

# Network of support found in sustainability group

By GENE STOWE  
Tribune Correspondent

Boosting the spirit of the sustainability movement, monthly Green Drinks get-togethers give environmentally friendly folks a friendly environment for networking and learning from each other.

The international movement, with local groups in South Bend and Goshen, reaches some 565 cities from Algeria to Latvia and Peru to Vietnam.

"We have a mixture of architects, contractors, educators, engineers, builders, preservationists, LEED APs, et cetera," says Mike Keen, director of the Center for a Sustainable Future at Indi-

## Get in touch

For more information about Green Drinks in South Bend, e-mail youcanbegreen@gmail.com.

ana University South Bend. "We learn from each other. We network. We make referrals."

Mike Reese, of The Troyer Group and the U.S. Green Building Council — Indiana North Central Branch, and Joel Barrett, of WVPE-FM and the Sustainable Business Network steering committee, organized the South Bend group along with Keen.

Their combined e-mail lists alert 300 to 500 people of the meetings every

month's second Tuesday, moving among downtown South Bend watering holes. About 20 people have visited each of the first three gatherings.

"Green Drinks to me is just a basic place for people to come together informally from a wide variety of professions to talk about sustainability issues," says participant Bob Humbarger, a roofing consultant.

"Projects discussed are sometimes related to whatev-

er particular profession you happen to be in, how that could relate to sustainability in all aspects of life, really."

"It's just a loose agreement that serves the purpose of getting people together that are interested in sustainability," Barrett says. "It's just a fun, simple concept that's taken off all over the world."

"Some of the people who have come found us on the Green Drinks Web site (www.greendrinks.org) because they had been in-

terested in Green Drinks in other cities. There's no real agenda. You're just sharing ideas and networking happens from it."

"It's basically an informal atmosphere to get people together to talk about sustainable happenings in the community, new technologies and ways to do things better in design, construction, business and whatever people bring to the table," Reese says.

"It's more about getting to know other people in your community that have similar

interests."

The connection is vital for a fledgling movement where many environmentally conscious people feel isolated in their interest, says Keen, whose center drew 120 people to a Sustainability and Innovation workshop in October.

"There's all kinds of people that have been doing this in little areas," he says. "They've been isolated in their own context, but they're starting to connect up."

Do you have an idea for an article in

## Tribune Business Weekly?

If so, contact Joni Gibley at (574) 235-6302 e-mail: jgibley@sbtinfo.com




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