

Time To Shine Green Light On Outstanding Businesses



Salem Convention Center Hosts the Mid-Valley Green Awards this March, Laurie Aguirre on the left

2015 Green Awards offer chance to honor sustainable leaders

There is a recycler down the street whose efforts divert hundreds of pounds of garbage.

There is a teacher in a nearby school whose lessons means hundreds of students know how to reduce their energy impact.

And there is a small business owner in a

busy shopping district whose switch to paperless communication and bulk purchases has saved tons of paper and thousands of dollars a year.

These folks are your friends, neighbors and shop owners—the ones who cut your hair or stay after school to collect recyclables. They salvage old barns, process fruit or make local

cider. They are farmers, corrections workers and bakers.

There are also the ones who will be honored this year at the sixth annual 2015 Mid-Willamette Valley Green Awards. The ceremony, designed to highlight the best green practices within several categories, including teaching and small businesses, is presented by Capitol Subaru, and co-hosted by the Straub Environmental Center, and Marion County Public Works Environmental Services.

Last year, winner of the business Recycler of the Year was the Oregon Department of Corrections, which recycles such unusual items as ballistic vests, 5-gallon plastic buckets, fabric/textiles, shoes, foam, lead, electronic waste, and chip bags.

Winner of the Green Apple Award, Laurie Aguirre is a teacher at Forest Ridge Elementary School. She gave thousands of students a naturalist education with hands-on experiences in the school's nature escape.

Winner of the large Sustainable Business of the Year, Salem-Keizer Transit



made 3.8 million passenger trips in 2012. Their strategy includes purchasing buses with the greatest long-term economic benefits to the community rather than the lowest cost.

A new category this year, sustainable wine production or brewery, takes advantage of the booming wine, cider and beer business. Other categories not mentioned above include:

- Recycler of the year: individual and business categories
- Green product or service of the year
- Sustainable business of the year: large and small categories
- EarthWISE business of the year.

To nominate a business or individual for one of these categories, go to www.midvalleygreenawards.org. To see video of past winners, go to www.mcEarthwise.net and click on the Green Awards link.

The 2015 Mid-Valley Green Award recipients will be honored at a March 7th, awards dinner at the Salem Conference Center. Funds raised during the event support the many free or low-cost environmental programs offered to the community. For ticket information, visit www.midvalleygreenawards.org or call 503-391-4145.



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