

GET GREENER



By Denise Gamino

The Heart of Texas Green Expo will be a true come-one, come-all event this year, with free admission making it an entertaining, interesting and educational activity for all.

The Green Expo on Saturday, June 7, will highlight recycling, energy conservation, alternative energy sources and sustainability programs while offering food, music and children's activities. It is the premier educational forum in Bastrop County for recycling and sustainable living.

This is the third annual Green Expo sponsored by the nonprofit volunteer group Keep Bastrop County Beautiful, which helps area businesses and individuals improve their communities and the environment. The event, co-sponsored by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, will be at the Bastrop Convention & Exhibit Center from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

More than 60 exhibitors will showcase water use and conservation, organic gardening, renewable energy, eco-friendly transportation and green building systems.

The Green Expo's 2014 theme is "Living the 5 R's — Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Re-buy." (Refuse, in this context, means decline to buy products with excess packaging or reject plastic bags at stores by bringing a reusable bag). Free paper shredding service will be available through Balcones Resources, Goodwill Industries will be on site for electronic recycling and a single-stream recycling area will allow attendees to recycle paper, cans and bottles used in the exhibit areas.

"The Heart of Texas Green Expo is a way to showcase the myriad ways we all can make

a difference in the world we live in," said Tara Minor, event coordinator. "We believe a more informed community is a better community."

"If each attendee can take one new idea from the Expo and use it in their everyday lives, that will help us accomplish our goals of litter prevention, beautification and waste reduction."

This year's one-day event with free admission will allow more people — and exhibitors — to experience a jam-packed day of education, entertainment and enlightenment.

The Green Expo will be divided into themed villages, including a Water Village with products and ideas about water use and conservation. Visitors with specific interests or questions can find similar villages featuring organics, renewable energy, clean transportation and green building.

Three keynote speakers will provide information on building and remodeling, organic gardening and environmental education. Speakers include Central Texas gardening expert John Dromgoole and environmental educator Gina LaMotte.

Dromgoole owns The Natural Gardener in Austin and is founder of Lady Bug Natural Brand soils, compost and other gardening products. He is also the well-known host of the weekly radio call-in show "Gardening Naturally" on KLBJ-AM 590 radio in Austin.

LaMotte is founder and executive director of EcoRise Youth Innovations, which teaches sustainability, design and social innovation in middle and high schools.

Broadcasting live from the Green Expo will be KDRP-FM 100.1, a solar-powered radio station based in Dripping Springs.

Last year's Green Expo attracted more than 1,500 visitors from as far as Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. ■

AT HEART OF TEXAS EXPO

IF YOU GO:

What: Heart of Texas Green Expo

When: Saturday, June 7

Where: Bastrop Convention & Exhibit Center, 1408 Chestnut St., Bastrop

Admission: Free

Activities: Educational booths, vendors, speakers, recycling, music, food, and children's activity area

Additional information: heartoftexasgreenexpo.org, keepbastropcountybeautiful.org, and Keep Bastrop County Beautiful and Heart of Texas Green Expo on Facebook

Joe Stafford illustration