



City of West Columbia  
*Bridging Past, Present and Future*

## **News Release**

### **City Recognizes Engineers Who Saved Home from Storm Water Flooding**

The city of West Columbia will hold a press conference and reception at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 10, 2013 at 1020 Natchez Trail in West Columbia to recognize two engineers who found a way to save the house at that location from being imperiled by severe storm water runoff.

Torrential downpours in July and August heavily eroded a creek bed along Natchez Trail jeopardizing the nearby home at 1020 Natchez Trail. Stephen T. Henry, PE, Assistant State Conservation Engineer with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Sidney F. Varn, Jr., Director of Planning and Engineering with the city of West Columbia, worked diligently together in a dramatic attempt to halt storm water flooding along Natchez Trail that threatened to plunge the house down a 35-foot deep gully. Both Henry and Varn collaborated to design a permanent solution to handle excessive storm water runoff that had turned Natchez Trail into a flowing river during heavy rains. The homeowners initially contacted Mayor Joe Owens concerning their grave plight. Mayor Owens sought assistance from NRCS, which is part of the US Department of Agriculture. State Senator Nikki Setzler and State Representative Kenny Bingham were instrumental in setting up the collaborative effort between federal and local government officials. Both Setzler and Bingham represent West Columbia.

Utilizing the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), a federal program designed to help protect lives and property threatened by sudden watershed impairments, the Natchez Trail Slope Stabilization Project was implemented to resolve the imminent hazard created by storm water runoff. EWP work must be sponsored by a public agency and the city of West Columbia stepped forward to support the project. NRCS provided the construction cost share in the amount of 75 percent, while West Columbia contributed the remainder. The estimated project cost is 222,000.00.

Mayor Owens described the Natchez Trail Slope Stabilization Project, which began mid-September and was completed October 4, 2013, as a dynamic response to an emergency situation. “On behalf of the City Council and citizens of West Columbia, I want to express how thankful we are for the assistance from the NRCS,” said Mayor Owens. “Those homeowners can sleep a lot better knowing their home is now safe from flood waters.”

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