



CLEAN & GREEN IN OAK HILL
Local Entrepreneurs Launch Austin's First Eco-Friendly Laundromat

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 2009

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Cleaning clothes has always been a dirty business. Conventional laundries and dry cleaners soak up huge amounts of energy and water while draining a witches' brew of chemicals into the environment.

Now, Southwest Austin families don't have to choose between clean and green. Wash Day Laundry, which opened March 15 in Oak Hill, is the first eco-friendly self-service laundry in the entire city. It also offers full-service Wash & Fold. Both services offer the greenest way to get clothes their whitest:

- Maytag Energy Star-qualified large-load washers use only 56% of the water of standard machines. The spin cycle's high-speed water extraction – up to 350 times the force of gravity – means the dryers can do less work. The 27 units at Wash Day come in five sizes, holding from two loads up to eight loads.
- The 24 Maytag Energy Advantage gas dryers use 23% less energy than regular commercial equipment, while their axial airflow systems speed up drying time.
- The front desk sells Clean Environment brand detergent, the same brand used at over 50 national parks. All other cleaning supplies are Clean Environment products.
- The lighting uses T-6 bulbs, cutting electric use 40 percent, while the paint on the walls has zero volatile organic compounds.
- The tankless hot water system, made by Noritz, heats water only as it's needed, so no energy is lost by storing pre-heated water in a holding tank.

- In the heat of Texas summers, customers can see out the windows, but little of the sun's heat can come in. A polyester film, embedded with reflective metal particles, bounces back 78 percent of the solar energy. The room is cooled even more by Hunter Douglas solar blinds, made from a recyclable fabric, with no PVC and no off-gassing.

But eco-friendly cleaning is just one of the innovations at Wash Day. "We want to reinvent the laundromat for the 21st Century," says co-owner Louise Messano. "Surveys show that laundry is the Number Two chore that people hate doing. Our goal is to make your wash day a time you look forward to, not a job that you dread."

Once customers arrive at Wash Day, they'll find inviting touches, from well-lit parking to comfortable chairs and floors as spotless as your clothes. The fully-attended facility is open seven days a week from 7 in the morning until 9 at night.

Most convenient of all, the washers and dryers are coin-free. Instead of quarters, a customer uses a plastic card. Its magnetic strip gets loaded with money, using cash, credit or debit. When the card is inserted into a machine, the cost of a wash or dry is automatically deducted. If money's left over, the card can be saved for the next visit.

While they're waiting for their clothes, customers can entertain themselves with 2 cable televisions or an arcade table with a selection of 39 classic video games. They can plug in laptops and surf the Internet with Wash Day's free Wi-Fi. For the ultimate in relaxation, they can lounge in a Back Rubber massage chair.

Wash Day can save a family time as well as energy. Wash & Fold laundry brought in before 9 a.m. can be cleaned the same day, for only \$1.15 a pound. Pressing is also available. Because of its strategic location, on Highway 71 just north of the Y, commuters from Lakeway, Bee Caves, Dripping Springs. Circle C and Oak Hill can drop off clothes on the way to work and pick them up on the way home.

And not just clothes. "If you've got it, we can wash it," says co-owner Jamie Bishop. "We can handle all washable items you'd take to a dry cleaner, for significantly less cost. We can wash a king-sized comforter or a feather bed. Plus, we don't use any of the harsh chemicals a dry cleaner does."

For more information, visit Wash Day Laundry on the web at www.washdaylaundry.com.

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