

North Coast businesses practice sustainability

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Whether it's organic farming, local food networks or community beach clean-ups, many businesses and groups on the North Coast have an environmental focus year-round.

For Earth Day on April 22, there will be additional opportunities to celebrate the environment.

Cannon Beach is hosting its annual 12 Days of Earth Day event through April 29, including clean-ups, tree planting, a shred event, lectures and a parade and street fair.

Even after the celebration ends, many North Coast businesses will be keeping an environmental focus.

Coast River Business Journal spoke with three businesses focused on sustainability.

Astoria Co+op

The entire lifespan of most products at the Astoria Co+op — from their locally-based source to their final resting place in a compost bin or recycling container — is planned with sustainability in mind.

“That’s a big differentiator for us. The corporate grocery stores, or even natural grocers, they don’t work on an individual basis with growers or producers and we take a lot of extra time to work directly with farmers, producers, manufacturers,” said Matt Stanley, the store’s general manager. “It’s more effort and more time, but it allows us to have a really neat product selection and greatly reduce how much stuff is coming from trucks all over the place.”

The store’s selection includes sustainably-raised meat, vegetarian and vegan items.

Product packaging has sustainability in mind, too. There are bulk options for staples like oats, nuts and spices, as well as soy sauce and maple syrup. Customers often bring their own reusable containers to fill or top off.

The store doesn’t sell plastic water bottles, and has locally-sourced refillable options for water, milk, beers, cider and wine.

The store works to minimize its waste, too. Staff can take home expired items, and it donates what isn’t sold to the food bank. The store also donates produce scraps from food preparation to feed the pigs and chickens that may find themselves on the shelves of the store.

It takes time to build a sustainable network. Being a consumer cooperative, Stanley said the store was able to invest in sustainable products without worrying about returning a high profit in the first few years.

“I think people are looking for not only things that are better for them, but are better for the planet, better for the employees working in the stores that they’re patronizing,” Stanley said. “There’s a growing consumer demand for those things and people are willing more and more to spend a little bit



TRAV WILLIAMS/BROKEN BANJO PHOTOGRAPHY

Solar panels are seen from the roof of the Astoria Co+op.



PHOTOS BY LYDIA ELY/THE ASTORIAN

LEFT: The Astoria Co+op's bulk food section is intended to reduce the waste of single use containers. **RIGHT:** The Astoria Co+op sources some of its fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers.

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