

# SUCCESS STORY

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COOLCALIFORNIA CLIMATE LEADER

## SHN Engineers & Geologists

Eureka CA

Engineering Sustainability in California



Air Resources Board's Research Division Chief Bart Croes with Sheri Woo and Mark Chaney.

SHN Engineers & Geologists, Inc. (SHN) is a California State certified small business enterprise meeting the engineering, geologic, and environmental needs of communities in Northern California and Southern Oregon.

SHN prepared its first Sustainability Report using the Global Reporting Institute's guidelines for small and medium business enterprises. A Sustainability Report often results in both direct and indirect cost savings. In SHN's case, direct cost savings were modest because their offices are already designed for efficient lighting and heating; electrical use in the California offices is already less than the California Energy Commission's average for similar buildings and use. SHN did realize indirect cost savings, which are frequently referred to as the triple bottom line of a company's financial, social, and environmental health. An example of a significant indirect cost saving is employee attraction and retention; by holding strong sustainability values, SHN attracts and retains like-minded employees, which in turn decreases training, replacement, and



From its first Sustainability Report, SHN has implemented seven of the report's nineteen recommendations to date.

recruitment costs. So far, SHN has completed one other sustainability analysis for a small, locally owned, restaurant business, demonstrating leadership in small business sustainability.



## BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

SHN Engineers & Geologists, Inc. (SHN) is a California State certified small business enterprise meeting the engineering, geologic, and environmental needs of communities in Northern California and Southern Oregon.

### Green Practices:

- Prepared a Sustainability Report using the Global Reporting Institute's (GRI's) guidelines
- Conducted an employee commuting survey evaluate a work-from-home policy
- Implemented recycling programs for paper, cardboard, plastics, electronics and batteries
- Decreased the need for paper, delivery costs, fuel consumption, and storage space by digitizing documents and records
- Replaced wall-to wall carpeting with 100% recyclable carpet tiles



SHN has replaced wall-to-wall carpeting with 100% recyclable carpet tiles with Silver Cradle to Cradle Certification from the Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute. The carpet tiles reduce waste by allowing replacement of just the worn tiles and eliminate the need for carpet padding, a significant waste when wall-to-wall carpet is replaced.



*SHN engineering geologist investigating geologic hazards associated with hydro-electric penstock infrastructure in northern California.*

Company-wide, SHN has recycling programs for paper, cardboard, plastics, electronics, and batteries. They are in the process of digitizing documents and providing these electronic documents to clients instead of providing traditional paper copies. This decreases the need for paper, delivery costs, fuel consumption, and space needed for storage.

SHN adopted its first Sustainability Report, based on the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI's) guidelines for small and medium sized business enterprises. Seven of the report's nineteen recommendations have been implemented to date. As part of the Sustainability Report, the business surveyed employees' commuting habits, to evaluate if a formal work-from-home policy would decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from commuting. Results indicated that a work-from-home policy would not significantly reduce the number of trips employees would make from their homes to the office which is needed to reduce GHG emissions. Some employees were in favor of a work-from-home policy for work/life balance reasons, but indicated



*SHN performed materials testing and construction inspection on this solar array at an elementary school.*

they would still likely drive to the office five days per week. Based on survey results, SHN estimated the number of carbon credits that could purchase to off-set commuting. By holding strong sustainability values, SHN attracts and retains like-minded employees, which in turn decreases their training, replacement, and recruitment costs.

***"We saved a lot of money in terms of our overall corporate goals; not only reducing our footprint on the environment but helping our employees."***

**- Mark Chaney, Regional Manager, SHN Engineers & Geologists**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Sheri Woo  
 Marketing Coordinator  
 812 W Wabash Avenue  
 707-441-8855  
 Eureka, CA  
 swoo@shn-engr.com  
 www.shn-engr.com