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● NEWS RELEASE ●  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **RVCC FIRST NJ COLLEGE TO RECEIVE RIVER-FRIENDLY DESIGNATION**

Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) is the first higher education institution in the state to be certified by New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) as part of the River-Friendly Business Program. The College has two tributaries of the upper Raritan River running through its Main Campus in Branchburg.

The River-Friendly certification was awarded to RVCC for its efforts over the past 18 months to improve local water resource quality through water quality management, water conservation, protection of the wildlife habitat, and education and outreach. RVCC is committed to pursuing River-Friendly certification as part of its environmental stewardship agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which was signed in June 2009. RVCC was the first community college in the country to sign such an agreement.

"RVCC has been a unique participant in the River-Friendly program as the first community college we have worked with. They have engaged staff, students, faculty and visitors in the process and now act as a model of stewardship for the community and new River-Friendly participants. We are proud of their efforts and look forward to continuing to work with RVCC to protect the Raritan River and its tributaries," said Heather Barrett, Assistant Watershed Protection Specialist, New Jersey Water Supply Authority.

RVCC has made numerous environmental improvements on campus to achieve River-Friendly certification. Some of these initiatives include:

- With support from the RVCC Foundation, installing a rain garden with native plants to filter storm water runoff, as well as an aerator in the campus pond to improve water quality
- Installing a rain barrel and using the water for a student-run organic garden and to irrigate flower beds around the campus
- Implementing an integrated pest management (IPM) policy to reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides on campus
- Reducing the campus' mowed lawn area by 24% and seeding wildflowers, in order to improve water quality and the animal habitat

Other actions completed for certification include training students to conduct stream visual assessments on the campus streams; planting willow and dogwood stakes along a stream bank; evaluating stream-side buffer quality and areas for improvement; creating inventories of the campus' 289 species of flora and fauna; mounting educational water quality posters across campus; and holding a River-Friendly seminar.

RVCC is the fifth business to be certified by NJWSA through the River-Friendly Business Program. The NJWSA implements a suite of River-Friendly Certification Programs for businesses, golf courses, schools (K-12) and residents in the North and South Branch and Lower Raritan watersheds. The certification programs are a cooperative effort between the participants and NJWSA, which provides an opportunity for landowners to become stewards of their local waterways. Participants receive technical information, support and guidance for implementing environmental projects tailored to their unique location, as well as resources. For more information, visit [www.njriverfriendly.org](http://www.njriverfriendly.org).

For additional information about sustainability efforts at RVCC, contact Brian O'Rourke, 908-218-8879, or visit <http://www.raritanval.edu/community/forum/sustain/home.html>.

RVCC's main campus is located at 118 Lamington Road in Branchburg, NJ. Serving Somerset and Hunterdon County residents for over 40 years, the College offers more than 90 associate degrees and certificates. RVCC @ Bridgewater, located at 14 Vogt Drive, offers technical, trade, credit and non-credit courses.

The College is committed to offering a quality and affordable education through effective teaching, liaisons with the community's businesses and state-of-the-art technology. For further information, visit [www.raritanval.edu](http://www.raritanval.edu).

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