

Recovering “The Original Green”

Written by

Wednesday, 29 September 2010 10:14



The Congress for the New Urbanism – Carolinas Chapter (<http://www.cnucarolinas.org>) sponsored, with its partners, “The Original Green” by Steve Mouzon on Wednesday, September 15, 2010. This public event, which was held at the TCL Beaufort Campus, was supplemented with sessions held for the Elected Officials of Beaufort County, and the local Planning Staffs & Development Community. This was the second of a series of speaking and learning engagements offered by the CNU-Carolinas Chapter, and was made possible by the following sponsors: City of Beaufort, Beaufort County the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce, Town of Bluffton, South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, the Beaufort County Open Land Trust, Historic Beaufort Foundation, Main street Beaufort, Brown Design Studio, and Moser Design Group.

Why Steve Mouzon?

The opportunity to have Steve Mouzon, one of the foremost writers and speakers on true sustainability, is extraordinary for Beaufort. Steve’s most recent book, *The Original Green: Unlocking the Mystery of True Sustainability*

is an excellent resource for our historic town as we embark on our 4th century of life, and figure out how to grow and develop in a natural, sustainable way. Steve’s philosophy is not new, but rather self-described as “the sustainability all our great-grandparents knew by heart.”

The Original Green

goes back to basics in figuring out the places we live and why they were built in their particular manner. It explores the way we live in them, why we love or may not love them, and how to perpetuate them in the best possible way.

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Closing in on the 300th anniversary of the founding of Beaufort, there are few places in America with as much enduring history as this town can reflect upon. Beaufort, like all built places, is defined by “software” and “hardware.” The Software is the people— the culture, traditions, desires, and occupations. In Beaufort, this includes Gullah, Lowcountry hospitality, the fishing industry, farming, and others. The Hardware is the built environment – the streets, buildings, and details that make up the town. The hardware adapts to the existing natural conditions. For Beaufort this is humidity, sunshine, marsh, water, topography and all other natural features that define the climate and terrain of the town.

The combination of these things gives Beaufort a unique identity, a sense of place. Steve Mouzon represents a view of our sense of place that must be understood by all members of society, from each individual citizen, to public officials. As Beaufort grows and develops, we all need to know why we love Beaufort and how to keep it this way. Steve’s message is relevant to all: Let us go back to basics and create places that are truly sustainable and will be around for the next 300 years – places that are nourishable, accessible, serviceable, and securable.

Steve Mouzon, who has studied thousands of cities and towns around the world, draws upon the best of “best practices” to offer insights about what is really important and what truly will sustain. His passion for places like Beaufort, and for helping to identify and remind us all of what makes them great, is perfectly timed for the momentous anniversary that our town is celebrating. We were so lucky to have him share in that celebration, and his timely message will guide us into our next century.

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of articles about sustainability and the future of Beaufort. It was written for Lowcountry Weekly by the Congress for the New Urbanism – Carolinas Chapter.

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