

shreveporttimes.com

November 18, 2009

Shreveport Convention Center & Hotel wins national Brownfields awards

From Staff Reports

Shreveport has been lauded for its use of formerly contaminated land now occupied by the city's Convention Center and Hilton Hotel.

On Tuesday, Mayor Cedric Glover and Operational Services Director Mike Strong attended the National Brownfields Conference in New Orleans, where the city won the People's Choice Award for Best Brownfields Project and the Phoenix Award for the Environmental Protection Agency's district that includes Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico.

Both awards were for 2008. The Brownfields group convenes every 18 months, according to a city news release. Brownfields are former industrial sites.

"We are thrilled that Shreveport has been recognized both regionally and nationally for its Brownfields efforts to take an area of blight and environmental decay and redevelop it into an area that is now prime real estate and has the potential to jump-start development in the downtown area and along the Red River and Cross Bayou," Glover said in the news release.

A panel of environmental professionals, business and government leaders cited an innovation, a vast and effective partnership and determination in transforming an "eyesore into a shining star," the release states. That included some 50 acres of abandoned property, which is now the location of the city's \$165 million complex.

"Despite its location at the northern gateway to the downtown area, the site was not attractive to private developers due to concerns about the environmental condition of the properties and remediation costs," Strong said. "Through the city's participation in the Brownfields program, these obstacles were removed."

Local officials knew the city had won the regional award, Strong said. But conference attendees voted on the people's choice award to pleasantly surprise Shreveport.
