

Sustainable Summer Highlights Blog

Written by Lisa Alexander

Thursday, 09 September 2010 14:01 -

Now that summer is over, people have been asking me about the high points and low points in this summer sustainability arena. I have to say my summer sustainability low point was the fact that Congress still can't seem to agree on and pass significant Climate Change Legislation. However, on a lighter note, my summer high point in sustainable facilities has to be the opening of the 25 acre solar park at [Pocono Raceway](#), in Long Pond, Pennsylvania on July 31st.

It was a great dedication event of which yours truly was invited to attend. (After all, I am **THE** sustainability expert in the Poconos, probably the only one, LOL). Besides a long list of speakers, some food and drink, the event included a ceremonial 'flipping of the switch'. (yeah, that's me the photo)

Yes, I know what you are thinking, NASCAR fans going green ? Hard to rap your head around huh? For the track owners, the Mattioli family, it just made economic sense rather than a PR play. The track was spending hundreds of thousand of dollars a year on electricity. The new 3 Mega-watt ground mount solar array system sits on what was once on overflow grass parking area of 25 acres. It is comprises of 40,000 thin-filmed solar panels, manufactured in the USA by [enXco](#), of California. It will produce 72 million kilowatts hours of energy over the next 20 years. It will completely provide all the power the track needs, plus provide enough additional energy back to the grid to power 1,000 homes in the area. At that rate the track will generate serious revenue, reducing the payback period on the 16 million spent on the project, to just a few years.

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This was not the only green initiative the track installed, they also added recycling bins and planted more trees. Of course NASCAR and racetracks in general have a long way to go before the environmentalist embrace them, but at least it's a start and it's in the North East, an area not know for abundant sunshine. Believe it or not, this project is recognized as the largest renewable energy stadium project in the world !



As a former amateur race car driver (I did grow up in Nazareth Pa, home of the Andretti racing family and it's own race track) and for someone who has been in the stands, pits and on the track at the Pocono Tricky Triangle, I can tell you this was a proud moment for this Green Girl !