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2018 GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Commissioner Shari Meghreblian today announced the winners of the 2018 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards. Winners will be recognized for their achievements and positive impact on the state's natural resources in an awards ceremony to be held in Franklin on July 9, 2018.

"These recipients have gone above and beyond what's required of them, and I commend their passion and drive to make Tennessee a more sustainable and innovative state," said Haslam.

The Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards program recognizes exceptional voluntary actions that improve or protect our environment and natural resources with projects or initiatives not required by law or regulation. In its 32nd year, this year's awards program covers nine categories: Building Green; Clean Air; Energy and Renewable Resources; Environmental Education and Outreach; Environmental Education and Outreach (schools); Land Use; Materials Management; Natural Heritage; and Sustainable Performance.

"A lot of TDEC's work focuses on education and partnerships that promote these types of voluntary actions wherever possible," said Meghreblian. "These organizations demonstrate that environmental stewardship can be conducive to economic gains and healthier communities."

The 2018 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award recipients are listed below. Details about each award winner can be found in the attachment.

Entity	County	Category
Bells Bend Conservation Corridor	Davidson	Land Use
Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum	Davidson	Materials Management
Hytch	Davidson	Clean Air
Whites Creek High School	Davidson	Environmental Education and Outreach (schools)
Knoxville Partnerships for Low-Income Weatherization	Knox	Environmental Education and Outreach
General Motors of Spring Hill	Maury	Sustainable Performance
Montgomery County Energy Upgrades	Montgomery	Energy and Renewable Resources
Window Cliffs State Natural Area	Putnam	Natural Heritage
Crosstown Concourse	Shelby	Building Green

Six additional entities will be announced at the awards ceremony: four will receive Pursuit of Excellence Awards, which honor past award winners who continue to demonstrate a high regard for environmental stewardship practices; two will be honored with the Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Achievement Award – one for a professional and one for a volunteer.

A panel of 18 professionals representing agricultural, conservation, forestry, environmental and academic professionals judged more than 75 nominations and selected this year's award recipients based on criteria including on-the-ground achievement, innovation and public education.

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Winner: Bells Bend Conservation Corridor

County: Davidson

Category: Land Use

The mission of the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor is to promote and protect the rural character of Bells Bend. Members are working to establish an outdoor recreational, cultural and residential conservation district that serves as a county, state and regional planning model for open space preservation. The Beaman Park to Bells Bend conservation area is a north-south corridor between Beaman Park and the oxbow in the Cumberland River that forms Bells Bend, encompassing roughly 34 square miles or 22,000 acres. This area is book-ended by two of Metro Nashville's newest and largest parks, Beaman Park in the north and Bells Bend Park in the south. Currently, 350 acres are in conservation easements held by the Land Trust for Tennessee.

Two major programs that benefit from the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor include the Share to Share Program and the Scholarships for Camp Bells Bend Beaman. The goal of the Share to Share program is to provide access to fresh, locally grown produce for food insecure families in Nashville. The Bells Bend Farm is one of four local farms that are able to donate to families in need each summer. The Bells Bend Conservation Corridor has formed a partnership with Camp Bells Bend Beaman and launched the Beaman Park to Bells Bend Conservation Corridor Scholarship Program, which offers flexible pricing in service to camp families for outdoor play, exploration and education through activities and experiences.

Winner: Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum

County: Davidson

Category: Materials Management

In 2016, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum launched a comprehensive sustainability program that focused on a variety of initiatives: reducing food waste through food donations and composting; increasing recycling with the introduction of receptacles in back and front of house; building an organic, hydroponic, rooftop garden to grow produce for use in Museum restaurants; and educating 300 staff to maximize impact of the Museum's sustainability activities.

As a result, the Museum diverted 216,124 pounds of waste from landfills in 2017. This reflects 40 percent of the Museum's total waste and an overall increase in waste diversion of 25 percent between 2016 and 2017. With the use of new front of house recycling, compost, glass and trash separation stations (funded by a grant from TDEC) the Museum expects increased results in 2018.

Through a partnership with the Nashville Rescue Mission, 13,800 pounds of food were donated, which in turn fed more than 25,000 people. Inedible food was composted through a contract with a local company. 123,356 pounds of materials were recycled, and a partnership for glass recycling was secured which resulted in 16,600 pounds recycled. The 144 square foot rooftop garden produced more than 1,200 fresh vegetables and multiple pounds of fresh herbs. The harvest was used in Museum restaurants and at third-party events.

Sustainable practices are celebrated and encouraged as corporate values and regular aspects of the institution's culture. In 2017, a quarterly meeting of the Board of Officers and Trustees was dedicated to this initiative, raising awareness and generating support for the Museum's efforts among leadership. Back of house signage is now posted in three languages, ensuring more effective communication among all members of the Museum staff. Receptacles and other materials are color-coded and sustainability is a topic commonly addressed in all-staff meetings.

To the over 1.2 million guests a year that visit, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum is a proud advocate of sustainable practices.

Winner: Hytch

County: Davidson

Category: Clean Air

Hytch LLC, a Nashville-based technology company, launched their Hytch Rewards smartphone application, which rewards ridesharing behavior through GPS tracking. Participants earn mile-by-mile cash rewards whenever you share a ride, including carpooling, public transportation and ride-hailing services. When a ride is complete, users receive a trip summary showing environmental impact, trees saved and cash rewards earned.

In the first two months of the launch, 3,300 individuals downloaded the app, banking over 630,000 vehicle miles not driven and \$11,000 paid back in rewards. This rate of adoption demonstrates that cash rewards can serve as a rallying point and effective source of motivation for commuters who decide to share more rides. Within these two months, the use of the app resulted in 178 fewer tons of carbon emissions or the equivalent of 12,000 trees saved.

Public awareness campaigns, such as the “Hytch with Leaders” video, features a wide range of bipartisan community leaders, from senators to mayors, Tennessee Department of Transportation leaders to private company presidents – all of whom address their own personal participation in making environmentally-conscious decisions, including ridesharing.

This first-of-a-kind technology was funded by community grants and brand partnerships with organizations including Nissan, Sprint Absolute Wireless, Reliant Bank and Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee. Interns from Vanderbilt University, Middle Tennessee State University, Belmont University and Lipscomb University have joined in to educate citizens and provide outreach awareness.

Hytch received the 2016 Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organizations “Innovation Award”; a 2016-2017 Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Grant; and in 2018 was awarded Nashville Technology Council’s “Emerging Technology Company of the Year”. These accomplishments are serving as the business model for a nationwide expansion this year.

Success in Middle Tennessee has already attracted sponsors who wish to fund additional rewards in cities like Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville. With Hytch Rewards, communities everywhere have a simple tool to help promote and accelerate their transition to a smarter, greener transportation system.

Winner: Whites Creek High School

County: Davidson

Category: Environmental Education and Outreach (Schools)

In 2017, the Whites Creek Community Club provided four acres of community garden space to Whites Creek High School for the production of soybeans.

With \$10,000 in grant funding from Ford Next Generation Learning and a Ford pickup truck, students utilized their soybean harvest to produce an alternative fuel source. In their biodiesel-fueled truck, they traveled to 14 different high schools and various colleges to showcase their work, demonstrating that high schoolers can be active contributors in the area of green energy and that alternatives to common fossil fuels can be implemented.

Ultimately students produced 60 gallons of soybean oil per acre. The project allowed National Future Farmers of America (FFA) student members to be involved in Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs for renewable energy and the promotion of environmental advocacy to the National FFA organization at the regional, state and national level.

Whites Creek has and continues to teach others about making biodiesel. The Whites Creek Community Club has hosted student speakers to discuss biodiesel production and students spoke at the 2017 Nashville Food Summit. Visiting teachers have also come from a number of states, including Hawaii, to see the program firsthand.

Winner: Knoxville Partnerships for Low-Income Weatherization

County: Knox

Category: Environmental Education and Outreach

In the past two years, numerous Knoxville partners, including TVA, Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC), the City of Knoxville, Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB), Alliance to Save Energy and several non-profits, implemented the Round it Up and Knoxville Extreme Energy Makeover (KEEM) programs for energy efficiency retrofits of nearly 1,500 homes in low-income areas.

Round it Up was launched in 2015 as a three-year pilot program through which KUB customers would voluntarily allow their utility bills to be rounded to the next dollar. 100 percent of the funds contributed were earmarked for the CAC's weatherization assistance program for low-income residents.

At the same time, partners were awarded more than \$15 million from TVA for KEEM, a two-year program to weatherize 1,278 low-income homes and provide energy efficiency education to better equip program participants to manage utility costs.

Through general education and outreach, KEEM leveraged the Savings in the House educational campaign to encourage low-cost and no-cost energy efficiency behavior changes. In addition, KEEM partners shared their strategies for successful energy efficiency education and outreach through presentations at national and regional industry conferences.

Extra effort was made to reach specific demographics and community groups that were underserved through traditional efforts. All KEEM and Savings in the House print materials were available in English and Spanish, and workshops were also available with Spanish translation. To reach low-income neighborhoods, a door-to-door campaign was organized through Socially Equal Energy Efficient Development (SEED). The goal was to teach community members in person about the benefits of energy efficiency. SEED's program also helps at-risk young adults gain job readiness skills. Trainees learned about aspects of home weatherization and assisted in workshop delivery and door-to-door outreach.

Annual energy savings of more than 6 million kWh, or an average savings of 32 percent per home, were realized. Over 1,700 residents received educational materials through 145 workshops. These projects brought \$12.2 million of direct economic impact to the local community.

Winner: General Motors of Spring Hill

County: Maury

Category: Sustainable Performance

General Motors Spring Hill strives for excellence in sustainable environmental performance. This commitment to environmental excellence is demonstrated continuously within the facility and throughout the immediate community. Numerous partnerships with onsite suppliers, local leadership, the State of Tennessee, volunteers and the many employees of GM have given various sustainability projects the desired positive impact important to the company's mission.

In recent years, projects included a partnership to provide a wetland observation deck at Henry Horton State Park and additional trees in the wetland area. GM employees provided for two raingardens at Port Royal Park in Spring Hill and a pollinator garden at the Visitors Center. They volunteered for a highway cleanup on Keep America Beautiful Day, assisted with watershed education activities with the Maury County Boys & Girls Club, and collaborated with TDEC to host a Sustainable Industry Workshop.

In 2017, a nature trail was constructed on the Spring Hill facility's grounds that allow for public accessibility. Features of this 1.16 mile trail include a creek, the outlet of an underground spring and an observation deck overlooking a wetland and several 100+ year old trees.

Ongoing environmental programs at the facility include maintaining a Certified Wildlife Habitat, updating the property's biological species inventory and expanding the plant's recycling program. The plant also has an active energy conservation program that has been ongoing for several years.

GM (formerly Saturn) was a member of the 1993 Tennessee 2000 Initiative, a collaborative effort among Tennessee industries to reduce emissions. In 1998, the Tennessee 2000 Initiative became the Pollution Prevention Roundtable, with GM as a charter member. In 2001, GM was accepted into TDEC's Tennessee Green Star Partnership. GM was a founding member of the Suppliers Partnership for the Environment, an innovative partnership between automakers, their suppliers and EPA. The Spring Hill branch recently hosted one of the Partnership's quarterly meetings.

Winner: Montgomery County Energy Upgrades

County: Montgomery

Category: Energy and Renewable Resources

In October 2016, the Montgomery County Government partnered with Siemens Industry, Inc. to complete a year-long, large-scale lighting retrofit and HVAC upgrade in the Montgomery County Historic Courthouse, Courts Center, Jail, Health Department and the Veterans Plaza property. Over 23,000 lights and fixtures were retrofitted with LED bulbs. Three chillers and four boilers were replaced with more efficient units. Two 500-gallon hot water storage tanks were replaced, four cooling towers were refurbished and the HVAC automation and variable frequency drive systems were upgraded to increase efficiency at multiple locations. An ozone laundry treatment system for the jail was installed as well as upgrades to over 600 toilets with low flow components.

The \$5 million retrofit and upgrade is a self-funded energy efficiency project, saving Montgomery County Government \$358,827 annually in its first year. Data collected from October 2017-February 2018 show a total savings of approximately 674,200 kWh. Natural gas savings during the same period is approximately 35,100 Ccf and water savings total approximately 5,046,700 gallons.

TDEC's Office of Energy Programs and the Clarksville-Montgomery County Green Certification Program provided technical assistance by helping the County determine which improvements would be most beneficial. As a result of the upgrades and financial savings, the County is able to take on additional projects.

Montgomery County won a special award for "Outstanding Efforts in Energy Efficiency" at the October 2017 Clarksville-Montgomery County Green Certification Awards banquet and the City of Clarksville is a Valley Sustainable Gold Community.

Montgomery County Mayor Jim Durrett explained: "This project is very unique, as it will be funded through the savings it generates over time. We will not only be upgrading and replacing much needed items like chillers, boilers and lighting, but at the same time installing equipment that is much more efficient, saving us money on utilities for years to come."

Winner: Window Cliffs State Natural Area

County: Putnam

Category: Natural Heritage

On April 7, 2017, TDEC officially opened Window Cliffs State Natural Area. Located within the dissected portion of the Eastern Highland Rim, this 275-acre natural area in southern Putnam County possesses an unusual geologic feature formed from the oxbow of Cane Creek. The narrow cliffs have resulted from erosion and natural bridges or “windows” appear within them, giving the area its name.

The Land Trust for Tennessee completed the initial purchase of two tracts of the land in 2014 from private landowners. A third tract, an area where the trailhead and parking area now reside, was purchased from another landowner. The state has since purchased all three parcels, representing a hugely significant land conservation win that was decades in the making.

The cliff face contains the Central Interior Calcareous Cliff and Talus plant community, and only one of two known Tennessee locations of the state-endangered plains muhly. At the base of the cliff, the state-listed northern white cedar also occurs.

The best quality forest communities in the area consist of dry mesic oak and hickory in the upland, while the mesic coves support both American beech and eastern hemlock. Roughly 2.5 stream-miles of Cane Creek flow through the area along with tributary Phelps Branch. A few small cascades, steep slopes, narrow ledges and a 20-foot waterfall occur along the creek. Many of these features can be observed along the 5.5 mile loop trail that leads from the parking area to the Window Cliffs. The trail traverses 18 creek crossings, old fields and successional forest. This Natural Area adjoins Burgess Falls State Park.

Winner: Crosstown Concourse

County: Shelby

Category: Building Green

The Crosstown Concourse is the metamorphosis of an abandoned Sears-Roebuck Distribution Center into a 1.5 million square foot “Vertical Urban Village”. The building was originally constructed in 1927 and by 1965 was the region’s largest employer. Due to urban disinvestment and suburban expansion, the structure was abandoned in 1993.

In 2007, the structure was purchased by a local philanthropist and in 2010, he was approached by a local start-up art organization who wanted to relocate their operation to the building. After a six-month feasibility study, a group of nine local institutions made their ideas a reality.

Both design and financing for the \$200 million project occurred in tandem between 2011 and 2015. Crosstown Concourse celebrated its grand opening in 2017, almost 90 years to the day from the building’s first opening. There were 41 office and retail tenants, bringing 700+ employees to the area. There are 265 apartments within the building as well as a charter high school, YMCA, performing arts theater and artist residency studios. This total project concept provides a vital civic heart for the community.

While LEED certification was not a project goal at the outset, the design team made significant decisions that led to Crosstown Concourse’s LEED Platinum designation in 2017 – the highest designation a building can receive. In addition to preservation of the building, more than 65 million pounds of material, equivalent to 94 percent of all waste produced during the construction/demolition process, was recycled. Vintage windows, which are 60 percent of the building façade, were restored as were seven million bricks. This designation qualifies Crosstown Concourse as the largest historic adaptive reuse project in the world.