

Kah-Nee-Ta Embarks on Environmental Goals

Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino, located on the Warm Springs Reservation in Warm Springs, Oregon, started to look at its environmental footprint, sustainability efforts, power usage and all around environmental standpoint in 2008. Jeff Dean, Kah-Nee-Ta's purchasing manager, started Kah-Nee-Ta's environmental team and is also the team's captain. He stated, "It only makes sense for us to see how our decisions affect our environment. The more we can help with that effort, the better for the tribal lands and the overall planet itself."

The team started with many goals and ideas, but decided to first focus on a few key issues. Between 2008 and 2009, Kah-Nee-Ta instituted a recycling program of aluminum, cardboard, office paper, cans, bottles and newspaper. From 2008 to 2009, Kah-Nee-Ta recycled 21.7 tons of these materials. "We were thrilled," said Dean. "Not only did we do the right thing by recycling, we also kept all that material out of the tribal landfill." That project was done in conjunction with Warm Springs Tribal Sanitarian, Nancy Collins and her team at the tribal landfill.

The team's next step was to look at the amenities in their guest rooms. "There were plenty of options," said Dean. "We weighed advantages and disadvantages. Some of the options had plant-based bottles, but they could not be recycled and would not break down unless special conditions were met." Kah-Nee-Ta decided on a new product from Gilchrist and Soames called "BeeKind," which can be found at: www.gilchristsoames.com/about/release-11092008-beekind. The actual containers are made out of paper, and contribute 92% less waste. In high season, that means the difference between 5,000 + bottles down to 400 paper containers in the tribal landfill.

"It was a huge difference," said Dean. The products are also made without several harsh ingredients and contribute money to honeybee and sustainable pollination research. The Gilchrist and Soames website states, "The BeeKind Collection features Gilchrist & Soames' Signature formulations, which contain no parabens, phthalates, petrol-derived ingredients, mineral oil, urea, DEA, TEA or propylene glycol. They do contain food-grade, naturally derived USP glycerin; natural conditioning agents from honey and the Brassica plant; and soybean and cottonseed oil, instead of petrochemicals. The BeeKind formulations are also free of any artificial colours or dyes." The rooms were also outfitted with a towel and linen reuse program, all of which have proven very successful.

Last year's final step was to do a lighting retrofit. Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino has recently completed a major lighting retrofit of its Kah-Nee-Ta Lodge, Casino and Conference Center. Gerard Lighting Group/Kills Thunder Inc.



served as consultants on the retrofit project. The project will save approximately 195 tons of CO2 per year and approximately 389,852 kilowatt hours with the lighting upgrade. "As we look forward to increasing our environmental responsibility and initiatives, the lighting project was a step in the right direction," said Dean.

Gerard Lighting Group/Kills Thunder, Inc. works with companies to lower their energy costs. "Kah-Nee-Ta uses a wide variety of interior and exterior lighting for its facility. The challenge has been to find the best new technologies for both interior and exterior applications," said Mike Gerard, President of Gerard Lighting Group. Kah-Nee-Ta received a utility rebate from the Bonneville Power Administration and Wasco Electric Cooperative. Warm Springs Ventures and Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises also assisted on the project.

Since Jeff is the Purchasing Manager, he could directly influence where items and what items were purchased. "First and foremost, we had to make sure our guests and employees were taken care of, and then base our environmental goals off of that," Dean said. "Like all business, we must look at the cost of items, but also the impact our purchasing makes on our earth, including carbon footprint, what items are made of, etc. It would be wonderful if we could get all of our products changed over, but we have to look at these items as we replace them, while keeping people, planet and profit in mind." ♣

For more information about Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort & Casino, visit www.kabneeta.com. Jeff Dean can be reached by calling (541) 553-4886 or email purchasing@kabneeta.com.