



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Railroaders Coffee & Tea

6 W. Potomac St.
Brunswick, MD, 21716
301-969-0830
Restaurant
Member since February 2015

Management and Leadership



Environmentally Preferable Products and Services

At Railroaders, our entire company is founded around environmentally preferable products and services. We sell and brew only 100% certified organic coffee and tea, all of which is purchased fair trade or better. Our coffee is roasted by Red Rooster Coffee Roaster located in Floyd, VA. They have developed personal relationships with many of the coffee farmers around the world, and only purchase the highest quality beans from certified organic farms. This is environmentally preferable because organics lead to fewer pesticides and other destructive farming practices. Fair trade (or direct trade) is also very environmentally conscious, in that coffee farmers are getting fair wages and are able to maintain organic certification. This encourages the farmers to continue eco-friendly practices.

Our teas are provided by Mumon Tea in Shepherdstown, WV. These teas are all hand bagged using 100% certified organic ingredients, including the tea leaves, which are purchased fair trade. For our sandwich menu, the bulk of our ingredients come from Sysco, who offers a large variety of natural and organic products. What doesn't come from Sysco typically comes from Costco. Costco is rapidly expanding their organic selections, and have been practicing waste reduction for a long time with their "no bag" policy. Any boxes used to carry, store, and transport items are recyclable. In the retail section of our store, we are selling artisan crafts made of local reclaimed forest wood. These items, such as cutting boards, shelves, etc; are made by a local veterans group using all biodegradable oils.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

In addition to purchasing only organic coffees and teas, we also make a strong effort to only purchase fully compostable and/or recyclable paper goods. Our to-go cups, both hot and cold, are 100% compostable, made by a company called Eco-Products. These materials are considerably more expensive than their non-compostable counter parts, however; we feel the extra expense from our pockets is the right thing to do, and the most practical way of doing it. We also carry to-go boxes and soup containers for the sandwiches and soups on our menu. These containers are also Eco-Products, and are fully compostable. When purchasing large quantity items, we buy the biggest bulk package we can find in order to cut down on the packaging used for multiple smaller packages. For example, when purchasing powdered sugar, the options which are typically available to us are: 1 case of 24 individual one-pound boxes or 1- 25 lb bag. The price for the boxes is actually significantly lower, and the boxes are more convenient to store in our small kitchen, however; we always purchase the bag to reduce the amount of waste associated with the purchase.

Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

At Railroaders, we are very proactive and involved in the community environmental projects. We co-sponsored a main street clean up, along with Better Choice Bakery, to remove trash from the back alleys of Potomac Street. We also donated coffee and muffins to a local group that spent a rainy day cleaning trash out of a section of the Potomac River. As business owners, we also sit on the Sustainable Brunswick Committee, which is dedicated to making Brunswick a generally greener place.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

This is a category we are particularly proud of here at Railroaders. As a food business, it is expected of us to produce a significant amount of trash, however, even on our busiest weeks; we have managed to stay below the residential maximum of 96 gallons of trash per week and we have actually decreased the amount of trash we throw away since our opening in April. We accomplish this through recycling and composting (see below), food donation, purchasing items with minimal packaging (see above) and maximizing the use of reusable food ware. We have a collection of custom designed ceramic mugs and plates and we always ask customers if they will be taking their items to go or if they will be enjoying them here. This allows us to use and reuse mugs and plates for customers who are staying in the building.

Donating leftovers to the local Veterans house in town significantly decreases our waste output. The veterans house provides peer-to-peer housing and counseling opportunities to veterans who are in need of such services. At the end of each day, a designated veteran comes over to the coffee shop and picks up any food leftovers that would have to be thrown away. This includes muffins which are past our personal 48 hour in-store limit, daily made macaroni and cheese, and any other items which we make fresh every day, and do not reuse leftovers. This has been an amazing partnership. It has decreased our weekly trash by nearly two entire 35 gallon bags, and it has provided reasonably fresh and high quality food to a group in need, a group whose purpose has deeply touched our hearts. In addition to the veterans group, we also give our used espresso pucks to a local bakery. The baker there uses coffee grounds in some of her sweets, and the "used" espresso pucks still carry tons of flavor without having to buy brand new coffee beans. Again, this has been a mutually beneficial relationship.

Recycling

To maximize our recycling rate, we ask our customers to leave their dishes/trash at their table. This may seem like an odd way of decreasing trash, however; it allows us to provide a two-fold service to our customers and our earth. One, the customers appreciate having us bus the tables, and not having to worry about where their dishes go. Two, it allows us to properly sort the trash and recyclables left on the table. For example, if someone has a glass soda bottle and a napkin, they are likely to either throw both in the recycling container, which contaminates the recycling, because the napkin has food product on it, or they are likely to throw both in the trash, which adds extra weight in the trash from the glass, as well as unnecessary trash, as the glass could have been recycled.

The county does not pick up recycling for businesses, therefore, many business owners think the best/easiest option for them is to not have recycling available to their customers. We think very differently. We talked to the people at City Hall about business recycling, and they informed us that we are able to drop our recycling off at the office of Public Works, during any weekday. We have a recycling container in our store, which is available to customers. Our customers recycle their glass and plastic bottles from the drink cooler, while the staff uses the recycling container for a much larger variety of items. We carefully wash out any aluminum food cans to recycle without contamination, along with plastic coffee syrup bottles, delivery boxes, and pretty much anything that can be recycled. Our county is kind enough to offer single stream recycling so sorting is not an issue. We recycle approximately 50 gallons per week, with additional boxes on delivery weeks. That's 50 gallons of potential trash, diverted from the

waste stream per week, which is equal to approximately 2100 gallons of recycling since we opened our doors in April, which is the equivalent of at least 315,000 lbs. of trash diverted from the waste stream since our opening.

Composting

We separate used coffee grounds and allow customers to take as much as they would like for use in their gardens. We also take used espresso pucks home and use them as compost enhancers for our personal garden.

We hope to further increase the composting of our food waste by working with our landlord and with City Hall to set up a large yard composter. All of our paper goods (cups, lids, to-go boxes, etc.) are compostable and a new composter would eliminate nearly all of our remaining food waste. Any compost made from this composter will either go to our personal garden or be donated to the Brunswick Community Garden.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

When completing the construction/build-out for our restaurant, we installed all LED lights. We also installed multi-function heaters/air conditioners, which are much more energy efficient than the baseboard style heating already installed in the building.

Transportation

Employee Commute

As the owners and operators of the restaurant, we moved to Brunswick before the restaurant was open. This allowed us to integrate ourselves into the community, but also to have less than a mile commute. In good weather, we ride our bikes down or walk. No employee lives more than 20 miles away from the restaurant, and our employees from the same area are frequently scheduled together so that ride-sharing is a consistent part of getting to and from work.

Efficient Business Travel

When we are traveling to a coffee conference or meeting, we always ride together. Luckily, we are a very small business with very few employees, so it is easy to fit us all in one or two cars.

When we order from Sysco, we do so understanding that gas and travel will be a factor in their delivery. In order to decrease the amount of deliveries being made, we purchased more cold storage space, which allowed us to reduce our deliveries from once a week to once a month. This has saved approximately 12 trips from Jessup to Brunswick in four months.

Water

Water Conservation

As a coffee shop, water conservation is one of the environmental goals which we struggle with the most. Unfortunately, there is a certain amount of water that we have to use, between dishes, and hand washing, food preparation and so forth. However, when designing the restaurant, we opted for a triple sink dish washing method as opposed to an automatic dish washer. This allows us to reuse dish water until it is soiled, rather than using fresh water for every batch of dishes. We also turn off the water supply overnight when we are not here, in case of any leaks or dripping faucets. The building we are in is very old, and not immune to broken pipes, leaks from our upstairs neighbors, etc. Turning the water off overnight allows us to be sure that in case of an incident, not only will we have less water damage, but we will also have less waste.



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at www.green.maryland.gov/registry

