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Fair Lawn Recognized For Environmental Sustainability Efforts

This month the borough received its long-awaited bronze certification from Sustainable Jersey, the state's comprehensive sustainability program for municipalities.

By [Zak Koeske](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 19, 2012

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After nearly three years spent establishing green initiatives throughout the community, the borough finally achieved official recognition this month for its ongoing environmental efforts.

Fair Lawn learned March 8 that it had been [awarded bronze certification](#) by [Sustainable Jersey](#), a statewide program that recognizes municipalities dedicated to going green, saving money and making progress toward sustainable living for years to come. Fair Lawn is one of 17 Sustainable Jersey-certified municipalities in Bergen County,

"This is very exciting," said [councilwoman Lisa Swain](#), who spearheaded Fair Lawn's sustainability efforts a few years back and formed [the borough's Green Team](#). "Educating the public about a sustainable future has been our goal and I feel getting the bronze certification demonstrates that we are achieving that goal."

The hard-earned bronze certification gives Fair Lawn further access to training tools and resources for developing a comprehensive sustainable community program, as well as priority access to and notification of incentives and grants. The certification is good for three years.

Municipalities achieve certification by earning points for the implementation of a myriad of sustainable practices within their community. Two levels of certification are currently available to municipalities – bronze (150 points) and silver (350 points). While Fair Lawn's 165 points qualify it for bronze status, Swain said that doesn't mean the borough can now rest on its laurels.

"It's not something, you can say, ok now we're a sustainable community, now we can stop," she said. "This is an ongoing process."

Fair Lawn received points toward certification for various initiatives like establishing a Green Team and [Environmental Commission](#), holding a [Green Fair](#), hosting a [farmer's market](#), operating a [community garden](#) and working toward the [preservation of open space](#), among other things.

Even before receiving bronze certification earlier this month, assistant borough manager Jim Van Kruiningen said the borough had already reaped significant rewards from its relationship with Sustainable Jersey to the tune of tens of thousands of grant dollars.

Grant funding paid to both update the borough's [Environmental Resource Inventory](#) – a document that identifies the presence of natural resources within the borough as well as the borough's areas of environmental concern – and to perform an energy audit of four borough buildings.

The borough's energy audit revealed inefficiencies at various borough buildings, including serious lighting and heating and cooling deficiencies at the [Senior Center](#) that were subsequently corrected at no cost to the borough, Van Kruiningen said.

Going forward, Swain said the Green Team will continue working to make Fair Lawn a more sustainable community. At the group's meeting on Wednesday, members will select the winners of Fair Lawn's [first annual Going Green Awards](#), which are presented to a resident or local business owner who exemplifies environmental concern. The winners will be honored at a council meeting in April, Swain said.

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ThomasPaine

7:14 pm on Monday, March 19, 2012

The Green Team which takes green out of the pockets of residents and business and the environmental commission which does nothing while brown fields and super fund sites are built on, and left to nature to clean up. And they win an award? Really?

Here is an idea for going "green" instead of wasting resources at the Sr Center, close it down. As for being a green community, don't we have a permit from the EPA pollute the Passiac River?

[Reply](#)



Bruce Knuckle

8:25 pm on Monday, March 19, 2012

With all the manure coming out of Borough Hall, how could you not be "green"...you said it Thomas

[Reply](#)

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