PRESS RELEASE AND PICTURES ~ 10/18/2013
LSU’S HILLTOP ARBORETUM HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING AND GRAND OPENING

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BATON ROUGE – The LSU Hilltop Arboretum held a ribbon cutting and open house for a $1.28 million expansion project constructed by Lincoln Builders of Baton Rouge on Thursday, October 17, 2013 from 6 – 8pm.

The Imogene Newsom Brown Education Facility will be the first LSU building to be registered with the U. S. Green Building Council for possible Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design [LEED] certification. It will play host to educational and fundraising events and will be the final piece of a 1999 building plan that includes the existing administrative building, library and open-air pavilion designed by award-winning Lake Flato Architects of San Antonio, Texas.

The Bert Turner Courtyard designed by Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects of New York will anchor the education facility including the Beverly Brown Coates Auditorium to the existing open-air pavilion. The courtyard will provide an important demonstration for best-practices for developing outdoor living space that extends the indoor space into the landscape, and works in concert with
natural systems to utilize water and plant resources in a sustainable way. The 2,050 square foot auditorium with a warming kitchen, more than doubles the existing capacity for activities.

The Friends of the LSU Hilltop Arboretum raised all funds for the expansion project through private donations.

The ribbon cutting and open house commenced after a brief program at 6pm that featured remarks by John Murrill (President, Friends of Hilltop Arboretum), Ted Flato (Principal, Lake Flato Architects), Stuart Bell Ph.D. (Executive Vice chancellor and Provost, LSU), Alkis Tsolakis (Dean, LSU College of Art and Design), Bradley Cantrell (Director, LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture), and Peggy Davis Coates (Director, LSU Hilltop Arboretum).

The LSU Hilltop Arboretum strives to be a nationally-recognized center for the study of plants and landscape design. The 14-acre nature preserve is noted for its collection of more than 150 species of plants native to Louisiana, its unique topography, and its reputation as a readily accessible space where people can experience and learn about nature, plants and the Louisiana landscape.

From left: Ted Flato, Bradley Cantrell, John Murrill, Alkis Tsolakis, Joe Benjamin, Keith Keller, Peggy Coates, Cathy Coates and Beverly Coates
From left: Sue Turner and Suzanne Turner
From left: Ted Flato, Bradley Cantrell, John Murrill, Alkis Tsolakis, Joe Benjamin, Peggy Coates, Keith Keller, Cathy Coates, Beverly Coates and Dudley Coates