

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Upstate Forever to Honor City of Spartanburg For Promoting Sustainable Communities**

**SPARTANBURG, S.C. – Jan. 30, 2012** – Upstate Forever will honor the City of Spartanburg this Thursday, Feb. 2 at its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual ForeverGreen Awards Luncheon. Upstate Forever has chosen to honor the City of Spartanburg with the Sustainable Communities Champion Award because of their significant work in land use planning and sustainability.

The City of Spartanburg's sustainable initiatives are truly ground breaking as they are the first municipality in the Upstate to adopt the smart code or transect for their entire downtown. This code, based on building forms rather than function, divides the downtown and its surrounding areas into zones and incorporates urban design principles, public gathering places, mixed uses and a range of housing options. The focus is on the "pedestrian experience" encouraging active street fronts with parking to the rear or side of a building and requires exterior building materials to be compatible with other buildings.

In addition to their leadership on downtown planning, the city also launched the Spartanburg B-cycle bike sharing program, the first of its kind in the Southeast and recently revamped its recycling program with large blue rollout carts and new automated recycling. Participation in the recycling program has tripled in the past three years.

"A thriving downtown is central to our city's vision, and Council's adoption of the downtown master plan and urban code was certainly a significant step in the continuing development of a thriving central business district," said Mayor Junie White. "This award is an example of the kind of positive attention our city is receiving as a result of years of efforts to make our downtown a place where people increasingly choose to live, do business, dine, and shop, as well as a central gathering place for our residents to form and maintain connections that strengthen the entire city. We're honored by this recognition, and I would encourage people from all over the Upstate and beyond to use this as an opportunity to take another look at our city and the great opportunities to be found here."

"The City of Spartanburg's award from Upstate Forever is a great testament to the type of vision we have for the city and its community members," said Angela Viney, Upstate Forever's Spartanburg Director of Development and

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Spartanburg Office. “This award sets a benchmark for the great work Spartanburg has done in the past and what we plan to accomplish in the future.”

The event’s keynote speaker will be Eric Larsen, a polar explorer who just recently returned from a visit to Antarctica. His presentation, “Into the Heart of Cold,” relates Larsen’s experiences as a modern day explorer and polar adventurer to everyday work issues and challenges. Larsen is the only person in the world to have journeyed to the top, bottom and roof of the world when during a continuous 365-day period, he mounted major expeditions to the North and South Poles and an expedition to the summit of Mt. Everest.

The annual luncheon will also honor individuals, and other organizations that have made significant contributions in air and water quality, public service and volunteer service.

“Environmental awareness and economic prosperity can be mutually inclusive,” said Brad Wyche, Upstate Forever executive director. “There are some real win-win opportunities out there and this year’s honorees prove that.”

Other awards were bestowed in the following categories:

- Tommy Wyche Land Conservation Champion Award: **Bettina George**
- Clean Water Champion Award: **Dan Rankin, Dave Demarest, Lynne Newton**
- Clear Skies Champion Award: **City of Greenville**
- Public Servant of the Year: **John Frampton**
- Volunteer of the Year: **Jim Gossett**

Sponsors include BMW, Community Journals LLC, and George and Susu Johnson. The luncheon will be held at the Embassy Suites in Greenville.

### **About Upstate Forever**

Upstate Forever is a non-profit organization promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina. To learn more, visit [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org).