

Sustainable Design/Green Buildings

VA Pacific Islands Health Care System

Energy Efficient Components at the Ambulatory Care Clinic

The Department of Veterans Affairs VA Pacific Islands Health Care System received the prestigious U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR® Label for 2004 in the “Medical Office Building” category for the Ambulatory Care Clinic building in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Ambulatory Care Clinic is VA’s first Outpatient Clinic and Hawaii’s first healthcare facility to attain the distinction of being EPA ENERGY STAR® labeled in this category.

Achievement of this award was accomplished through the original green design components and ongoing energy reduction efforts, which led to significant conservation in the use of energy at this facility. Installation of energy-efficient features also provided a rebate from the local electrical company, Hawaiian Electric Company, Incorporated (HECO), in the amount of \$76,600. The facility received the Energy Project of the Year 2000 award from HECO, and is featured in the spring 2005 issue of HECO’s publication, Powerlines, for its original design and continued efforts in identifying innovative conservation measures, including through energy management modifications and educational awareness.

Recycling

Kenneth Haines, Barry Woodin, and Timothy Trittschuh

Composting efforts at Fort Custer National Cemetery, Augusta, Michigan

In response to a ban on yard waste in Michigan’s landfills, the Fort Custer National Cemetery (FCNC) maintenance staff implemented a comprehensive composting program in 1996. Since Mr. Haines, Mr. Trittschuh, and Mr. Woodin initiated the composting program 8 years ago, FCNC staff has recovered roughly 40 percent of the facility’s annual solid waste stream and has processed approximately 4,000 cubic yards of topsoil for use at the cemetery. As yard waste is the second largest recoverable item in the facility’s waste stream, this project is an important part of improving FCNC’s overall environmental performance. The topsoil produced by the composting operation is used onsite and enhances the health of the turfgrass and plants at the cemetery. The composting program is a key component of FCNC’s natural resource management program.

Waste/Pollution Prevention (Co-winners)

The William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, Madison, Wisconsin

Reduction in Regulated Medical Waste Generation

The William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital is a tertiary care research facility affiliated with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In response to environmental and economic concerns that arose as a result of increasing volumes of infectious medical waste, the facility drafted a waste management policy that directly addressed the issue. The facility’s commitment to reducing Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) has resulted in a reduction of 263,287 pounds per year of RMW compared to the annual total in 1995. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, the facility was able to reduce the RMW level to 7.53 percent

of the total waste stream, from 8.80 percent in FY03. The reduction in the amount of RMW generated reduces the need for incineration, which can produce dangerous toxins, and saves the facility significant costs relating to the disposal of RMW.

The facility is a charter member of Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) and is cited as a case study on the H2E website for achievements in RMW reduction. It also has been recognized by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for using new technologies to reduce RMW generation.

Gregory L. Winters, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Office of Facilities Management, Environmental Programs Service

Waste Minimization and Compliance Report

The Waste Minimization and Compliance Report (RCN 10-99-904) was developed by Mr. Winters, RCRA/P2 Program Manager, to meet the requirements of Executive Order 13101, Greening the Government through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, for tracking waste prevention and affirmative procurement. Accordingly, he developed a series of five screens for inputting data on solid waste, regulated medical waste (RMW), hazardous waste, radioactive waste, and recycling and procurement of recycled products through an all-electronic format. These screens are updated annually as Federal and VA policies and requirements evolve.

The data collected resulted in the development of measurable environmental goals for VHA by the Under Secretary for Health and the development of VHA Directives in Hazardous Chemicals Management, Mercury Reduction, and Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know. The data is published annually in the Waste Minimization and Compliance Report (WMCR), which serves multiple purposes, including education and outreach. The WMCR was used to support VHA’s application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) Program and enabled VHA to be the first major Federal healthcare system to be accepted into the H2E Program.

Please join us in congratulating the winners of the 2005 VA Environmental Excellence Award. Their leadership in environmental initiatives serves as an example not only to their colleagues, but to the Federal community at-large.

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(Cover photos: 2005 VA Environmental Excellence Winners representing: (1) VA Central Office; (2) Fort Custer National Cemetery; (3) William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital; (4) VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.)



Department of Veterans Affairs Celebrates

EARTH DAY 2005

Leading the Way to a Healthier Environment



35th Anniversary

Leading the Way to a Healthier Environment

April 22nd marks the 35th anniversary of Earth Day, a milestone in the history of this global environmental event. Gaylord Nelson, then a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, founded Earth Day in 1970 to focus national attention on the need to improve and safeguard the health of the natural environment. Over the past three decades, Earth Day has led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, passage of significant environmental protection legislation, and many other positive actions resulting in a considerably cleaner and safer environment worldwide.

Leading the Way to a Healthier Environment is the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) theme for Earth Day 2005. At today's Earth Day Program, we recognize VA employees and facilities for their leadership in protecting the environment while carrying out VA's mission to serve our Nation's veterans. This year, five winners were selected in the VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program in the areas of environmental management systems, waste/pollution prevention, recycling, and sustainable design/green buildings. Through their innovative programs and collaborative efforts, all have made significant contributions to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environment. The award-winning projects are highlighted in this program. To learn more about them, or the VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program, please visit the VA Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management's Environmental Affairs – Greening VA Web site at <http://vaww1.va.gov/oamm/recycle>.

The Department of Veterans Affairs takes this opportunity to renew our commitment to being a good steward of the environment and to leading by example. VA calls upon all employees and facilities to take action to continually improve the management of environmental programs and to protect and preserve the environment for this and future generations

For information on how you can support Earth Day every day at work, at home, and in your community, visit the Environmental Affairs – Greening VA Web site or the Federal Earth Day portal at <http://www.EarthDay.gov>.

EARTH DAY PROGRAM VA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY

April 21, 2005
10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Acknowledgements
Mr. Charles E. Roberson
Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Program Management and Operations

Invocation
Chaplain Clarence Cross
Chief, Chaplain Service
VA Washington, DC Medical Center

Introduction of Mr. Edwin Piñero
Federal Environmental Executive
Mr. Charles Roberson

Remarks
The State of the Environment
Mr. Edwin Piñero

Introduction of The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Mr. Charles Roberson

Remarks
The Honorable R. James Nicholson
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Presentation of 2005 VA Environmental Excellence Awards
The Honorable R. James Nicholson
Mr. Edwin Piñero

Closing Remarks
Mr. Charles Roberson

Benediction
Chaplain Clarence Cross

Green Purchasing Awareness Fair
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
VACO Room C-7

VA Environmental Excellence Awards 2005 Winners

Each year, the Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes VA employees and facilities for efforts that resulted in significant contributions to the environment. The theme of VA's 2005 Earth Day observance, *Leading the Way to a Healthier Environment*, is exemplified in each of the award-winning projects, which follow by category:

Environmental Management Systems

GEMS Professional Advisory Group (Veterans Health Administration: Nancy Adams, Tina Beckner, Arnold Bierenbaum, Tom Boos, Keith Davidson, Mary (Bernie) Foster, Michael Frydach, Jim Holland, William Kulas, Victoria Lay, Becky Lemen, Linda Martin, Steve O. Morris, Keith Repko, Marian (MaryLou) Scholz, John G. (Jack) Staudt, Adeline (Addie) Wall, Vernon Wilkes; National Cemetery Administration: Donald Campbell; Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management: Fred Martinez, Barbara Matos; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Diane Lynne, Ruben McCullers)
VHA Guidebooks for Environmental Compliance, and the Development and Implementation of Green Environmental Management Systems at VA Medical Centers

Executive Order 13148, *Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management*, directs that Federal agencies conduct environmental compliance audits and develop and implement Environmental Management Systems. To meet this requirement, the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management embarked on the development of two environmental guidebooks.

The first guidebook, "Environmental Compliance Guidebook," provides detailed information on how statutory and regulatory environmental requirements apply to the operation of VA medical centers (VAMCs). The second, "Green Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) Guidebook," was undertaken as a collaborative project within VA and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The GEMS Guidebook assists VAMCs by providing the framework to coordinate existing environmental programs and activities into one integrated system that enhances and improves the overall management, efficiency, and effectiveness of these programs. The guidebook is easily modified to meet varying local conditions that exist at every VA facility.

Both environmental guidebooks are available electronically at: <http://vaww.ceosh.med.va.gov/Guidebooks/GEMS2004/gems.htm> (GEMS Guidebook) and http://vaww.ceosh.med.va.gov/Guidebooks/EnvCompl-6B/6b_environmental_compliance.htm (Environmental Compliance Guidebook).