

Living clean



SAN BERNARDINO — The Live Earth concert series showed the scope of global interest in all things environmental, but many observers maintain that real progress, especially in the U.S., must be made at the local level.

St. Bernardine Medical Center has won two top national honors for efforts to reduce waste and virtually eliminate mercury in medical operations.

In 2006, the hospital recycled 235 tons of paper, cardboard and plastic, up from 172 tons in 2004. Recycling these resources equates to a savings of 1.645 million gallons of water, 963,500 kilowatt-hours of energy and 3,995 trees.

The hospital's environmental services department also uses 3M cleaning chemicals that boast "Green Sea" certification. It also reduced medical waste by 18 percent, a reduction of 30,195 pounds.

The awards were presented by Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, a nonprofit group focused on improving the health-care industry's environmental performance.

— robert.rogers@sbsun.com