



BY ROBERT MATTLER

GUEST EDITOR

ECO-WORKS RECOGNIZES 'SUSTAINABLE CHAMPIONS' FORMER MICHIGAN GOVERNOR JENNIFER GRANHOLM INSPIRES WITH A PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

On a crisp morning this past September 18th, an overflowing contingent of Metro Detroiters filled the ballroom at the Detroit Yacht Club (DYC) in honor of the Eco-Works 7th Annual Awards Breakfast. Brilliantly hosted by Detroit Free Press Emmy Award-winning journalist Stephen Henderson, the event began with a video that featured the progress that Eco-Works is having with the community in terms of awareness, education, training, and featured sustainable projects that are having a positive impact on the region.

The event also featured the Sustainable Communities Champion Awards ceremony where leaders from four organizations were singled out for their distinctive contributions to a more sustainable community. Winners of the 2015 sustainable communities champion were:

- Malik Yakini of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network
- John Viera of Ford Motor Company
- Jim Newman of Newman Consulting Group, LLC
- Nikkia Jones from Soulardarity



▲ **Mr. Justin Schott (L), executive director of Eco-Works, presents Jim Newman (R), managing partner of Newman Consulting Group, LLC, for their work saving millions of dollars in energy for owners of C&I Buildings**

Photo Courtesy of Lauren Surprenant

All awardees were introduced and individually spoke of their passions for making Detroit a better place to live, work and prosper. The purpose of the tribute was to recognize those community leaders who are also making a difference in our daily lives, and the audience showed their appreciation with a prolonged, enthusiastic and standing applause.

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM OUR FORMER GOVERNOR

Former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm brought the house down with her inspirational presentation on creating jobs in the new energy economy. Granholm spoke of the Michigan "crisis" during her two terms as Governor, and forecast where

Michigan could be in the next several years based on the choices government, business and the non-profit world makes in the months and years ahead on clean energy policy and jobs. Of course, we can't determine where we're going if we cannot recall from where we've come, and the former governor gave the audience quite a history lesson on what it was like to be in the Governor's seat during those dark days in Michigan.

The Governor spoke of a plant closing early in her administration, involving a large refrigeration plant in Greenville - basically a one-industry small town in the middle of the state. The plant was going to close and move to Mexico, and despite the state, county and local jurisdictions "making an offer the company couldn't refuse," they

deliberated for just 17 minutes before telling the Governor they were going to close. The reason: Cheap labor in Mexico was the draw, and the state just couldn't compete with \$1.75/hour Mexican wages on any level, even with incentives. Unfortunately, that was the typical scenario back in 2005. As many remember, this happened countless times as company after company left the state, along with thousands of middle-class skilled jobs.

Fast forward to 2015. Granholm is now working at the University of California-Berkeley, The Berkeley Climate Institute, on the American Jobs Project. The goal: To launch a clean energy sector jobs market that creates good-paying, stable, middle-class jobs in which our economy can grow. Granholm remarked that the timing is right for this initiative to take hold, and Michigan can be part of this growth strategy, especially as it relates to advanced battery technology. The former Governor commented on successful companies in Michigan leading the way, such as Toggled in Troy, and Climatec, recently purchased by Bosch, the third largest appliance manufacturer in the world.

Eco-Works (formerly WARM Training Center) is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization located in Detroit, Michigan. Established in 1981, Eco-Works has been at the forefront of sustainable development in Michigan for 34 years. Eco-Works Mission is to create opportunities to learn about and practice the sustainable use of energy and natural resources through innovative education, job training, consulting social business and advocacy. If turnout at Eco-Works 7th Annual Awards Breakfast - and having almost twenty sponsors for the event - is any indication of serving their mission, Eco-Works has earned a reputation as an institution driving substantial development of a Green Economy right here in Southeast Michigan. To learn more or get involved, visit: <http://www.ecoworksdetroit.org>. For information about Newman Consulting Group, visit: www.newmanconsultinggroup.us.

Some of the major sponsors for this year's breakfast included: MASCO

Corporation Foundation; O'Brien Construction Company; Comerica; Griffin Smalley & Wilkerson; Pepper Hamilton, LLP; Plunkett Cooney; PNC Bank; Public Service Consultants; Alliance for the Great Lakes; AKT Peerless; CLEAResult; ICF International; Nexient; Ron Rose Milagro; WDET 101.9 FM; HOUR Detroit; and Greening Detroit.com.

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