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For Immediate Release

Hitting 25 and Heading for 80

Seventh Annual Challenge for Sustainability Awards celebrate Greater Boston's buildings and businesses achieving substantial GHG and sustainability goals

Boston, March 24, 2016 – As the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts continue to work towards ambitious greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reduction goals to maintain their internationally recognized leadership in sustainability, the business community is setting the pace. By making meaningful investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, and developing innovative ways of improving building sustainability, these business leaders are not only helping the region reduce its GHG emissions, but also making their facilities more affordable to operate and more attractive to future tenants. Since 2009, A Better City's Challenge for Sustainability program has worked closely with many of the region's leading business and building owners to provide them with resources, develop action plans catered to their facilities, and help facilitate peer-to-peer learning.

Now in its 8th year, the Challenge for Sustainability program is working with 90 facilities comprising approximately 41 million square feet of commercial real estate in Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Quincy. Since the program began, Challenge Participants have seen significant success in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, with an average annual reduction of approximately 2%.

"I'm grateful for the partnership the City has with A Better City in addressing Boston's climate goals," said Austin Blackmon, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space for the City of Boston. "Large Buildings and Institutions are responsible for half the City's GHG emissions, so programs like the Challenge for Sustainability are pivotal in helping Boston reach 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050."

On March 24th, Challenge leaders and stakeholders including representatives from Oxford Properties, Gillette, Veolia, Eversource, the Green Ribbon Commission, and many others gathered at Equity Office's 100 Summer Street to honor those who achieved exceptional success in sustainability initiatives in 2015. The event featured keynote speaker Kenneth Kimmell, President of the Union of Concerned Scientists, who reminded guests of the importance of staying engaged in the broader energy policy dialogue in addition to specific building sustainability measures.

“In Massachusetts, we are off to a great start. We’ve closed a number of coal plants, kept energy demand flat through nation-leading energy efficiency programs, and we are building out solar at an impressive pace,” said Kimmell. “But we still have a long way to go. The legislature and the governor have a great opportunity over the next few months to augment our clean energy leadership with an energy bill that prioritizes renewable energy and avoids over-relying on natural gas. We all need to stay vocal in that debate, and beyond.”

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Smith Building took home the award for Greatest Electricity Reduction in 2015, a success achieved by targeted operations and maintenance-related efforts such as recalibration of HVAC controls and a deep clean of the building’s HVAC system. Boston Properties’ 100 Federal Street building was awarded with the Greatest Waste Reduction in 2015 after finishing a building-wide rollout of single stream recycling and the initial steps of integrating composting into tenant spaces.

The Greatest Water Reduction in 2015 went to the Garage at Post Office Square. Pam Messenger, General Manager of Friends of Post Office Square, attributes the Garage’s success to calibration of existing water infrastructure, thorough and consistent monitoring of water use and operations, and ultimately a strong organization-wide commitment to efficient use of resources.

“We are a group of people committed to making sure we’re running the Garage better every year,” said Messenger. “We’re always trying to better ourselves and make sure we’re not wasting anything.”

Tsoi/Kobus & Associates, a participant since the program’s inception in 2009, took home the award for Greatest Greenhouse Gas Reduction from Baseline. As a tenant in a dynamic Cambridge facility, Tsoi/Kobus & Associates has made most of their impact through efforts to change employee behaviors.

Lastly, Paul Gusmini and Janice Kimsey of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston were selected by their peers as recipients of the Peer Recognition Award 2015. Gusmini and Kimsey have also participated in the Challenge since its pilot year in 2009. Their work in sustainability extends further back in time.

“Sustainability is in our DNA at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston,” said Gusmini. The wealth of knowledge and experience that Gusmini and Kimsey are able to share has made them invaluable to other Challenge for Sustainability participants.

They’re still able to learn from their peers too, said Kimsey, “We’ve gotten a great deal of value out of meeting with our peers and sharing best practices and ideas over the years of our participation in the Challenge.”

Last year the Challenge unveiled the new Target 2020 Leaders Plaque which recognizes Challenge Participants who have already achieved the City of Boston and State of Massachusetts’ goal of 25% GHG emissions reduction by 2020. Twelve facilities were honored as Target 2020 Leaders last year, including The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and Tsoi/Kobus & Associates. The Target 2020 Leaders group was joined by three more facilities this year: Boston Properties, 355 Main Street, Cambridge; Boston Properties, 100 Federal Street; and John Hancock/Manulife, 200 Berkeley Street.

“We’re proud and honored to be working with organizations and facilities that are leading the charge to meet the City’s climate goals,” said Rick Dimino, President and CEO of A Better City. “We look forward to driving impactful results within the commercial real estate sector for years to come.”

About the Challenge for Sustainability

A Better City’s Challenge for Sustainability is a voluntary program that works with Boston’s leading businesses, property owners and institutions to help them increase operational efficiency and reach meaningful sustainability goals, including the City of Boston’s ambitious goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.

The Challenge offers one-on-one engagement with Participants, helps them develop comprehensive sustainability action plans, and tracks their progress over time. In addition, Challenge participants have opportunities to network, share best practices, and assist each other in meeting a broad range of sustainability standards and practices with respect to energy efficiency, water use, transportation, waste reduction, healthy materials, resiliency, and renewable energy.

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