

Toyo awards grants to environmental groups

From staff reports

The Toyo Group Environmental Protection Fund, in conjunction with Toyo Tire North America and the Toyo Group, announced two grants of one million Japanese Yen —approximately \$8,974.25 US dollars each — to Bartow County environmental groups: the Margaret and Luke Pettit Environmental Preserve Inc. and the Keep Bartow Beautiful organization.

"Each of these local organizations and programs adds tremendous value to the Bartow community in multiple ways," said Mr. Shozo "Carlos" Kibata, president and CEO of Toyo Tire North America Inc. "Toyo views these grants as opportunities to assist very special organizations in providing Bartow County youth with important environmental education and hands-on experience to instill a respect and understanding of the environment."

The Pettit Preserve, a nonprofit organization located on a 67-acre environmental preserve in Bartow

County, provides students from the elementary level to advanced university studies with a sanctuary for environmental research. Toyo's donation will provide funds to assist in the construction of a septic system and restroom facilities, enabling the Pettit Preserve to serve more effectively its guests, visiting students and educators.

"This is the second consecutive year Toyo has supported our organization, and we are thankful for their ongoing commitment to the Pettit Preserve," states Jan Barnes, director for the Pettit Preserve. "Creating opportunities for environmental education is an important objective of the Pettit Preserve. Environmental education implants in students a reverence for their surroundings and creates the foundation for a lifetime of environmental stewardship. Toyo is generously helping further this cause with its renewed commitment."

The other grant recipient, Keep Bartow Beautiful, is an organization that strives to engage individuals in

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— Sheri Henshaw

Keep Bartow Beautiful

Bartow County to take greater responsibility for improving the community's environment. Their mission is to encourage community environmental activities and behaviors, resulting in a more beautiful Bartow County. The organization coordinates several community-wide environmental events each year.

The grant from Toyo will help Keep Bartow Beautiful promote various

water education programs and provide training for teachers for the Adopt-A-Stream workshop. Keep Bartow Beautiful is also working in conjunction with the Pettit Preserve on extensive water education programs for the county. Additionally, the nonprofit organizes regular field trips to the Preserve to educate children about the value of water preservation.

"This money provides necessary materials and equipment for our volunteers and student groups," said Sheri Henshaw, who heads Keep Bartow Beautiful. "With Toyo's help, we are making Bartow County citizens of all ages familiar with their watersheds, the problems inherent in those watersheds and what they as citizens can do through volunteer efforts to protect those resources. Increased opportunities for education lead to a better quality of life for all."

The Toyo Group is globally committed to preserving the environment and in 1992 established the

Toyo Group Environmental Protection Fund within the Osaka Community Foundation. The fund is made up of a matching gift system, whereby the company matches donations from Toyo employees. Because donors wish to see their funds applied to regionally based programs and activities, grants are provided mainly in regions in which the group has facilities.

"We view the Toyo Group Environmental Protection Fund as a reflection of the harmony that exists between the environmental concern of our employees as individual citizens, and a company directive of emphasizing care for the environment within all of our business activities," added Mr. Kibata.

Headquartered in the city of White, Toyo Tire North America Inc. is a subsidiary of Toyo Tire International Inc. Opened for production in December 2005, the local facility is Toyo's first North American tire manufacturing facility.