

BASSETT MEDICAL CENTER, COOPERSTOWN NAMED 2011 OCCA "GREEN BUSINESS"

COOPERSTOWN – For 2011, OCCA will present four awards to businesses and individuals who have made a positive difference related to environmental protection, preservation or education in Otsego County.

The "Green Business" Award, new this year, will be given to Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown for its initiatives to reduce, reuse, recycle or manage waste in more sustainable ways and to increase energy efficiency in existing or new processes.

The comprehensive impact of all of the steps Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown has taken to reduce its ecological footprint impressed OCCA Board members and earned Bassett this year's "Green Business" Award. From upgrades on lighting, windows, motor drives, and electrical transformers, to reduction of paper, fuel, and electricity usage, to recycling of batteries, compression sleeves, and cardboard, Bassett's green efforts represent a significant commitment to environmental protection.

Among Bassett's conservation activities noted on the nomination form: electronic reporting saves 373,008 sheets of paper annually; 400 pounds of batteries were recycled in 2010; 57 tons of paper waste has been kept out of the landfill through the shredding and recycling program; and the hospital's shuttle bus system reduces travel in the village by nearly 500 miles a day. Stacey Michael of the Pulmonology Department submitted the nomination.

"Bassett began its green efforts long before the greening of America's hospitals hit high gear and it's work our CEO and COO embrace," said Vice President of Corporate Support Services and Facilities Planning Joe Middleton. "From considering sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, indoor environmental quality, and waste reduction, we are continually seeking to be an even greener organization. As the region's largest employer, we understand we have a responsibility to set the example in reducing our ecological footprint."

In 2007, Bassett formalized its green efforts by establishing a volunteer Green Team made up of employees from various departments within the organization, including Housekeeping, Facilities, Food Service, Laboratory and Corporate Communications. The team, currently chaired by Brian Wrubleski, director of Food Service, leads the organization's efforts to improve recycling and reduce waste at Bassett. Their work has also resulted in energy savings as well as a reduction in chemical and water use.

"We're very proud of the action staff has taken to contribute to this effort by reducing waste, increasing recycling and offering suggestions for the further greening of Bassett," said Brian Wrubleski.

Middleton and Wrubleski will accept the award on behalf of Bassett Medical Center.

Al Sosa is the recipient of this year's Conservationist of the Year award. Sosa is being recognized for his dedication to bicycle and pedestrian trail building and maintenance, as well as for his leadership role in the fostering of natural resource appreciation and stewardship.

Golden Artist Colors, Inc. of New Berlin will receive the Business Conservation Award for keeping thousands of gallons of paint from landfill disposal for the last 13 years and Karen Sheckells of Friends of Glimmerglass State Park, Inc. has earned Special Recognition for Environmental Excellence for increasing and enhancing community awareness and participation in a diverse array of environmental education events.

Award recipients will be honored at OCCA's Annual Dinner, to be held on Friday, November 18 at the Holiday Inn Oneonta/Cooperstown, 5206 State Highway 23 in Oneonta.

"We are delighted to have such a diverse group of honorees this year," said OCCA Acting Executive Director Darla M. Youngs. "Our award winners demonstrate in countless ways how both individuals and businesses can successfully work to protect and preserve our environment. More importantly, they're doing a great job of it."

Erin Heard, tributary strategy specialist for the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and outreach coordinator/river trail manager for the Headwaters River Trail, will give the keynote address at this year's Annual Dinner.

Heard's presentation will cover the history of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, how USC came to manage the water trail, the partnership process, what has been accomplished, and where organizers hope to go in the future. She will also talk about the Susquehanna Sojourn – a multi-day, group-oriented annual paddling event emphasizing environmental and cultural education – which will embark from Otsego Lake in the summer of 2012.

OCCA's Annual Dinner will feature a new Silent Auction component this year. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the Silent Auction preview – dinner attendees are encouraged to bring their checkbooks, and to bid early and often! Items must be paid for and taken at the end of the evening unless other arrangements are made; cash or check only.

Annual Dinner menu choices are roast prime rib of beef au jus, chicken Kiev or vegetarian stuffed peppers. All selections include salad, vegetables, potatoes or rice, rolls, dessert and tea or coffee. There will be a cash bar at 6 p.m., followed by the dinner and program at 7 p.m. Reservations, \$35 per person, are required by Friday, November 11. For more information, visit www.occainfo.org or e-mail admin@occainfo.org

Otsego County's oldest environmental conservation organization, OCCA is a private, non-profit membership group dedicated to promoting the appreciation and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning. For more information, or to donate, call (607) 547-4488 or visit www.occainfo.org