

2025



WISCONSIN BUSINESS FRIEND

*of the* ENVIRONMENT

*Awards*

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Wisconsin's Chamber

# WISCONSIN BUSINESS FRIEND *of the* ENVIRONMENT AWARDS

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## 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award Winners

### SUSTAINABILITY

Performance Pallet  
Masters Gallery Foods  
Ashley Furniture Industries

### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Torrance Casting  
WPS - A Health Solutions Company  
Charter Steel

### ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION

Lake and Pond Solutions  
Pepper Construction  
KHS USA

## 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Program Overview

For the 35th year, WMC is recognizing nine companies with the Wisconsin Business Friend of the Environment Award. This year's winners have been chosen for programs that demonstrate an innovative approach to environmental protection, or a level of effort beyond that which is required for regulatory compliance. These success stories reflect the continued commitment of Wisconsin industry to environmental protection.

This year's award winners feature companies of all sizes that have made significant improvements in the areas of sustainability, environmental stewardship, and environmental innovation. Offering specific examples of successful programs, these nine winners demonstrate that sound environmental practices are good for Wisconsin's environment and its economy. They serve as important examples for industry.

The 2025 Wisconsin Business Friend of the Environment Award winners were selected from 17 nominees by an independent panel of judges representing industry, the Department of Natural Resources, an environmental nonprofit, an environmental attorney, and an environmental consultant.

Honoring Leadership in Sustainability,  
Environmental Stewardship and Environmental Innovation

# PERFORMANCE PALLET



## ABOUT PERFORMANCE PALLET

Performance Pallet, a family-owned company based in Seymour, Wisconsin, has been serving customers since 1981. They specialize in wood packaging, recycling, and transportation services, producing more than 3 million new and reconditioned pallets, skids, and crates each year.

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Performance Pallet recycles 1.3 million pallets and 3.35 million pounds of additional materials each year, reducing 20 million tons of CO2 emissions and saving the equivalent of over 413,000 trees.

In 2024, Performance Pallet partnered with Agropur to advance their shared sustainability goals. By collecting and recycling cardboard and wood scrap at Agropur's Wisconsin facilities, the initiative diverted 750 tons of material from landfills, reclaimed nearly 20,000 cubic yards of recyclable waste, and saved more than 4,400 trees in a single year.

This collaboration not only reduced Agropur's environmental impact but also cut 1,591 metric tons of CO2 emissions in 2024 alone.

For their demonstration of leadership and innovative recycling and repurposing methods, Performance Pallet is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for sustainability.

**Seymour, WI**

### Established

1981

### Size

250 Employees Company-wide  
220 Wisconsin Employees

### Website

[performance-corp.com](http://performance-corp.com)

### For more information about sustainability efforts, please contact:

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# MASTERS GALLERY FOODS



## ABOUT MASTERS GALLERY FOODS

Masters Gallery Foods, headquartered in Plymouth, Wisconsin, is a leading provider of premium private-label and branded cheese products. Founded in 1974, the company has grown into a trusted supplier for retail, food service, and industrial markets nationwide. Known for its high-quality products and strong industry partnerships, Masters Gallery Foods continues to expand its operations while maintaining a focus on innovation.

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Masters Gallery Foods has built a comprehensive sustainability program that has gained recognition for its impact. In 2024, the company achieved Green Masters status with the Sustainable Business Council, highlighted by an 83% landfill diversion rate across its Plymouth and Oostburg facilities. Waste management has become a central focus of their environmental efforts.

Their recycling program, launched in 2012 by employees passionate about reducing waste, has grown into a fully integrated part of operations. Dedicated recycling coordinators now oversee sorting on every shift, ensuring materials are handled efficiently. The company's employee-led Green Team has also expanded efforts to include inedible food waste, which is processed at a local anaerobic biodigester and converted into renewable natural gas.

Masters Gallery Foods is working toward the goal of becoming a zero-waste facility by continuing to improve recycling systems and explore innovative waste-to-energy solutions.

For their commitment to reducing waste and innovative recycling methods, Masters Gallery Foods is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for sustainability.

**Plymouth, WI**

**Established**  
1974

**Size**  
1,200 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[mastersgalleryfoods.com](https://mastersgalleryfoods.com)

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# ASHLEY FURNITURE INDUSTRIES



## ABOUT ASHLEY FURNITURE INDUSTRIES

Ashley Furniture Industries is a furniture manufacturer located in Arcadia, Wisconsin. Ashley's operations started in Arcadia in 1970 and have since expanded throughout the United States, as well as internationally. Ashley is now the world's largest furniture manufacturer and largest furniture manufacturer in the United States, employing over 35,000 team members globally.

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Ashley Furniture has prioritized recycling and waste management by developing a company-wide recycling tracking program, first launched in 2019 across U.S. manufacturing facilities and later expanded to distribution centers in 2022. By closely tracking materials, the company has lessened its environmental impact while creating greater efficiency in operations.

A major part of Ashley's sustainability strategy comes from its use of engineered wood and repurposing product materials. In 2024 alone, Wisconsin facilities recycled 68.4 million pounds of wood byproducts, contributing to a company-wide total of more than 153 million pounds. These byproducts are repurposed for animal bedding, boiler fuel, and compost additives. Similarly, recycled foam (totaling 22.7 million pounds) has been transformed into carpet padding, pillows, and cushion stuffing.

Ashley's recycling initiatives extend to metals, plastics, corrugated containers, and paper products, including 27.6 million pounds of paper recycled in 2024. Altogether, Wisconsin facilities recycled more than 76.8 million pounds of material last year, and across all sites, the company recycled over 212.8 million pounds. These efforts not only reduce landfill waste but also create valuable products for reuse.

For their effective recycling tracking program and creative repurpose of byproducts, Ashley Furniture is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for sustainability.



**Arcadia, WI**

**Established**  
1970

**Size**  
35,000 Employees Company-wide  
3,500 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[ashleyfurniture.com](http://ashleyfurniture.com)

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# TORRANCE CASTING



## ABOUT TORRANCE CASTING

Founded in 1876 and based in La Crosse, Wisconsin, Torrance Casting is a faith-based, family-owned iron casting manufacturer dedicated to integrity, community partnership, and continuous improvement. Their iron foundry combines cutting-edge software and inspection systems to ensure every casting meets precise dimensional, metallurgical, and performance requirements.

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Torrance Casting's commitment to sustainability is reflected in long-term investments that reduce waste, conserve resources, and ensure the health of both the business and its surrounding community.

A central component of Torrance Casting's stewardship is its investment in renewable energy. In 2020, the company installed a 416.8 kWdc solar array at its La Crosse facility, which has generated over 2,473 MWh of clean electricity and offsets roughly 440 metric tons of CO2 emissions annually. This commitment to solar power highlights the company's dedication to reducing its carbon footprint while advancing long-term operational efficiency.

Equally impactful is Torrance Casting's Beneficial Reuse Program, launched in 2016, which repurposes expelled foundry sand for road base and infrastructure projects. By redirecting over 1,000 tons of sand each year from landfills, the program delivers significant cost savings while conserving raw materials and supporting local development.

For their embrace of innovation and sustainability while serving as a good neighbor in their community, Torrance Casting is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for stewardship.



La Crosse, WI

**Established**  
1876

**Size**  
60 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[torrancecasting.com](http://torrancecasting.com)

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# WPS - A HEALTH SOLUTIONS COMPANY



### ABOUT WPS

WPS, a health solutions company, is an independent, not-for-profit, local partner based in Madison, Wisconsin. They have provided health insurance and benefit plan administration to millions of private and government members for almost 80 years. A recent focus has been a commitment to environmental responsibility and further contributing to community well-being.

### 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

WPS – A health solutions company – recently completed a sustainability-focused renovation project that cut its real estate footprint by 50%. A major aspect of the project was the reuse of 90% of existing furniture, along with repurposed glass partition walls and office fronts from other WPS locations.

The company also retained and reintegrated key building materials and systems such as HVAC units, water systems, lighting, doors, and security equipment. This approach maximized the value of existing infrastructure and reduced environmental impact, while the new facility's design emphasized controllable systems for improved comfort and energy savings.

Beyond its own operations, WPS supported the wider community by donating hundreds of pieces of furniture and equipment to local businesses and nonprofits across Wisconsin. The company also partnered with local police and fire departments, offering its vacant facilities for training exercises.

For their efforts to reuse furniture and building materials, along with their dedication to further serving the community, WPS is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for stewardship.



**Madison, WI**

**Established**  
1946

**Size**  
1,671 Employees Company-wide  
875 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[wpshealthsolutions.com](http://wpshealthsolutions.com)

**For more information about sustainability efforts, please contact:**

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## CHARTER STEEL



### ABOUT CHARTER STEEL

Charter Steel is an American supplier of special bar quality steel (SBQ) products to customers around the world. Charter Steel is a leading producer of cold heading quality steels and the largest coil processor in North America. The company produces products containing typically 90% or greater recycled materials, leveraging Electric Arc Furnace melt technology coupled with expert rolling capabilities at their Saukville, Wisconsin location.

### 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Charter Steel has advanced its sustainability efforts by installing the state's largest behind-the-meter solar system. Officially energized in June 2024, the system generates about 30 million kWh annually and reduces carbon emissions by 13,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e, earning recognition from the U.S. Department of Energy with the 2025 Better Project Award.

The project also emphasized community integration, with new berms, trees, and landscaping to ensure the solar field blends naturally with its surroundings. After nearly a year of operation, the system has already produced over 27,000 MWh and avoided 11,640 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Beyond energy savings, the initiative has strengthened employee engagement and reinforced Charter Steel's culture of innovation and continuous improvement. The company plans to expand community outreach through educational tours and partnerships with local schools.

For their conscious efforts of community integration and their record setting solar system, Charter Steel is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for stewardship.



**Saukville, WI**

**Established**  
1978

**Size**  
1,400 Employees Company-wide  
700 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[chartersteel.com](http://chartersteel.com)

**For more information about sustainability efforts, please contact:**

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# LAKE AND POND SOLUTIONS



## ABOUT LAKE AND POND SOLUTIONS

Lake and Pond Solutions is a professional lake and pond management company started in 2001 dedicated to improving and maintaining the health, beauty, and balance of aquatic environments. They offer customized services including weed and algae control, aeration, fountain installation, and water quality testing to ensure long-term sustainability. With a focus on science-based practices and environmental stewardship, Lake and Pond Solutions help clients achieve cleaner and healthier waters.



Elkhorn, WI

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

In 2022, Lake and Pond Solutions installed two of the first three Oxygen Saturation Technology (OST™) units in the world in Wisconsin ponds. Oxygen Saturation Technology (OST™) by Clarity Resource Group is an advanced water quality management system designed to deliver high levels of oxygen directly to the bottom of lakes and ponds. OST avoids bubbles and unnatural mixing, allowing water bodies to naturally stratify while oxygen is precisely placed over the sediments. This process uses a patented submersible structure that circulates bottom waters, dissolves pure oxygen generated onshore, and redistributes oxygen-rich water along the lakebed.

One of Lake and Pond Solutions' two OST units was designed to enhance a trout habitat, and the other was implemented to improve overall water quality in an aging stormwater pond.

The trout project in Walworth County increased bottom dissolved oxygen levels from less than 0.5 ppm to 10 ppm within six days, maintaining optimal trout habitat conditions for three years with no fish loss.

The stormwater pond project in Racine County showed a 41% reduction in soft sediment, a 76% decrease in Total Phosphorus, and a 23% decrease in Total Nitrogen within 22 months.

For their innovative use of Oxygen Saturation Technology (OST™), Lake and Pond Solutions is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for innovation.

**Established**  
2001

**Size**  
18 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[lakeandpondsolutions.com](http://lakeandpondsolutions.com)

**For more information about sustainability efforts, please contact:**

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# PEPPER CONSTRUCTION



## ABOUT PEPPER CONSTRUCTION

Founded in 1927, Pepper Construction is a leading general contracting and construction management firm recognized for its innovation and commitment to sustainable building practices. With a diverse portfolio spanning healthcare, education, commercial, and industrial projects, the company delivers high-quality solutions tailored to each client's vision and needs. Pepper Construction recognizes the built world's role in both social well-being and environmental impact and seeks to advance industry standards.

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Pepper Construction is leading transformative projects across Wisconsin that blend innovation, sustainability, and community impact. In Racine, the Lincoln King Community Center & Clinic is designed as a LEED Platinum model of sustainable development. It incorporates geothermal systems, solar energy, water reuse, and low-carbon materials to create a net-zero energy hub for education and wellness.

In Williams Bay, the Women's Leadership Center is being built with a vision for global impact, using environmentally conscious methods like tree repurposing, glulam timber, and CarbonCure™ concrete technology, while pursuing LEED Gold certification.

Additionally, the Pritzker Military Archives Center in Somers preserves history while protecting the environment, with less than 7% of its 3,000-acre site developed and the rest dedicated to green space, trails, wetlands, and solar-powered infrastructure.

For pushing boundaries in design and innovative building technologies, Pepper Construction is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for innovation.



**Milwaukee, WI**

**Established**  
1927

**Size**  
1,146 Employees Company-wide  
52 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[pepperconstruction.com](http://pepperconstruction.com)

**For more information about sustainability efforts, please contact:**

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# KHS USA



## ABOUT KHS USA

KHS is one of the world's leading providers of innovative filling and packaging solutions for the beverage, food, and non-food industries. With a strong U.S. presence in Waukesha, Wisconsin, KHS USA engineers and machinists collaborate on American-made, engineered-to-order projects that advance filling technologies. Guided by its motto "your reliable partner," KHS combines global expertise with local innovation to deliver sustainable, efficient, and customer-focused solutions.

## 2025 BUSINESS FRIEND OF THE ENVIRONMENT

KHS USA has developed Nature MultiPack, a breakthrough in sustainable packaging that focuses on minimizing packaging while maintaining durability for logistics and retail. By securing cans and PET bottles with just a few precise adhesive dots, this innovative solution reduces packaging material by up to 85% and lowers the carbon footprint by as much as 84% compared to conventional shrink film packs. The system is fully recyclable, energy-efficient, and eliminates the need for traditional shrink tunnels, cutting energy consumption by up to 67%.

Several international beverage brands have successfully adopted Nature MultiPack technology, demonstrating its impact. Estrella Galicia eliminated all external packaging for their cans, reducing their carbon footprint by 41%, while VILSA-BRUNNEN's adoption of the "NIX-PACK" can cut plastic usage by 50 tons annually. Carlsberg's "Snap Pack" version replaced traditional six-packs with this innovative solution, saving 1,200 tons of plastic each year.

KHS's Wisconsin team plays a central role in advancing these innovations, combining local engineering expertise with global sustainability goals. Nature MultiPack exemplifies KHS USA's commitment to environmentally conscious and customer-driven solutions.

For their leadership in packaging innovation, KHS USA is receiving the 2025 Business Friend of the Environment Award for innovation.



**Waukesha, WI**

**Established**  
1972

**Size**  
5,600+ Employees Company-wide  
215 Wisconsin Employees

**Website**  
[khs.com/en/](https://khs.com/en/)

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## Judges

**LISA ASHENBRENNER-HUNT**

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