



## **John Teipel Award for Environmental/Water/Wastewater Excellence**

### **2010 TPWA Awards Program**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>This award recognizes outstanding and meritorious achievement in the environmental field in its broadest sense. This may include, but not limited to, street sanitation, refuse collection, disposal and recycling, sewer and sewage treatment, water supply, and water treatment.</b>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Candidates must be members of TPWA and employed full-time by a Texas public agency.</b>
<b>Selection</b>	<b>The TPWA Awards Committee reviews the nominations and selects the award winner. Selection is based upon a paper or description of an operation, or design of a facility in the field, which reveals originality. The ideas developed or designed must have been put into practical use within the agency in which the candidate is employed.</b>
<b>Nomination</b>	<b>Nominations must be made by the Texas Chapter members.</b>
<b>Process</b>	<b>Original submittal should include the nomination form and documentation supporting the purpose of the award and the award's eligibility requirements. Seven copies of the submittal are required. These materials should be sent to the Texas Chapter Awards Chair (address can be found on the TPWA Website). Materials submitted in support of nomination will not be returned.</b>
<b>Deadline</b>	<b>May 1, 2010</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>The winner is presented with a plaque at the Awards Banquet during the TPWA Annual Conference.</b>





CITY OF BRYAN  
*The Good Life, Texas Style.™*

May 1, 2010

Texas Public Works Association  
Awards Committee  
300 South Texas Avenue  
Bryan, Texas 77843

RE: TPWA Awards, 2010  
John Teipel Award for Environmental/Water/Wastewater Excellence

Dear Awards Committee:

I would like to submit Mary Strauss as a candidate for the John Teipel Award for Environmental Excellence. Mary has shown an extensive amount of work and dedication to the cause and principle of environmental stewardship. Her ability to create programs that promote/preserve the environment and her activities within the community will help make a difference for years to come. I am proud to submit Mary for this award.

Sincerely,

Eric Zaragoza  
Environmental Services Manager



### ***Personal Background:***

Mary Strauss has worked for the City of Bryan since 2006 and currently serves as the city's Sustainability Programs Coordinator. Prior to the City of Bryan, Mary has worked as an educator and an environmental scientist. Mary received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies from Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in 2003.

Mary's passion for the environment began at an early age. In both high school and college Mary participated in numerous environmental causes, such as community clean-up events, wildlife preservation fundraisers, as well as starting FAU's first environmental student service organization. In 2006, Mary was married to a fellow environmentalist in a "green wedding" which was planned as environmentally friendly as possible. This landmark wedding was highlighted in a local newspaper and national publications.

In her community, Mary volunteers in several local conservation organizations. These include the Brazos Environmental Action Network (BEAN), the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN), and Keep Brazos Beautiful (KBB).

### ***Environmental Excellence at the City of Bryan:***

Mary's enthusiasm for environmental issues carried over into her first position at the City of Bryan as an Environmental Compliance Officer. In the first few months of starting this job, Mary had the initiative and opportunity to develop the City's first and only environmental education program. The Bryan Environmental Education Program, or BEE Program, was designed to educate area students on various environmental issues that have an effect on the local community. These topics include: recycling, water protection and conservation, composting, litter awareness and prevention, energy efficiency and community beautification. This would be the first of many innovative programs and ideas implemented by Mary.



After serving as a compliance officer for two years, Mary was given the opportunity to be the City of Bryan's first Sustainability Programs Coordinator. In this position, Mary is responsible for organizing the city's internal sustainability efforts and conducting outreach to community students, residents and business. In the few years she has been in this position, Mary has established the City of Bryan as a leader in environmental sustainability. A summary of her progressive initiatives are listed below:

## The City of Bryan “Green Team”

The Green Team is composed of representatives from each city department that meets on a regular basis to discuss the city’s current green initiatives and ways to expand efforts. The Green Team is responsible for creating both the city’s Sustainability Assessment and Action Plan.



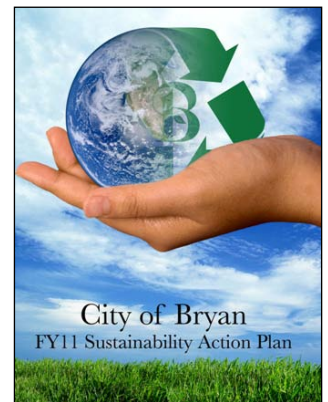
## Sustainability Assessment

A report summarizing existing sustainability practices and new opportunities, including the following information:

- Current “green” initiatives taking place within the city
- Best management practices implemented at municipalities across the country
- Departmental recommendations of future sustainability goals
- A detailed energy audit of 15 city buildings

## Sustainability Action Plan

Utilizing the information gathered in the Sustainability Assessment report, the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) was created for implementation during Fiscal Year 2011. The SAP outlines, in detail, measurable sustainability goals for each city department. These goals not only highlight sustainable changes to city policy, but also ways in which the city can engage both employees and the public in a move towards sustainable living.



## Buzz’s Big Tour

Buzz’s Big Tour” is an award winning and nationally recognized 11-minute video written and produced by the City of Bryan Environmental Services Department. This DVD takes an in-depth look at each facility that is part of Bryan’s integrated waste system, including the Compost Facility, the Drive-In Recycling Center, landfill operations, Earth Day events and more. Every Bryan ISD elementary and middle school has a copy of this video in their school’s library, and supplemental teaching documents can be found on the city’s website.



### Be Green in Bryan (BGIB) TV

BGIB TV is a 4-5 minute recurring program that airs on the City's public access channel (Channel 16) bi-monthly program, Bryan Living and Learning. This show highlights what Bryan departments, businesses, and residents are doing locally to "Be Green in Bryan". Past show subjects include: "Eating Local", "The Compost Facility", "Bio-fuels", "Bryan Texas Utilities (BTU) Rebates" and "Green Wastewater".



### Social Networking

The BGIB program has both a Facebook Page and Twitter account. Utilizing these free online networking tools, BGIB is able to reach a more diverse audience. The BGIB Facebook account has approximately 450 fans, while the BGIB Twitter account has approximately 60 followers.



### Event Hosting/Tabling

The BGIB program regularly hosts (Earth Day and Green First Friday) and attends community events to educate attendees on the various environmental issues. On average, over 30 events are tabled each year, reaching thousands of community members.



### Community Workshops

The BGIB program hosts a "Green Living" series of monthly workshops each semester. Workshop presenters are experts from the community who volunteer their time. Each workshop is held at the Bryan Library and averages between 40 and 60 participants.



### Volunteer Program

The City of Bryan offers a Be Green in Bryan volunteer training in which community members can become certified sustainability volunteers. After receiving a basic knowledge of current environmental issues and the city's environmental services, volunteers are able to assist in event tabling, school activities and community presentations.

### Green Team Training

The City of Bryan offers "Green Team" training to local businesses, organizations and communities of faith in an effort to engage the public in becoming more sustainable. Topics covered in the training include ways to conserve energy and water, reduce waste and take advantage of environmental rebates and tax incentives.

### ***Recognition:***

Mary's commitment to environmental causes both at the City and in the community has been recognized at many levels:



- **Keepers of the Kingdom Award** – Keep Brazos Beautiful, 2006.
- **Conservation Award** - Brazos Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, 2007.
- **Media Fanfare Award** – Keep Brazos Beautiful, 2008.
- **Solid Waste Planning Award** – Brazos Valley Council of Governments, 2009.

### ***Summary:***

In summary, Mary has shown an extensive amount of work and dedication to the cause and principle of environmental stewardship. Her ability to create programs that promote/preserve the environment and her activities within the community will help make a difference for years to come. Mary's passion for the environment doesn't just end at five o'clock, but is carried on into her daily activities at home and with her family. Being a sustainability coordinator is not just a job description, it's a way of life. Therefore, I believe Mary Strauss is worthy of the TPWA John Tiepel Award for Environmental Excellence.



# Southeast Texas Branch

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May 1, 2010

Ms. Linda Grubbs Huff, P.E.  
Director of Public Works  
City of Bryan  
P.O. Box 1000  
Bryan, Texas 77805-1000

Re: Nomination of Ms. Mary Strauss  
John Teipel Award for Environmental Excellence  
American Public Works Association, Texas Chapter  
2010 Awards Program

Dear TPWA Awards Committee,

The Southeast Texas Branch is proud to recommend Ms. Mary Strauss for the John Teipel Award for Environmental Excellence. Her work related to the City of Bryan's Sustainability Program and the outcome of her efforts deserves recognition. The program was a grass roots effort that has been embraced and is now an institutionalized effort within the City of Bryan. Please recognize Ms. Strauss for consideration of the John Teipel Award for 2010.

Sincerely,

*Katherine A. Mears*

Katherine A. Mears, P.E.  
2010 President  
Texas Chapter Southeast Branch  
American Public Works Association