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2006 Best In The Basin Awards

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Three South Shore projects will be recognized today with 2006 Best in Basin Awards from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

“For the past 17 years, TRPA’s Best in Basin awards program has recognized projects that demonstrate exceptional planning, design and compatibility with the Lake Tahoe environment while following the guidelines set forth by the agency,” according to a press release from the TRPA.

The award for Best Management Practices Retrofit will be given to the lakefront parking project at the Skyland Subdivision in Zephyr Cove.

Pastore.Ryan EcoDesign Services addressed the primary problem of the previous parking lot that was “crumbling directly into the lake,” said Tony Pastore, owner of and designer for Pastore.Ryan EcoDesign Services.

Asphalt in the parking lot was replaced with pervious concrete, a material that allows for stormwater to travel through the surface of the lot and permeate into the soil beneath. This permeability prevents pollutants, like oil and other automotive fluids, from being washed into Lake Tahoe by stormwater runoff.

The material also considerably reduces heat island effects commonly associated with black, asphalt parking lots.

The award for Best Erosion Control will go to the Cave Rock Erosion Control Project, which utilized re-vegetation techniques to stabilize slopes in the Cave Rock subdivision.

Although the project was innovative because of the unusually steep grades where the re-vegetation practices were utilized, the real breakthrough that made the project an award-winner was the treatment of the soil before the vegetation was planted, according to Jim Rienstra, project engineer for K.B. Foster Civil Engineering.

The engineering firm added organic compost acquired from dairy farms in the Carson Valley to replace top soil that had been eroded from the area “40 to 50 years ago,” in Rienstra’s estimate.

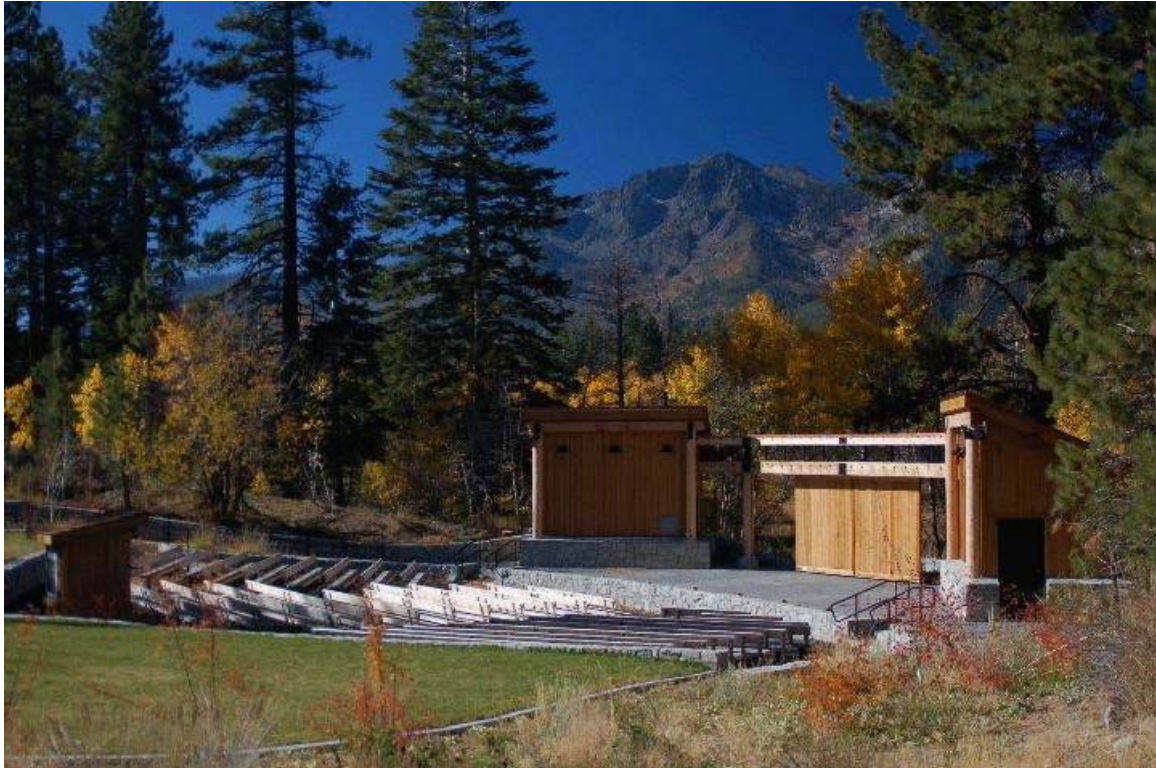
The result of the attention to detail is an erosion control project that, “tends to blend much better into the surrounding environment,” according to Rienstra.

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K.B. Foster can't take all the credit for the success of the project though.

Former chairman of the Cave Rock General Improvement District, Bill Lane, put an estimated "2,000 hours" of work into the project, according to Bob Heffernan, the current chairman of the improvement district.

The final South Shore award winner is the Lake of the Sky Amphitheatre at the U.S. Forest Service's Taylor Creek Visitors Center.



The amphitheater won for the Best Rebuild Project.

Many quarks existed throughout the old amphitheater, including a speaker system that had been struck by lightning "several times" according to Mike St. Michelle, director of the visitors center.

The rebuild took about two years and now includes features accessible to the handicapped, a retractable video screen that allows visitors to retain the spectacular daytime view of Taylor Creek Meadow, and a sound system that is currently state of the art, according to St. Michelle.

These three awards, as well as the rest of the Best in Basin Awards, will be presented at the TRPA's Governing Board meeting today in Kings Beach.