Western Connecticut State University was one of three winners of 2015 Green Awards announced by Morris Media Group in January 2015. According to a Morris Media Group press release, the awards recognize businesses, nonprofits and individuals that are leading the local fight to protect the environment while also creating a sustainable social and economic community.

“The awards salute those who are making a difference, and they bring awareness to their good work,” said publisher Geoffrey Morris.

Nominations were open to the public and were accepted in three categories.

1. Businesses or nonprofit organizations whose primary focus is producing or selling innovative green products, providing innovative green services, and/or promoting a green lifestyle.
2. Businesses or nonprofit organizations, though not a producer or seller of green products or services, that have significantly incorporated green practices into their culture and operations.
3. Individuals who are actively promoting and living a green lifestyle.

WCSU was selected in Category 2 for the university’s extensive investment and efforts to employ smart-building technology. Western invested more than $450,000 in the university’s largest residence hall, resulting in dramatic reduction in energy use. Other efforts included the installation of four EV charging stations, and the achievement of LEED Silver status on the newly constructed Visual and Performing Arts Center.

According to WCSU President James W. Schmotter, “This recognition delights the Western community. It’s a further testimony to the university’s commitment to environmental responsibility. Our faculty, staff and students not only advocate green practices. They implement them every day, week, month and semester.”

WCSU Interim Associate Vice President for Facilities Luigi Marcone concurred. “Western’s innovative efforts to reduce our environmental footprint have added value to our role as a community partner and a responsible neighbor. Creating an infrastructure of intelligent buildings and introducing technological solutions where human interaction had been required in the past has allowed us to continue to make improvements to our campus and reduce operating costs.”

Three independent judges sifted through the 85 nominees to determine the three category winners and Honorable Mention winners. The judges for the 2015 Green Awards represent the three counties (Fairfield, Litchfield and Westchester) that make up the geographical region of the nominees.

The 2015 Green Award ceremony was on March 12 at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield. Marcone accepted the award on behalf of the university.