



NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Maria Jurado-Flynn, Executive Director
Cleveland Better Home Town, Inc.
Phone: (706) 969-3336
mflynn@clevelandbetterhometown.org

Over 100 Volunteers, The City of Cleveland and the White County Board of Commissioners Recognized for their service to the Community by Cleveland Better Home Town

Cleveland, Georgia (May 17, 2009) – Not even the rain could keep board members from Cleveland Better Home Town from recognizing over 100 dedicated volunteers who have assisted the organization over the past year. The Fabulous 50's on Saturday was the setting for the "Tribute to Volunteer Service Awards," but rain quickly came in and organizers had to move to plan B.

"On Friday I met with County Manager, Alton Brown and asked if the County would allow us to have the Presentation of Colors and the "Tribute to Volunteer Service Awards" in the courthouse," said Maria Jurado-Flynn, Executive Director for Cleveland Better Home Town. We knew that rain could cause the event to be cancelled and we wanted to make sure that our volunteers were still honored." Without hesitation, the County Manager made the arrangements, should weather prevent the outdoor presentations and it was a good thing because as soon as the event began on Saturday, the dark clouds moved in and torrential rain dove attendees under tents.

Everyone pitched in to move inside for the awards and our volunteers and their families completely filled the main courtroom. The White County Honor Guard presented the colors in honor of Armed Forces Day and Board Members from Cleveland Better Home Town presented red, white & blue ribbons with engraved medallions to each honor guard member in honor of their service. "It's only fitting that today, Armed Forces Day, we honor our local heroes for their service to our country," said, Maria Jurado-Flynn.

Before the awards were presented to the volunteers, a rendering of the new "Tribute to Heroes" brick paver program was unveiled. Cleveland Better Home Town will begin offering engraved brick pavers to be installed in front of the "Freedom Vigil" monument in front of the White County Courthouse. "This is a wonderful way to pay tribute to the brave men and women who have served or are serving in our Armed Forces. The program will allow local families to honor a friend or loved one with an engraved paver," said Jurado-Flynn. Architect, George Hlavenka, who serves on the Board of Directors for Cleveland Better Home Town designed the plan for the "Tribute to Heroes" paver program. Chief of Police, John Foster joined Mrs. Jurado-Flynn to unveil the rendering for the attendees. In a heartwarming gesture to the Family of Sgt. Jason Harkins who died in Iraq serving his county, Cleveland Better Home Town presented the first paver in honor of Sgt. Harkins. The inscription read,

In Memory of a
Soldier for Freedom – A Soldier for Christ
Who gave the ultimate sacrifice
in service to his county.
Sgt. Jason Harkins
United State Army
Operation Iraqi Freedom

Maria Jurado-Flynn held back tears as she read the inscription. She presented a beautiful gold eagle award bearing the inscription to the family of Sgt. Jason Harkins on behalf of her board of directors.

Cleveland Better Home Town Board Members went on to present 179 medals to volunteers who have served on their various committees. Councilman Rush Mauney announced the recipients as medals were presented to volunteers by board members. The Promotions Committee, which produces the Fabulous 50's, Fall Leaf Festival and Christmas in the Mountains, was honored first. Last year's Agri-Fest & County Market Volunteers were also recognized. The Design Committee, Chaired by Councilman Rush Mauney was honored for their work on the downtown revitalization. The Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia and Boy Scout Troop 689 were honored for their work on the flower pot program and the new flowers in front of the White County Courthouse.

The Economic Restructuring Committee, Chaired by Jeff Hunt was honored, as was the Historic Preservation Committee, Chaired by Judy Lovell. More than 35 Corporate Partners were also recognized for supporting the Cleveland Better Home Town Program over the past year. The local Public Safety officials received awards for assistance with the security needs for the special events in the downtown. Sheriff Neal Walden and Chief of Police John Foster were on hand and both received awards.

The City of Cleveland and the White County Board of County Commissioners each received the **Spirit of Leadership Awards** for their incredible contributions to the downtown revitalization. "It is through the combined effort of the City and County that have resulted in the tremendous improvement in the downtown," said Garrison Baker, Chairman of Cleveland Better Home Town. They deserve to be recognized for their leadership.

10 Year Old Tyler Dorsey was presented with the **Junior Volunteer of the Year award**. This inscription on his award read:

In recognition of the exceptional leadership you have shown as Chairman of the Fall Leaf Festival 2008, the Tyler Dorsey Love Your Neighbor Food Drive 2009 and your love for educating your fellow students about the importance of Historic Preservation. You are a role model for other children and an inspiration to the adults who serve on the board of directors with you.

The **Volunteer of the Year Award** was presented to Cleveland Postmaster and lifelong resident of White County, Louise Nix. Her daughter Nicole Burkett nominated her for the award and Louise's husband and pastor helped to keep this a surprise. Her award read as follows:

There are few people that touch our lives so deeply that their very work can inspire you to tears. Such is the incredible work of Louise Nix, Postmaster of Cleveland, Georgia. Your efforts to make Cleveland a better place to live have not gone unnoticed. The Board of Directors proudly presents the Volunteer of the Year Award to Louise Nix.

Cleveland Better Home Town Board Chairman, Garrison Baker received a surprise award for his steady leadership of the organization over the past year, **Board Member of the Year Award**. His fellow board members were all honored to serve with him. His award read:

Extraordinary leaders are never solely concerned about themselves and their own personal victories. They have integrity and always remember to hold the needs of others equal to or greater than their own. Your commitment to serve the people of this community has not gone unnoticed. We honor your exceptional leadership as Chairman of the Board. Thank you Garrison for showing us the heart of a true servant-leader.

During her final remarks, Mrs. Jurado-Flynn said, "Main Street and Better Home Town Programs across the country are only successful through partnerships with City and County Governments and the many volunteers who give the greatest gift of all, their time."

Cleveland Better Home Town is a Nationally Accredited "Award Winning" Main Street Program. As a non-profit 501 (C) 3 charitable organization, all donations to Cleveland Better Home Town are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law and assist with the organization's downtown revitalization projects like the Façade Grant Program, Flower pot beautification program and Historic Preservation Projects. If you would like to donate to the program, or sponsor a "Tribute to Heroes Engraved Brick" please contact, Cleveland Better Home Town at (706) 969-3336 or visit: www.clevelandbetterhometown.org

###