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## Top 2 environmentally friendly businesses named

The Bellingham Herald

Community Food Co-op and RE Store were top winners in a November poll on people's favorite Whatcom County businesses that are pursuing environmentally friendly practices, with help from Whatcom Watershed's Business Pledge Program.

Hundreds of community members cast ballots in support of five of their favorite businesses involved in the pledge program, which began in 1998 to help businesses curb pollution. There are now more than 500 active pledge businesses in the county.

The Food Co-op bundles and recycles 300 pounds of cardboard daily and donates 100 pounds of compost to local farmers and gardeners.

"We are very fortunate that the culture created by staff and members constantly encourages us to strive to improve our practices," said grocery manager Larry Loomis.

RE Store, which came in one vote shy of tying for first place with the Co-op, learned through the pledge program that trace amounts of mercury are found in fluorescent light bulbs. RE Store accepts donations of bulbs that still work. Unsold bulbs are recycled, including the mercury. Also, RE Sources, the nonprofit parent organization to RE Store, set up a computer recycling service for proper disposal of computer hardware. RE Store extended the service to the community.

"There was a clear environmental need for such a service in Whatcom County, but no one was providing it," said Dean Fearing, RE Store manager.

The following businesses and groups received honorable mention in the poll for receiving five or more votes: Whatcom Humane Society, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Sustainable Connections, Les Schwab Tire Centers, A-1 Builders Inc., Cost Cutter, Everybody's Store, Terra Organica, The Bellingham Herald, Quicksilver Photo Lab and Gallery, Northwest Recycling Inc., Stockton's Paint, Kulshan Cycles, Jody Bergsma Galleries, Pepper Sisters, Old Town Cafe, Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro, and The Bagelry.

Free copies of the Fourth Corner Connector were provided to 15 randomly selected voters. The Connector is a community-based coupon book with more than \$2,500 worth of coupons good at local businesses that participate in the pledge program. For details on the program, see [www.watershedpledge.org](http://www.watershedpledge.org).