



Sustainability summit comes to Weber State

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by [Nathan Beach](#)



Joel Makower, chairman and executive editor of the GreenBiz group, speaks at the Intermountain Sustainability Summit at Weber State University on Thursday, Mar. 24. (Nathan Beach / The Signpost)

Business members, people from the community and students gathered March 24 at the ballrooms at Weber State University to learn about sustainability and what they can do to be more environmentally friendly.

This conference, which continues March 25, brought people of all kinds to the Shepherd Union to discuss the latest technology and methods to better the environment and lessen their impacts.

The summit's keynote speaker on Thursday, Joel Makower, chairman and executive editor of the GreenBiz group, spoke of ways that companies are becoming more environmentally minded.

"The sustainability of the things companies use most simply weren't always available," he said, "and understanding businesses and how that affects their ability to deliver to customers is an interesting part we don't look at."

Makower noted that companies put a value on economic resources that do not always include the environment.

"What is the value of ecosystems of nature? These are the things that nature provides for us—all these things that don't show up on balance sheets," he said. "They start to look at that and say, what is the value of that? And how can we harness the power of that in a way that naturally works with nature?"

"Sustainability is becoming a risk factor for companies."

It's this kind of thinking that is driving Weber State's sustainability plan, said Bonnie Christiansen, Weber State's academic sustainability coordinator.

The Facilities Management department has been retrofitting buildings around campus to decrease energy consumption, she said.

"We are saving over \$1.6 million a year now in energy costs because of what they've done to be sustainable," Christiansen said.

Christiansen said the sustainability conference is not only good for people of the community but for Weber State students as well.

"I think that the message for students is that sustainability and jobs in sustainability are thriving," she said. "This is a great place to get jobs in career fields they can go into. There are jobs here in this city and this state that are available for people that are interested in sustainability."

Andreas Leidolf, assistant director of event sponsor iUtah, said his organization, which does research and training on water sustainability in Utah, is one that offers students opportunities to learn about and experience sustainability and conservation.

"One program that we have going is called the iUtah institute," he said. "It is geared toward high school students as well as beginning college students. It takes place at University of Utah and is a one-week, summer research experience."

Leidolf said iUtah has programs to help improve the environment and help others to be more environmentally minded.

"We have three water sheds with monitors. We stream information live with a 15-minute delay to a website that is open to the public so anybody, like researchers, people in the public or water managers, can go to our website and look at our water quality data," he said.

For more information about sustainability and about programs offered here at Weber, go to <http://www.weber.edu/sustainability> There, students can learn more about organizations and ways they can be more environmentally sustainable.

For more information about the sustainability summit go to <http://www.intermountainsustainabilitysummit.com/>

This story was updated to correct the date. The Sustainability Summit was held March 24-25.