



2014 Sustainable Saint Paul Award Winners

1. **Local, Healthy Food Award** – honoring individuals, organizations or others that demonstrate outstanding commitment to promoting local, healthy food.

Gateway Food Co-op



Gateway members gathering for wood fire Pizza. Photo courtesy of the Gateway Food Co-op.

This year's Local, Healthy Food Award goes to the Gateway Food Co-op for its efforts toward addressing the limited or low access to healthy food on the east side of Saint Paul. Through diligent leadership from Sarah Geving and Beth Butterfield, a steering committee and community supporters, this true grassroots initiative was able to identify local sources of development expertise, create relationships with local food co-ops and city staff, develop communications, raise funds and incorporate as the Gateway Food Cooperative. The organizing effort caught the attention of Saint Paul's successful Mississippi Market Natural Foods Cooperative. In December 2013, the announcement was made that the Mississippi Market would buy the Gateway Food Co-op to be developed at the former hospital linen site on East 7th Street in the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood. This initiative has tremendous potential to positively increase access to sustainable, healthy, local food access on Saint Paul's East Side.

2. **Green Products Award** - honoring organizations which have developed or use innovative products that reduce toxicity, prevent pollution and lower environmental impact overall.

Garden Fresh Farms



Dave Roeser, founder of Garden Fresh Farms and the Orbiting Garden. Photo courtesy of Garden Fresh Farms.

This year's Green Products Award goes to Garden Fresh Farms for its innovative indoor agriculture farm for urban settings. The farm now occupies 10,000 square feet of the Pierce

Butler Route building in Saint Paul, and can produce 2,400 heads of lettuce a day, 5 days a week. Its sophisticated Orbiting Garden grows 80 pounds of basil daily, increasing the access to healthy food by growing year round. The farm's use of innovative products lowers environmental impacts and uses 95 percent less water. It has a ratio of 100:1 reduction in land use to grow crops without pesticides. Thanks to its location in an urban setting, less vehicle fuel is also used to transport food products.

3. **Youth Leadership Award** – honoring the accomplishments of an individual student, school group, organization or youth club to enhance and protect our air, water and natural environment.

Central High School Roots and Shoots



Roots and Shoots' project display. Photo courtesy of Roots and Shoots.

This year's Youth Leadership Award goes to Central High School's Roots and Shoots student club. The students organized a local dodge ball tournament to fundraise \$1,500 to install two hydration stations in their school as a way to reduce single-use plastic water bottle usage. Students also included an education and awareness component, and gave presentations about reducing waste to Central High School science classes.

4. **Natural Resources Conservation Award** - honoring community groups and residents who replant, restore, and reclaim the urban environment into opportunities for the social and physical renewal.

Frogtown Tree Frogs



Frogtown Tree Frogs tree planting. Photo courtesy of Frogtown Tree Frogs.

This year's Natural Resources Conservation Award goes to the Frogtown Tree Frogs program for its work on increasing tree canopy coverage in the Thomas-Dale planning district. With assistance from the City of Saint Paul Forestry division, the Tree Frogs have

annually secured grants and donations from the Unity Unitarian Church of Saint Paul and the United States Forest Service, Urban Connections Program to provide no-cost shade and fruit trees to property owners in the Thomas-Dale planning district. To date, the Tree Frogs have planted over 100 trees on private property, increasing home values and providing local fruit to the community, reflecting an innovative and effective model for low-cost, private property reforestation. The Tree Frogs also annually construct the Dale Street Pop-up Tree Park that provides a green spot of respite for pedestrians along Dale Street, and creates excitement for trees in the neighborhood. Trees are stored and cared for at the tree park and distributed to private property in the fall.

5. **Environmental Education & Awareness Award** - honoring programs and concepts which develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand the inter-relatedness among humans, culture, and surroundings.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, Chipotle Edible Garden



Children holding produce from the edible garden.



Chipotle Edible Garden



A presentation being held at the garden.

All photos provided by Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

This year's Environmental Education & Awareness Award goes to The Chipotle Edible Garden at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, a seasonal demonstration garden created to inspire visiting families, schools, and other community organizations to embrace healthy, active lifestyles through edible gardening. The garden, 8,000 square feet of raised beds and ground beds, is staffed throughout the growing season by education interpreters and trained interpretive volunteers to engage visitors with special presentations and hands on activities. The garden is an invaluable educational resource, promoting gardening and active lifestyles through gardening.

6. **Commercial Green Building Design Award** - Honoring the design, development, and construction of new green commercial buildings or renovations that set a standard for energy efficiency, healthy indoor conditions, storm water management etc.

Union Depot – Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority



Union Depot. Photos courtesy of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority.

This year's Commercial Green Building Design Award goes to the Union Depot. Led by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority team, the Union Depot, a classic urban renaissance, has been revitalized and transformed to a state-of-the-art, Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certified, multimodal transportation hub that is now welcoming passengers again. The \$243 million restoration was completed in December 2012.

The commercial building's sustainable features and practices includes a unique 202,430-gallon underground storm water retention system to mitigate runoff, a hot water snowmelt system to reduce the use of salt to prevent ice build-up on walkways, a multi-modal bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections establishment, and much more. Development activity tied to the renovation of Union Depot created 4,440 jobs, and resulted in 31,000 tons of construction waste recycled and diverted from landfills. Throughout this project, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority team adhered to the guidelines of the Historic Preservation Commission and State Historic Preservation Office. The Union Depot is emblematic of initiatives to integrate transportation, land use and sustainable environmental planning along the Green Line light rail.

7. **Multi-Family Residential Green Building Design Award** - Honoring the design, development, and construction of green residential buildings or renovations that set a standard for energy efficiency, healthy indoor conditions, etc.

Renaissance Box



Renaissance Box. Photo courtesy of Aeon staff.

This year's Multi-Family Residential Green Building Design Award goes to the Renaissance Box, a downtown Saint Paul property redeveloped and managed by the nonprofit developer Aeon. The Renaissance Box, a site once characterized as hazardous due to contamination, was a historic warehouse that through Aeon's work has now been transformed to 70 affordable and sustainable apartments. The Renaissance Box, now a beautiful Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Gold certified apartment building, dedicates 61 percent of its units for individuals with annual incomes of \$21,000-\$33,000, and reserves 14 units for those transitioning out of long-term homelessness.

The building includes many sustainable features, including: At least 90 percent of storm water being managed on-site with a variety of methods, consisting of two rain gardens, green space, and a green roof; repaired or restored building windows now operable to provide fresh air circulation; and a reduction in water consumption by at least 30 percent compared to typical constructions, possible through the use of efficient toilets and faucets.

Through the Renaissance Box project, Aeon has created a replicable model for designing sustainable multi-family homes, especially in historic buildings.

8. **Waste Reduction, Composting or Recycling Award** - Honoring programs or projects that contribute to the development of waste prevention, reduction, composting, or recycling and related infrastructure for commercial businesses.

Saint Paul Hotel -



Photo courtesy of Saint Paul Hotel.

This year's Waste Reduction, Composting or Recycling Award goes to the Saint Paul Hotel. The hotel's organics recycling program launched in August 2013, accompanied by improvements to the hotel's existing recycling program and energy efficiency initiatives. These changes were possible thanks to a diverse group of partners that came together to advance environmentally sustainable operations. Partners included Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Project, Xcel Energy, the Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and Troje's Trash and Recycling.

Already known as a huge success, these changes have resulted in a 90 percent recycling rate – more than twice the average recycling rate in Minnesota. 359,380 pounds of food waste and other compostable materials have also been diverted from the waste stream and delivered to a composting site in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Saint Paul Hotel exemplifies how commercial solid waste generators can be sustainable and engaged in helping achieve state mandated municipal solid waste goals.

9. **Energy Efficiency or Conservation Award** – Honoring efforts to reduce energy consumption and energy costs, utilization of clean and renewable energy sources, and level of investment and benefits of replication.

Regions Hospital



Regions Hospital.

This year's Energy Efficiency or Conservation Award goes to Regions Hospital. Hospitals are large consumers of resources, both in energy and material, and thus have tremendous potential to impact the environment. Awareness of this has led Regions Hospital to establish a comprehensive sustainability program. Notably, its well-developed, long-term energy

efficiency program resulted in a 3.5 percent Energy Use Intensity (EUI) decrease from 2012, making its EUI below the industry benchmark for the sector. Since 2011, Regions has also installed or upgraded new energy-efficient equipment, receiving more than \$350,000 in rebates from various vendors, and having an annual cost savings of more than \$300,000 per year. Regions demonstrates well that a comprehensive sustainability program at hospitals can go a long way.

- 10. Green Practices Award** - Honoring organizations that have developed innovative practices that reduce toxicity, prevent pollution and lower environmental impact overall.

Hamline Church Tech Dump



Photo courtesy of Hamline Church Tech Dump organizers.

This year's Green Practices Award goes to Hamline Church United Methodist and Tech Dump for their Hamline Church Tech Dump events. In response to a need for convenient, accessible electronics recycling, the Hamline Church Tech Dump events provides the community with low-cost, accessible opportunities to recycle unwanted electronics and appliances. In addition to promoting environmental stewardship, Tech Dump promotes social sustainability, utilizing the revenue from recycling electronics to provide jobs for people who have been incarcerated, and who would otherwise have difficulty finding employment opportunities. From environmentally-conscious recycling to socially-conscious job training, the Hamline Church Tech Dump emblemizes green practices.

- 11. Innovative Collaboration Award** – Honoring organized collaborations amongst various agencies and organizations to promote innovative sustainability efforts through a comprehensive sustainability approach.

Energy Innovation Corridor



This year's Innovative Collaboration Award goes to the Energy Innovation Corridor known as EIC. The EIC has developed a first-of-its-kind clean energy and transportation showcase in the United States. The EIC comprises of cross-section partners from varying sectors, including government, business, non-profit and utilities. These partners define and brand the initiative and develop goals and metrics to exceed Minnesota State energy standards. Furthermore, they coordinate action plans targeting the strategic deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency, smart technologies, and transportation within the project area along the Green Line light rail corridor.

Since the University of Minnesota began tracking metrics on January 1, 2010, EIC partners have either met or exceeded nearly all goals each calendar year. To date, the EIC has seen more than \$50 million in economic impact and avoided 2.5 billion pounds of carbon. According to the EPA, that's equivalent to: A year's electricity use for 155,000 homes, or 2.6 million barrels of consumed oil, or the carbon sequestered from 920,000 acres of U.S. forests in one year.

- 12. Water Quality or Conservation Award** - Honoring citizens, groups, businesses, or others which show outstanding commitment to responsible water management and conservation of water resources.

Capitol Region Watershed District, City of Saint Paul, Metropolitan Council and Ramsey County



University Avenue Landscaping.



Installation of tree trenches.

Photo courtesy of the Capitol Region Watershed District.

This year's Water Quality or Conservation Award goes to Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD), the City of Saint Paul, Metropolitan Council and Ramsey County for their water quality and conservation efforts along the Green Line corridor. The development of the light rail presented a tremendous opportunity to construct sophisticated storm water management practices in an urban setting. In choosing to take a holistic approach, the partnership was forged with a commitment to improve storm water management and transform the aesthetics of the Green Line corridor through the implementation of highly visible green infrastructures practices. These practices included three main parts: constructing approximately five miles of an integrated tree trench system that has 1,200 trees along the north and south sides of University Avenue; two types of surface green infrastructure practice (rain water and storm water planters) at nine locations adjacent to University Avenue; and infiltration trenches beneath two side streets within the corridor.

These features capture and treat the most polluted first flush of runoff along an extensive tract of highly developed land. The CRWD estimates that, on an annual basis, the entire project will reduce storm water volume by more than 50 percent. It will also reduce sediment load by 9 tons and reduce phosphorus load by 109 pounds to the Mississippi River.

- 13. Single-Family Residential Green Building Design Award** - Honoring the design, development, and construction of green residential buildings or renovations that set a standard for energy efficiency, healthy indoor conditions, etc.

Inspiring Communities Program



Homes redeveloped through the Inspiring Communities Program. All photos provided by Inspiring Communities staff.

This year's Single-family Residential Green Building Design Award goes to the Inspiring Communities program which, in 2013, invested \$8.6 million in Saint Paul neighborhoods that were most impacted by vacancy and foreclosure. The comprehensive program is a replicable plan for creating affordable and sustainable housing that minimizes negative environmental impacts, while simultaneously benefitting the occupants of the redeveloped homes and surrounding neighbors.

Through this program, Inspiring Communities has been able to form a partnership with Capitol Region Watershed District to ensure the inclusion of a rain garden on the property of every redevelopment to help improve drainage, protect the homes, and treat storm water runoff on-site. A partnership with the Saint Paul Forestry Division has also formed to provide assistance in assessing the health of the trees on project sites, as well as offering recommendations regarding removal of invasive or unhealthy trees. Furthermore, a partnership with the Neighborhood Energy Connections allowed the program to utilize the software Home Energy Rating System that models the energy consumption of each home and benchmarks the results based on a similar building constructed to current building code requirements.

Through Inspiring Communities, 90 residential units have been rehabilitated using extensive green techniques and materials. To date, more than 40 homes have been certified through Enterprise Green Communities and 29 homes are currently underway.

14. Sustainable Partnership Award – Honoring a strong, collaborative partnership between the city and an individual, business, or organization that broadly furthers the sustainability efforts in Saint Paul.

Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities, CityLabs



Writing the Story of Saint Paul's Elms, a CityLabs project. Photo courtesy of CityLabs.

This year's Sustainable Partnership Award goes to the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities, CityLabs program. The innovative partnership formed between CityLabs and the City of Saint Paul has integrated real civic problems into existing college courses that lead to research and feasible solutions for the city. In 2013, City of Saint Paul staff and CityLabs faculty and students worked on preserving urban tree canopy and other natural resources; managing water and encouraging urban green spaces; sustainable waste solutions; reducing energy use and streamlining processes to maximize efficiency; and pedestrian transit issues related to the Green Line light rail. CityLabs demonstrate that even the most complex sustainability issues can be tackled in partnership.

15. Sustainable City Staff Award - Honoring City of Saint Paul employee(s) who continually go beyond their normal duties to incorporate sustainable practices into their everyday activities.

Wes Saunders-Pearce



Wes Saunders-Pearce.

This year's Sustainable City Staff Award goes to Wes Saunders-Pearce, the City of Saint Paul's Water Resource Coordinator. Wes has consistently gone above and beyond his job duties to bring internal and external partners together to achieve sustainable storm water solutions that benefit the City of Saint Paul and its residents. He also leads the city's Water Resource Group and has been vital in establishing and improving many collaborative processes to protect and improve water resources in Saint Paul, including the Central Corridor Shared, Stacked Green Infrastructure Study and harvesting rainwater at the Lowertown Ballpark. Outside of water-related duties, Wes has served as the primary contact person with the ACTC CityLabs program. His approach of transparent, concise dialogue has fostered an environment of trust and a willingness to try new and innovative strategies, while elevating the importance of water quality issues in the city.