

ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2014 was a big year for the EAC—

We launched a brand new energy efficiency program, released a report detailing the first greenhouse gas emissions inventory for our community, and initiated a new program with our municipalities for locally funded Household Hazardous Waste collections in 2015 and 2017! All of this on top of the school education programs, hands on workshops, waste and recycling planning, and services we have provided for years.

Between direct outreach efforts like our education programs and answering inquiries on topics like e-waste recycling, combined with media outreach such as underwriting spots on WGLT, plus Facebook and Twitter postings, we hit a record of over 900,000 interactions with local residents in 2014!

These successes are the result of a dedicated coalition of individuals, groups, and institutions committed to improving our local environment, for the health and well-being of all. Thanks to our many contributors:

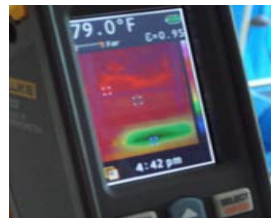
- The hardworking staff of the EAC; while we have 9 employees on staff (part and full time), the majority of our workload is carried by three individuals;
- The passionate board of directors, including the leadership provided by our board officers;
- The numerous hours of service given by our volunteers and student interns assisting the EAC with important projects, special events, and more;
- The financial support of our local government partners—the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, McLean County, and the Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District. Many of our efforts help our local governments meet state and federal mandates;
- The generous contributions of our members, donors, and sponsors, whose support allows us to go above and beyond meeting mandates to make lasting changes that improve our community; and
- The financial assistance of our grantors, including the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

As Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” We are grateful for the ongoing community support of environmental initiatives—in 2014 and beyond.

Sincerely,



Michael Brown
Executive Director



In Memoriam

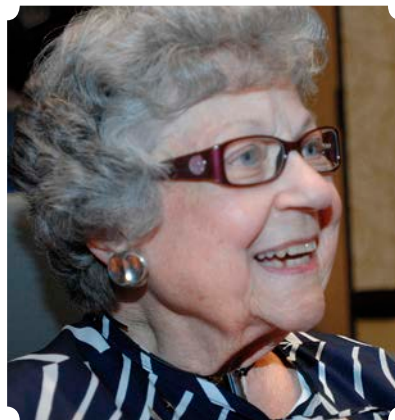
CAROL REITAN

Carol Reitan was always a woman ahead of her time...especially when it came to the environment. She was a leader of our community on so many fronts (including politics, culture, education, the environment, and the advancement of women). She was not afraid of pushing people when necessary, but she was also a master of building loose but strong coalitions who could move our communities ahead and often have a darn good time in the process.

Carol, the CEO of Mid Central Community Action from 1981 to 1995, helped the local volunteer recycling group, Operation Recycle (OR), become a full time recycling center in 1983 by making the program a part of Mid Central, with the goals of increasing recycling, providing job training for low income individuals with problematic job histories, and educating local residents concerning the growing importance of recycling, reuse, and other environmental issues. When the cities created municipal recycling programs, Operation Recycle was renamed the Ecology Action Center when we moved into our current location.

Throughout her life, Carol led the way on many environmental issues, designing solar homes (and living in one she had designed), pushing environmental causes in the McLean County League of Women Voters, and even, in her last years, becoming one of the first to drive an all-electric car.

Until her death in May, 2014, Carol was a community leader with a strong vision of what the issues are in our communities and of what is possible when caring community members join together to develop responses to those issues. The Ecology Action Center remembers her environmental leadership and her joy in our ongoing success.



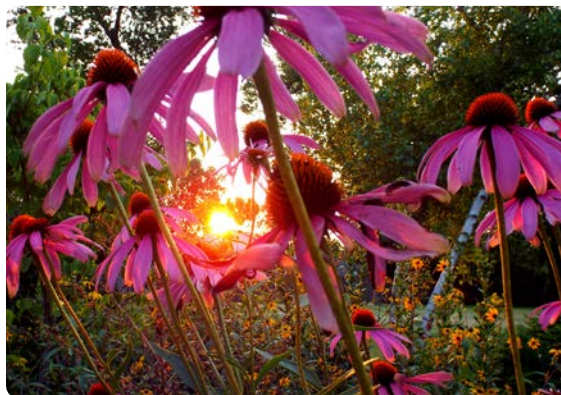
*Photo by Lori Ann Cook-Neisler,
The Pantagraph*

***Written by Myra Gordon,
first full-time Director of
Operation Recycle.***

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW - HIGHLIGHTS

SPRING

- Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo (p. 18)
- 12th annual Yard Smart garden walk featuring sustainable landscaping (p. 19)
- Launched BN EnergyBright, a new community energy efficiency program (p. 14)



SUMMER

- Published first area-wide greenhouse gas baseline inventory (p. 16)
- Secured funding for 2015 and 2017 Household Hazardous Waste events (p. 10)
- Installed rain garden & native landscaping at the EAC (p. 12)





AUTUMN

- Held the 3rd annual We Care Twin Cities Races (p. 18)
- Launched a “Curb your Leaves” outreach campaign for clean water (p. 12)
- Helped over 500 residents recycle at America Recycles Day at IWU (p. 19)

WINTER

- “Re-opened” as a certified Green Business through the Illinois Green Business Association (p. 21)
- Received “Top Non-Profit” designation for third year in a row (p.21)
- Spearheaded efforts to address cathode ray tube recycling crisis (p. 10)

EDUCATION & OUTREACH EFFORTS

The Ecology Action Center coordinates education and outreach programs in four different areas for municipal and state clients, along with various additional services for area residents and businesses. We provide:

1. Solid waste education to fulfill the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act requirements for McLean County, Bloomington and Normal;
2. Storm water education for Bloomington, Normal, McLean County, and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District to meet the public education requirements of their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Management Plans;
3. Energy efficiency outreach for Bloomington and Normal; and
4. Radon education through the McLean County Radon Program with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

920,284
Interactions

EAC engaged local residents and businesses through direct interactions, such as home energy check-ups and rain barrel workshops, or through radio, print and social media.

Presented to 1,860
residents

Presentation topics included energy efficiency, protecting our water supply, hazardous waste disposal, and radon awareness.

Visited 149
classrooms

Taught over 3,500 students about stormwater runoff pollution and solid waste issues including composting and the “Three R’s” of recycling.

Conducted 12
library programs

Taught over 460 parents and children through the summer reading program about recycling and waste reduction.

FESTIVALS & FAIRS

EAC staffed information booths promoting recycling, clean water, energy efficiency and radon awareness at over 30 area fairs and festivals in 2014. We spoke to approximately 4,000 members of the community at these events.

We even helped make these festivals more eco-friendly; for example, at the Sugar Creek Arts Festival we provided reusable water bottles and free refills saving over 2,000 disposable bottles from entering the landfill!

THANK YOU NOTES FROM LOCAL STUDENTS

You are so very good
at persauding and
teaching. I now want to
go home and beg for
a compost bin, I now
want to go shopping
with my mom and
teller what to reduce, I
now want to
rease water bottles and
battieries and all this
because of you. You
have taught me a lot
about recycling you should
become a teacher.

"I now want to go home
and beg for a compost bin,
I now want to go shopping
with my mom and tell her
what to reduce, I now want
to reuse water bottles
and batteries and all this
because of you."

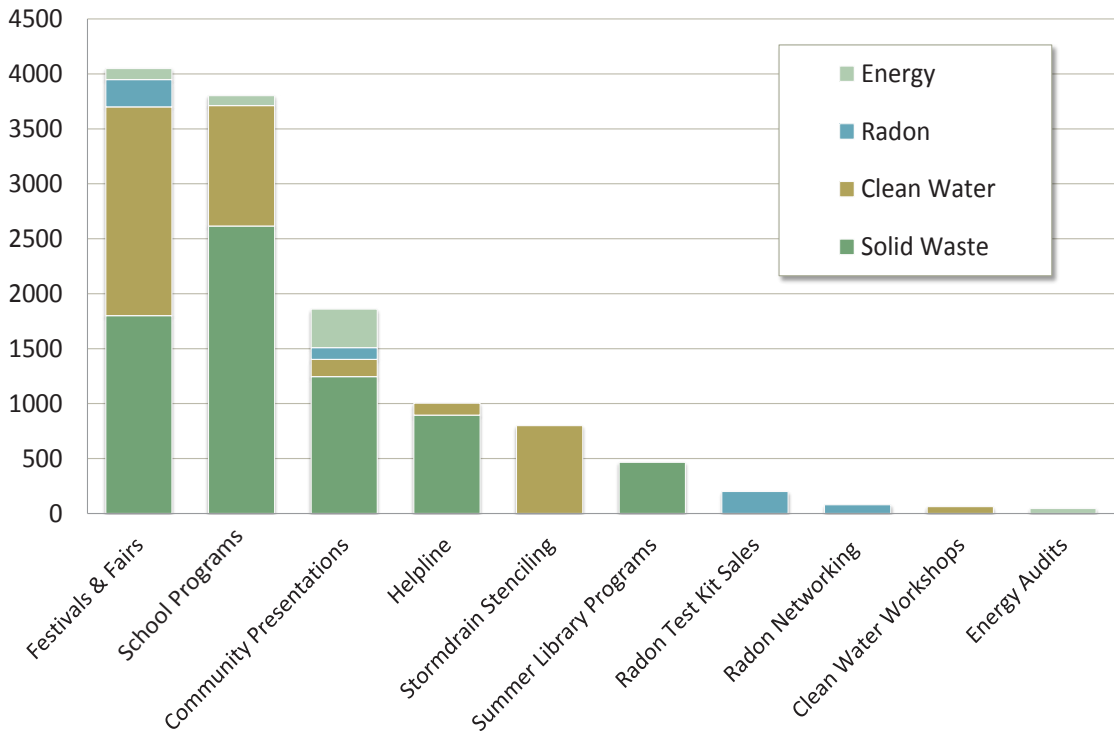
Thank you for coming to our school and
teaching us about recycling and how important
it is. I learned a lot like what goes in
recycling and what does not. I also learned
that you don't have to throw away so much
stuff because you can reuse it or make
a compost pile. Now that I know all that
important stuff I can help by telling other
people. Like last night I told my mom about
it.

Sincerely,
Kaelyn

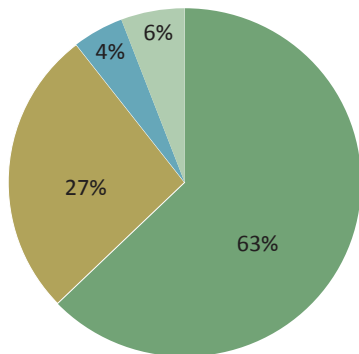


"I learned a lot like what
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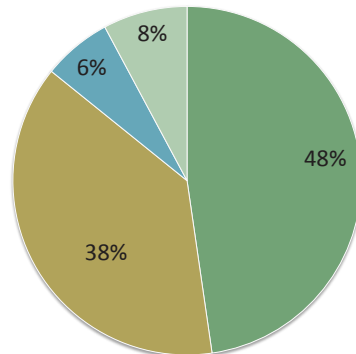
OUTREACH BY TYPE



OUTREACH BY PROGRAM



MARKETING BY PROGRAM



■ Solid Waste
 ■ Clean Water
 ■ Radon
 ■ Energy

EAC RECYCLING EFFORTS

EAC staff oversaw the ongoing administration and promotion of three major recycling programs that have helped improve the county's recycling rate:

- The Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) recycling program with three drop-off points in Bloomington-Normal continues to grow;
- The Household Battery recycling program, in conjunction with Interstate Batteries, Batteries Plus, and Springfield Electric, recycled over **22,600 pounds** of batteries; and
- The Garden Pot Recycling Program, in cooperation with YouthBuild McLean County, provides recycling drop-offs for plastic garden pots. Current efforts focus on the development of a longer-term, more sustainable means to support the volunteer-based program.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS (HHW) WASTE COLLECTION

The EAC reached an agreement with McLean County, Bloomington and Normal to fund Household Hazardous Waste collection events in 2015 and 2017.

For the first time, community residents will be able to count on a HHW collection event every other year. The EAC will coordinate these events.



RECYCLING PROGRAMS CONTINUED

RECYCLING RATE COORDINATION & RESEARCH

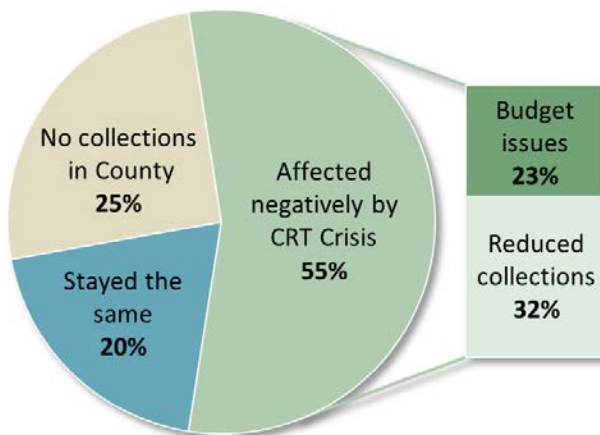
In addition to coordinating recycling programs, the EAC collects data to analyze and better understand recycling in our community. See the infographic on the following page for information on recycling in Bloomington, Normal and McLean County in 2014.

ELECTRONIC WASTE COORDINATION & RESEARCH

The increasing cost of Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) recycling has created a crisis for communities across Illinois. CRT glass is the most expensive item e-waste recyclers handle, and it also makes up the bulk of e-waste weight. The 2012 Electronics Products Recycling and Reuse Act created a system in which Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) fund recycling of e-waste items. Because of a variety of issues with the quota system, electronics recycling has seen a dramatic reduction in support.

The EAC, along with help from Will County and DuPage County solid waste staff, surveyed all 102 counties in Illinois to determine whether the law has affected local electronics recycling. Out of the 70% reporting counties, we found that 55% had been negatively affected by the CRT crisis. 25% fewer electronics were collected statewide in 2014 from 2013.

EFFECTS ON E-WASTE RECYCLING IN ILLINOIS COUNTIES



RECYCLING: HOW IS OUR COMMUNITY DOING?

37.7%

of our garbage is recycled.

THAT'S

4%

higher than the national average,

& ONLY

2.3%

away from a 40% recycling rate.

THAT'S UP FROM



28%

of garbage recycled in 2004

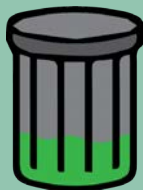
IN PART BECAUSE



68%

of us participate in curbside programs.

BUT WE STILL HAVE MORE WORK TO DO...



27%

of what we put in our garbage

could have been
RECYCLED.

IF WE CUT THAT NUMBER
in **HALF**, we would save about
11,000 TONS

of garbage,
and drive
our
recycling
rate to

43%

CLEAN WATER PROGRAMS

YARD SMART EFFORTS

With help from Accent Nature Landscaping, EAC redeveloped its landscaping (see bottom left picture on page 13) to demonstrate Yard Smart principles. The new landscaping includes a rain garden, extensive use of native plants and cultivars, compost bins, rain barrels, reduced turf grass, winter cover crops, garden boxes, and interpretive signage. EAC received a grant from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation which helped fund the new initiatives.

EAC staff organized and conducted 11 rain barrel making workshops with a focus on storm water runoff issues; **55 rain barrels** and 275-gallon mega rain harvesters were constructed.

We also promoted a new “Curb your Leaves” campaign using traditional and social media to encourage individuals to keep leaves off the curb and out of stormdrain systems. The campaign was featured in a live interview on WGLT’s Sound Ideas and coverage in the Pantagraph. The campaign received approximately **85,000 impressions** through traditional media and **16,015 targeted interactions** through social media.

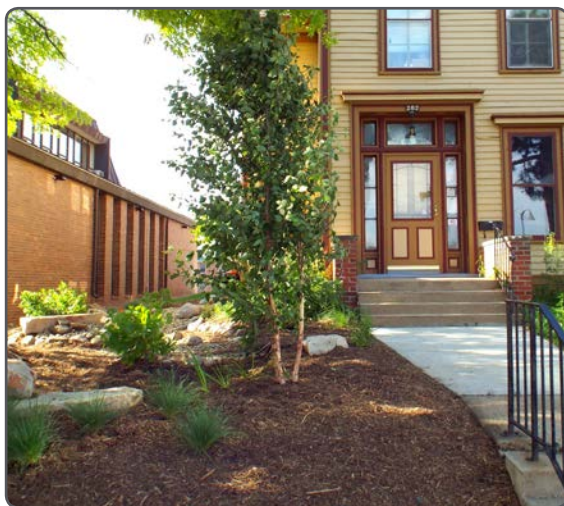
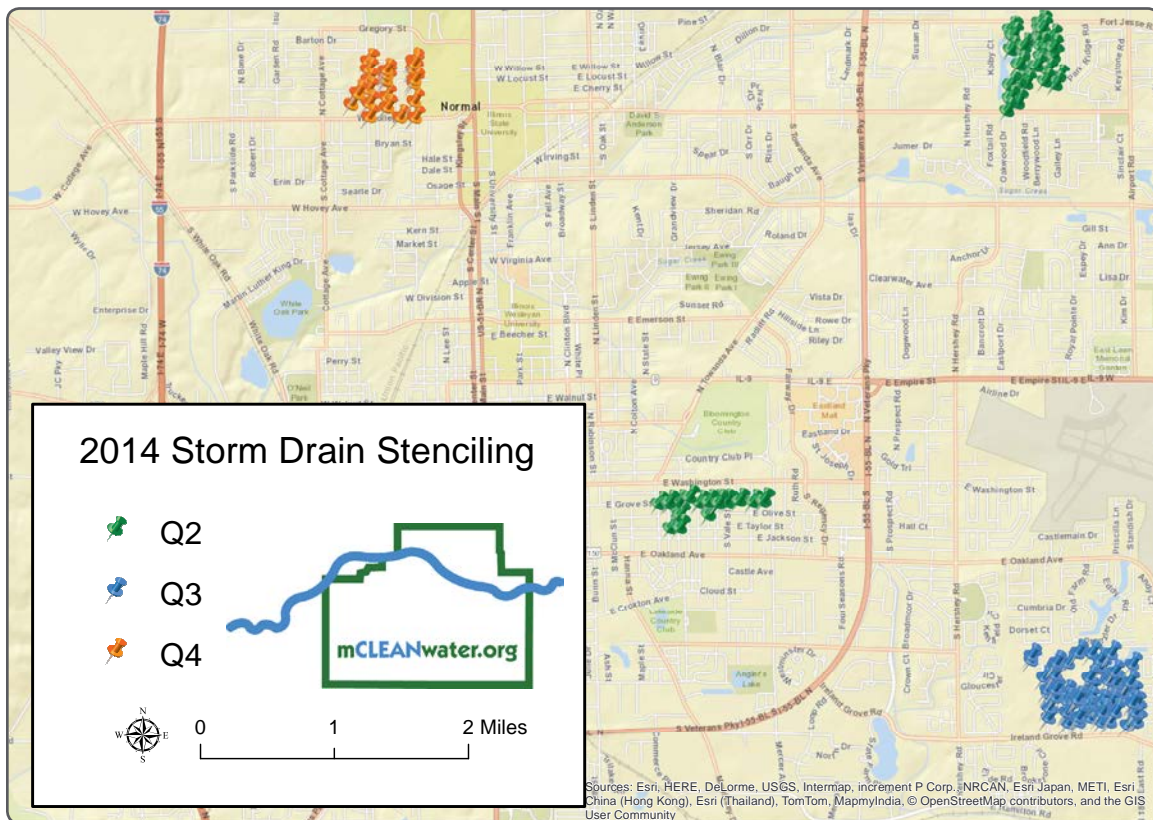


EAC organized 35 volunteers and other non-profits for the the Sugar Creek and Constitutional Trail Clean Up Event as part of Bloomington-Normal Clean Up Week. Volunteers removed approximately **one ton of trash from the creek and trail** in just one day!

STORMDRAIN STENCILING

EAC’s ongoing storm drain stenciling program had 47 volunteers who spent 116 hours painting **229 storm water inlets**. They distributed information on storm water runoff pollution and ways to reduce it to 1,014 homes in Bloomington-Normal.

See the top picture on page 13 for locations of where we stenciled.



INTRODUCING BN ENERGY BRIGHT

With support from Bloomington and Normal, EAC launched its new energy efficiency program, BN EnergyBright, dedicated to helping residents and businesses achieve their energy savings goals. Serving as a central hub for energy efficiency financial incentives, programs, contractors and more, we emphasize how important it is to reduce energy usage and provide the tools to do so. Part of the program includes a comprehensive, resource-rich website packed with energy-saving tips, where we challenge community members to pledge to save energy -- and money!

Staff also conduct on-site home energy check-ups to identify each building's unique energy efficiency opportunities and work with its occupants to achieve meaningful energy reduction. Depending on the home or business, we point them to available financial incentives to meet their energy savings goals.

EAC conducted **46 home energy check-ups** in 6 months, offering recommendations that on average would save households \$450 annually. Individuals engaged with the program **73,551 times** through home energy checkups, advertisements, articles, social media, and presentations.



"My wife, Beckie, and I were a bit hesitant about having an EAC staff team perform an energy checkup on our home. We were afraid they would tell us we need to spend hundreds of dollars on insulation, thousands of dollars on new windows and doors, or an extravagant amount on other renovations to eliminate energy wasters all around our house.

The actual checkup turned out to be a breeze. EAC Energy Coordinator Emily Cross and staff member Glen Wetterow performed a detailed inspection of the outside and inside of our house in less than an hour. As they examined everything from the tightness of windows to the condition of appliances, Emily and Glen pointed out easy, effective and inexpensive ways to eliminate energy wasters and, by doing so, to significantly reduce our utility expenses."

- Testimonial, Carl Roberts



"Thank you so much—am so pleased with your audit—am spreading the word!! You are the greatest! Will be getting on the recommendations ASAP! Got the number for a handy-man to cover the small projects.

Happy Thanksgiving— I know that you made mine a lot brighter!!"

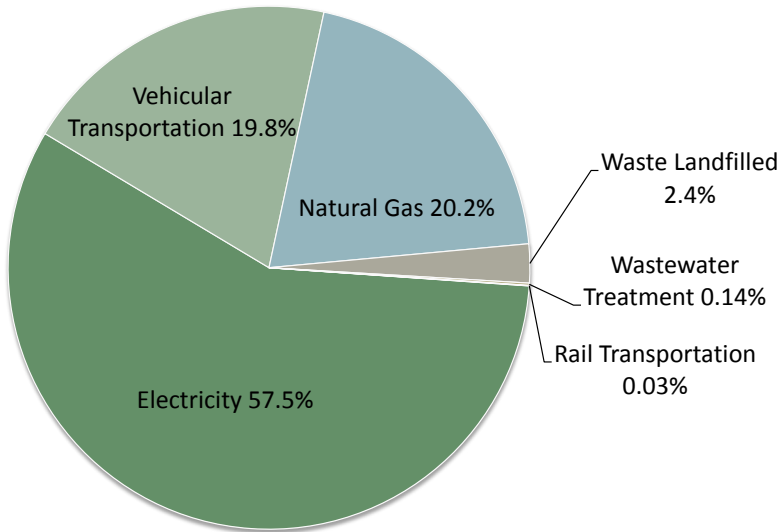
- BN EnergyBright Participant

GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY

EAC completed its **first inventory of greenhouse gas emissions** for Bloomington-Normal. A greenhouse gas emissions inventory is a tool that quantifies carbon dioxide and related emissions so that a community can establish a baseline of emissions and regularly evaluate its progress towards meeting local goals for reducing them. Bloomington and Normal funded the study.

The per capita emissions and sources for Bloomington-Normal for 2008 closely mirrored state and national rates and trends for that year.

COMMUNITY SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE GASES



Bloomington-Normal is in a position to keep implementing common-sense strategies that not only help reduce climate-changing greenhouse gases, but also save money, conserve energy, improve air quality, and preserve precious natural resources.

EAC's report Bloomington-Normal Greenhouse Gas Inventory—Local Government Operations and Community-Scale Emissions, Baseline Year: 2008, is available for download online.

EAC's radon program increases public awareness about the dangers of radon in single and multifamily homes and provides residents with the tools needed to identify its presence and connects them to mitigators. The program is funded by the federal State Indoor Radon Grant, administered by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.

The EAC maintains a website with radon resources and information, provides booths at public events like the annual Home Show and at EXPO, runs ads in the Pantagraph (with a coupon to clip and mail in), and maintains an informational display at the EAC.

McLean County has the highest percentage of homes tested for radon in the state of Illinois.

Over 200 radon test kits sold or given away in 2014

Presented or provided information at 14 community events and expos



Residents hang test kits in their basement.

EAC EVENTS

ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE LIVING & WELLNESS EXPO

The annual Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo (ISLWE) at IWU is coordinated by the EAC and Illinois Wesleyan's Wellness program to promote living well and living green. The event continued as a "Zero-Waste" event to promote waste reduction and recycling. Most literature was electronic, food service items were washable, vendors were encouraged not to distribute extraneous items, and food waste was composted. **Less than one bag of trash was collected at this event, which had over 4000 participants.**

The Renewable Fashion Challenge program promotes textile reuse and waste reduction by showcasing re-imagined textiles. EAC staff coordinated a kick-off event at Mission Mart to recruit participants for the program, which culminated with a fashion show at the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo. Ten contestants competed for a first place prize valued at over \$100.

The Mega-Recycling Event collected electronics, clothing, shoes, plastic garden pots, light bulbs, batteries and other nontraditional recyclables from 300 families.

WE CARE TWIN CITIES RACES



The EAC continued to host the We Care Twin Cities Races as a "Zero-Waste" event. We replaced disposable water cups with reusable HydraPouches, eliminating 5,000 plastic cups on race weekend.

We also coordinated a "Zero-Waste" station, where we demonstrated the benefits of composting, TerraCycling, and recycling to the Race participants.

The event sent only **5 pounds of waste to the landfill** for approximately 1500 participants.

AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

EAC held its annual November America Recycles Day Mega Recycling Event in partnership with Illinois Wesleyan University to promote nontraditional recycling.

Over 500 households recycled thousands of pounds of electronics, textiles, light bulbs, batteries and garden pots, while learning about permanent drop-off locations for these items.



YARD SMART GARDEN WALK

EAC hosted its Annual Yard Smart Garden Walk featuring yards that reduce their impact on the environment by minimizing water runoff, planting native trees and shrubs, eliminating chemical use, and using compost bins and rain barrels. This year's event featured homes and gardens on Bloomington's west side and had **62 participants**.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

2014 TOP NON-PROFIT

GreatNonprofits honored EAC with a prestigious 2014 Top-Rated Award, for the third year in a row, based on the large number of positive reviews that volunteers, donors and anonymous community members wrote.

Thank you, reviewers!



2014 OUTSTANDING SPECIAL RECYCLING PROGRAM AWARD

The EAC received the 2014 Outstanding Special Recycling Program of the year award from the Illinois Recycling Association.

We were chosen for our exemplary efforts in development of alternative strategies for funding of Household Hazardous Waste collection events for residents of McLean County.

CERTIFIED GREEN BY ILLINOIS GREEN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Ecology Action Center “re-opened” its doors as a Certified Green Business by the Illinois Green Business Association (IGBA)!

IGBA’s certification involves a rigorous checklist of business practices and building analysis, including an audit performed by Ameren’s Small Business Program. We are proud to be a green example for our community!



SPONSORS & CONTRIBUTORS

2014 MUNICIPAL & STATE AGENCY PARTNERS

- City of Bloomington
- Town of Normal
- McLean County
- Illinois Emergency Management Agency
- Illinois EPA
- Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District
- McLean County Regional Planning

2014 EVENT SPONSORS & CONTRIBUTORS

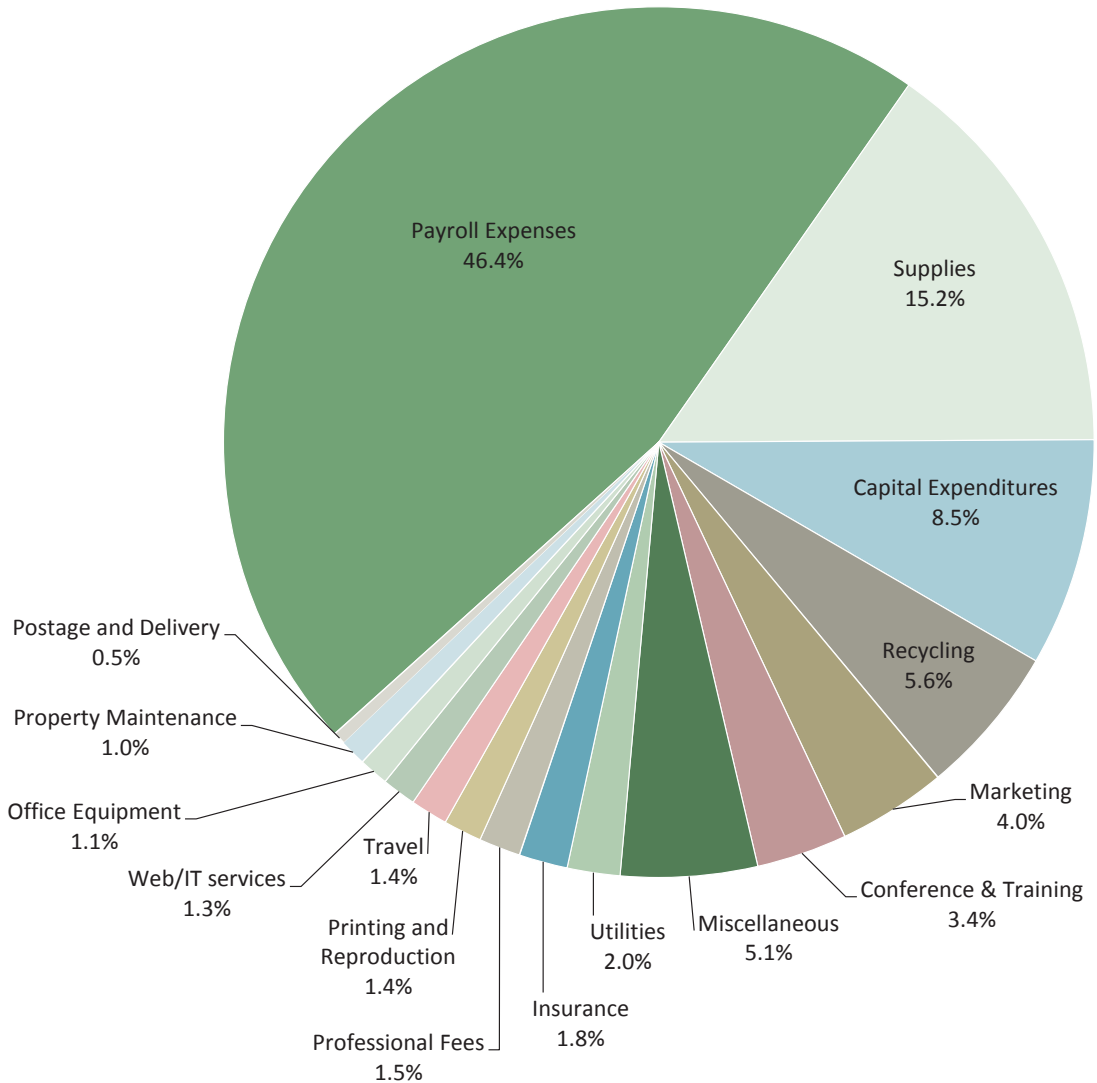
- Accelerated Health Systems
- Axel Jimenez, State Farm Agency
- Bloomington-Normal Marriott
- Bower Orthodontics
- Casey's Garden Shop and Florist
- Charlotte Brown and Ted Morris
- CliftonLarsonAllen
- Coldwell Banker Commercial
- Confidential On-Site Paper Shredding
- Culligan Water Conditioning
- Eastview Christian Church
- Epiphany Farms
- Evergreen Home Energy Consultants
- Fleet Feet Sports
- Four Seasons
- Good to Go
- Green Top Grocery Coop
- Heartland Bank
- Hewlett Packard
- HolleHock Designs
- Home Sweet Home Ministries
- Illinois Wesleyan University
- Illinois Wesleyan University Wellness
- ISU Credit Union
- Karen Stauffer Photography
- LaGondola
- Felumlee Family
- Matt Fraker and Sherri Thornton
- Midwest Fiber
- Midwest Food Bank
- Minerva
- MyLeanBody Boot Camp
- On-site Computer Services
- Palace Events
- Prairie Signs
- Progressive Asset Management Group
- Psychology Specialists
- Republic Services
- Rosati's
- Solid Ground Gardening
- Springfield Electric
- State Farm
- Stout Chiropractic
- The Workout Company
- Trunk Bay Properties
- University of Illinois Extension
- Vitesse Cycle
- Weavers Rental
- WGLT
- WJBC
- Wild Style Design
- Zozzaro Chiropractic & Rehab

2014 NONPROFIT PARTNERS

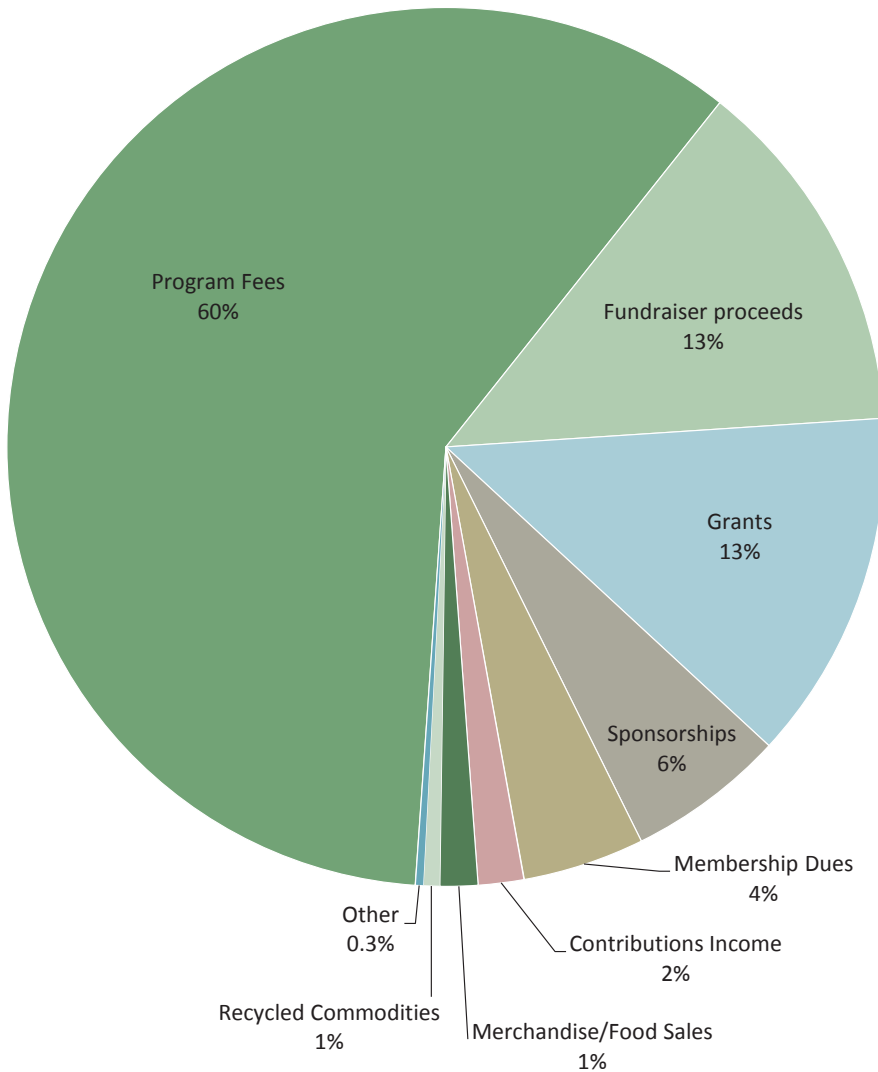
- Baby Fold
- Fuller Therapeutic Center for Holistic Health NFP
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore
- Heartland Head Start
- Home Sweet Home Ministries
- Illinois Green Business Association
- Illinois Recycling Association
- Illinois State University
- Illinois Wesleyan University
- Immanuel Health Center
- ISU Army ROTC
- Mid Central Community Action
- Normal Library Foundation
- ParkLands Foundation
- Recycling Furniture for Families
- She Is Safe
- Special Olympics
- St Jude's Children's Research Hospital
- Sugar Grove Nature Center
- The OM Tribe
- YWCA

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

EXPENSE OVERVIEW



REVENUE OVERVIEW



CONTACT US



Michael Brown
Executive Director



Kris Hall
Assistant Director



Emily Cross
Energy Program
Coordinator



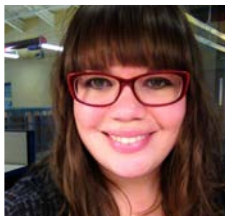
Ruth-Ann Lipic
Radon Program
Coordinator



Sally Stoneking
Bookkeeper



Glen Wetterow
Program Assistant



Larissa Armstrong
Program Assistant



Gary Kamplain
Program Assistant



Sarah Hinch
Administrative
Coordinator



Kristen Burhmann
Communications
Assistant

2014-2015 BOARD MEMBERS

Carlo Robustelli – President
Kari Sandhaas – Past President
Charlotte Brown – Vice President
Nancy Armstrong – Treasurer
Charles Bristow – Secretary
Wayne Aldrich – Ex-officio Normal

George Kutz – Ex-officio Bloomington
George Gordon – Ex-officio, McLean
County
Myra Gordon
Carl Teichman
Laurine Brown

Tim Golliday
Ken Springer
Missy Nergard
Adrienne Ohler
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