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Pender County earns achievement award

by Ken Clarke



BURGAW – Pender County is proud to announce the honor of receiving a “Significant Achievement Award” for the Old Topsail Consolidated School Renovation/Hampstead Annex Project from the Lower Cape Fear Stewardship Development Coalition and was presented with the award and recognized at the Coalition’s Annual Awards Luncheon on February 19, 2015.

The Significant Achievement Award recognized Pender County for the adaptive re-use of the iconic Old Topsail School building and campus into a new community landmark and revitalizing an abandoned space for renewed productivity and provision of public services.

The Stewardship Development Coalition judges projects based on their overall creativity, design and environmental impact. Criteria include site development, water quality protection, use of “green” materials, wetland and habitat protection, community outreach and re-use or revitalization of existing sites.

The school was originally built in 1924 and housed grades one through 11. It became one of the area’s first integrated high schools before becoming a middle school that remained in use until the mid-1990s. It was later used by Cape Fear Community College classes for several years before falling into disrepair and eventually placed on the Historic Wilmington Foundation’s Watch List of Most Threatened Places in 2009.

With the belief that re-use is the ultimate form of recycling, the primary strategy for sustainability was adaptive re-use of the existing building. Environmental hazards were removed and the site renovation plan included a new system for stormwater control and treatment where none existed before to protect local waterways and wetlands adjacent to the property. The new landscaping ensured that any existing native vegetation that was removed was replaced in-kind. The re-use of the property respects the history of the treasured building while giving it a new future of service to the county.

Pender County is proud of the efforts to restore the old school as a focal point of the community

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