



## **(314) 640-5211 For Immediate Release**

**For More Information Contact:**

Pamela Powell  
The Hauser Group

314.436.9090

### **S. M. WILSON & CO. DONATES TIME, RESOURCES TO REPAIR MARY MEACHUM VISITOR CENTER ON GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY'S NORTH RIVERFRONT TRAIL**

#### ***Center damaged by late June storms is now stronger than ever***

**St. Louis, Mo., July 27, 2011 ...** In late June, dangerous storms rolled through the St. Louis area, severely damaging the Mary Meachum Visitor Center, located along Great Rivers Greenways' Riverfront Trail in North St. Louis City. The visitor center, which is owned by St. Louis City and operated by Grace Hill AmeriCorps Trail Ranger Project, acts as an important rest stop to the thousands of pedestrians and bicyclists that travel the 11-mile trail, especially during the hot summer months. It was vital that repairs be made right away before the whole building was destroyed. However, with little available resources to fund the repairs, it looked like all hope was lost until St. Louis-based S. M. Wilson & Co., came to the rescue. The full-service general contracting and construction management firm donated an estimated \$7,000 in materials and resources to get the center fully functioning in less than three weeks, and because of S. M. Wilson's efforts, the center is now stronger than ever.

"Without S. M. Wilson, we would have lost the entire facility for sure, having neither the funds nor capacity to make repairs," said Doug Eller, manager of community initiatives at Grace Hill Settlement House. "Now, the visitor center will continue to be a haven for thousands of Riverfront Trail visitors for years to come."

Just a week before the storms hit, Grace Hill had worked with S. M. Wilson, when, as part of Marine Week, the firm led an effort to have Marines and other volunteers work with AmeriCorps Rangers to construct a wooden greenhouse at the visitor center. It was only natural for Grace Hill to reach out to the firm again for an assessment of the storm damages, but Grace Hill was very surprised and eternally grateful to learn S. M. Wilson would donate its services.

S. M. Wilson's team worked quickly to make the repairs, already having a plan of action two days after the storm had passed. The team first built a temporary plywood barrier to deter looters, before taking apart each panel and re-attaching them to the steel wall frame. The panels were disassembled, straightened and refastened with heavy-duty anchors and the building's flashing was replaced. The S. M. Wilson team also fixed minor damage and wear and tear including a door.

"We were honored to help restore this historic place in our community and assist Great Rivers Greenway and Grace Hill Settlement House," stated Fred Jaeckle, Vice President Pre-Construction and Estimating at S. M. Wilson. "Our team was able to come up with a solution to save most of the building's existing materials and strengthen the structure. "

The Riverfront Trail is owned by St. Louis City, in partnership with Great Rivers Greenway, and is maintained by Grace Hill's AmeriCorps Trail Rangers program. The trail follows the Mississippi River, starting at Biddle Street and heading north to the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, and connects the neighborhoods of Baden, College Hill, Hyde Park and Old North St. Louis. It passes through North Riverfront Park, Maline Creek and the Mary Meachum Freedom Crossing site, which is Missouri's first nationally recognized Underground Railroad site and is operated by Grace Hill. The Mary Meachum Visitor Center, located between Ferry and Prairie streets, serves

as the headquarters for the AmeriCorps Trail Ranger operations. The center, which includes a deck with picnic benches overlooking the Mississippi River, allows trail users access to bike repair, water, restrooms, trail

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**S. M. Wilson Donates Materials and Resources for Visitor Center Repair  
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information, first aid and more. The Visitor Center is generally open in mornings and afternoons on weekends and varies on other days.

“The Mary Meachum Visitor Center is a vital resource for our North Riverfront trail visitors,” said Susan Trautman, Executive Director of Great Rivers Greenway. “We are very grateful for S.M. Wilson’s generosity and timeliness in making the repairs so that trailgoers can continue to have a safe and secure place to rest.”

**About Great Rivers Greenway:**

*Great Rivers Greenway is a public organization developing an interconnected system of trails and greenways to make the region a better place to live. The organization encompasses St. Louis City and County and St. Charles County. For more information, visit [www.grgstl.org](http://www.grgstl.org).*

**About Grace Hill:**

Grace Hill Settlement House, a proud member of United Way, works in partnership with neighbors and stakeholders to identify the social and economic challenges in North and South St. Louis, and establish families and communities that are strong and self-sustaining. *Grace Hill Enables Healthy and Productive Lives.*  
[www.gracehill.org](http://www.gracehill.org)

**About S. M. Wilson & Co.:**

*S. M. Wilson is a 90-year-old, full-service construction management, design/build and general contracting firm with headquarters in St. Louis. It is one of the largest general construction and construction management firms in the St. Louis area. The company posted \$345 million in 2010 revenues, and ranks 149<sup>th</sup> in Engineering News-Record’s 2010 list of Top 400 commercial contractors nationwide.*

*Founded in 1921, the company has built a reputation for its high quality of work and outstanding financial and general project management expertise. The company is a proud member of the Associated General Contractors of St. Louis, as well as the Construction Management Association of America, North America’s only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of professional construction/program management. For more information, visit [www.smwilson.com](http://www.smwilson.com).*

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