



The United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone (202) 293-7330 • Fax (202) 293-2352
E-mail: info@usmayors.org URL: usmayors.org

2003 CITY LIVABILITY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED *Houston, Rochester, Asheville Receive Top Honors*

Denver, CO (June 7, 2003) — Mayors Lee Brown of Houston, William Johnson of Rochester (NY), and Charles Worley of Asheville (NC) have been awarded top honors in the 2003 City Livability Awards Program, sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Waste Management.

The 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, from a pool of 219 applicants, based on three criteria: mayoral leadership, creativity and innovation, and broad impact on the quality of life for residents.

- Houston was honored for its efforts to bridge the digital divide. SimHouston, a web-enabled virtual software application, allows all city residents with a public library card to access through the Internet word processing, email and other software.
- Rochester's unique and creative ARTWalk is a 2,375 foot-long interactive urban art trail within the public right-of-way along the city's University Avenue. It has become a vibrant place to live and a new mecca for development.
- Asheville successfully orchestrated preservation of one of the largest, most beautiful, and most significant architectural works in the region – the Grove Arcade Public Market. A cohesive public-private partnership ensured the renovation of this treasured landmark reflects its beauty and significance to the community.

Additional awards for cities with populations of 100,000 or more were received by Mayors Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Richard E. Filippi of Erie (PA); Jeremy Harris of Honolulu (HI); and Richard M. Murphy of San Diego. Outstanding Achievement Awards were also given to mayors of cities with populations of 100,000 or fewer people: Mayors William F. Glacken of Freeport (NY); Randy Roach of Lake Charles (LA); Ralph K. Smith of Roanoke; and Richard Bloom of Santa Monica.

Honorable Mention Citations were awarded, for cities with populations of 100,000 or more to: Mayors Paul D. Pate of Cedar Rapids; Jane Campbell of Cleveland; Kwame Kilpatrick of Detroit; Elizabeth G. "Betty" Flores of Laredo; and Paul D. Fraim of Norfolk. Mayors of cities with populations of less than 100,000 receiving Honorable

Mentions are Duane W. Dedlow, Jr. of Hammond (IN); Dean J. Mazzarella of Leominster (MA); Fernando Pedroza of Lynwood (CA); Suzanne Angeli of Pleasant Hill (CA) and Gregory E. Pitoniak of Taylor (MI).

The City Livability Awards were presented at the Conference of Mayors' Annual Luncheon by Mr. Maury Myers, Chairman, President and Chief Operating 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 men and women work continuously with community leaders on ways to improve the quality of life in our urban spaces," said Mr. Myers. "During the fifteen years we have sponsored this program, we've always discovered creative and innovative ways in which mayors have raised 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 and outstanding achievement winners –

TOP HONORS/FIRST PLACE

HOUSTON, TX

Through the foresight, determination and imagination of Mayor Lee. P. Brown, Houston has become the first city in the world to begin to truly "bridge the digital divide" for every resident. SimHouston, a web-enabled virtual software application, allows all Houstonians with a public library card to access, over the Internet, software programs that include word processing, email, spreadsheets, address books, calendars and a file explorer. Houston has purchased three million licenses that are being made available for free to any resident. Mayor Brown's dream is to make technology available to every citizen, regardless of socio-economic situation. Houston is on its way to making this dream a reality.

ROCHESTER, NY

Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr., has created the philosophy and mechanisms from which neighborhoods can see dreams come to fulfillment. ARTWalk is a menagerie of public art in the public way that tantalizes as well as educates the beholder. Using the precepts of Rochester's Comprehensive Plan, Rochester 2010: The Renaissance Plan and our Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Program, residents, business owners, artists, engineers and elected officials created a new street intended to showcase art in all its forms. The 2,375 foot-long interactive "urban art trail" exists within the public right-of-way along the city's University Avenue. ARTWalk has become a vibrant place to live and a new mecca for development. In 2001, ARTWalk was chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as a museum. It is quite

possibly the only outdoor museum classified in the nation. The ARTWalk environment continues to grow as one of Rochester's unique neighborhoods.

ASHEVILLE, NC

After Asheville Mayor Charles R. Worley took office, the City, the Grove Arcade Public Market Foundation, and Progress Energy formed a cohesive public-private partnership to ensure that the renovation of the Grove Arcade Public Market, a treasured landmark would truly embrace its beauty and significance to the community. Among other steps, Mayor Worley worked to convince the federal government to allocate \$38 million for a new Federal Building in Asheville to substitute for their use of the Arcade structure. Mayor Worley served as the convening authority on the project, bringing together community leaders to discuss options for the building. He also started the Grove Arcade Task Force, comprised of the Mayor, City Manager and two Council Members. The group orchestrated city involvement in the project to ensure preservation of one of the largest, most beautiful and most significant architectural buildings in the region.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

CHICAGO, IL

One Book, One Chicago, created under the leadership of Mayor Richard M. Daley and sponsored by the city and the Chicago Public Library, encourages all teens and adults to read and discuss the same book at the same time. Launched in the fall of 2001 with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the program builds upon the strong commitment of Mayor Daley and the city to reading and literacy. The goal of One Book, One Chicago is to cultivate a culture of reading and discussion in Chicago by bringing the city's diversity together around a great piece of literature. The program seeks to spark lively discussion among co-workers, colleagues, friends and families and encourages people to come together in libraries, bookstores, coffee shops, homes, office, churches and temples, schools and parks to discuss the book. One Book, One Chicago culminates in a special week of events to contextualize the book, including provocative panel discussions, readings and film screenings. Due to its overwhelming success, the program is now offered twice a year, in the fall during Chicago Book Festival and in the spring during National Library Week. Since it was launched, the program has received international media attention. More than 100 cities in the U.S. and the world have modeled their citywide reading clubs after One Book, One Chicago.

ERIE, PA

At the June 2002 U.S. Conference of Mayors, an official policy resolution was passed urging Mayors to invest in arts and culture. Erie Mayor Richard E. Filippi acted on that resolution upon returning to his city by establishing the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, just eight months after his inauguration and two months after passage of the resolution. For Mayor Filippi, recognizing the value of a strong "creative class" and forging a new economy based on the region's strongest and most unique assets – arts and entertainment – is essential to Erie's future. His city was beset with major manufacturing plant closings and layoffs. It was crucial to reshape the landscape with a vibrant, exciting modern economy, high-paying jobs and a quality of life that encourages pride and growth. Mayor Filippi viewed a thriving arts and entertainment industry as an opportunity to improve the region's overall quality of life, revitalize city neighborhoods and create civic pride. Neighborhoods came to life at CelebrateErie's Heritage Hall – a showcase of Erie's ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. CelebrateErie attracted a crowd of 100,000 to the city's downtown, a nearly 500 percent increase from the We Love Erie Days festivals of the past.

HONOLULU, HI

In September 1998, Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris launched 21st Century Oahu: A Shared Vision for the Future, a program that reverses the traditional top-down approach of governance

with grass roots, community-based planning, design and prioritization of neighborhood public works projects. Mayor Harris encourages community empowerment. He has put officials in the back seat and the community in the driver's seat. Whether it is prioritizing pothole repairs or how a major region of the Island should be developed, the Mayor has vested decision-making with the public. The Island of Oahu, with a population of 876,000 and a land area of about 600 square miles, includes 19 "vision" communities, where residents are encouraged to shape the future of their neighborhoods. Groups meet monthly and formalize their visions through a process in which every participant has an equal voice. Vision projects reflect community aspirations and focus on improving the quality of life, reestablishing the character of neighborhoods and preserving and enhancing cultural and natural resources. Initially, Mayor Harris committed \$38 million each year (\$2 million for each group) in capital funds to translate visions into reality.

SAN DIEGO, CA

The San Diego Family Justice Center is the most comprehensive "one-stop shop" service center in America for families that are experiencing the physical and emotional trauma of domestic violence. San Diego Mayor Richard M. Murphy worked together with City Council members, the City Attorney and the Chief of Police to reach their goal of zero domestic violence homicides in the city. Through the creation of the San Diego Family Justice Center, he sent out a message that San Diego cares deeply about hurting families, and abusers will be held accountable for their criminal behavior. The San Diego Family Justice Center brought together over 120 domestic violence professionals from seven different city and county agencies and over 24 private, non-profit social service organizations. The Justice Center also houses a first of its kind Forensic Medical Unit to specialize in the documentation, evaluation and treatment of domestic violence injuries. The Justice Center's work has already attracted national and international attention, and Attorney General John Ashcroft has identified the Center as a model for the nation. Visitors from 14 different countries and over 20 different states have already visited the Justice Center. The Center is leading the country forward in stopping family violence in America.

FREEPORT, NY

Under the leadership of Freeport Mayor William F. Glacken, the Freeport Police Department developed a multi-phase approach in response to a gang problem using the resources of the school district, community leaders and dedicated officers who volunteer their time to eliminate this deadly menace. The program, known as Adopt-A-Cop, reaches out to youngsters at critical stages in their development beginning in elementary school, through middle school and continuing into high school. The initial project under Adopt-A-Cop brings together volunteer police and fourth graders. The officers help the students develop a positive attitude. In middle school, the volunteer officers mentor the students and participate in after-school programs. At the high school level, police and community leaders form an outreach program to identify gang activity and counteract it. The positive relationships among the police, Freeport's young people and the community, provide the youngsters with additional adult relationship they can rely on for advice and guidance. This extensive cooperative effort is credited with helping to lower the crime rate in Freeport by 27 percent over the past six years.

LAKE CHARLES, LA

"Shiver Me Timbers Millennium Park" is an interactive playground specifically designed and named by the children of Southwest Louisiana. 5500 community volunteers built the playground in only ten days. The playground was financed by community donations in the amount of \$350,000. Under the leadership of Mayor Randy Roach, the City of Lake Charles donated the property for the park and passed an ordinance giving the city ownership and responsibility for maintenance and upkeep. The dream playground was designed so children of the city could have a central location to play in a safe environment while enjoying the scenic view of the lake. The

playground contains play structures that are rich in the culture and history of Southwest Louisiana. The facility is completely handicap accessible so every child in the city can play and have the experience of a lifetime.

ROANOKE, VA

“Every Drop Counts” is designed to help Roanoke citizens use water wisely in the face of the 2001-2002 drought and beyond. The campaign stresses education over enforcement, with the mission of encouraging and assisting the Roanoke community in water conservation. Under Mayor Ralph K. Smith’s leadership, in 2002 Roanoke and its residents reduced water consumption by 1.3 million gallons per day from 2001 use levels. This reduction was accomplished without imposing a single fine. During the first three months of 2003, after the drought was officially over and all water conservation measures had been lifted, Roanoke residents consumed 1.1 million gallons of water a day less than during the same time period before the drought, which reflects the overwhelming success of the campaign in changing water consumption habits. Mayor Smith has worked to make “Every Drop Counts” the vehicle to instill a culture of conservation throughout his community.

SANTA MONICA, CA

The Santa Monica Farmer’s Market Salad Bar Program, now in its fifth full year of operation, is a multi-agency collaborative effort that demonstrates the ability of Santa Monica Mayor Richard Bloom and his city staff to lead, as well as to inspire and to shape good public policy. Working from within at a department staff level, and with a mandate from a Sustainable City resolution, Mayor Bloom, with the help of his staff, was able to implement policy goals in his school district, by providing a fresh, farmer-direct salad bar lunch option to each student in Santa Monica. The Farmer’s Market Salad Bar Program, which was initially funded by a grant written by a member of the city’s community-based Task Force on the Environment, has become a fixed budget and policy initiative in both the city and school district’s plans. As a result of the Santa Monica Farmer’s Market Salad Bar Program, Santa Monica students have access to more nutritious food at a cost saving to the school district, and California farmers have realized a new source of recognition and revenue.

###

Press contact: Lina Garcia (202) 861-6719 or (202) 744-2959