
2015 MML INNOVATION AWARDS

More than 20 municipalities of all sizes shared projects that brought their city success this year by submitting a project for the 2015 MML Innovation Awards. The program showcases municipal projects that demonstrate new approaches for solving municipal challenges.

The awards complement the League's goal of serving as a clearinghouse for municipal information. The awards recognize and celebrate successful programs, spotlighting those that could benefit other communities. A panel of judges chose winners and awards were presented at the 2015 MML Annual Conference.

LARGE CITY: BLUE SPRINGS HOW TO OPEN A BUSINESS



In early 2013 the city of Blue Springs partnered with the Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as well as the Jackson County EDC to create the How to Open and Grow Your Business in Blue Springs guide. This step-by-step guide was created in-house as the result of a two-year planning process. By providing the business community with a centralized source for their needs, the guide consolidated the City's fragmented business development resources, creating one voice across multiple agencies. This guide has sparked change in City regulations as well as the creation of a new Business Services Division that acts as a liaison for the business community and to streamline the business development process. Since its publication, the city of Blue Springs, the Chamber and the EDC have hosted ten presentations and two expos, reaching more than 500 community members. As a direct result of expo attendance, two entrepreneurs were able to obtain Small Business Loans. □

HONORABLE MENTION: NIXA CRIME-FREE MULTI-HOUSING TRAINING



Drugs and meth labs are two things you don't want in your community. In 2012, the Nixa Police Department noticed it was spending a lot of time on the same type of calls on two specific streets. In fact, calls for service in this area averaged 2.9 per day, which means an officer was responding to the same locations around 3 times per day. That would be taxing on any municipal police department with only 25 officers. Nixa Police noticed that most of the calls were going to rental property. After meeting with local property owners, Nixa Police began the Crime-Free Multi-Housing program. This program educated property managers on how to attract and sustain higher-quality renters. Nixa Police saw immediate results. Calls for service in this area dropped drastically to .43 calls for service a day, or about a call every other day. A property owner even recognized a meth lab the day after taking the training. With this one class, we are working toward improving the quality of multi-family residents as well as assisting landlords in preserving and protecting private property ownership. □

MEDIUM-SIZED CITY (TIE): FULTON ANIMAL SHELTER INITIATIVE



The New Fulton Animal Shelter Initiative was created by Mayor LeRoy Benton to privately raise funds for a new city-owned shelter. Since City funds were not available to pay for construction outright, the mayor felt a fundraiser was the best option to achieve his goal. A committee was formed, made up of citizens who are passionate about animals and who wanted to help raise the needed funds. They reached out to possible donors and after two years of fundraising, enough money was raised to start construction. Expenses were further reduced on this project thanks to

volunteer labor as well as members of the local prison's work release program. City crews, meanwhile, graded the site, dug a detention pond and more. Reaching out to citizens directly to raise funds for projects can be successful for other cities, so long as it is a project the public deeply cares about. □

MEDIUM-SIZE CITY (TIE): MEXICO COMMUNITY GARDEN



The Mexico Community Garden is a partnership of private charitable organizations and public agencies. It is a free program in Martin Luther King Park that allows citizens of the community to grow fresh produce for themselves or the Help Center. The Help Center manages funds for the partnership and any part-time employees the partnership hires. Funds are held in a dedicated account reserved for the sole use of the Mexico Community Garden Steering Committee. Mexico Housing Authority, Help Center, and Central Missouri community Action are leaders in getting information about the gardens opportunities in front of the community members that need its services the most. The Audrain County Master Gardeners teach, train, and mentor new gardeners to provide the skills needed for them to succeed. The City of Mexico provides free land for the project, physical support, and light construction support. The University of Missouri Rural Sociology Department and University Extension provide free seeds and technical support. □

SMALL-SIZED CITY: NORTH KANSAS CITY (TIE)

SMALL-SIZED CITY (TIE): LA PLATA CITY PARK PUBLIC RESTROOM PROJECT



Through North Kansas City’s participation in Kansas City Power and Light’s (KCPL) Solar Energy Rebate Program, solar panels were installed at seven City-owned facilities in 2014. The city council unanimously supported the project for three reasons: 1) Long-term savings on ever-increasing energy costs, 2) The opportunity to take advantage of KCPL’s Solar Power Rebate Program, and 3) Utilization of solar energy is an environmental initiative that reduces the City’s carbon footprint. North Kansas City paid up-front for the solar panel installation, to maximize energy savings. The total cost of the project was \$651,780, but after KCPL rebates, North Kansas City’s share was only \$299,180. The City expects to save more than \$44,100 in energy costs annually and more than \$1.1 million over the next 25 years. Missouri House Bill 142, enacted in 2013, requires all electrical corporations in Missouri to provide the same rebate program. There is no better time than now to install solar panels while the state-mandated rebate program continues. □

The City Park in La Plata was in need of public restrooms in order to eliminate the monthly fee for a Porta-Potty as well as spending over \$2,500 each fall during our annual Soybean Festival. No public facilities had been available for several years. With the assistance of the La Plata Promotional Committee, a non-for-profit organization, the city of La Plata was able to obtain a grant from the Macon County Economic Development Board in the amount of \$12,688.69. Other funds were received from a memorial fund in the amount of \$10,627.99 and donations from community members and former residents in the amount of \$7,220.00. Volunteer labor was used except for the laying of the blocks, which was contracted out. The total cost of the project was in excess of \$32,000.00. The new red and white facility in the City park has two handicap units and two units with three facilities each for men and women. It is very attractive and has been very beneficial. □



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**PEOPLE'S CHOICE:
BELLEFONTAINE NEIGHBORS
YOUTH LIFE SKILLS
RECREATION PROGRAM**



Due to the many adult and youth misconceptions regarding the police in the North St. Louis County, Missouri, area, the Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department's Youth Life Enrichment Skills/ Recreation Camp was introduced. This camp was created and suggested by the police department's school resource officers who work in the Riverview Gardens School District. The primary objective of the program was to encourage, inspire, motivate, and challenge youth to excel on all levels of social and personal growth. Additional objectives of this camp were to build and develop youth self-confidence as well as teach respect for themselves and others. Furthermore, they gained a better understanding of the core function of policing as it concerned protecting and serving the community. Overall, the program encouraged youth to become achievers, role models and effective leaders in school and community. □

This award has a deeper meaning for the Bellefontaine Neighbors community. On Aug. 24, 2015, Sergeant Peggy Vassallo, who was instrumental in creating the youth life skills program, died after being hit by a car while on duty. MML Annual conference attendees held a moment of silence in honor of this fallen hero and her dedication to her community.



New in 2015, MML offered a People's Choice Award as part of the Innovation Awards Program, where member municipalities had the opportunity to vote for a top project. Members were able to review the projects and vote online for a winner.

It was also the first year for a new Innovation Showcase at the MML Annual Conference. All cities submitting a project had the opportunity to share their information as part of a conference breakout session. Attendees could learn more in-depth information about each participating project.

Learn more about the MML Innovation Awards and all submitted projects at www.mocities.com.

