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ANNOUNCING THE 2019 CLIMATE + ENERGY AWARD WINNERS
The Climate + Energy Project Honors Mary Fund, Kim Bellemere, The Merc Co+op, and Metro KC Climate Action Coalition

HUTCHINSON, KS -
Since 2017, the Climate + Energy Project has recognized individuals and organizations who are leading the way to a clean energy future. The 2019 Award winners include:

Impact Awards
Mary Fund, Kansas Rural Center, Topeka, KS

Mark Richardson Sustainer Award
Kim Bellemere, Grassland Heritage Foundation, Lawrence, KS

Changemaker Award
The Merc Co+op, Lawrence, KS
Metro KC Climate Action Coalition, Kansas City, KS

Impact Award: A lifetime achievement award recognizing an individual whose work resulted in positive, long-term, broad impacts in climate, energy, and environmental issues across the state.

Mary Fund
Mary Fund has dedicated her life to sustainable agriculture and rural communities. A strong presence at the Kansas Rural Center for the last 40 years, Mary has worked bravely and tirelessly to raise issues of environmental concern - from clean energy to clean water, healthy soils to local foods, and so much more. Mary never shies away from bringing up the important, if controversial issues, including most recently highlighting climate change in town halls across the state. Mary is as direct in her opinions as she is curious about what others think, which makes her a valuable partner to all. Mary has elevated rural issues to legislators while simultaneously addressing challenging issues with rural audiences. Mary's no-nonsense, common-sense approach has been foundational to conversations about environmental issues for decades.
Mark Richardson Sustainer Award: A volunteer-recognition award for an individual who has regularly engaged with CEP for at least five years

Kim Bellemere
Kim Bellemere has been a reliable and enthusiastic partner with the Climate + Energy Project for the last eight years, first as a steering committee member for Water + Energy Progress and most recently as a strong WEALTH partner. In her work as the Director of Outreach at the Grassland Heritage Foundation, Kim speaks passionately about the important role of grasslands and native plants as a climate solution. Kim’s leadership on climate change among conservationists has lit a spark for change and catalyzed partnerships to address climate issues locally. Kim’s nominator explained, “I’ve often felt overwhelmed by the climate change discussion, until I started having conversations with Kim and noticed the work that she was doing with Grassland Heritage Foundation. Small steps lead to big ones, and it’s people like Kim that take the first step so that the rest of us can follow.”

Changemaker Award: Recognition for an organization or individual whose recent (1-3 years) work has significantly advanced climate, energy, and/or environmental issues in Kansas.

The Merc Co+op
The Merc Co+op has elevated solar power and electric vehicles as clean energy solutions in a high-profile location. Through a full rooftop array, two solar covered carports and a solar covered patio, the community-owned grocery store installed 688 high performance solar panels to provide 29% of their energy each year, when combined with an electric vehicle charging station and a solar covered pergola the panels will produce enough energy to power 22 homes each year. The Merc’s highly visible location for solar panels and one of the few Electric Vehicle charging stations in Lawrence has strong potential to inspire other businesses to get on board with clean energy. The Merc Co+op is also working to ease the pressures of food deserts in Kansas by opening a grocery store in Wyandotte county. Since 2012, the co-op has reduced electricity consumption by 30% through LED lighting and preventative maintenance, in addition to reducing waste, improving access to local foods, and presenting sustainable options for the northeast Kansas community.

Metro KC Climate Action Coalition
The Metro KC Climate Action Coalition has rapidly elevated the issue of climate change in northeast Kansas. Initiated by Lindsey Constance and Mike Kelly, the MKCCAC provides a vehicle for local and state elected officials to take action on climate change. The coalition brings together diverse local elected officials to use their power to tackle climate change at the local and state level. MKCCAC has organized several events, including the upcoming Metro KC Climate Action
Summit in Kansas City on September 14. They are in the process of developing a local action playbook, a climate emissions inventory, and more. This bipartisan coalition has made impressive progress convening elected officials across the state line, leading with conversations about regional climate change solutions.

**RSVP Today!**

For more information about the Climate + Energy Awards, contact:
Dorothy Barnett, Executive Director, Climate + Energy Project - 785-424-0444, barnett@climateandenergy.org.

The Climate & Energy Project seeks to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America's Heartland through the ambitious deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in policy and practice.

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