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April 2026 Newsletter

[Sustain Dane](#) is the sustainability organization of Dane County. [Join us](#) and get involved in accelerating community well-being.



Data Centers & A Sustainable Future Recap + Podcast

Our April SBS program focused on the rapid growth of data centers and the consideration for sustainability in the evolving landscape. Panelists discussed government jurisdiction, energy grid operations, UW-Madison research, AI policy, community benefit packages, local action, and more. Highlights include:

- Hyperscale data centers require substantial infrastructure, including long-haul fiber optic cables, large energy supplies, and significant water access

- In Wisconsin, five proposed or in-progress data centers would require nearly 4,500 MW of power, representing a large demand shock to the electrical grid
- Government transparency and strategic planning are critical in decision-making processes
- Research is happening at the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies about environmental impacts of data centers that QTS provided funding to conduct
- Community benefit agreements can help ensure local communities receive infrastructure and support – but education around what to ask for is a crucial step in negotiations
- Data center energy use is uneven and inconsistent, which can strain the grid, demand response strategies can reduce energy use during peak times

Panelists included Anna Haensch, Associate Professor at UW-Madison; Kathy Kuntz, Director of the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change; Paul Robbins, Dean of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and was moderated by Claire Oleksiak, Executive Director of Sustain Dane.

Want to learn more about data centers? Listen to our newly released podcast episode from the SBS available [here](#).

[Listen Here](#)



Accelerate Sustainability Workshop

Accelerate Sustainability Workshop Recap

Welcome to the 2026 cohort of Accelerate Sustainability Workshop (ASW) participants! Forty-two businesses and organizations from Dane County came together to launch their 2026 sustainability projects. It was inspiring to hear attendees talk about their energy efficiency, waste reduction projects, transportation initiatives, and other goals.

Sustain Dane offers sustainability project ideas and resources for individuals and organizations. A 5-year recap of ASW impact and case studies is available [here](#).

“Sustain Dane has opened me up to a world of sustainable possibilities. The first workshop I attended made me feel inspired to make a positive change in my community. Not only do I feel like I can take what I learned from this experience back to my workplace to find what sustainable changes we could make, but I feel as though I can take what I learned back into my personal life and everyday choices. I would highly recommend anyone who is interested in sustainability to join Sustain Dane.” – 2026 ASW Attendee

Reach out if you were unable to attend the workshop and would like to connect with us on moving a project forward. Submitted projects will be recognized at the Sustain Dane Summit with a Sustainability Accelerator Award and showcased during a local sustainability projects panel.

ASW 5-Year Recap Document



Composting Education in Sun Prairie

Composting Education in Sun Prairie

In partnership with the City of Sun Prairie, Green Box Compost, and Sun Prairie Area School District, we are continuing the composting pilot program this school semester. This month Sustain Dane shared composting education with Sun Prairie's East High School environmental club and Token Spring's elementary school group that included:

- What compostable and recyclable items are and where they go to help students better understand the waste streams in their cafeterias.
- The environmental benefits of composting and recycling
- Where are locations for community composting opportunities, like Dane County Scrap Stops and local composting companies.
- The students also had fun participating in a game of Red Light, Green Light with different materials to reenforce what goes into the compost, recycle, or trash.

Students at Token Springs Elementary and Royal Oaks Elementary and staff at the West High School production kitchen are continuing to compost their food scraps in the cafeteria. Across these three schools, students and staff have diverted more than 9,056 pounds of food waste from the landfill. Composting in cafeterias of the three schools will continue for the 2026-2027 school year.

"I personally had no idea food waste was such a big driver of climate change, and I think that the work that you do is awesome" -East High School Student



Earth Month Cleanup 2026

This month we had our 6th annual Earth Month Cleanup at Garver Feed Mill and the surrounding Starkweather Neighborhood. Together we collected 916 pounds of trash with over 100 participants.

Some notable finds included a bike, pieces of a grill, and a sound system speaker. Some folks even found things in good enough condition to bring home including jewelry, wool socks, and an Eiffel Tower toy.

When trash washes into lakes, rivers, and streams, it not only harms fish and other aquatic wildlife, but it makes it difficult to boat, fish, or swim. Volunteering with us helped prevent this pollution from reaching our waterways.

Join us at our next [volunteering program at Cherokee Marsh](#) on Thursday, May 21 from 9 – 11AM.

Join us May 11 at Cherokee Marsh



Recycle Better

May 6 & 13: 12:00 – 1:30 PM
Online course



Join us! May Recycle Better

Our popular recycling program is back for 2026. Become a recycling steward with our award-winning workshop in partnership with the City of Madison and WM. Learn the ins and outs of our local recycling system and get your recycling questions answered. The program will give you the tools you need to teach your family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers how to improve recycling and community sustainability.

Topics include: what makes recycling work and why we do it, local recycling how-tos, barriers to recycling, other waste streams, low-waste living, and championing recycling in your community. Join the Recycle Better community that has spread recycling knowledge to over 102,000 people.

We will meet online via Zoom in two parts on Wednesday, May 6 and Wednesday, May 13 from 12PM—1:30PM. The session will be recorded and shared with registrants.

Later in the summer, we will offer the course for a second time. Recycle Better is also available for registration on Thursday, [July 23 & 30: 6:30PM – 8PM.](#)

Learn More & Register Here



Farmer's Market Food Scrap Drop-Offs

Farmers Markets Food Scraps Drop-Off

We're happy to announce the return of the free Food Scraps Drop-Off program for its fifth season. Over the past four years, the food scrap collection program has composted over 100,000 pounds. Join us this year to meet our goal to divert 48,000 pounds of food scraps, which is the equivalent to the weight of 24 giraffes.

[Westside Community Market](#)

- Dates: Saturday, April 11 – Saturday, October 31
- When: Saturdays, 7:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- Where: Research Park (505 S Rosa Rd)

[East Madison Market](#)

- Dates: Tuesday, April 28 – Tuesday, October 27
- When: Tuesdays, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- Where: McPike Park (202 S. Ingersoll St. Madison)

[South Madison Market](#)

- Dates: Tuesday, May 19 – Tuesday, October 27
- When: Tuesdays, 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- Where: Madison Labor Temple (1602 S Park St. Madison)

[Capitol View Market](#)

- Dates: Wednesday, May 27 – Wednesday, October 14
- When: Tuesdays, 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

- Where: City View Park (5901 Sharpsburg Dr)

Learn More Here

New & Renewing Members



City of Middleton	Madison Children's Museum	Summit Credit Union
City of Stoughton	Madison College	TLJ Coaching and Consulting
CRBE	Midvale Community	Village of Waunakee
EZ Office Products	Lutheran Church	Wisconsin Environmental Initiative
Goodwill of South Central WI	Mundo Esperanza	350 Wisconsin
Habitat for Humanity of Dane Co.	Ralph K Morris Foundation	Sun Vault Roofing
Habitat Holistic Systems	Sergenian's Floor Coverings, Inc.	

SUSTAIN DANE MEMBERSHIP

New & Renewing Members

Sustain Dane recognizes businesses, organizations, and individuals who value sustainability and are a part of our membership. Sustain Dane membership offers inspiring education and professional development, powerful connections through networking and volunteering, and customized support to help you accelerate sustainability actions.

Membership is rolling throughout the year, and all are welcome to join. Recent new and renewing members include:

New Members

- [Habitat Holistic Systems](#)
- [Goodwill of South Central Wisconsin](#)
- [Wisconsin Environmental Initiative](#)
- [CRBE](#)
- [350 Wisconsin](#)
- + 1 Individual Member

Renewing Members

- [City of Middleton](#)
- [City of Stoughton](#)
- [EZ Office Products](#)
- [Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison](#)
- [Madison Children’s Museum](#)
- [Madison College](#)
- [Midvale Community Lutheran Church](#)
- [Mundo Esperanza](#)
- [Summit Credit Union](#)
- [TLJ Coaching and Consulting, LLC](#)
- [Tribe 9 Foods](#)
- [UW Health](#)
- [UW Credit Union](#)
- [Village of Waunakee](#)
- [Findorff](#)
- [Habitat for Humanity of Dane County](#)
- [Ian’s Pizza](#)
- [IPM Institute of North America](#)
- [Ralph K Morris Foundation](#)
- [Sergenian’s Floor Coverings, Inc.](#)
- [Sun Vault Roofing](#)
- + 6 Individual Members & 1 Student Member



Earth Month Events

This Earth Month, Sustain Dane has been out in the community connecting with individuals and organizations across Dane County through presentations and events focused on sustainability. We have had the opportunity to provide educational workshops at organizations and have resource tables at community events.

- Boys and Girls Club
- Vera Court Neighborhood Association
- McFarland Senior Center
- Christ Presbyterian Church
- UW-Madison Earth Fest
- EcoLatinos Conservation Fair
- Madison College's Sustainability Fair
- Madison Children's Museum's Adult Swim
- Middleton's Earth Day Every Day Fair

Are you interested in bringing sustainability education to your organization or business? Sustain Dane offers presentations on sustainability topics including recycling, and we can tailor our content to meet your groups' specific needs or interests.



Annual Report

2025



(608) 285 - 2454
hello@sustaindane.org
sustaindane.org

2025 Annual Report

Learn more about our work in 2025! Sustain Dane's annual report highlights the impact of our programs. We collaborate with innovative organizations and individuals across the region to advance sustainability, support resilient communities, and drive meaningful change. Explore the 2025 report to see how these partnerships come to life and the impacts and accomplishments of our programs.

2025 Annual Report



Efficiency Navigator

Efficiency Navigator

Efficiency Navigator recently completed windows upgrade in a Jamestown neighborhood building that is a four-unit, four-bedroom, two-story multifamily residence constructed in 1980. There are approximately seven residents, three of which are children. Residents pay for utilities for gas and electricity. The owner pays for water.

The project resulted in approximately 1,874 kg of annual CO2 emissions savings, which is equivalent to 4,648 vehicle miles traveled avoided, and 14% estimated energy savings. During the assessment process at each building, windows are evaluated on the criteria of operability, glass condition (single/double pane) and window frame condition and materials. Window replacement can reduce heat transfer and air from leaking into and out of a home, which leads to reducing energy bills and creating more comfortable homes.

Applications are now open for new buildings to participate in Efficiency Navigator in 2026. Efficiency Navigator aims to help small to medium-sized multifamily housing become more efficient, affordable, and resilient while reducing operating costs for owners and energy cost burden for residents. [visit here](#) to learn more and apply. Application review occurs on a rolling basis.

Learn More & Apply Here



Join Sustain Dane and Madison Parks for a large-scale invasive species removal. Help protect Madison’s natural areas by removing garlic mustard, an invasive plant that spreads quickly and crowds out native species. This hands-on volunteer opportunity supports the health of our woodlands and helps restore habitat for native plants and wildlife.

Join on us on Thursday, May 21st from 9AM-11AM, RSVP [here](#).



Lunch & Learn: The State of Solar

Join Sustain Dane for a virtual Lunch & Learn to explore the current solar landscape and what it means for you. Whether you’re a homeowner curious about rooftop panels or a business considering solar options, this session will provide practical insights to help you make informed decisions. Midwest Solar Power will be leading the presentation and there will be time for participant Q&A afterwards. RSVP [here](#).



City of Madison Recycling Survey

The City of Madison wants to hear from you on what they can do to help you recycle better. Take the survey [here](#).



No/Low Mow May

As spring sets in and grass starts to grow, keep in mind No/Low Mow May. This initiative to not mow in May can help increase pollinators' habitat and create food sources as opposed to monoculture grass lawns. Check your local guidelines to see if your area is participating. And

if you want to learn more, check out the City of Madison Engineering Division's "[Pollinator Pointers](#)" digital video series, which explains what pollinators are, what the best types of native plants for pollinators are, and ideas on how to incorporate some of those native plants into your landscaping.

We appreciate you being part of our Sustain Dane community. Make a difference in local sustainability—support Sustain Dane today.

Donate to Sustain Dane

In the Community

May 2: [Party for the Planet](#) with Henry Vilas Zoo

May 2: [Earth Day Service Project](#) with UW Arboretum

May 3: [Earth Day & Repair Fair](#) with Green Box Composting & Green Life Trading Co.

May 6: [Recycle Better](#) with Sustain Dane

May 13: [Clean Lakes 101: State of the Lakes](#) with Clean Lakes Alliance

May 16: [Native Plant Sale](#) with Friends of the Arboretum

May 21: [May Volunteer Session](#) with Sustain Dane at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park

May 23: [Bird & Nature Adventures](#) with Aldo Leopold Center

May 27: [Lunch & Learn: The State of Solar](#) with Sustain Dane

May 31: [Floating Island Launch](#) at Tenney Park

Sustain Dane Forest & Tree Members and Partners.
Join the Sustain Dane Membership at the Forest, Tree, or Leaf level.

Support organizations that value sustainability:





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