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MEDIA CONTACT

Nicole Van Nelson

nicole.vannelson@ecicog.org

319-365-9941 ext. 125

ECICOG WINS NATIONAL INNOVATION AWARD

The East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) has won a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Innovation Award for their USDA Solid Waste Management Project. The project provides safety training, education, and technical assistance for the rural landfills in our region including the counties of Benton, Iowa, Jones, and Tama.

The project's goals are to promote sound landfill and safety practices, increase diversion of hazardous materials to protect our region's water supply, reduce the impact of landfill operations, retain landfill employees, and improve landfill planning and management of rural solid waste facilities in our region.

To accomplish these goals, the program has already provided on-site training to each of the landfills and hosted a 2-day Compactor Training from an industry leader in landfill operations and safety training, Blue Ridge Services. Future activities include Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) public educational efforts, development of standardized administrative protocols for each facility, and continued trainings.

As Jennifer Fencl, ECICOG Solid Waste & Environmental Services Director, states, "The project is a prime example of acknowledging that local issues are often regional in nature, and as a result are best addressed through a regional cooperative process. The potential negative environmental impacts of poor solid waste management can extend beyond the originating jurisdiction. The project curriculum recognizes these shared challenges and provides tailored but replicable training, policy development, and resource promotion."

The NADO Innovation Awards program "honors NADO members for their creative approaches to advancing regional community and economic development and improved quality of life. These projects have made significant impacts on their regions and demonstrate the diversity of services and program delivery provided by regional development organizations across the country." For more information on the awards program visit www.nado.org/congratulations-2016-winners

Grant funding for the program was received through the USDA Rural Development Solid Waste Management Program and matched with local funds.

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About ECICOG

The ECICOG is an intergovernmental council established in 1973 under Chapter 28E and provided for under Chapter 28H of the Code of Iowa. Governed by a board of directors comprised of elected officials and private citizens, ECICOG was created to promote regional cooperation and to provide professional planning services to local governments in Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, Tama, and Washington Counties.