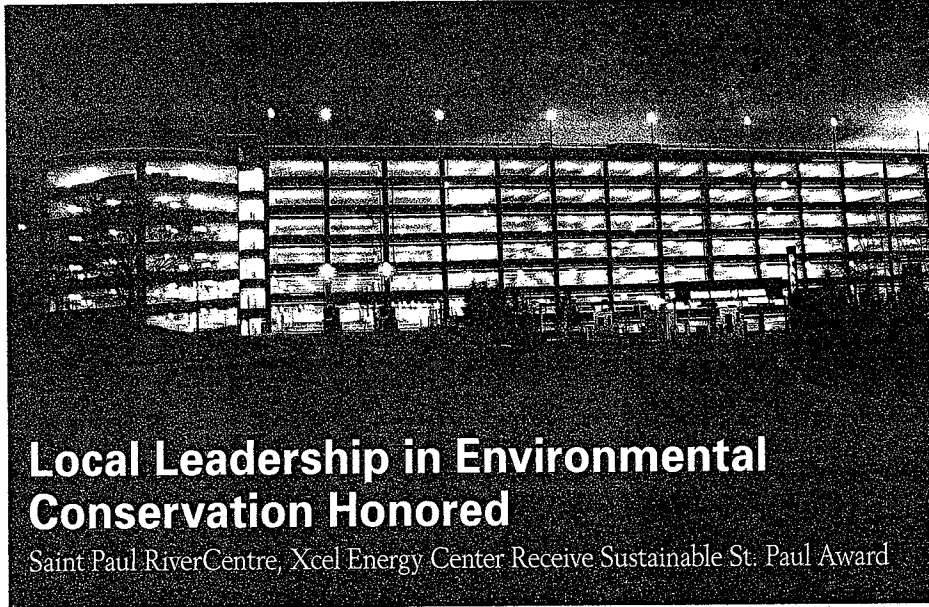


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## Local Leadership in Environmental Conservation Honored

Saint Paul RiverCentre, Xcel Energy Center Receive Sustainable St. Paul Award

Replacement of 900 wasteful bulbs achieves an energy saving of 47%.

BY JERRY ROTHSTEIN

Two of St. Paul's major public venues committed themselves in 2009 to become regional leaders in sustainability. St. Paul RiverCentre, in partnership with Xcel Energy Center, began to design infrastructure to achieve waste prevention or reduction, recycling and composting in their facilities, which include the Saint Paul RiverCentre, Xcel Energy Center, The Legendary Roy Wilkins Auditorium and 317 on Rice Park.

The first phase, called "50-50 in 2" aimed to reduce waste generated by 50% while increasing the amount recycled by 50% by the summer of 2011. Recycling bins were purchased and positioned so that they were almost equal to the number of trash containers. A more unusual aspect of the project called for composting of organic wastes from kitchens and concessions, and the visiting public, making RiverCentre among the first in the country to participate in composting at a convention center. RiverCentre has its composting receptacles in place, and soon Xcel will follow. Signage and educational materials are used to inform visitors and encourage their participation.

From the outset, the partners have employed Progressive Associates, a lo-

cal consulting firm that specializes in sustainability. Their focus has been on implementing better recycling, increasing energy conservation, and creating a long-range sustainability plan. For Progressive Associates, "sustainability" is a broad philosophy of practice that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future." This principle requires us to become conscious of the longer-term effects of our present decisions and actions.

Initial successes are always morale builders in projects like these, and between July 2009 and April 2010, the venues diverted 885,140 pounds of trash, on target for the ultimate goal of 1.2 million pounds per year. Financial savings accrued, building confidence to proceed in planning the next steps.

The energy goals for the next phase — known as "80-20 in 3" — are designed to increase efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the facilities. (A carbon footprint is "the total set of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions caused by an organization, event or product.") The aim is to reduce the carbon footprint by 80% and make the facilities 20% more efficient than average, within three years. Karolyn Kirchgessler, President and CEO of Visit Saint Paul (formerly the Saint Paul Con-

vention and Visitors Authority, and responsible for overseeing the operations of RiverCentre and The Legendary Roy Wilkins Auditorium), points out that the 80-20 in 3 initiative, building on the initial 50-50 in 2 project, "Shows that this is an all-encompassing sustainability plan and that we are serious about reducing the negative effects that our work can have on the environment."

Reducing the carbon footprint depends on using more efficient technologies and best practices for energy efficiency. As a start, 900 light fixtures at the RiverCentre parking ramp have been replaced with more efficient units, for an expected 47% reduction in energy usage. Preparations are under way for installing a solar thermal array on the RiverCentre roof, and control software is in place to manage efficient energy usage across the venues.

In addition to their Sustainable Saint Paul Award for Waste Reduction and Recycling, the facilities have received the Award of Excellence in Public Service from the Midwest Society of Association Executives. This award honors organizations that have achieved outstanding results operating a program for the benefit of the community or society.

## Great River Park Picnic, Master Planning Kick-off: An Invitation from Mayor Chris Coleman

In 2009, Saint Paul received legislative funding to create a redevelopment plan for its 17-mile Mississippi River valley. Your input is needed to envision a Great River Park that celebrates our greatest natural resource and enhances quality of life for all Saint Paul residents.

The kick-off event is set for Tuesday, August 17 at 5:00pm at the Wington Pavilion on Harriet Island.

Schedule of events include a picnic, a program with Mayor Chris Coleman,



Mayor Chris Coleman

Saint Paul Parks Director Mike Hahm, Great River Park consultant Bill Wenk. Open House: Meet the consultants, share your ideas. Also a special debut screening of "The River is Life," a new documentary detailing the adventures of Phillip Hullquist and Ryan Jeanes as they paddle the entire length of the Mississippi River. To register, email [sprc@riverfrontcorporation.com](mailto:sprc@riverfrontcorporation.com) or call 651-293-6860.

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## Holistic Health Complements Art

BY JERRY ROTHSTEIN

On August 10, Mary Hannah is giving a talk on "Sugar Blues" at the Conversational Salon. (943 West 7th, 6:30-8:30pm, free. Donations appreciated. Call for information 651-227-3228.) She also speaks on the topic "Weigh Less, Live More" August 23, 10:30am, at the same venue.

Patty Guerrero started the Conversational Salons in 2002 after retiring from the St. Paul Public Library. They have continued each Tuesday evening since then. Patty states her central idea for the Salons simply: "It is through conversation that communities and cultures thrive." Each Tuesday is something different, be it open conversation, poetry, a DVD or a speaker, and each one is centered around peace and justice issues. It is a place where people can freely come together and exchange ideas. Salons are open to all, and tea/coffee from the Mad Hatter's lounge and treats from Salon regulars are available. The theme is listed in the Community Reporter Bulletin Board each month.

Personal health and well-being, and what we can do individually to achieve them, occupy us in many ways. Whenever we look — books, magazines, television of health-related merchants in the community or on line — we are presented with theories, programs and products that promise to help us. But how do we choose among the many approaches? Which is best? Which has any scientific backing?

One approach that recognizes positive aspects of many perspectives is called "Integrative Nutrition." Its founder, Joshua Rosenthal, worked to combine many aspects of different systems to produce a method relevant to contemporary conditions, including the serious environmental toxins and pollutants that compromise our efforts at healthy living in many ways.

Mary Hannah has studied for a certificate in holistic health coaching with Rosenthal's Institute for Holistic Nutrition. Her history of community organizing, nonprofit fundraising and, more recently, founding and managing the North Star Residency Program from her home and studio in Uppertown, did not really prepare her for this outcome. "This is the furthest reach of everything I have done," she says.

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Mary Hannah