

Houston to host national scenic conservation conference

Scenic Visionary Awards will go to Gerald Hines and Carroll Shaddock; Saturday features downtown walking tour guided by Minnette Boesel.

HOUSTON – Advocates of scenic beauty from around the country will convene at the Magnolia Hotel in downtown Houston on April 11 for Scenic America’s 2014 Conference. The theme of this year’s event is: “How scenic beauty supports economic development, livability and tourism.”

Scenic America is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing the country’s visual character. Representatives from many of the group’s 43 state and local affiliates are traveling to Houston to learn from experts in planning, design and public health about how to better advocate for scenic beauty in their communities.

Featured speakers include Rice University Professor Stephen Klineberg, Ph.D., who will synthesize more than 30 years of Houston-area quality of life surveys and explain why the results are important for planners, designers and public health advocates, and Rhode Island-based multimedia artist Barnaby Evans, who will demonstrate how his creation WaterFire draws tens of thousands of people into downtown Providence on summer nights.

At the noon hour Scenic America will present lifetime Scenic Visionary Awards to Carroll Shaddock, founder of Scenic Houston, and Gerald Hines, founder and chairman of Hines, a global commercial real estate company based in Houston.

On Saturday, April 12 Scenic America Board and Affiliates will be lead on a walking tour of the Downtown Historic District guided by Minnette Boesel, the Mayor’s Assistant for Cultural Affairs, who has spent over 20 years working in partnership with others to help save this important vestige of Houston’s history. The tour will highlight the historic preservation movement in Houston and how it affected the Downtown Historic District, the park improvements and art projects that have helped revitalize the area, and other private and public sector investments that have contributed to Downtown’s renewal.

Buildings and sites highlighted on the tour will include the Rice Hotel, the Kennedy Bakery, Allen’s Landing, the Houston Cotton Exchange Building and a look at how Market Square Park has evolved over the years.

For a full agenda and speaker list go to: www.scenic.org/houston2014

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All presenters will be available to speak with media. To arrange interviews or for more information contact Max Ashburn, communications director, at 202.463.1294 or ashburn@scenic.org