

## PHOENIX NEWS

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# Group honors ecological stewardship

By Betty Reid

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Arizona Forward recently gave its "Academy Awards" for the environmental community.

Arizona Forward is a 44-year-old Valley group on a mission to achieve a balance between environmental quality and economic growth.

The awards spotlight sustainability in buildings, structures, site development, art, technology and environmental stewardship. This is the 33rd time the organization issued its Environmental Excellence Awards.

"It's all of the types of projects that impact the environment and quality of life in the the Valley and state," said Diane Brossart, Arizona Forward president.

More than 110 entries were submitted for seven categories. The Crescordia Award, a Greek term that means "to grow in harmony," is a top award, which 16 winners received.

Four Phoenix projects won the Crescordia award:

## Multimodal Transportation and Connectivity: PHX Sky Train

PHX Sky Train, the \$1.58 billion people-mover that opened in April, connects travelers between Metro light rail and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and takes passengers from long-term parking to terminals. The train moves about 10,000 people a day.

Sky Train is expected to reduce vehicle traffic to the airport by 20 percent, according to Phoenix. This means reduced emissions by 6,000 tons in the first year.

The train is designed to reduce energy consumption of travelers by 37 percent. Phoenix officials also said they expect to reduce water use by 1 million gallons per year because they replaced inefficient landscaping with desert landscaping.

The Sky Train's 44th Street Station is the "new front door" to Sky Harbor, according to the narrative submitted by the city. It gives free access to the airport and offers such amenities as boarding-pass printing and early bag check for US Airways and Southwest Airlines.

The station offers a passenger pickup and drop-off curb, which eliminates airport roadway traffic and curb congestion.



Fireside Elementary School in the Paradise Valley Unified School District is designed to use 55 percent less energy than comparable buildings in the area. It also strives to produce and conserve as much energy and water as it consumes. PHOTOS BY ARIZONA FORWARD



PHX Sky Train, the Sky Harbor Airport people-mover, was honored in the transportation division by Arizona Forward.

## Commercial and Mixed Use: DARTS Building

The DARTS Building in central Phoenix houses an architectural firm and three dentist offices.

The property, at 3326 N. Third Ave., was constructed in 1969 with state-of-the-art architecture. However, when new owners bought the property in 2011, it badly needed repairs.

When the owners renovated the building, they worked with the building's historical architecture and added green elements, which include:

» Beyond reusing the old building, about 25 percent of the new construction material was renewable. And more than 70 percent of the construction waste was recycled.

» The project added desert landscape.

» The asphalt from the original parking lot was reused as a base for concrete driveways and sidewalks. The asphalt



The Phoenix Neighborhood Stabilization Program earned an award for its revitalization of abandoned homes.

was replaced to reduce oily rainwater runoff. The lighter color of the parking lot reduces the "heat-island" effect.

» The building's north- and south-facing windows are shaded to maximize daylight while minimizing heat. Deep overhangs shade the building entrances.

## Institutional: Fireside Elementary School

Paradise Valley Unified School District set out to construct a nearly net-zero elementary school that could produce and conserve as much energy and water as it consumes.

Fireside Elementary School, 3725 E. Lone Cactus Drive, does just that.

The school has a rainwater harvesting system. Collection silos capture and store rainwater. The school uses reclaimed water from Phoenix's underground source as needed.

The district chose a design for the school that reduced 55 percent of energy

use compared with other buildings in the region, according to the district's award application.

The district identified design materials that include improved insulation and skylights in the multipurpose room and corridors to eliminate the need for artificial lighting.

The school also installed a parking structure with solar panels to help meet energy needs.

## Sustainable communities: Phoenix Neighborhood Stabilization Program

The Great Recession created many vacant, abandoned, foreclosed properties. Through Phoenix's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, the city and developers bought 522 homes starting in 2009.

The homes were remodeled and rebuilt with green standards. Some examples:

» Green building: The program partnered with Mandalay Communities and rescued an abandoned subdivision at 1536 E. Apollo Road. The property was transformed into a solar-powered residential community with 14 new-build — and energy efficient — homes. The project was completed this summer.

The estimated energy cost of the largest home, about 1,990 square feet, would be less than \$69 per month, which is about 70 percent lower than a traditional new home.

» Green renovation: The Foundation for Senior Living, Phoenix Neighborhood Housing Services and Mandalay Communities bought 395 foreclosed homes. The city's stabilization program remodeled the homes, installed energy-efficient air-conditioners, sealed holes around doors and replaced old windows with doubled-coated glaze ones.

The houses are projected to save about \$650 per home, per year in utility bills, according to the program's application.

» Green demolition: The city recycled and reused construction material from 102 blighted houses, which were demolished. Workers reused concrete, for example, for road construction.

This resulted in 73 percent of the demolition materials staying out of the landfills, according to the submission.

Find a full list of winners at [valleyforward.org/news/48](http://valleyforward.org/news/48).