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Tompkins group recognizes 82 'Signs of Sustainability'

From Staff Reports

Sustainable Tompkins gave kudos Sunday to 82 efforts by local organizations to reduce their carbon footprints during 2008.

The organizations ranged from cleaning services to restaurants to branches of Cornell and local government agencies. Groups got the nod for emphasizing local products, promoting or using solar power, using organic goods, depending on fairly traded items and other actions deemed sustainable.

The recognitions were made at Sustainable Tompkins' Annual Holiday Party at the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca.

The group describes the awards as designated for "individuals and entities whose work during this past year has been supportive of Sustainable Tompkins' mission to promote the long-term well-being of our communities and region by integrating social equity, economic vitality, ecological stewardship, and personal and civic responsibility."

Categories included New Sustainable Enterprise, New Program or Non-profit Supporting Sustainable Development, and New Activity or Expansion of Program by an Existing Organization or Business.

The "Signs of Sustainability" recognitions are in their third year, and almost doubled from 2007, when 43 signs were acknowledged.

Sustainable Tompkins recognized Ithaca Carshare as a new sustainable enterprise along with 14 others.

Under New Program or Non-profit Organization Supporting Sustainable Development, 14 groups got the nod, including New Roots Charter School, which opens next fall.

And 53 signs were recognized in the New Activity or Expansion of Program by an Existing Organization or Business category, including the Podcar City Conference hosted by Connect Ithaca, and Ithaca Common Council's vote to support a federal carbon tax.

"Sustainable Tompkins highlights these efforts in order to help these new activists 'plug in' and connect with others involved in similar endeavors," the group said in a press release. "With all of us working together in different ways to resolve our shared sustainability challenges, we spur faster and deeper forward movement of this social movement."
