

DO YOU HAVE A GREEN THUMB ? *And you like breaking new ground!*

Rockspire is looking for someone who would be interested in helping us develop our verticulture greenhouse concepts. As a major part of our sustainable lifestyle mission, we plan to incorporate a three story greenhouse in which to grow organic produce for our consumption as well as supply local markets. Food is one of the five basic pillars of basic needs discussed in the Rockspire Manifesto, and Rockspire Properties, is committed to developing the means by which to advance the science and art of food production without harming the environment or our food chain.



Photos of Sky greens in Singapore, www.skygreens.appsfly.com

So why have we chosen to grow vertical when we have plenty of land to cultivate at Rockspire? All one has to do is fly across the country and look out the airplane window to see the vast amount of land that has been dedicated to agriculture. In a time when climate change is a worldwide concern, it is not difficult to imagine the impact that weather has on food production when it is left vulnerable to the environmental swings nature has in store; not to mention the large amounts of water required to maintain these vast fields of produce.

However, there are many practical reasons for pursuing this method of greenhouse verticulture at Rockspire. To name a few:

- Pest control, both bugs and wild animals, without the use of pesticides.
- Reduction of water usage for crop irrigation by as much as 75%.
- Minimizing the time and distance food travels from garden to table.
- Minimal use of land for the production of food.
- Advancement of this scientific method for food production.

We have chosen a site next to the MobbyMac Carriage House for the construction of this three story, verticulture greenhouse and designs for the structure are in their early stages. The sketches in the watermark on this page represent our initial design which features exposed heavy timber structural members. Refer to the October 2011 *Rockspirian* for more information about our plans for the area where this will be built.

THINKING ABOUT THE LARGER ECO-SYSTEM, verticulture is a practice that reduces the food footprint. We hear a lot about the carbon footprint, but not much about how our food choices can make an impact on the environment. Experts say the impact of our food choices can be reduced by:

- Consuming less meat; the raising of livestock currently involves half of all U.S. cropland
- Eating foods that can be traced to the source and that use sustainable methods for cultivation; an example is a community garden that uses organic fertilizers and rainwater irrigation - verticulture.
- Consuming less, whether by eating less or reducing the amount of food waste; an example is composting

"Much of the land most suitable for food and feed crops is already in use or is not available because it is under legal protection, has carbon and biodiversity value (i.e., forests), or feeds most of the world's 3.5 billion ruminant livestock." Excerpt from The Global Agro-ecological Zones (GAEZ) *"Comprehensive information for rational land use planning and decision making for food security and agricultural development."* Curious to learn more? Visit www.iiasa.ac.at/

Although many of us at Rockspire are keenly interested in the development of the concept of verticulture, none of us has the expertise or desire to run the day-to-day operations of a greenhouse. We are looking for a person(s) who would be interested in taking on this challenge, possibly in conjunction with a university agricultural department or extension service. If you are this person, or know of someone who might be interested, please contact us.

THE NEAREST TOWN TO ROCKSPIRE -- **EUREKA SPRINGS** is an interesting study of a small town in the twenty first century. And like many small towns it is going through transformations that leave its future unknown. We have intentionally formed Rockspire to be as independent from the local economy as possible; however, the symbiosis of Rockspire with its urban neighbor is undeniable. As a "micropolitan" -- Eureka Springs is a small town with many of the same cultural and job opportunities as a large urban center but without the congestion, pollution, and inherent problems of densely populated areas. However, locals have recently expressed concern for the future of the town for a couple of reasons. One is the popularity of the area for motorcyclists and the associated noise generated in the narrow, historic downtown streets. And two, the rapid growth of the arts scene in nearby Bentonville, home of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, is concerning some that Eureka Springs may lose its rating as the preeminent fine arts destination in the region. How Eureka Springs meets these challenges will be interesting to follow. As Rockspirians strive to be good neighbors by helping ensure the sustainability of our hometown, we invite you to express your thoughts at a future Rockspire Forum.



Photos of downtown Eureka