

A Case Study: The Great American Grill at the Hilton Garden Inn Devens Commons

Produced by
the Devens
Eco-Efficiency
Center and the
Center for
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Summary: *Leading by example, the Hilton Garden Inn is pioneering commercial composting in the Devens area. By redirecting 800 pounds of food and organic waste away from the landfill to agricultural enhancement on a weekly basis, the Hilton is meeting their Corporate Sustainability initiative.*

Description of business: Restaurant capacity: 50, 60-80 meals are served per day. Kitchen and wait staff of 10-15.

The Great American Grill located in the new Hilton Garden Inn Devens Common serving 60-80 meals per day. The hotel and restaurant located in Devens at the end of 2011 to address the growing needs of businesses located in that area. By implementing composting and recycling programs from the start, staff has incorporated these practices into their culture and will be able to expand effortlessly with the business.

Motivation: General Manager Jon Mehlmann was supportive from the very beginning. "We have been very excited to have the opportunity to participate in this program. True North Hotel Group and Hilton Garden Inn Devens are committed to sustaining our environment and a composting program that recycles our organic waste helps us accomplish this goal."

How the program works: The 10-15 kitchen and wait staff all participate in the composting program. The procedures were explained in a staff meeting held very early in the process. Input was requested as to placement and sizing of the containers. The set ups are not permanent, and can be adjusted as needs change.

Organics are collected in convenient containers located closely to where the food waste is generated. In the prep areas, flat hotel pans are used. There is a small one gallon sized container located on counter next to coffee brewer to capture and transport coffee grounds. A 5-gallon plastic bucket is used at the plate scraping station in the dishwashing area for additional capacity. The restaurant had these containers already available which avoided the purchase of new collection containers. The size of these containers allows them to fit in the dishwasher to be cleaned whenever necessary.





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At the end of a meal shift, the containers are brought out to the compost dumpster and emptied. The dumpster has a locking bar to prevent unauthorized contamination. Cardboard boxes are placed on the bottom of the empty dumpster to aid in release of all materials when emptied.

The organics dumpster is emptied once a week with the capability for more frequent pickups if requested. Trash collection is now reduced from weekly to “on call” service which has extended the pickup frequency to nearly one month, reducing hauling costs.

Challenge / solution: The restaurant and hotel opened in 2012 and the staff began sorting organics and recyclables from the start. The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) provided signage and trained staff how to sort the different waste materials. Continued hands-on support from the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center assisted with questions and updated signage that met the needs of the Hilton. The signs provide separation guidance for the compost program, single stream recycling and trash.

Evaluation: A true compost champion emerged from the kitchen and tirelessly encourages his co-workers to efficiently separate the food waste according to the guidelines. Separation activities continuously improved and after only two months into the program, the Hilton was averaging 800 pounds of food waste diverted each week.

The Hilton Garden Inn is able to watch their bottom line through successful waste diversion. By improving both recycling and composting activities and hauling trash only when the container is full, the property has been able to decrease its need for waste disposal services by nearly 50% and reduce its waste management expense. These accomplishments also help the Hilton reach their corporate goals of efficiency and sustaining the environment.



*For additional information contact
Dona Neely, Executive Director
Devens Eco-Efficiency Center
978-772-8831 x3304 or
donaneely@ecostardevens.com*