

Firelight Books is a supplier of educational materials for special needs classrooms. The founders of the company, Dr. Nancy Nichols and her husband Michael, have always emphasized creating an ecologically responsible company. They pay close attention to materials coming in and out of their production facility, making sure to use recycled materials whenever possible and making selections that have less packaging. Eighty percent of the energy used to power Firelight Books comes from the company's own windmill. Firelight Books is also conservative in its use of energy by implementing natural lighting and passive heating and cooling within the facility. Firelight Books was founded in beautiful rural landscape of east Texas, a place that inspires Mike and Nancy daily in their endeavor to help create a sustainable future.

"I feel like our business is a little light, bringing some good into this world, and I'm excited to see all these other companies and people who are holding up their lights too!" Nancy exudes as she passes under "Windy," the windmill that overlooks Firelight's warehouse. Like most states, Texas gets its power from the top three polluters: natural gas, coal, and nuclear energy. Less than 0.5% of the electricity in Texas comes from wind power, a statistic that the Nichols' would like to see change. "We offer free tours and literature on wind power for anyone who comes out here. Wind power makes sense because it does not produce CO₂ like the highly polluting coal and natural gas plants, nor does it produce radioactive waste like the nuclear options." Mike adds, "Wind power is growing rapidly out here. Currently, Texas is the leader in wind power, and many entrepreneurs are putting up wind turbines out on their ranches."

As they produce their own clean energy, use recycled paper and packaging materials, avoid overly packaged products and plastics, and refill and re-use whenever possible, Firelight Books is one of the few suppliers of educational materials that gives attention to sustainability. Even as they expand into a larger building, their new warehouse has been designed to incorporate re-usable materials from buildings previously existing on their property, passive thermodynamics, and gray water drainage to their vegetable garden. "I really enjoy putting thought into what we do," says Nancy. "We don't just go for the cheapest option. Mike and I research where our supplies come from and choose the most economically sound. Not only do we look at the environmental footprint of a product, but we also look at where it comes from. We are proud to purchase and use products made in the U.S.A. and believe that buying local products really does have an influence on our economy." The Nichols know that everything they do in business makes an impact on the future. "It's not just about providing educational tools for kids; we also want to take a stand for responsible, ethical business practices that encourage sustainability and self-empowerment."