



## Friend of the Environment Award

2016 Business/Organization Winner: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium

The Zoo's Sustainability Goals include increasing their culture of sustainability by reducing energy/water use, increasing recycling effects and working to educate their visitors and employees on behaviors that will improve the impact on our earth.

In 2011, the Zoo's efforts were pushed to the next level by the creation of an Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (SMP). The SMP set specific goals to guide and focus the Zoo's next steps, including:

1. Reducing energy use per square foot by 10%. This required changing both behaviors and technology. ie: changing lighting schedules, evaluating heating and cooling settings, updating to LED and low-watt T8 bulbs.
2. Reducing water use. ie: optimizing exhibit tank dump and fill schedules to use less water, implementing "water smart" cleaning methods, fixing water leaks, and integrating landscaping practices that require minimal water use.
3. Increasing recycling efforts. Through the help of both a Nebraska Environmental Trust grant and a Nebraska State Recycling Association Grant in 2011, the Zoo purchased 94 outdoor recycling containers and a recycling compactor. A second compactor and reusable containers for some animal diets have helped move the effort even further.
4. Staff and visitor engagement. Efforts were made including regular sustainability updates at quarterly staff meetings and in e-newsletters, establishing a Green Idea program, incorporating information on climate change and other environmental issues at its exhibits and providing information on its sustainability efforts on both traditional media and social media.

The outcome of the Zoo's work has been outstanding. Results include:

- Increasing the sustainability engagement score for Zoo employees from 34 to 71. (1-100 scale)
- Reducing annual energy per square foot consumption by 14.4%
- More than doubling its recycling percentage to 18.5% of total waste being recycled (since 2012).
- The energy reductions resulted in avoiding 4,206 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, the equivalent of the emissions from 384 homes' energy use in one year.
- Reducing water use by 6.3% annually or by 22 million gallons (equivalent to filling the Zoo's main aquarium tank 50 times)
- Increasing its recycling rate from 8.5% to 18.5% of its waste since 2011.



Earth Day Omaha would like to thank our sponsor for the Friend of the Environment Awards, Whole Foods.