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2009 Community Stewardship Awards Announced

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(AUSTIN) - The recipients of the 2009 Envision Central Texas (ECT) Community Stewardship Awards were announced at a luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Austin Friday, May 8. The Community Stewardship Award Recipients included: new development - Capital MetroRail Red Line, Austin to Leander; redevelopment - T Flats Initiative, Austin - Austin Community Design and Development Center, the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation and the University of Texas for Sustainable Development; Pioneer - Sustainable Food Center, Austin; Public and Policy - City of Hutto; and Raising Public Awareness - Katherine Gregor, Austin Chronicle. In addition, the W. Neal Kocurek Legacy Award was presented to respected attorney and civic entrepreneur Pike Powers of Fulbright & Jaworski LLP. Envision Central Texas created the W. Neal Kocurek Legacy Award to honor Dr. Kocurek, founding chairman of Envision Central Texas, and to recognize and celebrate the qualities of civic leadership that he admired most.

The Keynote Speaker for the 2009 ECT Community Stewardship Awards was Ro Puentes, senior fellow of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. Puentes spoke on policies and issues related to metropolitan growth and development and the Central Texas Region's infrastructure challenges.

In order for the awards to be judged impartially ECT recruited some of the country's leading experts in planning, transportation and green space and to be jurors. Their decisions were based on how the projects exemplified or reflected some or all of

seven elements of the Envision Central Texas Vision as well how the project impacted the community in which it occurred. Jurors for the 2009 ECT Community Steward Awards were:

-Bridget Jones, AICP, executive director, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Nashville Tennessee

- Ed McMahon, senior fellow for sustainable development, Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C.

-Steve Mouzon, founding principal, New Urban Guild, Miami Beach, Florida

-John Promise, director of environment and development, North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, Texas

- Mike Sims, assistant city manager, City of Terrell, Texas

New Development Recipient:
Capital MetroRail Red Line

The Capital MetroRail Red Line is our region's first urban commuter rail system, spanning 32 miles and serving nine stations between Leander and downtown Austin. It is built on Capital Metro's existing freight right of way. When service begins, Central Texans will have a brand new choice when it comes to public transportation, and Capital Metro will become multi-modal. Capital MetroRail is one part of a community wide long-range transit plan, All Systems Go!, created by Capital Metro in 2004 with input from more than 8,000 concerned citizens. The plan addresses transportation needs for the rapidly growing population. MetroRail is a key component in reducing traffic congestion, developing healthy, walkable neighborhoods, creating economic opportunity, and protecting our region's great quality of life.

Redevelopment Recipient:
The Alley Flat Initiative

Austin Community Design and Development Center, the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation and the University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development

This initiative is an award-winning collaboration that mitigates the forces of gentrification and environmental degradation by providing affordable, sustainable housing on under-utilized urban lots. Many Austin families are finding it increasingly difficult to afford to live within the city, threatening the city's diversity and stability. Future land-use must address these threats and find ways to densify without losing the character of these urban neighborhoods. The initiative proposes placing secondary dwelling units on under-utilized lots in which the existing structure covers less than 25 -30% of the lot. Alley Flats are small, detached secondary residential units, accessed from Austin's extensive network of alleys, that can be built by homeowners on the back of the lot to generate additional rental income and/or house family members.

Pioneer Recipient:
Sprouting Healthy Communities

Sustainable Food Center

The Sustainable Food Center's (SFC) Sprouting Healthy Communities project is a comprehensive neighborhood-based initiative that aims to shape a healthier future for Central Texas children and adults within areas of Travis County identified as at-risk for diet-related diseases. Successful implementation of Sprouting Healthy Communities will result in increased access to healthy food for low-income communities through the establishment of school and community gardens, neighborhood farm markets and fresh foods in school cafeterias. Additionally, these communities will develop increased knowledge about healthy food and nutrition through gardening workshops, after-school programs, in-class lessons at schools, cooking and nutrition demonstrations. SFC will collaborate with and complement the vital work of school districts, teachers and other nonprofits who strive to cultivate a healthy community in the Austin area.

Public Policy and Planning Recipient:

Heart of Hutto Old Town Master Plan & Smart Code

City of Hutto, ERO Architects, Gateway Planning Group, Inc., TXP, HDR/WHM, and Lee & Associates, Inc.

Hutto is located between Georgetown and Austin and its resources include the large, city-owned cooperative site and silo structures, historic storefronts on East Street, Fort Worth, and a rapidly expanding population. In order to encourage organized growth consistent with the existing distinctive characteristics of Old Town Hutto, a community vision for future development in the downtown was necessary. The Heart of Hutto Old Town Master Plan supplies the regulatory framework, through the SmartCode, to enact a predictable method of future development over the next 50 years. The plan provides recommendations that will guide future investment and development within the 1911 incorporated area of the city in order to assure that the City of Hutto can retain the qualities and characteristics unique to Hutto while creating a vibrant, sustainable downtown district.

Raising Public Awareness Recipient:

Katherine Gregor

Katherine Gregor became a writer for the Austin Chronicle in 2006, during a period of intense population growth and development in Austin. As a journalist, Katherine writes about political, planning, and design issues in the Central Texas Region, focusing primarily on the Austin area. These issues revolve around sustainability, affordability, economic development, and community. Katherine presents an in-depth, objective, and relevant angle, even in the face of controversy. Her comprehensive articles and incorporation of a number of viewpoints immerse the reader in the facts, opinions, "hows," and "whys" of a particular issue, thereby enhancing public understanding of major local issues. Through her sarcasm and quick-witted asides, she presents an underlying truth to current political, environmental, and development issues. Katherine is also quick to point out who has and who has not, actually done their part in working towards a unified, sustainable regional goal.

2009 W. Neal Kocurek Legacy Award Recipient

Pike Powers, a respected Austin attorney and civic entrepreneur, is the recipient

2009 W. Neal Kocurek Legacy Award. Envision Central Texas created the award to recognize the qualities of leadership that he admired most. Pike opened the Austin office of Fulbright & Ja L.L.P. and served as its partner-in-charge for 26 years. He played key roles in re high-tech consortiums and employers to Central Texas starting with MCC, follow Sematech, 3M, Applied Materials and Samsung. Pike graduated from Lamar Uni and the University of Texas Law School. He represented Jefferson County in the House of Representatives from 1972 to 1979 and served as executive assistant Governor Mark White in 1983. Pike was named the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce's "Austinite of the Year" in 2006 and received the American Electroni Association's Texas Legend Award in 2008. Pike has been married to his wife Pa years and has two children and two grandchildren.

Sponsors for the 2008 ECT Community Stewardship Awards Luncheon were:

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Aqua Water Supply Corporation, Austin Community College District, Barton Spri Edwards Aquifer Conservation District , City of Hutto, Downtown Austin Alliance, Environmental Stewardship-Bastrop County, Hill Country Alliance, St. David's Community Health Foundation, Sustainable Food Center

About Envision Central Texas

Central Texas will add more than a million people over the next 20 to 40 years. Central Texas, a regional non-profit planning organization, was created in 2001 and implement the two-year public development of a regional Vision to address rapid growth.

Our Mission: Envision Central Texas serves as a catalyst for regional cooperation planning in order to realize a common Vision for Central Texas which preserves enhances our natural resources, economic vitality, social equity and overall qual living.

Our Goal: We must improve how we grow in order to sustain our region's quality and competitiveness. The focus of ECT is on what, where and when we build, ar that impacts natural resources and mobility.

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