

Lt. Governor Simon awards green industry leaders

Written by Kara Beach

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Local foods key to growing economy

CHAMPAIGN – October 27, 2011. At an award ceremony celebrating 25 of the greenest public, private and non-profit organizations and businesses in Illinois, Lt. Governor Sheila Simon said good environmental practices strengthen the state's economy.

"These awards recognize leaders in sustainability, and they also recognize smart economic policy for businesses and governments," Simon said at the 25th Annual Governor's Sustainability Awards Ceremony hosted by the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center at the University of Illinois.

Among those recognized was Uncommon Ground in Chicago, which runs two restaurants serving locally grown food from its 2,500 square foot rooftop farm. The group received a Continuous Improvement Award, given to organizations that have won awards at previous Sustainability Award Ceremonies.

Simon noted that Uncommon Ground helps keep local food dollars in the state. Simon, who chairs the Governor's Rural Affairs Council has targeted building opportunity in Illinois by promoting local foods. Illinoisans spend roughly \$46 billion annually on food, but only \$2 billion of that amount on food grown in Illinois.

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The awards have been presented since 1987 by the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC) at the University of Illinois. Awards are given to organizations for their efforts in implementing green practices such as technology and energy conservation.

“The efforts of these businesses and organizations demonstrate that it is possible to meet social and economic needs while minimizing impacts on the environment,” ISTC Director Manohar Kulkarni said. “Present and future generations will appreciate their foresight.”

A Sustainability Award, which recognizes first-time winners, was given to the University of Illinois Retro-commissioning Group, which is comprised of engineers, field technicians and tradesmen. The group has spent \$6 million making 27 campus buildings more energy efficient. The team’s efforts have resulted in an average energy savings per building of 26 percent and a total \$9.7 million reduction in utility costs since 2007.

Four community colleges - John A. Logan College, Lewis and Clark Community College, Rock Valley College and Southwestern Illinois College – all received sustainability awards for implementing energy efficiencies on campus.

“More efficient energy use in community colleges means more opportunity for students to get the education they need to be ready for the workforce,” Simon said.

The winners are:

- ActOnEnergy Business Program, Peoria

- Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne

- Cabot Corporation, Tuscola

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- City of Evanston, Evanston
- City of Naperville, Naperville
- DuPage County, Wheaton
- Earth Friendly Products, Addison
- Elmhurst Park District, Elmhurst
- Gabriel Environmental Services, Chicago
- GE Healthcare IT, Barrington
- Harris Corporation, Quincy
- J.L. Clark, Rockford
- John A. Logan College, Carterville
- Lewis and Clark Community College, Godfrey
- Lincoln Park Zoological Society, Chicago

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- NOW Foods, Inc., Bloomingdale
- PortionPac Chemical Corporation, Chicago
- Rock Valley College, Rockford
- Solberg MFG., Itasca
- Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville
- The Sherwin-Williams Company, Effingham
- Uncommon Ground, Chicago
- University of Illinois at Chicago, c/o Office of Sustainability, Chicago
- University of Illinois Retro-commissioning Group, Champaign
- Village of Hoffman Estates, Hoffman Estates

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