



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Cleveland Better Home Town Receives Two Statewide Awards “Best Downtown Event” – “Volunteer of the Year”**

**Cleveland, Georgia (October 4, 2008)** – Each year the Georgia Downtown Association and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs accept nominations from across the state from Main Street Managers for the Annual Georgia Downtown Awards. This premier awards program showcases the achievements within the traditional points of downtown redevelopment (organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring) and broken down into 15 detailed awards. Cleveland Better Home Town’s Executive Director, Maria Jurado-Flynn won 2 of the 15 awards presented at this year’s Georgia Downtown Awards Banquet in Douglasville. Cleveland Better Home Town was the only Main Street Program in the state to receive two awards:

- ❖ **“Best Downtown Event” for the White County Sesquicentennial Celebration**
- ❖ **“Volunteer of the Year” for Stepping Stone Farm**

“Last year when I attended the Georgia Downtown Conference I had only been the Manager of Cleveland Better Home Town for four months,” said Maria Jurado-Flynn. “I was so impressed by what these talented managers were doing in their communities, but I also knew we were doing great things in Cleveland too.”

**Volunteer of the Year** - A partnership with Stepping Stone Farm has resulted in beautiful planters around the Square that were purchased by Cleveland Better Home Town last year. An all-volunteer force, consisting of helpers and individuals with disabilities from Stepping Stone Farm continue to make sure that the flowers stay healthy and fresh looking. Not even the drought could slow down these dedicated volunteers. With concerns about a possible watering ban, a water reclamation system was put in place. This summer, the pots have been watered without using any tap water; instead the flowers have been watered using only roof water and air conditioning condensation water. This program has blossomed into a wonderful partnership resulting in a “*sense of place*” that comes from allowing people with disabilities to have a “*sense of pride*.” The Georgia Downtown Association and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs presented the Award for “Volunteer of the Year” to Stepping Stone Farm. Donny Parker, President and Founder of Stepping Stone Farm, Jane Grillo, Board Member and Holly Hunt, Secretary Treasurer accepted the award on behalf of the organization and its dedicated volunteers.

**Best Downtown Event** - How do you get a community to come together to help itself...you throw a huge birthday party and get everyone involved, from government officials, to local historians, and even children. 2007 was White County’s 150th Birthday or (Sesquicentennial). The request from the White County Board of Commissioners to host a celebration honoring the County’s History resulted in the formation of a Steering Committee, representing community leaders from all over White County and was Chaired by Maria-Jurado-Flynn and Co-Chaired by Jeannie Redditt. Together the entire Steering Committee planned a series of events that would pay tribute to the community’s past. The Georgia Downtown Association and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs presented the award for “Best Downtown Event” to the White County Sesquicentennial Steering Committee. Accepting the award were County Commission Chairman, Chris Nonnemaker; White County Chamber President Judy Walker; Regional President of Community Bank & Trust Jeff Hunt and Executive Director of Cleveland Better Home Town, Maria Jurado-Flynn. These four individuals attended the banquet and accepted the award on behalf of the entire Sesquicentennial Steering Committee that included:

**Sesquicentennial Chairs:**

Event Chair - Maria Jurado-Flynn, Executive Director – Cleveland Better Home Town  
Event Co-Chair – Jeannie Redditt

**Sesquicentennial Steering Committee:**

Promotions Chair: Julie Poulson – United Community Bank  
Judy Walker – President, White County Chamber of Commerce  
Vickie Frankum – Executive Assistant, White County Chamber of Commerce  
Connie Tracus – City Clerk, City of Cleveland  
Charlie Thomas – White County Honor Guard  
Shirley McDonald – Local Historian  
Judy Lovell – President, White County Historical Society  
Travis Turner – Vice President, Regions Bank  
Natalie Culp – White County Economic Development

**Media Steering Committee:**

Billy Chism – Editor, White County News  
Dean Dyer – President of WRWH 1350 AM  
KJ Allen – President Georgia 105.1

**Public Safety Steering Committee:**

David Murphy, Director – White County Emergency Management  
Sheriff Neal Walden  
Police Chief John Foster  
Chief Dickie Howard – White County Fire Rescue  
Chief Ricky Pruitt – City of Cleveland Fire Department  
Chief Bill Scandrett – White County EMS

“These two awards pay tribute to the dedication of our community’s leaders and our great volunteers who give the greatest gift of all, their time,” said Garrison Baker, Chairman of the Board for Cleveland Better Home Town. “I am so proud of these two state-wide awards and for the work that our volunteers do to help make Cleveland a special place to live. I’m also very proud of our Executive Director, Maria-Jurado-Flynn for her tremendous leadership in our Better Home Town Program and for her desire to honor the work of our volunteers, partners and community leaders by nominating them for these two special awards.”

Cleveland Better Home Town, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (C) 3 charitable organization and donations to the organization are tax deductible and assist with Cleveland Better Home Town’s Historic Preservation and downtown revitalization projects.

*Cleveland Better Home Town is a Nationally Accredited Main Street Program.*

**Cleveland Better Home Town, Inc.  
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Visit: [www.clevelandbetterhometown.org](http://www.clevelandbetterhometown.org)**

**Christmas in the Mountains is December 6<sup>th</sup>. Visit us on the web for more information.**

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