



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2024

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS RECEIVE 'KPB' STATE AWARDS

Uniontown, PA – Two revered environmental champions were honored during the Fayette County Commissioners' monthly meeting today.

Fayette County Recycling Coordinator/Stormwater Manager Sheila Shea and former Wharton Township Supervisor Jim Means received awards from Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB). A statewide environmental organization, KPB previously tapped Shea to spearhead their local affiliate, Keep Fayette County Green.

Means, who retired in December after serving as supervisor for 30 years, was nominated by Shea to receive the Volunteer of the Year Award.

For the last 27 years, Means has led a monthly recycling collection and annual hard-to-recycle event in his township, making recycling more accessible to mountain area communities. He also launched a recycling program at the Mountain Area Senior Center, in partnership with Keep Fayette County Green, in 2023.

"Jim has a dedication and passion for recycling," Shea said in her nomination. "Jim's leadership style fosters a collaborative and supportive environment, encouraging others to go above and beyond. His dedication and enthusiasm are contagious, and it's not uncommon to see others rally behind his recycling initiatives."

Means, who intends to remain a regular part of the recycling community, said receiving the award is "great" and "something special."

"I think recycling is a great program that's come a long way. Up here in Wharton Township, we're one of the highest collectors in the state every year, and we hope to continue those efforts and keep growing. If a person recycles right, very little goes to the landfill, and we've saved an awful lot of stuff from going to the landfill," Means said. "Sheila does a wonderful job, and I've worked quite well with her. I hope to continue our partnership for many years, especially with the hard-to-recycle program. You don't find televisions and tires sitting along the roads like you used to, so it's nice that our citizens can recycle locally."

After giving Means his award, state Sen. Pat Stefano surprised Shea with the KPB Community Pride Award, which recognizes those who exhibit outstanding environmental stewardship and commitment to litter control, recycling or community beautification.

“Wow. I’m honored to receive the Community Pride Award from Senator Stefano and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to them for giving me this generous award,” Shea said. “Working with all of you is such a privilege, and I’m excited to see what we’ll accomplish in the future. Thank you to the whole team who works with me to help make our recycling program so successful. It’s truly an honor to be recognized for my work.”

Commissioner Chairman Scott Dunn said Means and Shea are “recycling role models” that all citizens should aspire to emulate.

“Jim’s unwavering dedication to our mountain communities is unmatched. For many decades, he went above and beyond as a supervisor, an environmental activist and true leader. Having him represent Fayette County as our Volunteer of the Year is an honor, and we’re very proud to call him one of our own,” Dunn said. “Sheila has done an incredible job growing and evolving our recycling program, and her award is very fitting. She exemplifies what it means to be a true environmental steward and is the driving force behind keeping Fayette County clean and green.”

Commissioner Vince Vicites said Fayette County “has always been respected statewide for our recycling efforts,” but Shea has “improved our recycling program countywide even further.”

“She is very deserving of this award,” Vicites said. “Jim Means was an outstanding township supervisor. Since retiring as a supervisor, Jim has become a great recycling volunteer and helps at the recycling center. He, too, is very deserving of this award.”

Commissioner Dave Lohr said Means is “one of those rare individuals who, when presented with a need, doesn’t just offer a solution.”

“He steps right in and gets to work. That’s what he did when he started a monthly recycling collection and the fall hard-to-recycle event. This world would be a better place if more people had the same ‘can-do’ spirit as Jim. He doesn’t get involved for accolades or personal gain. Jim gets involved because it’s the right thing to do,” Lohr said. “Jim is a valued fixture in our community, and I don’t know what we’d do without him. The leadership he provides is an inspiration to others, which can be seen in how his event has grown and become an example.”

Lohr said “no one deserves (the Community Pride Award) more than Sheila,” because she’s “the very embodiment” of it.

“Her outstanding environmental stewardship has taken Fayette County recycling to a level we never could have foreseen. Changing a cultural mindset is challenging, but she is up to the task. She’s tenacious in her approach, implementing innovative programs to promote recycling; aggressively seeking out every available resource; and working with key agencies to make our communities cleaner, safer and more beautiful. Her vision is absolutely infectious, as evidenced by the support she has garnered in the community and beyond,” Lohr said. “As I always said, Fayette County is leading the way; on the cutting edge; setting the bar high; and others are looking to us for inspiration, vision and direction. Well done, Sheila.”

To learn more about Keep Fayette County Green, visit the Fayette County Recycling Convenience Center page on Facebook. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keppabeautiful.org.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

###

This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

For more information, contact Kristi Kassimer Harper, Public Relations Specialist, at 724-437-4571, kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info or Kaylie Glaze, Community Relations Coordinator, at 724-430-1200 Ext. 1611, kmoore@fayettepa.org.