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**Winners Announced for the 2018 ADEQ Environmental Awards**

**NORTH LITTLE ROCK**—This morning, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) announced the winners of the 2018 Environmental Awards at the State Capitol. Director Becky Keogh announced the winners who were presented their award by Governor Asa Hutchinson. Finalists for each of the awards as well as state and local officials were in attendance.

***ADEQ Director Becky Keogh:***

“Today we celebrate the successes and accomplishments of our partners advancing STEM education, environmental and energy technologies, and sustainable economic development for the State of Arkansas. These projects represent Arkansas’s commitment to forward-thinking initiatives to preserve and protect our natural resources.”

Delta Plastics was chosen as the winner of the fourteenth annual Arkansas Environmental Stewardship (ENVY) Award. Delta Plastics has grown over the past twenty years from a one-facility operation in Stuttgart to become the largest manufacturer of polytube in the world—a multinational organization with eight locations across the United States and South America. To date, the company has diverted more than one-billion pounds of waste plastic from landfills and is the largest recycler of heavily soiled plastic in Arkansas, and one of the largest in the world. In 2014 Delta Plastics established the Delta Plastics H2O Initiative to reduce irrigation water usage across the Mississippi Delta by twenty percent before 2020. To accomplish this, Delta Plastics developed software technology, provided to farmers free of charge, which helps farmers maximize the efficiency of their polytube irrigation systems and reduce water consumption.

The third annual Arkansas Environmental Technology (TECHe) Award was presented to the City of Fayetteville. The HyDOZ (hyper-concentrated dissolved ozone) Disinfection System is a proprietary technology for ozonating water and wastewater that was developed by BlueInGreen, an Arkansas company in Northwest Arkansas. Looking for a replacement for the aged ultraviolet disinfection system at the Paul R. Noland Water Resource Recovery Facility, the City of Fayetteville allowed a large-scale pilot of the HyDOZ system. The pilot study was a success, and in June 2017 the City of Fayetteville celebrated the successful installation and operation of a full-scale HyDOZ Disinfection System. The HyDOZ Disinfection System is the first of its kind to be installed in a wastewater treatment facility.

Arkansas Rural Internet Service (ARIS) was named the recipient of the second Energy Excellence (E<sup>2</sup>) Award. ARIS is the first partnership in the United States between an electric company, Ouachita Electric Cooperative (OECC), and a local telephone and internet provider, South Arkansas Telephone Company (SATCO). Through the collaboration, SATCO built a three-acre, 120 kilowatt solar farm, and OECC is providing its existing electric poles to run the fiber

optic cable. By 2021, ARIS expects to provide high-speed internet service to 4000 plus residents in a rural, five-county area of South Arkansas that has been largely unserved. Due to the low cost of the solar power and the avoidance of the need to trench and bury the fiber optic cable, costs to the customers are kept to a minimum.

Meghana Bollimpalli and Little Rock Central High School were the recipients of the inaugural ADEQuest Science Award. Bollimpalli's project addressed the growing global energy demand through the development of supercapacitors. In her experiment, she was able to make the design of supercapacitors more environmentally friendly through the use of waste byproducts and the use of a commercial microwave. Central High School received an award of \$500.00 to the school science program and Bollimpalli received \$500.00 to use for educational purposes.

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