



**SUSTAINABLE PITTSBURGH**



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**Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant program launched**

(Pittsburgh, PA – July 16, 2015) The Pittsburgh region’s restaurant industry now has another seat at the table for advancing quality of life and competitiveness. Building on the emerging trend of sustainability in the restaurant industry (valuing people and planet in addition to profits), the local nonprofit Sustainable Pittsburgh is pleased to announce the launch of the Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant program, a sustainability performance program providing recognition for leading restaurants in southwestern PA.

“Going green and being more sustainable is a moral obligation that we have to our guests, our children and our environment,” said Stephen Musciano, General Manager Sports and Entertainment for Aramark at PNC Park and an early proponent of the program. “Our guests are becoming much more aware of the need to go green. This is not a fad, but becoming a way of life—a better way to live!”

Obtaining Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant designation involves a restaurant’s completion of an online, self-assessment that evaluates its current state of operations. Topics covered include water, waste, energy, food sourcing, people, community engagement, and nutrition. Restaurants are recognized by the following “plates” to indicate level of achieved designation: Starter, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

The Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant website features a restaurant finder for diners who may wish to patronize establishments that demonstrate sustainability performance. Diners will be able to search restaurants by map, level of designation, alphabetical order, and by county/neighborhood. Profiles of Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurants will also be accessed through the website, providing diners the ability to view a designated establishment's commitment to sustainability practices. In turn, restaurants are provided a new venue to showcase their positive actions.

All restaurants operating in southwestern Pennsylvania are eligible to participate. By implementing sustainable policies and practices, a restaurant can save money, attract more guests, stand out as a leader, gain positive public recognition, and be part of a vibrant community of restaurants serving up sustainability in the Pittsburgh region.

“Sustainable Pittsburgh works to identify leverage points for positive change,” said Court Gould, Executive Director of Sustainable Pittsburgh. “With the culture and business of food coming on strong here, this is just the sort of pivotal moment to be seized. By inviting the foodie movement to advance the policies and practices of sustainable

development, the Pittsburgh region will be the emergent leader for a restaurant industry whose growing prosperity is based on attentiveness to mutual wins for people, business, and the environment.”

The Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant program distinguishes itself from other restaurant sustainability programs by focusing not only on environmentally sustainable actions, but social actions as well. For example, the assessment features such socially-oriented actions as helping people gain access to food, raising employee working standards, and community involvement. Some environmental actions of the assessment include reducing food waste, recycling, and energy efficient lighting.

Rebecca Bykoski, Program Manager at Sustainable Pittsburgh, stated, “The Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant designation provides a flexible way for restaurants to gain positive public recognition for their achievements while simultaneously helping owners and managers determine next steps for continual improvement. Restaurants incorporating sustainability employ it as a means to attract more customers, save money, conserve resources, and avoid costs while also supporting the local community. With more and more restaurants embracing sustainability as their strategy for success, the industry here in Pittsburgh has the potential to distinguish itself as a national forerunner in this movement.”

The Pittsburgh region’s booming restaurant industry is well-positioned to embrace and benefit from the Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant designation. The region is increasingly recognized as both a "foodie" town and a model for sustainable development. The number of restaurants is rapidly increasing and Pittsburgh recently has been named (twice) one of the top ten cities for foodies in the United States!

According to the National Restaurant Association, locally sourced produce and meats, environmental sustainability, and food waste reduction are among the “Top 10 Food Trends” of 2015 and gaining further momentum. Preferences also indicate that 78% of consumers are likely to choose a restaurant based on its sustainable values.

The restaurant industry is a big player in the nation’s economy. Getting food from farm to fork accounts for 10% of the United States’ energy budget, uses 50% of U.S. land, and consumes 80% of the freshwater in the U.S. All the while 40% of the food in the U.S. today goes uneaten. As the restaurant industry is the second largest private-sector employer in the United States and an engine of economic growth, the consideration of its environmental, economic, and social impacts of operations is crucial. The Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant program helps restaurants embrace these trends and build their businesses by incorporating sustainable principles into their existing processes.

More information, including the designation assessment criteria, is available at [sustainablepghrestaurants.org](http://sustainablepghrestaurants.org). Interested restaurants should contact Rebecca Bykoski at [dine@sustainablepittsburgh.org](mailto:dine@sustainablepittsburgh.org). Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant is on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/dine\\_sustainpgh](http://www.twitter.com/dine_sustainpgh)) and on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/sustainablepghrestaurants](http://www.facebook.com/sustainablepghrestaurants)). This designation program was developed by Sustainable Pittsburgh with the insights and expert guidance of the members of the Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant advisory committee. The development of this program was made possible through grant support from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation.

*A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, **Sustainable Pittsburgh** (SP) affects decision-making for the Pittsburgh region to integrate economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental quality bringing sustainable solutions for communities and businesses.*

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