



NEWS RELEASE

Suite 404, City County Building
400 Main Street
Knoxville, TN 37902
www.knoxmpc.org
(865) 215-2500 Fax (865) 215-2068

Contact: Mark Donaldson
Phone: 215-2500

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MPC Honors Local Development at 29th Annual Excellence Awards

The Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission presented its 29th Annual Excellence Awards on August 26 to recognize developers, designers and neighborhood activists who have made our community a better place to live. The 2010 awards were announced at the Knoxville Convention Center, following a dinner and guest speaker Carol Evans, Executive Director of the Legacy Parks Foundation.

The award for Residential Development was given to Knoxville Habitat for Humanity for their 2009 Blitz Build in Mechanicsville Commons. Habitat collaborated with Elizabeth Eason Architects to design and build three craftsman style homes along Knoxville College Drive, blending with the traditional architecture along the street. Several other homes were also built during this Blitz Build using the adopted housing plans for Mechanicsville Commons and replacing the previously vacant lots.

The 500 Block of Gay Street, which includes the former S&W Cafeteria, Athletic House and WROL, received the Historic Rehabilitation award. Most of these buildings

had been vacant for decades, but were thankfully spared from demolition with the cooperation of Mayor Bill Haslam, Regal Cinemas, Knox Heritage and the developers, 500 Block LLC. This group enabled the rehabilitation and reuse of the block's historic buildings to their original grandeur.

The Renovation award was given to Pellissippi State Community College's Magnolia Avenue campus. The design team for this project was able to give the new campus its own identity while maintaining its original 1950s architectural style. The renovation was a logical reuse of a vacant resource and a major commitment to higher education in the Heart of Knoxville.

The Knoxville Orthopaedic Clinic received the award for Commercial/Industrial/Office Development. The architects chose a split level design that respected the site's natural slope and created a logical separation of the medical offices, physical therapy wing and administrative center. The attention to environmental sustainability including the rain gardens and richly landscaped parking areas is also noteworthy.

Tommy Shumpert Park won the Special Use category. This park filled a major void in North Knoxville's recreation needs. It provided this rapidly growing area with fields for soccer, football, rugby and lacrosse as well as providing a new home for Central High School's baseball team. The park additionally boasts a greenway trail and the county's largest dog park, created with the help of Petsafe.

The Neighborhood Achievement award goes to the city's Community Development Department for their program, "My Front Yard," which was developed to booster curb appeal in the Heart of Knoxville. This program helped almost 200

homeowners receive modest improvement loans to renovate to their home's exteriors and yards. It has led to greater neighborhood pride and a greater sense of community.

The Environmental Sustainability award recognized the Legacy Parks Foundation for the creation of the Urban Wilderness and Historic Corridor. This project encompasses 1,000 acres paralleling the South Knoxville Waterfront Development that contain three Civil War forts, historic settlement sites, diverse ecological features and recreational activities. In addition to preserving these historic resources, it conserves sensitive ridgetop and forested land.

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