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TENNESSEE RECYCLING COALITION (TRC) PRESENTS ITS 2016 ANNUAL AWARDS TO SIX DESERVING ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUALS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE & DINNER IN OAK RIDGE

KNOXVILLE- The Tennessee Recycling Coalition held its annual conference & awards dinner on October 16-18 at the Oak Ridge National Labs state-of-the-art Y-12 New Hope Center and nearby Double-Tree Hotel. This year's theme was "Recycling by Design" and attendees enjoyed networking and interesting workshops by industry professionals as well as exhibits and displays staffed by companies and environmental agencies from across the state and region. Exploring many new environmental and recycled content products coupled with a strong educational component focused on re-use and recycling was the mission of the statewide organization and participants were quite impressed with the 3 day conference.

Those nominated this year represent six critical areas; government, non-profit, business, school, video, and the Tom Hattle Memorial award were individually recognized with a beautiful blue recycled glass plaque at an awards dinner at the Double-Tree Hotel with banquet address speaker Pat Flood, Solid Waste Director for the State of Tennessee. Director Flood stated "Partnership is at the heart of the recycling industry" and "The diversity of current and past award winners exemplifies that, ranging from public schools to manufacturers to non-profits, we are all important players in Tennessee's recycling value chain". The six Recycler of the Year award winners for 2016 are as follows:

Government: Tennessee State Parks, for its work with the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation (TDEC) Office of Sustainable Practices for launching the "Go Green with Us" initiative in its 56 parks statewide. Park managers and staff were encouraged to educate the nearly 34 million annual visitors on sustainability and recycling within the park environment. Efforts were monitored across the state and 616,997 lbs., or over 308 tons, of various materials were recovered and recycled.

Business: American Recycled Plastic, Inc., a family-owned business in Friendsville, Mike & Amy Hazlett manufacture quality outdoor furniture like Adirondack chairs and park benches from recycled plastic lumber. ARP has recycled tens of millions of #2 plastics like milk & water jugs once destined for the landfill in its long 28 year history, turning them into beautiful patio furniture that is very durable, never need painted, and carry a 25 year warranty. Well known clients like Disney, NASA, and the US Military as well as many local Tennessee parks, businesses, and residents enjoy ARP's products everyday.

Non-Profit: Turnip Green Creative Reuse, Founded in 2011 with the core mission to foster creativity and sustainability through reuse, Turnip Green accepts materials donations of all kinds and in turn supplies to community artists, educators and children regardless of their ability to pay for the recycled items. From their retail shop in Nashville, they feature recycled works by local artists with proceeds supporting there more than 200 workshops each year and many community outreach events. Their efforts have resulted in diverting more than 50 tons of waste in 2015 alone with more to come.

School: Michie Elementary, Beginning with a small start-up recycling program 5 years ago, the McNairy county school today operates a full-scale materials management program. While recycling traditional items like paper, cardboard, and food service packaging, they also compost milk cartons, make beautiful holiday ornaments from reclaimed materials, and collect clothes for several local charities. They educate students, local residents, and the outside business community on the importance of recycling and conserving resources.

Video: Christiana Middle School, Collin Deery, student movie-maker at his Rutherford county middle school awarded for his 2+ minute environmental film called the ‘Tale of Two Bottles’. He and his classmates on a mission to take the viewer on an interesting journey of exactly what happens to one unlucky water bottle thrown into a garbage can and its unfortunate final trip to the landfill and the other properly recycled and placed into a recycling container and the journey it takes to be recycled and helping the environment.

Tom Hattle Memorial: This annual award honors a dedicated and service-minded community leader for his or her advanced recycling efforts. This year, John Homa, retired from the City of Knoxville earlier this year as Solid Waste Manager, was honored for his many years of work and volunteerism as a strong advocate for recycling in Tennessee. During his tenure with Knoxville, John initiated a program to collect unwanted pharmaceuticals used today statewide and launched the city’s curbside single stream recycling program while expanding recycling drop-off locations across Knoxville.