

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Sept. 19, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- [Cox Communications](#) and [The Trust for Public Land](#) announced that Susan Epstein has been selected as Santa Barbara's 2013 Cox Conserves Hero. An event celebrating the finalists and announcing the winner was held at Fairview Gardens, a previous grant recipient of the Cox Conserves Heroes program.

Cox Conserves Heroes honors volunteers who are creating, preserving or enhancing outdoor spaces. The finalists were chosen by a judging panel of local environmental leaders, and the winner was selected through online public voting.

First Place Winner:As Susan Epstein's nonprofit of choice, the [Center for Sustainability](#) at Santa Barbara City College will receive \$5,000

, promotion through on-air public service announcements and 20 volunteer hours donated by Cox employees. Epstein is an advocate for conservation practices that have led to greener and healthier environments for thousands of children in the Goleta Valley. As a parent and Goleta School Board member, Epstein led efforts to eliminate pesticides in 120 acres of playing fields used by the district's 4,000 students and community groups. The district's use of alternative green practices has become a model for other county agencies and districts.

Second Place Winner:Vera Bensen's nonprofit of choice, [Carpinteria Valley Association](#) , will receive \$2,500

.Bensen was one of the major players in the preservation and purchase of the Carpinteria Bluffs. The property was slated for development until the community organized to purchase the property and keep it as open space. The 52 acres of prime oceanfront property has served the

Written by Australian Business

community for more than a decade. It has been a haven for walking and biking, as well as organized sports such as soccer and softball.

Third Place Winner: Dale Swanson's nonprofit of choice, [PARC \(Parks and Recreation Community Foundation\)](#), will receive \$1,000. In

2005, Swanson called the city of Santa Barbara

looking for ways for his church to give back to the community, which led to the Annual City Clean-Up. Swanson has been a driving force behind this event, which now draws more than 500 volunteers who plant trees, remove graffiti and pick up litter.

Santa Barbara's 2012 Cox Conserves Hero was Martin Camp, whose nonprofit of choice was Fairview Gardens.

The Cox Conserves Heroes program was created in 2008 through a partnership between [The Trust for Public Land](#) and [Cox Enterprises](#)

, the parent company of Cox Communications, to honor everyday volunteers. The program also runs in Arizona

, Atlanta, Louisiana

, Orange County (Calif.), San Diego

, San Francisco and Virginia

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has been donated to local nonprofits and more than 100 volunteers have been honored through the Cox Conserves Heroes program.

For more information, visit [CoxConservesHeroes.com](#) or find us on [Facebook](#).

Social Media: #CoxConservesHeroes and #CoxConservesHero

About Cox Conserves Launched in 2007 by Chairman [Jim Kennedy](#), Cox Conserves is Cox Enterprises' national sustainability program. Cox Conserves focuses on reducing waste and energy consumption, as well as conserving water. The program engages each of the company's major subsidiaries (Cox Communications, Manheim, Cox Media Group and AutoTrader.com) and encourages Cox Enterprises' 50,000 employees and their families to engage in eco-friendly practices.

About Cox Communications Cox Communications is a broadband communications and entertainment company, providing advanced digital video, Internet and telephone services over its own nationwide IP network. The third-largest U.S. cable TV company, Cox serves approximately 6 million residences and businesses. Cox Business is a facilities-based provider of voice, video and data solutions for commercial customers, and Cox Media is a full-service provider of national and local cable spot and new media advertising.

Cox is known for its pioneering efforts in cable telephone and commercial services, industry-leading customer care and its outstanding workplaces. For seven years, Cox has been recognized as the top operator for women by Women in Cable Telecommunications; Cox has ranked among DiversityInc's Top 50 Companies for Diversity eight times, including the last seven years. More information about Cox Communications, a wholly owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises, is available at www.cox.com and www.coxmedia.com.

About The Trust for Public Land Founded in 1972, The Trust for Public Land is the leading nonprofit working to conserve land for people. Operating from more than 30 offices nationwide, The Trust for Public Land has protected more than three million acres from the inner city to the wilderness and helped generate more than \$34 billion in public funds for conservation. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. Learn more at tpl.org

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