

# PA Environment Digest

## An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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Winner 2009 [PAEE Business Partner](#) Of The Year Award

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Harrisburg, Pa

May 14, 2012

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### **Gov. Ridge To Receive Lifetime Achievement Award From PA Environmental Council**

Tom Ridge, the 43rd governor of Pennsylvania and first-ever Secretary of Homeland Security, will be honored for his achievements as a champion of the environment by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Ridge will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Western Pennsylvania [Environmental Awards Dinner and Awards Ceremony](#) on June 28 at the Westin Convention Center Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.



Among Ridge's many achievements, both as governor and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, he championed the idea that the economy and environment can prosper in harmony and that sustainability should be part of government.

Under his leadership, Ridge and the Pennsylvania General Assembly created the Growing Greener program, which continues to be the largest single investment in cleaning up and restoring the environment in Pennsylvania's history.

“The beauty of Pennsylvania is a lasting tribute to Tom Ridge,” said Paul M. King, president of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. “His lifetime of distinguished service to our country often overshadows his important work to achieve a standard of environmental excellence here. We owe him a debt of gratitude for being such a worthy and dedicated steward of the environment of this Commonwealth.”

A list of environmental accomplishments [is available online](#).

Past recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award include the Hon. John P. Murtha, former secretary John C. Oliver of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Linda McKenna Boxx of the Allegheny Trail Alliance and Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Whetzel, Jr.

#### **About Tom Ridge**

The Honorable Tom Ridge is the president and CEO of Ridge Global. As the company's chief executive, Ridge leads a team of international experts that help businesses and governments

address a range of needs throughout their organizations, including security and infrastructure protection, emergency preparedness and response, energy, strategic growth, maritime management and other issues that encompass a diverse portfolio.

Following the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, Tom Ridge became the first Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and, on January 24, 2003, became the first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The creation of the country's 15th Cabinet Department marked the largest reorganization of government since the Truman administration and another call to service for the former soldier, congressman and governor of Pennsylvania.

During his tenure, Secretary Ridge worked with more than 180,000-plus employees from a combined 22 agencies to create an agency that facilitated the flow of people and goods, instituted layered security at air, land and seaports, developed a unified national response and recovery plan, protected critical infrastructure, integrated new technology and improved information sharing worldwide. Tom Ridge served as Secretary of this historic and critical endeavor until February 1, 2005.

Before the events of September 11th, Tom Ridge was twice elected Governor of Pennsylvania. He served as the state's 43rd governor from 1995 to 2001. Known for his commitment to high standards and results, Governor Ridge delivered on his promise to make Pennsylvania "a leader among states and a competitor among nations." Governor Ridge's aggressive technology strategy helped fuel the state's advances in economic development, education, health care and the environment.

Born August 26, 1945, in Pittsburgh's Steel Valley, Ridge was raised in a working-class family in veterans' public housing in Erie. He earned a scholarship to Harvard, graduating with honors in 1967.

After his first year at Penn State University's Dickinson School of Law, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he served as an infantry staff sergeant in Vietnam, earning the Bronze Star for Valor, the Combat Infantry Badge and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. After returning to Pennsylvania and to Dickinson, he earned his law degree and was in private practice before becoming assistant district attorney in Erie County.

Tom Ridge was elected to Congress in 1982. He was one of the first Vietnam combat veterans elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and was overwhelmingly re-elected by Pennsylvania voters five times.

An engaging and dynamic speaker, Secretary Ridge regularly addresses audiences throughout the world on issues, such as security, terrorism, global engagement, leadership, technology and more. Additionally, the first U.S. secretary of Homeland Security serves on the boards of the Institute for Defense Analyses, the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress and other private and public entities, and since 2005, has served as chairman of the National Organization on Disability. Secretary Ridge continues to contribute to matters concerning our nation's veterans and, along with Gen. Tommy Franks (Ret.), serves as national co-chairman of the Flight 93 Memorial Fundraising Campaign.

Throughout his public and private sector career, Tom Ridge has received numerous honors, including the Woodrow Wilson Award, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Dwight D. Eisenhower Award, the John F. Kennedy National Award, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the American Bar Association's John Marshall Award, the National Guard's Harry S. Truman Award, the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation's Conservationist of the Year Award, U.S.-Mexico

Chamber of Commerce's Good Neighbor Award, the American Cancer Society's prestigious National Medal of Honor, the Mister Rogers Award, the Champion of Public Television Award, the Intrepid Freedom Award and the Esperanza Leadership Award. Secretary Ridge has also been awarded honorary degrees and awards from many national and international academic institutions.

Tom Ridge and his wife, Michele, have two children.