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MEDIA ADVISORY

LEADERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AMONG AREA BUSINESSES AND INSTITUTIONS *2008 Environmental Stewardship Awards Recipients*

WHO: Alamo Area Council of Governments to present Environmental Stewardship Awards to Rackspace, Cintas Corporation, Southwest Research Institute, and Northwood Elementary School

WHEN: Wednesday, December 10, 2008, at approximately 1:30 p.m.

WHERE: Marriott Plaza San Antonio Hotel
555 South Alamo, Hidalgo Room C, San Antonio, TX 78205

WHY: Outstanding leadership in efforts to improve air quality and other environmental concerns

VISUALS: Award plaques

DETAIL:

At the end of each year the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) recognizes and awards local organizations and businesses who are actively helping to improve our natural environment. The awards are determined through nominations by AACOG's Air Improvement Resources Public Education Committee, whose member organizations include the City of San Antonio, CPS Energy, San Antonio Water System, VIA Metropolitan Transit, Texas Independent Automotive Association, Drive Clean Across Texas, San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Bexar County. These member organizations are environmental stewards in their own ways. To provide just a few examples, the City of San Antonio has replaced 40 percent of the Downtown Operations Department's gas-powered utility vehicles with hybrid electric vehicles and plans to replace the remaining fleet over the next two years. To preserve our drinking water, CPS Energy uses recycled water from Braunig and Calaveras Lakes to cool their power plants. SAWS is continuing to replace gasoline-powered equipment with equipment powered by compressed air. Bexar County provides its employees with free transit service.

All Environmental Stewardship Award recipients played important roles in keeping our environment clean by adopting voluntary pollution strategies. Nominees were selected for adopting one or several of the following practices: Alternative Commuting Practices, such as facilitating carpooling; Fleet Management, such as weekly maintenance inspections; Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Building, such as installing special or adding more building insulation; Process Pollution Reduction, such as retrofitting stacks and furnaces to burn cleaner; Clean Landscaping Practices, such as using only electric landscaping equipment; and Air Quality Education, such as distributing informational materials about ground-level ozone's health effects to employees. Below are listed the recipients of the 2008

Environmental Stewardship Awards, along with just a few highlights of the exceptional measures adopted by them.

Rackspace (Category: Large Business)

- Created an internal portal through which employees who want to carpool can register and find matches.
- Established a “Green Council” that meets regularly to assess its progression toward several goals related to increasing energy efficiency, conservation, recycling, and other environmental efforts.
- Hosted its second annual Green Day information fair this year, along with other efforts to educate employees and encourage them to take measures to be more environmentally friendly.

Cintas Corporation (Category: Small Business)

- Allows employees to adjust working hours to mass transit schedules.
- Gives fleet weekly maintenance checks to reduce emissions, has an idle-reduction policy, and employs ozone-sensitive fueling practices such as not topping off tanks and properly securing gas caps.
- Uses energy-saving lighting in its building, and employees are encouraged to turn off lights when not needed. Air conditioning is set at 78 degrees during the day and shut off in areas not used at night. Old equipment is repaired and overhauled to make it more efficient.
- Recycles its uniform hangers; reuses 40%. Also recycles old batteries, fluorescent lights, and cardboard.

Southwest Research Institute (Category: Large Institution of Learning)

- Pays 50% for VIA passes and provides a shuttle service between the bus stop and various campus buildings.
- Created and uses its own internal rideshare matching service for employees.
- Built on-site subsidized cafeteria for employees to use, to which most employees can walk.
- Hosted an Alternative Transportation information fair for its employees this year and has provided environmental education on other occasions.

Northwood Elementary School (Small Institution of Learning)

- As a part of the Northeast Independent School District, Northwood Elementary adheres to the many environmentally friendly policies of that district, which was one of our 2007 Environmental Stewardship winners. For example, it uses energy-efficient lighting, heating air conditioning equipment, plants shade trees to reduce the need for air conditioning, and posts Air Quality Health Alerts.
- In addition, however, Northwood Elementary has initiated the “Care to Share: Computers with Compassion” program, whereby the school’s gifted and talented 3rd - 5th grade students recycle, clean, and match components of unwanted home computers and then provide the computer systems to students whose families do not own a computer. They have thus far given computers to 20 families while helping to keep electronic waste out of the city landfill.

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If you would like more information about this topic, to schedule an interview with Annette Prosterman, or to receive photographs following the award ceremony, please call 210/362-5213 or email aprosterman@aacog.com.