

Stateville Correctional Center Sustainability

Stateville Correctional Center's multifaceted Go-Green initiative is committed to conserve energy, reduce waste and become a more self-sufficient facility by growing its own produce. The center's sustainability efforts include a variety of innovative options to fulfill this commitment. The facility implemented a traditional recycling program for recyclable items, such as plastic bottles, wooden pallets and vegetable oil, and a more complex program for recyclable items, such as florescent light bulbs and motor oil.

All spent florescent light bulbs are collected to be recycled by an outside vendor. Blue pallets get collected by the CHEP Company, and all other pallets can be collected by an approved vendor when delivering products to the facility. Vegetable oil used in Dietary is collected in tanks and picked up by approved vendors. Used motor oil is collected in a 300-gallon barrel and collected by a local company. The collection of used motor oil occurs once a month. Whenever a vehicle battery gets replaced, the old battery is returned to the store from where it was purchased.

Visiting rooms have designated recycle bins for plastic bottles. Not only is the center committed to reducing waste, it's also becoming more self-sufficient by growing its own produce. Currently, a variety of vegetables are harvested in the garden located near the old Minimum Security Unit (MSU) Building; some of the produce is served in the employee dining room. The center utilizes a 2,500-gallon steel container to collect rainwater to use in the garden. Seeds are planted in the old MSU lawn; consequently, the flowers are transferred to gardens throughout the facility.

The center's steam power plant produces the soft water for Stateville Proper, MSU and Northern Reception and Classification Center. During the water softener recharge, a brine solution is injected, then a slow rinse cycle begins for 20 minutes; the last step is a fast rise. The facility has modified the process to cut costs and be more sustainable. Instead of letting the slow rinse water go into the sewer, the facility runs it into a drum and pumps it back into the brine (salt) tanks to be reused. The slow rinse water contains about 40 percent salt, which the facility now saves because it's reprocessed, thus saving the institution 40 percent in salt costs per year. The result adds up to a reduction of about 97.5 tons of bulk salt and \$14,000 yearly. The process also keeps this amount of salt out of the state's water ways, helping the environment. The initiative has helped in many ways, such as savings associated with water, salt use and reduced trucking. The procedure can be retro-fitted to all of the state's institutions with large water softeners.

The need does not stop here. While there is still more to be done, Stateville Correctional Center is taking steps toward implementing a Recycling Program for whole/shredded sheets of paper and cardboard from general deliveries in the near future.