

Brandon's award-winning Water
Fire District wins Environmental Excellence Award
By LEE J.KAHRS

BRANDON — The efforts of Brandon Fire District No. 1 have once again been recognized in creating the best drinking water in the state. The district has received a 2014 Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence in the municipal category for its Comprehensive Groundwater Source Protection Plan and for being the first municipality in the state to receive Class II reclassification of its drinking water sources.

Brandon Water Supervisor Ray Counter said he is pleased with the recognition.

"It's a positive for Brandon," Counter said. "I see it working because so many people now are aware of what a valuable resource we have in our water. It's my hope we can use it as a resource for economic development, which has been my goal over the last three or four years." The fire district is one of four municipal organizations to receive a Governor's Award this year. Award winners will be recognized at the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility Annual Spring Conference on May 14 at the Davis Center on the University of Vermont campus in Burlington.

The Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence have been given since 1993 to recognize efforts and actions of Vermonters to conserve and protect natural resources, prevent pollution, and promote environmental sustainability. To date, more than 200 efforts have been recognized.

“These projects contribute significantly to Vermont’s environmental quality and encourage others to take similar actions to protect our resources,” said Deb Markowitz, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. “They demonstrate the importance of innovation and partnerships in enhancing and sustaining Vermont’s environmental quality.

This year’s recipients include:

Municipal Organizations

Brandon Fire District No. 1 (Brandon)- for its Comprehensive Groundwater Source Protection Plan and for being the first municipality in the state to receive Class II reclassification of its drinking water sources

Chittenden Solid Waste District (Williston) – Comprehensive and multi-faceted waste reduction education programs serving a quarter of the state’s population, and achieving solid waste diversion and reduction numbers that lead state efforts.

Marshfield Energy and Climate Change Committee (Marshfield) – Comprehensive energy retrofit to Marshfield’s community center, energy conservation assistance to the town’s school, and a home weatherization campaign, including door-to-door visits, workshops, and energy fairs.

Weybridge Energy Committee (Weybridge) – Comprehensive home weatherization program in 2013 that was part of a statewide Vermont Home Energy Challenge to weatherize 3% of homes. Weybridge exceeded the goal and led the state in this effort.

Businesses

AllEarth Renewables (Williston) – Innovative employee incentive program to reduce fossil fuels and carbon emissions

CxAssociates (Burlington) – Green incentive employee commuting program to encourage alternate forms of transportation

IBM (Essex Junction) – Photochemical waste reduction in the semiconductor manufacturing process

Lamoille Valley/Twin State Ford (Hardwick and St. Johnsbury)- Campaign to promote the sale of plug-in electric hybrid vehicles and was the second Ford dealership in the country in sales of hybrid electric vehicles in 2013.

SunCommon (Waterbury Center) – Residential solar business with an innovative financing model that has made solar renewable energy affordable and has substantially increased solar residential installations in the state.

Non-Profit Organizations

Highfields Center for Composting (Hardwick) – Leading statewide efforts in providing composting technical assistance to farmers, businesses and municipal entities, as well as developing acceptable management practices and training/certification programs for composters.

NorthWoods Stewardship Center (East Charleston) – For the past 20 years, the NorthWoods Conservation Corps program has provided hands-on conservation-based education, employment, and job skills to Northeast Kingdom youth, ages 14-21.

Waterbury LEAP (Local Energy Action Partnership) - Since 2007 has been a leader in energy conservation and renewable energy projects and educational efforts at the local level. A recent project, Waterbury/Duxbury Solar Years, has quadrupled solar renewable energy installations in a two-year period.

Sustainable Energy Resource Group (Thetford) – Has pioneered the concept of town energy committees, networking with over 180 town energy committees in Vermont and New Hampshire and leading

innovative pilot projects such as Thetford HEAT (Home Energy Action Team) to promote home weatherization.

Educational Institutions

Burr and Burton Academy (Manchester) – Created an innovative place-based environmental education model with integrated curriculum at its Mountain Campus in Peru, VT. The facility received LEED (Leadership in energy and Environmental Design) Platinum Certification.

Vermont Schools Achieving EnergyStar Building Certification

The following schools are among some of the first in Vermont to achieve EPA EnergyStar Building Certification for Schools. These schools are in the top 25 percent of schools nationwide in energy efficiency, while also meeting standards for health, ventilation, comfort and lighting quality. These schools are part of Project Green School, a collaboration led by Efficiency Vermont and the Vermont Superintendents Association's School Energy Management Program.

Brattleboro Union High School (Brattleboro)

Camel's Hump Middle School (Richmond)

Clarendon Elementary School (North Clarendon)

Harwood Union High School (Duxbury)

Mount Mansfield Union High School (Jericho)

Shelburne Community School (Shelburne)

Waits River Valley School (East Corinth)

