

## **Sustainable Pittsburgh Partners with Town Center Associates to Establish a Sustainable Business Designation Program**

August 6, 2010

Sustainable Pittsburgh is partnering with Town Center Associates to offer a *Sustainable Business* designation program. The *Sustainable Business* designation recognizes businesses in southwestern Pennsylvania business districts for implementing actions that are simultaneously good for their bottom line, the environment, and social fabric of their communities. The criteria used to substantiate a sustainable business are based largely upon the Sustainable Community Essentials developed at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Smart Growth Conference in 2009 (<http://www.sustainablecommunityessentials.org>). Businesses that incorporate sustainable practices into their operations are demonstrating their intentions to improve their performance and stand out as valuable contributors to the communities' downtown business districts. The *Sustainable Business* designation also helps consumers identify and choose businesses who are committed to sustainability and who view sustainability as core to their mission and business model. A list of resources has been assembled to help businesses meet the established criteria for receiving the designation. Those resources can be found at (<http://www.downtownfirst.net/sustainable-businesses>).

Qualifying businesses can receive a *Certified Local Independent Business* designation in addition to designation as a local, independent business in the Downtown First program's Downtown First online directory. The directory has been created to help consumers identify businesses with strong local connections. Now that the criteria for the *Sustainable Business* designation have been created, consumers will also be able to search Downtown First for businesses that implement sustainable business practices.

The Downtown First program and directory were developed by Town Center Associates in order to promote downtown business districts and local, independent businesses in the Pittsburgh region. Currently 22 business districts are participating in the Downtown First program. The Downtown First website (<http://www.downtownfirst.net>) provides a searchable directory of every business in the participating downtown business districts. The Downtown First program is the first of its kind in the Pittsburgh region, and hopes to launch a movement to encourage consumers to support our community business districts and local, independent businesses.

The new Sustainable Business designation program is being promoted through visits and events in participating business districts. The program is being launched in the eight communities currently participating in the Allegheny Together Program of Allegheny County Economic Development.

Next time you're looking for sustainable businesses, a unique local business, some new clothes or just a haircut, think Downtown First! <http://www.downtownfirst.net>.

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