

EMERALD AWARDS



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Awards celebrate excellence

People across Alberta feel passionate about the need to balance the development of our province's rich resources with careful stewardship of the environment and, every year, Albertans celebrate that balance with the Emerald Awards.

The 24th annual Emerald Awards will be presented June 4 at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton.

From small entrepreneurs to big energy producers, the Alberta Emerald Awards recognize and applaud dozens of environmental leaders, showcasing projects that demonstrate environmental excellence and set an example for everyone across the province.

"We are really excited about and inspired by the examples of environmental leadership from around Alberta that make up this year's list of finalists," says Gregory Caswell, communication and outreach manager at the

Alberta Emerald Foundation. "The Emerald Awards recognize and reward outstanding environmental initiatives undertaken by individuals, not-for-profit associations, large and small corporations, community groups and governments from across Alberta."

Since 1992, the Emerald Awards has shared more than 2,500 examples of creative thinking and innovation in environmental management systems, technologies and education programs. By celebrating this excellence with the Emerald Awards, the Alberta Emerald Foundation is helping raise the public's awareness of the growth in these different areas in recent years.

This year, the Alberta Emerald Foundation received nominations in nine established cross-sectoral categories, in which a panel of impartial judges reviewed the nominations and chose a maximum of three finalists in each category.

Individuals and organizations are encouraged to consider entering their projects that may seem everyday to them, but could be extraordinary to someone else.

"Often, organizations engage in an environmental practice that seems commonplace to them, but it's likely that their hard work and dedication could inspire others," Caswell says. "The Emerald Awards aim to be the catalyst to raise the expectations and performance of environmental stewardship."

Since its inception 23 years ago, the Emerald Awards has recognized more than 450 finalists and 250 recipients. Over the years, each of the organizations or individuals nominated that was an Emerald Award finalist or winner has, in their own unique and individual way, helped Alberta balance its growth and resource development with the preservation of our environment.

SPEAKING FOR THOSE THAT HAVE NO VOICE

After elders in the community advised, "We must speak for those that have no voice," the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada (AWN) in the Grand Cache area created the Caribou Patrol Program (CPP).

The program contributes to the recovery efforts for woodland caribou in the Foothills of west central Alberta. By patrolling forestry roads and Highway 40 south of Grande Cache, and encouraging people to report their caribou sightings, the program reduces the potential of vehicle collisions with woodland caribou on roads. It also increases public education about the critical situation of local caribou herds with a website, presentations to industry and a Facebook page.

CPP has also created three versions of a caribou edu-kit. "In the past two years, well over 1,000 children have received a caribou edu-kit presentation," says Rachelle McDonald of the AWN. "The program also works with local elders to gather traditional knowledge about caribou."

In 2012, AWN created the Caribou Patrol Program. Through the incorporation of traditional and scientific knowledge, the CPP has demonstrated innovation in action, reducing environmental impact and creating balance in the natural world.

"There are many people involved in our project and they are deserving of a pat on the back," McDonald says. "We are very honoured to be recognized alongside so many great people and great organizations that are making a significant difference on a wide variety of environmental issues."