

NWI Times – Saturday, November 8, 2014

## Shirley Heinze Land Trust honors region partners

by Lauri Harvey Keagle

LONG BEACH | In Paul Labovitz's five months as superintendent of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, one thing about the region has struck him as particularly impressive.

"I am in awe of the partnerships here," Labovitz said.

Labovitz served as keynote speaker for the fourth annual Shirley Heinze Land Trust Community Luncheon and Bringing Nature Home Awards presentation Friday at Long Beach County Club, an event aimed at honoring the partnerships Labovitz has found so striking.

The awards honored Indiana Dunes Tourism, NIPSCO and ArcelorMittal.



*ArcelorMittal employees pose Friday with their award from Shirley Heinze Land Trust at the group's annual Community Luncheon and Bringing Nature Home awards. The steel maker was honored for its environmental projects in partnership with the land conservation group.*

Indiana Dunes Tourism's award recognized a project at its Dorothy Buell Visitors Center using native plants to keep stormwater runoff and pollutants out of Dunes Creek and ultimately, Lake Michigan.

Christine Livingston, assistant director of Indiana Dunes Tourism, worked on the project to make it both biologically sound and aesthetically pleasing.

"Christine works hard to make sure something is in bloom during all native seasons," said Warren Buckler, co-chair of Friends of Shirley Heinze.

NIPSCO's award honored the utility's land acquisition, grant funding and volunteer efforts with Shirley Heinze.

"Preservation and restoration are critical to the long-term health of any community, and we're just glad to be a part of it," said Nick Meyer, public affairs manager for NIPSCO.

ArcelorMittal was recognized for land acquisition and financial support, including partnerships with Shirley Heinze for the Mighty Acorns educational programs for elementary school children.

"We recognize that we can't do it all on our own, so we turn to Kris Krouse and his staff," said Marcie Twete, manager of corporate responsibility for ArcelorMittal USA.

Valparaiso-based Shirley Heinze Land Trust was established in 1981 with the mission of protecting habitats and ecosystems in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties through acquisition, restoration and protection of environmentally significant properties. Educating the community about conservation is also a key goal of the group.



*Kris Krouse, right, executive director of Shirley Heinze Land Trust, shakes hands with Marty Balogh, associate director for the American Bar Association and former Shirley Heinze board member, at the group's annual luncheon Friday.*



*Paul Labovitz, right, superintendent of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore speaks with Allen Johnson of Ogden Dunes at the Shirley Heinze Land Trust Community Luncheon and Bringing Nature Home Awards event Friday. Labovitz was the keynote speaker.*