

Rolling out the green carpet

Five county establishments among growing list of Vermont hotels and inns committed to being both friendly and environmentally friendly

By **BOB AUDETTE**, Reformer Staff

Friday, May 1 BRATTLEBORO -- The 40 Putney Road Bed and Breakfast may be a green hotel, but we're not talking about the building's exterior paint.

The inn, and four other lodging establishments in Windham County, are members of Green Hotels in the Green Mountain State, a joint program of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the Vermont Small Business Development Center.

Green Hotels is a voluntary environmental program for lodging facilities created in 1998 to promote and advance environmentally, and fiscally, sound practices at inns and hotels in Vermont.

More than 92 lodging establishments have been designated green hotels since the program began.

"We have a lot of green initiatives in place right now," said Tim Brady, who owns 40 Putney Road with his wife, Amy.

Just as with the four other recognized inns in Windham County, some of those initiatives include ditching bottled water, encouraging guests to reuse towels and linens, using green cleaning agents, replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lightbulbs and installing a rainwater collection system to water the inn's garden.

In place of bottled water, the Bradys offer refillable sealed glass water carafes, filled with spring water, in each room.

"We will also be offering sport bottles to guests this summer," he said.

The other recognized inns in the county are the Hermitage Inn and the Inn at Mount Snow in West Dover, the Inn at Stratton Mountain in Stratton and the Readmore Bed, Breakfast and Books in Bellows Falls.

The Bradys got started greening their inn by reinsulating the building and reglazing the windows.

"Those projects got us involved in the green initiatives," he said.

They wanted to install solar panels to augment power taken from the grid, but Tim Brady was concerned about the damage that might happen to the building's slate roof if a solar array were mounted there.

As a business, said Brady, they have a responsibility not only to minimize their impact on the environment but also to make environmental policy a key and integral part of their business strategy.

"It's really good that the state of Vermont has this program," said Dorothy Read, who with her husband, Stewart, owns the Readmore.

The Reads had instituted many of the initiatives suggested by Green Hotels for the Green Mountain State prior to its enlistment in the program, she said.

In addition to the things the Bradys are doing at 40 Putney Road, the Reads have installed an energy

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efficient furnace and soap dispensers in the bathrooms instead of individually wrapped bars of soap.

"It's a lot of little things," said Read, who uses the inn's compost in its flower garden. "It's a lot of common sense things."

The Readmore is also a member of the Vermont Fresh Network, which partners restaurants and inns with local farmers.

"We use as much local food and dairy as possible," said Read.

For the past seven years, she and her husband have operated the Readmore, and being a green hotel is definitely good for business, she said.

"We have many guests who come here specifically because we are a green hotel."

That holds true for the Inn at Mount Snow as well, said Glenda Belicove, the innkeeper.

"Some of my return guests have commented on the fact that they are pleased we are a green hotel."

The green initiatives are a way the inn's owners can lessen their impact on the local and global environment by conserving energy, water and other natural resources; reducing waste generation; recycling and purchasing recycled products; and reducing our use of toxic materials.

Among the projects taken on at the Hermitage Inn is a solar array, designed to not only supply power to the inn but also to the grid during low-usage times.

"The companies and organizations represented today are leaders in what I call the Vermont Way -- where our economic and environmental heritage are

inextricably intertwined," said Gov. James Douglas, during a ceremony earlier this month to honor green businesses.

The Bradys also hope to one day purchase energy from environmentally friendly sources such as Central Vermont Public Service's "Cow Power" program.

Forty Putney Road has a small garden, where the Bradys grow herbs and spices, tomatoes and flowers.

"We compost everything possible and have a robust recycling programming," said Brady.

The inn, which the Bradys bought in 2007, has six guest rooms.

The Bradys, from the Philadelphia area, wanted to run their own business and decided, because Amy enjoys cooking, that they would like to open a bed and breakfast.

They had visited Brattleboro before and when they heard 40 Putney Road was up for sale, they jumped at their chance.

"It's such a cool town and we knew we could totally live there," he said.

One of the best things about the inn, said Brady, was the fact it had a small pub.

The Bradys offer about 30 beers and wine for their guests and host beer tastings on Saturday evenings. The beer tastings are open to the public, but because seating is limited to 12 people, Tim asks that anyone interested call ahead to make sure there is room.

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