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October 2026 Newsletter

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



2026 Summit Last Chance to Register

The sustainability event of the year is one week away! The 2026 Sustain Dane Summit will feature a local chef panel exploring connections between our favorite restaurants and sustainability, conversations about Wisconsin's data center landscape, actions businesses can take, and more.

The Year in the Review session is a continuing education course approved by the **American Institute of Architects' Continuing Education System to count as one Continuing Education Credit** (CEU).

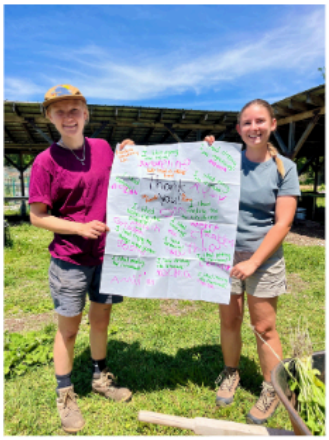
You don't want to miss the opportunity to connect with other sustainability enthusiasts and learn from our speakers. Join us at the Sustain Dane Summit on Friday, November 6, at the Monona Terrace. **Register by November 1 to ensure we can accommodate dietary requests and receive a printed name tag.**

Register for the 2026 Summit here



Ryan Holley
The River Food Pantry





Troy Farm and Kids Garden

Live Foward Awardees

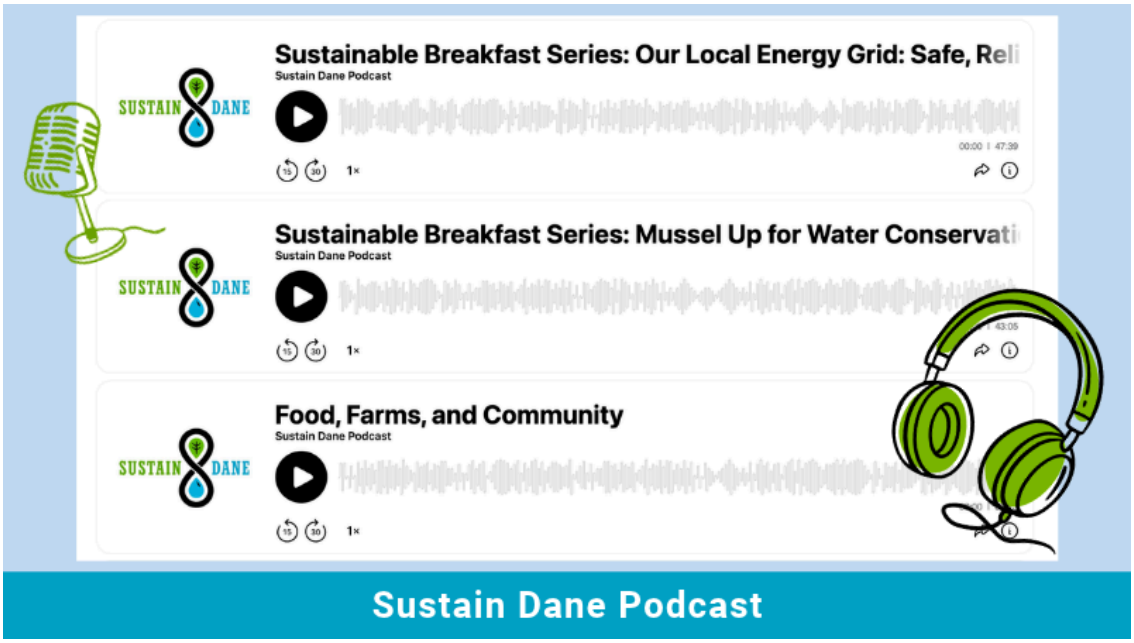
Live Forward Awardees

We are excited to announce the winners of the 2026 Sustain Dane Live Forward Awards. The Live Forward Awards honor local changemakers and emerging leaders who are creating a positive impact through sustainability, community well-being, and resilience. This year's winners include:

- Ryan Holley, The River Food Pantry
- Troy Farm and Kids Garden

Congratulations to all the nominees. Learn about this exceptional group of changemakers here. Awardees will be recognized at the Sustain Dane Summit on November 6.

Register for the 2026 Summit here



Sustain Dane Podcast

Are you looking for your next podcast? The Sustain Dane podcast covers our programs that help people learn, connect, and take action for sustainability. Hear from experts in topics ranging from water conservation, data centers, agriculture, and more. Three most recently released podcasts include:

- Sustainable Breakfast Series: Our Local Energy Grid: Safe, Reliable, Affordable & Sustainable
- Sustainable Breakfast Series: Mussel Up for Water Conservation
- Food, Farms, and Community

Whether you are looking to learn something new, discover new ways to take action toward sustainability, or revisit a previous Sustain Dane program, our podcast can offer insights to help you take steps in your sustainability journey.

Listen to the podcast here

Renewing and New Members



Downtown Madison Inc
JP Cullen
SmithGroup

SUSTAIN DANE MEMBERSHIP

Renewing and New Member Highlight

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. A recent new and renewing member includes:

- Downtown Madison Inc
- JP Cullen
- SmithGroup
- Sunny Side Development



Farmers' Market Food Scrap Drop-off Update

The Westside Community Market has two more weeks of food scrap drop-offs on October 31 and November 7 from 7:00 AM - 12:30 PM. We are happy to accept your pumpkins.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to the program. Your participation has led to less waste in the landfill and an expansion of composting at Neighborhood Food Solutions Farm in Fitchburg and Flynn Creek Farm in Verona. To date, we have collected 36,000+ lbs of food scraps and had over 6,500 drop-offs!

Are you wondering how you can keep your pumpkins out of the landfill? Bring them to:

- The Westside Community Market on Halloween morning of November 7
- Bring them to one of five free pumpkin composting collection locations.
- Place pumpkins at the curb with leaf collection (Madison residents)
- Add them to your own compost (break pumpkins to help decomposition)

Farmer's Market season is coming to an end, but you can still keep diverting your food scraps from the landfill. Check out Dane County's Scrap Stops here to learn about your options for composting throughout winter.

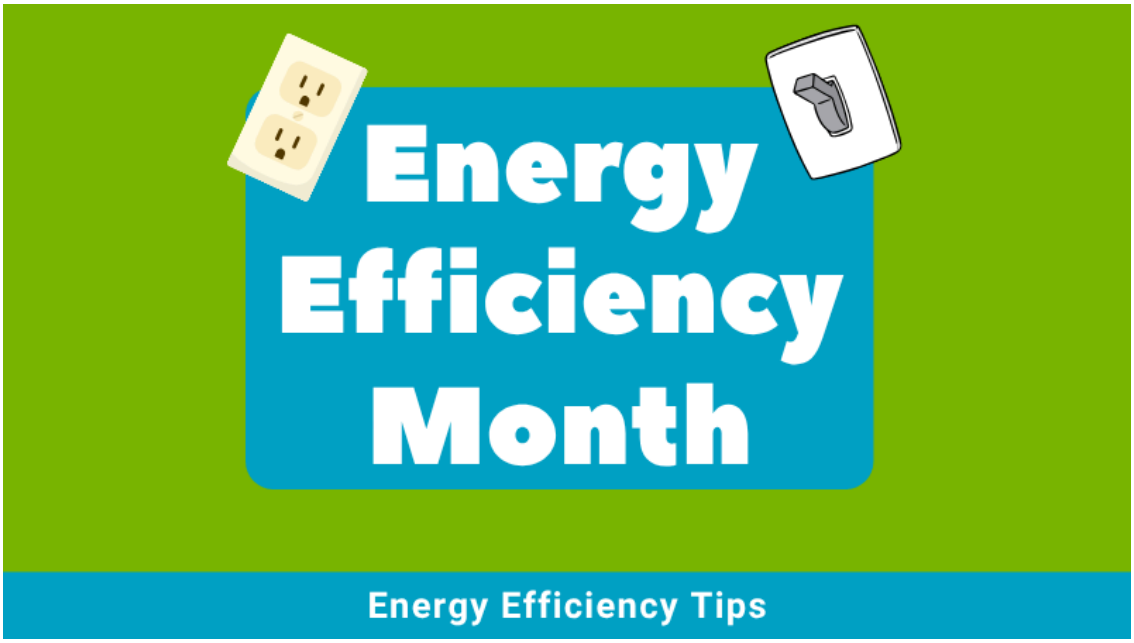


Efficiency Navigator Update

Through the Efficiency Navigator, Sustain Dane and partners support small to medium-sized multifamily housing to become more efficient, affordable, and resilient.

We recently completed work on a four-unit property built in 1957 in Madison's Dunn's Marsh neighborhood. This property is home to 14 total residents, including two children and one senior. Efficiency upgrades include air sealing, insulation, ventilation, and Energy Star windows. These improvements will have an estimated $539 in annual utility cost savings for residents and an annual CO2 emissions savings of 2,764kg. This is the equivalent of avoiding 6,791 vehicle miles traveled, and an estimated 17% reduction in overall energy usage.

Learn more about Efficiency Navigator here



Energy Efficiency Tips

October was Energy Efficiency Month! As we go into winter, here are some energy efficiency and conservation actions you can take:

- **Lights** - Turn off lights that are not in use. As your light bulbs burn out, replace them with energy-efficient LED bulbs. LED bulbs use up to 90% less energy & typically live 15 times longer than the standard bulb.
- **Thermostat** - As it gets colder outside, think about setting your thermostat to 68°F or lower or installing a smart thermostat.
- **Plug load** - Unplug chargers and power strips when not in use. Many electronics consume energy even when they are switched off.
- **Kits** - Focus on Energy has free energy saving kits that you can find here. These have a variety of products like LED light bulbs, showerheads, and more

If you own your own home, consider conducting an energy audit. This can help you start planning for energy-saving improvements. Focus on Energy is providing Inflation Reduction Act rebates through the HOMES and HEAR program that can significantly lower the cost of projects and upgrades.



Middleton All Around Dane County

The Middleton All Around Dane County showcased some of the community-driven initiatives dedicated to fostering local engagement and promoting sustainability. Participants met at the beautiful Parisi Park and heard from the Middleton Parks and Recreations team, the Purple Martineers, Gildas Club, and Natura Clean. Highlights include:

- **Natura Clean** - shared their efforts to make their business more sustainable from workforce retention to their commitment to eco-friendly products.
- **Gildas Club** - is working towards zero waste events by incorporating composting and plastic bag recycling, as well as adding solar panels to their building for their electricity usage.
- **Middleton Parks and Recreation** - is working to get recycling bins in all Middleton Parks and continue recycling education to all staff.
- **The Purple Martineers** - shared their work caring for and maintaining nearly 50 human-made homes for Purple Martins throughout the summer.

This program creates a ripple effect that extends beyond each program, inspiring new connections, ideas for action, and building a more sustainable future for our county. Reach out to us if you have an idea for a 2027 All Around Dane County.



Recycle Better Reunion

Recycle Better Reunion

This month, we celebrated five years of community members learning about recycling and sharing that knowledge with others through Recycle Better! Happy 5th birthday to Recycle Better! Over 1,500 individuals participated in the workshop. Participants' outreach projects have spread recycling knowledge through their networks to over 100,000 more people.

At the reunion, we celebrated through connection with participants across the years, a recycling bingo game, and heard from speakers about the processing of recycled material. Recycle Better and the Reunion was made possible through0 support by WM. Some of the facts we heard included:

- Alter Metal recycles items from small wire hangers to large end-of-life school buses, which are shredded and processed for reuse.
- Locally our #1 plastics are being made into carpet and #2 plastics are turned into plastic decking and landscape edging.
- At Sibelco, glass bottles are recycled right back into new glass bottles that can be back on the shelf for purchase with new material in just a month or two.

Recycling helps us make the most of the resources we have today, reducing the need to take more from the Earth and preserving resources for future generations.



Sustain Dane member, Goodwill of South Central Wisconsin, has launched their sustainability webpage. You can find information about their recycling partners for items they cannot reuse, ways to extend the life cycle of your items and clothes, and more. Learn more and visit the webpage here.

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

November 6: Sustain Dane Summit

November 7: Squash Your Waste - Pumpkin Composting Drive

November 7: Last Food Scrap Drop Off Day ay West Market

November 8: Nature Hike with UW-Arboretum

November 8: Kids on the Prairie with Holy Wisdom Monastery

November 9: Learn to Grow Native Plants Lussier Family Heritage Center

November 9: Energy Conversion Technologies for an Electric Grid Superhighway with Wisconsin Energy Institute

November 14: Ecological Work Party with UW-Arboretum

November 17-18: Sustainable Business Council Conference

November 19: Owls of Pheasant Branch Conservancy

November 29: Mend Don't Spend - Repair Cafe with Sector67

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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