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Glendale Airpark adds jobs, Coca-Cola goes green

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Glendale Airpark has seen a boost in occupancy thanks in part to companies tackling sustainability.

Brian Friedman, Glendale's economic development director, said the airpark, which starts at Glendale Avenue and Glen Harbor Boulevard, has gone from about 54 percent occupancy last year to 94 percent this year.

Companies such as Coca-Cola Refreshment, a division of the global soft drink producer, have gotten into the act with new hires and efforts to save materials.

The airpark is a microcosm of the city as a whole in terms of sustainable businesses, Friedman said. It is the new home of Linamar Corp., which is manufacturing parts for the Stirling Energy Systems Inc.'s SunCatcher solar power generator, and has become a hub for companies looking to add sustainability to their endeavors.

Coca-Cola, for example, has changed many of the practices at its airpark distribution site, Friedman said. "What's interesting about Coca-Cola is how serious they are about sustainability," he said.

Cristina Munoz, community relations and business development manager for Coca-Cola Refreshments in Phoenix, said the company's Glendale site has become a hub for its sustainable distribution.

Its goals include using a proprietary packaging system that has eliminated about 4 tons of wrapping annually, saving the company about \$30,000, Munoz said.

The company also schedules many of its deliveries at night to save fuel and idling time for its trucks and has a recycling program that processes about 63 tons of material per year, Munoz said.

"Our goal at every one of our sites is to recoup 100 percent of our materials," she said.

Coca-Cola Refreshments also has incorporated other sustainable technologies, including better lighting and water conservation as its Glendale and Tempe facilities, Munoz said.

The company went from using 225 million gallons of water locally in 2007 to 92 million in 2009 by using air rinsers instead of water to clean its bottles and lowering the amount of water needed to produce a liter of soda, Munoz said.

Coca-Cola is planning an open house from 1 to 3 p.m. Oct. 29 at its Glendale location, 7845 N. 106th Ave., to showcase some of the strategies.