



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 21, 2018

CONTACT: Lauri Keagle, Communications Director
(219) 644-3698 or lkeagle@southshorecleancities.org

South Shore Clean Cities lauds clean fuel leaders

Northern Indiana environmental successes celebrated at annual event

MICHIGAN CITY, INDIANA — South Shore Clean Cities celebrated Northern Indiana's sustainable transportation leaders at the nonprofit's Annual Meeting and Awards Tuesday.

"I continue to be amazed and inspired by the work of our members and the broad impact they are having on quality of life," South Shore Clean Cities Executive Director Carl Lisek said. "The award winners are all reducing our dependence on imported oil, contributing to cleaner air, promoting economic development and supporting local jobs. I applaud their achievements."

The annual meeting and awards ceremony, which took place at the Blue Chip Hotel and Spa in Michigan City, Indiana, celebrated the successes of South Shore Clean Cities members in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline gallon equivalents. All winners were selected from among South Shore Clean Cities members.

Collectively, South Shore Clean Cities members displaced 16.8 million gasoline gallon equivalents and more than 108,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2016, the year for which awards were presented. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, their actions represent the greenhouse gas reduction equivalent of taking more than 32,000 passenger vehicles off the road for one year.

The 2017 Member of the Year Award was presented to Fair Oaks Farms of Fair Oaks, Indiana. The award is given to the South Shore Clean Cities member with the largest amount of greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline gallon equivalents reduced over the course of 2016.

Runners up in the 2017 Member of the Year category were Entertainment Cruises, Chicago; Ceres Solutions Co-op, Goshen; Indiana; Ozinga, Mokena, Illinois and Family Express Corp., Valparaiso, Indiana.

The 2017 Nonprofit Organization of the Year Award was presented to Dunes Learning Center of Chesterton, Indiana. The award is based on total greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline gallon equivalents reduced over the course of 2016 among nonprofit South Shore Clean Cities members.

South Shore Clean Cities manages the Green Fleet programs for two Northern Indiana metropolitan planning organizations, the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC). The goal of the program is to significantly improve the environmental performance of government fleets by implementing sustainable transportation strategies.

Green Fleet members receive professional consultation including a fleet assessment and emissions quantification report.

The 2017 MACOG Green Fleet Member of the Year Award was presented to the City of South Bend. The award recognizes the MACOG South Shore Clean Cities Green Fleet member that has shown the greatest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline gallon equivalent reductions for their metropolitan planning organization territory. MACOG serves Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall and St. Joseph counties in Indiana.

The 2017 NIRPC Green Fleet Member of the Year Award was presented to the School City of Hammond. The award recognized the NIRPC South Shore Clean Cities Green Fleet member that has shown the greatest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline gallon equivalent reductions in their metropolitan planning organization territory. NIRPC serves Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties in Indiana.

The Porter County Recycling and Waste Reduction District was awarded the 2017 Excellence in Environmental Education Award. The award is presented to an individual or organization that has most greatly influenced the Northern Indiana community and has implemented one or more of the following: advancing environmental learning, ensuring Hoosiers are environmentally literate, engaging in environmental stewardship or contributing to a sustainable future.

Danette Garza, owner of Jack Gray Transport, Inc. in Gary, Indiana, was honored as the 2017 Empowering Woman of the Year. The award recognizes a woman affiliated with a South Shore Clean Cities member organization who is passionate about sustainable transportation solutions and has demonstrated measurable impacts related to her efforts.

South Shore Clean Cities also honored two retiring Board of Directors members at the Annual Meeting and Awards, Rick Gosser, owner of Gosser Corporate Sales Inc. in Crown Point, Indiana and Shawn Seals, senior environmental manager for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

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About South Shore Clean Cities

South Shore Clean Cities is a 501(c)(3) organization managed by Legacy Environmental Services, Inc., a woman-owned, certified Women's Business Enterprise. The U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities coalitions are organizations designed to reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector by advancing the use of clean fuels and vehicles, idle reduction technologies, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel blends and fuel economy while reducing dependence on imported oil.