



Date: March 24, 2016

Contact: Lisa Wolff, Communications Manager
(207) 523-3108 or wolff@ecomaine.org

For Immediate Release:

City of South Portland's Verbena receives 2016 eco-Excellence Business Award

Awards Honor Individuals, Organizations or Businesses Who Demonstrated Commitment to Environmental Sustainability in 2015

PORTLAND, MAINE – (March 24, 2016) Verbena of South Portland has received a 2016 eco-Excellence Business Award for the café's sustainable business practices.

"We are proud to recognize Verbena for its notable commitment to environmental sustainability," ecomaine CEO Kevin Roche said. "The employees have driven important initiatives and walk the talk of the waste hierarchy every day to leave the smallest carbon footprint in their paths."

Verbena Owner Melissa Coriaty has brought a sustainable mindset to every decision since she opened her South Portland café in 2009. She has put this mindset to work with a constant focus on green design features, waste-reduction initiatives and a focus on local food.

Verbena has been recycling for four years, but took a big step toward reducing its waste by introducing composting and making all of its "to-go" containers and service ware either compostable or recyclable.

"By introducing composting, Verbena has effectively reduced its trash on a daily basis by 80%," said Jim Gailey, City Manager of the City of South Portland and Chairman of ecomaine's Board of Directors. "The cafe is one of the only establishments in the City to offer its customers clearly labeled bins for recycling and compost when they bus their dishes."

Coupled with a promotion for customers to grab a card and get a month free of home composting, Verbena is also increasing awareness in the community about composting. In addition to providing recycling and composting options on the back end, Verbena is also making sure its disposable "to go" materials are sustainable by purchasing compostable cutlery, cold cups, salad and sandwich containers, and recyclable soup containers and coffee cups.

The eco-Excellence Award winners are selected based on effectiveness, increasing awareness, community impact and ease of replication of their initiatives or programs. Other criteria include:

- Each municipality may have an award winner in both the community and business categories.

- Any person or organization may submit multiple entries; self-nomination is encouraged.
- All effort or activities in support of sustainability are eligible for award, regardless of size or scope.
- Award recipients may be individuals, organizations or businesses.
- There is no age limit.
- The nominated activity must have occurred during 2015 or be ongoing to be eligible.
- Nominees must live, work or be located in the municipality for which the award will be given; that municipality must be one of the 55 ecomaine communities.

ecomaine is the nonprofit, recycling and waste-to-energy operation that serves 25 percent of the state's population; it is owned by 20 communities and is located in Portland, Maine.

-end-