

Greening Harbor Country

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Harbor Country is going green. Off the leeward coast of beautiful Lake Michigan with its stunning sunsets, right in the middle of the fruit belt and wine country, it's a natural. With its heavy reliance on agriculture and tourism, few regions are more dependent on a healthy environment for their livelihood and future. Located within less than two hours of more than ten million people, few regions are better positioned to take advantage of the newly emerging green economy.

With conscious planning and concerted effort, Harbor Country can become the Midwest's premier sustainable bioregion and ecodestination, the breadbasket of Southwestern Michigan, Northwestern Indiana, and Chicagoland. Other regions that are taking advantage of similar circumstances are the Napa Valley with its proximity to San Francisco, the Willamette River basin south of Portland, Oregon, and the Long Island wine country to the east of New York City.

The residents, businesses, and local governments of Harbor Country are working together to create a sustainable future and you can join in as well. Sustainable community and economic development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The foundation of sustainability is what is sometimes referred to as the "the triple bottom line," people, prosperity and the planet. Instead of being seen as at odds with one another, the goal of sustainability is to bring into harmony the environment, the economy, and society. In order to be successful sustainable development aspires to be ecologically friendly, economically sound, and socially responsible all at the same time.

To become friends of the future, we can all begin to adopt a few simple principles that will allow us to walk down the path of sustainability one step at a time:

- Reduce our wasteful dependence upon non-renewable fossil fuels, metals, and minerals.
- Reduce our wasteful dependence upon man-made synthetic chemicals and unnatural substances such as plastics, volatile organic compounds, and other substances foreign to nature.
- Reduce our contributions to the depletion and destruction of nature, i.e., careless use of water, land, the forests, and air pollution.
- Strive to meet our own and others needs more equitably and efficiently.

One way to become more sustainable is to buy local. The typical meal a family eats comes from as many as 1500 miles away. Buying local reduces the "embodied energy," the fossil fuel used required to get it to your table. That's good for the environment. Money spent on locally owned businesses has a greater multiplier effect, thereby supporting more local jobs. That's good for the economy. Food grown locally is also fresher. That's good for society. This is the win-win-win sweet spot of sustainability.

When possible, using organic produce is also good for the planet, and will help grow the new green economy. In Harbor Country, there are already many organic options, and many of its farmers, growers, and vintners have already started down the path to sustainability by beginning to reduce the amounts of unnatural pesticides and herbicides they use to grow their produce.

As you visit the many fine restaurants, inns, and delis in and around Harbor Country, you will see its locally grown produce, wines, and beers in the menus and on the shelves. Harbor Country is also the location of several burgeoning arts communities with great paintings, prints, sculpture, and every other type of art imaginable. Some of it created from local and recycled materials.

So, partake of the food and beverages of Harbor Country while you are here. Purchase a little extra so you can take a taste of Harbor Country back home to share with your friends and family. Ask your local grocery and beverage stores to stock Harbor Country products so you can enjoy our produce and beverages, with their reduced embodied energy, year round. And, just maybe, take home a piece of art to remind you of the good times you enjoyed here. By doing so, you can help us to create the Midwest's premier sustainable bioregion and join the people of Harbor Country as we all work and play together to create a sustainable future.

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Professor Keen is an award winning scholar and teacher, and the author of several books and articles.

Harbor Country Green Business Members

American Red Cross
Beachtails
Bentwood Tavern
Blue Fish Guest House & Cottages
Blue Fish Vacation Rentals
The Blueberry House
Camp Buffalo Cottages
Casa Greta
Catherine Doll Clothing
Center of the World Woodshop
Century 21 1st Team
Charm Cottage
Chikaming Open Lands
Dancing Feet Yoga
Dunes Development
Fitzgerald's of Sawyer
Fritz Olsen Sculptures Contemporary Fine Art
Garden Grove B&B

Gintaras Resort on the Lake
Gordon Beach Inn
Harbert House B&B
Harbor Country Bike
Harbor Grand
Hearthaven Cottage
Hearthwoods Cottage Design
Heston Supper Club
Kemps Home and Lawn Care
Lakeside Antiques
Lakeside Inn
LaPorte Housing Specialists
The Lark and Pear
Local Color Gallery
Marina Grand
Merchant Street Cottages
Michigan Thyme
New Buffalo Hypnosis

New Buffalo Inn and Spa
Pine Garth Inn
The Pink House
Rabbit Run Inn
Retro Café
Sandpiper Inn
Sans Souci Euro Inn
Sawyer Garden Center
Schlipps Pharmacy
Skip's Restaurant & Catering
Snap Sports of Harbor Country
Snooty Fox
Studio B Gallery
Susan Fredman's At Home With Nature
Terrace Room
Union Pier Summer House
Vineyard Lofts

Drop-off Recycling

Chikaming Township: 5885 Sawyer Road, Sawyer, 469-1676. Accepts corrugated cardboard, newspaper, glass bottles & jars, metal cans, plastic bottles & jugs. Call for location details.

Forest Lawn Landfill: corner of Basswood Rd. & Forest Lawn Rd., Office Parking Lot, Three Oaks Twp. 756-9252. Open Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm. Accepts corrugated cardboard, paperboard (such as cereal and tissue boxes), newspaper, mixed paper, catalogs, phone books, junk mail, paper grocery sacks, glass food bottles and jars, metal cans, plastic bottles & jugs #1- #7.

Michiana Recycling and Disposal: 684-0900. Drop-off recycling center for current customers only. Call for details.

New Buffalo Twp Annex: corner of Red Arrow Hwy & Clay St., one block south of Rt 12 intersection. County funded. Accepts corrugated cardboard, newspaper, glass bottles & jars, metal cans, plastic bottles & jugs.

