

EPA HONORS SACOG WITH NATIONAL AWARD FOR SMART GROWTH ACHIEVEMENT

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SACRAMENTO [November 17] – Today, EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt recognized the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) as one of five winners of a 2004 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. Winners were recognized for innovative approaches to development that strengthens community identity and protects the environment. The five recipients were honored in a ceremony at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

At a ceremony held today in honor of this year's National Award for Smart Growth Achievement winners, Administrator Leavitt commended SACOG for its innovative Blueprint Project — a comprehensive examination of land use patterns, using state-of-the-art modeling tools to estimate transportation, air quality, economic and other effects of current land use patterns, and to develop alternatives to those patterns for future growth. The project was created within a framework of public outreach and involvement, and provides a vision of how our region may grow and change in the future.

“EPA is proud to recognize these exceptional communities that are creating healthy, attractive, and enduring places to live, work, and play,” said EPA Administrator Michael Leavitt. “We salute these winners for their outstanding achievements and challenge others to follow their example in protecting the environment and improving the quality of life of our great nation.”

“We are proud and honored to receive this award,” said SACOG Executive Director Marty Tuttle. “The Blueprint Project continues to be recognized as a new and innovative way to collect better data for local governments to make informative decisions to benefit not only individual communities, but the region as a whole. Our partnership with Valley Vision resulted in more than 5000 participants in the process of refining regional alternatives to future growth.”

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Communities all over the United States are using the principles of smart growth to protect and enhance their natural environment while their economies prosper. They are reusing previously developed land; providing more housing and transportation choices; preserving critical natural areas; and developing vibrant places to live, work, shop, and play. These techniques can also protect our air, water, and land and enhance quality of life.

EPA recognized one winner in each of the following five categories: 1) Overall Excellent in Smart Growth; 2) Built Projects; 3) Policies and Regulations; 4) Community Outreach and Education; and 5) Small Communities. SACOG was given the award for Community Outreach and Education. The Community Outreach and Education category recognizes efforts to educate the general public, developers, decision-makers or any other constituency about smart growth.

Former EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman created the National Awards for Smart Growth Achievement in January 2002. Through this program, EPA seeks to recognize exceptional approaches to development that benefit the economy, public health, and the environment.

EPA received 98 applications, making the selection of five winners highly competitive. Award recipients were chosen through a multi-step process based on their replicability and effectiveness in advancing smart growth and the level of citizen and stakeholder participation or partnerships. Advice on the entries was provided to EPA by a panel of external experts representing a broad range of constituencies with interest and expertise in the built environment and smart growth. An internal EPA review panel then provided additional recommendations on the entries. EPA's Associate Administrator for Policy, Economics and Innovation made the final award determinations.

For more information about the Blueprint Project, please contact Joan Medeiros at 916-321-9000 or jmedeiros@sacog.org. For more information about the National Awards for Smart Growth Achievement, visit the EPA web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm>, or contact Tim Torma at EPA at 202-566-2864 or torma.tim@epa.gov.

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is an association of Sacramento Valley governments formed from the six regional counties – El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba – and 22 member cities. SACOG's primary charge is to provide regional transportation planning and funding as well as a forum for the study and resolution of regional issues.

For further information, please contact Joan Medeiros, at (916) 340-6207.

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