

A Good Neighbor is a Green Neighbor

With more than 17,000 State Farm agents in the U.S. and Canada, there's no shortage of green neighbors. Many agents started efforts to be green with steps as simple as recycling everyday trash — keeping tons of garbage out of landfills — and are moving on to bigger efforts.

Receiving junk mail faxes daily gave Tim Mee, an agent from Plainview, New York, an idea. “I thought there had to be a better way to deal with these faxes and found a program called MyFax (www.myfax.com). Now, MyFax converts all faxes

coming to my office into an electronic format and sends them to me as e-mail,” said Mee. “I can save those as electronic files on my computer. Then, I can print out just a single page if I need it, rather than the entire document. It costs \$20 a month to use this service, but I'm saving about \$150 a month in paper and toner. Any paper that doesn't have confidential information on it, I use again as scratch paper or in the printer.”

State Farm agent William Kohl of Surprise, Arizona, encourages his team to car pool. “I give gift certificates to team members who ride to

work together twice a week or more. My wife and I traded in our vehicles for hybrid cars, and I ride my bicycle to the office on Saturdays, weather permitting,” explained Kohl. “I hired a shredding company to shred and recycle all paper with customer information. This keeps the information confidential and ensures it will be recycled properly.”

Shirley Light uses solar panels to provide electricity for her office.

Photos courtesy of Juliana Thoennes, State Farm.





“This car is tiny, but it has everything I need — heater, directional signals, seatbelts and a trunk!” says State Farm Agent Shirley Light. “It goes 30 miles per hour for about 40 miles on each charge, and it costs only a penny per mile to drive.”

Shirley Light, an agent in Winslow, Arizona, has reduced electric energy use in her office. “I installed energy-efficient, compact fluorescent lighting in the main work areas and use a programmable thermostat to run the heating and cooling system,” said Light. “These steps are saving energy and money. I had a solar panel installed on the roof of my office, and a recent electric bill was more than \$200 less than it was at the same time last year. The panel was expensive, but through rebates and tax credits, I should see a return on that investment within the next six years.

“I had an energy audit done on the office to see what else we can do to save energy.” Light plans to purchase a wind generator and install natural lighting features as her next

green steps.

Reduce, reuse and recycle are everyday activities for agent Chuck Watkins of Feasterville, Pennsylvania. “We’ve reduced by using compact fluorescent light bulbs, driving our cars 60 miles per hour or less on the highway, turning down the thermostat, and installing an on-demand, tankless water heater,” said Watkins. “We reuse zip lock bags, plastic take-out containers and paper or plastic bags. We recycle newspapers, magazines, boxes, cans, glass and plastic. The document shredding company we use sells the shredded material to a paper company to be recycled.

“And, we try to involve our children — because the earth was not given to us by our parents — it has been loaned to us by our children.” ■

Measuring Green

State Farm has a long a history of being environmentally responsible. More than 67,000 employees across the U.S. and Canada combine with the Agency Force to deliver some remarkable accomplishments, including:

- A customer electronic billing and payment option that eliminates more than 3 million pieces of mail per year.
- The third-largest non-governmental, eco-friendly fleet in the nation.
- A 26-year-old company-wide recycling program that includes paper, plastic, aluminum, glass, carpet, electronics, light bulbs, batteries, and more. Last year, more than 972 tons of material was kept out of landfills from its corporate headquarters alone.
- Inaugural membership in the Business Roundtable’s Climate RESOLVE initiative, a voluntary program to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. State Farm has reduced its emissions by more than 38% since 2002.
- A composite Energy Star rating of 82, indicating that State Farm buildings, on average, are more energy efficient than 82 percent of comparable buildings. That’s up from 49 in 1999.
- Van pool programs in offices across the U.S. and Canada with more than 1,250 riders, and a shuttle service that moves 400,000 employees each year among corporate buildings, eliminating that number of individual car trips.
- More than 1 million square feet of carpet kept from landfills by recycling, downcycling, or reusing carpet that comes out of its facilities.
- More than 147,000 pieces of out-of-date electronic equipment sent to an asset recovery vendor for reuse or recycling in 2007.