

Informational Packet for Big Lake Businesses

City of Big Lake

2018



This document was created with the intention of offering information to local businesses in the hope that they will utilize it to preserve Big Lake's natural resources and help the community. Not all actions will be relevant to every business, so we organized the actions by category in a table of contents. Utilize the information that is relevant to your business or organization. None of the suggested actions are required, but will strengthen our community's resiliency. If you would like more information or have any questions about the information provided, please direct them to Katie Stelzner (kstelzner@biglakemn.org, 763-307-6040) at City Hall.

Table of Contents

1. Energy
 - Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistant Program
 - MN Waste Wise
 - Green Building Frameworks
 - Energy Star
 - MN Chamber of Commerce
 - Renewable Options
2. Sustainable Purchasing
 - Buy Local
 - Sustainable Green Printing Partnership Certified
3. Food
 - Good Samaritan Law
 - Food Scraps to Pigs
 - Composting
4. Land
 - Commercial Greening Program (only applicable in 2018)
 - Rain Gardens
 - Bike Racks
 - Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
5. Recycling
 - E-waste
6. Additional Resources

Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistant Program

(RETAP)

The Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP) employs skilled, retired professionals to provide facility assessments and assistance to small businesses, institutions, and communities in Minnesota.

No-cost, non-regulatory energy efficiency and waste reduction assessments are available to Minnesota's small businesses and public and private institutions. Assessments include an on-site visit to your facility from a team of RETAP members with emphasis on finding opportunities to increase energy efficiency and water conservation, reduce waste, and reduce operating costs.

When you have an assessment done, an experienced team of retired professionals will:

- Analyze your utility bills
- Visit your facility
- Send you a written report with high priority changes and estimated financial and environmental savings

Recommendations may be simple behavior changes, maintenance improvements, or more complicated retrofits. While you are **under no obligation** to implement the recommendations, a high percentage of surveyed clients do.

To find out more or to request a free assessment, contact [Mike Vennewitz](#), RETAP Coordinator, at 612-781-1307.

Minnesota Waste Wise

The Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliate of the [Minnesota Chamber of Commerce](#). They provide environmental sustainability consulting to Minnesota businesses and organizations. They offer more information about their services on the website: <http://www.mnwastewise.org/>.

The Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation offers a variety of [services](#), including:

- Project Funding Assistance
 - Waste Wise recognizes that project funding is often the biggest barrier to completing waste and energy projects. They will help businesses find energy utility rebates, county grants, and low-cost loans.
- Environmental Sustainability Consulting
 - Waste Wise offers consulting services regarding waste disposal costs, waste outlets, recycling programs, and sustainable supply chains.
- On-site Waste and Energy Visits
 - They will come to your building to help find new ways to reduce solid waste, maximize recycling opportunities, identify energy efficiency potential and save your company money. They also help with implementation.
- Waste Stream Analysis (Waste Sort)
 - The sort will identify and quantify material that can be removed from the waste stream through waste reduction, reuse, or recycling.
- Waste and Energy Utility Bill Analysis
 - Analysis of these bills can lead to cost savings and greater energy efficiency
- Project Investment Analysis
 - Waste Wise can help you determine if an investment in waste prevention or energy efficiency is good for your business. Whether you need to calculate simple payback or run a life-cycle investment analysis, they will help you perform the needed calculations so that you're best prepared to make the case for investment.
- Employee Training and Workshops
 - The Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation can help create marketing materials and educational components to make sure your staff understand your initiatives. They can also come to your site and train employees in person and create signage to help them better understand the program.

Green Building Certifications

Why obtain a green building certification?

- Buildings are responsible for an enormous amount of energy use, resource consumption and emissions in our city. By working toward a green building certification, you can join other community members in preserving our resources.
- Green building is cost-effective
 - Upfront investment in green building makes properties more valuable, with an average expected increase in value of 4%. By virtue of lowered maintenance and energy costs the return on investment from green building is rapid: green retrofit projects are generally expected to pay for itself in just seven years.
 - Green buildings reduce day-to-day costs year-over-year.
 - Between 2015 and 2018, LEED-certified buildings in the United States are estimated to have \$1.2 billion in energy savings, \$149.5 million in water savings, \$715.2 million in maintenance savings and \$54.2 million in waste savings.
- Green buildings use natural resources efficiently, lowering both utility bills
 - Buildings are positioned to have an enormous impact on the environment. At 41% of total U.S. energy consumption, buildings out-consume the industrial (30%) and transportation (29%) sectors.
 - Buildings use about 15 trillion gallons of water per year, but water-efficiency efforts in green buildings are expected to reduce water use by 15 percent and save more than 10 percent in operating costs.
 - Standard building practices use and waste millions of tons of materials each year; green building uses fewer resources and minimizes waste.

Information from: <https://www.usgbc.org/articles/green-building-facts>

LEED Certification

- LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. Available for virtually all building project types, LEED provides a framework to create healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings. LEED certification is a globally recognized symbol of resource, community, and environmental preservation.
- LEED offers rating systems and guides that can be custom-made to fit your building
- <https://new.usgbc.org/leed>

Green Globes Certification

- Green Globes offers a different approach: one that provides in-depth support for improvements ideally suited to each project. They believe that building owners and facility managers know their buildings and operations better than anyone else. They believe that their certification helps you to:
 - Reduce operating costs, qualify for tax incentives and utility rebates, meet regulations, attract and retain employees, increase your property's marketability
- <https://www.thegbi.org/green-globes-certification/>

Energy Star Products

ENERGY STAR is a voluntary program that helps businesses and individuals save money and protect our natural resources through energy efficiency.

- ENERGY STAR is most well-known for their energy efficient products such as:
 - Appliances
 - Building Products
 - Commercial Food Service Equipment
 - Electronics
 - Heating and Cooling Equipment
 - Lighting
 - Office Equipment
 - Water Heaters
 - And other miscellaneous products
- With their guidelines and programs, ENERGY STAR provides assistance along the way:
 - ENERGY STAR provides Guidelines for Energy Management which allows you to create an energy savings roadmap to use now and in the future
 - <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/existing-buildings/learn-benefits>
 - The ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is an online tool that allows you to track energy and water use

MN Chamber of Commerce

The MN Chamber of Commerce offers a variety of resources to businesses interested in increasing energy efficiency.

- Energy-Saving Opportunities: <http://www.mnenergysmart.com/resources/energy-saving-opportunities/>
- They also provide energy tools and calculators: <http://www.mnenergysmart.com/resources/tools-calculators/>
- The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce offers energy assessments: An energy assessment measures your business's energy use and recommends steps for you to save money on operational costs. Energy assessments can include lighting, heating/ventilation/cooling (HVAC) systems and industrial processes. Following an on-site assessment, you will be provided with a report documenting energy use and conservation opportunities.
 - The steps include:
 - Data collection and analysis
 - A detailed report
 - Significant savings from upgrades

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce provides resources to help business with energy efficiency upgrades in the form of financial incentives.

- Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources
 - <https://mn.gov/commerce/industries/energy/financial-assistance/funding-opportunities.jsp>
- Utility Rebates
 - Electric and gas utilities offer rebates to commercial customers making common energy improvements, such as installing energy-efficient lights, heating and cooling systems, and motors, as well as sometimes custom improvements. Details of the rebate programs vary widely, but the rebates can be worth 40% or more of the improvement project's cost.
 - Xcel Energy Rebates
 - https://www.xcelenergy.com/programs_and_rebates
 - Connexus Energy Rebates
 - <https://www.connexusenergy.com/business/save-energy/>

Renewable Options

Renewable energy is a term we often hear discussed in the United States today. There are actually five types of renewable energy: biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, and solar. The last two are the most common in Minnesota.

Why should you use renewable energy at your business? Here are some answers:

- The name says it all: unlike energy resources like gas and coal, renewable energy sources are regenerate and are inexhaustible, they are “renewable”
- Renewable energy emits little to no CO2 emissions which will in turn...
- Improve public health and environmental quality
- With more people using renewables than ever before, renewable energy is providing jobs and economic growth
- The price for renewable energy is dropping, and as more people opt in, the technology will improve, stabilizing fuel prices much more than gas or coal ever will
- Renewable energy will eventually provide a more reliable and resilient energy system
- More information is available here:
https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/?page=renewable_home#tab1

Xcel and Connexus Energy offer renewable energy options to their customers.

- Connexus Energy: allows customers to join a voluntary renewable energy program for a few dollars more a month (using wind energy)
- Xcel Energy: also allows customers to join a voluntary renewable energy program for a few dollars more a month, but Xcel uses both solar and wind, and it organized on a first come, first serve basis

Buy Local

- According to the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, each additional dollar that circulates locally boosts local economic activity, employment, and, ultimately, tax revenue.
- In addition, buying local products for paper, equipment, office supplies, etc. helps the environment by reducing the necessity to ship and store items

The Ripple Effect When You Shop Local

We know that shopping on **Amazon** can be convenient, but this holiday season, don't forget that local businesses deliver even more for your dollar.

Here's what happens when you shop with a locally owned business — starting with you.



YOU BENEFIT FROM EXPERTISE.

The perfect running shoe. The new toy that's certain to delight. The fantastic novel you hadn't heard of. The best tool for the job. Get the right thing and save time by relying on the expertise of local retailers.

At a local store, you're as much as **3x more likely** to discover something new.¹

In places with more local businesses, people have stronger social ties² and participate more in civic affairs.³

YOU CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.

Shopping locally means bumping into friends, enjoying lively streets, playing in the toy store, and trading neighborhood news with the people behind the counter. Local businesses make communities work.



YOU STRENGTHEN YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY.

Local retailers hire local people, pay local taxes, and source goods locally. When you shop local, you expand opportunity where you live.

Compared to Amazon, independent retailers create **2x as many jobs** for the same amount of revenue.⁴

Places with more small businesses have less income inequality.⁵

YOU CAST A VOTE FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM.

Starting a small business has long been a pathway to the middle class. By supporting local entrepreneurs, you invest in a future that works for all of us.



Join the conversation on social media: **#LocalEffect #ShopLocal #ShopSmall**

1. Codex Group via: "Why Online Book Discovery is Broken (and How to Fix It)," Gigaom, Jan. 17, 2013.
2. "The Health and Wealth of US Counties," Troy C. Blanchard, et. al., Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy, and Society, 2011.
3. "The Configuration of Local Economic Power and Civic Participation in the Global Economy," Troy Blanchard and Todd L. Matthews, Social Forces, June 2006.
4. "Amazon's Stranglehold," Institute for Local Self-Reliance, Nov. 2016.
5. "Wage Inequality and Firm Growth," Holger M. Mueller, et. al., ILSR Working Paper 632, March 2015.

Sustainable Green Printing Partnership Certification

SGP Partnership is the leading non-profit accreditation organization that promotes sustainability in printing practices and manufacturing operations. Almost all businesses use reams of paper a day. By using recycled paper instead, we can preserve and protect the untarnished forests and woodlands that make Minnesota (and Big Lake) such a great place to live and work.

Below is a list of accredited printers in Minnesota:

- Bolger LLC (Minneapolis, MN)
- Modernistic Décor, Display, and Graphics (Stillwater, MN)
- The John Roberts Company (Minneapolis, MN)

This is a relatively easy switch which will do a world of good.

Good Samaritan Law

Reduce waste, Feed the hungry, Improve sanitation, Save money, Enhance community perception, Do the right thing

Waste Not, Want Not

Food recovery – the practice of preventing surplus foodstuffs from being dumped in the trash – takes numerous forms and provides a variety of benefits. The highest and best form of food recovery involves collecting wholesome but unused or unsalable food for distribution to those in need. Engaging in food recovery is a straightforward way to respond to a variety of difficult problems. By implementing recovery programs, food-sector businesses can reduce the amount of material that enters into the waste stream, provide nutritious meals for hungry people in our communities, and lessen the environmental burdens associated with agricultural production, food disposal, and waste. Food recovery is consistent with a socially responsible business model. As such, it can help businesses garner good will in the community and with potential customers.



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS
SCHOOL OF LAW

By the Numbers

Food makes up the largest percentage of waste being put into municipal landfills

Reducing US food waste by just **15% each year...** Would provide nutrition for an additional **25 million Americans**

96 billion pounds of food is wasted in the United States annually: a loss worth approximately \$165 million

50.1 million Americans are food insecure. That means 1 out of 6 people in this country do not have regular access to food for an active, healthy life

Food Recovery: Risky Proposition or Missed Opportunity?

Unfortunately, many food businesses hesitate to donate their excess food because they fear that doing so will expose their enterprise to the risk of liability for foodborne illnesses, allergen exposure, and other negative consequences for the ultimate consumers of recovered food. That food-sector

businesses want nothing to do with foodborne illness outbreaks is certainly understandable – no one wants to sicken consumers or to receive the inevitable negative attention that follows.

Fortunately, when it comes to food donation, liability-related fears are largely unfounded because a federal statute, the **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** absolves those who donate apparently wholesome food to nonprofit organizations for ultimate distribution to needy individuals from civil and criminal liability related to such donations. The Bill Emerson Act extends the same liability protection to the nonprofit organizations that receive and distribute donated food. Thus, except in cases of gross negligence or intentional misconduct, donors and qualified recipients of appropriately recovered food have robust protection against liability associated with their food donations.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996 exempts those who make good faith donations of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations that feed the hungry from liability for injuries arising from the consumption of the donated food.

Covered Activities: What the BEA Encourages

The Bill Emerson Act provides liability protection for activities such as donating, gleaning, receiving donations, and distributing donations. Although the terms “food recovery” and “gleaning” are used interchangeably in conversation, under the Bill Emerson Act they are separate, defined activities.

Covered Persons: Who the BEA Protects

“Persons,” “gleaners,” and “nonprofit organizations” all receive protection from the Bill Emerson Act. The very broad category of covered *persons* embraces individuals, corporations, partnerships, organizations, associations or governmental entities. It expressly includes retail grocers, wholesalers, hotels, motels, manufacturers, restaurants, caterers, farmers, and nonprofit food distributors or hospitals.

Perishable produce rescue/salvage: The collection of perishable produce from wholesale and retail sources, including wholesale markets, supermarkets, and farmers’ markets.

Perishable and prepared food rescue: The collection of prepared foods from the food service industry, including restaurants, hospital, caterers, and cafeterias.

Nonperishable processed food collection: The collection of processed foods, usually with long shelf lives, from sources such as manufacturers, supermarkets, distributors, grocery stores, and food drives.

Liability Protection: How the BEA Works

The Bill Emerson Act states that covered parties engaged in covered activities “shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition” of the donated items as long as certain requirements are met. The requirements are: (1) The donated items must be either *apparently wholesome food* or *apparently fit grocery products*; (2) The covered party must donate the items in good faith; (3) The donation must be made to a *nonprofit organization*; and, (4) The nonprofit must distribute the donated items to needy individuals. In order for the Bill Emerson Act’s protections to apply, the items must be donated in good faith.

Premises Liability: Another Way the BEA Removes Risk From Food Donations

In addition to addressing concerns about liability for foodborne illness, the Bill Emerson Act removes most of the risk associated with premises liability for injury or death arising out of collection of donations on the donor's property. For a donor to take advantage of this protection, certain conditions must be met: (1) The property where gleaning or donation collecting occurs must be owned or occupied by a covered "person;" (2) The "person" must permit the gleaners or representatives of a nonprofit (paid or unpaid) to enter his or her property; (3) For the purpose of collecting the donations; and (4) The collected donations must ultimately be distributed to needy individuals.

What is "Apparently Wholesome Food"?

Food that meets all quality & labeling standards imposed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations even though the food may not be readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions.

What is "Apparently Fit Grocery Product"?

A grocery product that meets all quality and labeling standards imposed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations even though the product may not be readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions. This includes disposable paper/plastic products, laundry detergent, cleaning products, and miscellaneous household items.

Partial Compliance:

What To Do With Food That May Not Meet All Applicable Standards

The Act extends civil and criminal liability protection to products that may not meet all "quality and labeling standards imposed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations" as long as the Act's procedures for reconditioning are followed. This provision allows for the recovery and donation of otherwise edible and wholesome items with technical flaws, such as missing or marred product labels, open or broken packaging, and items that require washing, trimming or other cleaning before they can be provided to the ultimate recipients. To extend the protection to nonconforming items, donors and nonprofits must follow three steps: 1. The donor must inform the nonprofit of the nonconforming nature of the item; 2. The nonprofit must agree to recondition the item so that it will be compliant; and, 3. The nonprofit must know the standards for reconditioning the item.

Engaging in Food Recovery

Food sector businesses that would like to take advantage of the Bill Emerson Act's liability protections should begin by developing a formal food recovery plan. This plan will guide and organize recovery efforts and help identify non-profit organizations to receive donations.

To be of greatest use, food recovery plans should identify and address the following matters:

1. Characteristics of suitable food distribution organizations <http://www.biglakefoodshelf.org/>
2. Types of food to be donated
3. Protocol for and means of transportation for donated food and grocery items;
4. Qualifications of the persons in charge of overseeing donations
6. Necessary staff training regarding food safety, hygiene, defense, storage, and transportation
7. Preferred timing and frequency of donations
8. Communication protocols as between the donor and recipient organizations
9. Record keeping policies.

Food Scraps to Pigs

Farmers have been doing this for centuries. With proper and safe handling, anyone can donate food scraps to animals. Food scraps donated to animals can save farmers and companies money. It is often cheaper to feed animals food scraps, rather than having them hauled to a landfill.

In the state of Minnesota, the only regulations that limit food scrap donations to hog farms are 1) that both meat and vegetable scraps must be heat-treated and 2) that a license is required to feed food waste to swine. There are two federal laws concerning the feeding of food scraps to pigs:

- Federal Swine Health Protection Act
 - It requires that meat and animal-byproduct-containing food scraps are heat-treated in a manner that is sufficient to kill disease-causing bacteria.
- The Food Safety Modernization Act Preventative Controls Rules for Animals
 - These rules are slightly different based upon what type of business you run. However, if your business is already in compliance with the Preventative Control Rules for human food, and you do not further contaminate the food after human consumption, you do not need to worry about these rules
 - For more detail: https://law.uark.edu/service-outreach/food-recovery-project/LeftoversforLivestock_ALegalGuide_August2016.pdf

There are two farmers located in Isanti who are licensed by the MN Board of Animal Health to accept food scraps in order to feed them to their pigs: Peter Barthold and David Johnson

To contact these farmers:

Peter Barthold: 763-286-4466

David Johnson: 763-286-5557



Composting

Compost is the decomposition of raw materials, such as leaves, food scraps, grass clippings, and animal manure, which transforms it into a wonderful regenerative fertilizer.

Unfortunately, the only waste hauler in Big Lake that offers curbside organics collection is Republic Services.

But Randy's and Waste Management offer organics collection in other cities. Since Big Lake has an open waste collection system, residents and business owners are allowed to choose their own waste hauler, but it also means waste haulers get to decide which services they offer in which areas. The only way more haulers will offer organics collection in Big Lake is through customer demand.

So if you would like to start composting, call your waste hauler!

If you are interested in learning more about how other businesses compost, the Minnesota Composting Council is sponsoring an event for you! You can also contact Katie Stelzner at kstelzner@biglakemn.org or 763-307-6040 at City Hall with specific questions.

Organics Collection Workshop for Businesses

Date: January 17, 2018

Location: Securian Club at CHS Field (Home of the St. Paul Saints)

Time: 8:30 - 9:00 am registration; 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Workshop

Tour: A Tour of the facility follows the event: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm Tour

This event brings together small, medium and large businesses to talk about their experience in setting up organics collection programs. They will tell us about the successes and barriers their business experience in setting up their program and how they manage them.

More information is available here: <http://www.mncompostingcouncil.org/>

Commercial Greening Project

City of Big Lake and Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)



Why Buy a Tree?

Sherburne SWCD is selling trees at a discounted rate, and volunteers will plant and care for your tree.

Trees are an investment in the future. When properly placed they save you money on heating and air-conditioning costs.

Commercial retail areas with trees are more appealing to shoppers. Businesses on treescaped streets show 12% higher income streams.

Healthy, mature trees add about 15% to a property's value.

Planting and Caring for the Tree

Volunteers from the Big Lake Sustainability Task Force will plant your tree with help from the SWCD.

The Citizen Pruners Program will care for your tree.

Your only responsibility is to purchase a tree, and advertise how you are helping the community!

How This Will Help the Community

The exceptional water quality of Big Lake is our community's legacy! By strategically increasing tree canopy around your business you are protecting this valuable natural resource!

Trees improve water quality by decreasing runoff and erosion. They also allow the groundwater supply to be replenished by absorbing water.

Visual exposure to settings with trees reduces stress levels. This will benefit your customers, employees, and yourself!

Tree Options: Ohio Buckeye, River Birch, Honey Locust, Planetree, Newport Plum, Amur Chokecherry, Bicolor Oak, Japanese Tree Lilac

Price: \$50 each (includes gator bag water system)

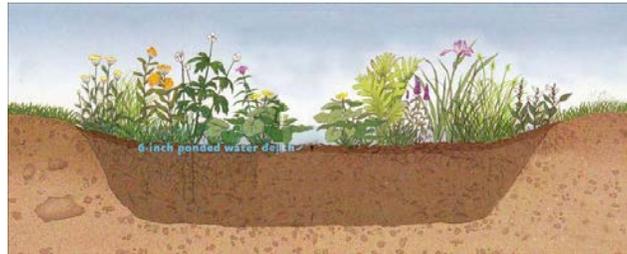
If interested, contact Katie Stelzner at kstelzner@biglakemn.org or 763-307-6040



Rain Gardens

What is a raingarden?

- A rain garden is simply a garden designed to catch rainwater runoff from your roof or parking lot. By creating a slight depression in the garden, you are able to catch and absorb rainwater before it floods into the street or creates a pool on your property, by allowing it to slowly seep into the ground. The types of plants grown in rain gardens are able to withstand partial flooding, and also create beautiful new landscaping!



The Benefits of Rain Gardens

- Rain gardens can be made in various shapes and sizes, and can therefore compliment your existing landscaping.
- Native plants are common in raingardens and provide natural habitat for butterflies, bees, and birds.
- Rain gardens allow plants to establish deep roots, which prevents erosion by holding the soil in place.
- After the first year, they need very little care in comparison to the average garden.
- By slowing the flow of water, and absorbing some of it into the ground, rain gardens reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, helping to stop the greatest cause of water pollution. The absorption of water also replenishes local aquifers. In a rain garden, pollutants are filtered out, improving water quality in lakes, rivers, and wetlands.

If you are interested in learning more about rain gardens and how you could plant one at your building, please contact Katie Stelzner (kstelzner@biglakemn.org, 763-307-6040) to be provided with detailed information

Bike Racks

Your business or organization can help the City of Big Lake to improve its transportation infrastructure, while also attracting new customers!

1. Advantages of bike-friendly businesses

People traveling past your business on bike simply won't stop unless there is adequate parking. Minnesota is the 2nd most bike-friendly state in the country. This means more and more people are opting to travel by bike. Bikers save money by not paying for parking, maintenance, or gas. This may mean they are more likely to spend their money on other things, like products in your store. Offering adequate bike parking is a good enticement to come inside.

2. Community engagement

Cities all over the country, including here in Minnesota, are becoming more integrated. For example, Big Lake has adopted a complete streets policy which will start to make the city friendlier to pedestrians and bicyclists in the coming years. But businesses will continue play a huge role in shaping the culture of our city. Businesses have the opportunity to support better infrastructure and environmental stewardship.

3. Cultivate your image

For any business, their reputation in the community is everything. By showing leadership in supporting responsible lifestyles and demonstrating a commitment to alternative modes of transportation, businesses will retain old customers and attract new ones. Bike racks, and going even further to advance alternative transportation (indoor storage, air pumps, etc.), is a great way to show you are in step with the times.

4. Healthy & happy employees

Cycling is a healthy activity. It increases both physical and mental health by keeping one's body active and reducing stress. Installing a bike rack will encourage more employees to bike to work, hopefully decreasing the need for sick days and increase productivity and employee contentment.

5. Increase parking capacity at little cost

Bike parking requires significantly less space than adding even a few parking spots. It can also offer prime access to your building, encouraging more people to enter.

6. Optimize space

Without adequate bike parking, cyclists will often resort to tying their bikes to trees or pillars. By simply installing a low-cost bike rack, this problem is easily avoided.

7. Community support

There are statewide organizations willing to help businesses interested in increasing their bike infrastructure, one being the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota. But there are also organizations right here in Big Lake which could help to create and install bike racks, contact Katie Stelzner at City Hall for more information.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Big Lake is in a very advantageous position to develop electric vehicle charging stations due to Highway 10 running straight through town. But beyond protecting and preserving the environment, installing electric vehicle charging stations can improve business.

In 2016, 64,000 new electric vehicles hit the roads in the United States, according to the Electric Vehicle World Sales Database. This means that businesses in Big Lake can attract new customers; because the drivers of these vehicles will need to charge their cars. If a driver needs to wait for their car to charge, they are much more likely to spend time in your store, restaurant, or place of business. In addition, because electric vehicle infrastructure is still relatively limited, consumers need to search for electric vehicle charging stations. They may come to Big Lake specifically for this purpose and spend their money here!

Financial Incentives and Assistance

Utility companies are willing to help their customers to install EV charging stations, and often offer rebates for installation!

Xcel Energy and Connexus Energy

If you're a commercial building owner, you may be aware of the value of offering electric vehicle charging stations to accommodate the growing population of drivers. When EV owners leave their home, they rely on electric-charging sources to maintain power. Offering the convenience of charging stations on your properties—for employees, renters, business partners, or customers—is an option many are offering for very little cost and big paybacks.

EV Energy Advisors on Hand

Xcel can provide resources to help you get your property set up for EV charging. Call 800-895-4999 or send an email to RPT@Xcelenergy.com to speak with an energy advisor.

Connexus does not offer such services; however they do offer a \$500 rebate to customers who install a Level 2 charging station. These consulting services can be found through other sources.

EV Power for Employees

As an employer or facility manager, you may be approached by employees about installing charging stations. Next to charging at home, your employees likely will see their workplace as the most convenient place to charge. There are a number of factors involved in adding charging options to your property – from number of charging units and location, to policy and controls. Consult with your tax advisor and contact our EV energy advisors to ensure you can provide safe, reliable, and efficient charging while helping you to minimize your energy costs.

EV Charging at Multifamily Buildings

EV chargers installed on multifamily properties offer a valued feature to attract and keep your tenants happy. There are creative ways to fulfill EV charging affordably. Depending on the building layout, the charger might be assigned to either the resident or the common area meter. Consult an EV charging station provider to help you configure your charging area, and call our energy advisors to help you evaluate the best rate options.

EV Power for Your Customers

Commercial businesses are offering charging options as a convenience to customers to ensure they stay shopping, dining, or lodging. You can own or you can lease these stations, or you can consult manufacturers that offer installation and maintenance packages to save you time and effort.

EV Power for Communities

If you're a community leader, boosting your economy may be among your top goals. Cities and towns are finding that being an EV-friendly community has the potential to attract more visitors to business districts and city centers. The EV growth numbers speak for themselves; and strategically-placed charging stations can help meet the demand at an affordable cost.

Get Started

Evaluate your options.

- Prior to selecting charging equipment and installation solutions, you may want to consider your organization's policies such as collecting payment for the investment you're making or who will have access to the charging equipment. The decision is up to you. But our EV Advisors can help with the latest trends and resources on the topic.

Determine your charging level.

- For most businesses in Big Lake we would recommend installing a Level 2 or NEMA 14-50R Outlet (essentially the same as a Level 2 but cheaper)

Install a charging station with the help of an electrician.

- Finding the right charging station setup takes some research and planning when identifying what works for your space and charging needs; and an electrician of your choice can help you install it. For a turn-key solution, charging station solution providers can also help you size the charging station for your property.

Electronic Waste (E-waste)

Electronics (in their various forms) have become a regular, and often necessary, part of our everyday lives. Especially in an office setting, we are constantly using phones, computers, printers, etc. In modern America, we are consuming and disposing of electronics all the time.

Yet few people know what happens to their electronics after disposal. Many end up in landfills, polluting the environment and harming humans through the toxic leaching of chemicals such as lead and mercury. There is an informative documentary on YouTube about the electronic waste stream, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSgrDOR4bIM>.

Thankfully, there are also many places in Minnesota which offer responsible electronic recycling services:

- Central Appliance Recyclers, 3107 Highway 10 S. St. Cloud, MN 56304
 - (320) 252-3221
- Tech Dump, 825 Boone Avenue N, #100 Golden Valley, MN 55427
 - (612)-260-9427
- PC's for People, 1481 Marshall Ave St. Paul, MN 55104
 - (651)-354-2552
- Eureka Recycling, 2828 Kennedy Street NE. Minneapolis, MN 55413
 - [\(612\)-669-2783](tel:612-669-2783)

Additional Resources

For more information on energy efficiency, visit these websites:

- Minnesota GreenStep Cities: <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us>
- EnergyStar: <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings?s=mega>
- U.S. Department of Energy: <https://energy.gov/>
- Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/energy>

For more information on sustainable purchasing, visit these websites:

- Minnesota GreenStep Cities: <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/bestPracticesDetail.cfm?bpid=15>
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/quick-links/environmentally-preferable-purchasing-policies>

For more information on food and the environment, visit these websites:

- Big Lake Food Shelf: <http://www.biglakefoodshelf.org/>
- Second Harvest Heartland: <http://www.2harvest.org/>
- Love Food Hate Waste: <https://lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

For more information on how to make your property more sustainable, visit these websites:

- University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/>
- Blue Thumb: <http://www.blue-thumb.org/>
- Sherburne County Soil and Water Conservation District: <http://www.sherburneswcd.org/>
- Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota: <http://www.bikemn.org/>

For more information on e-waste, visit these websites:

- Rethink Recycling: <https://www.rethinkrecycling.com/residents/materials-name/electronics-tvs-computers>
- Luen Hai (Documentary on E-waste): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSgrDOR4bIM>
- Tech Dump: <http://www.techdump.org/responsible-recycling/>

For more information on electric vehicles, visit these websites:

- PlugIn Cars: <http://www.pluginCars.com/ev-charging-guide-for-businesses.html>
- Xcel Energy: https://www.xcelenergy.com/energy_portfolio/innovation/electric_vehicles/get_started_going_electric/ev_power_for_building_owners
- Connexus Energy: <https://www.connexusenergy.com/residential/programs-rates/electric-vehicle/electric-vehicle-tod-rate/>