

Conover company recognized for green efforts

CONOVER — State environmental officials used a ceremony at Research Triangle Park to honor companies in Catawba and Rowan counties for their environmental stewardship efforts.

GKN Sinter Metals in Conover and Freightliner-Cleveland in Cleveland became new members of the state's Environmental Stewardship Initiative, or ESI.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which manages the ESI program, organized the recent ceremony at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences campus in Research Triangle Park.

The program honors manufacturers, agribusinesses; local, state and federal govern-

ment agencies; and schools and universities that make a formal commitment to reduce their impacts on the environment.

GKN Sinter Metals became a Rising Steward, the second highest level of achievement in the three-level initiative. Rising Stewards commit to exceeding compliance requirements, set measurable environmental performance goals and show continuous improvement. Freightliner-Cleveland became a new Partner.

Partners are the initiative's first level of environmental achievement. Partners commit to continuous environmental improvement.

Companies and others achieving the highest level of environmental recognition

in the ESI program are known as Stewards. The ESI program has 123 member sites in 53 North Carolina counties. Including this year's new members, North Carolina boasts 14 Stewards, 14 Rising Stewards and 95 Partner sites.

ESI members' efforts have helped reduce environmental impacts and saved money. From 2004-09, ESI members saved more than 2.5 billion gallons of water, 208 million British thermal units of energy, 211 million gallons of wastewater, 352,000 tons of landfill waste, 1,150 tons of air emissions and 759 tons of hazardous waste. Based on environmental reductions, total financial savings at the facilities has been more than \$33 million.