

Green Initiatives at Waste Management Phoenix Open

Written by Written by Julia Swem

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The Waste Management Phoenix Open adds countless new features this year that accommodates golf fans as well as the planet.



Mike Bartell, operations manager of the Waste Management Phoenix Open, says there is always so much to see, wonderful hospitality, and, this year, so many great additions to the annual golf event. The Open has 16 new skyboxes this year, 12 of which were added to the 16th hole that Bartell says is the premiere spot for viewers. The hole has full stadium seating for viewing pleasure. "The hole has a great view and puts the fans right there," Bartell says. "The fans are really close at the 16th and because it is a shorter hole they encompass the whole par." Another new addition is the opening of the Fry's "19th Hole on the Water," This is where the public can get food and beverages and comfortably watch the 18th hole.

Not only is the Waste Management Phoenix Open fan friendly, it is planet friendly as well. Last year, 62 percent of trash was diverted from the landfill and 45 percent of that was recycled, Bartell says. And 311,000 gallons of water were reclaimed along with 756 trees according to the Waste Management Web site. This year, they are expecting to save even more because of new green initiatives.



There will be more coupons for prizes at the GreenOps recycling kiosks. This is where a viewer can scan a beverage before they recycle it to get credit added to their name and later use for prizes. "Many people won't recycle on their own," says Rachael McBride, an Arizona State University sophomore majoring in journalism and minoring in sustainability. "For those people, prizes are an excellent way to encourage them. They will listen to what is said and hopefully start to do it on their own." To help encourage this behavior even further, there will be recycling receptacles throughout the course that include educational signage and the help of "Recycling Ambassadors" to inform and answer questions.

To raise even more eco-friendly awareness is the first-ever tournament Green Out. On Saturday, Feb.5, everybody is encouraged to wear green to support the green effort of the Open. "This is an easy way to engage fans and spread awareness," Bartell says. "People are curious and will ask 'hey, what's going on?' And they will say, sustainability." The Thunderbirds will also donate money to Arizona Clean and Beautiful based on how many green T-shirts were worn.



Another way to spread awareness and engage the public is through social media. For instance, Random Acts of Green is where fans and followers can post updates, photos and videos of themselves demonstrating their green actions at the Open or in their everyday lives. The best examples will win prizes.

Another social media example is Caught Green-Handed where fans and celebrities are photographed participating in sustainable acts that will later be posted to the Waste Management Facebook and Twitter pages. "These were created to involve the public and create social awareness," Bartell says. "The situation is still in our hands. The goal is to get people to think about it and observe others participating in green acts. We want people to engage, respond and make choices." McBride adds: "I think this will definitely raise awareness. Social media is showing how progressive sustainability is."

Other green initiatives include four natural gas trucks, as opposed to diesel; the use of greywater or wastewater created by the concession

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kitchens (the water will be used in the course's portolilet); and a sun pod that will be used to power the tents that includes everything from the lighting to televisions. For more information on the Waste Management Phoenix Open, visit www.wastemanagementphoenixopen.com.