

The Big Green Bus

Fifteen Dartmouth College students take part in the fifth annual cross-country road trip to bring awareness and prompt eco-friendly actions and lifestyle changes.

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The classroom has hit the road this summer for 15 students at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H.

The team is embarking on a trip across America in a refitted 1989 MCI motorcoach powered by waste vegetable oil in an effort to promote sustainability and green living.

"This year, the bus interior will resemble a 'green' living room. We hope to connect with homeowners by presenting environmental and economic issues facing our society today and how individual action can help mitigate these problems," says Merritt Jenkins, a member of Dartmouth's Class of 2010 and co-general manager of the Big Green Bus. "From New York to San Francisco, we will be traveling the country helping Americans make energy-conscious choices."

A green living room is exactly right ... even down to their 100 percent recyclable computer cases made from PET plastic bottles.

With solar panels providing the energy, the efficient Split Cool air conditioning system keeps the bus cool, and the LCD flat screen TV allows the group time to relax. They can also access wi-fi—powered by renewable energy—to keep followers updated with blogs, podcasts, photos, videos and tweets from the road.

"I'm excited about putting to use all the new teaching tools we have this year to help the public learn about the energy issues facing our society," says Marissa Knodel, a 2009 Dartmouth graduate and the Big Green Bus's education director.

With five key educational pillars in mind, the bus and its drivers will focus on promoting:

1. Recycling and reduction of consumption
2. Energy efficiency
3. Clean and renewable energy
4. Wise food choices
5. Personal action through voting

The Big Green Bus left the Dartmouth College campus on June 16 and will travel more than 12,000 miles through 40 states from New Hampshire to California and back again.