

SPOTLIGHT: MEDICAL CENTER RECOGNIZED FOR REDUCING WASTE

FIGHTING MERCURY

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SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

St. Bernardine Medical Center is receiving national attention for efforts to reduce waste and eliminate mercury both at their hospital and in the community.

The center received the Partners for Change and Making Medicine Mercury Free distinctions from Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E), a nonprofit group established to improve the health care industry's environmental performance and stewardship.

"St. Bernardine Medical Center is leading the national movement for sustainable health care," said Laura Brannen, director of Hospitals for a Healthy Environment. "They are to be commended for their visionary efforts to create a healthier environment for their patients, staff and community, and for setting the example for other hospitals to follow."

Since developing and implementing an environmental action plan in 2002, the center has garnered five H2E awards.

The hospital's environmental efforts include an annual free thermometer exchange, a 10 percent reduction in infectious waste shipping, as well as cardboard, shredded-paper and cell-phone recycling.

The center also has developed a partnership with Goodwill Industries to collect and distribute used clothing, glasses, shoes and household items.



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Christine O'Dell, front row, left, Kathy Morehead, and, back row, left, Bud Rogers and Sean Ordway are part of the St. Bernardine Medical Center staff.

In 2006, St. Bernardine recycled 235 tons of paper, cardboard and plastic, up from 172 tons in 2004. The hospital's environmental services department also uses cleaning products that are environ-

mentally friendly.

Hospital officials said they hope their efforts prompted the public to think more about recycling.

"It is so important to remember that properly recycling all materi-

als helps to promote cleaner landfills and in turn, a cleaner and healthier environment," said Linda McDonald, vice president of mission services at St. Bernardine.