

## Clackamas County business receives eco-certification, helps homeowners save on water bill

Down to Earth Irrigation, a Clackamas County business for almost 40 years has been awarded the EcoBiz Landscape Certification by the [Pollution Prevention Outreach \(P2O\) Team](#). The P2O is made up of staff from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Cities of Portland and Gresham, Clackamas and Washington Counties, Metro, Clean Water Services, and the Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC).

To become certified, Down to Earth demonstrated their knowledge and use of more than 120 different best environmental business practices in their areas of specialty. These practices relate to all of the ways their business could impact the air, water, soil, and release greenhouse gases and toxic substances. A specialty service of Down to Earth is “smart controllers,” which often cut irrigation bills by 25-30 percent and produce better watering results for yards and gardens. They also use drip irrigation and rotary nozzles to reduce water consumption on their customer’s property. According to the U. S. General Accounting Office 50% of all irrigation in the Western United States is wasted.

“Homeowners have been surprised about how much we could impact their water bills“, Phil Severson, owner of Down to Earth says. He also notes that since he often works on properties that border the Tualatin River it is important to him to make sure his work has a positive impact on the environment.

The [Eco-Logical Business Certification](#) program or “EcoBiz” is an Oregon-based program developed 14 years ago by local governments as an innovative way to partner with businesses to meet pollution prevention goals. The EcoBiz Landscape Certification Program recognizes landscape companies that reach the highest standards in minimizing their environmental impacts. It is the first comprehensive landscape certification program in the nation, since it addresses a broad spectrum of potential impacts.

To become certified a business completes the program checklist, receives recommendations, and DEQ and a local water agency carry out the certification process. This certification helps businesses lessen environmental and financial impacts and allows customers to choose to do business with landscapers and automotive shops they know are working hard to safeguard our environment.

Certified landscape firms adopt a variety of practices that reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides, reduce water, energy and waste for their customers and create healthier and more sustainable landscapes.

EcoBiz certification is also available for automotive repair, body shops, and car wash facilities.

As of June 2011, 139 automotive or fleet maintenance shops, 12 car washes, and 21 landscape firms have been certified in Oregon.

For more information about the Eco-Biz program, contact Debra Taevs at 503-336-1256 or visit [www.ecobiz.org](http://www.ecobiz.org).

The **Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC)** is the leading regional non-profit that provides practical, on-the-ground technical assistance to businesses, public agencies, and non-profits seeking to conserve resources and improve economic performance. **PPRC's** projects include lean and green for industry, environmental trainings, environmentally preferable purchasing, green business certifications, fiscal agency, and the Spray Technique Applied Research (STAR) training for painters. PPRC also provides research including development of best management practices, life-cycle analysis, toxics- and greenhouse gas (GHG)-footprinting, and free research for a specific environmental issue or question.