

December 15, 2009

KERN COG ANNOUNCES 2009 REGIONAL AWARD OF MERIT RECIPIENTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Organization: Kern Council of Governments
What: 21st annual Regional Awards of Merit ceremony
When: 6-9 p.m. Thursday, March 4, 2010
Where: 1401 19th Street, Suite 300, Bakersfield, Calif. 93301

Kern Council of Governments will honor 14 individuals, organizations and programs for making major contributions to this area's quality of life through innovative, cooperative efforts during its 21st annual Regional Awards of Merit Program on March 4, 2010.

Regional Awards of Merit recipients, as decided by a Kern COG's Board subcommittee, are divided among nine broad categories and include:

Community Involvement:

- Ridgecrest resident **Virginia "Jinny" DeAngelis**, chief executive officer of Desert Area Resources and Training (DART), which provides services and opportunities to people with developmental disabilities.
- **Diane Duran**, a contracts supervisor with Chevron, USA for efforts with the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.
- **Keep Bakersfield Beautiful's Highway 99 Tree-Planting Committee** for planting 555 trees along State Route 99 over half a decade.

Local Government:

- **Brent Green**, Shafter's economic development director for a variety of projects, including the Shafter/Oakland Inland Port.
- **The City of Tehachapi and Tehachapi Community Theatre** for their restoration of the historical Beekay Theater.

Environmental Resources:

- **The City of Maricopa** for adopting the first Kern Regional Blueprint-compliant General Plan in Kern County.
- **The Kern County Water Agency** for its 1-megawatt solar project, which uses renewable energy to purify water.

Transportation:

- **Mehran Akhavan**, Caltrans District 6 Project Manager for his decade of work to widen State Route 46 in Kern County.
- City of Bakersfield Engineer **Ted Wright**, lead staff member for the Thomas Roads Improvement Program.

Distinguished Leadership – Public Group or Individual:

- Retiring Kern County Superior Court Judge **Gary Ingle** for his work with the Shafter Drug Court.

Lifetime Achievement – Private Citizen:

- **Jan Bennett**, chief executive officer of the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, for her contributions to the Indian Wells Valley's economic well-being.

Lifetime Achievement – Public Official:

- Retiring Ridgecrest City Manager **Michael Avery**
- Retired Bakersfield Planning Director **Jim Movius**
- Retiring Bakersfield Police Department Chief **William Rector**

Kern COG celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2010, and this is the 21st year the agency has recognized those programs and people in our region whose ideas and hard work have made life in Kern County better for us all.

The awards banquet will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 4, 2010 at the Petroleum Club on the 12th floor of the Stockdale Towers, 5060 Stockdale Highway in Bakersfield. Cost is \$35 per person, which includes a dinner buffet. Reservations are due by noon Tuesday, March 2, 2010 by calling 861-2191 or emailing lcollins@kerncog.org. No money will be accepted at the door.