June 16, 2014

Six communities selected for Northwest Indiana Green Fleet program

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. - A nonprofit environmental organization funded by the U.S. Department of Energy has selected six northwest Indiana communities to join a program that aims to significantly improve the environmental performance of municipal fleets.

Officials at South Shore Clean Cities Inc. announced the following communities will participate in the Northwest Indiana Green Fleet program: Dyer, East Chicago, Hobart, LaPorte, Portage and Valparaiso.

Carl Lisek, executive director, said South Shore Clean Cities manages the program for Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission. Lisek also is vice president at Purdue Research Park-based Legacy Environmental Services Inc.

"The goal of the Green Fleet program is to work with governmental fleets in Lake County, LaPorte County and Porter County to lessen the barriers to adopt alternative fuels and create policies to support reductions of petroleum use and vehicle emissions," he said.

Lisek and his staff collect information from government officials about their fleet vehicles, including those operated by police, fire, health, sanitation, public transportation and utility departments and building inspectors.

"We analyze the data and make recommendations on equipment needed to improve each fleet's environmental performance," he said. "We provide training on green initiatives and assist on finding and applying for eligible funding to improve and update fleet equipment."

Kathy Luther, director of environmental programs at Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, said the Green Fleet program builds upon work in the past.

"In the past, we have provided information and assistance to municipalities on ways to reduce pollution and save energy through their fleets based on what funding is available," she said. "The great thing about the Green Fleet program is that each of the pilot communities' fleets will be looked at as a whole. Solutions that work best for each city, town and department can be identified and implemented in ways that save money and improve the environment."

About South Shore Clean Cities Inc.

Designated as the 71st Clean Cities Coalition on June 15, 1999, South Shore Clean Cities Inc. was founded on the principle that motivated individuals working together for common goals best accomplish our nation's objectives. In almost 100 coalitions, government agencies and private companies voluntarily form partnerships that meet the objectives of improving air quality, developing regional economic opportunities and reducing the use of imported oil.

About Purdue Research Park

The Purdue Research Park is the largest university-affiliated business incubation complex in the country. The Purdue Research Park manages the Purdue Technology Centers in four sites in Indiana located in West Lafayette, Indianapolis, Merrillville and New Albany. The more than 260 companies located in the park network employ about 4,500 people who earn an average annual wage of $63,000. The park is managed by the Purdue Research Foundation, which received the 2014 Incubator Network of the Year by the National Business Incubator Association for its work in entrepreneurship. For more information about funding and investment opportunities in startups based on a Purdue innovation, contact the Purdue Foundry at foundry@prf.org.

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