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When United Cooperative Services (UCS) renovated and expanded its eastern district offices at 2601 South I-35W this year, it did so in a manner that uses less energy, recycles construction waste, includes a wind turbine and a solar array to power some of the electricity for the buildings and exterior lighting, and even supports electric vehicles. That effort garnered UCS the Jerry Allen Award for Excellence in Community Improvement Award from the City of Burleson. The award was presented at the June 4 Burleson City Council meeting.

The award was named for Jerry Allen, who in May 2007 retired from city council. He was re-elected in 2011 and is currently a sitting councilmember.

The award is given in recognition of individuals, businesses, organizations or community groups that go to extraordinary lengths to improve the Burleson community through incorporating sustainable development, new urban design principles into new development, a redevelopment or neighborhood rehabilitation project which significantly improves the aesthetic beauty of Burleson, outstanding landscaping, and beautification projects that significantly contribute to the long-term beautification of Burleson. The inaugural award was presented to Allen in 2007. B&G Commercial Investments won the award in 2008 for the Renfro Square Development. No winners have been selected since 2008. The 2012 winner was selected by City staff, which included the director of neighborhood services, senior planner, and director of engineering services.

When UCS renovated and expanded its office, it was able to achieve more than 40 percent regional material use for the project and UCS used local contractors. The facility was built to achieve LEED Gold Certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), thus reducing energy costs. The building is designed to be more than 16 percent more energy efficient than a standard code compliant building with the use of high efficiency HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), high efficiency lighting in 98 percent of the building, use of occupancy sensors on all lighting, and maximized use of day lighting to offset artificial lighting. UCS reused approximately 55 percent of the existing building and site work for the project. Reusable material was removed from the original building and donated to Cleburne's Habitat for Humanity. The renovation recycled 90 percent of all construction waste. UCS worked to leave areas of the property undisturbed, using native plants and grasses.

The renovated structure uses a solar system and a wind system, which covers approximately 5 percent of the annual energy use of the building. The 10kW wind turbine is one of the largest in Johnson County.

Representing UCS at the award presentation were Ray Beavers, chief executive officer; Lynn Godfrey, chief financial officer; Marty Haught, senior vice president over communications and public relations; and Patsy Dumas, UCS board secretary and treasurer. Also part of the presentation were Jerry Allen, Laura Melton/director of engineering services, Brian Guenzel/senior planner, and Lisa Duello/director of neighborhood services.