

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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A NEW EDUCATION FOR THE SOUTHEAST *Introducing the Aveda Institute Birmingham*

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (February 4, 2010)—Education just got a little more beautiful, thanks to the transformation of a beloved movie theatre into a brand new cosmetology training facility located in the heart of Alabama.

Years ago, the foyers of the former Cobb Theatre located at the Galleria Circle in Hoover were once packed with moviegoers. Now, on **February 4th** from **6p.m.- 8p.m.**, a new crowd fills the halls again celebrating the grand opening of the **Aveda Institute of Birmingham's** state-of-the art education center located on the prestigious Riverchase Galleria property. With this location, **Beauty Basics, Inc.**, a premier beauty industry training and education company **and Neill Corporation**, Aveda's exclusive distributor for the southeast and Mexico, have together created **The Education Center for the South**, setting a new standard for beauty, wellness, fashion and art.

This brand new high-tech, low-impact educational facility measuring 42,000 sq. ft., will serve as a training center for more than 300 day and evening students who are looking to begin a successful career in cosmetology, esthology and massage and as a salon for local guests who are looking for Aveda services at an economical price. In addition, the building has been constructed and designed with environmental sustainability in mind every step of the way—meaning a safe and healthy environment for all.

The Aveda Institute Birmingham promises to elevate Birmingham on a national level in the fashion and beauty industry. The center provides a full-service retail store, Internet café, and a luxurious service environment for students to perform guest services and build guest relationships. The school also features a unique 300 seat theatre to hold industry and student education events and will provide opportunities to host internationally and nationally renowned artist shows.

“Our goal has always been to create an environment that inspires our students and prepares them for success in the professional salon and spa industry,” says **Jeanine O’Neill-Blackwell, Chief Learning Officer of Beauty Basics, Inc.**, a school management company which operates ten Aveda Institutes. “We are excited to provide the network of Birmingham salon and spa owners with a well-trained talent pool.”

Aveda Institutes are a launch pad for aspiring beauty industry professionals. Students attend the schools to learn the basics of, and become licensed in, cosmetology, esthology and massage. Thanks to Aveda's extraordinary curriculum and unique approaches to learning, students at Aveda Institutes also gain a well-rounded understanding of the industry, not only learning creative and technical excellence in their respective areas but also business development, retail knowledge and wellness.

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The Aveda Institute Birmingham is located in the Riverchase Galleria property—Alabama’s number one tourist attraction¹ and the largest mall in the southeastern United States. Comprising high-end shopping, lodging, dining and entertainment, Riverchase Galleria is also designed with design sleek efficiency in mind, and features the world’s largest skylight.

Welcome

Visitors to the Aveda Institute Birmingham will immediately enter the Experience Center—a full-service retail store where they can explore all of Aveda’s many plant- and flower-based products and savor Aveda’s unique signature aromas. Guests can also receive any number of Sensory Experiences—such as a cup of comforting tea or a hand massage—designed to relax and rejuvenate them. Just beyond the greeting area is a refreshment bar and Internet café, where prospective students and guests can access computers to learn more about Aveda.

On either side of the Experience Center are the north and south clinic floors, where students perform cut and color services on guests. Each clinic floor has 40 stations supported by its own shampoo room and manicure pedicure room. The stations are divided into two blocks of 20, each with two educators—providing an unprecedented student to teacher ratio of 10:1—and each run like its own mini salon, providing real-world experience for the students.

“By creating this atmosphere of realism, we’re providing the students with the most effective educational experience possible—and we’re providing local salon owners with the most highly-skilled and talented students they could possibly find,” says **Bonnie Wilson, director of the Aveda Institute Birmingham**. “In creating such a lifelike salon environment, students really are learning everything they need to know about working in a salon from technical to guest service skills.”

Beyond the clinic floor is the high-end spa housing 12 multi-functional rooms where guests can receive treatments including massage, facials and body wraps. Operating as a luxury spa, this area contains its own concierge area, relaxation room and locker rooms. Continuing on beyond the main foyer area is the unique Mission Wall. It is here that all visitors can learn the story of the heritage of the building, and commitment to environmental responsibility. The Mission Wall is 30ft long and features seven panels, some embedded with a 9” touch screen TV for interactive storytelling, and each telling a different chapter in the story of the building’s creation.

At the very back of the building, is the magnificent multi-purpose theater. The space is designed to be a multi-functional space seating up to 140 people in rounds and 300 people in theater setup. The space includes dedicated circuits and water, meaning that hands-on classes featuring hair cutting and coloring can take place without disruption to the rest of the school.

Greening Birmingham

The Aveda Institute Birmingham has been built to stringent green design principles, making it one of the most sustainable buildings in Alabama. Every aspect of the design of this new location has been thoughtfully considered and built to high environmental standards.

Most notably, the building itself has been repurposed and recycled—originally a 10 screen movie theater, the Institute has been refurbished to house the educational facility, while still staying true to its roots by ———
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¹ www.riverchasegalleria.com

maintaining a theater to be used for exhibitions and student shows. In fact, two walls in the retail area feature panels that will tell the story of the original building, its re-construction, and also allowing a place for guests to add their own memories and stories of the building and what it means to them.

In addition, the Institute has an enormous amount of natural light, which is utilized throughout. Solar tubes bring direct sunlight into the building along with large windows and a skylight. In addition, the use of indoor windows in conference rooms and classrooms makes for an open plan work environment, which improves the feel and flow of the space.

Other environmental aspects include low-energy lighting, heat and ventilation systems and further use of refurbished and recycled materials throughout. (Please see the design fact sheet for more information.)

"I'm inspired by the effort and commitment that has been made by all of our design team in the recycling of this great building and creating this healthy, green project," says **Terry Blackwell, Chief Executive Officer of Beauty Basics, Inc.** "It embodies Beauty Basic's mission statement to create nurturing environments that facilitate life long learning."

Says **John White, Vice President, INOX DESIGN, Inc., LEED AP**, "My partner Cynthia Sours and I applaud the efforts of the team at Beauty Basics for their commitment to sustainable design and constant innovation- this is the magic that helps transform these projects from the ordinary into the extraordinary...."

Leader in Education

Cosmetology students will spend 500 hours in the classroom at the Aveda Institute Birmingham, building up the confidence and skills needed to work on real customers honing their consultation and timing skills along while continuing to develop their creative and technical ability. In the third and final phase of their education, they will work mostly on the clinic floor while also studying for their State Board Cosmetology license exams—before graduating; students from Beauty Basics locations have an average licensure rate of 96.3% of those students completing the program.

With an approach to learning unlike any other, Aveda Education is designed as a journey—one that each student follows to reach his or her unique goals. This philosophy of continuous improvement and dedication to connecting beauty, wellness, fashion and art with the environment has fueled the success of the other ten hugely successful Aveda Institutes owned and run by Beauty Basics, Inc. which include the Aveda Institute New Orleans, Aveda Institute Washington D.C. and the Aveda Institute Dallas (opened in late 2009). Aveda stylists earn three times more on average than other stylists, reaching an average salary of almost \$50,000 by their third year of practice, and going on to many successful careers including international award-winning stylists and colorists and successful business owners.

The **Aveda Institute Birmingham** is located at 3200 Galleria Circle in Hoover; it contains separate classrooms for cosmetology, esthology and massage as well as a spacious haircutting and styling clinic. Reservations are now available for guests to receive services, including haircuts starting at \$15. For more information on classes or services, contact the Aveda Institute Birmingham at 205.769.3500 www.AvedaInstituteBirmingham.com.

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“Our mission at Aveda is to care for the world we live in, from the products we make, to the ways in which we give back to society. At Aveda, we strive to set an example for environmental leadership and responsibility, not just in the world of beauty, but around the world.”

About Beauty Basics

Beauty Basics Inc. is the visionary behind this exceptional learning environment that is an embodiment of the Aveda mission. Our core purpose is to educate on the craft of beauty and wellness – teaching, inspiring, nourishing and connecting our students. We do this by creating nurturing environments that facilitate life long learning. More information at www.avedainstitutesbb.com

About Neill Corporation

Neill Corporation is an exclusive AVEDA distributor serving seven southern states and Mexico. Its services include product distribution, technology, education and retail design. Neill Corporation believes that business development and personal development are interdependent and responsible for creating opportunity and inspiring evolution. More information at www.neill.net