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Stowe's Green Mountain Inn Leads Environmental Stewardship for Green Hotels in Vermont

Stowe, VT—December 2007—The Green Mountain Inn can boast many firsts—the area's first liquor license, the first non-smoking hotel, and the first hotel in Stowe to establish a Green Policy.

The Inn, which is celebrating its 175th anniversary in 2008, began instituting environmentally friendly practices in the mid-1990s. The differences are subtle and might not be noticed by every guest that stays at the Inn. But to long-time innkeeper Patti Clark, their green initiative isn't intended to make a big splash or for marketing purposes, but to try minimizing the footprint that the Inn leaves on the earth.

"We take our status as a green hotel very seriously and have been pretty aggressive with our changes over the last 12 years," Clark said. "Implementing such practices as recycling, composting and changing to energy efficient light bulbs are simple steps. We are now looking at what else we can do to reduce our energy consumption and educate our staff and guests on why we think this is so important."

In the over 100 rooms at the Inn, guests can also do their part to conserve energy by reusing towels, linens and choosing to turn off lights when they are not being used. The Inn is also experimenting with bulk dispensers for guest amenities such as shampoo, conditioner and lotion and is in the process of changing their cleaning products to utilize ones that are more environmentally friendly. These efforts will help to eliminate over 69,000 1.5 ounce plastic bottles.

But it's not just in the rooms that the effects of the Green Policy are felt, the Inn's two restaurants, The Whip Bar & Grill and the Main Street Dining Room use local products from farms and ranches to breweries and cheese companies. The goal is to reduce transportation costs and to support local infrastructures. "We've always had a strong relationship with the community producers and feel it's important to have Vermont products featured in our menu items," said Chef Steven Truso. "But we take it one step further and work to reduce the amount of waste that our kitchen puts out by using a compost pile."

It is reported that in the U.S., we collect over 230 million tons of trash a year, which mostly sits in landfills or incinerators. The Inn's recycling program as well as the composting is intended to try and offset some of the products that they do need to send to the local landfill.

The Green Mountain Inn, originally built in 1833, began as a coaching inn for 19th-century travelers located in the heart of Stowe village. Stowe's original inn retains much of its antique charm offering 104 rooms, suites and apartments. Guests enjoy two acclaimed restaurants, the Whip Bar & Grill and the Main Street Dining Room, specialty shops, a year-round heated outdoor pool, afternoon tea and cookies, health club facility, massage services, and much more.