



PUBLIX GOES THE EXTRA (GREEN) MILE

This southeastern grocery chain is reducing energy usage, recycling, and building sustainable stores. | **Jaime Lackey**

Publix Super Markets is focusing on organic foods with its new Publix GreenWise Market concept. But the company is looking beyond its shelves to do good things for the environment. (And the eco-friendly efforts are reflected in energy savings, too.)

Publix has 928 stores (including its first Publix GreenWise Market) in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Tennessee. Typical stores range from 27,000 to 61,000 square feet. Publix GreenWise Market stores will average 39,000 square feet.

The Publix GreenWise Market concept has a focus on all-natural and organic foods, with a heavy concentration on prepared foods. The first store opened in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, in September 2007. Additional Publix GreenWise Markets will open in Boca Raton, Vero Beach, and Tampa, Florida, this year.

Publix GreenWise Markets use a number of environmentally friendly technologies, says Maria Brous, director of media and community relations with the Lakeland, Florida-based company. For example, at the Palm Beach Gardens loca-

tion, Publix is testing a soy-based roof coating that refracts light so that less energy is needed to cool the store.

Lighting has been a major focus in Publix's efforts to reduce energy usage chain-wide. The Publix GreenWise Market store has skylights, which means less energy is needed to light the store. The store has an energy management system that monitors the amount of light from the skylights and controls the amount of light put out by the fluorescent luminaries. The store also uses T6 HID track lighting instead of the standard incandescent track

lighting, and it uses high-output LED lighting for external signs, walk-in freezers, coolers and reach-in door cases.

Publix GreenWise Market stores will also use waterless urinals and low-flow toilets to conserve water, and the company uses recycled or sustainable fixtures whenever possible.

While the Publix GreenWise Market stores do have a strong focus on implementing environmentally friendly initiatives, Publix has also introduced green initiatives at all of its stores.

For example, Publix is partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce its impact on the environment. According to Brous, "Publix is one of 10 companies that have joined forces with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in a voluntary program to promote green refrigeration technologies, strategies and practices that protect the stratospheric ozone layer, reduce greenhouse gases, and save money."



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The program, called GreenChill Advanced Refrigeration Partnership, brings together the supermarket, refrigeration equipment and chemical refrigerant industries. Brous explains, "To counteract the depletion of stratospheric ozone, which protects Earth's residents from the sun's ultraviolet radiation, partners guarantee to use only ozone-friendly alternatives and advanced refrigeration technologies in all new and remodeled stores."

She adds, "The EPA believes that GreenChill partners' adoption of advanced refrigeration technologies will lead to increased energy efficiency and reduce operating expenses to the industry by over \$12 million annually. The EPA estimates that widespread adoption of advanced refrigeration technologies, best practices, and improved equipment design and service could reduce refrigerant emissions by 1 million metric tons of carbon equivalent per year — the equivalent of taking 800,000 automobiles off the road



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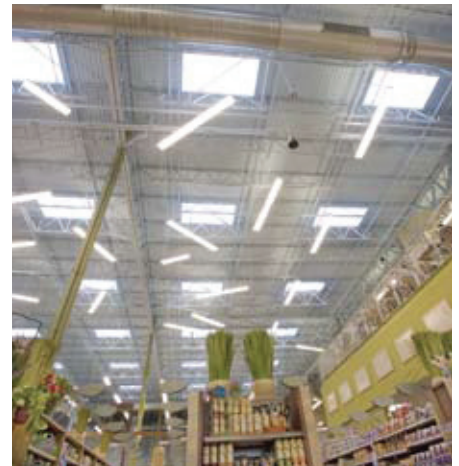
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Reusable bags as part of the Publix GreenWise Market concept.



Skylights at a Publix GreenWise Market.

Above: Publix's GreenWise Market concept.

every year.”

Publix is also partnering with Florida Atlantic University to test a composting program. The program is in its early stages, but Brous says it shows great potential.

In the near future, Publix will also work with Florida Power & Light to test the use of solar panels to generate energy at its stores.

In the meantime, Brous says, “Publix continues to evaluate the latest technologies in lighting.”

In terms of LED lighting, Publix has tested and validated a replacement fixture for its walk-in coolers and freezers and is replacing 150-watt incandescent fixtures with 33-watt LED fixtures in all of its stores. The company is also testing LED

lighting for reach-in frozen food cases, and plans to use 21-watt LED fixtures instead of 58-watt fluorescent lamps.

The company is beginning to use T6 track lighting in all of its stores. Brous says, “The T6 technology replaces older track lighting fixtures/lamps with more energy-efficient and improved lighting. Through wattage reduction and overall fixture reduction, we anticipate saving up to 60% over [what we spend on] the current track lighting technology.”

The company began recycling cardboard in 1974 and has encouraged shoppers to return used plastic bags for recycling for three decades. In 2006, Publix recycled 209,000 tons of cardboard and 7,000 tons of plastic. (Through other initiatives, the company also saved 3.6 million trees, 1.5 billion gallons of water and 2.3 million barrels of oil in 2006.)

In 2001, Publix launched its “Get Into a Green Routine” program to create a culture of environmental consciousness among associates. The program involves



There are more than 600 Publix associates involved with facilities maintenance. Publix handles most facilities issues in-house.

simple reminders: stickers that remind associates to turn off computer monitors, reminders to turn off the lights and close cooler doors.

The company saves enough energy every year to power 44,000 homes for a year.

“It is really a buy-in for our culture,” says Brous. “It is the small steps we take that make a big difference.”

A sustainability team evaluates new technologies and initiatives to see how they would fit into the company’s stores. This is a cross-functional team that incorporates experts in all areas of the business, including facilities, finances and operations. These team members look for ways to conserve energy and opportunities to make the technologies cost-effective.

“We want to know if it will help us be sustainable in the future,” says Brous. “Then we look at realistic expectations for the technology — can we incorporate it into our current structures?”

There are more than 600 Publix associates involved with facilities maintenance. The company handles the majority of facilities issues in-house.

Store managers contact the facilities

department for routine and emergency requests and the facilities department dispatches the appropriate teams. After emergencies, survey teams follow up with the store managers. And throughout the year, there are facilities teams that investigate issues and proactively try to prevent facilities problems.

Continuous training is an important part of the facilities program. “The facilities services teams are here to serve the customer — internal and external,” Brous says. “They continue to educate themselves, to become aware of the cutting-edge technology and to work for better systems to serve store customers.”

There are times when the company turns to vendors. Typically the company tries to use suppliers and vendors located near the stores. Brous says that vendors are evaluated based on the ability to service the need, prompt customer service, quality of work and price point.

For vendors who want to work with Publix, the company’s Web site is the way to gain entry. Brous says that vendors can click on the “Publix Purchasing” link and submit their company information or send an inquiry to the consumer relations department, which will route the information to the appropriate party. **PRSM**



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