

2008 Governor's Award for Sustainable Practices

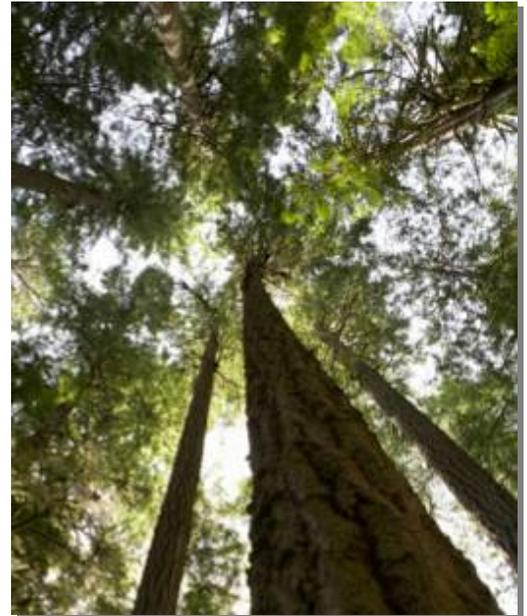
Leading the March to Sustainability

Four Washington companies – an environmental educator, a cabinet manufacturer, a landscaper, and a hospital – have won the 2008 Governor's Award for Sustainable Practices, the state's highest environmental award.

Why they won

The winners offered their services and products, while maintaining their economic vitality, and protecting the environment. They demonstrated excellence and leadership through their commitment to environmental quality and their willingness to share their knowledge of sustainable practices.

Sustainable practices allow a facility to meet its own needs, without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. These businesses reduced or eliminated the use of toxic materials, minimized waste, and conserved energy, water and other resources. They reduced material and disposal costs, increased product quality, and improved worker health and safety.



The judging process

An external panel of judges selected the winners from finalists reviewed by Ecology staff. The judges are past winners, pollution-prevention experts, and representatives from business, labor and environmental groups, and academia.

2008 Governor's Award Recipients

Boxcar/The Little House

Boxcar/The Little House, in Olympia, is a one-person environmental education program. Dee Williams built her 84-square foot bungalow in 2005 as a personal journey, but in three years she has taken 20,000,000 people along on the ride.

Williams uses her tiny home as an object, tangible lesson in green building, renewable energy and energy efficiency, communitecture (community design) and voluntary simplicity. Her message is simple: positive change begins at home. "[N]ot everyone needs to live in a small house...but everyone can look at their choices and figure out what works for them."

Williams hosts tours and tells her story of building the home from salvaged and environmentally-friendly materials. She uses speaking engagements, videos on the Internet, and media events to reach more viewers and readers. More than 480,000 people viewed one video in the first six hours it was posted. Boxcar/The Little House has been featured nationally on the Tyra Banks Show and in the New York Times.

The numbers: Reduced material use approx. 1700% (1,500 sq ft house down to 84 sq ft), 100% renewable energy (solar); reduced water use by 13,000 gal/yr.

Canyon Creek Cabinet Company

Canyon Creek Cabinet Company, in Monroe, makes affordable custom cabinetry for homes. The company has been a recognized leader in the kitchen and bath industry since 1981 and has won many government and industry awards for its products and practices, including the Environmental Protection Agency's Evergreen Award for Environmental Excellence. Canyon Creek was also the first cabinet company awarded the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers' Association Environmental Stewardship Program certificate

The company explores new finish technologies and works with its suppliers to create coatings that reduce volatile organic compounds (VOCs) while providing a durable, quality finish. Canyon Creek helped develop waterborne finishes for use in the cabinet industry. They have now developed a coating with an even lower-VOC than waterborne, which gives the company room to increase production while staying in a synthetic minor regulatory category.

Canyon Creek Cabinet Company continually works with the Snohomish County Public Utility District to find ways to save energy. It was the first business to sign on to the Lean and Environment pilot program with the Dept. of Ecology and Washington Manufacturing Services to streamline processes and reduce waste. Canyon Creek also worked with the Pollution Prevention Resource Center to find and use the latest techniques and tools for training in finish spraying. www.canyoncreek.com

The numbers: Eliminated use of toxic material: 68,723 lbs/year; reduced energy use: 518,868 kWhs/year; reduced water use: 40,000 gal/year; reduced VOC discharge: 60,000 lbs/yr; reduced waste: 568,605 lbs/yr.

N.W. Bloom – EcoLogical Landscapes

N.W. Bloom – EcoLogical Landscapes, in Mill Creek, started and continues as a business dedicated to maintaining an ecological balance while maximizing land use. The locally owned and operated company designs and builds their projects as self-sustaining landscapes.

EcoLogical means they “[A]pproach the entire landscape from a holistic viewpoint and as part of a fully functioning ecosystem...[O]ur gardens have proven that landscapes can be ecological AND beautiful.”

N.W. Bloom does not use pesticides or other harmful chemicals, relying on organic, non-toxic methods. The company uses recycled material, locally produced mulches and compost and native plants in their work. They send organic debris to recyclers, and then close the loop by buying back the compost and mulch to use on more projects. They reuse rock, lumber and other materials from demolition projects and even maintain a “Plant Orphanage” for unwanted plants until they can be used.

Their designs conserve water by building healthy soil, using drought-tolerant plantings, and incorporating features that absorb rain, such as rain gardens, bio-swales and by using pervious surfaces. The company uses biodiesel in all of their vehicles and equipment and runs a 4-day workweek to cut down on transportation. They are also using electricity from the Planet Power program, which buys “green” power from renewable resources.

The numbers: For 2007: Biodiesel used: 3314 gal, saving 73,570 lbs carbon dioxide emissions; recycled material purchased: 405 cubic yards; material sent for recycling: 25 tons concrete, 67 cubic yards green debris, 150 cubic yards sod. www.nwbloom.com

Seattle Children’s Hospital

Seattle Children’s Hospital is a 250 bed hospital, specializing in pediatric care and research. The hospital was one of the first to recognize the dangers of plasticizers to newborns and has phased out medical devices that contain the chemical. Children’s is also mercury free and has reduced its annual hazardous waste amount by more than 27 tons.

Children’s was the first hospital in the region to compost food waste and now sends about 1400 pounds each week for composting. The hospital has saved water and energy by retrofitting and changing equipment, from the surgery autoclave to floor mops. They improved the management of waste from the operating rooms and in six months had reduced their amount of regulated medical waste by 36,000 pounds.

Children’s also uses integrated pest control management for their grounds, follows environmentally preferable purchasing, and donates unused medical supplies and equipment to a non-profit organization for use worldwide. In 2007, Children’s shared their clean, green hospital efforts with more than 80 organizations around the country through a teleconference organized by Hospitals for a Healthier Environment. www.seattlechildrens.org

The numbers: Annual water savings: 7,042,276 gals, \$89,891 in costs; reduced/diverted solid waste: 284,542 lbs, \$50,796 in costs; reduced annual use of toxic material: 120 lbs xylene, 856 gals methanol, 1086 lbs soda sorb, 856 gals formaldehyde.

Future Awards

The next round of the Governor's Award for Sustainable Practices will begin with an application period starting in April 2009.

For More Information

Contact Mariann Cook Andrews of the Department of Ecology's hazardous-waste program, 360-407-6740, or visit the Governor's Award Web site at: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/GovAward/index.html

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