



Carolyn Sechler is able to enjoy her beautiful garden located right outside her “green” office and home.

Green CPAs

Three CPAs Are Helping Save the World by Patty Gannon

There is no dispute that studies have shown that global warming is real and it is caused primarily by human activities. There is a growing trend to help save the earth and reduce our ecological footprint. Three ASCPA members have taken up the challenge to “Go Green” and have made considerable efforts to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

Carolyn Sechler, CPA President of Sechler CPA PC

What started out as just telecommuting to the office turned into a complete environmental overhaul of home and office for Carolyn Sechler.

“I really think it is important to be a leader in this area, and we are fully committed to this mission in our family,” says Sechler.

Sechler works entirely from her home office. Her husband works for the firm as well and their three dogs “hang” with them all day. Her unattached garage was converted to an office that looks over her very green backyard.

“We have an edible landscape that includes grapefruit, oranges, tangelos, apples, plums, lemons, peaches, grapes, sweet potato and some herbs,” says Sechler. “We continue to plant more trees and make sure what fruit we don’t use can be gleaned by the local food bank.”

“We installed a 21-panel solar power system, which means we are an alternative energy ‘generating station’ for APS,” says Sechler. “It runs all our power for the office and house. When we generate more power than we need, it is



'banked' with APS and can be used as needed. We researched recycled paper, ink and folders that maintain the quality appearance with the recycled benefit. By using this paper and ink we are able to use the paper we shred in our composter as the 'brown' material."

All Sechler's light bulbs are compact fluorescent and she has a "Solatube" (passive solar lighting) in the office that fully lights her office space during the day, so no artificial light is needed.

She even collects spent coffee grounds from the local Starbucks and uses it to feed her red wigglers (worms) so they can produce better soil material for her garden.

By supporting her clients "virtually" she drives less than 10,000 miles a year in her hybrid car. Her other team members also work from home and keep their mileage low.

"We work with local nonprofit agencies to develop green policy in-



Debra Johnson's company, Eco-Edge, is helping to make a difference by selling a combustion catalyst system and other technologies that allow diesel engines to run more efficiently and reduce emissions.

ternally and we belong to the U.S. Green Building Council advocacy committee and finance committee," states Sechler. "This is an ongoing process, and we are proud to be doing our part to make a difference in our environment."

**Debra Johnson, CPA
CEO & president, Eco-Edge**

With a child with asthma, Debra Johnson is particularly concerned about the air we breathe. Her company, Eco-Edge, is helping to make a difference by selling a combustion catalyst system and other technologies that allow diesel engines to run more efficiently and reduce emissions.

Her company is making such a difference, it has won several awards including being the recipient of the ACCA Process Innovation Award, the Governor's Award of Merit for Energy Efficiency and The Valley Forward Award of Merit for Environmental Technologies.

"With Eco-Edge, I am able to make a difference for my children, one of

whom has asthma, by helping to clean up the air," says Johnson. "The exciting part is with our focus on eco-efficiency (saving money while reducing environmental impact), I get to help companies improve their bottom lines. This was my passion when I was in public accounting and an accountant in industry."

"My years in accounting have given me a unique ability to analyze the operational data we get from fuel testing, assess anomalies and put the information into a presentation that enables our customer to make competent, confident decisions," says Johnson. "Our company is also bringing an unprecedented credibility to an industry known for 'snake oil,' and we are doing this using the ethical standards ingrained in me from public accounting. I feel I am in the perfect job!"

As CFO of Total Transit, which operates "green" Discount Cabs around the Valley, Richard Bingaman takes pride in operating a green business and helping the community.



You Can Save the World, Too!

50 Ways to Make a Difference in Your Home and Office

Change your lightbulbs to CFL (compact fluorescent lightbulb) • Carpool • Telecommute • Allow your employees to telecommute • Use recycled paper • Recycle your paper • When it is time to buy a new car, buy an energy efficient car or hybrid vehicle • Keep your tires filled • Replace dirty air filters in your car • Keep your car properly tuned • Turn off your lights • Put your computer on “sleeper” mode • Unplug your charger when not in use • Turn your computer, TV and cable box off at the power strip • Consume organic food • Limit your red meat intake • Plant a tree • Buy bamboo flooring instead of hardwood • Detox your home with earth-friendly cleaning products • Recycle toner and print cartridges • Post employee manuals and other forms online instead of printing • Recycle your old cell phone, pager or PDA • Bring your own dishes to the office, instead of using paper products • Provide filtered water to reduce bottled water waste • Use rental cars that use hybrid vehicles or alternative fuel • Invest in video conferencing and other technology to reduce the need for travel to meetings • Buy furniture, carpeting and paint that are free of volatile organic compounds and won't emit toxic chemicals • Support environmentally responsible companies • Buy energy efficient appliances • Turn off the water when you brush your teeth • Buy “green” computers for office and home • Buy products with the EPA's Energy Star label • Adjust your thermostat up in the summer and down in the winter • Use less hot water • Avoid buying products with lots of packaging • Eat more raw fruits and vegetables • Install a low-flow shower head • Walk or use a bike instead of a car • Take the bus • Clean or replace the filters on your air conditioner • Use a clothesline instead of the dryer • Get a home energy audit • Buy locally grown produce • Lobby your government on environmental issues • Buy used • Compost • Dispose of electronics responsibly • Use the library • Plant shrubs and trees that are native to your area

Richard Bingaman, CPA
CFO & CIO of Total Transit, Inc.
dba Discount Cab

Richard Bingaman takes pride in operating a green business. CFO of Total Transit, his company operates the “green” Discount Cabs around the Valley. A good portion of their cab fleet utilizes alternative fuels. Another division of the company provides transportation brokerage services to organizations in the Valley to assist with placing passengers into public and private transportation in the most cost efficient and environmentally friendly way. They also operate public bus transportation in the Phoenix area and continue to look for additional opportunities to contribute to the environmental safety of the community through the utilization of alternative fuels and mass transit alternatives.

“I have had a great experience with the people in our company because of how much fun we have focusing on providing quality transportation to the community,” said Bingaman. “At the same time, our people are very aware of how our presence in the community affects public safety and our environment.”

With the number of taxi cabs, sedans and vans Total Transit has on the road (close to 500 vehicles), seeking fuel alternatives for these vehicles has been a primary objective for the company.

“Through the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) and hybrid fuel technology in our fleets, we have attempted to do what we can to reduce the detrimental affects our vehicles may have on the environment in which we live and breathe every day,” says Bingaman.

“I am extremely proud of the great public service we provide to the Phoenix Metropolitan and Tucson communities. I look forward to participating in our efforts to make our Valley of the Sun a much safer and healthier place to work and live.” **AZ CPA**

Patty Gannon is director of publications for the Arizona Society of CPAs.