

New Jersey GREEN BANDWAGON Jumps on the

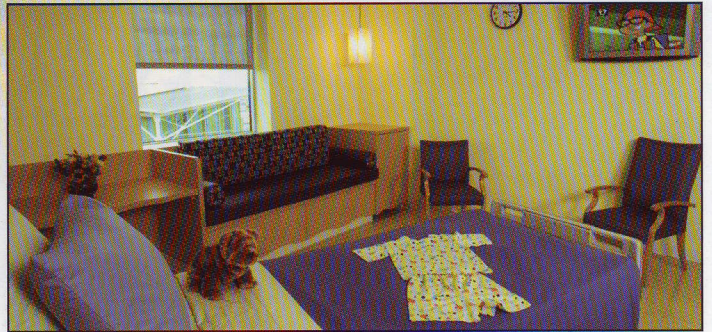
'Green living' is growing, and an ever increasing number of Americans are adopting a planet-friendly way of life. According to the National Association of Home Builders (www.nahb.org), this year consumers are expected to double their spending on green products and services.

"The movement has definitely picked up. People's willingness to act is unprecedented," says Dena Mottola, executive director of Environment New Jersey (www.environmentnewjersey.org), an environmental advocacy organization affiliated with New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG). "Homeowners are making their houses more energy-efficient, and there's been a lot of leadership from industry and CEOs. There are also positive steps happening in the state government."

For its part, Environment New Jersey has successfully rallied its resources with far-reaching results. The organization has gained the Clean Water Act's strongest protection for 45 New Jersey waterways, secured voter support to fund tailpipe pollution traps that significantly reduce diesel emissions from trucks and transit and school buses, and helped push legislation requiring automobile manufacturers to produce 'cleaner' cars.

In 2003, New Jersey's environment got another helping hand with the establishment of a clean energy mandate, the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), aimed at increasing the use of homegrown, renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, ocean and sustainable biomass. With the state's electricity demand anticipated to jump by 29% in the next 13 years, the RPS, adopted by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) (www.state.nj.us/bpu/), was expanded in 2006 and now calls for 20% of New Jersey's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020. NJPIRG estimates that the RPS will remove a total of 15.3 billion pounds of carbon dioxide.

Renewable energy systems have segued into the construction industry, making 'green' building a multibillion-dollar market. From incorporating more natural light, to building with solar panels and recyclable roofing tiles, to using nontoxic paints and carpets, builders are able to offer clients more options, at increasingly affordable prices, that generate cost savings in the long run. To promote 'green' building, the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) (www.usgbc.org) developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™, a third-party certification. To be LEED certified is to



A patient's room at The Sarkis and Siran Gabrellian Women's and Children's Pavilion, Hackensack University Medical Center.

be known for "reducing the negative environmental impacts... and improving occupant health and well-being."

"Buildings have a great impact on the environment. In New Jersey, greenhouse gas emissions from buildings are especially high at around 36-39%," points out Andrew Topinka, chairman of USGBC's New Jersey chapter (www.usgbcnj.org). "Today more municipalities are putting LEED certification into their building requirements, and we have a larger group of political leaders behind tax credits for LEED building."

Many New Jersey based corporations have taken up the 'green' cause. PNC Financial Services Group is planning about 90 LEED-certified branches, and Valley National Bank recently underwent an energy-efficient overhaul of its corporate headquarters. Two years ago, Hackensack University Medical Center unveiled The Sarkis and Siran Gabrellian Women's and Children's Pavilion, one of the country's first environmentally responsible and sustainable healthcare facilities that has since become a model for other institutions worldwide. The Pavilion was creative in its 'green' construction, insulating walls with cotton-denim scrap and building cabinetry with wheat board as its core instead of particle board, which contains formaldehyde.

"Our energy consumption has been lower," says Suzen Heeley, the hospital's director of design and construction. "But I think the more visible returns are the health of our employees and patients."

"Media coverage about the environment is so gloom and doom, so what needs to be done can seem overwhelming," Mottola remarks. "The reality is we do have the technology, and solutions are available to avert disaster. The problem can be solved."

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