



## Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ST. GEORGE TO RECEIVE 2010 HERITAGE FOUNDATION AWARD

**St. George, UT.-** The City of St. George recently received notice that it will be the recipient of the 2010 Heritage Award in the Governmental Agency category for the construction and design of the St. George Town Square from the Utah Heritage Foundation. Mayor Dan McArthur will formally receive the award on behalf of the City at the 2010 Heritage Awards Luncheon ceremony scheduled for Friday, April 30 in the Banquet Hall of the Salt Lake Masonic Temple. "The Town Square represents not just the heart of St. George but the heart of Dixie! We (the City) had great partners like Washington County, Washington County School District and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who shared a similar vision to preserve this area and keep it a gathering place for the community and a place where we can reflect on the tremendous hardships of those who have gone before us," said McArthur.

McArthur and members of the St. George City Council along with city staff firmly believe that the health and economic vitality of a community is best reflected in its downtown, the heart of the city. "Creating a destination while preserving community heritage in the heart of our city was the primary motivation for the improvements," said City manager, Gary Esplin. He continued, "These improvements represent the beginning of a bright future for what will always be referred to as historic St. George." The Town Square anchored by historic and new buildings, designed to blend architecturally, give visitors the feeling that they are taking a brief step back to early 20<sup>th</sup> century St. George. The new Washington County Library, Washington County School District Administrative Building and the recently completed State of Utah Fifth District Courthouse reflect traditional architecture present during the early settlements in Southwestern Utah.

Cooperation between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, State of Utah, Washington County, Washington County School District and the City of St. George was paramount in preserving and recreating the beautiful two block area in the core of the St. George Historic District.

Funding for the Town Square and Water Walk came from a Redevelopment Agency (RDA) created in the 1980's. Existing RDAs in the State of Utah allow cities to use property tax from a specific geographical area and spend it on improvements within the same area. These monies are earmarked to improve blighted areas through capital expenditures and cannot be used for ongoing maintenance, personnel or to buy equipment. The Brooks Park and Cox Pond were funded through park impact fees paid by new development.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints decided to use the opportunity to address some landscape and parking lot issues around the historic Tabernacle building as part of the Town Square project in order to maintain a traditional look and feel. The Church agreed to pay for brick pavers in its parking lot to match those at the new county library and redo some concrete and landscaping around the building. Gillies, Stransky, Brems, Smith Architects (GSBS) of Salt Lake City was the architect of the St. George Town Square and improvements around the Tabernacle. Jacobsen Construction of Salt Lake City was the general contractor of construction.

The purpose of the Heritage Awards is to recognize those projects, organizations, agencies, and individuals that exemplify the highest standards within the preservation movement. Utah Heritage Foundation distributes and accepts nominations from December through January for projects. The Governmental Agency category includes professional firms and governmental agencies whose work has furthered the preservation movement in Utah. Firms and agencies may be recognized for a variety of projects undertaken within the past five years, such as: advocacy, infill design in historic districts, and renovation, restoration, and adaptive use designs.

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