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## Cranberry showcases its sustainability Environmental efforts touted

By Jared Stonesifer  
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CRANBERRY TWP — A group of community planners and managers learned firsthand Thursday the steps Cranberry officials are taking to make their community more environmentally sustainable and friendly. The two dozen leaders listened to presentations from Cranberry planners and other officials at the Cranberry Highlands Golf Course. The group later took a tour around Cranberry, stopping to inspect environmentally friendly practices at the township's waste water treatment plant, golf course and neighborhoods.

The seminar focused on the Cranberry Plan, the township's 25-year road map for community planning through the lens of sustainable development.

Sustainability focuses on eco-friendly developmental practices designed to cut back on energy consumption while leaving as little of a carbon footprint as possible. According to the Cranberry Plan, sustainable development "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The event was the first held by the Sustainable Development Academy, a partnership between the Local Government Academy and Sustainable Pittsburgh.

John Trant, the township's chief strategic planning officer, told the group officials expect Cranberry will be built to capacity within 25 years, which is the life of the plan.

That is why it's important township officials built sustainability practices into the plan, a move Trant said will raise property values and spur economic development.

"The plan really creates a long-term vision based on community input," Trant said, referring to a 2007 survey sent to residents about the environment, after which the township supervisors adopted a set of "sustainability principles" to guide the planning process.

Trant also told the group about Cranberry's partnership with Sustainable Pittsburgh, which involved that group's employees climbing through air ducts in the township's municipal center and inspecting electrical output at the waste water treatment plant.

He said those inspections already have led to improved sustainability practices and have helped cut down the township's utility bills. He said Cranberry is saving tens of thousands of dollars per year after installing waterless urinals in the municipal center, a move that also saves thousands of gallons of water per year.

Court Gould, Sustainable Pittsburgh executive director, said it is practices such as these that create a win-win situation for municipalities and the environment. Implementing sustainable practices, he said, is a sort of "code of ethics" when it comes to healthy, eco-friendly expansion and development.

"Sustainability is a promise to current and future generations to do unto others what you would want done unto you," he said.

Gould praised Cranberry officials for implementing "forward-thinking" goals and principles into the Cranberry Plan, especially when sustainability isn't widely practiced by fast-growing municipalities such as Cranberry.

Eric Kaunert, a community planner with the township, talked about the steps he's taking to insure a clean and green future for Cranberry residents. He said officials are first focusing on internal improvements, such as cutting carbon emissions from the township's work vehicles and cutting energy consumption in buildings.

He also said officials are focusing on external improvements such as changing all the township's traffic lights to energy-efficient LED bulbs.

Lorin Meeder, the environmental programs coordinator for Cranberry, praised residents for their efforts in engaging in environmentally friendly and sustainable practices, as shown by the fact Cranberry has a 30 percent higher rate of recycling than any other municipality in southern Butler County.

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