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## Mary Lou LoPreste



Mary Lou LoPreste's identity as a businesswoman is intimately connected to her responsibility and vision as an environmentalist. This rare combination has manifested in the precedent-setting Sun Harbor Marina, a \$5 million development on the San Diego Bayfront slated to open in May, 2005. When the ribbon is cut, Sun Harbor will be the first marina in the US that is LEED certified, a rigorous process that requires careful

adherence to principles of sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, sustainable materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

In a business world that bows to the bottom line as if it were sacred, environmental ethics typically take a back seat to economics. But for Lo Preste, using recycled blue jeans for insulation, toxic free paint, bamboo and installing low-flush toilets and waterless urinals and employing Feng Shui Principles IS about economics—the economics of our future. "I've been lectured time and time again about how I can't mix my ethics with my business and turn a profit," she said. "I don't want to turn a profit if it means that my grandchildren have to swim in a bay with oil-streaks everywhere, or hike in a clear cut forest. This is about combining economics with common sense." And for any naysayers, Lo Preste can show you that it pencils out quite handsomely.

Lo Preste doesn't plan to rest on any laurels, though. Encouraged by the interest of the Port of San Diego and the tidelands business community, she plans to use Sun Harbor as a prototype which will inspire others to follow suit. Within the project itself, there is a room dedicated to LEED certification information and other environmentally oriented projects, such as shade grown, organic Fair Trade coffee, that Lo Preste has embraced. Mary Lou may just hit the road to tour the project and raise consciousness about the feasibility of making LEED work. So far, Lo Preste says, "business people don't warm to the idea so readily. It seems like the concept is so new and requires so much more thought and money that they are not willing to go the extra 9 yards."

But for Lo Preste, changing people's ways takes time and commitment. If the new Sun Harbor is any indication of this woman's persistence, we'll all be seeing some changes in the way people think and do business.

Lo Preste has been in the sportfishing and marina business for over three decades, is the co-founder of Eveoke Dance Theater, and sits on the boards of The San Diego Port & Tenants Association, Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, and the San Diego Performing Arts League.

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