

# Going Green Matters 2016 to highlight sustainable suburbs



During the 2015 Going Green Matters environmental fair, Dave Doerschuk of Columbus, Ohio, inspects the Boonemobile, a recumbent bicycle with a carbon fiber shell. This year's fair is set for March 13 at the Michigan Shores Club in Wilmette. (file / Pioneer Press)

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**T**he annual Going Green Matters environmental fair will ask visitors to explore how they can help make their suburban communities more ecologically sustainable, and do so in a way that blends education and family fun, according to one of the event's organizers.

The fair, set to run from noon to 5 p.m. on March 13 at the Michigan Shores Club, 911 Michigan Ave., will draw more than 50 vendors and hundreds of visitors from as many as 18 communities around [Wilmette](#) and the Chicago region, said Beth Drucker, president of Go Green Wilmette.

The environmental education and advocacy organization is putting on the fair in partnership with the village of Wilmette.

Many of the offerings from dozens of businesses, environmental and civic organizations, student groups, and government bodies like Wilmette, the Wilmette Park District and Wilmette School District 39 will focus on this year's theme of Sustainable Suburbs, Drucker said.

She said organizers decided on the theme because "there's been a lot of talk about urban planning and how to make cities more efficient and livable in the future, so it occurred to us that people don't talk about the same issues when it comes to the suburbs where many of us live.

"We decided that this year, let's think together about our communities, to make them more sustainable," she said.

People visiting the fair can explore the theme by investigating exhibits from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, planning company [Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLC](#), and the Chicago Active Transportation Alliance, among others, she said.

"But we're not just about policy," Drucker said. "We're filled with interesting ideas for residents – individuals and families – to contribute to the sustainability of their communities through what they do personally, at home."

As part of that focus, Go Green Wilmette will give away 500 donated LED light bulbs, and will also give bulbs to low-income Chicago area families and agencies serving underserved communities, Drucker said.

Organizers want visitors to bring their children to Going Green Matters, she said, and have arranged for displays and activities, like a sustainable scavenger hunt, that will be interesting for people of all ages.

Some of those include:

- A collection of "green" electric cars, a Pace bus with a bicycle rack that bike owners can practice attaching their two-wheelers to, and a Divvy bicycle display;
- An inter-active "Eco Zone" with hands-on exhibits for children and adults;
- The Go Green Café where visitors can take a break with complimentary healthy refreshments and heartier menu offerings from the Michigan Shores Club;
- A native plant sale, and a display of Gillson Park nature photography by Therese Bach Heyek;

This year's event, the second to be held at Michigan Shores, will have even more companies, environmental organizations, student groups and other exhibitors than last year's Going Green Matters, Drucker said.

"The show is 25 percent bigger than last year," she said. "It's going to be great."

For the first time, Go Green Wilmette's annual recycling day, held concurrently with the fair, will take place at the Gillson Beach parking lot just south of Michigan Shores. People can bring in a variety of items from computers and clothing to Styrofoam, electronic games, cell phones, holiday lights and more.

To learn more about sponsors, programming, vendors, and recycling at Going Green Matters, visit [www.goinggreenmatters.org](http://www.goinggreenmatters.org).

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