

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Municipalities win national water award with grassroots environmental program Well Aware

PETERBOROUGH - A group of Ontario municipalities with large rural constituencies has won the national 2009 Sustainable Community Award - Water with their support for the Well Aware program. The award was granted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and CH2M HILL.

Well Aware is delivered by the community based, non-profit members of Green Communities Canada in partnership with municipal governments and others. Well Aware was developed by the community organizations in response to demands from their citizens for more information about wells and private water supplies. It is the first large-scale program in Canada that educates rural residential well owners about well maintenance and how to keep our common groundwater healthy and safe.

"We're proud of this national recognition for Well Aware and the municipalities that help make it happen," said Marisha Lamond of Green Communities Canada, which coordinates the private-well stewardship program throughout Ontario.

There are approximately 750,000 private well owners in Ontario who are wholly responsible for their own water supplies.

"It's about healthy families and a healthy environment," said Ms. Lamond. "For municipalities, it's also about maintaining the viability of private wells and avoiding preventable expenditures on municipal water treatment systems," she said.

The award cites seven municipalities for their participation in Well Aware: Kingston, Thunder Bay, Loyalist Township, Wellington North Township, Bruce County, Town of Wasaga Beach, and Oxford County. Well Aware is also delivered in 14 other locations across Ontario and has been adopted by Newfoundland and Labrador.

Funders include the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. The Award was conferred 6 June at the FCM annual conference in Whistler, B.C.

For additional information: www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca

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