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ReScape Award Ceremony Celebrates Transformation of Sites Using Innovative Solutions to Significant Environmental Issues

SAINT PAUL, Minn. – (October 24, 2014) – Minnesota Brownfields ReScape Award was given to four projects demonstrating innovation, collaboration, and exemplary results in revitalizing formerly contaminated land. Awards were given in the categories of Economic Impact, Community Impact, Environmental Impact and Small City Impact at a ceremony that took place at Union Depot in Saint Paul on October 23, 2014, from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. “The Mac”, an individual award named after industry visionary, Maclay Hyde, was awarded to an individual that demonstrated high ethical standards; commitment to serving the community and the environment; excellence in brownfields redevelopment; and a genuine interest in helping and mentoring others in the field.

The call for project nominations closed on September 11. From the project nominations, 12 finalists were selected and showcased at the ReScape Awards ceremony. Winning projects featured transformation of abandoned or underutilized sites using innovative solutions to significant environmental issues.

AWARD WINNERS

ReScape Community Impact Award winner: Rising Cedar

Located in Minneapolis’ Seward neighborhood on the former Bystrom Brothers manufacturing site, Rising Cedar Apartments is a \$12 million dollar 40-unit housing project serving people with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI). The development team included Project for Pride in Living, UrbanWorks Architecture, and Touchstone Mental Health. Rising Cedar incorporated many unique design to support the needs of residents, including abundant natural light to help residents reset circadian rhythms and pattern language, assisting in way finding; a Healing Garden providing a calm, natural area for people to sit, socialize, experience movement; and a Health and Wellness center which is open not only to residents but to the community at large. An estimated 170,000 Twin Cities residents suffer from SPMI. Rising Cedar increases the supply of SPMI-dedicated housing in Minneapolis by nearly 50%. Rising Cedar is a result of strong collaboration between neighborhood groups, city and state agencies, health care community; innovative thinking; and evidence based process that is serving not only the residents but the broader community.

ReScape Economic Impact Award winner: Schmidt Artist Lofts

The Schmidt Artist Lofts redevelopment project involved renovation/rehabilitation of a historically significant former brewery complex into 260 affordable apartment and townhome

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units to provide much needed workforce housing in the West 7th neighborhood of St. Paul. The main brewery site has welcoming green spaces, seating areas, and water features that are inviting spots for the public and neighborhood residents. Named one of “Minnesota’s 10 most endangered historic places” by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the project provided an exciting opportunity to preserve the Schmidt Brewery, with its crenellated towers and Gothic details, and convert it into affordable artist live-work apartments. The adaptive reuse of the historic Schmidt Brewery into artist lofts continues the rich tradition of a 100-year old neighborhood landmark in the city of St. Paul, and preserves the Brew House and Bottling House as the centerpiece of the newly created Jacob Schmidt Brewing Company Historic District. Dominion, the project developer, was committed to finding a use for the site that would honor its history and maximize preservation of the historical elements of the buildings. A strong demand for affordable housing in Saint Paul, coupled with the opportunity to preserve the historic buildings, proved that multifamily housing was the best possible use for the site. Exterior work has improved the area and helped bring life back to a long abandoned Schmidt Brewery site.

ReScape Environmental Impact Award winner: Mississippi Watershed Management Organization Community Facility

The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) had a clear vision of what their new community facility would look like when the project started in 2009. The building and grounds were to be completely unique, both as an educational/training/interpretive facility and as a gateway property that could spur the redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhood and the Mississippi River corridor to the north. The project remediated a formerly blighted and contaminated site adjacent to the Mississippi River, enabling restoration of natural habitat and improving stormwater quality. MWMO’s new facility incorporated many sustainable design elements, and supports education on water quality and stormwater issues, provides the local community with access to the river, demonstrates innovative and best management practices for urban water quality, while functioning as an office for the MWMO staff of fifteen.

ReScape Small City Impact Award winner: Former Brooklyn School Site Redevelopment

The former Brooklyn School Site project transformed a city block that had been destroyed by fire in 1973 and left vacant and contaminated for 35 years, located in Hibbing, Minnesota, into \$960,000 worth of affordable, single-family homes. The project reclaimed a blighted area of Hibbing’s Brooklyn neighborhood and filled a critical need for affordable housing options in St. Louis County (currently ranked 79th among Minnesota’s 87 counties for availability of affordable housing). The development provides homes for 28 to 30 new residents to help revitalize a small city that has been affected by a declining population as well as wages, employment, and educational outcomes that are lower than state-wide medians.

The Mac Hyde Individual Award of Brownfields Leadership (“The Mac”) winner: Alan Williams

In 1983, serving as Counsel for the Minnesota Senate, Alan Williams authored Minnesota’s version of the Superfund law (Minnesota Environmental Response and Liability Act, or MERLA) and he played a key role in setting up Minnesota’s voluntary approach to remediating sites. Alan later joined the Minnesota Attorney General's Office where he was assigned to represent the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), assisting MPCA staff in applying

the new law to clean up dump sites where there had been major releases of hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants. Alan was also instrumental in drafting language and working for the passage of Minnesota's landmark Land Recycling Act in 1992.

About Minnesota Brownfields

Minnesota Brownfields is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization whose mission is to promote, through education, research, and partnerships, the efficient cleanup and reuse of contaminated land as a means of generating economic growth, strengthening communities and enabling sustainable land use and development. For more information about Minnesota Brownfields, visit www.mnbrownfields.org.

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