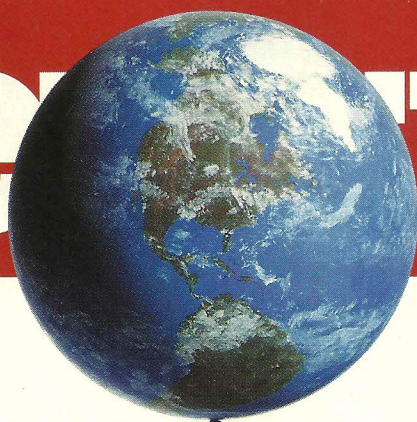


LEADERSHIP & THE ENVIRONMENT

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PHOTOGRAPH BY NIGEL PARRY

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger



BOSTON

Car sharing with Zipcars helps reduce the number of people who keep cars in the city. Solar-powered trash compactors crunch trash and reduce the number of truck pickups needed per week.

from solar, wind and even tidal power, which would be created by harnessing the tides flowing in and out through the narrow channel below the Golden Gate Bridge. Giant bi-directional blades would spin in the current, fueling generators. "And unlike solar and wind power, which are unpredictable, tidal power is incredibly reliable," says Jared Blumenfeld, director of the San Francisco Department of the Environment.

While the U.S. government continues to dither on climate change, foreign countries are sending representatives to San Francisco to study its green policies. "The Danish, Irish and French environment ministers have come to meet with us in the last six months," says Blumenfeld. "When we asked why, they said, 'Our governments are taking action at the federal level, but we have no idea what to do at the local level.'" America's green mayors could teach them a thing or two.

With MATTHEW PHILIPS

says Environment Commissioner Sadhu Johnston. They lower the temperature, filter air, remove carbon dioxide, absorb storm water and provide shade and beauty. (They even boost the economy. "Research has shown that people are willing to spend up to 12 percent more on a product if they're shopping in a district with mature trees," thanks to the pleasant ambience of the neighborhood, says Johnston.)

At Chicago's Center for Green Technology, the city also runs free programs on topics like planting green roofs, which are actual plots of grass on roofs. They absorb storm water, reduce heat loss in winter and help cool buildings in summer. "We run green-roof test plots to see how much they bring down the temperature," says Johnston. The verdict: a green roof can reduce the surface temperature of a summer-sun-drenched roof from 170 degrees to just 80 to 90 degrees. Chicago has 300 such roofs already built or under development.

The Small Things

THEN THERE ARE THE LITTLE THINGS we can all do. "If every household in America switched out one compact fluorescent bulb, it would reduce energy consumption as much as taking a million cars off the road," says Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie. We could also start drinking tap water rather than the bottled variety. "Production of the bottles alone consumes over 1.5 million barrels of oil a year," says Rocky Anderson in Salt Lake City. Even worse is the energy squandered on shipping water halfway around the world. As a result, he says, "you pay more for a bottle of water than an equivalent amount of gasoline." And we could carry our own mesh shopping bags.

Two weeks ago, San Francisco grabbed headlines for banning nonbiodegradable plastic bags, which were costing the city \$8 million a year to clear from streets, storm drains and recycling machines.

In the future, there will no doubt be more amazing ways of contributing. San Francisco has major plans for renewable energy



At xtra.Newsweek.com: the 100 places most vulnerable to climate change

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