

# Two Upper Keys Businesses Get Green Certified

Going green in a down economy may not make sense to some business owners; but for others, going green is more than a passing trend. It's a way to save money and show your respect for the environment. With more than 20 million small businesses in the U.S. making up 96 percent of all U.S. businesses, this is an area that can have a huge impact on the status quo.

Think about it: Would you rather do business with someone who is a caring steward of their island, or someone who is just looking to make a quick buck with no concern for their impact on the community?

But being ethical is only one advantage of greening your business. So far, Keys businesses that have become certified in the GLEE Green Business Program have found ways to save money by conserving resources and reducing waste. Some have made small financial

investments in those changes, while others are beginning by simply changing their habits.

In November, the Green Turtle Inn Restaurant of Islamorada, and Sheriff Synthetics: A Certified Amsoil Dealer, Key Largo, met the requirements of the Green Business Certification Program. Both businesses downloaded and completed the online tools for the program, and using those guidelines, met the standards of an on-site assessment.

The Green Turtle Inn Restaurant, serving locals and tourists since 1947, has adopted a recycling program, replaced all light bulbs with energy saving CFLs (An Energy Star CFL will use 75 percent less energy than an incandescent bulb), added window tinting to deflect heat and save energy and installed weather stripping where needed to reduce energy leaks. Management is

also practicing water conservation measures, is in the process of switching to biodegradable or recyclable supplies for take out items and will eventually establish a compost program that will nourish a vegetable garden planned for the site. All of these steps will save the restaurant money in the long run and add to its credibility as one business that makes an effort to reduce its impact on the environment.

Sheriff Synthetics, a certified Amsoil dealership operated by Jeff & Rosie Sheriff, has maintained a small footprint while doing business in a 120-square foot home office. In the Sheriff household, recycling is a way of life and energy conservation is a priority. By downloading his energy bill history dating back to 2003 (available on the Florida Keys Electric Cooperative website), the Sheriffs can confirm the energy savings they began to enjoy in 2006,

when the Sheriffs became serious about energy conservation. Installing CFLs and investing in an AC system that is Energy Star certified are two of many steps the Sheriffs have taken to conserve energy. Their green lifestyle has naturally influenced their business practices as they continue to find ways to conserve resources and reduce waste.

The Green Business Certification Program was launched in November and offers free downloadable tools to help any businesses reduce waste, conserve resources and save money. Green Business Certification is open to all GLEE Business Members and includes many benefits, including a framed certification, Green Business Partner window decals and more. A \$50 fee is required for the on-site assessment. For more information, read about the Green Business Program at KeysGLEE.com.



Jeff Sheriff and Sheriff Synthetics stop long enough for a photo.



The Green Team at the Green Turtle Inn Restaurant in Islamorada were recently presented a framed certificate acknowledging their steps to green the restaurant's operation through GLEE's Green Business Program. From left are Green Team members Trish Knapp, Janet Crane, Terry Albury, Celestin Gesner, Chef Andy Niedenthal, GLEE board member Christi Allen, Warren Rogers, Michael Carraway and Tony Corallo

**The Island Grill is undergoing construction to install a full Tiki Roof over the outdoor seating. It will include heaters, and fans and can be completely closed off from the elements. Soon we will be able to service all our guests, in any weather!**

**Stop by in January and check it out!**

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# Useless "Green" Facts

- The average person throws away about 10 lbs of trash per day.
- Almost 7 tons of clothing and fabric are thrown away every year. Only 12% of that is reused or recycled.
- The most common litter is cigarette butts. Smokers toss 4.5 trillion butts a year. It takes 2 to 5 years for the filter to biodegrade.
- Time it takes to biodegrade:  
A disposable diaper - 10 to 20 years.
- A hard plastic container - 20 to 30 years.
- A rubber boot sole - 50 to 80 years.
- An aluminum can - 200 to 400 years
- A plastic 6-pack holder - 450 years.
- Glass bottles - forever.
- Paper - 2 to 4 weeks. However, newspapers take up the most space in landfills. The Coconut Telegraph recycles all unused issues at the Upper Keys Humane Society.

# Freecycling in the Keys!

**Got something you're done with that someone else can use?  
Need something that someone else might have?**

Florida Keys Freecycle™ where one person's trash can be another's treasure!

Freecycle is open to individuals, businesses, schools, and nonprofit organizations. Our goal is to make it easy for everyone in the Keys to find new homes for good items rather than throw them away. We'll reduce waste, save resources, ease the burden on landfills, and connect with like-minded folks.

Main rule: Everything posted must be free, legal, and appropriate for all ages.

Here's how it works: You sign up for the Yahoo Group. If you have or need something, you post it (which eventually is included in an email to everyone in the group). People respond to you via email, and you make your arrangements to exchange the item(s). No strings! It feels great to know you've helped someone, and nice to know they're there when you need help yourself.

The Freecycle Network is a movement of people interested in keeping good stuff out of landfills while building a sense of community. Check out [freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org) for other cities and national Freecycle info!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FloridaKeys-Freecycle/>  
 or go to [freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org) and search for Florida Keys

Visit [www.keysglee.com](http://www.keysglee.com) and sign up to have your business green certified