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Media Contact: Jesse Kharbanda, 317-981-3205

2020’s Largest Environmental Gathering in Indiana Honors Key Grassroots Leaders

Greening the Statehouse, in its 13th year, brings together nearly 350 in first-ever virtual conference (INDIANAPOLIS) - Hoosiers from across Indiana gathered together for the first-ever virtual, and thirteen annual, Greening the Statehouse (GTS). GTS has historically been Indiana’s largest annual gathering of environmental-minded Hoosiers. The conference, hosted by the Hoosier Environmental Council, aims to prepare attendees to be as knowledgeable and as skilled as possible heading into the new legislative session. One of the most popular elements of the conference is the “GTS Awards,” which recognizes exemplary grassroots leaders and grassroots organizations from across Indiana. Moments ago, the 2020 GTS Awards were announced.

“We’re thrilled that we could honor such tremendous community-minded grassroots leaders and grassroots organizations from literally six different regions of our state. It is a testament to the sincere commitment to environmental protection that exists throughout our state. The grassroots activists and leaders that we recognized all reflect incredible persistence, compassion for their fellow citizens, and an intelligence to do things right and with impact. We are truly grateful for their selfless contributions,” remarked Jesse Kharbanda, Executive Director of the Hoosier Environmental Council.

The 2020 GTS Award Winners are the following...

1.) East Central Indiana

Barbara Sha Cox (Richmond) - Lifetime Achievement Award, for building an all-volunteer, statewide grassroots organization aimed at helping citizens across Indiana to protect themselves from factory farm pollution

2.) Northwest Central Indiana

-Bryon Petschow – Volunteer of the Year (West Lafayette), for playing an instrumental research role in the creation of a landmark coal ash white paper that illuminates that 90%-+ of coal ash sites in Indiana have contaminated the groundwater beneath those sites

-Cass County Concerned Citizens (Logansport), for their remarkable ability to organize thousands online, and carry out a multi-prong campaign (in the public square, in the media, and before local government bodies) aimed at stopping a lead and mercury polluting factory from being built in their community

3.) Northwest Indiana
Just Transition NWI – Sustainable Champion of the Year (Michigan City), for leading a broad-based coalition, with an on-the-ground and high impact online campaign, that succeeded in securing stronger protections from coal ash pollution

4.) Southeast Indiana:
Christine Mueller (Lawrenceburg) - Volunteer of the Year, for working tirelessly to try to reduce the threat of coal ash contaminating the drinking water resources of her community

5.) Southwest Indiana:
Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality of Life (Dale) - The Mal Atherton Award, for galvanizing a tremendous number of people to push back against a proposed, massive fossil fuel plant that would be within a mile of a nursing home and school, and generate 2.2 million tons of carbon pollution per year

6.) Central Indiana
-Garry Holland – Improving Kids’ Environment Award (Indianapolis), for considerably raising the profile of threats to the drinking water of Indianapolis school children due to lead, and for facilitating a careful program of evaluation and treatment for kids who might be exposed to dangerous lead levels

-Rethink 65/70 Coalition – Environmental Justice Advocate of the Year (Indianapolis), for creating a tremendous amount of grassroots energy to reshape a massive infrastructure project in a more sustainable and environmentally just way

-Richard Himsel – Frontline Advocate of the Year (Hendricks County), for his unwavering commitment to seek justice for victims of factory farm pollution through the courts and public education

About Hoosier Environmental Council:

Founded thirty-seven years ago, the Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC) is the largest statewide environmental policy organization in Indiana. HEC aims to advance solutions that are good for the economy and good for the environment. Visit hecweb.org for more information. You can also follow HEC on Twitter: @hec_ed or follow us on Facebook: http://facebook.com/hecweb.