

SACOG HONORS REGION'S BEST AT AWARDS CEREMONY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 17, 2009

**Contact: Erik Johnson or
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SACRAMENTO – The Sacramento Area Council of Governments today honored outstanding regional efforts in transportation, smart growth planning and air quality as part of the 2009 *SACOG Salutes!* Regional Awards Program. The high-profile awards were presented to individuals and organizations whose achievements and innovations made a significant difference in the Sacramento region in 2009. This is the 11th year SACOG has recognized outstanding work by organizations, businesses and individuals through this program.

Organization of the Year: Sacramento Metro Chamber
for collaborative efforts to represent the Sacramento region in local, state and federal advocacy

Project of the Year: City of Folsom
for multi-agency collaboration and project delivery for the Folsom Lake Crossing

Blueprint Excellence: City of Winters
for downtown redevelopment and Blueprint implementation

Business of the Year: VSP Vision Care
for CO₂ reductions through alternative mode transportation, and use of eco-friendly materials and operations

Employee of the Year: Toni Barry, Sacramento County
for collaboration to create the Sacramento Green Partnership and its work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region

Employee of the Year: Jim Mills, Produce Express
for creating local farm distribution to restaurants and helping to build a market for local small farms

Mary Brill Youth Excellence: El Dorado Youth Commission
for community organizing that informed the Environmental Vision for El Dorado County

Special Recognition: El Dorado County Department of Transportation
for El Dorado trail improvements that add connectivity to major business hubs

SACOG instituted the annual awards program in 1999 to honor outstanding regional work by organizations, businesses and individuals. Detailed background on each recipient follows. Photos of recipients are available upon request. For further information on the awards, categories and past recipients, please visit:

www.sacog.org/about/awards/sacogsalutes/categories/ or contact Erik Johnson or Monica Hernández at (916) 321-9000.

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Organization of the Year Sacramento Metro Chamber

The Sacramento Metro Chamber, over the last 39 years, has organized regional leaders on the annual Cap-to-Cap trip to Washington, D.C. This coordinated regional effort has helped position our region to receive millions of dollars of funding for a wide range of projects.

This year, the Metro Chamber stepped out of its traditional business role to work closely with SACOG and other regional public and private partners to prepare for the federal economic stimulus package. The Chamber helped prepare prioritized lists of the region's "shovel ready" projects. The coordinated effort of the Chamber on non-transportation projects and SACOG on transportation projects helped ensure the region was in position to maximize any available ARRA funding to our region.

This work involved many hours of Chamber and regional staff time collaborating with cities and counties, colleges and community groups, and public or private organization interested in receiving stimulus funding.

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Sacramento Metro Chamber

Director of Communications

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Nominated by:

Robert Dugan

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Project of the Year

Folsom Lake Crossing, City of Folsom

In 2003, Folsom Dam Road was closed due to national security concerns. Prior to its closure, the road carried approximately 18,000 vehicles per day between Placer and El Dorado counties. The key to the success of such a large-scale infrastructure project was coordinated collaboration between the local community and government agencies at the local, state and national levels.

Environmental considerations and benefits were a priority in the planning processes, given the project's proximity to the American River. The city of Folsom and other partner agencies worked together to protect and preserve the natural environment, developing a storm water improvement program and reusing over 700,000 cubic yards of excess material as on-site fill.

Even the funding for the \$139-million project reflects this intergovernmental collaboration with project costs shared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, the California Department of Water Resources, and the city of Folsom. The project was completed in March of this year.

Contact:

Sue Ryan
Public Information Officer
City of Folsom
(916) 351-3360

Nominated by:

Stephen Miklos
Mayor
City of Folsom
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Blueprint Excellence City of Winters

In 2006, the city of Winters adopted a strategic plan to implement Blueprint principles in their Downtown Master Plan.

In planning its downtown, the city of Winters took an integrated approach, linking the Downtown Master Plan with the Putah Creek Master Plan, water and sewer master plans, form-based codes, revised parking standards and capital improvement programs.

The city's form-based codes establish guidelines for land use, mixed-use development, housing and downtown design. The codes allow for increased densities, vertical design and infill — all while maintaining a rural downtown style.

Since the adoption of the Downtown Master Plan, the city of Winters has completed a \$2 million streetscape renovation that added bulb outs, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public areas to the existing downtown. The city is currently implementing an additional \$700,000 in bicycle and pedestrian and roadway improvements.

The city of Winters has invested nearly \$4 million in water and sewer improvements to improve downtown infrastructure that will support infill projects. The city also funded 27 façade improvements to store fronts and buildings to facilitate economic growth and to encourage more pedestrian activities.

The Blueprint planning and implementation in the city of Winters is an example of how Blueprint planning can improve and support rural and urban communities in our region.

Contact:

John Donlevy
City Manager
City of Winters
(530) 795-4910

Nominated by:

Cindy Tuttle
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Business of the Year

VSP Vision Care

VSP Vision Care regularly educates and engages employees about the importance of operating as an environmentally responsible business through its Environmental Sustainability Program.

In collaboration with SMUD, VSP implemented a SynapSense Wireless Green Data Center. With SynapSense, wireless sensors measure the temperature, humidity and air pressure around their data center so the Operations Department can monitor misdirected or wasted energy. This new system will reduce CO₂ emissions by more than 50,000 metric tons and save over 250,000 kilowatts of energy worth over \$23,000 per year.

VSP provides incentives to employees including bike lockers and a locker room with shower facilities for employees that bike to work in addition to preferred parking for carpoolers and electric or hybrid vehicles. They have an Alternative Transportation Program which allows employees to use pre-tax dollars to purchase transit passes and provides discounts through local car dealerships when purchasing alternative fuel cars.

Currently, 15 percent of VSP employees use an alternative mode of transportation.

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Nominated by:

Steve Hibbs

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Employee of the Year

Toni Barry, Sacramento County

In Sacramento County, Toni Barry is working with county agencies and building and development stakeholders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As part of the General Plan Update, Ms. Barry helped create and implement a Climate Action Plan and CEQA thresholds for greenhouse gases.

Barry facilitated a partnership with SMUD to help form the Sacramento Area Green Partnership bringing together Sacramento County and the cities within to measure baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory using the ICLEI method. Climate coordinators from each jurisdiction are working collaboratively to develop a consistent approach to measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Green Partnership's collaboration includes Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, SACOG, PG&E and other stakeholders. Barry worked to secure funding from SMUD, Sacramento County and the air district to reduce the funding needed from each city. Now in its second year, the Green Partnership is exploring new areas of collaboration and cooperation to achieve greenhouse gas reductions.

Contact:

Toni Barry

Principal Environmental Analyst

Sacramento County

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Nominated by:

Christina Ragsdale

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Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

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Employee of the Year

Jim Mills, Produce Express

Jim Mills has been a sales representative with Produce Express for 10 years and prior to that was in the restaurant industry. Mr. Mills has been integral in supporting locally grown produce on the regular menus of restaurants throughout the region. His work connects local farms with over 200 restaurants; many of these small farms would not have the opportunity to grow their distribution market without the support of Produce Express.

Each year, Mills coordinates farm tours for local chefs facilitating market opportunities for farmers growing specialty crops adding to the growing, farm-to-table movement.

Mills' work connecting small farms to local restaurants is above and beyond produce distribution. He puts a high priority on locally grown produce and encourages restaurateurs to share his passion including: fresh quality, food miles traveled, air quality impacts, and other factors.

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Jim Mills

Produce Express

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Nominated by:

Suzanne Ashworth

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Mary Brill Youth Excellence El Dorado Youth Commission

This is the first presentation of the Mary Brill Youth Excellence award. Mary Brill was a highly recognized figure in the Sacramento region. Mary succumbed to cancer in October of this year. She worked to engage stakeholders of all interests and backgrounds to participate in decision making processes and was an advocate for the environment, transportation and smart growth.

The El Dorado County Youth Commission works with the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors to ensure the voice of today's youth are heard. The youth commission is operated through the University of California Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program.

In 2007, the Angora fire destroyed 254 homes and 67 commercial buildings, damaged 30 more homes, and caused significant environmental damage in Lake Tahoe. In immediate response, the environmental vision began to develop for the Angora area. The environmental vision creates a model for El Dorado County to consider environmental issues, smart growth principles, walkability, and accessibility when planning for growth development.

The El Dorado Youth Commission felt this initiative was of broad interest and should be adopted countywide plan reflective of wide input from residents of the entire county.

The youth commission, with assistance from a professional facilitator, conducted focus groups throughout the county and surveys to every high school in the county on transportation, bike paths, recreation planning, parks, trails and other environmental issues.

The youth commission gathered significant input to El Dorado County Environmental Vision project, adopted in March 2008. Since its adoption, a community garden, solar agricultural education project, and bike safety video have been created.

The El Dorado Youth Commission have proven to their peers, policy makers and their community that public input and participation, especially from young people, are key to inclusive and successful planning and implementation.

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Nominated by:

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Special Recognition

El Dorado County Department of Transportation

In 2005, the El Dorado County Bicycle Transportation Plan identified the El Dorado Trail improvement and Weber Creek Trestle Bridge restoration as high-priority projects.

Through collaboration with local advocacy groups, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the county Trails Advisory Committee, and five public meetings in the community, El Dorado County developed a bridge design plan including a natural trail for equestrian and bicycle use.

The 2.75-mile trail, completed in October 2009, connects the city of Placerville with the Diamond Springs community and provides non-motorized connectivity to the El Dorado Government Center, Herbert Green Middle School, a skate park, and two major shopping centers. In addition to serving the El Dorado community, the trail represents the first step in connecting the El Dorado Trail with the city of Folsom and the American River Parkway.

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Nominated by:

Eileen Crim

Chairperson

Trails Now

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