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Clean Energy Jobs Rise Thanks to IRA

<https://www.wpr.org/news/landmark-climate-law-helps-boost-clean-energy-jobs-to-73k-in-wisconsin>

Wisconsin's clean energy sector added nearly 2,200 jobs last year, bringing the state total to 73,000 positions, a growth driven by the Inflation Reduction Act. Nationally, clean energy employment is on the rise, with the U.S. adding 142,000 such jobs last year—a 4.2% increase. The Milwaukee metro area, in particular, saw strong job growth. Investments in clean energy are also ramping up across the Midwest, with major projects expected to sustain job growth and private investment. [Read more at WPR.](#)

Reducing Winter Salt Use to Protect Waterways

<https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/2623/Winter-Maintenance>



The use of salt during winter months is a common practice to manage snow and ice on roads, sidewalks, and driveways. While salt is effective for preventing slips and falls, its overuse can lead to significant environmental challenges. Reducing outdoor salt application not only benefits our ecosystems but also promotes public health and safety.

Excessive salt application can contaminate nearby water sources, harming aquatic life and disrupting local ecosystems. As salt washes away, it accumulates in rivers, lakes, and groundwater, raising salinity levels that can be detrimental to fish and plant species. According to the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), road salt is a major

contributor to rising chloride levels in freshwater systems. By adopting more sustainable de-icing practices, we can mitigate these impacts and protect our natural resources.

One effective approach is to explore alternative de-icing materials. Products such as sand, calcium magnesium acetate, and beet juice offer less harmful options for ice management. These alternatives not only provide traction but also reduce the negative environmental impact associated with traditional salt. Using your shovel or snowblower shortly after snowfall helps to limit packing down and ice formation, reducing the need for salt later on. Additionally, [proper application techniques](#)—like using smaller amounts, timing the application before snow falls, and applying it only to high-traffic areas—can significantly reduce the overall salt usage. By prioritizing these alternative practices to salt use, we can both enhance safety and help protect our environment during winter months.

Leaf-Free Streets and Clean Storm Drains

<https://ripple-effects.com/Event/Detail/2057>

Did you know leaves that collect on our streets every fall can harm our waters?

More than 50% of the annual amount of phosphorus in urban stormwater can come from leaves in the street! When it rains, stormwater flows through leaf piles in streets creating a “leaf tea” that is rich in dissolved phosphorus. This “leaf tea” travels through storm sewers making its way to our lakes, rivers and streams. Too much phosphorus can lead to toxic algae blooms, low oxygen levels and green murky waters, none of which are good for animals living in the water or those of us who use it for recreation.



In the fall, timely removal of street leaf litter can reduce phosphorus in urban stormwater by 80% compared to no leaf removal! Communities across Dane County are working hard to reduce stormwater pollution to protect our waters, but they can't do it alone. You can help!

[Join us in keeping streets leaf-free!](#)

1. Safely remove leaves from the street in front of your home before it rains.
2. Follow your community's guidelines for leaf collection or recycle leaves on your property. Many communities offer curbside leaf pick up or free access to yard waste drop off sites.
3. Sign up to receive Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts this fall (Oct. 1- Nov. 30). Alerts will be issued 1-2 days before a significant rain event reminding you that it's time to remove

street leaves. ***This program is only available to Dane County residents or businesses.***

Sign up for Text Alerts

Sign up for Email Alerts

4. Help spread the Leaf-free Streets message in your neighborhood! Sign up for a yard sign and check out the [Leaf-free Streets Toolkit](#) for resources.

Request a Yard Sign



5. Sign up to adopt a storm drain near your home! Use the Dane County website to [create an account](#) and select one or more un-adopted storm drains on the map that you will pledge to monitor and help keep clear of leaves, sticks, and other debris that could block the flow of water or get washed into our local waterways. Then just clean your designated drain(s) monthly and report your progress to help Dane County track its stormwater and have a positive ripple effect on local waters! <https://ripple-effects.com/adopt-a-storm-drain>

Trees In Fall

Submitted by Sue Fieber, of Fitchburg's [Tree Advisory Committee](#)

Fall is a busy time of year. Much work is needed to prepare outdoor spaces for winter—harvesting vegetable gardens, cleaning up flower beds, and of course raking leaves. But you might not realize that trees and shrubs need some extra fall attention too.

“In deciduous trees, cold nights cause photosynthesis to stop,” said Anna Healy, Fitchburg Urban Forester and Naturalist. “The sugars produced in photosynthesis (called photosynthates) are pulled into the tree’s roots, where they are stored until spring,” she said. The absence of the



sugars causes the leaves to change color and fall.

According to Healy, deciduous trees and shrubs need extra water before the first frost. She recommends giving about 1 inch of water per week until about October 15. Once the leaves have fallen, trees are dormant, and watering will no longer be useful.

Coniferous trees do not go as deeply dormant as deciduous trees, Healy said. They give off water vapor all winter, so they would also benefit from weekly watering until early or mid-November. Periodic changes in temperature over the winter (e.g., a “January thaw”) may cause conifers to go in and out dormancy, a situation that may lead to winter burn. Signs of winter burn include browning and dying from foliage tips. The best defense against winter burn is to make sure conifers go into the winter well hydrated.

Late fall, when trees are dormant, is a good time to prune trees. Healy also suggests that adding mulch around trees (especially conifers) out to the end of the root zone will help preserve moisture in the soil. “Put down 1-3 inches of mulch,” she said, “and stop with 3 inches. More is not better!” Healy also said it’s important to keep mulch a few inches from the trunks of trees. Mulching against the trunk makes it easier for diseases or insects to breach the tree bark and cause problems. Fall is also a good time to remove any invasive plant species that may have crept into your outdoor spaces over the summer.

Finally, if you have trees or shrubs close to a roadway, they may be susceptible to damage from salt. Build-up of salt in the roots can interfere with photosynthesis, respiration and water uptake. Salt spray on plant surfaces can build up, causing tissue dehydration. To help guard against salt damage, Healy suggests that you consider wrapping the base of your trees and shrubs with burlap or wire mesh to protect them from salt spray. Such wrapping will also protect trees and shrubs from any hungry deer and rabbits in your neighborhood.

Healy is concerned about some recent changes she has noticed in trees around the city. For instance, some walnut trees are losing their leaves before the leaves change color. “We don’t know what this means,” she said. “Is this part of climate change? Will the walnut trees behave normally when spring comes? What other changes are on the horizon? We’re in uncharted territory.”

For much more information about trees and tree care, visit the Parks and Forestry section of the City of Fitchburg website. You will find information on tree planting, tree care, and much more.

Brian Hudelson of the UW Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic is also a great resource for citizens trying solve problems they may be having with their trees. He is quick to respond and may ask for photos or samples illustrating the problem(s). He can be reached at hudelson@wisc.edu.

Shop Local for the Holidays: A Win for the Environment and the Economy

As the holiday season approaches, many people are already making their shopping lists and preparing for the rush. This year, why not consider a more sustainable and impactful way to celebrate by shopping local? When you choose to purchase gifts and goods from local businesses, you're not only supporting your community, but you're also helping to reduce your environmental footprint. Local shops typically source products from nearby manufacturers, which means fewer goods need to be transported over long distances. This results in lower carbon emissions and reduced energy consumption, making local shopping a greener alternative to mass-market, big-box stores.



In addition to the environmental benefits, shopping locally provides a significant economic boost to your community. When you buy from a local business, a much larger portion of your spending stays within the local economy. Local store owners, employees, and suppliers benefit directly, which can lead to job creation and an increase in economic activity in the area. And an economic impact analysis by the American Independent Business Alliance found that local independent businesses recirculate over 3x as much money from purchases through the local economy as do chain stores (*source: [University of MN-Duluth News Center](#)*)! By choosing to shop local, you're investing in the prosperity of your community, making it a stronger, more resilient place to live.

Another key advantage of shopping local during the holidays is the potential for unique, personalized gifts that you won't find in larger retail chains. Many local artisans and small businesses offer handmade, one-of-a-kind items, in addition to the chance to build relationships with the people who make your community thrive. Whether it's custom jewelry, locally sourced food products, or handcrafted home décor, these thoughtful gifts often carry more meaning and value, as well as helping to create a vibrant, diverse local marketplace.

This holiday season, consider making a difference with your dollars by choosing to shop local — it's a win for the environment, the economy, and your community!

More information on shopping local for the holidays:

- [Small Business Saturday](#) (this year on Saturday, November 30)
- [Dane Buy Local](#) and [Dane Arts Buy Local](#)
- [Fitchburg Chamber Visitors and Business Bureau](#)
- [Wisconsin Latino Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Madison Black Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce](#)

America Recycles Day – November 15

From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/america-recycles-day>

On America Recycles Day (November 15), EPA recognizes the importance and impact of recycling, which has contributed to American prosperity and the protection of our environment. The recycling rate has increased from less than seven percent in 1960 to the [current rate of 32 percent](#). Help us reach our current National Recycling Goal to increase the U.S. recycling rate to 50 percent by 2030.

The recycling efforts of communities and business throughout the United States help with this success and growth. To build on our progress, EPA encourages every American to contribute by recycling right, not only on America Recycles Day, but all year long. This means checking with your local recycling provider to know what they will accept in your recycling bin. Items like cardboard, metal cans, and paper are commonly accepted by local curbside programs, and items like plastic bags, electronics and batteries do NOT go in the curbside recycling bin. [Visit our How Do I Recycle?: Common Recyclables](#) to learn how and where to recycle these and other items.

Tales From Planet Earth – Bad River

<https://nelson.wisc.edu/events/tales-from-planet-earth-bad-river/>

Join the UW Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies on Monday, November 18, for a free screening of *Bad River*, a new documentary that follows the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band on their continuous fight for sovereignty. The screening will be followed by a moderated Q & A with some of the voices featured in the film.



Panelists

- Aurora Conley, vice chair of the Anishinaabe Environmental Protection Alliance and Bad River tribal member
- Misty Jackson, American Indian Science & Engineering Society coordinator, Madison Metropolitan School District
- Patty Loew, professor emerita at UW–Madison and Northwestern University, retired inaugural director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern University

[Register here](#)

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Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov or (608) 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

