

Building A Better NJ

Ralph LaRossa



Ralph LaRossa, winner of PlanSmart NJ's C. McKim Norton Community Development Award

Ralph LaRossa's vision for the future is simple. "We should leave behind a better New Jersey for the generations that will come after us," says the President and COO of PSE&G and the father of two young New Jerseyans.

"We need a stronger middle class with good paying jobs, we need to revitalize our cities, and we need to do everything we can to combat global warming," says the utility chief. "This means more action and less talk."

A can-do attitude is a hallmark of LaRossa, who is being honored with PlanSmart NJ's C. McKim Norton Community Development Award, for taking a leadership role in urban redevelopment, infrastructure investment, and New Jersey's drive to reduce greenhouse gases.

"PSE&G is committed to the Garden State's urban centers and we are proud to offer customer service centers in vital cities such as Newark," said LaRossa. Over the years, PSE&G has used its extensive urban presence to target its civic and economic development activities to promote a brighter future for New Jersey's cities and their residents. The company has a well-established supplier diversity program with minority- and women-owned firms, for example. This program not only helps the company meet its own business needs, but it also promotes job creation and stimulates the local economy.

The Garden State has also benefited from hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure improvements that have helped to make PSE&G's strong utility network even stronger.

Climate change is another challenge that has been embraced by PSE&G's leadership. Last spring, the utility proposed a \$100 million initiative to spur investment in solar power. PSE&G also announced it was replacing 1,300 vehicles with hybrids and making other changes in order to reduce the harmful emissions that contribute to global warming.

"Action cannot be focused solely on energy if we are to make progress in combating climate change," said LaRossa. "The fact is that transportation is New Jersey's largest source of carbon dioxide emissions. That is why we are transforming our fleet to one that is cleaner and greener —

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Honoring Ralph LaRossa (continued)

one that will allow us to make immediate gains in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.”

LaRossa was named President and Chief Operating Officer of Public Service Electric and Gas Company in October 2006 after serving as vice president for electric delivery. He joined PSE&G in 1985 as an associate engineer and advanced through a variety of management positions in the utility’s gas and electric operations. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, Marnie, and his two elementary-aged children. ■

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C. McKim Norton Community Development Award

Kim Norton was famously associated with the Regional Plan Association of NYC, but he was also a long-time PlanSmart NJ Board member, after he moved to Princeton from New York. Since 1983, PlanSmart NJ has been presenting the award in his honor to an individual or organization that has demonstrated leadership in growth management, regional planning, the environment, affordable housing, urban revitalization, or any other topic from our broad agenda. The awardees have included the following.

1983: Louis Gambaccini, NJ Commissioner of Transportation

1984: Gerald Stockman, New Jersey Senator, for the State Planning Act

1985: John Heldrich, Johnson & Johnson, for New Brunswick Tomorrow

1986: Alan Landis, developer of Tower Center and Carnegie Center

1987: Maureen Ogden, NJ Assemblywoman, for the Wetlands Protection Act

1988: Bruce Coe, NJBIA, for the SLERP Commission Report

1989: Hazel Gluck, NJ Commissioner of Transportation, for Transplan

1990: James Amon, Director, D & R Canal Commission

1991: Martin and Elizabeth Johnson, Isles, Inc.

1992: The State Planning Commission; James Gilbert, Chairman

1993: Harry Sayen, columnist and former PlanSmart NJ Chairman

1994: Somerset Alliance for the Future

1995: Ronald Berman, for redevelopment in Trenton and New Brunswick

1996: American-Re Insurance, for the BEES program

1997: Washington Township Town Center Master Plan

1998: DEVCO, for redevelopment in New Brunswick

1999: Lawrenceville Main Street Program

2000: Train Link Project, Greater Mercer TMA and corporate and municipal sponsors

2001: Willingboro Town Center Master Plan

2002: City of Trenton

2003: Peter A. Cantu, Mayor, Plainsboro Township

2004: Anthony Coscia, Esq., for leadership on the NJ Economic Development Authority

2005: Johnson & Johnson

2006: Maher Terminals, Inc.