A Gift For Earth Day

Tuesday, 22 April 2008

Rick Pillans and the staff of Threshold Recycling Services received a cash award from the US Department of Agriculture Tuesday, as part of the agency's celebration of Earth Day. (Photo by Fred Hawley/KMXT).

{audio}images/stories/mp3/threshold_recycling_22_april.mp3{/audio}

Threshold Gets Loan, Grant To Pay For Building
Threshold Services Employs People With Disabilities

A non-profit community recycling center in Kodiak that employs disabled workers, received a big financial gift from the US Department of Agriculture this Earth Day. In all, Threshold Services is getting a little more than 389-thousand dollars to purchase its building--an old two story warehouse--and the land that it sits on. KMXT’s Casey Kelly has more.

In accepting the award from the USDA, Threshold’s Program Director Rick Pillans called his employees up to the front of the room with him for some well-deserved praise. He reminded the crowd that although recycling is the main service of Threshold, its primary mission is putting developmentally or physically disabled people to work.

(Pillans 1 :20s “…a hand. [clapping fades]”)

Chad Padgett, director of USDA’s Alaska Rural Development office in Palmer, was on hand for the ceremony. He said the money going to Threshold is part of 164-million dollars that the agency is handing out nationwide on Earth Day, for rural infrastructure projects that help the environment. It’s a bonus, he says, that the money will serve Threshold’s dual purposes.

(Padgett 1 :16s “…so much good work.”)

After the ceremony, Padgett said USDA’s Rural Development office is aware of the challenges facing small, remote communities in terms of disposing of solid waste, and he thinks the program at Threshold can serve as a model for success in other places.

(Padgett 2 :08s “…big small or otherwise.”)

About 41-thousand dollars of the award is a grant that Threshold won’t have to pay back. The rest is a low interest loan, which Pillans says will be cheaper to pay off every month than the non-profit had been paying in rent. He says the risk of buying the building is worth it.

(Pillans 2 :20s “…for people with disabilities.”)

Part of the money will also be used to make improvements to the building, which is likely to see larger loads in the coming years as people increase the amount of recycling that they do. Pillans says the more people recycle, the better program Threshold will be.

(Pillans 3 :34s “…this a successful program.”)

In all, 16 disabled workers are employed by Threshold, which partners with other non-profits and businesses in the Kodiak community.

I’m Casey Kelly.

###