

# The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices



## What to Look for in Sustainable Spirits Products



Tennessee is home to world-class distilleries, wineries, and breweries, but how can you tell which ones are committed to sustainability?

Start by looking for the Tennessee Sustainable Spirits logo. This badge signals that a producer has met rigorous environmental standards through the [Tennessee Sustainable Spirits Program](#). But even if a business

Isn't officially recognized, there are still ways to identify an organization that incorporates sustainability into its business practices.

Water conservation is a key indicator. Look for low-flow toilets, faucet aerators, and rainwater collection systems. Businesses that use these features demonstrate a clear intent to reduce water consumption, thereby helping preserve Tennessee's natural resources and protect local ecosystems.

Air quality matters too. Sustainable producers often minimize the use of materials that emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as certain paints or carpets. Clean, well-ventilated spaces with minimally treated wood or synthetic furnishings suggest a healthier environment for both visitors and staff.


Behind the scenes, many sustainable producers use electric or manually powered equipment instead of propane-powered machinery, reducing emissions and improving air quality.

By supporting these businesses, you're not just enjoying a great drink, you're helping protect Tennessee's natural resources. So next time you visit a distillery, brewery, or winery, take a closer look. Your choices can help shape a more sustainable future.



## Sustainable Pet Ownership



-  Pick up pet waste to reduce runoff contamination
-  DIY your own pet toys by reusing materials at home
-  Make your own dog treats by upcycling foods in your kitchen

Our pets bring joy to our lives, and with a few simple habits, we can help them tread more lightly on Tennessee's environment. Start by always picking up pet waste—rain can wash bacteria and excess nutrients

into local waterways, contributing to [runoff pollution](#). At home, try giving old materials new life. Retire worn-out T-shirts, towels, or socks by turning them into [DIY tug toys](#) instead of buying new ones. You can also reduce food waste by making easy, pet-safe treats from ingredients you already have on hand, like overripe bananas or leftover pumpkins. Check out these [five zero-waste dog treat recipes](#). These small actions keep usable materials out of the landfill and help protect our shared natural resources. With a little creativity, we can all make choices that protect our pets and the places we call home.

## Appreciating Agriculture This Holiday Season

As you gather around the table this holiday season, take a moment to appreciate the extraordinary effort behind every bite. Farming requires vast amounts of resources such as land, water, energy, and time, but today's producers use advanced tools like GPS-guided tractors, soil sensors, and drones to work more efficiently and reduce waste. These innovations help keep grocery costs down, but even with modern technology, getting food from the field to your fork is still a remarkable accomplishment.



The next time a tractor slows your drive, remember the farmers behind the wheel and the hard work they do every day. If you would like to learn more about agriculture, consider visiting a local Tennessee farm. [Click here to explore a statewide list of farms that participate in agritourism.](#)

## Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

# Small Business Saturday®

November 29, 2025



November 29th marked Small Business Saturday, a day to recognize the vital role small businesses play in our economy. Nationally, they [generate two-thirds of net new jobs, contribute 40% of economic output, and drive innovation](#). In [Tennessee, small businesses](#) make up 99.5% of all businesses and employ 41.5% of the workforce.

While celebrating them is important, the most impactful way to support small businesses is by shopping locally. The holiday season is a great time to find unique, handcrafted gifts made in your community. This not only boosts the local economy and supports neighbors, but also reduces transportation-related pollution, making it a more sustainable choice.

Tennessee small businesses can access free and confidential assistance through TDEC's [Small Business Environmental Assistance Program](#). For help understanding and complying with environmental regulations, call 800-734-3619 or email [BGSBEAP@tn.gov](mailto:BGSBEAP@tn.gov).

## Sustainable Recipe

After your Thanksgiving or Christmas meal, use your leftover turkey to make rich, [homemade stock](#). It's a simple way to reduce food waste and stretch your holiday meal even further. Freeze the stock in portions to use throughout the year or turn it into a comforting [turkey noodle soup](#) right away. It's a delicious, sustainable tradition worth starting.



# News Articles

[XSYS welcomed into Tennessee Green Star Partnership](#)

[Tennessee State Parks dedicates Fiery Gizzard State Park](#)

[TDEC plays major role in first-ever summit to improve state water quality](#)

[How refill stations in schools and parks make a sustainable difference](#)

## Get Involved

### Volunteer

[The Chattanooga Tree Project: Tree Planting](#)  
Chattanooga  
December 6, 7, 13, 20

[The Giving Grove Community Orchard](#)  
Nashville

[Nobody Trashes Tennessee: Litter Cleanups](#)  
Statewide

### Conferences

[Tennessee Local Food Summit](#)  
Nashville  
December 5-7

[Pick Tennessee Conference](#)  
Lebanon  
January 15-17

### Award Nominations

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Love Where You Live Award](#)  
Deadline: January 9

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Leader Against Litter](#)  
Deadline: January 9

## Receive Funding

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Law Enforcement Grant](#)

[TDOT Litter Grant Program](#)

[TDEC Grants and Programs](#)

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