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Barrackville, West Virginia 4-H Club wins Presidential Award

WASHINGTON – The Busy Bison 4-H Club of Barrackville, West Virginia will receive a Presidential Environmental Youth Award at a national ceremony in the White House Rose Garden on Earth Day, April 22, 2004.

The award will be presented by President George W. Bush to four members of the club. The 4-H Club representatives are Katie Ridenour of Farmington, Derek Swiger of Shinnston, James Taylor of Worthington, Cody Gallagher of Fairmont, and their adult sponsor, Tonya Daft of Mannington, West Virginia. Since EPA Administrator Leavitt will be in Japan, Acting Deputy Administrator Steve Johnson will also participate in the ceremony.

“The young people in the Busy Bison 4-H Club have truly been busy in improving the quality of life in their communities,” said Donald S. Welsh, EPA’s mid-Atlantic regional administrator. “The members of the club earned this highly-competitive award through their enthusiasm, creativity and commitment to environmental protection. Their efforts have been remarkable.”

The club’s winning project, “Helping Hands in the New Millennium,” was a community service and conservation project. Each Busy Bison member has organized, initiated, and participated in environmental projects. Members come together as a club to help one another achieve their goals to make life in their community better for everyone.

Many individual projects include adopting-a-highway, stream monitoring and cleanup, recycling, local beautification, and wildlife and habitat improvement.

The Busy Bison 4-H Club has adopted more than 20 miles of highway, holds monthly clean ups and set up and maintain trash cans. Their “Clean Streams, American Dreams” project consists of two yearly cleanups of Buffalo Creek, a 20-mile river between Mannington and Fairmont, and monthly water monitoring.

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Barrackville, West Virginia's 4-H Club

Every month, the club recycles items in Barrackville. Last year, the club recycled 610 pounds of aluminum; 4,305 pounds of steel; 6,002 pounds of paper; 27,953 plastic bags; 1,080 pounds of plastic; 2,929 pounds of glass; 690 tires; as part of their "Waste Not Want Not" and "Guardian for Earth" projects.

Bison members have rebuilt and reprogrammed more than 500 donated computers, distributing many of them to local students and organizations in need, and shipping more than 300 of them to students in Nigeria.

These are just some of the many projects and events in which members of the Busy Bison 4-H Club participate. The need for their projects and enthusiasm is perhaps best demonstrated by the surprising tally of objects removed from local roads as part of a Bison project. These items include: shingles, metal, carpet, oil drums, various lengths of pipe and fencing, 310 bags of garbage, 338 tires, 8 TVs, 7 couches, 18 paint cans, 18 home appliances, a table and 8 chairs, 3 toxic Freon containers, 3 gallons of oil, a plastic pool and line, 3 commodes, 11 beds, 3 mufflers, 2 car fenders, 3 bags of newspaper and 1 dishwasher.

"These helping hands are clearly a gift to their community," Welsh said.

Up to ten President's Environmental Youth Awards are presented each year to clubs and school groups nationwide. One winning project is selected from each of the ten regions in the country.

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