(DALLAS ? September 20, 2011) Today, the

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(DALLAS – September 20, 2011) Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognized 52 organizations for their environmental stewardship during a Sustainable Materials Management recognition ceremony at Richland Community College in Garland, Texas. The ceremony recognized their environmental records under the EPA's National Partnership for Environmental Priorities (NPEP), WasteWise Program, School Chemical Cleanout Campaign (SC3) and Pollution Prevention programs.

In partnering with the EPA, the organizations pledged to go beyond day-to-day regulatory compliance requirements as demonstrated by a commitment to protect public health and the environment. Through these efforts the National Partnership for Environmental Priorities removed more than 29 million pounds of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals from business processes and products and WasteWise partners assisted in eliminating more than 160 million tons of waste. School Chemical Cleanout Campaign partners helped to make schools safer by providing training and resources to properly manage school chemicals and in EPA Region 6 alone, grants awarded through the Pollution Prevention Program have reported direct savings of greater than $25,800,000.

"By preventing pollution and hazardous waste from entering our air, water, land, and ecosystems, EPA's partners in sustainability have become leaders in environmental stewardship," said EPA Regional Administrator Al Armendariz. "As we move forward in sustainable materials management, their dedication and results will be a model for our future programs to follow."

The NPEP is a partnership focused on reducing the use of potentially hazardous chemicals from products and processes. By forming partnerships with the EPA, NPEP partners representing industry, business, municipalities, federal facilities and tribes are successfully reducing the use and/or recycling of toxic chemicals, including mercury and lead.

WasteWise is a free, voluntary EPA program in which organizations eliminate costly municipal solid waste and select industrial wastes, benefitting their bottom line and the environment. WasteWise members can join as partners, endorsers, or both. Partners join to change behaviors and track internal waste reduction efforts, while endorsers are state and local government agencies, trade associations, nonprofit organizations and businesses that help their members, clients and constituents realize that reducing solid waste makes good business sense.

The EPA SC3 promotes chemical management programs that remove outdated,

unknown or unneeded amounts of dangerous or inappropriate chemicals from K-12 schools. SC3 also promotes policies and practices that prevent accumulations of chemicals and encourages responsible management practices used in schools. These programs aim to minimize exposure to students and staff, thus improving the learning environment and reducing school days lost.

The EPA's Pollution Prevention Program is reducing or eliminating at the source, modifying production processes, and promoting the use of non-toxic or less-toxics substances, implementing conservation techniques and reusing materials rather than putting them into the waste stream. Pollution prevention is a key policy in national environmental protection activities.

More information on the organizations recognized is available at http://www.epa.gov/region6/6xa/pdf/smm_recognition_ceremony_092011.pdf [1]

More about activities in EPA Region 6 is available at http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region6.html [2]

EPA audio file is available at http://www.epa.gov/region6/podcast/sep2011.html [3]

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