



Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Pollution Prevention Champion

Silver Star Communications

Driggs, Idaho

2010

Environmental Commitment

Silver Star Communications in Driggs provides communications and broadband services, including local telephone, long distance, Internet, wireless mobile phones, and television services. Company officials believe that they can't be profitable if they are not also strong in their social investment through community involvement, service and support and committed to reducing their impact on the local environment. They believe it is up to businesses to lead the way in preventing pollution and preserving our natural resources. For these reasons, Silver Star Communications completed the Yellowstone Business Partnership's Leadership in Sustainability Program and started several projects to prevent pollution.

Pollution Prevention Success

Silver Star Communications has successfully prevented pollution in four key areas: minimizing waste, implementing environmentally preferable purchasing, improving energy efficiency, and using alternative transportation.

Waste Minimization

Silver Star Communications conducts quarterly waste audits to track the amount of waste generated and to identify opportunities for reduction. Since the beginning of its sustainability program in 2008, the company has reduced its overall landfill waste in Idaho from two dumpsters a week, which is about 3.5 cubic yards of waste, to an average of one dumpster a week at 1.29 cubic yards. This has been accomplished by replacing disposable paper and plastic kitchen products with reusable kitchenware; replacing all paper towel holders that dispense individual, loose paper towels in the bathrooms with hard roll holders that dispense a pre-measured length of paper towel; and beginning a paper reduction awareness campaign. The awareness campaign included replacing magazine and catalog subscriptions with digital versions where possible, utilizing duplex printing, and printing on the clean side of used paper when duplex printing is not an option. Based on the amount of purchased copy paper for the first 6 months in 2010, the company expects to have reduced its copy paper use from 2009 by 73%, which is equal to 127 reams.

Additionally, Silver Star Communications began a company-wide recycling program, recycling over 8,000 pounds of material thus far.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Silver Star Communications has written and implemented a preferred purchasing policy outlining a mandate to use environmentally friendly products with the least shipping distance whenever possible and reasonable. To date, the company has replaced 100% virgin copy paper with 50% post-consumer recycled paper, replaced tri-fold 100% virgin paper towels with 40% post-consumer waste hard roll towels, purchased refurbished ink toners, replaced toxic chemical cleaners with environmentally-friendly alternatives, and replaced 100% virgin toilet tissue with 60% post-consumer waste tissue. In the future, Silver Star Communications hopes to investigate alternatives for floor polish, packing material, batteries, solvents, and other office supplies.

Energy Efficiency

Silver Star Communications has replaced all of its T12 fluorescent lighting with more energy-efficient equivalent T8 bulbs, estimated to reduce power consumption up to 40%¹. According to ENERGY STAR, lighting can account for 20% to 50% of electricity consumption, depending on the type of business operated. This means that significant cost savings can be achieved with energy-efficiency improvements, and due to continually improving equipment, lighting usually provides the highest return-on-investment of major upgrades. Silver Star Communications has also installed small windows in 18 garage doors in its warehouse, allowing for natural lighting. With the savings on electricity, the company expects to recoup installation costs within an estimated 3.92 years.

Alternative Transportation

As a part of doing business, Silver Star Communications employees drive extensively between corporate offices in Idaho and Wyoming, approximately 150 miles roundtrip. To reduce travel, the company has installed a video conference system and encouraged employees to carpool between both corporate locations. Estimated minimum annual savings from just its Idaho employees using alternative transportation include the equivalent of 24,000 vehicle miles traveled, 22,920 pounds of pollution, and 64.5 metric tons of carbon dioxide. Additionally, the company uses a personal incentive program to encourage employees to carpool to and from work, entering employees into a prize drawing each time they carpool.

For More Information

For more information about Silver Star Communications, visit its Web site at www.silverstar.com/Community/Sustainability.aspx.

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