

## Texas Honors Environmental Stars

Continuing our recognition of the 2010 Texas Environmental Excellence Award Winners, more projects are highlighted below.



### BUSINESS/TECHNICAL AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

#### Oncor Electric Delivery LLC, Dallas

Operating the largest distribution and transmission system in Texas that delivers electricity to approximately 3 million homes and businesses, Oncor Electric Delivery realized the need to increase the reliability of electrical power to meet rapidly growing energy demands from an equally growing customer base. To ensure dependability, Oncor invested \$60 million in Texas' only urban Static Var Compensators (SVCs) to serve customers in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) Metroplex.

This cluster of SVCs, the largest concentration in the world, acts as a local high-speed "voltage reservoir" that responds automatically to support the system during peak electricity demand. A higher-than-usual demand on the electric grid system could cause voltage fluctuations to occur across the grid and potentially result in electricity outages. In the case of a fluctuation, the SVCs kick into action within 20 milliseconds, the fastest response time in the world, to prevent potential widespread power outages.

Constructing an SVC in the Parkdale neighborhood of Dallas ends the need to generate an estimated 563 hours of peak-load electricity, preventing air emissions and conserving 988,160 megawatt hours of energy. These annual savings will occur over the lifetime of the equipment and will continue to increase as electric load grows.

### LARGE BUSINESS/NONTECHNICAL

#### Texas Lehigh Cement Company, LP, Buda

Since Texas Lehigh Cement Company (TLC) first began operations of its dry cement kiln in 1978, Buda has rapidly grown from a rural, agricultural community into a bustling suburb

with master-planned housing, retail centers, and a hospital. Texas Lehigh realized the potential for community objections to having an existing cement plant as a next-door neighbor, so it opened the plant's doors to the public for tours. Additionally, in response to recent market and regulatory changes, TLC considered the viability of using alternative sources of fuel. An ideal fuel would cost less, reduce the plant's environmental impact, and meet the approval of the surrounding community.

Texas Lehigh decided to involve the community in its research of emissions reduction options. This approach was not required by law, but TLC understood the value in proactively forging strong community relationships. Texas Lehigh asserts that adopting this open-door approach of including its neighbors in the business planning process has established trust—giving the community a sense of partnership in Texas Lehigh Cement's future operations, and a stake in its success.



### SMALL BUSINESS

#### The Phoenix Commotion, Huntsville

This innovative business owner is making quite a commotion while taking care of the Texas environment. How? By using his company, the Phoenix Commotion, to spread the idea that constructing homes with reclaimed materials has a viable place in the building industry. Dan Phillips is building houses from donated, salvaged, and recycled materials that otherwise would go to the landfill, and offering single parents, families with low income, and professional artists the opportunity to own a home. Dan and his wife Marsha started the Huntsville-based company approximately 10 years ago and have completed 14 houses to date.

The Phoenix Commotion allows a project's available materials to dictate the design of each house, counter to standard

building practices. Through networking, Dan maintains a steady stream of donated scrap materials. Whatever he can't use, he takes to a municipal warehouse, where the overage is distributed to low-income families and nonprofit organizations.

All Phoenix Commotion-built homes feature Xeriscape landscaping and include a rainwater catchment system that provides water for toilet flushing and clothes washing. Ranging from \$18,000 to \$89,000, the true affordability of these homes allows the new owners to join the economic mainstream and enjoy the confidence that comes with home ownership.

## CIVIC/NONPROFIT

### Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi, Office of Community Outreach

The Office of Community Outreach at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has been supporting the quality of life in the Coastal Bend area since 1993.

Community Outreach forms partnerships with public and private organizations—and finds grants and private donations for funding—to offer a diverse range of environmental programs to participants.

In 1999, Community Outreach's Gulf Coast Environmental Education Program began to offer summer camps for youth from the low-income community. Due to its popularity, the program expanded to serve area youth, teachers, students, and the general public year-round. Featuring kayak instruction and exploration, the outdoor program now offers five week-long summer camps, multiple one-day excursions, and field science programs.

As one of Community Outreach's cornerstone programs, the Pollution Prevention Partnership (P3) sought to lower Corpus Christi's risk of becoming a nonattainment area for air quality standards, and helped reduce air pollution by more than 600 tons. Two of its programs are aimed at reducing air emissions: Auto-Check, which screens and repairs high-emissions vehicles; and

the Clean School Bus Project, which installs emissions-reduction components to area school buses. AutoCheck has screened over 25,000 vehicles and repaired 338 high-polluting vehicles. The Clean School Bus project has modified 91 buses, resulting in an average emissions reduction of 30 percent a bus.

## AGRICULTURE

### Texas AgriLife Research, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, West Texas A&M University, Kansas State University, and USDA- Agricultural Research Service, Amarillo

In 2002, a team of scientists, engineers, and government agencies partnered on a research project that is helping cattle feedyards and open-lot dairies successfully reduce the emissions generated by these facilities. Entitled "Air Quality: Reducing Emissions from Cattle Feedlots and Dairies," the project continues to study emissions of dust and particulate matter, ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, odor, and volatile organic compounds from feedlots and open-lot dairies. In addition, the project is credited with producing sound scientific knowledge of air quality emissions and improving control strategies for a region that raises 42 percent of the fed beef in the U.S. and contains nearly 40 percent of the Texas dairy production.

Scientists and engineers conducted seven years of research in the field and in laboratories to determine best practices for reducing emissions that the cattle-feeding and dairy industries could adopt. The findings have helped cattle feedyards develop targeted reduction strategies, such as timely, efficient water sprinkling and frequent scraping of feedlot surfaces to lessen or control dust. Additionally, the project's data has helped 80 Texas feedyards receive federal financial assistance for dust-control measures.



## Clean Texas Welcomes New Gold-Level Member Cargill Value Added Meats, Waco

Cargill Value Added Meats in Waco has earned Gold-level membership in Clean Texas, the TCEQ's environmental performance program that gives recognition to environmental leaders in their communities and throughout the state.

Cargill's Waco location is a turkey-processing facility with roughly 700 employees who prepare about 7 million turkeys annually for national distribution. Committed to conserving Texas' natural resources and reducing energy use, Cargill employees at the Waco facility have, since 2001, improved energy efficiency by 14 percent, increased water efficiency by 34 percent, and reduced landfill waste with innovative initiatives like feather-to-fertilizer processing and recycling efforts.



As part of its Clean Texas Gold-level membership, Cargill is implementing an ISO 14001 certified environmental management system, which is a way to help businesses find effective ways to protect the environment. The facility's environmental goals include reducing water use by 6.5 million gallons and decreasing the amount of nonhazardous waste by over 22,000 pounds. Since 2001, Cargill's employees have identified opportunities to collaborate with others to protect the environment, including adopting a local roadway for routine cleanups and participating in a planting project at the Lake Waco Wetlands.

For more information about Clean Texas, visit [www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org).

## July is Smart Irrigation Month!

The Irrigation Association, the leading membership organization for irrigation professionals since 1949, has named July as Smart Irrigation Month to offer homeowners tips on smart watering practices.

Automatic sprinklers can offer convenience and control for watering your landscape. However, many homeowners tend to overwater their lawn or waste water through inefficient habits. Adopting water-savvy habits is essential to helping your community conserve water, especially during peak use.

The key to efficient outdoor irrigation is applying just enough water and only when necessary. Water-wise habits will result in a healthier lawn and landscape, in addition to conserving water. Plus, reducing your consumption will help reduce your water bill.

To learn about what you can do to water your lawn efficiently all year long, see the TCEQ's publication, [Landscape Irrigation: A "Take Care of Texas Guide," GI-409](#).

## Highlighted TCEQ Publications

*What Do I Do With It Now? A Quick Guide to Recycling Resources, GI-288*, is a short guide that summarizes the recycling options available through [RecycleTexasOnline.org](http://RecycleTexasOnline.org) and through other recycling resources in our communities.

*Volunteer to Lend a Helping Hand as an EnviroMentor, GI-292*, is a brochure that tells environmental professionals how they can volunteer to help small businesses and local governments comply with environmental regulations. It also includes an application form, TCEQ-20003.

To order TCEQ publications, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications).



## Take Care of Texas Tips

### At Home

### Replace Your Older Refrigerator

Choosing an Energy Star model can reduce energy bills by as much as \$15 per month, or \$180 per year. It's important to select the appropriate size of refrigerator for your household's needs. Side-by-side styles use 10 to 25 percent more energy. Automatic ice makers and through-the-door dispensers increase energy use by 14 to 20 percent and increase the purchase price by \$75 to \$250.



### Around the Office

### Buy Recycled-Content Products

Buy products made from, or packaged in, recycled materials, including office supplies. Recycled content means fewer virgin materials were used to manufacture the product. You can usually spot products made from recycled paper, plastic, and other materials by reading the labels. Give preference to items with acceptable percentages of recycled content, especially post-consumer. To view environmental standards and guidelines on recycled content by product, see the Database of Environmental Information for Products and Services at <http://yosemite1.epa.gov/oppt/epstand2.nsf>.



[www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org)

The TCEQ is an equal opportunity employer. The agency does not allow discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this document may be requested in alternate formats by contacting the TCEQ at 512-239-0028, Fax 512-239-4488, or 1-800-RELAY-TX (TDD), or by writing P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087.