



Business Journal

Dedicated to Advancing the Economic Vitality of the Livermore Valley

'Waste not' is a guiding principle for Checker's Catering & Special Events, a recently certified green business

FOR Checker's Catering & Special Events, "waste not" refers to more than just how food is consumed and disposed. The waste-not philosophy starts with the food and catering supplies purchased. It involves making wise choices about organic foods and foods packaged in boxes or wood as well as using cloth napkins and tablecloths, and biodegradable plates, utensils, and plastic food containers.

Wasting not permeates the way the business is operated—with many measures in place to save energy and water while preparing food and cleaning up after nearly 60 catering client deliveries each day.

Checker's Catering & Special Events, recently certified as an Alameda County Green Business, is the first catering company in the Tri-Valley area to earn this honor. The company is one of only three such businesses in the county to receive the "Certified Green Business" designation. Certification is a stamp of approval that Checker's Catering & Special Events has met and exceeded all environmental

regulations and taken measures to reduce waste, prevent pollution and conserve resources.

The following are among the "green" and environmentally-responsible practices implemented by Checker's Catering & Special Events:

- Reducing weekly waste from 80 to 8 cubic yards—to 10 percent of the company's original volume. Checker's Catering & Special Events is the first Livermore company to take this extra measure in handling kitchen waste, separating food and service ware waste for composting at an offsite facility. (In addition, excess non-perishable food, including bread and produce, is donated to charitable organizations.)

- Purchasing organic greens and local olive oil (made with no pesticides) and strawberries and grapes packed in wood and boxes instead of plastic or styrofoam.

- Using cloth table covers and napkins and selecting biodegradable utensils, plates made from sugar cane (bagasse) and

compostable containers made from corn-based plastic.

- Installing a low-flow pre-rinse nozzle for dish scraping that can efficiently rinse dishes under high pressure while using only three gallons of water a minute (recycling water). This, in addition to upgrading existing fluorescent lighting to T-8 lamps (operating on up to 40 percent less energy than conventional systems), choosing energy-saving electrical equipment and a water-conserving dishwasher, and installing lighting sensors for low-occupancy areas like the dry and can storage rooms.

"We've been able to make these changes with the help of our vendors, the City of Livermore, and Waste Management Company," comments Facilities Manager Randy Smith. "US Foodservice and Bay Cities Produce brought us environmentally-friendly products, and the City and Waste Management have worked with us to reduce waste and implement new practices."

Checker's Catering & Special Events, a family-owned and operated business for the

past 18 years, provides "Set Up and Go" and full service special events catering to the Tri-Valley region. Two years ago, owner Denise Slavitt moved the company into its 10,000 square foot facility in Livermore, and was honored by DiversityBusiness.com as one of the top 500 women-owned businesses in the United States.

Checker's Catering & Special Events joins the ranks of more than 250 certified companies in Alameda County and over 800 companies certified "green" in the Bay Area.

The Alameda County Green Business Program, started in 1996, is a partnership among businesses, the government and the public that certifies businesses based on their environmental performance and practices. For more information on certification or a directory of Green Businesses, contact Pamela Evans at 510.567.6770 or visit www.greenbiz.ca.gov.

To contact Checkers Catering to have them help you plan your next event, call Denise Slavitt at (925) 968-1121.