



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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2004 CITY LIVABILITY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED *Charleston, Santa Barbara Receive Top Honors*

Boston, MA (June 26, 2004) — Mayors Joseph Riley of Charleston (SC), and Marty Blum of Santa Barbara (CA) have been awarded top honors in the 2004 City Livability Awards Program, sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Waste Management, Inc.

City Livability Awards recognize and honor mayors for exemplary leadership in developing and implementing programs that improve the quality of life in America's cities. An independent panel of judges, selected by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, determined the winning cities based on three criteria: mayoral leadership, creativity and innovation, and broad impact on the quality of life for residents.

- Charleston's Livability Court, created under the direction of Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., addresses minor disturbances and ordinance violations that were previously interjected among more serious cases in the criminal court system.
- Under the leadership of Mayor Marty Blum, Santa Barbara's Downtown Worker Housing Program delivers high-density affordable housing of extraordinary quality to low-income households.

Outstanding Achievement Awards were given to: Mayors Martin O' Malley of Baltimore (MD), Jeremy Harris of Honolulu (HI) Ron Gonzales of San Jose (CA), Francis Slay of St. Louis (MO) for cities with populations of 100,000 or above; and Mayors Carlos Martinez of Aguadilla (PR), Peter Clavelle of Burlington (VT), Michael Guido of Dearborn (MI), and Gene Daniels of Paramount (CA) for cities below 100,000 in population.

Honorable Mention Citations were awarded to: Mayors Mark Begich of Anchorage (AK), Thomas Menino of Boston (MA), Charles Luken of Cincinnati (OH), Vera Katz of Portland (OR) for cities with populations of 100,000 or above; and Keith Hightower of Shreveport (LA), Dan Coody of Fayetteville (AR), Charles Oberlie of Michigan City (IN), H. Abram Wilson of San Ramon (CA), Brenda Lawrence of Southfield (MI), and David Jones of St. Joseph (MO) for cities below 100,000 in population.

The City Livability Awards were presented at the Conference of Mayors' Annual Luncheon by Mr. David Steiner, Chief Executive Officer of Waste Management, the

nation's largest provider of waste management services. Waste Management's support makes the City Livability Awards Program possible.

"Waste Management employees work continuously with community leaders on ways to improve the quality of life in our urban spaces," said Mr. Steiner. "During the fifteen years we have sponsored this program, we've always discovered creative and innovative ways in which mayors raise the standard for families who choose to live, work and play in our nation's cities."

J. Thomas Cochran, Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors added, "Our City Livability Awards Program gives the Conference a chance to express our pride in cities' determined leadership in making urban areas more safer, cleaner and more livable. We are grateful to Waste Management for their support of the City Livability Awards Program, and for the opportunity to showcase the talent and commitment of mayors and city governments."

Following are brief descriptions of the First Place, Outstanding Achievement and Honorable Mention winners:

FIRST PLACE

CHARLESTON, SC

Charleston's Livability Court, created under the direction of Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., addresses minor disturbances and ordinance violations that were previously interjected among more serious cases in the criminal court system. In response to concerns of residents about quality of life issues Mayor Riley took steps to insure that noise and nuisances cases were heard in an appropriate venue. Issues ranging from complaints about animals to unkempt yards, noise violations, parking and tourism infractions are now addressed in bi-weekly court sessions. A police sergeant assigned to the court prepares evidence and ensures compliance with court decisions. Although the emphasis is on problem - solving rather than punishment, Mayor Riley's commitment and the court's message remains clear – small matters can be very serious to those affected, and violators will be held accountable.

"This program goes a long way towards improving quality of life in Charleston," noted the panel of judges, "and it addresses problems that are often neglected. There are problems that come with success and popularity like Charleston has experienced that include noise, trash and other quality of life nuisances. Mayor Riley is continuing to celebrate Charleston's renewal while managing age old and common problems – a model for other cities to follow."

SANTA BARBARA, CA

Under the leadership of Mayor Marty Blum, Santa Barbara's Downtown Worker Housing Program delivers high-density affordable housing of extraordinary quality to low-income households employed downtown while minimizing impact on traffic and parking in a city with a median house price of \$ 925,000. Mayor Blum created a public/private partnership, the city provides predevelopment and permanent financing under favorable

terms to developers like the city's Housing Authority and local nonprofit organizations. Local banks also provide financing, and local businesses help with marketing the units. The first project completed is a stunning 42-unit development, and four projects with 129 units are currently in predevelopment.

"This is a great example of building sustainable communities," said the panel of judges. "It is a departure from previous practices in terms of land use planning. Mayor Blum recognized multiple issues and came up with a sustained strategy – true leadership."

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

BALTIMORE, MD

After Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley took office in 2000, he was determined to fight crime, grime and drug prevention. "Baltimore Believe" is a multi-component, community-centered communications campaign aimed at elevating civic pride and reducing the effects of drug use in Baltimore City. "Baltimore Believe" is an unprecedented attempt to change the mindset of an entire city. The program's kick-off component, a four-minute movie depicting the harsh realities of drug life, was segmented into commercials that aired extensively on local television and radio stations. The campaign's strong, simple logo – the word BELIEVE in all capital letters knocked-out of a black background – can be seen throughout Baltimore and beyond. Mayor O'Malley's campaign has led to record reductions in violent crime, rising property values, improved public schools and an expanding economic infrastructure.

"Mayor O'Malley put his personal prestige on the line for this program," said the panel of judges. "This was a major effort to ensure a bright future for the children of Baltimore with significant outreach to segments of the community including the private sector – a commendable effort."

HONOLULU, HI

The Sustainable Honolulu plan, established by Mayor Jeremy Harris to address the challenges of island urbanization in the 21st century, is a comprehensive system of city programs and partnerships designed to ensure that future generations will enjoy a quality of life characterized by environmental beauty and resource abundance. Sustainable Honolulu focuses on five areas critical to the future of the city: economic development, land use, transportation, natural resources and energy. Under Mayor Harris' leadership, Honolulu has dramatically increased the energy efficiency of all city facilities, leveraged the potential of renewable energy sources, and expanded the use of distributed energy systems that allow local government operations to be increasingly energy self-sufficient.

"This is an outstanding example of environmental leadership on the part of Mayor Harris," observed the panel of judges. "They took a solid step toward protecting their tourist base -- their welcome mat is still out."

SAN JOSE, CA

The City of San Jose has developed a program to address the removal of graffiti and vandalism. Most large urban cities in America are faced with the blight of graffiti. Infrastructure units including buildings, light poles, utility boxes, bridges, buses, light rail, sidewalks, sound walls, even trees are “tagged.” After determining the extent of the graffiti vandalism in San Jose and current sentencing for offenders. Mayor Jose Gonzales recognized that this fight needed to be ongoing and has diligently made sure that funding and city resources necessary to this struggle were provided. An “Adopt-A-Block” volunteer program was started. Volunteers attended community meetings with anti-graffiti kits (paint, brushes, rollers, solvent, gloves, masks and sponges). These efforts have resulted in 2,700 volunteers dedicated to keeping their streets and neighborhoods free of graffiti. A “hotline” was established to report graffiti, which abates the tags within 48 hours and within 24 hours if it is gang related. Through Mayor Gonzales’ innovative thinking, collaboration and government resolve there has been a 96% reduction of graffiti in San Jose.

“This is a wonderful example of civic engagement and community involvement,” observed the panel of judges. “2,700 volunteers attacked a problem with paint brushes and paint in a creative use of law enforcement/citizen partnership. San Jose did a great job of organizing and energizing the community to address a community problem.”

ST. LOUIS, MO

Launched in the fall of 2002, Mayor Francis G. Slay’s Problem Properties Program has increased coordination and communication among city departments to crack down on owners who refused to maintain and manage properties, as well as send a message that there is no tolerance for the those types of nuisances in the neighborhood. Mayor Slay brought all the departments together and reprioritized resources to tackle the quality of life issues. Problem Property Court was established where cases are heard on an accelerated docket. In three years 13,915 cases have been heard and over 25% have been brought into compliance. Departments now communicate regularly about the issues and employees are accountable for – and proud of – their respective roles.

“This is a good example of strong leadership on the part of the mayor to address seemingly intractable long-term neighborhood deterioration,” said the panel of judges. “This is also an excellent example of coordination of city resources to address problem properties. The program is evidence that you don’t have to accept the status quo.”

AGUADILLA, PR

The Lilliam Neris Crespo Electronic Library is located in the low-income community of San Antonio Township. Prior to 2003, services were limited to those offered by a traditional public library with the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Due to poor conditions of the facility, large numbers of outdated books and limited hours of operations, attendance levels were very low. Under the Mayor Carlos Mendez Martinez leadership, the library underwent a significant remodeling and renovation. Mayor Martinez saw the enormous potential for community development projects, so he began a campaign to bring together the community, the private, public and educational

sectors to develop a strategic plan to maximize the resources available. The city along with the Hewlett Packard Company, World Changers Foundation of the South Baptist Conference, the Corporation for National and Community Service AC*VISTA members, the Inter-American University and the community organization Iniciativa San Antonio 2005 joined in a collaborative effort to bridge the digital divide and achieve a better quality of life for the community through education and technology.

“The Mayor has taken a major step toward bridging the digital divide,” said the panel of judges. “This is a good example of public/private sector involvement and great community capacity building. There is also the additional benefit of improving literacy, a truly commendable effort.”

BURLINGTON, VT

After decades as a fenced-off zone of junkyards, rail yards, oil tanks and a coal-fired generating plant, Burlington’s waterfront has been transformed into a spectacular community resource. Led by the Mayor Peter Clavelle, a partnership of government, businesses, nonprofit organizations and citizens has realized a shared vision of an inviting, economically vital, accessible, and affordable waterfront. The project began in the mid-80’s and the city completed a \$52 million sewage treatment upgrade, built a bike path and a community boathouse, secured public ownership of more than 60 acres of waterfront land, created a waterfront park and promenade, constructed a public fishing pier, built a skate park for the youth, expanded boating access and restored the historic breakwater. Mayor Clavelle has played a central role in building a shared vision for balanced development of the waterfront. He has facilitated strong partnerships involving municipal government, Vermont’s Congressional delegation, state government, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and citizens to realize this vision.

“This broad scale project is a significant investment of public money combined with legal and legislative solutions that resulted in a dynamic vision for waterfront development,” noted the panel of judges. “Mayor Clavelle recognized the value of long-neglected resources and determined to utilize them.”

DEARBORN, MI

Mayor Michael A. Guido appointed the Commission on Disability Concerns in October 2000 to help the City of Dearborn be proactive in addressing accessibility issues for all residents. The city provides the framework, budget and staff to support the commissioners in their mission. For Mayor Guido, the Commission has been extremely active in offering expert advice in barrier-free access and architectural matters, most notably at Dearborn’s showpiece Ford Community and Performing Arts Center; in increasing accessibility at polling places and improving election equipment; in advocating “visitability” provisions in home construction; in improving emergency communication; in developing an accessible website; in making community festivals more inclusive; in addressing individual concerns, and above all expanding awareness of the issues that affect people with disabilities.

“People with disabilities are often neglected,” observed the panel of judges. “Mayor Guido has taken it upon himself to correct that inequity. Kudos to him for affirming that all citizens should have equal opportunity and access to the resources of Dearborn.”

PARAMOUNT, CA

During the 1970’s and early 1980’s gang activity and crime were tearing at the heart and soul of Paramount. After extensive research, Mayor Manuel E. Guillen was determined to address the gang issue. Under Mayor Guillen’s leadership the city developed GRIP (Gang Resistance is Paramount) a program for every child in town with a message on the dangers and dead-end gangster lifestyle. The city staffs the program and spends less than \$100/per student. The city has seen dramatic drops in gang membership and serious crime. Numerous studies have found that of the 58,000 students reached by GRIP, 90-96% have avoided joining a gang and retain negative opinions of the culture. Mayor Guillen has been instrumental in growing the program and maintaining funding, even during times of economic stress.

“Mayor Guillen has taken a major urban problem and sets an example as to what other mayors can do about it, said the panel of judges. “This is a national model that can and should be replicated across the country. It has demonstrable results that are remarkable.”

HONORABLE MENTIONS

ANCHORAGE, AK

When local women began to report incidents of harassment and assault on trails in the summer of 2003, the community called for action and Mayor Mark Begich introduced the Anchorage Trail Watch Program. The Anchorage trail system includes 127 miles of paved trails that spread through the city’s urban center, wrap around the coastline neighborhoods and stretch into the foothills of nearby state parks. The Anchorage Trail Watch Program recruits trail users to help promote safety and prevent crime. Volunteers for the program receive safety training, agree to carry cell phones to report suspicious activity, wear distinctive Trail Watch gear and post patrol reports on the Trail Watch website. Through Mayor Begich’s encouragement, the Trail Watch Program has evolved from an ad-hoc volunteer program to an official program of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department.

BOSTON, MA

The Boston Pedestrian Protection Program (BPPP) is a multi-dimensional program designed with the primary purpose of decreasing the annual number of pedestrians injured in Boston. Under Mayor Thomas M. Menino’s direction, a collaboration of more than twelve public and private organizations, the BPPP first identified areas that are considered high-risk for motor vehicle pedestrian collisions through EMS dispatch data. The results showed that 54% of pedestrians crossed against the light at intersections, and only 47% of drivers slowed down for pedestrians crossing at the crosswalk against the light. Mayor Menino convened a group of city officials to form a task force that would develop a new kind of public information campaign. The *Walk This Way* Campaign used

the famous Aerosmith song “Walk This Way” as the theme of the crusade. Humorous street signs were posted throughout the city that made pedestrians think about their behaviors when they were about to cross the street. The Boston Pedestrian Protection Program included environmental changes such as improved signals and newly painted crosswalks, as well as increased enforcement for certain pedestrian laws.

CINCINNATI, OH

Under Mayor Charles J. Luken’s guidance the Cincinnati Dental Healthcare Program was created to address the social and health care problems of those with little or no access to dental care, as well as the social, political and economic impact the lack of care has on the community. In recent years the breadth and scope of the problem has grown overwhelmingly. The number of emergencies in the clinics has tripled over a 12-year period. Mayor Luken passed an ordinance allowing the Dental Director to serve as executive director of the Greater Cincinnati Oral Health Council (GCOHC) with no additional compensation and essentially fused the GCOHC with the Cincinnati Health Department’s dental program. Utilizing the skills and experience of the health department and the dental director, city resources have been leveraged to bring about new funds and access to dental care has been substantially improved.

PORTLAND, OR

The River Renaissance is a citywide initiative to reclaim the Willamette River as Portland’s centerpiece and celebrate the river as the chief economic, environmental and social asset. Through a broad community dialogue, Mayor Vera Katz and 1,100 citizens created the River Renaissance Vision, which proclaimed Portland’s aspirations for: a Clean and Healthy River, Prosperous Working Harbor, Portland’s Front Yard, Vibrant Waterfront Districts and Neighborhoods, and Partnerships, Leadership and Education. Mayor Katz convened the River Trust, a collaboration among government entities responsible for Lower Willamette River. This group helped Portland become the first non-federal entity to have a Streamlining Agreement with other government agencies to facilitate review of city projects that trigger Endangered Species Act regulations. The River Renaissance Strategic Plan is now being developed and will map a course of strategic actions and investments to achieve those aspirations.

SHREVEPORT, LA

There has long been a desire in Shreveport to make public art more accessible to the public. Mayor Keith P. Hightower pointed out that buses are canvasses that reach every neighborhood. In 1999, SporTran (the city’s transit system), in concert with Mayor Hightower, the department of community development and regional arts council, began a “moving murals” project aimed at bringing art to everyone. In the five years since, 21 buses have been transformed into moveable palettes blooming with 20-foot-tall roses, made joyful with children’s television characters, used to encourage residents to explore their heritage, to inspire patriotism, and to honor our diverse local cultures. The once drab buses - now vivid works of art - are sought after by drivers and patrons alike, and groups needing shuttle service or who want a bus in a local parade constantly ask for their favorite.

FAYETTEVILLE, AR

The Pay-As-You-Throw Cart System, created under the leadership of Mayor Dan Coody, is a program that encourages citizens to recycle more, while helping the environment and improving quality of life in the city. Under the Pay-as-You-Throw System, weekly trash collection is limited based on the size of the trash container purchased by the customer. Mayor Coody agreed with the rate structure, so customers get to choose which size container they want, with the larger containers having higher monthly charges. Under this program, customers are offered incentives to recycle more, because when they throw away less material, they save money on their solid waste charges.

MICHIGAN CITY, IN

The Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer, created by Mayor Charles Oberlie in 2003, is dedicated to providing information to Michigan City citizens about detection and treatment of all forms of cancer, to donate funds to the American Cancer Society for use in providing support services to the community, and to work with healthcare providers to make low-cost or free screenings available to those in the area who cannot afford them on their own. The Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer includes public service announcements on local television and radio stations, discussion panels with health-care professionals, self-exam instruction cards handed out at grocery stores, special events, a page on the city's website and other projects which include the community. Mayor Oberlie is actively involved with each of the components of this comprehensive program. He recorded public service announcements, wore a pink shirt and participated in the "Community Project In Pink," which 150 people came to a city park wearing pink and formed a human breast cancer pin. He even went chest deep into Lake Michigan's 55 degree water during the first Annual Plunge for a Cure.

SAN RAMON, CA

School congestion is a community-wide issue and Mayor H. Abram Wilson worked with the city council to address the problem. The majority of school districts in the San Francisco Bay area do not provide "free" school bus service. The San Ramon Valley Unified School District does provide school bus service but it is a "fee-based" program. In an effort to further ease traffic congestion and reduce air pollution, Mayor Wilson, the city of San Ramon ALTRANS Transportation and the San Ramon Valley Unified School District worked in collaboration to develop and implement an online "Carpool to School" ridematching program. The website, www.PooltoSchool.org provides parents with an online instant ridematching service to form carpools, reducing the number of car trips to and from school sites. The program is available to elementary, middle and high school students in San Ramon Valley Unified School District. During the first year of implementation, program participants drove 266,760 fewer miles. According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, these carpoolers reduced the emission of 1.8 tons of harmful pollutants and reduced more than 109 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

SOUTHFIELD, MI

Under Mayor Brenda L. Lawrence's leadership, the Mayor's Walk-A-Healthy City helps members of the community increase their overall level of fitness while networking with the mayor and other elected officials. The Mayor's Walk-A-Healthy City is an eight-

week walking program with a goal to foster physical fitness. To ensure a thorough, yet refreshing workout, consideration was given to warm-up exercises, as well as the routing of the walking assignment. The walk starts at 7 a.m., including a 15-minute warm-up, and lasts for approximately 30-45 minutes, three times a week. All Southfield residents, business people and local and regional elected officials are invited to walk. The walks have provided Mayor Lawrence with the opportunity to be accessible to both the public and the business community while promoting the importance of physical fitness. At the end of the eight-week program a celebration walk is conducted, followed by a catered picnic and free health screenings including blood pressure check-ups, physical assessment, and blood tests by Southfield Providence Hospital.

ST. JOSEPH, MO

One of Mayor David J. Jones top-ten goals during his current term is the St. Joseph. Community Appearance Plan (CAP) a ten-year roadmap, updated annually, for improving the appearance and quality of life. The CAP is effective because it successfully combines the often-contradictory focus of Council/Board policy and staff administration, of courts and defendants, and of public and private responsibilities to achieve a common goal. Mayor Jones commitment and the combined efforts of community volunteers, business proprietors, private property owners, municipal workers, corrections inmates, outside contractors, neighborhood associations, community leaders, and the citizens are manifested in a wide array of appearance improvements to produce a cleaner, healthier, and more aesthetically pleasing community.

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