



## “Green Drinks” event in Baton Rouge promotes environmentally-conscious networking

On January 13, the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) hosted the inaugural meeting of “Red Stick Green Drinks,” which is the new Baton Rouge chapter of Green Drinks International, an organization whose mission is to promote the exchanging of ideas and information among people in order to benefit the environment in some way.

Held at the Manship Theatre in downtown Baton Rouge, more than 60 attendees turned up for the professional and social mixer of sorts. Free and open to the public, the event is designed to bring business owners, academics, government employees, students, scientists and other professionals into the same room under a central theme: initiating a dialogue for ways in which we can all make a positive impact on our environment.

The organization began in 1989 at the Slug & Lettuce pub in London, England. Over drinks, three gentlemen from the green design industry were discussing environmental issues when they fell into conversation with a fellow environmentally-minded colleague at an adjacent table. Joining the tables and continuing the discussion, the Green Drinks movement was born. Additional meetings followed, and the men eventually created a Web site in 2001 with the premise that “anyone can attend.” Soon, the concept went global, and today, each chapter has an organizer who coordinates meetings, makes arrangements for beverages

and food (usually organic), relays information and plans discussions.

“The Green Drinks concept is simple—we want environmentally-minded Baton Rouge residents to come together in a casual atmosphere, have a good time, make some new connections, and maybe even learn a little bit in the process,” said Phillip LaFargue, Communications Director for the Center for Planning Excellence.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation from Steven Babcock, an Environmental Science instructor at University High on the LSU campus, who discussed his experiences studying the environment in the Galapagos Islands where he researched sustainability projects and studied the island’s unique wildlife and volcanic environment. Babcock followed his discussion with a question and answer session.

CPEX dedicated time and resources to organizing the event, with the idea that it will be an open forum for organizations and individuals with environmental missions to get involved. CPEX plans to host the event on a recurring basis each month, centering on a guest speaker who will open the dialogue by presenting information concerning a specific environmentally-related topic or project.

The Green Drinks idea is growing in popularity, with chapters already established worldwide and





*Environmental Science Instructor Steven Babcock gives a presentation at the inaugural Red Stick Green Drinks event in Baton Rouge*

across the United States. Specific names and logos vary chapter to chapter, but the concept of bringing environmental stewards together to support the environment remains the same. Attendees in other cities have touted the easygoing and unstructured nature of the events, with many having found employment, gained new contacts or developed new projects and ideas. A Green Drinks chapter is forming in New Orleans and CPEX hopes to facilitate the positive experiences that other chapters have realized, while spreading the Green Drinks model to other cities throughout Louisiana and the Gulf Coast region.

The next event is slated for Feb. 10 at the Manship Theatre, with theme of Green Architecture and Construction. For more information, visit: [www.greendrinks.org/LA/Baton%20Rouge/](http://www.greendrinks.org/LA/Baton%20Rouge/) or send an email to: [redstickgreendrinks@gmail.com](mailto:redstickgreendrinks@gmail.com).