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Trend Towards Sustainability Grows

Sometimes it seems like good news seems to be getting harder and harder to find. But when it comes to sustainability, "there is actually plenty out there," says Stephen Ashkin, president of Sustainability Dashboard Tools LLC. "Even better, realizing there is good news when it comes to our planet makes us more optimistic during this Holiday Season and the year ahead."

For instance, Ashkin points out the following positive sustainable trends that have likely gone unnoticed:

- We are using less energy. The average per-person consumption of energy in the U.S. has fallen 9 percent from its 1978 peak because the appliances, machines, and cars we use today are much more energy efficient than those made 30 years ago.
- We use less energy to go places. Here's a surprise. We are using public transportation as much today as Americans did back in 1956. The use of public transportation has grown 38 percent in the past 15 years, saving billions of barrels of oil.
- We don't toss as much. At one time, old televisions, computers, fax machines, cell phones, and other products were just tossed into landfills. Today, it is estimated that 800 tons of "stuff" formerly tossed away each year is now given to charities and other organizations to be reused by someone else.
- Our forests are growing again. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the total amount of forested land in the U.S. has actually increased over the past 30 years.
- We breathe easier. Thanks to Green cleaning and other measures, the

levels of six common but potentially health-risking indoor contaminants such as lead, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon monoxide, have all fallen over the past decade.

"Good news just doesn't get the attention it should," adds Ashkin. "But good things are happening, especially when it comes to sustainability and protecting human health, and much of the credit goes to the professional cleaning industry."