

Good things flow through little town by the river

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BY CHRIS STURGIS

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BORDENTOWN CITY -- This small riverside city, the most densely populated municipality in Burlington County, has been recognized for its efforts to safeguard the environment with a Green Town USA designation from the New Jersey Environmental Lobby.

Over the last eight years, the city of 4,000 at the confluence of the Delaware River and Blacks and Crosswicks creeks has made a concerted effort to preserve open space, protect watersheds and preserve its scattered, highly stressed group of trees -- an urban forest -- said Mayor John W. Collom III, a lifelong resident of Bordentown.

"Urban forest" is only a contradiction in terms if you let it be, he said. In a place like Bordentown, the trees are large in number but challenged by pollution from automobiles, he said, and their access to water is interrupted by impervious surfaces, such as roofs and pavement. Yet the time, effort and money put into nurturing and protecting trees and replacing them when they die is entirely worthwhile, he said.

"They make a tremendous difference on a lot of different levels," he said. "They look nice, provide comforting shade, reduce the cost of air conditioning in the summer and heating costs in the winter. The most obvious thing they do is reduce carbon dioxide and put out oxygen."

Bordentown assembled an effective team to work for environmental sustainability, Collom said. It included the Planning Board headed by Sam Surtees, the Environmental Commission headed by Mike Hunninghake, and the Shade Tree Commission.

In order to qualify as a Green Town USA, Bordentown met a majority of the NJEL's requirements, including a documentation of resource planning and management of air quality, water resources, open lands and natural systems and waste management, according to the organization's web page, <http://www.njenvironment.org/greentown.htm>

Bordentown has previously been rewarded for its environmental efforts, including open space funding from New Jersey's Green Acres program, from Burlington County, and the D&R Greenway Land Trust.

The city, the most densely settled municipality in Burlington County, used those funds to acquire and develop trails and open space, including Lime Kiln Alley Park, Thorntown Creek Greenway Trail and the Railroad Avenue Promenade. The Green Town award was

presented Nov. 10 to the Bordentown City Commissioners at City Hall, according to Hunninghake.

Past Green Town USA winners include Hamilton, Cranford and West Windsor townships.

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