

## Producing Green – Case in Point and Survey Results

by Kathy Dismukes

On September 17, WIFV and TIVA co-hosted a *Producing Green* workshop at the National Press Club. The event was held in the club's broadcast studio and featured a tour of the club's production facilities. The meeting attracted many filmmakers wanting to learn how they can make their productions "greener".

The panelists announced the upcoming release of the *Code of Best Practices in Sustainable Documentary Filmmaking* which will greatly aid production teams in measuring and reducing their carbon footprints. In addition to the Code's announcement, panelist Lisa Suchy, Production Manager at Crabtree + Company, a DC-area marketing and communications company, gave a case-in-point presentation about what they have done to significantly improve their environmental sustainability.

Sandy Cannon-Brown presented the findings of a 22-question survey of green production practices undertaken this summer. Respondents included AU CEF faculty contacts, members of WIFV, TIVA, IDA, Filmmakers for Conservation, Realscreen, and the Greencode Project. More than 90% of the 174 respondents worked with crews of five people or fewer, and most were freelancers, so the survey can be seen as a fairly solid representation of the thinking of small US production companies, rather than large organizations. Cannon-Brown used Neenah Paper's definitions of some terms to ensure respondents had a consistent definition for:

*Carbon footprint:* An estimate of an individual's or organization's impact on the environment, usually measured in terms of greenhouse gases produced or emitted.

*Carbon neutral:* Producing zero net greenhouse gas emissions. This is done either by using renewable energy sources, which produce no net greenhouse gas emissions, by increasing energy efficiency, or by carbon offsetting.

*Carbon offsetting:* The practice of engaging in or sponsoring of projects to nullify or "offset" greenhouse gases emitted. This can include such practices as planting trees. This is often done via third party through purchase of carbon offsets.

The survey asked respondents about how important it was for them to be carbon neutral, whether they measured their carbon footprint, whether they purchased carbon offsets, what actions in the office and in the field they were taking to reduce their carbon footprint during production and post-production, etc.

The survey results indicate that there is a great deal of interest in green filmmaking, but there are many questions about where to get information, how to measure a project's carbon footprint, and whether buying carbon offsets was actually a good practice. In addition, there were concerns about "greenwashing". Cannon-Brown said that the *Code of Best Practices in Sustainable Documentary Filmmaking* would be very helpful in answering these and other questions and in significantly increas-



Photo by Bob Morrison

TIVA-DC President Jacqueline Greff and WIFV President Denise Moak

ing the quality and quantity of green production practices. A copy of the *Best Practices in Green Filmmaking Survey* results will be posted to [www.wifv.org](http://www.wifv.org) in the near future.

Since being small poses particular challenges for a company trying to minimize its carbon footprint, WIFV will make a special effort to provide specific green tips and resources for small production companies. Of course, we have a ready resource in how a small company can be environmentally responsible from Mike and Tanya Spann Roche of Think Speak Act, LLC who are already operating in an environmentally responsible manner and educating their clients how they can do the same. They can be reached at [www.thinkspeakact.com](http://www.thinkspeakact.com). WIFV will continue to provide information on green equipment, travel/lodging, craft services, marketing/distribution, and more. Share your successes with [director@wifv.org](mailto:director@wifv.org) to join this important exchange.