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WEF Honored as a "Green" Leader among Washington, DC Nonprofit Organizations

1 message

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The Water Environment Federation Honored as a "Green" Leader among Washington, DC Nonprofit Organizations

Alexandria, Va. - The Water Environment Federation (WEF) recently was honored with a 2008 Green Leadership Award from Bisnow on Business, a regional trade publication, in partnership the U.S. Green Building Council, the George Washington University, and the Sustainable Business Network of Washington, in recognition for WEF's efforts to promote sustainability and energy efficiency. The first annual award was given to 20 organizations in five categories—associations, real estate, legal, tech, and medical—that have implemented green initiatives and are leading the way to sustainability in the Washington, D.C. metro region.

"We take our mission to 'preserve and enhance the global water environment' very seriously at WEF," said Bill Bertera, WEF executive director. "And we realized early on that we could lead change among our members, volunteers, and partner organizations by incorporating environmental sustainability into our own practices."

WEF is now in the third phase of its Low Carb(on) Diet program aimed at reducing the organization's

carbon footprint through individual and organizational actions and ultimately helping other organizations in our sector with similar efforts. The first phase focused on WEF's building and facilities. The second phase engaged WEF staff and visitors to their building through an educational outreach program.

WEF cut its electricity consumption in half after making upgrades to its heating and cooling systems, including replacing rooftop units and thermostats and sealing all windows to prevent heat loss and gain. The Federation also is installing a new energy management system that will allow real-time, online controls of HVAC and lighting to allow for downtime, seasonal adjustments, and better control in individual areas.

Books, journals, magazines, newsletters, and other publications are the backbone of WEF's goal to educate its members. To reduce the environmental effects of producing these items, many have either been scaled back or are being produced digitally. Those items that are still printed are produced on post-consumer, recycled-content paper. Proceedings for WEF's annual conference, which draws nearly 22,000 attendees, have been produced on CD-ROM for several years.

WEF recycles all paper, cardboard, glass, metals, and other materials. Trash bins have been removed from under employee's desks and replaced with recycling bins; non-recyclable trash needs to be placed in centrally located "wet" bins. Other efforts include:

- Green Seal certified cleaning products in use since 2005.
- Incentives for employees to use mass transit.
- Bicycle racks and showers for employees who commute by bike.
- Flexible work schedules to reduce commuting times.
- Minimum 30% post-consumer, recycled paper in all copiers and printers.
- All Xerox machines are Energy Star qualified and leased for easy upgraded.
- All Xerox printers/copiers toner cartridges are recycled and returned for refill.
- Use of low-emissions paint and construction materials.

Other large-scale projects in the works include a green roof and green terrace, which will help to reduce stormwater runoff, reduce energy consumption, and help to absorb carbon from the atmosphere. The green roof will extend the life of the roof to 40 years compared to 10 to 15 for a standard roof. The terrace will provide an outdoor area with tables and paths for employees to enjoy.

WEF also has committed to helping others reduce their environmental effects. To educate our members on technical issues, WEF has developed a Community of Practice on Sustainability and has launched the annual Sustainability Conference, both of which are geared toward helping businesses and organizations in the water business to improve the sustainability of the entire water sector, from how business is conducted in offices through implementation of projects in the field.

About WEF

Formed in 1928, the Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization with 35,000 individual members and 81 affiliated Member Associations representing an additional 50,000 water quality professionals throughout the world. WEF and its member associations proudly work to achieve our mission of preserving and enhancing the global water environment. To learn more, visit www.wef.org.

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