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Ohio EPA Awards \$40,900 Environmental Education Grant to Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction for “Green Prison” Project

Ohio EPA has awarded a \$40,900 environmental education grant to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to provide renewable energy training to inmates in Fairfield County. Ten grants were awarded statewide for almost \$340,000.

The entrepreneurship program will provide training for 300 adult males who are incarcerated at the Southeastern Correctional Facility in Lancaster, to help prepare them for work in renewable energy and other sustainability businesses upon their release. Ex-offenders usually face barriers to re-entering the labor market. The project is modeled on a Texas program that significantly reduced recidivism.

The “green prison” program emphasizes business plan development, accounting, bookkeeping and financial literacy, business operations and legal and human resources. The program also stresses a triple bottom-line: profit, people and the planet. Sustainable Business Ventures and the Vera Institute of Justice are collaborating.

The Ohio Environmental Education Fund is administered by Ohio EPA. Grants up to \$50,000 are funded from one-half of the civil penalties collected by the Agency for air and water pollution control violations. Eligible grant recipients include environmental groups, public and private schools, colleges and universities, trade or professional organizations, businesses and state and local governments. Approximately \$1 million is given each year.

The next OEEF application deadline is Jan. 17, 2012. An electronic letter of intent to apply is due on Jan. 10. For additional information, contact the Ohio Environmental Education Fund at (614) 644-2873 or visit www.epa.ohio.gov/oeef/.

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