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## Green Educator Winner: Scott Walton

Renovated office quickly led Walton to green pastures

Birmingham Business Journal - by [Cary Estes](#) Special

When Scott Walton planted his investment firm in a renovated building in downtown Homewood, he didn't anticipate all the green growth that would emerge from within those walls.

Walton recently relocated his company – S. Andrew Walton Investment Planning – to a 70-year-old, two-story building that originally had operated as a community center.

He had the building renovated using LEED standards, and during the process became increasingly interested in the green movement.

Little did he know, the green movement would soon take up permanent residence in his building.

The second floor of the building was an open space that had been used to show movies and hold dances during its community-center days.

So instead of extending his offices to the upper floor, Walton decided to use the area to house a new Green Resource Center for Alabama, where people could come to learn more about green products and organizations in Alabama.

Walton invited 15 people from various local environmental organizations to attend a meeting and discuss plans for the new center.

He said 50 people showed up to the event.

“It was just an incredible moment,” Walton said.

“We realized then that there's really a need for this in Birmingham, a place for people to convene and learn about the many green options.”

Within six months, the GRCA had assembled a board of directors, become incorporated and received a nonprofit designation from the IRS.

It has operated for the past two years as sort of a one-stop shopping location for information about all things green.

Walton said there is serious public interest in green at the moment and it's not just from businesses and nonprofit organizations.

Just the other day, a woman came to the center who wanted to install solar panels.

The Green Resource Center was able to point her in the right direction.

“Our mission is to inform people about sensible-living practices and inspire them to action,” he said. This woman came in asking questions, she learned some things and now she can take action. She has steps she can take now to build her house the way she wants to by making good decisions.”

Walton said he has been surprised at how quickly the GRCA has been accepted.

He said the center is used regularly by a variety of people and organizations, ranging from architects to

government officials to children's camps.

"It has exceeded our expectations," Walton said.

"It's amazing how many people are plugging into the Green Resource Center. When people have questions, we've become the central station for informing them and trying to direct them to sensible practices."

*Cary Estes is a freelance writer based in Birmingham.*

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