



Restoring and protecting the Cahaba River watershed and its rich diversity of life

Cahaba
River
Society

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Cahaba River Society Awards Development Projects for Water Conservation Design

***McWane Cast Iron Pipe, Opus South Corporation, Trussville High School
and Protective Life Corporation***

Birmingham, Alabama, February 19, 2008 – The Birmingham region’s growing “green building” trend is proving that well-designed development plays an essential role in helping to conserve our scarce water resources. For the past two years the Cahaba River Society (CRS) has recognized businesses that are leaders in Low-Impact Development (LID), which is a set of site design and building strategies that conserve drinking water resources, harvest and reuse storm water, and protect water quality.

Four years ago the Upper Cahaba planning process recommended that new growth should be built with LID design to reduce impacts such as flooding, pollution, and loss of drinking water supply. Yet developers resisted this type of work due to unknowns about the cost and feasibility of LID. Today, according to Beth Stewart, Executive Director of the Cahaba River Society, “The knowledge level about low impact development has changed dramatically in just a few years. As more firms increase staff with these skills and more projects come online, it’s clear there are sensible, cost-effective ways to protect our rivers, lakes, and drinking water.”

The awards given at the Cahaba River Society’s 20th Anniversary Annual meeting on January 24, 2008 applauded innovative development that protects both the Cahaba watershed (“blue”) and the region’s environment (“green”). Recognized this year with **Blue-Green Design Innovation Awards** were: **McWane Cast Iron Pipe Company**, for its storm water and industrial process water reuse system; **Opus South Corporation**, for the Social Security Administration building green roof and storm water collection system; and the **Trussville City Schools**, for the new Hewitt-Trussville’s High School straddling the banks of the river. CRS also created the new **Classic Blue-Green Development Award**, given to the **Protective Life office complex**, to showcase Birmingham’s heritage of good design that conserves water resources and saves money over time. (See attached summary of award-winning projects).

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The CRS Annual Meeting also highlighted many LID projects underway. Developer Barry Stalnaker keynoted the meeting, describing the challenges of building **Trussville Springs**, a New Urbanist/LID mixed use neighborhood that is reusing an abandoned industrial site on the Cahaba. Displays at the meeting featured LID projects in construction and on the drawing board, including **Bass Pro** in Leeds, **Patchwork Farms** in Vestavia, the **Trussville Springs** development, **Indian Springs School**, **Homewood Park**, and **St. Vincent's One Nineteen**, in addition to this year's award-winning projects.

At their 2007 Annual Meeting, the Cahaba River Society awarded two development projects, **St. Vincent's One Nineteen Health and Wellness** and **Shoppes at River Run**, for their LID design. It is notable that the number of LID projects underway has become larger in just one year.

The awardees at the 2008 Annual Meeting were grateful that their significant efforts were being recognized. John Floyd, President of the Trussville City School Board, appreciated being given an award for "our commitment to respect [the] land, respect [the] river." He welcomed the public to come and see the high school when it is finished. Robert Busey, Plant Manager of McWane Cast Iron Pipe stated, "We're very proud of that system,...we will continue to improve the water quality of this community in the future." Duane Wood, Vice President of Real Estate at Opus South Corporation, acknowledged the team effort it took to achieve his company's design efforts. He said, "[I] specifically want to thank the City of Birmingham, city officials, GSA, and the Social Security Administration because without their support of these green elements, this project wouldn't have been possible."

Stewart said, "**CRS intends for these awards to promote LID by thanking businesses and developers who are taking positive leadership and by increasing the recognition of those engineers, architects, landscape architects and contractors who can deliver a quality 'Low Impact Development' project.**"

The attached project summaries list not only the top decision-makers in the awardee companies, but also the talented design and construction teams that were essential to successful completion of the watershed conservation features of the developments.

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