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## **Programs at UT receive boost from pair of grants**



Kudos for UT: Congratulations to the University of Toledo for landing \$5 million in new grant money that could help the region's environment. The latest consists of \$2.6 million the U.S. Department of Energy awarded for two projects that support UT's budding research in solar power. They were among 11 university-led projects that were funded.

Not bad company, either. Others receiving awards included the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Florida, and the Georgia Institute of Technology. Those awards build upon the recognition UT's solar research got in Newsweek and the Economist last year.

Before that, UT's Lake Erie Center received \$2.4 million from the National Science Foundation for a five-year mentoring program that will match eight PhD students with eight area high school teachers on a year-round basis starting June 1.

The goal is to inspire more hands-on environmental studies, thereby putting youth more in touch with nature. The graduate students will spend 15 hours a week in school classrooms.

Earlier this month, UT won two Top 10 national awards at the annual Association of University Technology Managers meeting in San Diego for excellence in licensing new technology and generating spin-off companies. UT also was ranked third behind the University of North Carolina and Brigham Young University for startup companies formed for every \$1 million of funding.

Nuisance Anniversary News: This year marks the 20th anniversary of the zebra mussel's invasion and subsequent colonization of the Great Lakes. It has since spread across North America, costing the United States and Canada billions of dollars.

Environmental groups used the occasion this week to ramp up their campaign against irresponsible oceanic vessels that refuse to exchange their ballast water at sea in order to kill off freshwater exotics that have hitched a ride from another part of the world. They're confident Congress will do more soon.

Uh-huh.

I couldn't help but remember hearing the military perspective on this from Coast Guard Cmdr. M. Eric Reeves, who once was chief of the Great Lakes region's marine port and environmental safety program.

"If you look at this in terms of military strategy, we're not in good shape. We're fighting a battle with an unknown enemy with unknown weapons," Commander Reeves said at the

Sixth International Zebra Mussel and Other Aquatic Nuisance Species Conference in Dearborn, Mich.

That was on March 5, 1996. Twelve years ago.

Holy Turbine, Batman!: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources this week announced the hiring of Keith DeWitt Lott, a bird-bat expert who is to help the agency decide whether wind turbines and wildlife can coexist, especially where the issue collides in western Lake Erie. He's based near Huron, Ohio.

And now, for a little good news: It's easy to get depressed about southeast Michigan, but John Hartig has an upbeat message about the ecological progress of western Lake Erie and the Detroit River.

Mr. Hartig, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who manages the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, will present the latest findings at 7 p.m. Thursday in Monroe County Community College's La-Z-Boy Center, 1555 South Raisinville Rd. The announcement used the word "recovery." I'm more comfortable with "progress" because, Lord knows, we still have a ways to go. But we all need to celebrate progress sometimes.

Mr. Hartig is one of seven editors of a new report, which can be found at [www.stateofthestrat.org](http://www.stateofthestrat.org).