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Camden County makes progress on sustainability

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Chris LaChall/Courier-Post

Written by William Sokolic Courier-Post

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Camden captured more than 3.1 million gallons of storm water each year between 2011 and 2013, thanks to the planting of 992 trees, placement of 120 rain barrels and more than two dozen green infrastructure projects.

That kept 3.1 million gallons of polluted water from entering the storm sewer system and eventually reaching the Delaware and Cooper rivers and smaller streams.

Such success helped earn the city silver [certification](#) from Sustainable Jersey, one of 22 municipalities in the state with such a designation.

“We created an environment where we all flourish,” Mayor Dana L. Redd said last month during the 2nd Annual Camden SMART Initiative at the Adventure Aquarium. SMART stands for Storm Water Management and [Resource](#) Training.



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Gene Muller, Founder and General Manager of Flying Fish Brewing Company, stands by an energy saving LED light display that is surrounded by reclaimed wood in the tasting room of Flying Fish Brewing Company in Somerdale. Sustainability is part of Muller's business plan. 02.05. / Chris LaChall/Courier-Post

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For more on sustainability, visit these sites:

- City of Camden
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The city is one of 12 municipalities in Camden County certified by the state, and one of four to earn silver. (The others achieved bronze status.)

Of the 37 municipalities in the county, 35 have registered with Sustainable Jersey, including those certified. The others are working towards certification.

Launched in 2009, Sustainable Jersey supports community efforts to reduce waste; cut greenhouse gas emissions; and improve the environment with tools, training and financial incentives to pursue sustainability programs.

"We are the biggest such program in the country and a model for others to accomplish," said Randy Solomon, co-director of Sustainable Jersey.

Certification, which lasts three years, focuses on measuring progress.

"It's a way we reward municipalities; many come back the next year," Solomon added. "It doesn't mean they solved all their problems because they're certified."

A lot of actions save money and in a lot of cases, municipalities can quantify it, for example, with savings on energy bills.

"We describe costs and benefits as a generality," Solomon explained. "We do not yet have a way to tabulate all the impact of what municipalities have done."

"When we do the gold level, we'll incorporate the ability to quantify the impact."

Action plan

Camden also serves as a model for other cities in New Jersey and around the country for its embrace of sustainability, said Judith Enck, regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a keynote speaker at the SMART Initiative.

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