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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 18, 2016

Michigan Communities Honored for Clean Energy Achievements

Green Challenge Moves Locals Toward Sustainability

Nearly two dozen Michigan communities have been honored in the statewide Michigan Green Communities Challenge for their sustainability efforts in projects ranging from green building technology to LED streetlight conversions.

Twenty-two communities were recognized for clean energy and environmental leadership by the Michigan Green Communities Network (MGC), which aims to connect community leaders through training, education, and communications. The MGC is a partnership of the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Association of Counties, and Michigan Townships Association. The original Challenge launched in 2009 and emphasized energy efficiency projects. In 2016, MGC network members, with support from the C.S. Mott Foundation, revised and relaunched the MGC Challenge. Program benefits include creating a roadmap for sustainability initiatives; establishing benchmarks for your community's progress toward sustainability initiatives; and the motivation of comparing and competing with other Michigan communities. The Challenge competition will happen annually, with the next round expected to open in early 2017.

"We were really excited to relaunch the Green Communities Challenge this year with some new incentives and with the support of the C.S. Mott Foundation," said Dave Norwood, co-chair of the MGC Steering Committee. "The response was fantastic and the communities being honored have a lot to be proud of. We're impressed with the innovative sustainability work and projects happening in Michigan's communities."

As part of the Michigan Green Communities Challenge, participating local governments were awarded Gold, Silver, and Bronze "medals" reflecting community leadership in areas such as clean energy programs and sustainability planning. New to this year's program is the availability of \$3,000 in awards to participating programs. Communities involved in the program will have the chance to win one of three \$1,000 randomly drawn honors. The MGC \$1,000 winners randomly selected were the City of Allegan, the City of Berkley, and the Village of Milford.

Below is a breakdown of the recipients by level.

Gold medalists:

- City of Ann Arbor: Installed over 40kW of solar at a public housing site.
City of Dearborn: Participates in Wayne County's property assessed clean energy program (PACE) and established a facilities fund to finance energy projects.
Delhi Charter Township: In 2016, began a partnership with a commercial waste hauler to provide free curbside recycling to residents.

Silver medalists:

- Charter Township of Meridian: Helps maintain a healthy environment through wetlands protection, a Land Preservation Ordinance, Greenspace Protection Plan, and Pathway millage.
City of Battle Creek: During the spring of 2016, in an effort to make the City's curbside recycling program more robust, 96 gallon, single-stream recycling carts were delivered to each residential home for weekly pick up! During the first three weeks of the program, our contractor (Waste Management) collected 85 TONS more recycling

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than the same time last year. This has resulted in an 80-percent participation rate so far.

- **City of Farmington Hills:** Has a well-established sustainability program that has helped them reach their energy conservation and environmental goals through education, outreach, and their current participation in the Georgetown University Energy Prize.
- **City of Novi:** Sustainable and green building technologies incorporated into all city facilities.

Bronze medalists:

- **City of Allegan:** Recently created a Neighborhood Awareness Advisory Board to raise awareness of energy conservation in the neighborhoods.
- **City of Berkley:** Adopted a policy requiring a new street tree to be planted whenever a new house is built.
- **City of Coldwater:** Completed their streetlight replacement project, converting over 1,300 mercury vapor and high pressure sodium fixtures to highly efficient LEDs.
- **City of Grand Blanc:** Converted 70 streetlights to LEDs in 2016 to increase energy efficiency.
- **City of Ithaca:** Joined the Michigan Main Street program in 2016 to promote placemaking downtown.
- **City of Petoskey:** Updated its Sidewalk Plan to a more comprehensive Non-Motorized Facilities Plan in 2015.
- **Muskegon County:** Offers free household hazardous waste, electronics, and tire recycling for all county residents two times per year.
- **Village of Milford:** Installed a riparian garden as a pilot project to help reestablish a natural shoreline along the Huron River.
- **Village of Quincy:** Tracks energy use in all Village facilities to identify energy-saving opportunities.

Honorable Mention:

- Charter Township of Kalamazoo
- City of Bangor
- City of Kalamazoo
- Grand Haven Charter Township
- Monroe County
- Village of Vanderbilt

View the MGC website, <http://migreencommunities.com/>, for more details.

For additional information, contact Jamie Kidwell-Brix, MGC network coordinator, at migreencommunities@gmail.com and (734) 249-8055; or Matt Bach, Michigan Municipal League media relations director, at mbach@mml.org and (734) 669-6317.

Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities. The League advocates on behalf of its member communities in Lansing, Washington, D.C., and the courts; provides educational opportunities for elected and appointed municipal officials; and assists municipal leaders in administering services to their communities through League programs and services. Learn more at mml.org.

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