



2012 Sustainability Awards

Summary Descriptions of Winners

For Immediate Release:

October 19, 2012

For more information:

Sweet Pea Cole

541-385-6908 x11

Individual—Sustainability Champion: Karen Kassy

PO Box 1421, Sisters OR 97759

Phone: 541-388-3987

Email: sunnybendgirl@gmail.com

Karen Kassy is a writer and consultant who relocated two years ago from Colorado to Sisters, OR.

What stood out to us: Karen Kassy shows her commitment to sustainability in her day to day actions, her dedication to community by volunteering throughout Central Oregon, and her willingness to champion recycling in the face of stiff institutional resistance. Karen became an “accidental activist” when the Sisters Recycling Center (SRC) was slated for possible closure.

In her personal life:

- Karen works from home and walks or bikes for almost all in-town trips/errands.
- She sold her car and shares a car for consolidated trips that require a vehicle.
- She purchases renewable energy and has used an energy monitoring device to eliminate “energy hogs” from her home.
- She is an avid supporter of purchasing re-used items and shopping locally.

Most recently, Karen championed the preservation of the Sisters Recycling Center (SRC) as an engaged citizen volunteer. When the City of Sisters slated the SRC for future closure, Karen volunteered to research, report, and recommend actions to the council. Over a period of several months, she filed public record requests, wrote letters and articles that engendered citizen involvement, and attended meetings. Karen persuaded the Sisters City Council to keep the recycling center open seven full days per week for a six-month pilot project that can be monitored and refined, and that hopefully will result in avoiding closure. According to Public Works, the pilot project is going great. City Councilor Sharlene Weed told Karen, “Thank you. If you didn’t do it, no one would have. No one else stepped forward.”

In addition to her dedication to the SRC, Karen volunteers in the community:

- Karen has served as a board member of Newfoundland Dog Rescue
- She volunteers her time to regularly play music for cancer patients
- She has helped with Sparrow Club fundraisers
- She volunteers in annual county weed pulls (‘Let’s Pull-It’)

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Special Award—Commitment to the Cause: Debra Burke

Debra Burke
gosolar@bendtel.net
541-312-3389

Debra Burke is long-time resident of Central Oregon. A retired nutritionist, she and her husband, Greg Burke, live east of town on a small, rural property.

What Stood Out to Us: Debra Burke makes sustainability a part of her every action and thought. She inspires others to embrace a more sustainable lifestyle by demonstrating what is possible and she does this in an utterly unassuming and gracious way. She has built sustainability into everything she does. Debra rides her bike 9 miles into Bend regardless of rain or snow.

- When her bike ride started making her tired, she purchased an electric assist for her bicycle.
- She has converted her VW to biofuel for any trips that can't be done by bike.
- The straw-bale home Debra shares with her husband Greg is entirely off the grid – passive and active solar, water catchment system (in addition to a well), grey water re-usage, and energy and water efficient appliances.

Debra is a dedicated member of the sustainability community, volunteering every week for the past 24 years for The Environmental Center and its Member Groups (local, non-profits working to protect the environment). She also shares her knowledge about native plants, organic gardening, and living off the grid with anyone who has questions or wants to learn more.

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Small Business Award: SolAire Homebuilders

Cindi and Mike O'Neil

593 NW York Drive, Bend OR 97701

541-633-1220

coneil@solairehomebuilders.com

SolAire Homebuilders have been building custom homes in Central Oregon since 1995. Owners Mike and Cindi O'Neil have made building with exceptional energy efficiency, healthier indoor air, resource efficiency, and low-waste practices a priority since they founded the company.

What stood out for us: SolAire Homebuilders have been dedicated leaders of the green building industry in Central Oregon since they established their business. They have not only built 290 energy efficient homes in Central Oregon, they have built an Earth Advantage certified corporate headquarters in Northwest Crossing that includes passive solar and solar panel systems and have integrated sustainability into their general operations. Solaire walks its talk.

- SolAire Homebuilders have pushed the green building industry forward in our community and, in many ways, have gone beyond what is required to build green homes.
- SolAire built the first and second Net Zero Energy Homes in Central Oregon, in 2011 & 2012 (certifications pending).
- They were the first builder to certify four LEED Platinum Homes.
- They have been a 100% ENERGY STAR Builder since 2006
- They were the first builder to certify Earth Advantage homes in Central Oregon, starting in 2002.
- Owners Mike and Cindi O'Neil were founding members of the Building Green Council of Central Oregon.
- SolAire designed their corporate office to collect all water from their roofs, their parking lots are drained and filtered onsite, and they have integrated bio-swales with native plantings to make sure the drainage swales were aesthetically pleasing.
- They installed a 6,000 watt solar system on their corporate office and use solar hot water to heat their facility. They also purchase 100% Blue Sky Renewable energy.
- When an employee wanted to use mass transit to get to work, SolAire adjusted his arrival and departure time to accommodate the bus schedule and they encourage tele-conferencing

Owners Mike and Cindi O'Neil are dedicated to contributing to our community. They made financial and time contributions to a wide variety of community events and organizations, including:

- Rotary International Members
- Board member of Habitat for Humanity
- Habitat for Humanity "Blitz Build" builder
- COBA "Rampathon" builder
- Salmon Run Sponsor (seven years)
- Cindi is a Board Member of the Oregon Environmental Council (three years)
- Affordable Housing Board Members
- Mike is currently the President of the Oregon Home Builders Association

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Large Business Award: Deschutes Brewery

Craig Horrell

901 SW Simpson

(541) 480-7773

chorrell@deschutesbrewery.com

Since 1988, Deschutes Brewery has been brewing beer in Central Oregon. They are now the 5th largest craft brewery in the U.S., and produce 186,783 barrels of beer annually.

What stood out for us: Deschutes Brewery has an impressive list of sustainability efforts and it is important to note that much of the changes and advancements have come from the ground up—employee driven and management supported. As one of the larger businesses in our community, Deschutes Brewery is a manufacturer, retailer, and restaurant, providing them with a wide spectrum of sustainability obstacles to consider.

- Deschutes Brewery has pledged to put 1 billion gallons of water back into the Deschutes River annually - 14 times more water than Deschutes Brewery and all of its suppliers use in water per year.
- Their water usage (4.1 gallons per barrel) is nearly 20% below industry standard (5 gal/barrel) and they have set a goal of reducing their water usage to 3.2 gal/barrel in the next 2 years.
- They use 100% renewable energy as a “Champion” level member of Pacific Power’s Blue Sky renewable energy and are recognized by EPA as “Green Power Partner.”
- They have installed energy efficient equipment including boilers and heat exchangers. They have also developed energy-saving systems and structures like beer cellars that maintain the required cool temps for beer storage without the need for AC in the summer. They also reclaim hot air discharge from beer production to heat the cellars in the winter.
- Deschutes Brewery diverts approximately 11,000 tons of solid waste from the landfill through partnerships with local farmers and ranchers. Their spent grain is used as cattle feed, malt dust and hops waste is used as compost, and high strength beer waste is used as fertilizer.
- They are currently having staff work with advisors from OSU Cascades sustainability program to refine their own sustainability program.

Deschutes Brewery management and staff support our community both financially and with time:

- They donate \$1/barrel of beer sold to local charities, an expected \$250,000 for 2012.
- Founder, Gary Fish, is on the board of the Fresh Water Trust.
- Chief Operating Officer, Michael LaLonde, is on the board of the Deschutes River Conservancy
- Director of Finance, Peter Skrbek, is on the board for the Mountain River Chapter of the Red Cross.
- Many employees are involved in local non-profits through donation of time, including: American Red Cross, Boys & Girls Club, Bend Schools, Bethlehem Inn, Big Brothers Big Sisters, High Desert Museum, and United Way.
- The Founded the Sagebrush Classic 23 years ago as a fundraiser for local non-profits.

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Organization Award: Cascade Culinary Institute

Gene Fritz, Director

2555 NW Campus Village Way Bend, OR 97701

541.318.3799

cheffritz@cascadeculinary.com

The Cascade Culinary Institute (CCI) is a program of Central Oregon Community College (COCC). This culinary program provides training in professional food preparation to aspiring chefs looking to make their mark, food service workers developing their skills, and foodies who enjoy cooking classes.

What stood out to us: The Cascade Culinary Institute is leading the way in culinary education with a highly energy efficient facility, the first “Sustainable Food Systems for Culinary Arts Certificate” in the Pacific Northwest, and their dedication to the local food community. The impact that the Cascade Culinary Institute’s sustainability activities have on their students and the community is far-reaching. They are a model and advocate for the local food industry.

- Cascade Culinary Institute has a unique sustainability and local food curriculum and certificate program - one of only a few in the Nation. Classes include:
 - Sustainable Food Production Systems Overview and Operational Assessment
 - Applied Growing and Raising of Farm Plants and Animals
 - Applied Harvesting and Food Preservation Principles
 - Farm to Table and Sustainable Cuisine Practices
- The Jungers Culinary Center is a state of the art, extremely energy efficient, green facility built to Earth Advantage Gold standards.
- They have intentionally eliminated the use of industry standard disposable plastic products (deli containers, plastic utensils, Styrofoam, etc).
- Elevation Restaurant menu features locally-sourced produce, proteins, cheeses, grains, and all Oregon-produced alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.
- They have reduced their waste through a formal program that manages composting & recycling.
- Their fryer oil is transformed into bio-diesel by one of their agricultural partners (Rainshadow Organics).
- They reduce toxics and pollution by using green chemicals for ware-washing.

Cascade Culinary Institute strongly believes in formally supporting Service Learning initiatives that benefit the greater community and that connect back to the competency/skill development of CCI students. Examples of events that CCI faculty and students have supported over the past year include:

- Project Connect – Chef Fritz and Chef Darwin were leads for the food production this year.
- Neighbor Impact – Hosting and supporting production of soup and bread for the annual Empty Bowls Event.
- Tower Theatre – Student participation and faculty leadership and judging at the annual Tour du Chocolate.
- Food production at Bethlehem Inn.
- Catering the COCC Meal of the Year to support scholarships for COCC students.

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Special Award—Vision: Living Cities Design Team (Steven Ames, Rachel Stemach, Stacey Stemach)

Stacey Stemach

919 NW Bond Suite 216, Bend OR 97701

541-647-5675

sstemach@ambientarch.com

The Living Cities Design Team (LCDT) was led by three individuals who voluntarily came together to create an entry for the International Living Cities Design Competition. The entry featured visual depictions of what Bend could look like if it were redeveloped using the most stringent guidelines for sustainable development. Among a field of 80 applicants from 69 cities around the world—including Paris, New Dehli, and Mexico City -- Bend's submission made it to the finals.

What Stood Out For Us: The Team's work created an impressive, sustainable vision for the future of Bend's urban core. In addition to many environmental elements, the project also focused on developing a more vibrant community by weaving art, green spaces, urban gardens and pedestrian travel opportunities into the City's infrastructure.

Their vision has elevated the conversation about Bend's future and has already begun to influence discussion and planning on several key projects in our community:

- The City of Bend is incorporating elements of the LCDT's work into the Central Area Plan.
- OSU Cascades has incorporated many of the Team's ideas into its vision for a campus across the river from the Old Mill District.
- Citizens expressed strong support for the Team's ideas in Bend 2030's recent Accelerate Bend visioning process.

###END###