

*"As a business owner I am driven to do things that best impact the company and make our choices as a business reflect what we believe in – for us, it is continuing to find new ways to be sustainable."*

– Matt Galvin, Owner of Pagliacci

# climate action **GUIDEBOOK** for **RESTAURANTS**



## Why should your restaurant take action on climate change now?

Restaurants and cafés have a substantial impact on climate change through their everyday production and use of food. At the same time, customers are becoming more aware of climate issues and are reevaluating the food they are eating, how it was grown, where it came from, and what restaurants are doing to take action on this issue. More and more restaurants are finding that adopting climate action policies within their operations can increase customer loyalty, strengthen brand value and more importantly, reduce costs and improve their bottom line.

## Why join Seattle Climate Partnership?

Seattle Climate Partnership, a voluntary business program managed by the City of Seattle, can help you get started with reducing your carbon footprint. Signing a partnership agreement gives you access to:

**Carbon footprint calculator:** This easy-to-use spreadsheet calculator will help you identify the best opportunities to reduce carbon and save both money and energy.

[www.seattleclimatepartnership.org/carboncalculator](http://www.seattleclimatepartnership.org/carboncalculator)

**Networking opportunities:** Learn from the experiences of other businesses who are already taking climate action.

**Expert help:** Get technical assistance from field staff and accelerated access to utility assistance programs as well as forums and workshops with advice from experts.

Follow in these organizations' low-carbon footprints and join the Seattle Climate Partnership today.



City of Seattle  
Office of Sustainability and Environment



# CASE STUDY: Ivar's



SECTOR: **Restaurant and Food Service**

SERVICE AREA: **Washington and California**

EMPLOYEES: **Over 1,100 (Seattle, Kennewick, Spokane, SeaTac Airport and Santa Clara, CA)**



## Keep Clam

Ivar's has more than 49 different venues, including three full-service waterfront restaurants, casual dining seafood bars and concession stands in stadiums within the Seattle region. Since its beginnings in 1938, Ivar's has built a lasting relationship with Seattle through its great food, friendly customer relations, sincere dedication to its staff and community-focused vision.

## Climate Strategy Provides Direction

A climate strategy has been instrumental to Ivar's continuous search for both short and long-term cost savings strategies that strengthen their brand. Ivar's President Bob Donegan explains their unique approach as "trying stuff with the expectation to fail. Everything we do we may 'screw up,' but it is better to do something, make a mistake, and then correct it than to do nothing at all." By making sound investments around sustainability and climate change, Ivar's has affected its company culture and operations through:

- Cost savings to their bottom line
- Increased employee morale and engagement
- Reduced occupancy costs by as much as 25%

## Debunking the Myth

Ivar's has successfully debunked the myth that it is expensive and more difficult to begin climate action programs within restaurants than in other industries. Ivar's chose to learn by doing. Four years ago it began composting and separating waste at their Salmon House, and Donegan says they have found "it is not complicated and not more expensive" than their old way of managing waste. For example, simply setting out a slim, green-colored can designated for food waste next to the larger gray waste bins has helped employees separate waste at the source.

## Water Conservation

Ivar's did not stop after addressing food waste. They looked for opportunities to replace older equipment with more efficient machines and found significant cost savings and operational efficiency. Using City of Seattle incentives to mitigate investment costs, Ivar's

replaced their older dishwashing equipment and began seeing a return on the investment after only seven months, while saving thousands of gallons of water. To compare:

- Previous dishwashing equipment used approximately 4.7 gallons of water per rack
- New, more efficient washing machines use only 1.7 gallons per rack
- Current dishwashing machines at the Salmon House use only 0.4 gallon per rack

Although Ivar's does not actively advertise or market what they are doing, they receive positive responses when they do tell customers or staff about efforts to make the business more sustainable:

*"Customers expect these things from us. When we tell them what we're doing, they like it and want more of it."*

— Bob Donegan, President of Ivar's

## Employee Engagement

Since they began implementing sustainability initiatives, Ivar's has seen an increase in their employee retention. Ivar's has a 103% annual turnover rate, considerably lower than the industry average of 200-400%. All employees who work

more than 28 hours a week receive full benefits, and the money saved through sustainability initiatives is returned to employees and store managers through performance-based bonuses. Donegan says, "If you give good benefits and treat employees well, they will stay."

Additionally, Ivar's staff share the company's values of philanthropy, community involvement and sustainability, which makes it easier for them to adopt climate-friendly initiatives. Plus, employees have an active voice in shaping the company's approach to climate change issues. For example, at the Salmon House, a chef initiated one of the company's first composting programs. At the Acres of Clams restaurant, two employees suggested a commuting program to encourage alternative transportation within the company.

## In-house Communication

The open exchange of ideas between management and staff has also been vital to the success of its climate change programs. The company conducts

## COST-SAVING ACTIONS

*Other areas where restaurants could achieve cost savings and reduce carbon include:*

### Energy

Purchase Energy Star equipment. Inspect seals on refrigerator and oven doors to prevent loss of heat or cold air. Recalibrate your thermostats to make sure you are cooking at the correct temperature.

### Waste

Collect and re-process all cooking oils and fats collected. Use refillable condiment dispensers or bottles instead of individual packets. Compost all food waste. Buy ingredients in bulk to minimize packaging.

### Transportation

Combine multiple deliveries to reduce trips. Purchase local food products to reduce food miles.

### Materials

Eliminate the use of disposable service ware. Print double-sided menus. Use cloth napkins.

Also consider looking at:

- Food preparation
- Customers
- Bussing
- Storage and handling products
- Water
- Equipment: refrigeration, dishwashers, stoves

For a detailed list with dozens of actions you can take to reduce your carbon emissions and save money, visit the Seattle Climate Partnership website at [www.seattleclimatepartnership.org](http://www.seattleclimatepartnership.org)

an annual employee survey which allows Ivar's to accurately gauge how the company is doing and invites employee suggestions for future climate action programs. Ivar's believes that the environment of open communication between employees and management has helped decrease employee turnover by as much as 8% on its own.

*"It is important to have communication, so you know what you're doing wrong or what needs to be done (next)."*

– Bob Donegan, President of Ivar's

### Challenges

1. Figuring out where to start and how not be overwhelmed.
2. Getting employees involved.
3. Finding sustainable vendors that meet your criteria.

### Overcoming Challenges

1. Focus on the low-hanging fruit, things that are simple and that you can afford to do, and set realistic, achievable short-term goals rather than trying to bite off everything all at once.

2. Assign a sustainability champion in your restaurant to actively educate your employees by posting reminders to turn off lights and sending out emails and literature on what they can do.
3. Talk to your suppliers and vendors. Ask them what they are doing on climate change and tell them what you'd like. Often suppliers will adapt to your preferences; they just need to be told to do so.

*"If it's hard to get suppliers to do things you want, you find them somewhere else."*

– Bob Donegan

## Carbon/Cost Savings Examples

Company	Action	Savings
<b>14 Carrot Café</b> Seattle, WA	Retrofitted with CFL bulbs, replaced exit signs with LED lights and installed energy efficient T8 lamps and ballasts.	Saved <b>\$500</b> annually with a payback of 2.5 years.
<b>Michoacan Mexican Restaurant</b> Seattle, WA	Replaced three old, inefficient toilets with FREE low-flow toilets from Seattle Public Utilities and upgraded faucet aerators.  Expanded recycling to include cardboard, glass, paper, plastic and metal and sent food scraps to Cedar Grove for composting.	Saved <b>25,000</b> gallons of water annually and thousands of dollars.  Cut solid waste and disposal costs in <b>half</b> .
<b>Burgerville</b> Washington, OR	Began composting and recycling waste.	Saved annually <b>\$100,000</b> in hauling fees across its system.
<b>Tripp's Grill &amp; Six Pack</b> North Bend, PA	Invested in a six-door walk-in cooler to replace four inefficient beverage coolers in the dining area.	Saved more than <b>\$1,900</b> annually in electricity costs.
<b>Ted's Montana Grill</b> Restaurant Wide	Switched out all incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs.  Installed more efficient high-temperature dishwashers.  Installed automatic low-flow faucets, dual flush toilets and waterless urinals.	Saved <b>\$90,000 to \$100,000</b> a year in energy costs, providing payback in only six months. Cut water use by <b>40,000 to 60,000</b> gallons per year per unit. Saved <b>150,000</b> gallons of water per year and saved <b>\$2,500</b> annually in each of its 10 new units.
<b>Thai Kitchen</b> Henderson, NV	Sent food waste to a pig farmer.	Reduced waste disposal costs by around <b>two-thirds</b> and turned <b>94%</b> of their waste into recycling.
<b>Deschutes Brewery</b> Bend, OR	Replaced a 5 gallon dishwasher with a 1.4 gallon dishwasher.	Saved <b>\$5,900</b> per month.
<b>SAS Institute</b> Cary, NC	Replaced paper cups and other disposables with washable items in the break areas, eliminated soda cans and bottles.	Saved <b>\$100,000</b> each year in purchasing costs for all disposables.
<b>Vic's Market</b> Sacramento, CA	Replaced the compressor room and deli, meat and freezer cases with newer, more efficient equipment.	Saved <b>\$38,237</b> and <b>364,000 kWh</b> annually with a 3-year payback.
<b>The Oregon Convention Center</b> Oregon	Replaced 28 inefficient hot-food holding cabinets with 30 new, Energy Star-qualified units.	Saved over <b>200,000 kWh</b> and <b>\$12,000</b> annually.

## Resources

### Energy

#### Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy Conservation Services

Listing of financial incentives, conservation ideas and technical assistance to help businesses reduce energy costs.

[www.seattle.gov/light/conserves/business/](http://www.seattle.gov/light/conserves/business/) and [www.pse.com/solutions/forbusiness/](http://www.pse.com/solutions/forbusiness/)

### Transportation

#### Commute Trip Reduction

Website sponsored by the City of Seattle and SDOT provides information and resources about trip reduction laws, regulations, resources and more.

[www.seattle.gov/transportation/commute.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/commute.htm)

### Waste

#### Resource Venture

Seattle Public Utilities' Resource Venture program offers free assistance in creating and implementing a comprehensive recycling program.

[www.resourceventure.org](http://www.resourceventure.org)

### Materials and Purchasing

Includes City of Seattle resources for sustainable procurement and a vendor questionnaire and office equipment guidelines to help employers make sustainable purchasing decisions.

[www.seattle.gov/environment/Purchasing.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/environment/Purchasing.htm)

### Water

#### Saving Water Partnership

Sponsored by a group of local utilities to provide information on rebates and tips to encourage participation in water conservation programs in Seattle and King County.

[www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org)

### Sector Specific

#### Green Restaurant Association

A national non-profit dedicated to providing services in research, consulting, education, marketing and community organizing.

[www.dinegreen.com](http://www.dinegreen.com)

#### EPA's Commercial Food Service Equipment Incentive Finder

Provides information about rebates for ENERGY STAR qualified CFS equipment available from utilities and other energy-efficiency program sponsors.

[www.energystar.gov/](http://www.energystar.gov/) (click on Rebate Finder)

#### Green Restaurant Association's Green Guide of Endorsed Products

Guide to environmentally responsible products for the restaurant industry.

[www.dinegreen.com/solutions.asp](http://www.dinegreen.com/solutions.asp)

#### Food Service Technology Center

A scientific testing facility that benchmarks the energy performance of equipment used in commercial kitchens; also offers information on rebates for equipment.

[www.fishnick.com](http://www.fishnick.com)

## What is the Seattle Climate Partnership?

The Partnership is a voluntary agreement among Seattle-area employers to take action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Twelve Seattle-area employers joined together to found the Partnership in response to Mayor Greg Nickels' challenge to the Seattle community to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets. The Partnership has been growing; partners include large businesses such as Starbucks, Ivar's and Group Health Cooperative and small companies with only a handful of employees.

## What does membership involve?

When businesses join the Partnership, they sign an agreement to take actions to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and help support efforts in the broader community to reduce emissions. In exchange for making – and keeping – this commitment, partners receive a host of benefits, including high-quality technical assistance, access to utility incentive programs, opportunities for cost-saving collaborations such as joint purchasing arrangements and recognition for a job well done.

**We want all Seattle companies to join the Partnership and make the pledge to reduce carbon emissions. See the current list of partners, find a comprehensive list of resources and download the Partnership Agreement at [www.seattleclimatepartnership.org](http://www.seattleclimatepartnership.org)**

**Or contact Charlie Cunniff, [charlie.cunniff@seattle.gov](mailto:charlie.cunniff@seattle.gov) or 206.386.9748  
Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment**



*"We need to find a way to power our economy without toasting the planet. My Green Ribbon Commission recommended the establishment of a government and business partnership – the Seattle Climate Partnership – to help employers reduce their carbon footprints. These guidebooks are a tool to help businesses and institutions accomplish our common goals."*

– Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels

### INDUSTRY GUIDEBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR:

- General Offices
- Hotels
- Hospital/Medical
- Retailers
- Property Management
- Industrial



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