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Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc. (928) 282-4938*

KSB Award of Excellence Presented



From left to right: Maia Vettorel, Ernie DiMillo, Becki Ross, DeAnna Bindley, Doug Von Gausig, Kegn Moorcroft, Craig Swanson, and Zach Schwartz. Photo by Derek Von Briesen.

On April 24, Keep Sedona Beautiful (KSB) presented its annual Awards of Excellence to recognize businesses, organizations and individuals whose activities have contributed significantly to Verde Valley communities.

Ernie DiMillo received an award for Community Service, recognizing his volunteer work for multiple organizations: Friends of the Forest, Habitat for Humanity, The Sedona Heritage Museum, Meals on Wheels and KSB. He's the person these organizations call when there's hands-on work to accomplish, including fixing almost any type of machinery. The Verde Valley is fortunate to have some of the best and most capable volunteers, and Ernie DiMillo is the best of the best.

Awards for Dark Sky Lighting went to Ramazan Meneske of Nick's West Side and Dieter Lehmann of Steakhouse 89. When Sedona became a Dark Sky Community, City buildings were required to become dark-sky compliant as did all new construction, but

existing structures did not need to update their lighting. With grants from the City of Sedona, KSB began a Grandfathered Lighting Initiative, but quickly discovered that even though the initiative would substantially reduce costs, businesses were hesitant to participate. Steakhouse 89 and Nicks enthusiastically committed to the program. Their outdoor lighting serves as an example for others.

Gerardo's Pizzeria in Sedona was honored for their strong emphasis on Sustainability. Owner and chef Gerardo Mocerri is keenly aware that restaurants can generate a significant amount of waste and has reduced it significantly. Gerardo obtains his food from local sustainable sources as much as possible. He is also spreading the word about the critical value of regenerative agriculture techniques that care for the land as much as profits.

The City of Sedona was recognized with an award for Sustainability for the successful Sedona Trailhead Shuttle program. Free shuttles take hikers to 5 trailheads: Cathedral Rock, Little Horse, Soldier Pass, Dry Creek Vista and Mescal. Each group of hikers that take the shuttle is one less car on the road and in the overflowing trailhead parking lots. Since inception, the shuttle has served over 700,000 riders, avoiding over 650 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

TinyCamp and its owner Darin Dinsmore also received an award for Sustainability. TinyCamp has locations in both Cottonwood and Sedona. The design and construction of the tiny homes they offer for vacation rental emphasize sustainability in every aspect: low-water fixtures, solar where possible, recycling grey water and responsible landscaping. Their goal is to reach net-zero electricity use. They also partnered with Friends of the Verde River to install swales and catchments, so rainwater stays on the grounds and soaks into the soil.

Doug Von Gausig and the Verde River Institute were recognized for Environmental Stewardship. The Institute plays multiple roles in protecting and sustaining the river. They introduce residents and visitors to the beauty and tranquility of the river while ensuring they do so safely. Along with partners like the Friends of the Verde River, they monitor and

report on the health of the river. And each time their River Rangers traverse the Verde River they also pick up the trash they encounter on the way.

The final two awards, both for Environmental Stewardship, went to two advocates who have worked tirelessly and selflessly for over 4 years to galvanize attention on our OHV crisis: DeAnna Bindley and Becki Ross. DeAnna has relentlessly documented and communicated the damage caused by OHVs and the threat that reckless driving poses to residents. Becki has been similarly dedicated to documenting and communicating the impacts of illegal camping and the degradation of grazing land caused by OHVs. In large part because of their persistence, agencies are finally beginning to address the issue.

Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that, by acting through the stewardship of its members and volunteers, is committed to protecting and sustaining the unique scenic beauty and natural environment of the Greater Sedona Area. For more information about Keep Sedona Beautiful, please call 928.282.4938, or visit www.keepsedonabeautiful.org.