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**DEC ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR
ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

Annual program recognizes leaders in conservation and efficiency

Applications Accepted Through April 8, 2016; instructional webinar hosted on February 24, 2016

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is now accepting applications for the 2016 Environmental Excellence Awards program, Acting DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos announced today.

The Environmental Excellence Awards program recognizes businesses, institutions, government agencies and non-profit organizations for outstanding, innovative and sustainable projects or programs that are contributing to a healthier environment and economy.

“As a national environmental leader, New York is home to many organizations and businesses that are pioneering new and exciting programs to reduce energy consumption, use natural resources sustainably and help combat climate change,” Seggos said. “Through our annual Environmental Excellence Awards, DEC is able to honor and showcase those who are setting the example for others across New York and beyond.”

Eligible applicants include businesses (i.e., small, medium and large businesses, manufacturing, power generation, retail, agri-business, hospitality, sports, etc.); not-for-profit organizations; education, health care and recreational facilities; individuals, and local, state, federal and Indian Nation government agencies.

DEC has scheduled a webinar on Wednesday February 24, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. to provide details about the awards program and how to submit a competitive application. Participants will also hear from previous award recipients about the benefits of receiving statewide recognition. Those interested in learning more about the awards program and how to submit a competitive application must register at <http://on.ny.gov/1VbKmMx>.

This year, DEC is especially interested in showcasing innovative projects that achieve significant environmental benefits through state-of-the-art: green infrastructure projects; initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; climate change adaptations; food waste reduction efforts; recycling and composting programs; “green tech” solutions; initiatives to “green” businesses, farms, schools, recreational, sports, health care and hospitality facilities; clean energy projects; creative natural resource/habitat protection or restoration efforts; energy efficiency improvements; education and training programs; manufacturing process improvements and creative urban forestry or farming practices, including programs to advance “farm to table.”

(MORE)

Completed applications for the 2016 awards must be post marked no later than Friday, April 8, 2016. Award winners will be honored at an awards ceremony to be held in November 2016, and will have the opportunity to showcase information on their innovative project or program.

Benefits of receiving an award include statewide recognition and visibility for environmental leaderships, and increased marketing, promotional and networking opportunities.

“This award has not only helped bring people to our showroom and added to our sales, but it has also opened up doors for additional recognition from our industry,” said Bonnie Webster, Vice President of Monroe Industries, a company in Livingston County that developed a product line using 60,000 lbs. of recycled glass each year. “Customers feel good they are working with a company that is conscientious of our environment. It’s good for our bottom line and good for the environment.”

“The recognition we received through winning the award has opened doors for our organization in terms of attracting the attention of new funders and community based organizations interested in working with us to develop similar programs in their communities,” said John McKeeby, Executive Director Schoharie River Center, a non-profit organization that helped train more than 800 local students in the relationship between the natural environment and human activity. “Success breeds success only when it is recognized. The Environmental Excellence Award has helped to do that for the Center.”

Over the past decade, 72 previous award winners have had positive impacts on New York’s economy and, on an annual basis, contributed to impressive improvements of New York’s environment, such as:

- reducing or eliminating more than 150,000 metric tons of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions;
- producing at least 1.4 million kilowatt hours of electricity from solar installations and saving 214 million kilowatt hours of electricity;
- reducing the use petroleum products by more than 12 million gallons;
- reducing water consumption by more than 80 million gallons;
- capturing at least 45 million gallons of stormwater;
- diverting more than 240,000 tons of waste from landfills;
- composting nearly 175,000 tons of organic material;
- eliminating the use of at least 400,000 single-use plastic shopping bags;
- preserving thousands of acres of open space, planting thousands of trees and protecting sensitive and critical habitats;
- engaging many adults and students in sustainable practices at home, work and school.

Information about the award program and the 2016 application materials are available on DEC’s [website](#), by email to awards@dec.ny.gov, or by writing to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Pollution Prevention Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750 or by phone to DEC’s Pollution Prevention Unit at (518) 402-9469.

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