

CASBA Sustainable Business Exchange

Over fifty members of Colorado's Sustainable Business Associations gathered April 30, 2009 to network and participate in an interactive discussion. The sponsors for the event were the *University of Colorado Denver Business School - Managing for Sustainability Program* and *INVESCO Field at Mile High*.

Barbara Stoker, a Consultant on Intelligent Risk-Taking, facilitated the dialogue on *Can you Afford NOT to be Green During a Recession?* Thought-provoking responses were provided by the audience and representatives from sponsoring organizations: **Blair Gifford** and **Elizabeth Cooperman**, UCD Business School - Managing for Sustainability Program, and **Matt Shine**, Parking and Site Manager, INVESCO Field at Mile High.

Insights pointed toward the lesson that, in general, sustainability efforts are being received positively and we should be thinking bigger. Sustainability benefits cited included more passion for course work, greater fan satisfaction, and positive local economic development. One participant, Jeff Hohensee of Natural Capitalism Solutions summed up the discussion by stating, "Taking actions that also benefit climate protection are also profitable."

[Here are participants' comments.](#)

Tell us about a risk that you wish you would have taken.

INVESCO Field: Waterfree urinals - this change would have resulted in a large decrease in water usage throughout the stadium. The risk was with the concern over maintenance issues that could arise with this specific change.

UCD: More sustainability courses

Other professors are not understanding sustainability. Each school department has its own language and definition of sustainability. The business school staff are laggards but are watching.

The reward is lots of passion around the subject.

What risk did you take and was it successful?

UCD: Boulder Community hospital started a recycling program and is now saving \$500k per year. UCD Boulder Credit Union - handed out light bulbs to customers. This case study will be included in a report to CORE.

INVESCO Field: Started recycling in 2007 and are saving \$20k per year after investing upwards of \$100k into the stadium's recycling program. Through better purchasing policies we have been able to reduce our waste stream from approx. 700 tons of trash last year to 550 tons this year. Fans are cooperating, and in fact were requesting that INVESCO Field start recycling. The stadium's initial goals were more short term, but now with a greater understanding of the impact recycling can make we have been able to make vast improvements in the program and saw an increase in our diversion rate from 7% in 2007 to 24% in 2008. We discovered following the first year of recycling that Cardboard is the biggest waste stream for the stadium and purchased a cardboard baler prior to the start of this last season. Each game created 11 bales of cardboard (700lbs each) saving approx. \$250 per game by baling the cardboard separately rather than putting into our single stream. These savings are realized through reducing the number of hauls per game. INVESCO Field is now part of a NFL Green Working Group to discuss and improve the way in which teams are implementing and operating green programs. INVESCO Field is just starting to advertise its green efforts using players and fans.

How do you convince a company to be green if they're not acting socially responsibly?

Audience anecdote: A structure was built to burn chemical weapons. It had a construction flaw that would allow dangerous emissions. An individual employee told the general so it could be fixed and was personally at risk for blowing the whistle.

Audience anecdote: City manager in Iowa realized that all the energy dollars were leaving the city. Instead he promoted investments in conservation. The money was re-circulated in the community 7 times and was a good economic development strategy.

If you had all the money you needed, what sustainability practices would you do?

INVESCO Field: The next big step we have is to implement a full stadium composting program. We implemented a back-of-house program last season for kitchen scraps which has been successful but we are not yet at the stage that we could implement a composting program throughout the stadium. There are concerns with the storing of compostable cups and other items as well as the higher cost of these items that at this time doesn't make it financially viable.

Jeff Honessee, Natural Capitalism Solutions – *Climate protection is profitable*. See case studies.