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**FROM THE UPCOMING ISSUE**

## Bar associations encourage environmentally-sustainable law offices

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BOSTON — A move by individual law firms to "go green" with stronger environmental programs in their offices is now moving to the next level, with bar associations and legal groups pushing new initiatives.

Early this month, the Massachusetts Bar Association announced an Energy and Environmental Task Force that plans to roll out green guidelines for law firms this fall.

The Massachusetts bar group joins the Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future, which has guidelines for running a sustainable law office by using energy and resources in a way that sustains them for future generations.

In March, with input from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the American Bar Association's Section of Environment, Energy and Resources launched its "climate challenge" program that lays out strategies for law firms to conserve energy and resources such as paper.

New Massachusetts Bar Association President David W. White said the association is naming a task force partly because the issue is one he wants to focus on during his tenure.

"We all have a responsibility, and lawyers have an opportunity, to be leaders among the business community," White said. "Hopefully this will inspire others to take a look at their practices and join in the efforts as well."

### **Giving firms a choice**

In its first six months, 17 law firms have signed up for the ABA's climate challenge, including Arnold & Porter and Beveridge & Diamond in

Washington, Holland & Knight and Stoel Rives.

The ABA's program is designed to give firms choices. They can focus on one of three key areas: cutting paper usage or boosting paper recycling; buying energy from renewable sources; or using power-saving U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star equipment and following Energy Star guidelines.

The EPA's Office of General Counsel, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies and the expert witness company IMS Expert Services of Pensacola, Fla., are also on board with the ABA program.

In addition, some corporate law departments have made inquiries, said David M. Friedland, a principal at Beveridge & Diamond and a spokesman for the ABA's program.

"We private law firm folks said everyone else in the business world is doing that, we ought to be doing that, too," Friedland said.

The Oregon group has progressed the furthest. It's technically a project of the nonprofit Center for Earth Leadership in Portland, Ore., but former Stoel Rives corporate lawyer Dick Roy is at the helm.

When the group was formed, the legal profession was concerned about being on the sidelines of the sustainability movement, Roy said.

In addition to running continuing legal education seminars on sustainable practices, the Oregon group already has a model law office policy, and environmental checklists for operating a law office, office construction and for the building manager who leases space to a law firm.

In June, Roy said, the Oregon group met with sustainability teams at three Portland firms: Cosgrave Vergeer Kester, Dunn Carney Allen Higgins & Tongue and Stoll Stoll Berne Lokting & Shlachter.

"We go in and talk about how you can reinvent the law office so it acts in a sustainable fashion," Roy said.

### **Working on a handbook**

Next on the Oregon group's agenda is an ongoing statewide study of the intersection between the legal profession and the sustainability movement, and a task force has been formed to publish a sustainable lawyer handbook.

"It will allow lawyers to be very savvy in traveling in terms of their carbon output," Roy said.

Although bar associations in two states known for progressive politics have stepped to the forefront on the green-practices front, the issue is starting to percolate at other bar associations.

A couple of associations, including the State Bar of New Mexico, said members or staff have informally broached the issue, but have not adopted policies.

The Tennessee Bar Association's Environmental Law Section is taking a more concerted look at energy conservation. The section plans to disseminate information to the legal community through its newsletter, said the bar association's executive director, Allan Ramsaur.