

Eco Guide a Resource for Yampa Valley Sustainability

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In a world where living sustainably is on the rise, where can you access the most up-to-date “eco” tips and practical information? You’ve already changed your light bulbs, but what else can you do? When will you find the time to not only research and identify the changes, but also make them? Does the information you find apply to you and your home or business?

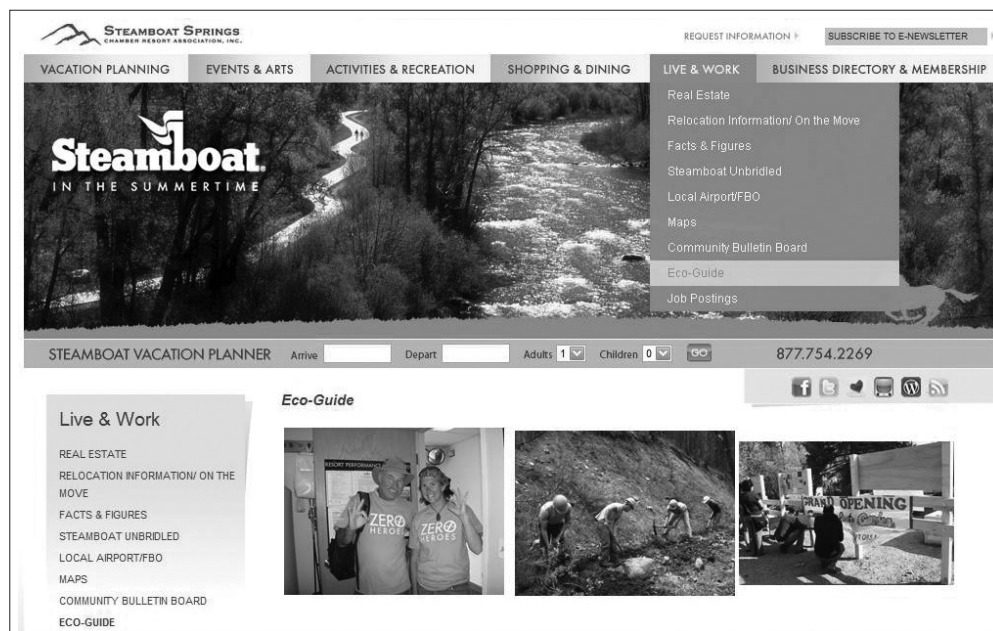
Fortunately, the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association has teamed up with the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council to create an all-encompassing eco guide. The eco guide is an online resource outlining sustainability-related organizations, services, retailers and more in Routt County by category. It is a one-stop shop to meet your sustainability needs and learn about communitywide sustainability initiatives.

History of the Eco Guide

Many towns across the country are providing eco guides for their residents and visitors. The Steamboat Springs community saw a need for an eco guide when taking note of the abundance of organizations and businesses throughout the Yampa Valley that are focused on sustainability and preserving the environment. It is a great opportunity to spread the word about all of the exciting progress happening in this community. It is easy to find via the Chamber website at www.steamboat-chamber.com/ecoguide and under the Live & Work tab. The site also is user-friendly for consumers to search. It is meant to be an all-encompassing tool for everyone to use so efforts are not duplicated. Overall, the eco guide is an important resource that will help visitors and residents make knowledgeable decisions in the Yampa Valley community.

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is another driving factor for the formation of the eco



The eco guide is easy to find and navigate on the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association's website at www.steamboat-chamber.com/ecoguide.

guide. Consumers are making travel decisions based not only on the destination and price, but also the bigger picture. Regardless of economic conditions, sustainable tourism is gaining popularity. Many travelers want to know that the community and destination they are visiting are making a conscious effort in preserving the planet.

A popular page in The Official Steamboat Springs Visitors' Guide outlines a sustainable travel tips section for simple ways to reduce the carbon footprint of travel. The Chamber visitor center implemented a rack card on these tips to help visitors who are looking for green travel options while visiting Steamboat Springs. Sustainable Business Program participants rack cards also are recognized with a sustainable sticker in the visitor center racks. These options all cater to the green traveler.

How Steamboat Compares

Mountain towns especially seem to attract people who genuinely care about the environment and show diligence in preserving it. Steamboat Springs is a strong competitor in the

mountain travel industry and the abundance of local sustainability efforts positively enhances the Steamboat Springs brand in the marketplace.

“Steamboat Springs has tremendous momentum on a wide range of environmental issues, such as green building, environmental education, climate change, land preservation, zero waste and many more,” said Anne Mudgett, Yampa Valley Sustainability Council coordinator. These environmental issues are top priorities for the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council. Being proactive in addressing these issues, while cultivating community awareness and partnership is important for the future of this region. “The eco guide provides increased exposure with residents and visitors for all the environmentally focused special events going on in the community, as well as the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council's diverse programs and partners linked from the YVSC website,” Mudgett said.

Businesses Take Advantage

The eco guide helps residents and visitors find businesses that have made sustainability an important value.

Sustainable Travel Tips

Whether you are looking for eco-friendly activities, lodging, restaurants, local programs or guest services, let this simple list assist you.

■ **Ride the free bus:** De-stress your life and leave the car at home while riding Steamboat Springs Transit.

■ **Support sustainable businesses:** Currently 69 businesses strong, the Sustainable Business Program is one of the most accredited programs of its kind in Colorado focusing on the Triple Bottom Line.

■ **League of American Bicyclists:** Routt County offers a variety of recreational opportunities for bicyclists of all levels and is winner of the Silver Bicycle Friendly Award.

■ **Yampa Valley Sustainability Council's Zero Waste Initiative:** This group is dedicated to reducing waste and spreading awareness about recycling, reusing materials and composting at many Steamboat Springs events and the ski area.

■ **Shop for local products:** Check out the farmers market every Saturday for local vendors and visit the Northwest Colorado Products website at www.nwcproducts.org.

■ **Buy Local campaign:** Launched by the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, the Buy Local campaign hopes to bring attention to the importance of supporting local commerce. Visit www.steamboat-chamber.com/buylocal.

While the business and organization is listed directly on the site, the consumer can hyperlink to that listing's website to enhance their search. It also raises awareness of sustainable products, programs and services that even residents might not know about. “We have some really forward-thinking green businesses right here in our own backyard,” Mudgett said.

The eco guide also is a great place to learn about the Sustainable Business Program, Cents for Steamboat program, Colorado Carbon Fund and Zero Waste Initiative. The guide includes a link to the sustainability calendar on www.yvsc.org.

Time is of the essence when searching for sustainable information. The eco guide continually will be the comprehensive resource consumers are looking for. It is a living, changing document with a variety of useful tools. E-mail meagan@steamboat-chamber.com for eco guide listings and to learn more about the Sustainable Business Program.



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- SPRINGS CENTENNIAL HALL
- MOUNTAIN VALLEY BANK
- STEAMBOAT SPRINGS CHAMBER RESORT ASSOC.

NOT YET CERTIFIED

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