

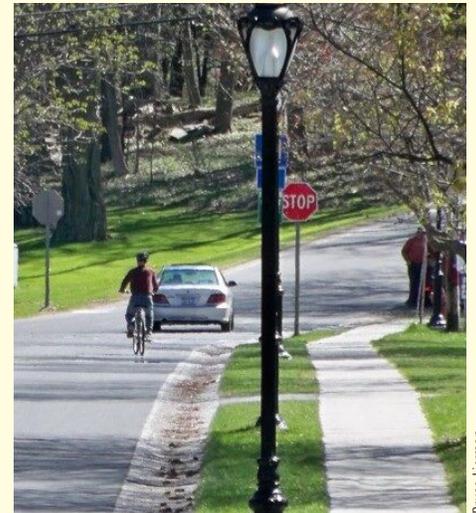
Promoting Bicycling Safety to Get More Bikes on the Road

Bruce Lierman – Bike Safety Instructor, North Bennington

Riding his bicycle for local commuting and errands is one of the things that Bruce Lierman likes best. As a bicycle advocate and safety instructor, Bruce aims to share his knowledge and interest in using bicycles as an alternative transportation mode with others. He recently started The Cycling Academy to teach bicycle safety in southern Vermont.

Certified by the League of American Bicyclists as a League Cycling Instructor, Bruce leads a variety of cycling courses, from hour-long slide presentations to nine-hour courses that include bike safety, maintenance and on-road practice. According to Bruce, these cycling courses “help people to see bicycling as a skill that needs to be developed.” He believes that teaching cyclists how to care for themselves on the road is one of the most important messages that he can get across. He also runs a Motorist Awareness Program primarily with drivers’ education classes. Here the aim is to help drivers know what they can expect from cyclists so that motorists and bicyclists can better share the road.

Bruce focuses on bike safety and the ways in which motorists and cyclists can share the road. He notes, “One of the most significant barriers to biking is simply that people are afraid to do it. Fear of car-bike crashes is often the reason given for not riding bikes, but it’s primarily the people who don’t ride who see bicycling as dangerous.” By providing people with more knowledge about bicycling, Bruce hopes that bikes will become a more common mode of travel on Vermont roadways.



Bruce Lierman

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A Hand in a Greener Community

Hand Motors Auto Dealership – Energy and Recycling Initiatives, Manchester

Our children are often motivating factors in our lives, and that’s certainly the case for Jim Hand from Hand Motors in Manchester. As Jim will tell you, “It all started with my oldest son who got me interested in alternative fuels,” and Jim has since used that interest to make some changes both in his business and in his community.

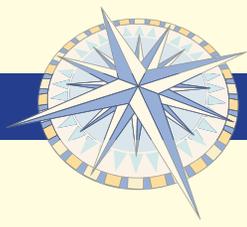
The dealership has changed many of its own practices in an effort to save energy and resources in its buildings. Some of those projects were of the large-scale variety, like re-doing all of the lighting, re-insulating their buildings and installing solar hot water heaters. Many of the new practices, however, are seemingly minor changes that have had a big impact. For instance, Jim researched Manchester’s water, and found it to be as safe to drink as the bottled water that they used to buy. The company then eliminated their water coolers and, by doing so, are saving \$1,400 each year. They’ve also instituted single stream recycling at every workstation, which has reduced their volume of garbage by 40%. Additionally, the dealership has posted



Image provided by Hand Automotive

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“No Idling” signs outside of their buildings to cut down on unnecessary gas emissions, and their thermostats are programmed so that at night the buildings are kept at 55 degrees.

The dealership’s environmental practices extend beyond the company’s own walls. Hand Motors also serves as a community recycling point for plastics, batteries, mercury thermostats, metal, aluminum, cardboard, newsprint, office paper, cell phones and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Jim and his son also led a community compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) campaign encouraging community members to trade in their incandescent light bulbs for CFL’s. In the town of Manchester, 43,000 light bulbs were switched out in less than six months. Just goes to show, everyone can make a difference — many Hands make light work!

“It all started with my oldest son who got me interested in alternative fuels.”

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Help in Reducing Home Energy Use

Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services – Food and Fuel Fund, Bennington

Faith organizations regularly provide counseling to those in need. The fact that Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services (GBICS) offers suggestions for ways in which people can reduce their home energy consumption is something that sets them apart.

The Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services established its Food and Fuel Fund in 1973 in the wake of the first international oil embargo. Local clergy banded together to provide support for people who found rising gas and home heating fuel prices difficult to afford. GBICS began to raise money and give it back to people in the local community to help them pay for housing and food costs. Today, the Food and Fuel Fund also counsels people on budgeting, nutrition and ways to reduce home energy costs. While the major focus of the fund is to help people to better afford their lives, sustainability is always in the background. In fact, one of the values in the GBICS mission statement reads, “We must all live sustainably in a way that provides for the needs of today’s people while at the same time assuring that future generations have all that they need to lead fulfilling lives.”

Sue Andrews, Executive Director of GBICS, says, “We see a lot of behaviors that are counter to home budgets and the environment.” This includes things like smoking, having expensive cable television bills and living in homes that are not heated efficiently. When trying to support people in making tough lifestyle changes, Sue says, “The neat thing is that it’s really different working with faith communities in one major way — instead of focusing on the problem, we focus on the strengths. This is a strength-based way of looking at people.” And it seems that by focusing on individual’s strengths, GBICS helps to make whole communities stronger, too.



Michael Clough

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