State College Receives Gold Award for Environmental Initiatives

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by StateCollege.com staff
State College Borough received a Gold Award for its sustainability achievements in the State Electronics Challenge, a comprehensive nationwide environmental sustainability initiative that reaches more than 220,000 employees in 47 states. The borough was recognized for its accomplishments in green procurement, energy and paper conservation and responsible recycling of electronic office equipment in 2015.

"The Borough of State College's technology program is a truly outstanding example of a commitment to environmental leadership," said Lynn Rubinstein, State Electronics Challenge program manager. "This is the seventh year in a row that the program has earned recognition - starting at Bronze, then moving up to Silver, and then Gold."

She added that the borough is one of only 12 organizations nationally being recognized this year.

"Being recognized for our sustainability efforts solidifies why we do what we do from development, implementation and practices of such sustainable goals," said Hillary Pasch, borough IT project manager. "While the award is definitely appreciated, we do it for a different reason. The Borough of State College has a mission to enhance the well-being of our residents, visitors and employees, and one of the best ways we can do just that is through sustainable practices. The State Electronics Challenge is a fantastic way to accomplish this, and we are proud to be so involved with such a worthwhile program."

As a result of these initiatives, in 2015 the State College saved enough energy to power 39 households per year, avoided greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 64 cars from the road per year, and avoided the generation of almost a ton of trash, as well as avoiding the generation of almost 700 pounds of hazardous waste - equivalent to the weight of two refrigerators. The borough has an ambitious paper reduction program that resulted in avoiding the use of 200 reams of paper last year, with plans to increase that number this year.

The borough has committed to purchasing computer and imaging equipment that is qualified by the Electronic Procurement Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) standard. EPEAT is an internationally recognized system that identifies office equipment that meets specified environmental performance criteria. It also uses power management, electronic time sheets and double-sided printing, to decrease energy and paper usage, and ensures that at the end-of-life, equipment is recycled by a third-party certified electronics recycler.

"The State College Borough strives to improve our sustainability practices each year," said Tracey Miller, the borough's IT Helpdesk specialist. "The State Electronics Challenge provides us a great avenue to see how we compare from year to year with ourselves as well as other organizations in decreasing our environmental footprint. Being recognized for our efforts is a great feeling. We are proud to be involved with such a great program."

"The State Electronics Challenge provides state, tribal, regional and local agencies, as well as schools, colleges and universities and non-profit organizations with a great opportunity to integrate concepts of sustainability and waste reduction into their operations," Rubinstein added. "It's inspiring to see programs such as the one developed and implemented by the Borough of State College to ensure that the highest environmental practices are met through the lifecycle of office equipment."

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