

2016 CELEBRATION OF TREES AWARDS

Award Category: Local Government: > 20,000 population

City of Meridian

Mayor

Percy Bland, III

City Council

Dr. George Thomas
K. Dustin Markham
Barbara Henson
Kim Houston
Randy Hammon

Meridian Tree Commission

Craig Wilkes, Chairman
Tom Carmichael
Cynthia Boyd
Donia Evans
Duffee Williams
Gail Barton



"We are so pleased to be working with the City of Meridian to bring this technology to their downtown. As the first city in the state of Mississippi to use this technology, Meridian is showing others in the region what a truly sustainable urban forest can look like – and the incredible impact it can have on a community." Graham Ray, DeepRoot CEO

The City of Meridian is joining only 700 cities world-wide in installing the *Silva Cell* system as a part of the effort to improve the downtown area's infrastructure and streetscape. *Silva Cells* are open, crate-like structures installed underground and filled with loosely compacted soil which enables trees to grow larger and healthier. Using this innovative system, trees are able to have pavement on top of them without compacting the soil below. This "green infrastructure" increases the volume of non-compacted soil allowing for mature healthy tree canopies resulting in long-term tangible benefits, to include aesthetics, safety, and reduced maintenance costs.

Silva Cells use leading edge technology to provide an environment that is aesthetically pleasing, as well as functional. Residents can enjoy the beauty of the newly planted trees, as well as appreciate the positive environmental impact on the city. The soil contained in the *Silva Cells* absorbs rainwater as well as nurtures the trees, so it aids in storm water management. Air and water quality are also improved by the tree that the *Silva Cell* system nurtures.

Funding for this downtown revitalization project was awarded through a grant from MS Development Authority in the amount of \$3,500,000. A second revitalization project funded by a \$1,000,000 grant through the MS Department of Transportation is now underway and will also include the *Silva Cell* system.

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