



March 12, 2010

Lillian Mill, Abernathy, Central School pick up Main Street awards

Thursday, March 11, 2010 — Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation (ADDC) announced last week that two local projects were recognized for their excellence in the 2009 N.C. Main Street Awards competition.

Central Elementary School won an Award of Merit in the category of Best Endangered Property Rescue Effort and the Lillian Mill Project received a Certificate of Special Recognition in the category of Best Adaptive Reuse Project.

In addition, Albemarle's Don Abernathy was honored as a 2009 Main Street Champion. Along with Champions from 33 other communities, Abernathy was presented a certificate commemorating his designation.

The N.C. Main Street Program's annual awards competition recognizes the outstanding achievements in categories reflecting the four areas emphasized by Main Street: organization, design, economic restructuring and promotion. This year's entries were judged by a panel that included staff from the Appalachian Regional Commission, Division of Community Assistance's Piedmont Regional Office and the N.C. Main Street program.

Following the judging, Office of Urban Development Director Liz Parham remarked: "The Main Street Awards represent North Carolina's finest examples of downtown revitalization initiatives. Main Street and Small Town Main Street communities understand how to leverage partnerships, incentives and investment in an effort to strengthen the local economy. These projects serve as exemplary models as the best in downtown redevelopment and are celebrated for their accomplishments."

In nominating Abernathy for the Champion Award, the ADDC wrote: "For more than nine years, Don has given tirelessly and unselfishly of his time, financial resources and energy to further the efforts of ADDC. In addition to serving for six years on the board, he has chaired numerous committees and raised countless dollars for the organization. Fortunately, he's also willing to take on the unglamorous work at events such as helping to set up food vendors or cleaning up the streets afterwards. It seems that no job is too big or too small for Don to undertake."

The awards were presented recently by Parham, N.C. Secretary of Commerce J. Keith Crisco, Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll, Assistant Secretary for Community Development Joseph D. Crocker and Division of Community Assistance Director Gloria Nance-Sims. The ceremony was held at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center. Twenty projects received Awards of Merit and seven Certificates of Special Recognition.

Based on economic revitalization within the context of historic preservation, the Main Street program was created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to share an effective downtown revitalization strategy which they had developed for smaller towns. The program is part of the Department of Commerce's Division of Community Assistance.

Selected as an original Main Street state in 1980, North Carolina has grown its program from five communities to 61. Today, combined public and private investment in North Carolina Main Street downtowns totals more than \$1.4 billion.