

Lower Makefield Township's Board of Supervisors and the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) have chosen Mark Bortman as the recipient of its 2020 Environmental Stewardship Award that was given at a recent Board of Supervisor's meeting held on February 17th. Given annually since 2008, the award recognizes LMT residents who have exhibited environmental excellence in the areas of pollution prevention, resource conservation, sustainability, environmental education and/or environmental leadership.

A past member of the EAC, Mark Bortman is the owner of the local solar company, Exact Solar. Over the past two years, Bortman has made it possible for the township to host five successful Styrofoam collections. He supplies not only company vans to transfer the Styrofoam to processors but also company drivers. The most recent collection, which occurred on January 9, resulted in two truck-loads of Styrofoam from residents who were eager to contribute their share after the holidays.

According to Jim Bray, an EAC member for 16 years and a former chair, "These collections have become immensely popular. Many environmentally-minded residents are thrilled to keep tons of Styrofoam out of landfills, and happy to know that new products, such as picture frames, molding and other home décor items, will be made from the Styrofoam." In past years, Bortman has also been instrumental in electronic waste collections, which EAC is considering to revive in the near future.

Bortman founded his family-owned business, Exact Solar, in 2005, after he and his family moved to Costa Rica for a year to learn more about alternative energy options. Bortman was mentored by Bruce Carey, a pioneer in the solar water heating (solar thermal) field since the 1970s. Initially specializing in installing solar water heating and pool heating, Bortman's company soon expanded to become a solar electric (photovoltaic or PV) systems installer as well.

The Stewardship Award stipulates that if the \$1000 stipend is given to a for-profit concern, then the money will be donated to one of a number of local non-profit environmental organizations. Bortman has decided to donate the \$1000 to the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN), which safeguards the health of the river and its watershed. Through DRN's efforts, the Delaware River was named the 2020 River of the Year by the national advocacy organization American Rivers.

