

**KY Department for Environmental Protection
Environmental Excellence Awards
2018**

The awards recipients are as follows:

KY EXCEL Champion Award: Sekisui S-Lec America

Sekisui S-Lec America (SSA) manufactures polyvinyl butyral interlayer film for the automotive glass market. SSA is committed to continual improvement of the environment and the prevention of pollution through its products and services and improving their environmental performance. In 2016, SSA joined the KY EXCEL program as a Partner member and progressed to a Master member in 2017.

SSA embodies the spirit of KY EXCEL by constantly expanding upon their efforts as an environmental leader within the Commonwealth. Their commitment extends beyond the company walls by encouraging volunteerism, with their associates and families completing 323 hours of volunteer activities in 2017 and 253 hours as of July 2018. SSA actively participates in community events and volunteer activities, such as being a Lead Sponsor of the 2018 Reforest the Bluegrass event by donating 3,800 seedlings. SSA worked with Bluegrass Greensource to provide a school-wide instruction on recycling to Justice Elementary in Winchester. As a Partner in Education with Justice Elementary, SSA recognizes the importance of continuous involvement in the school to help teach the next generation about the significance of environmental stewardship.

As part of their commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions, SSA completed a complete building conversion from fluorescent lights to LEDs, translating to an annual reduction in electricity consumption from office lighting of 9,704 kWh, resulting in a CO₂ reduction of 6,025 kgs. As part of this their main project was the installation of an 814-kw roof and ground-mounted solar array. The design of the system makes maximum effective use of the roof space of the plant and office buildings and utilizes open land area on SSA's 23-acre site. The array consists of 2,035 400-watt panels, which will generate enough energy annually to power the equivalent of 84 average homes. This system became fully operational by the end of July and established SSA as one of the top five private producers of solar energy in KY. The annual CO₂ reduction is projected to exceed 710 metric tons, which is the equivalent of taking 210 midsize cars off the road or planting 3,915 trees each year.

For their outstanding efforts and commitment in environmental stewardship, who represent the KY EXCEL community and strive to serve as an example for others through environmental leadership, the Department for Environmental Protection is pleased to recognize SSA as this year's 2018 KY EXCEL Champion.

Community Environmental Luminary Award: Leggett & Platt, Inc. – Winchester Spring Branch 02

In Winchester, Leggett & Platt, Inc. – Winchester Spring Branch 02 has been challenged by both a corporate ECO Initiative and the facility's very own Community Responsibility and Education program to take waste reduction and recycling beyond their facility doors and involve their community. This manufacturer not only accepted both challenges, but surpassed them.

As partner in education for Justice Elementary, Leggett & Platt's Winchester Spring Branch's ECO Initiative "Green" Team has taken advantage of multiple opportunities to help instill information about recycling and preserving our environment to students at an early age. For the 2017-2018 school year, they participated in 7 Enrichment Fridays and shared 21 Environmental lessons with over 450 students. These activities resulted in 196.75 volunteer hours given towards environmental education. The teachers at Justice Elementary say the members of Winchester Spring Branch's Green Team are favorites with the students and the students always look forward to their visits! This could be because some of the aforementioned volunteer hours were spent in costume, as a fish or cigarette, as members of the Green Team performed fun and engaging educational skits about the environmental impacts of littering.

The Winchester Spring Branch has also sponsored learning programs and food outreach. As a PIE partner for Clark County High School, students who work part-time at Branch 02 receive ECO and recycling training. This is just a few examples of the many activities Branch 02 conducts for the citizens in their community.

Leggett & Platt's Winchester Spring Branch 02's desire to educate, engage and inspire their Winchester community and employee partners through environmental outreach is what makes them this year's Community Environmental Luminary.

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Resource Caretaker Award: Chris Barton, PhD. – Green Forest Works

As Professor of Forestry Hydrology and Watershed Management at the University of Kentucky, Dr. Barton has served as a member of the science team of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative and has been integral in developing the Forestry Reclamation Approach. In addition, he is President and co-founder of Green Forests Work, a nonprofit dedicated to reforestation of mined lands in Appalachia.

Dr. Barton has been at the forefront of research and practice in reforestation of surface mined land in the Appalachian region, especially in eastern Kentucky. He has conducted crucial research to better understand the science behind reforestation on surface mined land in Appalachia and has established and monitored experimental plots that have been critical to the development of restoration science in this region. His research in mine reforestation has led to the publication of dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as several Forestry Reclamation Approach advisories, several book chapters and additional publications.

Beyond conducting scientific research, he brought this research into practice, making dramatic impacts on the region's degraded lands. Dr. Barton saw that over a million acres of formerly forested land in Appalachia have been converted to non-native grasses and shrubs after mining and realized that native forests would not grow back on these sites without intervention due to poor soil conditions and heavy vegetative competition. So, he helped found Green Forests Work (GFW), a nonprofit dedicated to reforesting these sites. Since 2009, GFW has planted over 2 million trees on over 3,200 acres of grassland-reclaimed mine land, engaging nearly 15,000 volunteers.

Because of his extensive research into reforestation science and his significant contribution to reforestation activities in the state and region, the Department for Environmental Protection is pleased to announce Dr. Chris Barton as the winner of the 2018 KY DEP Environmental Caretaker Award.

Environmental Pacesetter Award: Lincoln Co. Sanitation District

Lincoln Co. Sanitation District members were active participants in a watershed planning effort for the Hanging Fork Watershed in Lincoln County. The watershed planning effort was the result of microbial testing results that found E.coli concentrations in area streams often ranging from ten to 1,000 times greater than the statewide limit for safe wading/swimming. Source tracking as part of the watershed study and due in large part to the members of the Lincoln Co. Sanitation Districts support, identified that human inputs from failing or improperly maintained septic systems were a dominant source of the problem. As a result of these findings, the district's members were committed to installing sanitary sewer lines in areas of the county.

With the assistance of the Bluegrass Area Development District, the Lincoln County Sanitation District pursued and received multiple grants and loans to install a sanitary sewer line from Hustonville to Junction City, from which the waste would then be transported to Danville for treatment. The new sewer line will capture about 600 un-sewered homes and significantly reduce threats to area streams, as well as increase the value of these homes and enable economic development along the US-127 corridor.

When area residents expressed concern about the sewer connection costs, the Lincoln County Sanitation District worked with the Kentucky Division of Water and Rural Community Assistance Partnership to develop a USEPA 319h-funded homeowner assistance program. This program is providing cost-share funding to homeowners at an income-based percentage rate and is helping to communicate the rationale for sewer connection. As of July 2018, 334 applicants had been approved for funding assistance, \$182,929 in reimbursements had been provided to 200 recipients, and 302 total sewer connections had been completed.

The Lincoln County Sanitation District is an environmental Pacesetter for its commitment and efforts in pursuing and achieving infrastructure improvements for its citizens, which provides multiple benefits for the community it serves and the environment.