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Winners Announced for the 2020 Golden Pinecone Sustainability Awards

RENO, NV - Local non-profit GREENevada announced today the winners for the 2020 Golden Pinecone Sustainability Awards, a prestigious annual event recognizing local individuals and organizations working towards a more sustainable Nevada.

The Golden Pinecone Awards celebration is a legacy event started in 1988 by Tod Bedrosian, Bob Fulkerson, Glenn Miller, and Bob Loux to bring the environmental community together as friends and initially to get the community excited about stopping the dump of nuclear waste.

The 2020 Golden Pinecone Sustainability awards ceremony, sponsored by NV Energy and greenUP!, will be held during a virtual event hosted by the Reno+Sparks Chamber of Commerce on December 3rd. Anyone may attend the event using the [registration link](#).

The award categories were inspired by the City of Reno Sustainability & Climate Action Plan, which was unanimously adopted by the Reno City Council in July 2019. Additional categories recognize youth and education leaders in the sustainability field. This year's winners are:

- Green Business Operations – Davidson's Organics
- Clean Energy – Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC)
- Green Building – Great Basin Hall Project / University of Nevada Reno
- Low-Carbon Neighborhoods & Mobility – Daniel Inouye, Branch Chief, Washoe County Health District, Air Quality Management Division
- Toward Zero Waste – Full Circle Compost / Cody Witt
- Urban Forest Canopy – ReLEAF Reno
- Food Security – Food Bank of Northern Nevada
- Safeguard Water Resources – Carson Water Subconservancy District
- Sustainable Milestones – greenUP!, for launching the Nevada Green Business Program and Network
- Educational Program – Adrienne Wiggins, Empire Elementary School
- Youth Leadership – The Dayton Intermediate School Robotics Team for Project ReCharge LED Retrofit

All are invited to attend the event to honor the significant accomplishments of the individuals and organizations that utilize triple bottom line practices (social, environmental, and financial) in order to enhance the sustainability and climate resilience of our communities and state.



GREENevada stands for Growing Resources for Environmental Education in Nevada and is a consortium of 20+ environmental organizations in Northern Nevada whose mission is to foster sustainability through environmental education and leadership.

greenUP! is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization providing environmental education for businesses in Nevada, helping to cut down on waste, reduce valuable resource consumption, and fight climate change in an environmentally safe and cost-effective manner.

The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce is the largest business organization in northern Nevada with over 1,700 members who employ over 85,000 individuals in Washoe County. The Chamber is the voice for business in Washoe county by focusing on advocacy on behalf of all business, information and education for members, and connectivity with members and consumers.

Background of the Awards Winners

Davidson Organics is being recognized for their work in *Green Business Operations*. Davidson's Organics is the first food manufacturer to become a certified Nevada Green Business, and the first manufacturer in the state to achieve an Innovator ranking, the most advanced tier in the program. Not only do they source their tea from sustainable family farms in India "where they have implemented many fair trade policies to protect their employees," but the company has also worked to achieve a sustainable life cycle for their product. This 1% for the Planet member has adopted plastic packaging alternatives, chosen recyclable tea bags and boxes, and recycles and composts its own waste. The business uses nontoxic cleaning supplies, recycled paper content, Energy Star equipment, and high efficiency toilets and urinals, among other sustainable measures. "Davidson's has always had a strong desire to do right by the environment and the community," Kunall Patel, owner of the manufacturing company. "We realize how important it is to support the environment as best we can, which is why we pursued a certification to be recognized as a Nevada Green Business."

Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) is being recognized for their work *for Clean Energy*. As of Dec. 1, 2019, TMCC turned another shade of green by joining the NV Energy GreenRider program. This program has enabled 100% of the energy serviced to students, faculty and staff at TMCC to come from renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power. TMCC is the first institution in the Nevada System of Higher Education to achieve 100% Green status, enabling TMCC to achieve a one if its major sustainability goals. In addition to the GreenRider program, TMCC has implemented sustainability across several campus structures and in the fabric of the campus culture itself. The new energy program joins TMCC's four solar arrays and two Verkek Electric vehicle charging stations as renewable sources of energy. Truckee Meadows Community College is a comprehensive community college located in Reno. With five college sites and more than 20 community locations, TMCC serves more than 16,000 students each year in state-supported programs and another 9,600 students in non-credit workforce development classes. For more information, see their [Sustainability Webpage](#)

The Great Basin Hall Project, from the University of Nevada, Reno, is being recognized in the *Green Building* category. Great Basin Hall, the newest residential building at the University of Nevada, opened in 2018 and earned U.S. Green Building Council LEED Gold Certification in 2019. During its construction, 75% of the waste produced on site was recycled. The building features high quality insulation, low-emissions paints and flooring, ample natural lighting, low-consumption plumbing fixtures, a heat reflective roofing system, and automated lighting and HVAC systems. In support of its mission to maximize student health and academic success, UNR's Residential Life and Housing department championed the pursuit of LEED Gold through funding and programming. VanWoert Bigotti Architecture demonstrated excellence and innovation in the design of Great Basin Hall and CORE Construction executed the construction with daily attention to detail in every aspect. UNR Senior Project Manager, Cory Jennings, led the project team with a tireless commitment to quality and accountability. Great Basin Hall received two American General Contractor Pinnacle Awards that measure entries based on safety, craftsmanship, challenges met, client relations, innovation and building practices.

Daniel Inouye, Washoe County Health District, Air Quality Management Division is being recognized in the *Low-Carbon Neighborhoods and Mobility* category. In his current role as branch chief at the Washoe County Air Quality Management Division, Daniel is the leading advocate of the Division's Ozone Advance Plan. The Plan's objective is to encourage regional partners to implement strategies that will reduce ozone emissions. These strategies include green building, alternative transportation, urban tree canopy enhancements, expanded electric vehicle use, and compact urban development. Under Daniel's leadership and expertise, the Division gained support for the plan from all three local governments. He is described by his peers as one of the region's most diligent and committed sustainability champions, a dedicated public servant committed to providing unbiased facts to inform decision-making, working with the best interests of his community in mind.

Cody Witt, Full Circle Compost is being recognized for working *Toward Zero Waste*. Full Circle Compost is Nevada's longest running compost company. In 2019 they diverted 59,113 cubic yards of organic materials, keeping them out of the landfill and turning them into soils, compost, and mulches. By keeping these materials out of the landfill and putting them back into the soil, the EPA WARM model estimates Full Circle pulled the equivalent of 33,000 cars worth of CO₂ off the road in 2019. A great example of the "full circle" model is their relationship with the University of Nevada: UNR sends Full Circle Compost organic materials, which Full Circle converts into compost products that get sent back to UNR to naturally fertilize the landscape, allowing UNR to cut down on fertilizer applications, increase plant health, and decrease water usage. Cody Witt helps manage and operate Full Circle Soil & Compost in Carson City, Nevada. He also creates Circle environmental networks where partners help to establish a fully sustainable community of suppliers and producers through organic materials recycling, soil fertility program implementation, sustainable food and medicine production, and education. Cody Witt is a fifth generation Nevada farmer who completed his MBA and multiple undergraduate degrees from the University of Nevada, Reno.



ReLEAF Reno is recognized under the *Urban Forest Canopy* category. ReLEAF Reno is a City-sponsored program designed to preserve and expand Reno's urban forest. Councilmember Naomi Duerr launched the ReLEAF Reno program in 2016 in order to help homeowners and our community connect with the benefits of an increased tree canopy: providing shade and reducing home energy usage, adding property value, carbon sequestration, and contributing to stormwater catchment and improved water quality. The goal of the program is to care for existing trees and expand Reno's urban tree canopy. Over the last couple years, the program has held Arbor Day events providing trees to the community at subsidized prices.

The Food Bank of Northern Nevada is being recognized for its work towards *Food Security*. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada helps to put food on the table for more than 91,000 people each month and serve 18,200,000 meals each year to families throughout a 90,000 square mile service area. The FBNN achieves this through the following programs:

- Feeding the Hungry distributes non-perishable and fresh food items through a network of more than 145 partner agencies, who then distribute the food directly to families, children, and seniors in need in the communities we serve.
- Mobile Harvest distributes perishable foods such as fresh produce, bread, and dairy directly to clients in 45 high-need neighborhoods each month and has increased the amount of fresh produce distributed each month to one-third of all food distributed.
- Senior Programs distributes monthly boxes of food to seniors in need through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) in which nutritious foods and funds are provided by the USDA. Feeding Kids through the Kids Cafe offers free meals to children after school at more than 30 locations and free lunch during the summer at more than 70 locations. The Back-Pack Kids and School Food Pantries provide access to food and meals that can be taken home.
- Snap Outreach connects clients to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Nutrition Education teaches adults and children about nutritious food choices, simple food preparation, safe food handling, getting the most nutrition with a limited food budget and increasing physical activity for healthy living.

The Carson Water Subconservancy District is being recognized under the *Safeguard Water Resources*. The Carson Water Subconservancy District's mission is to promote cooperative action across agency and political boundaries in the Carson River Watershed. They strive to balance the municipal, agricultural, and environmental water needs of our watershed by working with watershed partners using an integrated watershed planning process to reach goals of a sustainable, healthy watershed. CWSD integrates planning, coordinating, and management activities to support projects associated with floodplain management, river projects, water quality, water supply, invasive species, outreach and



education, and recreation. Most recently, CWSD launched the "I am Carson River Watershed" campaign, after years of surveying and planning. This campaign aims to connect the community to the watershed they live in and provide real day-to-day tips on how everyone can contribute to a healthy watershed.

greenUP! is being recognized under the *Sustainable Milestones* category. In 2018, greenUP!, led by Donna Walden, President, partnered with Western Nevada college to secure federal funding to launch a certified Green Business Program and license the GreenBizTracker database to track environmental outcomes for Nevada. Through the Green Business Program, businesses can sign up to record and track the environmental impacts of their operations. The GreenBizTracker environmental outcomes database tracks impact metrics, helping businesses and manufacturers across the state monitor and reduce their environmental footprint. With trainings and on-site technical assistance, businesses learn how to reduce their impact and save money while helping our planet, too. In 2020, greenUP! encouraged six programmatic partners to join the network to help facilitate the recruitment of businesses across the state. This program is the first of its kind in the state and is critical support to our statewide sustainability goals.

Adrienne Wiggins, of the Carson City School District, is being recognized under the *Educational Program* category. Adrienne was nominated by her peers for bringing STEM education to Empire Elementary school and for helping fellow educators to understand how to bring STEM education to their students. She has contributed to the efficacy of the Empire staff, helping students accomplish sustainability education goals and become aware of what they can do to make their community and their world a better place. This school year, Empire will be doing service projects at each grade level, at the school and community level, and they will be starting a cafeteria recycling program.

The Dayton Intermediate School Project Recharge Team are being recognized under the *Youth Leadership* category. Last year, students Zoe W., Evan M., Braydon W., Ashanti L., Dylan R., and Ben L., as members of their robotics team and coached by Project ReCharge teacher Dusti Houk, developed a project that will save their school thousands of dollars a year while also reducing greenhouse gasses. Through Envirolution's project-based program, Project ReCharge, Zoe, Evan, and other students at Dayton Intermediate School discovered that by replacing the school's 25 watt fluorescent tubes with 15 watt LED tubes, the school could save close to \$9,000 a year in energy savings while offsetting over 128,000 lbs of CO₂. "The students went through the computations themselves and they know the numbers, including energy savings, payback, and other benefits," said Dusti Houk, an 8th grade STEM teacher at Dayton Intermediate who advises the robotics team. "This is fantastic experiential learning in a number of areas with the addition of a bit of project management experience too... This real world learning provides valuable workforce development as students learn how to solve energy and sustainability problems in their home, school and community," said Houk. "We're so proud of our students," said Kevin Kranjcec, principal at Dayton Intermediate.



“They’ve done a tremendous job with a positive impact on their education through this process as well as their saving Dayton Intermediate and Lyon County School District approximately \$9,000 over the course of a year.” Envirolution is working with NV Energy and the utility’s “Smart Schools” program. Funding for energy-saving LEDs came from a \$4,440 NV Energy Smart Schools Rebate along with a grant provided by Tesla and its K-12 Nevada Education Gift fund.

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