

**SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 6, 2005, SBI ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABILITY
EDUCATION, TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL
BUSINESSES AND THE PUBLIC
October 31, 2005**

The SBI Roundtable for Education, Training and Technical Assistance for businesses met on October 6th 2005 in the Conference Room, Fire Station #1. Eleven participants attended representing people from local academic institutions, non-profits, city government, and the private sector. The central question was how to expand sustainability education, training, and training to local businesses and the general public.

The Following Themes Emerged During The Meeting:

- Public education and raising community awareness is a crucial part in the retention, expansion and creation of sustainable businesses and jobs in Eugene.
- Many businesses and the general public are unsure about the definition of sustainable business practices and products.
- A starting point is to understand what businesses are currently doing:
 - Many businesses have adopted sustainability practices without knowing, and if they could receive recognition it would help encourage further development of sustainable practices.
 - Many businesses look to peers as examples for ways to improve business practices; if they could see examples of sustainable practices they would be more likely to try to adopt them.
- Effective education and training programs begin by understanding the needs of local businesses. We need to ask local firms what type of education, training, and technical assistance they want.
- A coordinated system of education and technical assistance is especially important for start-up firms and low-income members of the community seeking to become entrepreneurs. The education and training they need must be tailored to their current understanding, skills, and needs.
- More public recognition of businesses that are practicing sustainability would encourage other businesses to adopt sustainability practices.
- Networking and sharing among businesses using sustainable practices should be strengthened. This will help to build a common understanding of what sustainable business is and how it should be adopted. Creating this common understanding will help local businesses take more ownership of sustainability.
- A Business Network already exists that meets every two months and the Chamber of Commerce has roundtables to address different issues.

Specific Recommendations Made to Address the Themes Include:

- Send a survey to local businesses to understand what they want and need in terms of education and technical assistance for sustainability. The survey could be modeled after surveys used in other municipality initiatives across the country. Ask EWEB to consider sending it to their commercial customers.
- Develop a "train the trainer" program similar to the model used by the Eugene Master Recyclers Program.

- Support the development of a local Entrepreneurial League System as proposed by Shawn Winkler-Rios, Director of the Lane Micro Enterprise Center to coordinate education and training opportunities for local entrepreneurs, especially low income, small businesses, and those in the start-up phase.
 - Roger Ebbage of Lane Community College volunteered to establish a web-based clearing house of information for local businesses and the general public on sustainable business practices and products including education, training, and technical assistance programs.
 - Strengthen the existing networks for dialogue among local businesses by creating a local electronic clearing-house for information on sustainable business practices and education, training, and technical assistance opportunities. Specifics need to be worked out as to who will head it up, what will the content look like, how it will be maintained/updated, can it incorporate Springfield and Lane County etc.
 - The City of Eugene or other entities should reinforce the message of sustainability in the media through vehicles such as monthly article in “Breaking News”, Public access TV could highlight sustainable business developments
 - Consider expanding the Emerald Awards which are already established in the area
 - The Eugene City Club could give a yearly award for sustainable business
- Distribute information about the SBI and sustainable practices and products in general through the Neighborhood Association newsletter.