



# Sustainable Delaware NEWSLETTER

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## Forward on Climate Rally

In November, several SDO supporters attended Bill McKibben's "Do The Math Tour" at the Capitol Theater. McKibben explained that to grasp the seriousness of the climate crisis, one needs only do a little math, explaining that there are three numbers we shouldn't forget. The first is **2 degrees**— the number almost every government in the world has agreed that any warming above (2°C or 3.6°F) would be unsafe. The second is **565 gigatons** — Scientists estimate that humans can pour roughly 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and still have some reasonable hope of staying below two degrees. The third number, **2,795**

**gigatons**, the amount of carbon already contained in the proven coal and oil and gas reserves of the fossil-fuel companies, is the amount of fossil fuels that we're currently planning to burn. Note that this number is higher than 565, FIVE times higher. McKibben's message, find a way to slow them down.

When McKibben asked who would be going to DC in February for the largest climate

rally ever, I found myself standing. February 16<sup>th</sup>, we boarded the bus along with students from OWU, fellow SDO supporters and a variety of local activists to join McKibben, 350.org and the Sierra Club for the **Forward on Climate Rally**. After an all night ride we found ourselves in DC early Sunday morning, joining nearly 50,000 others demonstrating

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This pipeline would carry



## Baumholder and Renewable Energy

In October 2012, five members of the city council plus the city manager paid a week-long visit to Delaware's German sister city, Baumholder. This sister city relationship started in the summer of 2011 when Baumholder's mayor and a three of

their council members visited Delaware. Both cities are excited about this new partnership, and there are plans in the works to expand the relationship beyond the municipal governments to include a student exchange and possibly other programs.

Situated in the southwestern German state of Rheinland-Pfalz, Baumholder is the seat of the *verbandsgemeinde*, a unit of government comparable to our county. The *verbandsgemeinde* is home to about 12,000 Germans and a

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## Forward on Climate Rally (cont'd)



Chuck, Julie and Sheila representing Delaware at the rally in DC.

*Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realize we cannot eat money - Cree Indian Proverb*



at the Washington Monument to tell President Obama that right now is the time to move **forward on climate**. Specifically, we came to ask the President NOT to approve the Keystone XL pipeline.

This pipeline would carry what scientists describe as some of the most polluted and carbon-intensive fuels in the world from the tar sand under Canada's Boreal forest 2,000 miles to the Gulf of Mexico to be refined and exported. Tar sands oil is not only difficult, costly and energy intensive to produce but also dirtier and more corrosive than conventional oil. Leaks and spills threaten rivers, aquifers and communities. Private landowners in

Texas are being forced to cede land through their private farms and ranches for this private corporation's venture. The urgency of this demonstration is illustrated by NASA scientist James Hansen, who has said that approving this pipeline will be like lighting a fuse to the biggest carbon bomb on the planet - a tragic decision that will spell "game over" in our efforts to halt the warming of the planet.

We feel it is important to address the issue at the national level and also here in Ohio where we are challenged with a rush to extract oil from shale deposits using hydraulic "fracking." This technology not only contributes to the carbon

problem but is being rushed by state officials without waiting for research by the EPA and, according to many, without adequate capacity to regulate the oil and gas industry.

The President pledged in his State of the Union address to take action on climate change, "for the sake of our children and our grandchildren." We showed up to say yes to moving forward on climate change action.

Bill McKibben said that when people tell him this venture is a David and Goliath story he reminds them that it was, after all, David who prevailed.

## Shade Tree Commission and Arbor Day

There are over 3,400 communities that are part of the Tree City USA program, sponsored by the USDA's Forest Service. About 135 million people live in a Tree City USA. The four standards to qualify for Tree City USA status are: a local city ordinance, the establishment of a tree board or commission, an annual budget of no less than \$2 per resident, and an annual Arbor Day proclamation and observance.

The City of Delaware has been a member of Tree

City USA since 1977. In recognition of the fact that trees provide numerous (measurable) benefits to a community, ordinance 77-2 created a Shade Tree Commission (STC) as an advisory board to City Council. The 9-member commission is in charge of regulating the selection, planting, maintenance, protection, and replacement of all trees and shrubs on city-owned property, especially in the tree lawns. A 2012 inventory of Delaware's urban forest identified at least 12,464 existing

public street trees, a figure that does not include public parks and schools. The estimated value is approximately \$17 million.

Delaware's green infrastructure has faced many challenges over the decades. Finding the right balance between public street trees and overhead power lines owned by AEP, for example, has occupied the current members of STC since 2010. A severe blow was the recent arrival of the Emerald Ash Borer that

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## Baumholder (cont'd)



**Solar panels on a building at the US Army garrison in Baumholder**

US Army garrison. The scenery there is beautiful and reminiscent of Ohio's Hocking Hills region.

German energy policy was among the things Delaware's delegation learned about while on the trip. The German government has placed a high priority on renewable energy, with renewables amounting for just over 20% of all production in 2011. Like in the United States, government subsidies drive the development of renewable energy infrastructure; however, the German subsidy system is different from the American system, and far more comprehensive.

The German federal government guarantees producers of renewable energy a fixed purchase price for the electricity they generate for a period of time, typically 15-20 years. This means that if a homeowner wants to install solar panels on his rooftop, he can secure financing from a bank because the solar panels are guaranteed to pay for themselves regardless of the market price of electricity. Similarly, an investor can safely invest in a wind power enterprise without the risk that a natural gas discovery will drive down electricity prices and render the wind farm unprofitable.

These policies have led to a visible change in the landscape of the German countryside. Dotted the hillsides near Baumholder are about two dozen windmills. By my estimation, roughly one house out of every five has a rooftop solar panel array. Germany's renewable energy policies seem to be resulting in a substantial development of renewable energy production.

However, the German renewable energy approach is not without its

shortcomings. A major problem is that Germany's transmission infrastructure is not as robust as in the United States. The German grid lacks the capacity to send electricity generated in the high-wind region by the North Sea to the high-demand industrial south, meaning German renewable energy producers in the north must often sell energy to neighboring countries, only to have consumers elsewhere in Germany purchase renewable energy from neighbors in the south. The transmission infrastructure problem has become a national political issue, with some parties advocating nationalization of the transmission lines.

In any event, Baumholder is a picturesque town populated by friendly, welcoming people. There is much to see besides the solar panels and windmills, so I encourage anyone with an interest in our sister city to consider making the trip.



**Windmills on the outskirts of Baumholder**

## Shade Tree Commission (cont'd)

wiped out Delaware's entire ash tree population. The city has yet to recover from the sudden loss of about 1,500 trees. As a result, STC has concluded that more tree diversity is needed so that the damage of future invasive insects (there are several on the horizon) can be minimized.

One of the happier tasks of STC is

the annual celebration of Arbor Day, which this year's falls on Friday, April 26th. In cooperation with local elementary schools, both public and private, a poster contest is held; this year's theme is the magic of trees. All fourth graders receive a free pine tree seedling. On Arbor Day itself, there will be a ceremonial tree planting in Delaware's Bicentennial Park at 4 pm, and beautifica-

tion awards are handed out to select businesses. Arbor Day is the highpoint of STC's annual cycle, and the event is usually well attended.



## Sustainable Delaware Ohio

**Our Mission:** Sustainable Delaware is a group of citizens focused on promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability for the Delaware community

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Visit us on the web at [www.sustainabledelawareohio.org](http://www.sustainabledelawareohio.org) and on Facebook at Sustainable Delaware Ohio



# Celebrate Earth Day

Since the first celebration in 1970, Earth Day comes to us this April 22, reminding us that there is more than just ourselves that needs taken care of. As stewards of our planet it is our responsibility to make sure that our planet can sustain us far into the future. There are many service projects going on around the world to celebrate Earth Day

In Delaware, there are several Earth Day celebrations this year. A number of organizations are getting together to bring us a weekend full of Earth Day activi-

ties. Included are Green Service Day on April 20<sup>th</sup> and a Farmer's Market/Freecycle/Learning Day on April 21<sup>st</sup> from 12-4 pm at Mingo Park. A lecture on global warming, presented by Prof. Gordon Aubrecht, and a lecture by Sean Kinghorn on OWU's sustainability effort will take place from 7-8 pm April 22 at the Benes Room at OWU. More details will be available soon on the Sustainable Delaware website or you can email [justoneearth@gmail.com](mailto:justoneearth@gmail.com). The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is celebrating Earth Day with a daylong

awareness event at the zoo on April 20<sup>th</sup>; for more details contact the zoo or go to their webpage at: [http://www.columbuszoo.org/events/04-20-13/earth\\_day\\_celebration.aspx](http://www.columbuszoo.org/events/04-20-13/earth_day_celebration.aspx).

For more information on this worldwide event, you can visit the Earth Day Network's site at: <http://www.earthday.org/> and you can also visit the US EPA's website for more tips, projects, etc. at: <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/>. For a better tomorrow, make it Earth Day, every day.

# April Events

For more upcoming events and details see the SDO calendar on the website at <http://www.sustainabledelawareohio.org/Events.html>

- 4/5/13 6:00p –9:00p First Friday; downtown Delaware
- 4/6/13 9:00a –11:00a Organic Gardening; Stratford Ecological Center
- 4/13/13 9:30a -11:00a Sustainable Delaware Meeting; Delaware County Library, Main Branch
- 4/20/13 9:00a - 5:00p Earth Day Celebration: Columbus Zoo & Aquarium
- 4/20/13 Spring Cleanup; Alum Creek State Park
- 4/21/13 12:00p –4:00p Farmer's Market/Freecycle/Learning Day; Mingo Park
- 4/22/13 7:00p –8:00pm Global Warming Lecture; Benes Room, OWU
- 4/26/13 6:00p Ca\$h Mob; Main Street Delaware