

GREEN GIANTS

With concerns continuing to mount over the environment, going green has become a global challenge that we can no longer afford to ignore. New Jersey has been at the forefront of implementing environmentally responsible business initiatives, but there is always room for growth. Here are some ways mid-Jersey's greenest companies have made their footprints smaller, and how you and your business can follow their lead.

by ALLEN KIM

that benefit not themselves but the environment, you probably want to believe in the company that's willing to go the extra step to be responsible."

Zhang didn't stop with simply cleaning up the contaminated soil. "Renewable

able temperature throughout. All the floors are made of 100-percent-recycled materials, and the building uses high-efficiency light bulbs that are programmed and motion-controlled, so energy consumption is minimal.

hand," Zhang says. "You should do what's sustainable as a company but remember that you have a social responsibility."

PAYING IT FORWARD

Based out of Mount Laurel, Nothing But Green Living (NBGL) is dedicated to offering green-certified cleaning services and products. Founded by Ron Timmons, the company opted to take the path less traveled when it comes to going green.

While the focus of green initiatives tends to lean toward sustainability and renewable energy, something as simple as the chemicals used to clean floors often gets overlooked. This is where NBGL steps in.

NBGL offers a unique cleaning service that is completely green, and one of its main focuses is to reduce the use of harmful floor finishes and chemicals in favor of green-certified cleaning products.

"We're bringing new initiatives to the world of cleaning buildings," Timmons says. "You're changing health issues that can impact children and adults."

Timmons' partner, Nat Anderson,

"For everyone thinking about going green, the way you should remember or think about it is that the environment isn't a short-term issue but a long-term initiative."

— Nat Anderson, CEO, Nothing But Green Living

energy is only part of the sustainable practice that we have here."

Of the energy that Princeton's solar panels produce, the company only consumes about one-third of it. The rest is sold back to the grid. The company also harvests nearly 10,000 gallons of rainwater every year, which is used for flushing toilets and maintaining its landscaping. It brings in fresh air from outside, and everything in the building is insulated, which allows for minimal energy to maintain a comfort-

Princeton's Hamilton facility has not yet been awarded the LEED Gold certificate, but it's waiting for its application to pass through the certification process. And in addition to its impending LEED certificate, it's transitioning to a B corporation—or benefit corporation—which calls for accountability and transparency while putting an emphasis on social and environmental problems. "The only way to compete is through innovation, and social responsibility and innovation go hand in



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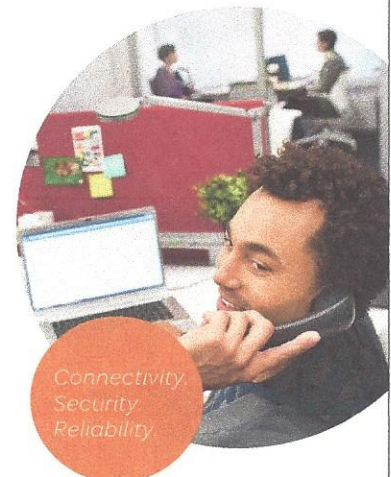
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serves as the chief operating officer of NBGL. It didn't take much to convince him to join forces with Timmons, and he has been a crusader for NBGL ever since. "Being a green initiative, it was just the right thing to do," Anderson says.

The company works with school districts, municipalities, churches, and businesses of all sizes. But one of the areas that both Timmons and Anderson are particularly proud of is when they go to work in a community, they hire veterans to work alongside them. They train them, get them certified if they so choose, and open up opportunities for them to start their own businesses. "It's more than just somebody giving you a certificate and sending you on your way," Anderson says. "You're actually sitting in a classroom and getting the theoretical side. It's equipping them with this foundation of knowledge and not just the lingo."

This pay-it-forward mentality only helps to spread their message of creating a clean environment. "I think the environment should be at a homeostasis: equal with no one doing anything wrong to it," Timmons says. "We can't totally live without chemicals, but if we can reduce our dependence, I think it would be a positive thing. I would say for anyone that's interested in going green, don't let the initial, upfront price or cost deter you from doing what's good in the long run. Years two, three, and beyond, cost is not an issue, yet you've done so much to impact the environment and people's lives. So look beyond that. Give this green thing a chance because it'll make a difference in your lives and the environment we live in." **GAJ**

TIP: WANT TO GO GREEN?

Start by assessing your own situation to create a baseline to work from. Something as simple as adding up the energy and water bills would be a good place to start. The next logical step would be an energy audit.

Many green policies are attractive and beneficial from a financial standpoint. There's a wide range of options available, and it's really up to each individual to decide how far they want to pursue any green initiatives. "People need to wake up and recognize that times have changed and that things that may have not been cost-effective even a few years ago make business sense now," says Ed Seliga chair for the New Jersey chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council and COO of Advanced Solar Products.



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