

Columbia Choice Awards Recognize Those Who Work Hard To Enhance The Area's Beauty

It takes so much to make a city livable. A good education system, state-of-the-art medical facilities, the arts, a top-notch business environment. But all that doesn't mean much if a city lacks beauty.

If you don't believe me, just travel to some of the mining towns in West Virginia or some of this country's industrial cities that spew out so much industrial waste that the atmosphere is gray with it. And then there are the "concrete" cities, where nothing grows except more traffic snarls.

Columbia is none of those. Although it has its problems, its face is changing, and many looking to relocate find it a wonderful place to bring up a family and grow a business. Many beginning to value this city's past by saving its historic buildings and designing new buildings that blend with the area's history.

At its third annual Columbia Choice Awards, the Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission and Columbia Green recognized individuals, neighborhoods and firms whose work has significantly enhanced Columbia's environment, both in design and in overall quality of life.

The Preserve, a single-family subdivision off Pelham Drive near Gills Creek, was recognized with the *Special Achievement Award*.

The development incorporates the effective preservation of greenspace among wooded hills and creeks in common areas and smart growth principles to cluster smaller lots in the center of the tract, which was a former sewage lagoon. The densely wooded portions of the site have large lots varying in size and shape to maximize the protection of valuable large hardwood trees.

Todd Avant worked with Kenneth B. Simmons Associates to develop plans for the community, which quickly proved to be a wise financial decision as well.



Photo by Brian Dressler

The Preserve

Cox and Dinkins, Inc. and Curt Davis & Associates were presented with the *New Construction/Site Development Award* for the Cox and Dinkins office complex on Beltline Boulevard.

Gene Dinkins, president, made a commitment to build a "green" building to meet the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

The 11,672-square-foot facility, completed in November 2003, was showcased for its LEED design, an environmentally friendly method which incorporates design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative

