



2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Sustainability, Industrial Installation Award

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense has honored installations, teams, and individuals for outstanding achievements in Department of Defense (DoD) environmental programs. These accomplishments include outstanding conservation activities, innovative environmental practices, and partnerships that improve quality of life and promote efficiencies without compromising DoD's mission success. The 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2023 (Fiscal Years [FY] 2022-2023). A diverse panel of 47 judges with relevant expertise representing Federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector evaluated all nominees to select 1 winner for each of the 9 categories. These nine categories cover six subject areas including natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, cultural resources management, and environmental excellence in weapon systems acquisition.

About the Sustainability, Industrial Installation Award

The Sustainability, Industrial Installation award recognizes efforts to prevent or eliminate pollution at the source, including practices that increase efficiency and sustainability in the use of raw materials, energy, water, or other resources. The sustainability award also recognizes energy-efficiency and renewable energy practices, greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts, toxic and hazardous chemical reduction efforts, the procurement of sustainable goods and services, waste diversion, electronic stewardship, and efforts to plan for adaptation and resilience. Sustainable practices ensure that DoD protects valuable resources critical to mission success. The DoD Components may nominate any DoD industrial installation that has a primary mission of manufacturing, maintaining, rehabilitating, or storing military equipment, such as depots, fleet readiness centers, air logistics centers, regional logistics/supply support centers, armaments plants, shipyards, and other manufacturing plants. The 2024 winner of the Sustainability, Industrial Installation award is *Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pennsylvania*.

About Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pennsylvania

Tobyhanna Army Depot (TYAD) is the region's largest industrial employer, consisting of 1,336 acres with 3,300 employees and a regional impact of \$3.3 billion. It is a recognized leader in providing world-class logistics support for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C5ISR) systems across DoD. TYAD's corporate philosophy, dedicated workforce, and electronic expertise ensure the depot is the joint C5ISR provider of choice for all branches of the armed forces and industry partners. Tobyhanna uses lean principles to efficiently carry out the mission and provide the highest quality product. Capabilities include full-spectrum logistics support for sustainment, overhaul and repair, fabrication and manufacturing, engineering design and development, systems integration, post-production software support, technology insertion, modification, foreign military sales, and global field support to joint warfighters.



The Tobyhanna Army Depot Environmental Branch Team during the adopt-a-highway event. From left to right: Paula Mesaris, Joe Mazza, Amalia Thomas, Rich Daywood.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2022-2023

- TYAD Environmental Branch manages and monitors water usage, constantly striving to achieve the Army NetZero program goals to decrease installation water consumption and strategically identify alternative water sources to offset freshwater supply use. In FY 2022 and 2023, TYAD maintained an annual consumption reduction with a 63-percent reduction in 2022 and a 66-percent reduction in 2023. Some measures contributing to the water consumption reduction are a 90-percent reuse rate through water recycling in the Industrial Operations Facility, groundwater monitoring equipment on drinking water wells, and a water utility valve maintenance trailer for more efficient and timely water valve repairs.



The water utility valve maintenance trailer used at TYAD for water supply repairs.

- To properly manage hazardous material (HM) and reduce hazardous waste (HW), TYAD upgraded its Hazardous Material Management System to a Hazardous Material Inventory and Disposal System (HMIDS). The use of HMIDS allows TYAD to track HM and HW “cradle to grave,” providing a complete audit trail for inventory, disposition, and reporting of materials and waste. The system upgrade saved TYAD \$190,500 annually without reducing installation capabilities.

- TYAD established a pollinator program and an apiary with the goal of reducing honeybee colony loss, increasing the eastern population of the monarch butterfly, and restoring or enhancing land for pollinators. The apiary’s location near a closed landfill allows for beneficial reuse of the land, which is currently unable to be used for any other purpose and contributes to plant diversity. One honeybee colony can be responsible for pollinating up to 250 million flowering plants per day, and pollinators can travel several miles from the colony, providing additional benefits to the installation’s surrounding communities.



Sean Maynard inspects for a healthy brood pattern at one of the honeybee hives at the inactive landfill apiary.

- At the beginning of FY 2022, the TYAD Environmental Branch volunteered for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Justice (EJ) Pilot Project. TYAD collaborated with team members from the EPA, Army Environmental Command, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to discuss ways to better involve the at-risk communities in remediation activities and increase EJ engagement within the community. The team developed an EJ Tools Guide and EJ Process Guide to share with other DoD sites to help improve EJ in local communities as well. TYAD expanded its EJ efforts on site by adding bilingual warning signs, connecting with local township supervisors and homeowners’ associations, and working with an EPA Community Involvement Coordinator to best leverage future correspondence with communities that have historically been disadvantaged.
- TYAD spearheaded an effort to reduce the costs of recycling wood waste from industrial processes. Transporting the wood waste to a wood recycler was costly, so TYAD purchased a wood auger compacter to reduce the size of larger wood pieces, increasing the amount able to fit in each container. By using the compacter, TYAD increased load capabilities from 2 to 3.5 tons per load to 6 to 8 tons per load, resulting in a 300-percent increase in wood recycling efficiency. This small change not only reduces recycling costs for the same amount of waste, but also decreases the carbon footprint required to transport and recycle the wood.