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Charlotte Convention Center's Lean, Mean Pollution-Fighting Team

The Charlotte Convention Center wants planners to know that sustainable practices are here to stay. In addition to procedures implemented within the past year like the usage of biodegradable cups made from corn products, the facility has gone the extra mile and added a "Green Team" tasked to cut environmental costs. The team includes representatives from local hotels, larger area employers, event venues, and local government.

"A five-day conference of 2,500 people will typically use 90,000 cans or bottles, 75,000 cups and 87,500 napkins," reports the Green Meeting Industry Council. The Charlotte Convention Center plays host to more than 600 events a year and curbing the environmental impact the meetings industry has on the area is a top priority for the Green Team. Local events are doing their part too. Charlotte Shout, a month-long cultural celebration, sought to reduce the festival's waste by a considerable 30% this year.

The Charlotte Convention Center has proposed a long list of initiatives, which stands to grow considerably in the coming years. Recent sustainable programs include using more and more recycled products for food and beverage whenever possible, donating excess food to local food banks, and taking advantage of the practice of "bundling" to limit the number of distributors of goods as well as miles to cut down on emissions. Recycling is key too - programs are in place for paper and aluminum. Food is brought in from local vendors whenever possible, while all cooking oil is recycled and more and more cleaning supplies are environmentally safe.

Staff does their part too – even event managers carry thermometers to ensure the facility's temperature is regulated to 72 degrees. Window glass utilized throughout Center is classified as low "E," which controls the amount of UV light flowing into the facility. And during trade show move-ins and move-outs, work lighting is reduced by a significant 50%. "No idea is too small and no challenge too large for us to consider," says Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority CEO Tim Newman. For additional information on these sustainable initiatives and others, log onto www.charlotteconventionctr.com.