

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mount Laurel to receive award for winning billboard battle

WASHINGTON -- Scenic America will present its Stafford Award to Mayor Linda Bobo and the citizens of Mount Laurel for their successful years-long effort to prohibit billboards in the township. The Award will be presented at the Township Council meeting at 7:30pm on April 22 by Scenic America President Mary Tracy and Board Member Carl E. Hintz.

“We are thrilled to present this award to Mayor Bobo and the township of Mount Laurel for standing tall against the forces of blight,” said Tracy. “They are to be commended for rigorously defending their vision for the township and not backing down against an industry with deep pockets and a track record of using intimidation to get what they want.”

Mount Laurel’s ban on billboards was challenged by a sign company that sought permission from the town's zoning board to erect four billboards along I-295. But the township’s ban was upheld by several courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit, which said that the town's “conclusion that billboards affect traffic safety and aesthetics” was reasonable, and that municipalities have the right to ban billboards. The entire 3rd Circuit is impacted by the case, which set a precedent in the U.S. Court of Appeals.

“The citizens and public officials of Mount Laurel should be very proud of what they’ve accomplished,” said Tracy. “Their success serves as inspiration and motivation to people and towns all over the country who want to protect themselves from billboard blight but who’ve been afraid to stand up to an industry with enormous resources. Every town should have the right to determine how they want to look, and Mount Laurel proved it can be done.”

The Stafford Award is named for former U.S. Senator Robert Stafford of Vermont, for his concern for the environment and efforts to strengthen federal highway beautification laws. Previous recipients include Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Governor Pete Wilson of California, Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island and U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Pena.

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For more information contact Max Ashburn, Scenic America communications director, at 202.588.6385 or ashburn@scenic.org

Scenic America is the only national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated solely to preserving and enhancing the visual character of America's communities and countryside.