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## ***IT'S A "SURVIVAL OF THE GREENEST" WORLD!***

(St. Louis, Missouri): They brought us into the era of instant messaging and gave new meaning to a "face book." Now, it looks like we can count on them to demand a more sustainable world. Yep, those Gen Xers and Yers are at it again...and only the greenest businesses will flourish.

Results of a national survey released by **PGAV Destination Consulting**, a planning and design firm in the international entertainment, tourism and hospitality industries, in collaboration with the world-renowned **Missouri Botanical Garden**, provide a message to the attractions industry that resonates with businesses everywhere: Beware – sustainability is not a passing fad, and younger consumers have little patience for the unenlightened.

The influence of Gen X and Y is significant and enduring. This group is almost single-handedly fueling the green fire. **Nearly 75% of 18-34 year olds say they are more likely to visit an attraction that is pursuing environmentally friendly practices.**

"We need to fully understand consumers and their views on sustainability," reports Mike Konzen, Vice President of PGAV Destination Consulting. "Because leisure choices reflect people's values and priorities, the scientific exploration of consumers yields compelling data. Our survey of attractions visitors has universal applications."

**Especially encouraging during today's economic times is news that the commitment to sustainable practices will be supported with spending behavior.** Almost 60% of people under age 35 expect to pay more for green attractions, and they will pay over 10% more. Most of these consumers (nearly 65%) expect their spending on green products to increase over the next 12 months. These economic decisions provide another reason why going green is a matter of survival.

**What do attractions visitors look for as specific signs of environmental commitment?** In rank order, they are: recycle bins, energy efficient lighting, solar panels, selling food/beverages in biodegradable containers, reusable shopping bags, and offering water in biodegradable cups rather than plastic. Recycling is a nearly universal expectation for green attractions with over 80% across all consumer segments saying that recycling is *very* representative of an environmental commitment. LEED Certification, the standard system of sustainability measurement, ranked last as an outward sign of environmental commitment valued by attractions visitors. It is likely that the LEED rating is less known and less understood by the general public.

"In a world that is beset with environmental problems, from global warming, air and water pollution, soil loss, and the extinction of a huge number of species of plants and animals, we are pleased to learn that visitors to public institutions of all kinds are more apt to patronize and enjoy them if they practice and display various approaches to sustainability," says Dr. Peter Raven, President of Missouri Botanical Garden and a 1999 *Time Magazine* Hero of the Planet.

Among many interesting findings, Gen X and Y are also taking personal responsibility for environmental actions: Over 75% reduced water consumption, over 61% reduced energy consumption and nearly 39% have already purchased green products.

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To read the full report, including how consumers define sustainability, contact [marie.shellenberg@pgav.com](mailto:marie.shellenberg@pgav.com) or visit the newsroom at [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org).

*PGAV Destination Consulting* provides strategic and innovative solutions to achieve economic and environmental sustainability for many of the world's most important cultural, historic and natural landmarks. Each year, more than 75 million people visit destinations developed or revitalized by PGAV.

The mission of the *Missouri Botanical Garden* is to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment, in order to preserve and enrich life. Founded in 1859, the Missouri Botanical Garden is the nation's oldest botanical garden in continuous operation.