

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROGRESSIVE CHURCH RECEIVES LDEQ CITATION FOR BROWNFIELDS EXCELLENCE



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MARRERO, LA- On Sunday, November 2, 2008, Progressive Church received a Citation for Brownfields Excellence from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). The award recognizes the successful completion of the environmental cleanup of their 18-acre site located at 6539 4th Street, Marrero, Jefferson Parish. Speakers included Sam Coleman, Director of EPA Region 6's Superfund Division; Dr. Alex Appeaning, LDEQ Deputy Secretary; and Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and Jefferson Parish Council Chair, John F. Young, Jr. LDEQ also presented Citations for Brownfields Excellence to the RPC and Waldemar S Nelson for their participation in the project.

In 2002, Progressive Church purchased property across the street from their existing church with intentions of building a Family Life Center, a school, and a senior living center. After the purchase, Progressive Church discovered asbestos mixed in with the soil at the site. Through the RPC's Brownfield Redevelopment Program, a new environmental investigation was conducted to identify the extent of asbestos contamination and any other environmental concerns related to the past history of the site. The results of soil and groundwater sampling were used to develop a cleanup plan to address the asbestos in soil along with a limited area of lead and hydrocarbon contamination. Using a \$200,000 Brownfield cleanup grant from US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and a \$300,000 loan from RPC's Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund, Progressive Church cleaned up the site under the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ's) Voluntary Remediation Program. The project will also utilize the Louisiana Brownfield Tax Credit, a transferable tax credit up to 50% of the total cleanup costs. Progressive Church is now moving forward with the construction of their Family Life Center, the first phase in redeveloping the site.

Progressive Church is under the leadership of Pastor Sterling Mealancon. The Family Life Center will focus on the spiritual, educational, and character development of individuals, enhancing the entire community. In addition, it will provide much-needed alternatives for area youth to participate in activities that will help them identify and build on their strengths and grow into strong community leaders. The Center will serve as a focal point of the community and bring together people with a variety of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds for increased community collaboration. The Center will also create approximately 40 new jobs for the operation and maintenance of the facility.

RPC serves Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes. Through grants from USEPA's Brownfield and Land Revitalization Program, the RPC's Brownfield Redevelopment Program provides funding for environmental assessment and cleanup of abandoned and underutilized properties in order to facilitate their redevelopment. Once the cleanup loan to Progressive Church is repaid, it will be available for the assessment and cleanup of other Brownfield sites in the region.

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Pastor Sterling Mealancon with his congregation and project partners at the award ceremony on Nov. 2, 2008



Pastor Sterling Mealancon and First Lady Schwann P. Mealancon accept the Citation of Brownfields Excellence on behalf of Progressive Church



RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks, Brownfields Coordinator Rebecca Otte, and RPC Chair John F. Young Jr. accept the Citation of Brownfields Excellence on behalf of RPC



Keith Prieur, Project Manager accepting Waldemar S Nelson's Citation of Brownfields Excellence from Dr. Alex Appeaning, LDEQ Deputy Secretary



Keith Prieur of Waldemar Nelson, RPC Executive Director Walter Brooks, RPC Brownfields Coordinator Rebecca Otte, RPC Chair John F. Young Jr., and Pastor Sterling Mealancon with LDEQ Deputy Secretary Dr. Alex Appeaning



Certificates were awarded to individuals for their contribution to the project (from left to right): Roger Gingles, LDEQ Brownfields Initiative and Voluntary Remediation Program; Trina Harris, Harris Builders; Robert Bolin, Ranger Environmental; Keith Prieur, Waldemar S Nelson; Walter Brooks, RPC; Anatola Thompson on behalf of Jefferson Parish President Broussard; Sam Coleman, Director, Superfund Division, USEPA Region 6; Karen Peycke, EPA Region 6 Project Officer; Eric Holden, Special Counsel to Progressive Church; Renee Washington, Progressive Church; Pastor Sterling Mealancon, Progressive Church, Rebecca Otte, RPC; Dr. Alex Appeaning, LDEQ