

Looking at the big picture

While we're all upset about the Gulf oil spill, it really shouldn't come as a big surprise. For many years our built environment has been designed in ways that maximize our use of fossil fuels—larger, inefficient homes and buildings, and communities where we have to drive a car to meet nearly all of our daily needs. Because of that, in some sense we all vote for offshore drilling every time we drive our cars and demand energy to run our homes and businesses.

We can all do our part to reduce energy use and therefore offshore drilling by improving the energy efficiency of our daily lives. That means reducing the amount of driving we do by carpooling, using our local bus service, bicycling, and walking. But more importantly, it means asking our local elected officials to help us create more compact communities with retail, offices, and schools integrated into our neighborhoods in ways that allow us to drive much less and to experience the joys of walking and bicycling much more. This is the type of pattern we see in some of the most beloved cities in America—places like historic Charleston, Savannah, and for that matter much of downtown Pensacola like East Hill and the Seville District.

Here at Ever'man, our location in the urban, mixed-use environment of downtown Pensacola means that many customers and employees can get here by foot, bike and bus, which greatly reduces energy use. We also have invested in more energy-efficient coolers, and use a solar water heater to make much of the hot water we need. And we're looking forward to including many more energy-saving and environmental features in our store as we renovate and renew our building and grounds in the not-too-distant future. If we take a step back and look at the big picture, we see that we can redesign our homes and communities to wean ourselves away from oil and to create a healthier place to live. Let's get out there and make it happen!

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