

2017 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality revealed the winners of the prestigious **Texas Environmental Excellence Awards** today. TCEQ commissioners and the Texas governor jointly selected the nine winners—based on recommendations from a Blue Ribbon Committee—in eight categories.

The [25th annual edition of these awards](#) include efforts to use less water or energy, to educate the public about natural resources, and to reduce pollution.

"I am inspired by this year's winners," says TCEQ Chairman Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E. "These projects show that protecting the environment and sustainable economic development go hand-in-hand."

Winners were picked from a pool of 144 applicants. Here are the TEEA categories and the honorees for each:

- Pollution Prevention: The **Amarillo Veterans Affairs Medical Center** combined two technologies that allow it to shift air conditioning load to nighttime, generate electricity during the day, and even export excess electricity back to the local grid.
- Education: The **Colorado River Alliance** of Austin uses a mobile trailer to "bring the river" to students, so they can learn about its watershed and what they can do to conserve and protect this natural resource.

- Civic/Community: **Fort Hood** in Bell County sets the example for others by reducing energy usage, obtaining energy from renewable resources, conserving water, minimizing waste, protecting and enhancing ecosystems, and connecting communities together toward common sustainability goals.
- Civic/Community: **Lower Rio Grande Valley Nature Center** in Weslaco fosters an appreciation of the area's natural flora and fauna, encourages environmental stewardship, and provides many other services to satisfy the current and future needs of its community.
- Innovative Operations/Management: The **Mansfield Independent School District's** conservation program inspires students, teachers, and other members of the community to reduce energy usage and conserve water, saving the school system nearly \$7 million in utility costs from 2012 through 2016.
- Individual: **Martha McLeod** of Fulton, who is an elementary science teacher, goes the extra mile for her students, creating lifelong learners who understand the importance of protecting and conserving the Earth's resources.
- Youth: **Teens4Green** of Frisco is a service-based club that brings high school students together to make their community cleaner and develop young leaders.
- Agriculture: **Texas Project for Ag Water Efficiency: Citrus** in the Lower Rio Grande Valley studies irrigation techniques for citrus groves and provides assistance to producers on how they can implement a technique to conserve water that also increases profitability.
- Water Conservation: **University of Texas at Austin** modernized its irrigation system to reduce water usage by more than 100 million gallons a year, amounting to a savings of about \$1 million annually and allowing them to recoup their investment in less than three years.

"The true winners," TCEQ Commissioner Toby Baker says, "are all Texans who benefit from these efforts to protect our natural resources."

Commissioner Jon Niermann says he is impressed of the range of projects represented. "I am encouraged by the spirit and passion of the Texans behind these projects," he says.

TEEA winners will be recognized at a banquet on May 17 as part of the [TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference](#) at the Austin Convention Center.