



NEWS RELEASE



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Date: July 30, 2008

Charleston County News Release Number: 2906

See Photo of Check Presentation: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/NewsImages/epa.htm>

U.S. EPA Presents \$200K Check to Charleston County for Pollution-Reducing Education Programs

On Tuesday, July 29, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented a \$236,498 check to Charleston County at the 7 p.m. County Council meeting. The check was given for Charleston County's continuing participation in its Project Impact Partnership program aimed at reducing local air and water pollution.

The award is part of EPA's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program, a community-based, community-driven program that builds partnerships to help the public understand and reduce toxic risks from numerous sources.

Since the program was established three years ago, CARE has provided a total of \$7.75 million to more than 49 communities nationwide. The Charleston County CARE project is one of just five awarded in the southeast region.

"The Community Action for a Renewed Environment award will allow the South Carolina Project Impact Partnership to continue its work to reduce air and water pollution in the Charleston area," said Russell Wright, Acting Deputy Regional Administrator for EPA in Atlanta. "EPA is helping the Charleston County communities address their local environmental challenges."

The Charleston County's Project Impact Partnership program was formed in 1999 with the help of a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant. There are now 172 local partnership members who focus on making the Charleston County communities more disaster resistant, including undertaking environmental improvement endeavors.

"EPA's financial support gives Charleston County the opportunity to expand our environmental education efforts throughout the community. We applaud EPA for their assistance in this important environmental education effort, which will help us meet the ultimate goal of enhancing the area's environmental quality," said Tim Scott, Charleston County Council Chairman.

Project partners previously conducted the Charleston Region Toxics Risk Assessment and identified particulate air pollution and ground level ozone as priority air toxics risks, and fecal coliform bacteria, petroleum product releases and trace metals as priority water pollutants in the Charleston County area. Through the CARE project, project partners aim to heighten local residents' awareness of these air and water pollution sources and encourage actions that individuals can take to reduce pollution.

"We are pleased and honored to have been selected by the EPA to become a CARE community," said Carl Simmons, Charleston County's Building Services Director. "We are undertaking an extensive educational campaign with this program to provide information and assistance to our citizens on ways to reduce pollution and improve our air and

water quality in order to protect the environment for future generations.”

Educational campaigns to be developed through the CARE project will focus on reducing on-road diesel emissions through anti-idling, retrofits and the use of alternative fuel vehicles; controlling open burning; encouraging proper disposal of pet waste; promoting mass transit; working with boaters to address marine pollution; and preserving green space, among others issues.

Established in 2005, CARE is a competitive grant program that offers an innovative way for communities to organize and take action to reduce toxic pollution in their air, land and water. By joining forces, for-profit and non-profit organizations can work together to improve the environmental health of a community and its residents.

Visit the CARE Web site at www.epa.gov/care to learn more about the program.

To schedule a presentation on environmental quality and pollution issues, local groups can contact Charleston County Government's Building Services Department at (843) 202-6940.