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## **Environmental Start-Up Delivers Big Results in Inaugural Year 2008; Helps 100,000 People Reduce Their Carbon Footprints**

*— Brighter Planet Makes Environmentalism Accessible with  
Web-Based Campaigns; Bank of America and Other Partnerships —*

Middlebury, VT – Brighter Planet, a Vermont-based environmental start-up, announced today that it has helped 100,000 people reduce their carbon footprints in 2008, its first full year of business. The company said its results were attributable to the success of its Web-based viral marketing campaigns the [350 Challenge](#), [Climate Matters](#), [Break the Bottled Water Habit](#) and [One Day](#); and the national popularity of the Brighter Planet™ Visa® credit and Check cards, provided in partnership with Bank of America.

“2008 was a banner year for Brighter Planet because we made it easy for such a large number of people to confront climate change,” said Patti Prairie, CEO of Brighter Planet. “We founded our company to help people who truly want to do good for the environment, but may not know how or be able to make drastic changes to their lifestyle. By partnering with Bank of America and creating engaging Web-based campaigns, we guided consumers and businesses to take steps to becoming environmentalists.”

Recent research shows that Americans’ desires to help the environment don’t always match their actions. [Gallup's 2008 Environment poll](#) found that 55 percent of Americans report they have made "minor changes" and 28 percent "major changes" in their lifestyles to protect the environment. Yet the [Natural Marketing Institute](#) found that more than 80 percent of U.S. adults had some form of “green motivation” – whether that means purchasing eco-friendly products or changing conservation behaviors.

The cumulative impact of Brighter Planet customers’ efforts in 2008 led to the offsetting of more than 73 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>. That’s the equivalent of each of the following: shutting down all the power plants in the U.S. for seven minutes, removing 13 million bags of rotting trash from landfills or 73,000 people not driving their cars for a month. Through its many products, Brighter Planet helps consumers and businesses understand their CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting activities, embrace conservation at home and work, and neutralize unavoidable emissions with carbon offsets.

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“Beyond a core group of active environmentalists, a growing number of consumers and businesses are eager to do their part for the environment,” said Mindy Lubber, president of Ceres, a leading U.S. coalition of investors and environment groups who serves on the Brighter Planet Project Selection Committee. “Brighter Planet has found a way to inspire thousands of people to make small, positive changes by educating them about conservation and helping them directly contribute to projects that reduce greenhouse gasses.”

A key channel for engaging new consumers in 2008 was through Brighter Planet’s partnership with Bank of America and the creation of the Brighter Planet™ Visa® credit and Check cards. Every time cardholders make purchases with their cards, they earn carbon offsets that fund reputable renewable energy projects.

Brighter Planet’s web-based campaigns also engaged consumers and businesses in the green movement and added to the mix:

- 350 Challenge: Offset 350 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> for 1,400 bloggers. Helped jumpstart leading environmentalist and Brighter Planet Advisory Board member Bill McKibben's international awareness campaign, 350.org.
- Climate Matters: Created a forum for 100 user-generated videos to inspire the next president to take action on climate change. Broadcast winning submissions to 50 million viewers and distributed to presidential nominees and each member of Congress with 1Sky.org.
- Break the Bottled Water Habit: Received 10,000 pledges from citizens to stem the use of water bottles, partnering with Center for a New American Dream.
- One Day: Gave 1,000 gifts of carbon neutrality for a day and, as a bonus, let people pass the gift along to five friends. In exchange, participants reduced CO<sub>2</sub> with 12 money- and carbon-saving conservation tips. Within three weeks, over 5,000 participants were given carbon neutrality for a day. Al Gore’s The Climate Project embraced One Day to offset every U.S.-based presenter.

Several other Brighter Planet channels made environmentalism more accessible in 2008. Two successful corporate initiatives were the WorldPoints® program, a way for customers to redeem credit card points for carbon offsets, and employee gift-based programs at State Farm. Brighter Planet also engaged more than 200,000 participants at green events throughout the country. Events included the American Birkebeiner in Wisconsin (the country’s largest ski race), Boston’s EarthFest (one of the country’s largest music events), the Sierra Nevada Alliance (climate change conference), and GreenFestivals (multi-day gatherings in San Francisco and Washington D.C.).

### **About Brighter Planet**

Brighter Planet ([www.brighterplanet.com](http://www.brighterplanet.com)) helps people reduce and manage their carbon footprints. Its engaging web-based campaigns tap the power of social media to help consumers and businesses *learn about emissions, conserve what they can, and offset the rest*. Brighter Planet carbon offset products fund only the most reputable climate change projects, demonstrating direct community and social value while reducing the amount of greenhouse gasses being pumped into the atmosphere. To date, the company’s customers have offset over 73 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

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