

# PRESS RELEASE

## **Brownfield Site Becomes Award Winning Greenway Gateway**

Evansville, Indiana — April 9, 2010 — How does a picturesque spot on the north bank of the Ohio River, at the point where the meandering Pigeon Creek after winding 41-miles through Southwest Indiana empties into the river, go from...

- a prehistoric Native American campsite,
- to the founding settlement of what would become a major Midwestern city,
- to that city's growing commercial and industrial hub,
- to a polluted industrial waste site,
- to a once again picturesque place that is the centerpiece of the city and an area-wide string of parks, pathways, and biking and jogging trails?

Such is the evolutionary tale of the City of Evansville, Indiana, chronicled by the new Shirley James Gateway Plaza, recently completed on that very historic spot.



In spite of its inherent natural beauty and historic significance, the site was home to a salvage yard from 1935 to 1998, processing and recycling automobiles, refrigerators, and electrical transformers. Barges loaded on Pigeon Creek shipped scrap on the Ohio. When the vacant property was chosen for a park and gateway for the new greenway project in 2005, a plan to reverse environmental damage went into action. Contractors worked for 10 months to remove 35,750 tons of contaminated soils, 425 tons of scrap metal, and 59,580 gallons of wastewater. With 23,000 tons of new soil completing the clean up, a healthy new trailhead site emerged.

The plaza was named in honor of Mrs. Shirley W. James, Chairman of the Greenway Passage Board from 1993 to 2007, whose perseverance and zeal helped create the Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage. Shirley James devoted much of her life to supporting conservation efforts and green movements and had a vision for Evansville to develop a citywide jogging and bike route that would link Evansville's downtown riverfront with its residential areas and beyond. The Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage would connect people with the heritage of the city and the possibilities for its future.

RhodesWorks Ltd. of Champaign, Illinois, along with a team of leading design professionals led by VPS Architecture of Evansville, was selected by the City of Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation to develop and design the Shirley James Gateway Plaza as a multi-function facility on the riverfront. In its ultimate incarnation the plaza serves as a focal point for the west end of the downtown area, an interpretive trailhead and orientation gateway for the City's Greenway Passage park and trail system, and a social and cultural special events space for the community.

Located at the confluence of two significant bodies of water, at what has been for centuries the center of travel, transportation, and human activity in the area, the gleaming cantilevered stainless steel structures of the Gateway Plaza reflect the surrounding sunlight, sky, clouds, people, vehicles, and architecture, turning the otherwise static assemblage into an ever changing kinetic environment that not only amazes passersby but also teaches them the high points of local history.

A central stair leads up to the Plaza from the parking lot, and pair of curving ramped walks sweep up to it from each side. Constructed entirely of brushed stainless steel by the project structures general contractor, Murphy Catton Inc., of Walton, KY, and their structures fabricator Poly Matrix, Inc., of Blanchester, OH, the Gateway consists of six tapered 26-foot-tall interpretive mast structures. Each mast is cantilevered 30° off vertical and each pivoted 30° off the radii of the 44-foot-diameter dark gray granite and paver surface of the circular Plaza. The lower portion of each mast structure is supported by a series of graduated stainless steel rods that rise out of the granite base and terminate in the underside of the masts. Large triangular fins are welded on the top side of each mast, and varied combinations of graphic elements—incised and enamel filled typography, waterjet cut dark bronze dimensional letters, and raised anodized interpretive image panels—are applied to both sides of each.

Large dramatic cantilevered stainless steel pennants complete each mast structure. The pennants are framed by welded stainless steel tubing and infilled with two layers of waterjet-cut stainless steel leading that sandwiches multiple densities of woven wire mesh to create six iconic images that appear backlit against the sky. Each iconic image portrays a significant change in transportation in fifty-year periods over the past several centuries. At night the Shirley James Gateway Plaza glows in the darkness, illuminated by lights recessed into the Plaza pavers and the surrounding landscape.

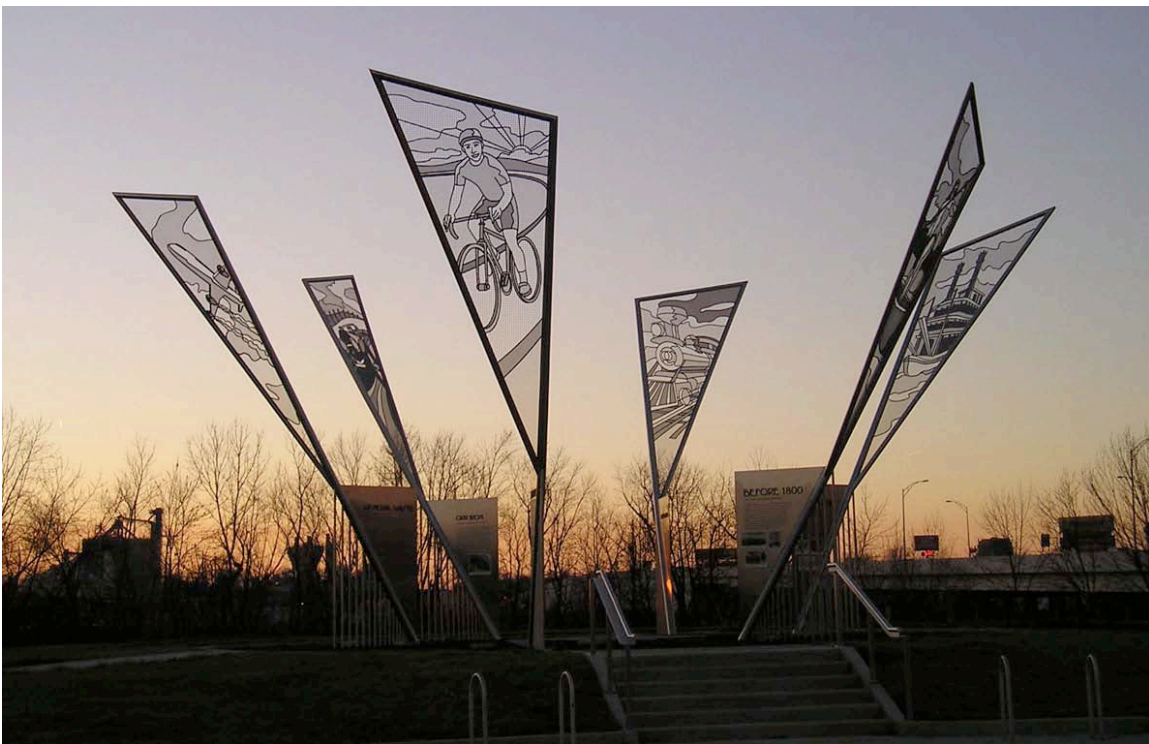
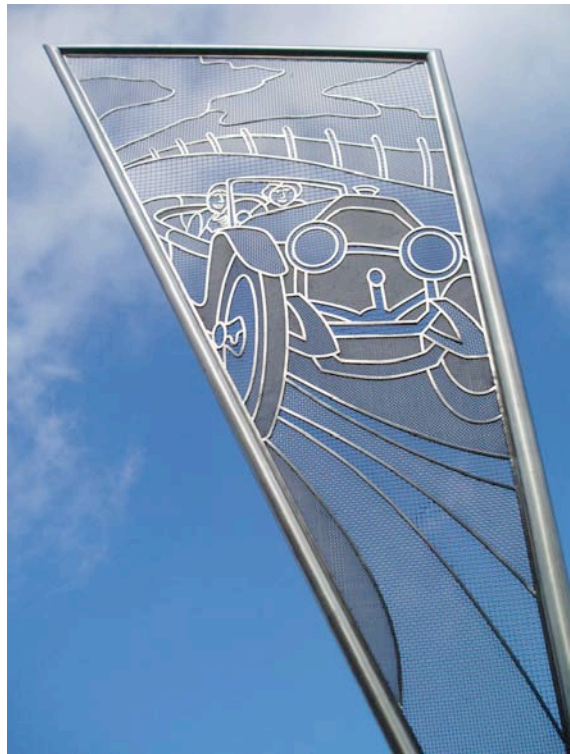
The Plaza engineers were Wilke Structural Engineering and Durkin & Villalta Partners electrical engineers. Its sitework, stone benches, and landscaping were designed by landscape architects, Storrow Kinsella Associates, Inc., of Indianapolis, IN, and constructed by project site contractor, Lichtenberger Construction Inc., of Evansville.

The project has just been awarded First Place in the International Sign Contest, Unique Sign category, sponsored by *Signs of the Times* magazine.

Traveling this unique highway today, people can discover much about the community's commitment to alternate bicycle and pedestrian transportation routes, urban recreation, outdoor education, natural environment restoration, and historic preservation. They can experience the shared vision for the increasing beauty and vitality of the Shirley James Gateway Plaza and the Greenway Passage for the community.

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