

Save the Planet. Save Money. Get Certified



Beyond the Office Alternatives to Wasteful Gift Wrap



As you've probably noticed, trashcans overflow after winter holiday festivities. Wrapping paper, bows, ribbons and boxes fill up a big portion of that too-stuffed trash bin. Ease the load going to the landfill by wrapping your gifts in repurposed items and reusable containers. Here are 5 great ideas to get your imagination rolling for preparing your presents and ensuring they're something the recipient will never

"I'm dreaming of a Green Christmas"

Green your holiday party by reducing waste and purchasing local food. Use caterers that do at least one of the following:

- use reusable and/or compostable dishes
- compost and recycle dishes and food waste
- purchase local and/or organic foods

[Waste Reduction Requirements](#)

Dubuque Data Services Announces Petal Certification

Dubuque Data Services joined the Petal Project exactly one year ago. In that short time they have transitioned from awareness of environmental issues to being active advocates for sustainability. This is demonstrated by their team approach to corporate sustainability where all employees are challenged to find new and innovate ways to reduce waste and conserve resources.

Dubuque Data Services is a long standing, locally owned business in Dubuque. According to Colleen Callahan, president of Dubuque Data Services, "Dubuque Data is celebrating our 40th year in business in the Dubuque area. We've been very proud to see the changes and growth in our community, and when we heard about the Petal Project and the emphasis on conservation and sustainability, we knew that we wanted to be a part of that effort. One of our corporate values is to "ACT AS IF"... meaning act as if we were the customer, the owner, the person on the other end of the phone. This also applies to taking care of our environment. Act as if our city, our resources are a precious commodity, take care of what we have. Our team has been very enthusiastic about embracing this idea, by finding new ways to reduce our waste, conserve energy, and buy locally. We will continue these efforts moving forward. "

forget.

1.) Reused Gift Bags

Most of us have a stash of gift bags saved from presents we've received.

Put them to good use and commit to using only gift bags instead of wrapping.

Also, if you feel a gift bag isn't finished without a filler like tissue paper, use a greener option.

2.) Reusable Cloth Bags

Do you have scrap fabric lying around? Or maybe some old shirts you never wear but that have lovely patterns. Try your hand at some easy-sew cloth bags. Since you're making them by hand, you can sew them to suit your needs. You can also design them to be practical for the recipient as a shopping bag. Your imagination is the limit.

3.) A Gift in a Gift

One great way to make a gift extra special is to wrap it in another gift. A hand-knit scarf, a beautiful table cloth or runner, and hand-made

At Dubuque Data Services, corporate sustainability begins with new-hire training on the environmental policy and a tour of the facility to point out recycling locations for paper, trash, bottles/cans and toner cartridges. Staff members remain informed through emails, newsletter articles and company meetings. At a recent Software conference, Dubuque Data Services provided attendees with USB sticks holding the conference materials instead of printing reams of paper. Additionally they gave attendees a reusable water bottle to use for refreshments. Kelly Schiel, green team leader at Dubuque Data Services, commented: "Our work family takes pride in our facility and has readily absorbed the Petal Project's environmental practices into our culture."

An internal Green Ribbon Cutting will be held Thursday, December 13th to celebrate Dubuque Data Services' Petal Certification.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Dubuque Data Service's achievement.

Green Ribbon Cutting at River Lights Bookstore

River Lights Bookstore celebrated their Petal Certification with a Green Ribbon Cutting on November 15th. River Lights is the 6th Petal Certified business.



[Click here](#) to learn more about River Lights Bookstore's achievement.

purse or similar items are all great things to use for wrapping a gift within a gift.

4.) Furoshiki

This idea might be well combined with the "gift in a gift" suggestion. Furoshiki is a method of folding cloth into beautiful packages.

Using a piece of beautifully printed cloth and a few knots in interesting places will create an eye-catching package.

5.) Maps

Maps, especially road maps, can become obsolete.

However, they never lose their visual intrigue. Put them to good use as wrapping for a package that the recipient will turn over and over...and over and over...before opening.

[For these and other great tips visit TLC.](#)

Community Garden Meeting

A Dubuque Community Garden public planning meeting will be conducted at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, at the Multicultural Family Center, 1157 Central Ave. The intent is to improve the city's community garden system. Whether people have an idea for a new community garden, run a community garden and are looking for resources, or just want to find out how they can get more involved in a community garden, they are invited to attend. The interactive meeting will answer the question: How can we expand Dubuque's community garden system and connect with those who need healthy local foods the most? RSVPs are appreciated but not required by contacting Brittany Bethel, 563-583-6496, ext. 12 or bbethel@iastate.edu.

Leader of the Pack: 2013 Building for Performance

Alliant Energy is hosting a second building conference in several towns across Iowa in January and February. This workshop is for everyone who touches the home. Builders, framers, electricians, HVAC, plumbers, foundation specialists, HERS raters and energy code officials – even realtors, lenders and appraisers. There is something for everyone at this innovative conference. It's the only conference of its kind that shows the home as a system – and its individual subsystems – and how they interact. We'll show you how to bring together advanced building science, IECC 2009, ENERGY STAR and utility rebates requirements to create a cost-effective, energy-efficient home that homebuyers will demand.

[Learn more and register here.](#)