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EPA recognizes Colorado Springs Utilities as WaterSense Partner of the Year

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(Denver, Colo. -- October 4, 2012) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) honored Colorado Springs Utilities as a 2012 WaterSense Partner of the Year. The water provider, which serves more than 210,000 people, earned EPA's recognition for its exemplary commitment to encouraging water efficiency in the Colorado Springs area. Thanks to their efforts, along with over 2,600 other WaterSense partners nationwide, WaterSense-labeled products have helped Americans save 287 billion gallons of water and \$4.7 billion in water and energy bills.

“WaterSense is proud to partner with these champions of water efficiency who share our mission to protect the future of our nation’s water supply,” said Nancy Stoner, EPA's acting Assistant Administrator for Water. “The 2012 WaterSense Partners of the Year were exceptional in their efforts to support innovative approaches to help people and companies save water and money on utility bills nationwide.”

In 2011, Colorado Springs Utilities engaged consumers and local businesses in the water efficiency movement by offering them personalized ways to get involved. The organization’s YOUilities YouTube video contest inspired customers to document the ways in which they save water and energy at home. The contest, which aimed to create consumer advocates for water-efficient products and practices, produced a number of informing and entertaining videos for the community to enjoy.

In 2011, a team effort led by Colorado Springs Utilities, along with local builder Wayne Intermill, EnergyLogic, Inc., and 2008 WaterSense Retailer Partner of the Year Ferguson Enterprises, resulted in the first WaterSense-labeled home in Colorado located in the Gold Hill Mesa neighborhood. During the three-week 2011 Parade of Homes, 5,000 visitors explored the WaterSense-labeled home, which also became the first home in Colorado to receive LEED® for Homes certification, ENERGY STAR® qualification, and the WaterSense label. Also last year, Colorado Springs Utilities issued more than 4,500 water-efficiency rebates to customers, resulting in a savings of 23,078,060 gallons of water.

The utility also helped hundreds of commercial kitchens save water by offering them free, water-efficient pre-rinse spray valve nozzles for cleaning dishes. The commercial retrofit program helped facilities save more than 20 million gallons of water in 2011, or one-third of utility's annual water savings goal.

EPA is also recognizing the following WaterSense partners for their water-saving initiatives:

Manufacturer Partners of the Year:

American Standard Brands earned a Manufacturer Partner of the Year Award for developing a WaterSense-labeled toilet model that can be installed without tools. American Standard also toured the country with an educational display that demonstrated how WaterSense-labeled faucets, toilets and showerheads work.

Kohler Co., now a three-time WaterSense Manufacturer Partner of the Year, introduced its most water-efficient dual-flush toilet in 2011. Kohler also more than doubled the number of WaterSense-labeled showerheads it offers and supported and participated in the “Wasting Water Is Weird” consumer education campaign to promote water conservation.

Retailer Partner of the Year:

Lowe’s Companies, Inc. became a three-time WaterSense Retailer Partner of the Year by supporting and participating in the “Wasting Water Is Weird” campaign to promote water conservation and training their sales associates on water savings and usability of WaterSense-labeled products. Through their efforts, Lowe's customers saved about 4 billion gallons of water in 2011 with WaterSense products.

Builder Partner of the Year:

KB Home, now a two-time WaterSense Builder Partner of the Year, built nearly 100 WaterSense-labeled homes in 2011 and pushed the limits of sustainable building with a model home designed to achieve net-zero energy use and the highest levels of water and other resource efficiency.

The Partner of the Year awards were presented at the WaterSmart Innovations conference in Las Vegas, Nev. The Excellence Awards were also given at the conference to five organizations that contributed to program initiatives such as providing employee education, supporting WaterSense’s annual Fix-a-Leak Week public awareness campaign, and facilitating collaboration among stakeholders during 2011. WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by EPA, and seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people a simple way to use less water with water-efficient products, new homes, and services.

More on the 2012 WaterSense Partners of the Year and Excellence Award winners:
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