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Audubon Nature Institute Recognized for Supporting Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses

Good Work Network Names Audubon Recipient of First Annual Equity Ally Award

(New Orleans, La.) - In recognition of its commitment to supporting minority- and women-owned small businesses, Audubon Nature Institute is the 2018 recipient of the first annual Equity Ally Award from Good Work Network.

Established as a non-profit in 2001, Good Work Network is a provider of business development services for small, community-based businesses that support families and sustain communities throughout a 15-parish region in Southeast Louisiana.

"We know that strong economies are inclusive economies," said Good Work Network Executive Director Hermione Malone in a letter to Audubon announcing the award.

"Organizations like Audubon Nature Institute have made an evidenced commitment of that belief through proactive engagement with women- and minority-owned firms. The fruits of that work can be seen in contract opportunities awarded and growth in business revenues."

During the June 27 meeting of the Audubon Commission, Malone presented Audubon Nature Institute with the award along with a framed landscape of downtown New Orleans featuring Audubon Aquarium of the Americas.

In 2017, Audubon's purchases from diverse suppliers totaled nearly \$4.1 million, or 13 percent. Through the first quarter of 2018, purchases total \$1.1 million, or 17 percent.

Audubon's goal is to direct 12 percent of its capital and operating budgets to diverse suppliers and to add 15 new ones annually.

"Lunch and Learn" sessions to inform local women- and minority-owned firms about opportunities at Audubon have included painters, general contractors, geotechnical and engineering services, marketing firms, catering companies, welders, electricians and landscape architects.

"Audubon Nature Institute is honored to receive the Equity Ally Award from Good Work Network," said Director of Purchasing and Zoo Safety Cecilie L. Halliwill. "Through our partnership with Good Work Network and other local and national organizations, we have been able to identify, work with and foster relationships with talented and experienced diverse suppliers."

Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman said: "Audubon is committed to doing its part to ensure that minority and women-owned businesses are successful and able to participate in an inclusive and equitable economy of diverse entrepreneurs."

Good Work Network educates, coaches and supports smaller businesses to help them improve their skills, realize their full potential and become active participants in the local economy.

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