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DEQ Recognizes Calhoun County for Recycling Excellence

The DEQ and Governor's Recycling Council recognized Calhoun County for excellence in recycling today at the Governor's Recycling Summit in Plymouth.

Calhoun County is recognized for partnership with the City of Albion to expand drop-off recycling access to county residents. On February 11, 2015, the new Albion Recycling Center was opened. This is the first staffed recycling center in Calhoun County and greatly increases access for residents on the east side of the county. Prior to 2015, the center only offered recycling to residents of Albion, approximately 8,000 people. A five-year agreement between Calhoun County and the City of Albion opened the center to the entire county population of more than 134,000 people. This unique center allows residents to stay in their cars while staff and numerous volunteers unload the recyclable items. The interaction provides the opportunity for staff to offer educational information and inform residents of upcoming events. The center also provides the first opportunity to recycle vinyl siding and offers access to recycle batteries and expanded polystyrene. This project represents an extraordinary increase for residential recycling access and, therefore, was chosen to receive the Excellence in Recycling Enhanced Program Award for service to a rural area.

Calhoun County was one of 10 honored at the event. The awards are designed to honor organizations excelling in several key categories, including outstanding education programs for K-12 students and youth organizations, new and enhanced programs that bring increased access to recycling, and "closing the loop" programs that design or create new products that can be recycled or that purchase and use products made of recycled content. These categories are consistent with the objectives and goals outlined in Governor Rick Snyder's April 2014 statewide recycling plan.

According to Calhoun County's Solid Waste and Recycling Coordinator, Sarah Kelly, "A good recycling initiative is not about doing things for people. Instead, a truly successful initiative involves collaborating with the community to build an effective program."

In addition to Calhoun County, the 10 organizations selected for awards include:

Outstanding Education Awards

- Green Living Science, Detroit
- The Ecology Center, Ann Arbor

- Southeast Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority, Southeast Michigan communities
- Carpenter Year Round Elementary School, Lake Orion
- Mr. Bob Bowman, Parkside Elementary in Rockford, Inspiring Individual Award

New Recycling Program Award

- Hastings Charter Township, New recycling drop-off center in Barry County

Enhanced Recycling Program Award

- Calhoun County, Expanded drop-off recycling
- City of Plymouth, Expanded to cart-based curbside recycling
- US Farathane, Port Huron, Enhanced recycling opportunities in the workplace

Closing the Loop Award

- Petoskey Plastics, manufacturing solutions that include post-consumer recycled content

To learn more about recycling opportunities in Michigan or to see Michigan's plan for increasing recycling, visit www.Michigan.gov/MIrecycles. To learn more about Calhoun County's recycling efforts, call the Calhoun County Public Health Department at 269-969-6341 or visit our Facebook: Calhoun County Recycling or website www.calhouncountyrecycling.com.

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