



**For Immediate Release
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Green Resource Center for Alabama Releases 2014 Green Progress Report
Annual report shows state sustainability and other green focused progress on the rise

Birmingham, AL -- The 2014 Green Progress Report has been released by the Green Resource Center for Alabama (GRCA). The report demonstrates a wide range of nearly 100 successful green and sustainable efforts and initiatives achieved last year by various organizations, nonprofits and businesses across the state of Alabama.

The mission of the Green Progress Report is to feature the important developments that make Alabama a greener place to live, work, and play. Contributors aim to share and promote the many different ways Alabama continues to make advances in green efforts and sustainable progress on multiple levels.

“In order to continue the progress we’ve already made on sustainability issues in Alabama, collaboration is the key to success,” said Chris Williams, President of the Board of Directors for the Green Resource Center for Alabama.

The annual Green Progress Report is divided into nine categories: Land Conservation and Preservation; Environmental Education; Energy Efficiency; Transportation; Recycling and Cleanups; Parks Trails and Recreation; Building and Design; Corporate Sustainability; and Sustainability Progress and Initiatives.

In an effort to bring more recognition to the growing number of businesses and corporations embracing sustainability measures, this year’s report includes a new category, Corporate Sustainability. The GRCA is excited to share examples from business leaders throughout Alabama who demonstrate a true commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. It is the hope of the GRCA that corporate success stories from around our state will continue to increase in the future.

Top highlights from the 2014 report include the visit of U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell to Alabama in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the development of the state’s first solar research center, and Birmingham earning a Smarter Cities Challenge grant from IBM.

Other notable highlights include:

RENEW OUR RIVERS CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF TRASH REMOVAL

During the 15th year of Renew Our Rivers, volunteers removed more than 380,000 pounds of trash from Alabama waterways during the 2014 campaign. This marks the most trash collected by the program coordinated by Alabama Power from state waterways in the last five years.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY OF AUBURN PARTNER TO ACCELERATE SUSTAINABILITY

The City of Auburn and Auburn University are working together to implement elements of the city's Downtown Master Plan and several other downtown-related projects. This partnership was formed as a result of receiving a one-year, grant from the Urban Sustainability Accelerator program offered by the Nohad A. Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY ACQUIRES 1,419 ACRES IN THE TALLADEGA NATIONAL FOREST

The Nature Conservancy acquired 1,419 acres in the Talladega National Forest to help preserve Alabama's longleaf pine habitat and the red-cockaded woodpeckers. The purchase was a complex transaction, taking years to complete; however, this victory underscores the collaborative multi-agency effort to conserve precious land in the state.

TOYOTA ALABAMA NAMED MODEL PLANT FOR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Toyota Alabama has invested \$1 million into implementing several programs to enhance its plant's environmental efforts including switching to higher-efficiency motors and using compressed air more efficiently. The Huntsville engine plant has also switched to using LED lighting, solar lights and day lighting to help reduce its overall electricity use. These initiatives and others result in annual savings of more than 3.3 million kilowatts and more than 2,000 metric tons of CO2 for Toyota Alabama. In October, the facility won five awards for environmental excellence, including one from the EPA, three from Toyota and one from the city of Huntsville for air pollution control.

"The Green Progress Report is a reminder of how innovation, dedication, and teamwork can lead to creating a better tomorrow for our environment and for local communities. I hope it serves as a source of inspiration for Alabamians and people around the country, to continue to work collaboratively to meet the needs of our changing environmental landscape," said Natalie Kelly, President of Sustain, an environmental strategy and media agency, and publishing partner of the Green Progress Report.

To view the complete *2014 Alabama Green Progress Report*, visit:

<http://mygreenbirmingham.com/2014-green-progress-report/>

For interviews or questions, please contact Natalie Kelly at natalie@sustainforward.com or 205-796-7856.

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The Green Resource Center for Alabama (GRCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to enhance the quality of life throughout Alabama communities, and to inspire people to embrace more sustainable social, economic, and environmental practices. The GRCA aims to enlighten and educate the public, industry professionals, and policymakers about the many values associated with environmental stewardship.