

2010

Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award Winners



Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards

EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

King Dairy Farm Sullivan County

The King Dairy Farm has been in existence since 1774. Today, the farm has more than 180 cows, which are milked twice daily and average over 20,000 pounds of milk per cow each year. Almost all of the feed for the herd is produced on the farm and they incorporate conservation best management practices into their crop production. Corn silage yields are exceptionally high because they practice conservation tillage to reduce soil erosion. Because 100 percent of the farm's confined animal and milking parlor wastes are stored and kept out of the nearby stream and lake, the farm is able to use the waste as fertilizer to help reduce the amount of nutrients purchased. A 2,600-foot underground pipeline was also installed to deliver this valuable waste to cropland through an irrigation system. The farm also practices crop rotation and winter cover to control runoff, soil erosion and to improve soil. The farm also installed a new energy efficient, variable-speed vacuum pump for its milking parlor and continually makes environmental improvements each year.

EXCELLENCE IN AQUATIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION

City of Athens / Athens-McMinn Family YMCA McMinn County

With two streams listed on the state's impaired waters list, the city of Athens teamed up with the local YMCA to take a plan for a traditional parking lot and build an all-green parking area, showcasing various green technologies. Located on city property behind City Hall, the lot uses pervious concrete and pavers, geoblock green paving and rain gardens – all focal points combined for the first time at one location and using technologies that have approximately a 50-year life, as opposed to asphalt with a 20-year life. The rain gardens allow the rain gradient to percolate through six inches of stone underneath the entire lot and clay berms help keep water in the garden's sub-base longer. The city of Athens supplied the labor and equipment, saving a total of \$60,000 and utilized a local Eagle Scout candidate to help build an educational kiosk with the first "green" roof in the county.

EXCELLENCE IN BUILDING GREEN

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee / New Cameron Hill Campus Hamilton County

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee built its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design corporate headquarters on Cameron Hill, consolidating 4,500 people from 10 locations throughout the city of Chattanooga while reducing its operating costs through environmental and design efficiency. Once certified, the 950,000-square-foot headquarters will be the largest LEED project in Tennessee. The campus provides employees a smoke-free environment, a 17,000-square-foot fitness center, employee pharmacy and clinic, an outdoor walking path and reflecting pools. Additionally, more than half of the 52-acre site is preserved as undisturbed forest area.

As part of its new campus, BCBST restored Boynton Park – the historic Civil War memorial, which now serves as a public park. Building design reduced energy costs by 20 percent or \$265,000 per year. Through low-flow fixtures, efficient irrigation systems and low-water use plants, approximately 20 million gallons of water are saved annually. Other innovations include a raised floor system, which lowers energy costs from 30 to 60 percent; high performance and task lighting controls, which can increase employee productivity; and seven percent of the parking spaces are designated for low-emission vehicles. The company will save approximately \$4 million a year in operating costs.

EXCELLENCE IN ENERGY LEADERSHIP

Nissan North America Headquarters – Williamson County

With an investment in excess of \$100 million dollars, Nissan's North America 460,000-square-foot corporate facility in Franklin includes a site design that minimizes energy consumption, maximizes open space, uses materials with high-recycled content and incorporates on-site renewable resources. Preserving large areas of open green space, the facility sits on a 50-acre site and has 2.5 acres of improved wetlands. Located between South Prong Creek and a tributary, the wetlands provide long-term protection and enhance local aquatic ecosystems as both streams are listed on the state's impaired waters list and provide a third tier of storm water protection and exceptionally clear runoff.

In addition to tracking and benchmarking their energy performance, Nissan developed a plan to reduce energy intensity across all operations. Electrical power use is continuously monitored at the Nissan North America facility to ensure they use only what is needed. By preserving green space, Nissan uses the site to naturally absorb storm water and to reduce the heat "island" effect typically caused by large areas of asphalt. Other efforts include the reduction of impervious pavement by 70 percent, a "green" roof covers the office tower and daylight harvesting. Overall, Nissan's energy efficient strategies include a 33-percent reduction in consumption, saving 1,600 tons of coal per year. Throughout construction, Nissan collected, separated and recycled 3.78 tons of steel, six tons of cardboard, 14 tons of wood and 325 tons of concrete construction debris.

EXCELLENCE IN GREEN SCHOOLS HIGHER EDUCATION

Pellissippi State Community College Knox County

Pellissippi State Community College has engaged in a combination of sustainability initiatives, including new building design, green job education and student participation in recycling. Students, faculty and staff have developed cooperative, mutually beneficial efforts that increased sustainability in the operations of the college, offered new sustainability education programs to the community and trained 40 students – involving students directly in the process of sustainability within the campus environment.

Efforts include the expansion of the school's bicycle storage, the inclusion of shower/changing facilities for individuals riding their bicycles to campus, reserved parking near campus buildings for carpool vehicles, and charging stations in reserved parking spaces for alternative fuel vehicles. Other initiatives included a new building constructed to LEED standards, educational programs in photovoltaics and energy conservation, and campus student projects designed to maintain college-wide recycling efforts. By expanding recycling from 15 collection containers for aluminum to 70 single-stream collection containers, collections rose to approximately 350 pounds per week in 2009.

EXCELLENCE IN GREEN SCHOOLS K-12

University School of Nashville Davidson County

Illustrating their growing environmental commitment, The University School of Nashville involves students of all ages in “greening” its campus, studying environmental issues and conducting community environmental outreach. Beginning in kindergarten with the award-winning Young Naturalists Program, students become grounded in nature and develop an environmental stewardship ethic. This year, 6th graders studied deforestation and global warming and examined the concept of the “carbon footprint,” making a difference in offsetting their own carbon by planting 178 trees in the community. In addition, the Middle School photography class used their skills and love of nature to publish a field guide to the trees on the Edgehill campus.

The school's previous field guide for the H.G. Hill property was used as a fundraising tool by the West Meade Conservancy and Friends of Warner Parks to raise \$10.4 million for acquisition of the old-growth forest property. This 324 acres will eventually become part of Warner Parks. The students also researched the annual quantities of styrofoam plates, cups, and cutlery that were costing the school \$11,200 and ending up in a Middle Tennessee landfill. Changing over to non-disposables and budgeting for a bigger, more energy efficient dishwasher – the school was able to reduce their waste.

EXCELLENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

City of Knoxville / Rainy Day Brush-Off Knox County

Created in 2008 by the Water Quality Forum of Knoxville, the Rainy Day Brush-Off artistic rain barrel competition features actual works of art on 55-gallon rain barrels to help raise awareness about water conservation and water pollution. Engaging the regional visual arts community, the Rainy Day Brush-Off produces a unique collection of barrels, while providing the community with an aesthetically compelling and easily accessible water conservation tool. Since its inception, the Rainy Day Brush Off has created 89 unique rain barrels produced by artists, school groups, 4-H clubs, design collectives and businesses. The painted barrels are displayed throughout Knox County and feature helpful information on the benefits of using a rain barrel and tips on reducing storm water pollution. Currently there are more than 2,000 functioning rain barrels throughout the Knoxville area.

EXCELLENCE IN HAZARDOUS WASTE REDUCTION

Tri State Distribution, Inc. White County

Established in 1992 as a prescription container manufacturer, Tri State Distribution, Inc. has nearly 350,000 square feet on 23 acres in Sparta. With help from a third-party consulting firm, Tri State Distribution assesses its operations every six months for health, safety and environmental issues. During one of those assessments, it was noted that employees were mixing hazardous waste with non-hazardous. By eliminating the acetone mix with that activity, Tri State Distribution has dropped from a Large Quantity Generator to Small Quantity Generator – going from 1,348 pounds to 230 pounds per month. This reduction in acetone mix was achieved while growing their operations by 24 percent in 2009. Tri State Distribution also sends its non-hazardous waste off-site from its White House facility for laundering and reuse. Tri State Distribution recently installed an oil / water separator – a \$30,000 investment to minimize their oily water solid waste stream.

EXCELLENCE IN GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

City of Clarksville Greenway Montgomery County

The city of Clarksville has added a 3.6-mile trail to its current greenways and trails system. This particular addition was constructed on a six-mile abandoned rail bed with an estimated cost of \$2.5 million for the project – but due to city leadership, local community support and the help of various city departments, the project only cost the city \$330,000. Materials and labor for the walking path were donated by local businesses and the majority of the land and right-of-way were donated by private citizens – further reducing the cost of the project. The addition of the greenway will help establish a buffer along the Red River and nearby streams, while providing a habitat for diverse plant and animal species.

EXCELLENCE IN NATURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Friends of Warner Parks / Save Our Ancient Forest Davidson County

Made possible by the Friends of Warner Parks, the "Save Our Ancient Forest" project includes the acquisition and preservation of a 324-acre natural area with approximately 225 acres of old-growth forest in Metropolitan Nashville / Davidson County. The Metropolitan Nashville Board of Parks and Recreation approved the acquisition as an addition to the 2,684-acre Warner Parks system. This project will have a significant positive impact on Nashville's environmental, educational, recreational and economic goals.

Another innovative component of the project is the partnership with area high schools and universities, in addition to the opportunities for a living laboratory in the old-growth forest. Inventories of the flora and fauna and other research projects will reveal information and help influence resource management priorities. An initial birding survey of the property identified three bird species of High Conservation Concern to this region. The "Save Our Ancient Forest" project preserves and protects Tennessee's natural landscape through the acquisition of one of the largest remaining stands of old-growth forest in the United States – ensuring its gentle use and enjoyment today and for future generations.

EXCELLENCE IN PARKS AND RECREATION

A Sustainable Bonnaroo Coffee County

Bonnaroo is a four-day music and arts festival in Manchester, which attracts 80,000 people each year. In 2009, Bonnaroo addressed product consumption, education and outreach, waste management and energy consumption in a comprehensive plan to reduce waste produced for this recreational event. Thirty-three percent of the waste produced by the festival (by weight) was diverted from the landfill. This included 81.49 tons of commingled recycling, 19.07 tons of scrap metal, 27.18 tons of cardboard, three tons of cooking oil and 30 tons of compost – totaling nearly 161 tons diverted from the landfill. This waste diversion, combined with education and outreach promoting sustainability, locally sourced products, on-site composting and environmentally friendly purchasing, lead to the highest amount of materials recycled in the history of the festival. New in 2009, Bonnaroo provided re-usable water bottles for attendees to refill with free filtered water from on-site wells. Bonnaroo also retired 900 metric tons of carbon dioxide, accounting for and offsetting all emissions generated from the festival.

EXCELLENCE IN POLLUTION PREVENTION

Chattanooga Green Lodging Program Hamilton County

The Chattanooga Green Lodging program has been recognized as a national model for sustainable tourism planning and is internationally recognized by Green Globe. An initiative to promote and support Chattanooga's vision for a sustainable city, the Green Lodging program encourages hotels, bed and breakfasts and other lodging facilities and restaurants to be aware of their impact on the environment and to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint, while enhancing the overall sustainability of their operations. The program provides guidance and resources that will greatly reduce impact by using proven techniques to reduce waste and, in many circumstances, save money.

Once certified, properties are encouraged to take an active role, including working with the city's Chattanooga Green effort to increase awareness with businesses and in the community, reduce waste from operations, promote natural resource conservation and efficiency measures, as well as alternative energy deployment. The Chattanooga Green Lodging program represents a uniquely cooperative effort transcending public and private lines, providing a meaningful but achievable certification program at an affordable cost. The net result of the program can be seen at the business level as companies become more energy efficient and operating costs are reduced.

EXCELLENCE IN SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

Knoxville Regional Medication Collection Program Knox County

A task force including the Knoxville Police Department, the city of Knoxville, city and county Solid Waste, Knox County Health Department, Department of Environment and Conservation, University of Tennessee's Academy of Student Pharmacists, Knox County Sheriff's Office, the Hallsdale-Powell Utility District, Knoxville Utility Board, Volunteer Rescue Squad and Earth Fare was created to develop a solution to medication disposal problems.

Since its inception, the program has collected more than 1,000 pounds of medication from over 600 participants at various collection events and through permanent 24-hour medication drop-off boxes located at law enforcement facilities. Also collected were more than 500 pounds of mercury thermometers and 474 pounds of medication packaging. Some unique characteristics of this program include collection of over-the-counter pharmaceuticals and prescription medications, focusing on the environmental concerns of its proper disposal, as well as public safety – helping keep medication out of waters and off the streets. Today, Knox County's efforts are being mirrored by nine separate entities across the state.

2009 ROBERT SPARKS WALKER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

To Be Announced June 24, 2010