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Mayor Chris Coleman Announces 2012 Sustainable Saint Paul Awards

SAINT PAUL – Mayor Chris Coleman honored 10 businesses, individuals and organizations that have demonstrated environmental leadership during the 2012 Sustainable Saint Paul Awards today.

“These 10 recipients represent the best in sustainable initiatives for the past year,” Mayor Coleman said. “I admire their dedication to making our environment better every day. I am proud to be giving these awards to people and organizations whose efforts continue to make Saint Paul a national environmental leader.”

The Sustainable Saint Paul Awards pay tribute to individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental stewardship through leadership in their respective categories. By sponsoring these awards, Mayor Coleman encourages all residents, businesses, community groups and nonprofits in Saint Paul to implement similar projects. These efforts further enhance the city’s quality of life and make Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America.

Here are the 2012 Sustainable Saint Paul Award Winners:

1. Clean-up and Beautification Award – Honoring groups or individuals demonstrating commitment to the improvement of the Saint Paul community, environment and beautification of our surroundings

Roger Svendsen



Roger has demonstrated great concern for the water quality of our lakes and rivers in Saint Paul and beyond. He shares his time and energy serving on his church’s Caring for Creation Team.

Roger also leads the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District's Stewards of the Phalen Chain of Lakes clean up teams.

Roger has volunteered countless hours of knee and back-bending to pick up over 60,000 cigarette butts from around Lake Phalen in 2011 alone.

2. Exceptional Environmental Steward Award – honors the extraordinary efforts of an individual who has helped lead Saint Paul's efforts to protect and enhance our air, water and natural landscape.

Bob Piram

After retiring as Director of the City of Saint Paul's Park and Recreation Department, Bob Piram started a second "volunteer" career. For the last 13 years, he has served as manager and president of the Capitol Region Watershed District.

Bob Piram was President of the Board during the completion of all four Lake Management Plans for the Watershed District, Como (2001), McCarrons (2002), Loeb (2009) and Crosby (2011). These management plans lay out the specific details to protect and improve the water resources within the Watershed District.

Through Bob Piram's leadership, the Watershed District is a leader in urban water quality and watershed management. The City of Saint Paul and CRWD have partnered on new and innovative methods to treat urban storm water runoff including curbside rain gardens, tree trenches, green roofs and pervious pavement.

3. Youth Leadership Award – Recognizing the accomplishments of an individual student, school group, organization or youth club to enhance and protect our air, water and natural environment.

Youth Outdoors/Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa



The Youth Outdoors program was created by the Conservation Corps of Minnesota in 2008 to engage disadvantaged, urban youth in environmental education and conservation work. The program educates young people and inspires them to become environmental stewards by restoring natural areas in Saint Paul, training young people to be leaders in their communities, and preparing them for jobs in the growing green industry.

In 2011 the Youth Outdoors program engaged 63 youth and 12 young adults in Saint Paul. Together, these crews worked to better understand how their actions impact the world around them and what they can do to make Saint Paul a more sustainable city. Youth Outdoors Corps members completed natural resource work on more than 30 sites across the city.

4. Renewable Energy Award – This award acknowledges efforts to reduce energy consumption, energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions by focusing on advancing renewable energy sources.

District Energy St. Paul



District Energy St. Paul had a vision to integrate a large scale solar thermal array into its hot water district energy system that serves 80 percent of downtown Saint Paul. In March 2011, that vision became a reality. District Energy St. Paul developed and commissioned the midwest's largest solar thermal project with support from partners that included the U.S. Department of Energy, Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources, the City of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul RiverCentre.

The project is the first in the nation to be tied to a district heating system and has gained international attention. The 23,000 square foot installation produces over 1.2 peak megawatts of thermal energy and contributes domestic hot water and heat to the Saint Paul RiverCentre complex and to the District Energy system.

5. Commercial Green Building Design Award – Honoring the design, development, construction or renovation of a commercial building.

Baldinger Bakery



Baldinger Bakery has been baking bread in Saint Paul for over 120 years. They needed to find a new location and building that would allow for growth in their business and they were also mindful of impacts of their decision on the environment and the community.

With assistance from the Saint Paul Port Authority and the city, Baldinger Bakery reclaimed a brownfield site that had been vacant for 40 years and transformed it into a 144,000 square foot state-of-the-art, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certified manufacturing facility.

Due to this energy innovation, the facility is now producing 45 percent more product – breads and buns per therm of natural gas. They installed a heat recovery mechanism to reduce electricity and a white roof to reduce air conditioning.

6. Natural Resources Conservation Award – Honoring community groups and residents who replant, restore and reclaim the urban environment into opportunities for the social and physical renewal.

Val Cunningham



Through her volunteer work with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and other natural resource restoration organizations, such as the Saint Paul Audubon Society, Val Cunningham has been an invaluable resource and asset to the Saint Paul community. She has been involved in numerous projects to create, restore and advocate for birds and bird habitat in Saint Paul. In response to the need for additional nesting habitat in Como Park, Val established a bluebird trail at Como Golf Course in 2005, and has continued to maintain it every year – an annual commitment of approximately 75 hours.

Sharing birds and nature with people is a passion for Val. She is always willing to lead a bird hike and will be assisting with the golf course hikes and the bird and bike hikes during the Urban Birding Festival in June. Val is also a trained interpreter for the Hike It! Interpretive program.

7. Water Quality or Conservation Award- This award recognizes citizens, groups or businesses which show outstanding commitment to responsible water management and conservation of our water resources.

Patricia James



Patricia James saw a problem in her neighborhood. There was an unpaved, sloped alley that had created erosion and drainage problems on many blocks in St. Anthony Park. Much of the runoff from two alleys came down her driveway and flooded her back yard. She thought a rain garden would help.

Capitol Region Watershed District assisted with consultation and grant funds. With this support, a larger rain garden was built to handle more of the runoff from the entire block. The beautiful rain garden has significantly reduced the amount of runoff going into the storm sewer.

8. Energy Efficiency & Conservation Award – Honoring efforts to reduce energy consumption, energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Home Energy Squads



The Home Energy Squad is a simple, low-cost, extremely convenient residential program that helped more than 5,000 Saint Paul households save energy and money and reduce their homes' impacts on global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Home Energy Squads are crews of two to three trained workers who install key energy efficiency measures in customers' homes, including exterior door weather stripping, programmable thermostats, water heater blankets, shower heads, faucet aerators, and a complete swap-out of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

Home Energy Squads is a program of Xcel Energy, and in Saint Paul is delivered by the Neighborhood Energy Connection.

9. Environmental Education and Awareness Award – Recognizing programs and concepts which develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand the inter-relatedness among humans, culture and environment and foster behavior change.

East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC)



ESNDC, a nonprofit community development organization working to revitalize the city's east side, has provided energy-related assistance to businesses along the east side's Payne Avenue and Arcade Street business corridors. ESNDC has worked with partners to offer free programs for businesses to learn ways to become more energy efficient, while also providing financing to help businesses cover the sometimes high upfront investment costs of certain energy improvements.

To date, about 20 local businesses have taken advantage of no-cost on-site energy consultations, forgivable loans, Xcel Energy rebates, and have cut their energy bills in half.

10. Sustainable City Staff – Recognizing City employees who continually go beyond their normal duties to incorporate sustainable practices into their every day activities.

Jim Giebel



Jim Giebel's work as the City of Saint Paul's Energy Coordinator has had a citywide impact. Jim has worked tirelessly to advance energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy in

over 40 city-owned facilities. His efforts have saved the city money; reduced green house gas emissions; improved the quality of life for city employees and customers.