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Boeing among DHEC's 2011 'Spare the Air' award winners

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COLUMBIA, S.C. -- The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control has announced the newest recipients of the 'Spare the Air' awards.

"Our 'Spare the Air' awards program acknowledges people, projects and programs that reduce emissions and improve air quality in our workplaces, schools, communities and throughout our state," said Myra Reece, chief of DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality. "We value and appreciate the commitment of each of our partners to improve the environment. Their innovative programs and projects bring about long-lasting environmental benefits and make a significant difference in the air that we breathe."

DHEC congratulates the following partners:

Outstanding School or District: Williams Middle School in Florence for developing an environmental education kiosk to inform parents about the school's anti-idling policy and encourage them to modify their behavior by turning their engines off while waiting in the line of traffic to pick up students. The kiosk serves as an important tool in reaching the community on multiple environmental issues.

Outstanding Local Government: The Greenville City and County Electric Vehicle Ecosystem Pilot Program provides area companies and citizens access to electric vehicles and charging stations throughout the greater Greenville area. This program reduces air emissions, gasoline dependency, carbon footprint and improves the community's quality of life.

Outstanding Business: Boeing South Carolina in North Charleston for its efforts to reduce Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAP) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) during its painting and assembly process. The facility reviewed their standard operating procedures, identified process and material changes, and adopted new policies that improved business performance. As a result, Boeing's VOC emissions have been reduced by 15 percent and HAP emissions by 65 percent.

Outstanding Employees: The iRide Committee (Wendy Cruce, Glen Brown, Laura Varn, Marc Tye, Allison Dennis, Nicole Wren, Mollie Gore, Liz Kress, Dean Creed and Ray Smith) of Santee Cooper in Moncks Corner for its efforts in establishing a unique alternative rideshare program that not only benefits employees, but also serves individuals in the tricounty communities of Berkeley and Charleston counties. Participants save money on fuel and vehicle maintenance, and reduce their carbon footprint.

DHEC also recognizes Greenville County's Sandra Yudice with the first ever Air Director's award for her outstanding personal commitment to improving air quality and the environment in the Upstate.