

## News Releases

# DHEC News Release: DHEC announces Earth Day Award winners

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2012

### DHEC announces Earth Day Award winners

COLUMBIA, S.C. - A county, a zoo, a large company and a small business have been recognized at the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's fourth annual Earth Day Awards program.

"Each year, we honor exemplary environmental stewards from across the state at our Earth Day Awards event," DHEC Director Catherine Templeton said. "By showcasing the winners' innovative efforts to protect our state's natural resources, we hope to inspire other South Carolinians to embrace the Earth Day concept and work to make a difference in their communities."

The 2012 winners are: 1000 Rain Gardens for York County, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden's ComPOOst Program (Columbia), Boeing South Carolina (Charleston) and Groovy Green Glass (Myrtle Beach).

The rain gardens project, begun by the York County Water Education Team last April, is an initiative to create 1,000 rain gardens to reduce stormwater runoff. The rain gardens act as natural filters and prevent pollutants from entering lakes and streams. The initiative has certified ten rain gardens in York County, held two rain garden workshops and installed four rain garden displays at nurseries throughout the county.

Riverbanks Zoo's ComPOOst program takes the 1,500 pounds of waste created each day by the elephants, giraffes and zebras to create high-quality compost. The material is used in landscaping and exhibits around the zoo. It is also available for public sale. The zoo saves approximately \$13,000 a year by eliminating disposal costs. The revenue earned from the sale of the material goes to the Riverbanks Conservation Support Fund, which pays for wildlife conservation efforts around the world.

Boeing South Carolina's 2011 environmental milestones include achieving zero waste-to-landfill status, eliminating Styrofoam in its cafeterias and reducing air emissions. The company has a comprehensive approach to waste reduction and recycling. Boeing South Carolina recycles many items including cardboard, plastic and wood. The facility also reuses pallets and safety glasses. Food scraps are composted. Material that cannot be recycled is used as boiler fuel for energy recovery. The company recycled 917 tons of material last year.

Groovy Green Glass, a small business that says it believes bottles deserve a second chance, reclaims wine and liquor bottles from area restaurants. Instead of taking up landfill space, these bottles become usable products such as glasses, bowls, candlesticks and jewelry. Any glass the company can't use is recycled. Last year, the company saved more than 16,000 bottles from landfill disposal.

The top three projects of the Champions of the Environment 2011-2012 grant cycle were also recognized at the event.

West Ashley High School in Charleston was named first place Champion for its W.A.T.E.R. Wildcats Preserve Pond Using STEM project. Barnwell County Career Center in Blackville took second for its "Green" Living project. Third Place went to Heathwood Hall Episcopal School in Columbia for its Highlander School Environmental Education Programs.

This is the 19th year that the Champions of the Environment partnership has promoted environmental education opportunities for South Carolina's K-12 students. The program is sponsored by International Paper, Sonoco Recycling, Inc., WCSC-TV, WIS-TV, and Health and Environment with additional support from the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina. Additional information about the Champions program can be found on DHEC's website at: <http://www.scdhec.gov/champions> <<http://www.scdhec.gov/champions>>.

More information on the winning Earth Day projects is available at: <http://www.scdhec.gov/earthday> <<http://www.scdhec.gov/earthday>>.

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