

## Making Our Meetings More Environmentally Responsible

If you've attended an AMS Annual Meeting or specialty conference in the past few years, you may have noticed some of the many ways—big and small—that AMS and our partners are trying to make our gatherings greener. Last month in this space we introduced the AMS Committee on Environmental Responsibility and promised more details on the committee's work in this and future "45 Beacon" features. This month we focus on how we are trying to reduce the environmental impact of our conferences.

The AMS Meetings Department works with AMS member volunteers to make sure that our meetings are not just scientifically stimulating and professionally rewarding, but that they also make responsible use of natural resources and keep waste, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum. Since these efforts began (with the Council's 2007 adoption of the AMS Green Conference Guidelines; see [www.ametsoc.org/MEET/greenconferenceguidelines.html](http://www.ametsoc.org/MEET/greenconferenceguidelines.html)), the whole meetings industry has gradually developed a similar focus. Vendors of meeting services—hotels, convention centers, caterers, and exhibitors—are marketing more environmentally friendly products and services. The AMS meetings staff often signs contracts with convention centers that are certified for their Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), such as the Austin Convention Center, site of the 2013 AMS Annual Meeting ([www.austinconventioncenter.com/sustainable/process.htm](http://www.austinconventioncenter.com/sustainable/process.htm)). Some examples of the center's sustainable design include LED lighting in all meeting rooms; carpet made from recycled materials, generating zero emissions, and installed without using glue; wind-generated electrical power; and a 93% reduction in its carbon footprint since 2007.

You've probably noticed that we rely much less on disposable food and drink containers, that the hotels we visit offer environmentally friendly housekeeping options, and that our exhibitors are distributing a lot fewer give-away (often really throw-away) souvenirs and tchotchkes. Other efforts may be less visible to the average meeting attendee. For example, we try to ensure that our caterers send leftover food to local food banks rather than waste it, and that they compost food scraps rather than send them to a landfill. Meetings Department Director Claudia Gorski notes, "The meetings staff is trying to cut back on the amount of paper used during meetings; this includes electronic signage for meeting rooms and an electronic 'Conference-at-a-Glance.' We are also working on a phone app for our program for future Annual Meetings."

And it's not just big AMS meetings that are going green. AMS is also trying to help its members in their own meeting planning efforts. Building on the Green Conference Guidelines, in 2011 the Council adopted the AMS Professional Guidance Statement on Green Meetings ([www.ametsoc.org/policy/2011green\\_meetings\\_amsstatement.html](http://www.ametsoc.org/policy/2011green_meetings_amsstatement.html)). From choosing a meeting venue that minimizes participant travel and offers good public transportation, to planning menus with locally sourced foods, to limiting printed material, the statement offers dozens of suggestions for environmentally responsible meetings of any size. If you have suggestions for additional ways to "meet green", please share them with your colleagues at the committee's website ([www.ametsoc.org/committeepges/envres/index.html](http://www.ametsoc.org/committeepges/envres/index.html)).

Watch this space next month to learn how environmental responsibility informs the AMS financial investment portfolio.