

NEWS RELEASE



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Florence Utilities Donates \$1,000 to Safeplace, Inc.

Florence, AL – March 1, 2003 – Florence Utilities will donate \$1,000 to Safeplace, Inc., which offers shelter for women and children in abusive situations. The donation is made through the **Project Habitat™** program in recognition of Florence Utilities as the winner of **Project Habitat's** Community Outreach Award for utilities with less than 5,000 circuit miles.

Project Habitat is a wildlife habitat enhancement program sponsored by BASF Professional Vegetation Management. The program has partnerships with numerous wildlife organizations, including the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Safeplace, a residential program for domestic violence, serves six northwestern Alabama counties and has been serving abused women and children for 23 years. According to Arned Heath, Safeplace executive director, the \$1,000 donation couldn't have come at a better time. "For several years a local grant covered our utility bills, which run about \$2,000 a month. This year we didn't get the grant, so this is a wonderful gift," says Heath.

Annually, Safeplace serves from 1,200 to 1,300 people. "We provide them many services like housing, counseling, job training and food. The money from Florence Utilities will be used to pay our utility bill for the 36-bed residential facility that houses more than 400 people over the year," says Heath.

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Recently, **Project Habitat**[™] honored Florence Utilities and three other utilities for their efforts in 2002 to improve wildlife habitat and build community support for wildlife. In recognition of their achievements, each utility receives a \$1,000 donation to be made to the charity or civic group of their choice.

Joseph McPhail, Line Clearance Supervisor, heads up the **Project Habitat** program for Florence Utilities, and was involved with selecting Safeplace to receive the donation. “I chose Safeplace because they provide critical services for women and children who are at risk,” says McPhail. “I know they provide excellent community service and we are happy to be of help.”

To be a **Project Habitat** member, utilities must control vegetation in a manner conducive to wildlife enhancement. They must make a long-term commitment to reduce its percentage of mowing, specifically during ground-nesting periods; use low-volume, selective herbicide applications to increase vegetation value to wildlife; and use control methods that protect and create corridors for wildlife crossings.

Project Habitat members have the opportunity to participate in the annual awards competition. An advisory panel comprised of industry experts selects the winners. Those chosen demonstrate the very best in integrated vegetation management practices that provide habitat for wildlife and involve the community in their efforts.

“We are pleased to have this awards program in place to recognize utilities that strive to excel as stewards of the environment. The \$1,000 grant gives them an opportunity to recognize and support other groups that also strive to be the best in service to others,” says Scott Peoples, BASF Professional Vegetation Management senior marketing manager.

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BASF is the world's leading chemical company, offering its customers a range of high-performance products, including chemicals, plastics, performance products, agricultural products, fine chemicals as well as crude oil and natural gas. With sales of EUR 3 billion in 2002, BASF's Agricultural Products division, headquartered in Mount Olive, New Jersey, USA, is a leading supplier and marketer of fungicides, insecticides and herbicides. Based on its broad experience in R&D, manufacturing, marketing and sales, the vision of BASF's Agricultural Products division is to be the world's leading innovator, optimizing agricultural production, improving nutrition, and thus enhancing the quality of life for a growing world population. Further information on BASF Professional Vegetation Management can be found on the Web at www.vmanswers.com (or www.forestryfacts.com).

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