



## Red Lion Inn Wins Massachusetts Good Earthkeeping Award

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Photo by Kristian Septimius Krogh

STOCKBRIDGE, MASS.—The Massachusetts Lodging Assn. awarded The Red Lion Inn the Good Earthkeeping Award at the Stars of the Industry Awards ceremony in Boston on February 12. The award recognizes a property that is a leader in the industry for its good earth keeping efforts. The Red Lion Inn won the award for the Up to 150 Rooms category. Good earth keeping is a vital part of The Red Lion Inn's company culture and the way it conducts business. The Red Lion has integrated effective environmental management practices into as many aspects of its operation as possible and staff continues to explore new ideas for energy conservation and sustainability.

As stewards of one of the most famous New England stagecoach inns, The Red Lion Inn's success depends upon the careful preservation of its rich colonial- and Victorian-era heritage. A recent major renovation of the Main Inn resulted in upgraded plumbing and electrical infrastructure that provides guests with energy-efficient, individually climate-controlled guestrooms. The new heating and cooling system includes modulating condensing boilers, which promise to increase energy efficiency

by at least 15 percent (aided by 6 inches of new insulation installed throughout the renovated part of the building). Further heat loss is prevented by new insulated windows that were retrofitted into old windows—a more time-consuming and costly way to replace windows, but one that also maintains the architectural integrity of the nineteenth century inn's design.

Red Lion Inn staff also implemented new water conservation efforts. The Inn eliminated the burden its storm water put on the municipal wastewater treatment system by installing an on-premises filtration system that disperses storm water throughout the property (also at an additional cost). The Inn's maintenance staff created a new water collection system for garden irrigation that collects water from rain gutters into drums, which are wheeled around by a hand truck to disperse the water using a pump. Staff carefully monitors water usage in order to make adjustments accordingly.

### Landscaping Favors Native Plants

Renovation efforts included the creation of new perennial gardens and green spaces throughout the property—new plants and trees that add beauty and contribute to good air quality. The landscape architect designed gardens using plants that thrive in the conditions provided by the New England climate, including subsisting on rain and the rainwater the inn collects and disburses. Extra care was taken to landscape around the elms that guard the Inn's facade, changing the soil mixture to one that encourages elms to thrive while also allowing perennials to grow in their shadows.

The Inn's staff works on the reduction of their carbon footprint through the purchase of supplies locally, an important part of the company's business model and one that fosters the sustainability of the region. As a major employer in the Berkshires, The Red Lion Inn is a prominent part of the business landscape and has the buying power that a business of its size would afford. An analysis of 2007 purchasing habits shows that the Inn spent \$1.15 million on regional vendors.

Red Lion Chef Brian J. Alberg is a strong proponent of buying locally. In 2007, the Inn spent \$350,000 with local farmers alone—up \$50,000 from 2006. Alberg offers a Sustainable Dinner Menu on Sunday and Monday evenings and offers a Sustainable Breakfast daily (both menus consist entirely of locally-sourced ingredients). He grows his own pigs for the Inn's menu, which dine on vegetable scraps from the inn along with local grains. Alberg works hard to preserve the bounty of the fall harvest for use throughout the winter months in order to provide guests with locally-grown food. The kitchen also recycles cooking oil for local farmers who use biofuel to power their trucks. The Inn is a longtime supporter of Berkshire Grown, a nonprofit organization dedicated to marketing local farmers' products to restaurants and markets in the region.

Additionally, the Inn's staff has integrated the following practices into their daily operations:

- Recycling of bottles and cans from guestroom waste;
- Recycling paper, bottles and cans from staff refuse;
- Performing monthly checks on all faucets and kitchen appliances for leaks;
- Maintenance crew regularly educated on energy-saving methods and conservation;
- The Inn uses APEX "green" cleaning products in the Lion's Den, and the products are packed in cardboard boxes (no plastic), further reducing waste;
- The Inn will implement use of green products in the housekeeping department and the main kitchen—expected in early 2008; and Duvet covers are made by a local designer (Crispina Designs—[www.crispina.com](http://www.crispina.com)) who crafted them from the Inn's recycled guestroom sheets.

Go to [The Red Lion Inn](#).