

# LATINA *Style*®

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## Go Green

Going Green for  
Latina Business  
Owners



# Environment and Energy Consumption at the Forefront

By Arcilia C. Acosta

A cool fall morning, the peaceful sound of doves cooing in the distance, and the solemn rhythmic sound of oil pump jack disrupted periodically by the ever present wind—this is “West Texas”. This area is known fondly by those who have chosen to live here as the “heart” of our great State of Texas. It is also the hub of oil and gas companies with rich natural resources found in abundance below the surface of the caliche ground. A look to the sky reveals wind turbines that have recently dotted the mesas, allowing the man made resource of wind energy to compete with the dark oil that is drawn out of the ground daily.

Growing up here, I never realized that we were a part of a larger economy that depended on these rich resources to power and fuel small and large companies everywhere. Today, as a business owner and entrepreneur, the state of our environment and energy consumption is at the forefront of all of our daily lives.

Energy use and conservation is a focus both at home and in the workplace. The task has fallen on Entrepreneurs to become leaders in supporting efforts like Green Sustainability programs. Why? Because we know the impact this has on the economy, our bottom line, but most importantly, on our future.

Latina entrepreneurs, in particular, represent the fastest growing small business sector, and are quickly becoming strong players in this movement. They are employing creativity in establishing recycling programs to minimize waste, recycling outdated equipment, and searching for meaningful methods of contributing to the wellness of their communities.

I am one of these Latina entrepreneurs dedicating my working hours to operating a large construction company. The latest methods of construction command the use of innovative systems all centered around energy. In fact, more schools and buildings are being designed to include a variety of green Initiatives. The use of light efficient applications, the use of recycled building materials, and innovative technology that allows us to determine the extent of energy expenditure that

will be required to cool, heat and power a building are all tools utilized in the green movement. All with the end result - a better environment.

Some of our contracts require our expertise as program managers of school bond programs with projects totaling over \$1.5 billion dollars worth of school design and construction. We view our job as more than just building great schools. Identifying opportunities to share energy conscious information with parents, teacher organizations, administrators, and of course, our precious children become important elements of our contracts. Students are being educated on the many ways they can use some of these energy efficient efforts in their daily lives. They are passing along this knowledge to their parents and grandparents—all with one goal—taking care of our environment. We have only one Mother Earth and once our resources are gone...it will take many millions of years to replace, if at all.

Transportation is on the leading edge of this movement as well. We are currently building the largest light rail project in the country and have been fortunate to manage projects involving bridges and highway infrastructure. Mass transportation is critical to reducing toxic ozone levels and reducing the greenhouse effect in our atmosphere. We view our mission in this arena as one that helps clean up the air we breathe each day.

My challenge to all who read this article is this...strive to look around in your community and recognize and appreciate the natural resources you are using. Without a doubt we are well aware that “going Green” and being more environmentally conscious is business smart and dollar wise. It is my sincere hope that others will join me in the Green Movement!



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