



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Ginette Walker Vinski
Sustainable Pittsburgh
Office: (412) 258-6646
Cell: (412) 780-8280
gvinski@sustainablepittsburgh.org

The time has come.
Who are the greenest companies in southwestern Pennsylvania?
This answer, and the next big step for sustainability in SWPA, to be announced October 18

(PITTSBURGH, PA – October 15, 2012) On Thursday, October 18, 2012 Sustainable Pittsburgh will announce the winners of the first ever regional Green Workplace Challenge (GWC) during a morning program at Phipps Conservatory. In addition, the group will unveil the Southwestern Pennsylvania Sustainable Business Compact, the next major step for this region on its path to becoming more sustainable.

Victor Olgyay, Principal Architect, Built Environment Team, from the Rocky Mountain Institute will keynote the event with a talk entitled, "Taking Energy Efficiency to Scale: The Empire State Building," where he will discuss the Empire State Building retrofit project. One year after completing the project, the Empire State Building is ahead of plan and has exceeded its year one energy-efficiency guarantee by five percent, saving \$2.4 million and establishing a commercial real estate model for reducing costs, maximizing return on investment, increasing real estate value, and protecting the environment.

Additional speakers include:

- Bill Flanagan, Executive Vice President, Corporate Relations, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, speaking on Energy Efficiency and the Regional Energy Economy;
- Caren Glotfelty, Senior Program Director, The Heinz Endowments, discussing the Breathe Project.

Earlier this week the Green Workplace Challenge was recognized by the Office of Mayor Ravenstahl, City of Pittsburgh, via the Green Champion Award. Sustainable Pittsburgh accepted the honor, which was described by the Mayor's Office for "Excellence in promoting improved environmental resource efficiency amongst local businesses through the Green Workplace Challenge."

For the last twelve months, 50+ forward-thinking organizations from southwestern PA took actions via the GWC that resulted in improved energy efficiencies, water usage and emissions reductions, ultimately paving the way for a more sustainable region. On October 18, Sustainable Pittsburgh and members of the business and community sectors will be on hand to publicly recognize the overall achievements of these participants and their efforts in going beyond regulations to implement voluntary measures that are good for business, the

environment, and people. Awards will be presented to companies who achieve the top scores in the large, medium and small business categories.

The GWC sets itself apart from other comparable competitions across the country because participants are required to measure their actions and provide verification. Actions (each of which earns a company points) cover a variety of topics, ranging from reducing energy and water usage to working with employees on such measures as incorporating more carpooling or bike riding into daily commutes.

“The competitors in the Green Workplace Challenge should take pride in their significant achievements in efficiency and their resulting positive impacts to the region,” said Matthew Mehalik, Program Manager at Sustainable Pittsburgh.

The new Southwestern Pennsylvania Sustainable Business Compact, to be launched at the event, sets the bar even higher in terms of leadership, collaboration, credibility, and transparency. The Compact is a commitment and certification platform, providing a credible and rigorous pathway for businesses to advance and publicly demonstrate their corporate sustainability achievements. It steps beyond the “green” actions found in the Green Workplace Challenge and embraces additional components of sustainability like diversity, smart growth, workforce development, governance and management.

BNY Mellon serves on the advisory committee for Champions for Sustainability, the region’s sustainable business network coordinated by Sustainable Pittsburgh. Vince Sands, Chairman of BNY Mellon Pennsylvania, says, “BNY Mellon sees value in being involved with the Compact as the initiative helps further sustainable practices among businesses and presents opportunities that align with our region’s continuing transformation based on innovation. In addition, the Compact will deliver leadership, cost savings, reputation enhancement and public recognition opportunities for businesses.”

“This Compact is a bold, new approach for southwestern Pennsylvania,” says Mehalik. “Tailored to this region’s unique sustainability needs and opportunities, it facilitates the collaboration of business and community on a regional level, and because of that, it helps build a regional ecosystem that centers on innovation, talent attraction, investment, and healthier people and communities.”

Information on the SWPA Sustainable Business Compact will be available on October 18 at www.C4SPgh.org. Both the Compact and the Pittsburgh Green Workplace Challenge are initiatives of Sustainable Pittsburgh’s [Champions for Sustainability](#) business network. The Pittsburgh Business Times is the GWC Media Sponsor. More information about the GWC is available at <http://greenchallenge.C4SPgh.org> or by contacting Amanda Virbitsky at gwc@sustainablepittsburgh.org.

Champions for Sustainability (C4S), a network for sustainable business solutions, brings together companies large and small to put sustainability into practice. A program of Sustainable Pittsburgh, C4S provides value via education, technical assistance and consulting on operational needs, and serves as a catalyst for new enterprise and innovation for cementing the business case for sustainability.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, **Sustainable Pittsburgh** (SP) affects decision-making for the Pittsburgh region to integrate economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental quality bringing sustainable solutions to communities and businesses. Over the past 14 years, SP has proven adept at building coalitions for change on issues that get at the heart of sustainability for southwestern Pennsylvania.

###