

## OAR's Clean Air Excellence Award Program

**Background:** The Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) Clean Air Excellence Award Program, established at the recommendation of the Clean Air Act Advisory Committee (CAAAC), was started in 2000. Through this program, OAR has recognized and honored individuals and organizations whose efforts have helped to make progress in achieving cleaner air. The award recipients have developed innovative, replicable, and sustainable programs, served as pioneers in their fields, and have improved air quality either directly or indirectly through reduced emissions of criteria pollutants or hazardous air pollutants.

The award recipients are chosen through a multi-step judging process. EPA staff conducts an initial technical screening of all applications. Selected entries are then reviewed by a CAAAC task force, which provides advice to EPA on the candidates' programs. EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance then provides additional comments on entries. EPA's Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation makes the final award determinations. EPA posts information about current and past award recipients on the Clean Air Excellence Awards Program Web site, located at [www.epa.gov/air/caaac/clean\\_award.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/caaac/clean_award.html).

**Award Categories:** There are five general categories and two special awards. They are judged based on the following general criteria, along with specific criteria developed for each award. The four general criteria are:

- The entry directly or indirectly (i.e., by encouraging actions) reduces emissions of criteria pollutants or hazardous air pollutants;
- The entry demonstrates innovation and uniqueness;
- The entry provides a model for others to follow (i.e., it is replicable); and
- The positive outcomes from the entry are continuing/sustainable.

Although not required to win an award, the following general criteria will also be considered: (1) the entry has positive effects on other environmental media in addition to air; (2) the entry demonstrates effective collaboration and partnerships; and (3) the individual or organization submitting the entry has effectively measured/evaluated the outcomes of the project, program, or technology.

The five general categories are:

(1) Clean Air Technology Award applies to technological developments (including products or processes) that reduce air pollution from stationary, mobile, or area sources. In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each entry:

- The technology is commercially viable and can be widely applied;

- The technology is cost-effective relative to other air pollution control technologies that already exist; and
- The technology is developed at the prototype stage or beyond.

(2) Community Action Award applies to community partnership efforts that directly or indirectly (i.e., by encouraging actions) reduce emissions of criteria pollutants or hazardous air pollutants. In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each entry:

- Diverse stakeholders participate in planning and decision-making efforts aimed at improving air quality;
- Partnerships among business, industry, government and non-government organizations are established and help to leverage community resources where appropriate;
- The project identifies and addresses the community's priority air quality concerns; and
- The project has significantly improved the community's quality of life.

(3) Education/Outreach Award applies to efforts to disseminate information about air quality and related issues. In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each entry:

- The education/outreach program increases public awareness about the importance of clean air;
- The education/outreach program improves access to information on clean air issues;
- The education/outreach program reaches a wide number of stakeholders; and
- Development of the education/outreach program is completed or substantially underway

(4) Regulatory/Policy Innovations Award applies to regulatory or policy initiatives and programs implemented across all levels (state, local, tribal, non-profit, industry, etc.). In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each entry:

- The regulation or policy encourages actions that go beyond compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- The regulation or policy provides flexibility to the regulated community;
- The development process for the regulation or policy has included a stakeholder (e.g., public) involvement component; and
- The regulation or policy has been put into effect.

(5) Transportation Efficiency Innovations Award applies to programs and projects that make transportation systems more efficient and reduce air pollution in the process. In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each entry:

- The project or program increases the number of available transportation options, and thus is likely to reduce VMT and/or vehicle trips;
- The project or program improves travel convenience and reduces travel time and costs; and
- Development of the project or program is completed or substantially underway.
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Two special awards categories are:

(1) Thomas W. Zosel Outstanding Individual Achievement Award, honoring a former member of CAAAC and environmental leader at 3M, recognizes up to one individual for outstanding achievement, demonstrated leadership, and a lasting commitment to promoting clean air and helping to achieve better air quality.

The candidate should be an innovative leader in his or her field and demonstrate a lifetime of achievement in promoting clean air. Candidates for this award must be nominated by a third party. In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each candidate:

- The individual has demonstrated leadership, outstanding achievement, and a lasting commitment to promoting clean air and helping to achieve better air quality.

(2) Gregg Cooke Visionary Program Award, named after a former EPA Regional Administrator, recognizes the air quality project or program that most successfully blends aspects from two or more of the existing awards categories (i.e., Clean Air Technology, Community Action, Education/Outreach, Regulatory/Policy Innovations, and Transportation Efficiency Innovations). In addition to the general criteria, the following criteria will be used in assessing each entry:

- The project or program demonstrates environmental excellence in more than one of the five general award categories.