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## Fitchburg Is A Climate Champion!

<https://daneclimateaction.org/initiatives/Climate-Champions-2020>

The Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change has released their list of [2020 Climate Champions](#), and the City of Fitchburg received multiple awards for their energy- and water-saving efforts in recent years. Launched earlier this year as a component of the recently completed Climate Action Plan, the Climate Champions awards recognize entities in Dane County that have demonstrated significant progress towards setting and meeting energy-reduction and other climate goals.

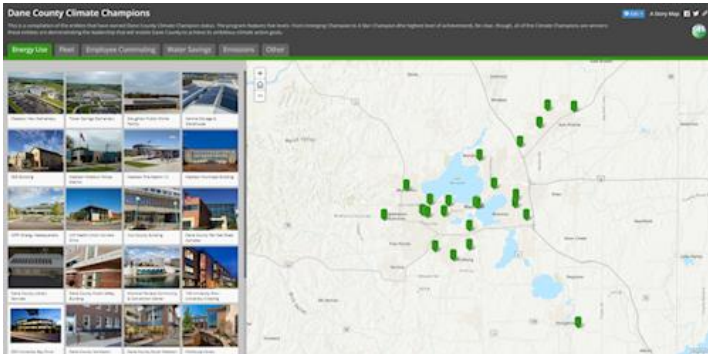


Designees were recognized at one of 5 levels from “emerging” up to 4-star based on their overall achievement. Fitchburg’s Library and West Fire Station were recognized as 1-Star champions, and the East Fire Station an “emerging” champion, in the Energy Use category; and the City was named a 3-Star champion for Water Savings. With its four awards, Fitchburg joins Dane County, the City of Madison, and CUNA Mutual Group as one of just four entities that received more than two designations this year.

The West Fire Station and Public Library both use at least 40% less energy than comparable buildings, thanks to efficient design, geothermal heating and cooling, and extensive rooftop solar panels, while the East Fire Station features a geothermal installation as well as solar hot water and recently-installed rooftop solar. Meanwhile, in addition to proactive efforts to reduce salt-usage on city properties and in commercial and residential areas, Fitchburg has provided numerous water-conservation education opportunities to the community, in addition to prioritizing water quality and conservation through its engineering and land-use practices.

While Common Council and Fitchburg staff have put in a tremendous effort in pushing for these energy- and water-savings efforts, these are items that the entire community has made clear are a priority; so although these awards are officially given to the City of Fitchburg as a

municipality, they truly are city-wide awards, and the entire residential and business communities of Fitchburg are to be commended for driving and participating in these initiatives. Thank you, and congratulations!



Check out the [online map](#) of all 2020 Climate Champion designees

## Think Local This Holiday Season

<https://www.danebuylocal.com/>



Dane County officials are encouraging residents to look to local businesses first when doing their holiday shopping this season, to help Dane County companies withstand the ongoing economic pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic. Dane Buy Local is a nonprofit that supports local commerce, and their website can help you plan your holiday shopping at nearby companies (or look at business listings for the [Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce](#) or the [Madison Black Chamber of Commerce](#)). The economic benefits of buying local are [well](#)

[documented](#), as between 2x and 4x of your spent money stays in the community when you buy from local businesses rather than national ones; but additional benefits can include decreased vehicle emissions from transporting the goods to your home, connecting with your neighbors, and knowing you're helping local businesses to stay afloat this winter.

Another big local impact you can have this holiday season is in donating to organizations that have been forced to cancel their normal fundraisers and are in greater need of financial help than usual. From environmental groups, to social justice organizations, to groups helping those in need during the holiday season, if you are able to give this winter, you can find numerous places looking for your assistance.

# Happy Green Holidays

<https://www.greenamerica.org/magazine/go-green-holidays>

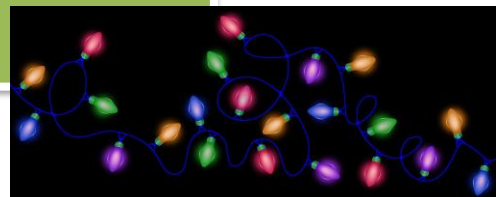
The winter holiday season is upon us yet again, and while plans for travel and gatherings are still being impacted by the ongoing pandemic, the annual tradition of gift-giving and decorating is sure to continue for many. But with those gifts and decorations come potential waste in the form of higher energy usage, increased materials use for wrapping and mailing, and disposable decorations. Here are a few suggestions for ways to enjoy a lower-waste holiday season this year (also see Fitchburg's [holiday-specific recycling guide](#)):



Christmas Trees: Real trees support carbon-sequestering tree farms and are ultimately biodegrade, while every year you reuse an artificial tree reduces its overall environmental footprint. Whatever your choice, you can find ways to minimize the impact.

[nytimes.com/2018/11/26/business/energy-environment/fake-christmas-tree-vs-real-tree.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/26/business/energy-environment/fake-christmas-tree-vs-real-tree.html)

Holiday Lights: LED bulbs use less energy than traditional bulb types, and over the lifetime of the string these lights can save you money as well.



Gifts: Aside from travel, gift-giving is usually the most resource-intensive thing we do around the holidays. Some ways you can cut down on that impact include:

- Re-gift things you know somebody else will love but you may no longer need, rather than buying something new
- Wrap gifts in reusable or recyclable bags or wrapping paper (see [tips here](#) on which gift wrap can be recycled)
- Give experiences instead of gifts
- Buy local and look into whether a seller is taking steps to minimize their own environmental impact

## Ten Years for Green Tier Legacy Communities

<https://daneclimateaction.org/initiatives/Climate-Champions-2020>

This year marks ten years since the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources launched the Green Tier Legacy Communities (GTLC) program, a collaborative networking and resource-sharing project to bring together communities focused on sustainability improvements around Wisconsin. Since 2010, the network has grown to 28 member communities representing over a million residents around the state. The impacts of the GTLC program have been extensive, as members have led the state and influenced each other in joining numerous climate-focused organizations, implementing water- and energy-savings projects, creating sustainability plans, and signing emissions-reductions commitments.

Since 2010, the City of Fitchburg has constructed a LEED Gold-certified Library, installed 485 kilowatts of solar photovoltaic capacity on municipal building roofs to offset ~10% of the city's electricity use, begun energy benchmarking and annual reporting, produced a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to guide the improvement of non-vehicular infrastructure, created a Clean Energy Resolution, sharply decreased water runoff and pollution through various city and community efforts, and continued to act as a leader among Wisconsin's sustainability-focused communities.

## Fitchburg Recycles

<https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/146/Refuse-Recycling>



Fitchburg has been a recycling leader in Wisconsin for nearly 40 years, and the work to keep setting the pace for the state continues. The City has a [recycling guide](#) available online and at City Hall, a comprehensive single-stream recycling pickup program through our waste-hauler contract, and a recycling drop-off site for residents that accepts yard waste, cardboard, scrap metal, block polystyrene, used motor oil and filters, and invasive plants.

And now, thanks to the hard work of the Resource Conservation Commission and FACTv, a [new video](#) provides guidance on how to appropriately dispose of materials at Fitchburg's recycling drop-off site. If you have any questions about waste and recycling in Fitchburg, be sure to familiarize yourself with these resources, or reach out to City staff if you still need further information!

## New Cabinet Role for Climate Action Announced

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biden-names-john-kerry-climate-envoy/>

With little over 6 weeks until the next President is sworn into office, President-Elect Joe Biden has been slowly rolling out announcements for various senior-level officials he plans to include in his administration. In late November, excitement grew in the environmental community as

John Kerry was announced for a newly created position: Special Presidential Envoy on Climate Change.

Serving within the State Department in this new role, the former Secretary of State stands to become the highest-ranking individual in United States history with a role specifically focused on climate, and he may not be alone: pressure has grown on the incoming President to also name a domestic climate policy coordinator, which would represent a seismic shift in White House attention devoted to climate science and our response to increasing global climate weirdness. Any such positions will require confirmation by the Senate, making this a good time to [reach out to your state's Senators](#) to express the importance of having senior officials in the White House focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## Upcoming Events/Deadlines

### WI Salt Week

*Tune in from 12:30-1pm daily as area experts dive into #TheTrueCostOfSalt on our drinking water, pets, freshwater ecosystems, and more. All WI Salt Awareness Week talks will be livestreamed on YouTube.*

**January 11-15**

<https://www.wisaltwise.com/Take-Action/Salt-Awareness-Week>

### Free Native Plants for School and Community Projects

*Know of groups looking to start or add to an existing native plant garden or rain garden? Plant Dane is accepting applications for their Free Native Plants for School and Community Projects Program (spring cycle). Plants for the spring cycle are purchased by community members and donated through the Plant Dane native plant program.*

**Applications Due February 1**

<https://ripple-effects.com/plantDane>

### Chloride Reduction Grant Programs

*The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District offers grants and rebates to incentivize projects that help advance the district's chloride reduction goals. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with the 2020 grant period coming to a close and 2021 fast approaching.*



<https://www.madsewer.org/Programs-Initiatives/Chloride-Reduction/Chloride-Grants>



### Share the News

Tell your friends to subscribe to Green Fitchburg on the city website

<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx> > Green Fitchburg

- a. Visit Fitchburg's "Notify Me®" web page:  
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx>
- b. Type your email address in the box and select "Sign In"
- c. To receive text messages enter your phone number and select "Save"
- d. Click  (to subscribe/unsubscribe to emails) and/or  (to subscribe/unsubscribe) next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe / unsubscribe (e.g. "Green Fitchburg" is the mailing list for environmentally friendly suggestions or events)

Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at [phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov](mailto:phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov) or 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

