

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Friends For the Dearborn Animal Shelter Announce Winners of New Shelter Design Competition

DEARBORN -- A brand new ultramodern environmentally friendly animal shelter inched a little closer to reality Saturday, Feb. 25th.

During a ceremony at Ford Motor Company's historic Rouge plant officials from Lawrence Technological University (LTU) and the Friends For the Dearborn Animal Shelter (the Friends) announced that LTU graduate students James Droski and Daniel Wells are the winners of the 2006 Dearborn Animal Shelter Student Design Competition.

The Friends are currently working to raise the \$5 million needed to fund a much-needed new facility, which will be located on Michigan Avenue on land donated by the City of Dearborn.

The winning design of Droski and Wells was chosen for its:

- Innovative use of environmentally friendly or "green" building materials.
- Straightforward layout.
- Use of natural lighting and attention to ventilation.
- Reliance on solar energy to heat water and provide natural heat.
- Excellent thermal performance that will keep the heat in the building during the winter while reducing the shelter's energy consumption.

Although their exact design won't be used for the new shelter, many of the ideas contained in Droski and Wells's winning entry will be incorporated into the new shelter plans.

If the fund-raising effort stays on schedule, the new shelter could be open for business by December 2007. About \$150,000 has been raised so far, but many events and fund-raising activities planned for 2006 should boost that total. "Once roughly \$3 million is raised, construction can begin," said Rich Bardelli, Friends board member and Ford Land Supervisor of Planning. Friends Development Director Kelle Sisung further commented, "We are truly grateful for our partners Ford Motor Company and LTU, but we are looking for that one big gift to launch our capital campaign efforts. We know it's out there; we just need to find it!"

The project to design a new shelter began last fall. Teams of students from LTU majoring in architecture visited Ford's rebuilt Rouge plant, where the nation's top-selling pickup truck, the F-series, is built. Then they toured the current shelter, which is more than 20 years old, worn out, overcrowded and suffering from numerous infrastructure problems. Finally, the students went to the vacant lot on Michigan Avenue that will be the home of the new shelter. Then they went to work.

Their assignment: design a modern facility, which like the Rouge plant, goes easy on the environment. The Rouge plant, for instance, has a sedum roof of natural grass that filters rainwater and helps insulate the building during the winter. There are also large expanses of grassy areas around the plant that help filter runoff rainwater. The Rouge plant has won numerous environmental awards.

The trip to the current shelter at 2661 Greenfield Road was an experience that took both Droski and Wells by surprise. "I was disappointed in the current living conditions of the animals and the working conditions of the shelter staff," said Droski.

Added Wells: "It's a closed space. It's small and there is a lot of bad ventilation. That inspired me to keep the design of the new shelter very open, have a lot of natural light and to design an efficient ventilation system that gets the smells of the animals out of the building."

About 200 people attended the design competition ceremony, which was held in the Rouge plant's visitor's center. There was valet parking and catered food partly donated by Jim Kokas of Opus One. The shelter's Executive Director, Elaine Greene, mingled with guests accompanied by a very well behaved shelter dog, Mya.

During a brief address, she explained that the current shelter is falling apart: The sewage system backs up, there is inadequate space for animals and the staff doesn't even have enough room to eat lunch.

Greene said visitors to the shelter have to deal with bad odors and a very loud environment. "All of this makes it difficult," she remarked, "to do what we need to for the animals and for the community."

Mary Ann Wright, an executive vice president at Collins & Aikman, a manufacturer of automobile interior parts for nearly all of the world's automakers, said that Droski and Wells will split a \$2,500 scholarship donated by Greektown Casino.

Wright, an animal lover who became a benefactor of the Dearborn Animal Shelter while she was an executive at Ford Motor Company, said the project taught the students about compassion and social responsibility. "The shelter project is unique because it creates interest outside of just helping animals," commented Wright. "By getting students involved, people can get their hands around it and relate to kids and the work that goes into architecture."

Edward Orlowski, the LTU chair of the department of architecture -- and the instructor who led the project at the school -- said all of the students who submitted an entry worked hard and came up with great ideas. "This was an outstanding group of students," Orlowski said at the Rouge event. "They were highly motivated." During a brief speech to all the students and their families, Orlowski congratulated all the competition participants: "You kids did a terrific job. You deserve all the credit in the world, and your parents should be very proud of you."

The effort to build the new shelter has attracted quite a bit of high profile attention. Robert Lutz, vice chairman of General Motors, attended the Rouge event and made a sizable donation. Lutz and his wife Denise are longtime supporters of Southeast Michigan humane societies and shelters.

Ford Motor Company's Deputy Chief of Staff, Tim O'Brien, made it possible for the Dearborn Shelter to use the Rouge Visitor's Center for the event. Ford has also donated leftover building

supplies, vehicles and other resources to the Dearborn Shelter. "We're very happy to be supportive of the shelter," said O'Brien.

Wright made a \$10,000 donation to help fund the new shelter and has been working behind the scenes to help raise funds for the new facility. "The shelter we have now is so gross. It's stinky and crowded and cannot accommodate the volume of animals," Wright says. "We help care for nearly 3,000 homeless animals each year. Because of space limitations, some cats are housed in a trailer behind the shelter; and we often take animals home with us to foster. We don't want to turn any animal down."

For Executive Director, Elaine Greene, the new shelter can't be built fast enough. "It's going to be easier to save more animals," Greene said of the new facility. "We outgrew the current shelter about five or six years ago. Animals come in healthy, but go out sick because of the stress, overcrowding and noise level. Everyday is a challenge."

For more information about the Friends, or to become a partner in the new shelter campaign, please visit Friends For the Dearborn Animal Shelter online at www.dearborn-animals.com or contact the shelter at 313-943-2697. To visit the shelter's adoptable animals, please stop by the facility, which is located at 2661 Greenfield Rd., Dearborn.

Caption: Lawrence Tech architectural students Daniel Wells (2nd from left) and James Droski (4th from left) won the student design contest for the new shelter and were awarded a \$2,500 scholarship from Greektown Casino Feb 25th. Also pictured: LTU's Edward Orlowski, left, Marianne Pollock of Greektown Casino and Dr. Charles Chambers, LTU chancellor.

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The mission of the Friends For the Dearborn Animal Shelter is to provide loving care and sanctuary to animals, encourage adoptions and reunions, and promote respect, responsibility and compassion for all animals.

Animals are the heart of our mission.

We cordially invite your coverage of this event. Thank you.

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