

Sustainable Driftless, Inc. hosts an annual awards celebration that honors the sustainability achievements of the economic, social, and environmental movement in the Driftless Region and raises awareness of the need to protect our resources for future generations. Scheduled close to Earth Day (April 22) each year, the inaugural event will be April 25, 2026 in La Crosse, WI.

## 2026 AWARD CATEGORIES & CRITERIA

<b>Category: Outstanding For-Profit Business, Commerce or Industry</b>
Celebrating a for-profit business, commercial entity, or industry which practices and encourages sustainable natural, cultivated, and/or built environmental practices and is an advocate for change through sustainable environmental practices in the workplace and throughout the region it serves.
<b>Criteria</b>  <i>Judges will be looking for entries that highlight elements of how the business:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes a significant contribution to sustainability in their regional service area.</li><li>• Goes above and beyond expectations to deliver sustainability and/or best practices.</li><li>• Displays creativity, inclusivity and innovation in how they work.</li><li>• Stands out from the crowd and demonstrates initiative.</li></ul> <i>Eligibility:</i> Submissions are open to any for-profit organization impacting natural, cultivated, and/or environmental sustainability in the Driftless. Although the impact may have been a multi-year journey, the entry needs to focus on examples of outcomes and measurable success achieved in calendar year 2025.
<b>Category: Outstanding Non-Profit/Community Organization</b>
Celebrating a non-profit organization, group or community which engages in sustainable natural, cultivated and/or built environmental practices.
<b>Criteria</b>  <i>Judges will be looking for entries that highlight elements of how the non-profit organization/community:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes a significant contribution to sustainability in their region.</li><li>• Goes above and beyond expectations to deliver sustainability messaging and/or best practices.</li><li>• Displays creativity, inclusivity and innovation in how they work.</li><li>• Stands out from the crowd and demonstrates initiative.</li></ul> <i>Eligibility:</i> Submissions are open to any non-profit organization with a 501(c) status or a community which impacts natural, cultivated, and/or built environmental sustainability in the Driftless. Although the impact may have been a multi-year journey, the entry needs to focus on examples and measurable success achieved in calendar year 2025.

**Category: Outstanding Sustainability in Agriculture**

Celebrating an individual farmer or agricultural group that is modeling sustainable innovation in Driftless agriculture and/or food production or distribution.

**Criteria**

*Judges will be looking for entries that highlight elements of how the farmer or agricultural group:*

- Makes an innovative and significant contribution to sustainability.
- Goes above and beyond expectations to deliver environmental messaging and/or best practices.

*Eligibility:* Submissions are open to any individual farmer, agricultural business or organization significantly impacting sustainability in the Driftless. Although the impact may have been a multi-year journey, the entry needs to focus on examples and success achieved in calendar year 2025.

**Category: George Howe Legacy Award: Outstanding Educator**

Celebrating an individual educator - a high-performer who is passionate about the natural, cultivated, and/or built environment, and is inspiring students in sustainability.

**Criteria**

Recognizing and supporting educational leaders is crucial to ensuring a more sustainable way of life. These are the individuals who are working to transform the way in which students approach environmental and social issues, paving the way towards a more sustainable future for the Driftless region.

**Judges will be looking for entries that highlight elements of how the individual:**

- Makes a significant contribution to sustainability in the classroom or youth environment.
- Goes above and beyond expectations to deliver environmental messaging and/or best practices.
- Displays creativity, inclusivity and innovation in how they work with students and youth.
- Stands out from the crowd and demonstrates initiative.

*Eligibility:* Submissions are open to any educator significantly impacting sustainability in the Driftless. Although the individual's impact may have been a multi-year journey, the entry needs to focus on examples and measurable success achieved in calendar year 2025.