

Going green

Earth-friendly business practices benefit state

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From a dry cleaner that uses non-toxic detergents to a spa that recycles shampoo bottle caps, local companies are proving that even small steps can make a big difference in protecting the environment.

For the first time in Louisiana's history, the state met all federal ozone standards in 2008, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality announced last week.

And greener industry practices are a big reason why, said DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett.

"Some of them (companies) have to because they're required, but a lot of it is vol-

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untary," said DEQ environmental scientist John Rogers.

"And when environmental measures are better done by everybody, they have a great deal more impact."

Spa Mizan in Lafayette has implemented a number of green measures since opening 10 years ago, from using organic personal care products to recycling.

The salon partners with AVEDA, a manufacturer of flower- and plant-based beauty products.

"Even down to the nail polish we have, we're taking everything we can get that is organic and renewable for use," said spa coordinator Jaime Begnaud.

Spa Mizan also takes care of products after they are used with a comprehensive recycling program.

The spa recycles all its paper, plastic and glass products, and recently began recycling bottle caps that must be separated from plastic bottles during the recycling process.

"We collect them, send them on to AVEDA and they'll turn around and recycle them and use them in their products," Begnaud said.



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Miles Frank with Camellia Cleaners shows the two new dry cleaning machines that are environmentally friendly.

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“It’s taking something that would have ended up in a landfill and recycling it.”

Spa Mizan is expanding its green efforts with its move to Kaliste Saloom Road next month.

All materials from the construction site are being recycled, and furniture for the new building is being made from renewable sources. Even staff uniforms are being made from organic materials, Begnaud said.

Spa Mizan also does its part to raise environmental awareness and funds each April during Earth Month. Proceeds go to the Gulf Restoration Network, which has helped restore marshes and waterways across the Gulf Coast.

Camellia Cleaners in Lafayette recently installed two GreenEarth Cleaning systems at its dry cleaning facility on Bertrand Drive.

The process uses liquid silicone, an environmentally-friendly alternative to petro-chemical solvents that can contaminate the air, soil and water.

“Once we found there was an environmentally-safe alternative, we didn’t hesitate to make the investment,” said Camellia Cleaners owner Miles Frank.

Frank said the new technology is more expensive, but prevents any chance of costly contamination cleanup. And the solvent is better for clothes as well.

“Right out of dry cleaning machine, clothes smell fresh,” Frank said. “The clothes feel softer, and it doesn’t (fade) colors as much as the other solvents.”

Entergy, which supplies power to six Acadiana parishes, recently began offering electricity generated from environmentally friendly sources as part of its Geaux Green initiative.

The program allows customers to pay an extra \$2.25 per month for every 100 kilowatt hours of electricity generated from agricultural by-products like bagasse and rice hull.

“We’re always looking at alternative fuel sources,” said Entergy spokesman Philip Allison. “This is just one more part of our diversification efforts.”

In addition to the environmental benefits, businesses are realizing cost savings from going green as well.

Rogers recalled one company that saved \$2,000 a year in dumpster fees by instituting a recycling program.

“When you make a waste, whether it’s hazardous or not, it has a cost,” Rogers said. “Recycling and waste management gives those companies a competitive edge.”