



Delaware is Twelfth State to Add Green Lodging Program

By Glenn Hasek
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DOVER, DELAWARE—Delaware, the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution way back in 1787, is the 12th state to launch a green lodging program. The announcement was made on June 19 by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), and the Delaware Hotel & Lodging Association (DH&LA). Two hotels—the Courtyard Newark-University of Delaware, and the Hilton Wilmington/Christiana—are the first properties to join the Delaware Green Lodging program.

DNREC and DH&LA may have set a time record for getting a state program up and running. According to Crystal Nagyiski, program manager for the DNREC's Pollution Prevention Program, work on the initiative began in January. It was then when she had an opportunity to witness a presentation by a representative of Virginia's Green Lodging program.

"It was decided we would model our program after Virginia's," Nagyiski said. "The hotel association was very eager to partner and eager to get the program moving."

Voluntary, Self-Certifying Program

The Delaware program is a voluntary, self-certifying program. Participants make a commitment to reduce their property's environmental impact. Hoteliers complete a checklist and submit it to the Pollution Prevention Program. Each participant is required to implement the following: optional linen service, recycling, water conservation, and energy conservation. To obtain certification, hotels must also offer a green events package. Participants are also asked to inform DNREC about other steps they are taking to minimize environmental impact.

Properties that meet the basic standards for certification are mailed a welcome packet that includes a certificate and window decals, and can freely use the Delaware Green Lodging logo in their marketing efforts. They are also listed on the DNREC and DH&LA websites. While an audit is not currently part of the certification process, Nagyiski says it is her organization's goal to add this step. Private contractors would handle those duties. Nagyiski says any type of lodging establishment in the state can participate in the program, whether a large hotel or a small B&B.

"They are all going to benefit from saving resources," she says. "There will also be cost savings and they will be able to market themselves to tourists interested in ecotourism packages."

Many Reasons to Participate

According to DNREC and DH&LA, there are many environmental reasons for Delaware hotels to participate in Delaware Green Lodging:

- Average-sized hotels purchase more products in one week than 100 families do in a year. At least 50 percent of those purchases should be environmentally preferable products.
- Waste generation can be as high as 30 pounds per room per day; as much as 80 percent of these materials can be recycled.
- The hospitality industry spends \$3.7 billion a year on energy. Electricity use accounts for 60 to 70 percent of the utility costs of a typical hotel. DNREC and DH&LA can introduce hotels to energy-efficient products and practices that will reduce energy consumption, therefore lowering energy costs.
- A significant portion of Delaware's food waste comes from the hotel and lodging industry. This food waste can be composted and/or donated to charities.
- Typical hotels use 218 gallons of water per day per occupied room. Water-efficient fixtures can reduce water and sewer bills by 25 to 30 percent.

Information about the green lodging program is available at the [DNREC](#) and [DH&LA](#) websites. To access a list of the United States' state green lodging programs, [Click here](#).

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