



# Sustainability

by Evadne Giannini & William Sullivan

## Several initiatives that hotels can take to “green” their transportation

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle®, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! \*\*\*Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.\*\*\* College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com*

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The facts are clear, transportation in the United States and around the world is rapidly changing, and some hotels such as the Courtyard Newark at the University of Delaware are on board to do their part to reduce their hotel's carbon footprint.

The Courtyard Newark UD currently has two 2005 six-passenger Dodge Caravans. Greg Caldwell, the hotel's Transportation Supervisor, has been working diligently to improve the efficiency of the hotel's transportation fleet. One of the first elements implemented into the hotel's Green Transportation plan was to integrate reusable filters. These filters are designed to be washed and reused on a regular basis. These specially made filters are made to last up to 50,000 miles before any cleaning is required, and for less than \$25.00 per filter, will never need to be replaced.

The first step in this process is very simple. Visit your local auto parts store and find out which filter is right for your hotel's car, truck, van or SUV. Now, buy the air filter and install it into the vehicle. Air filters are very easy to install, but if you need assistance, you can find many online Internet forums that will help. A reusable air filter is typically a multi-layer cotton filter that is sprayed with special oil. Compared to using a standard paper filter, it keeps the engine clean and also allows for very high air-flow that can actually increase the performance of the vehicle's engine. This minor change in The Courtyard Newark UD's everyday vehicle maintenance represents a cost savings of more than \$350.00 for the hotel's budget and is a vital step in the right direction toward meeting their Green Transportation goals.



The hotel's next endeavor started with Green Earth Technologies', G Oil. It is the only non-toxic motor oil that is safe for both humans and animals and is made from beef tallow. According to Dr. Mathew Zuckerman, the company's president, one cow yields 110 quarts of oil. The bottles used by G Oil are made from 100% recycled material as well. Better yet, G Oil does not cost more than standard motor oil that is derived from petroleum and synthetic chemicals. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, over 40% of our nation's oil pollution comes from the improper disposal of used motor oil by Do-It-Yourselfers. One five-quart oil change improperly disposed can:

- create an oil slick on the surface of ten acres (about ½ million square feet),
- render five acres (about ¼ million square feet) unusable for planting for decades,
- and, contaminate one million gallons (a year supply for 50 people) of water.

Green Earth Technologies' products, including G Oil, are made from American-grown base oils, achieving an Ultimate Biodegradability ranking from the ASTM standard D5864, which defines 'Ultimate Biodegradable' as a product that is rapidly absorbed (eaten) by microorganisms by 60% in 28 days. G Oil exceeds those standards. The biodegradability of motor oil depends on the feedstock. If the feedstock is crude oil, then the biodegradability that can be obtained is between 15% - 35% and synthetics biodegradabilities value is between 5% - 30%. For G Oil, where the feedstock is plant oil or animal fat, the biodegradability is significantly better with 65% to 95% achievable within 9 days and more over time. Hence, this was a great addition to the Courtyard transportation Green initiative.

Initially, one of the most challenging issues for the hotel came in trying to find a mechanic that would install these products. Lack of product knowledge and personal skepticism wasn't the only difficulties the hotel's transportation supervisor found, but he persisted and found an eco-friendly mechanic that has since convinced other customers about the benefits of using G Oil.

The two latest transportation initiatives for the hotel currently underway are the tinting of the vehicle windows and changing the operational procedure by purposefully parking in the shade. The improvements to the shuttle vans will limit the amount of sun that enters the vehicle, which will cause less energy to be used when heating or cooling the vans. Additionally, the hotel recently announced that it will be adding four bicycles to the hotel amenity options, giving guests the option to truly “go green” and pedal to their destinations! The hotel is also working with the city to add a bus stop closer to the property in the hopes of giving their guests the option of riding the bus.

The Courtyard Newark – University of Delaware will continue to enhance its transportation department when it comes to sound environmental issues. They are dedicated to finding products, as well as incorporating procedures and policies, that will help them to reduce their carbon footprint and pave a road for other hospitality organizations to follow. Their changes make sense not only for the hotel but also in efforts to better the environment. These choices are sustainable since they represent no additional costs to the hotel. Equally significant is that when riding in the comfort of a van, guests are genuinely interested and impressed when Greg tells them that they are riding in an eco-friendly, green-maintained vehicle. ✧

*(Evadne Giannini is principal of HospitalityGreen LLC, a company whose mission is to help businesses to execute environmentally sustainable practices in order to reduce their carbon emissions and offset their skyrocketing operational costs. William Sullivan is the Managing Director for the Courtyard by Marriott, Newark-University of Delaware. For more information on how to implement sustainable business practices throughout your lodging operations, contact Evadne at: [e.giannini@hospitalitygreen.com](mailto:e.giannini@hospitalitygreen.com). Website: [www.hospitalitygreen.com](http://www.hospitalitygreen.com)).*