



2016 Missouri Municipal League

INNOVATION AWARD

Nomination Summaries

**Arnold – Corridor 55 Co-working Space
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

In 2013, the City of Arnold, Missouri, saw a need to support sole proprietors, small businesses and start-up enterprises. The City's innovative solution was to create Corridor 55, a unique, low-cost, high-quality co-working space for small business professionals that offers diverse amenities not available in a home office or Wi-Fi-enabled restaurant. With City Council approval, Corridor 55 opened in September 2014 to provide an affordable office environment where small business professionals can work comfortably and effectively. It is located in a commercial office space leased by the City on a major thoroughfare. Corridor 55 is the first municipally owned co-working space in Missouri. It is a modern, affordable, multi-office space where start-up or small businesses have access to convenient amenities typically found in larger business settings. Corridor 55 members work in a safe environment with a modern, high-tech conference room, classroom, kitchenette, unlimited high-speed secure internet and Wi-Fi service, mail services and a private address, as well as private, furnished office options. Corridor 55 offers four low-cost membership options from \$50 to \$200+ per month. This co-working space is fully rented today with a waiting list of prospective members.

**Battlefield – Creating an Autism Friendly City
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the world today, affecting more than 3.5 million Americans. A recent Strategic Park Planning Survey recognized Battlefield's desire to be a family friendly community, including parks, schools, churches, and businesses free of physical and social barriers, and welcoming to all citizens. Fueled by a proclamation identifying Battlefield as an "Autism Friendly City", the Mayor, the Board of Aldermen and local non-profit organizations implemented this innovative program. The project offers free training to virtually every citizen, allowing the public to understand and support families living with this life-long disorder.

The objective of the project is to promote awareness of the social and environmental factors which affect people who have autism and support those citizens through public training, environmental upgrades and improved services. The City successfully achieved these objectives by partnering with Springfield Public Schools, Steps Care Incorporated, Greene County 911, Greene County Office of Emergency Management, and local media, under the guidance of the non-profit organization Stars for Autism. There are families living with autism in virtually every city in America. The implementers of the program have created written materials and presentations which offers step-by-step guidance to any city replicating this timely program.

**Bellefontaine Neighbors – Law Enforcement Education and Diversity
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department and the St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley formed the Law Enforcement Education and Diversity Program collaborative partnership. The program spawned from social need and involves a qualified uniformed police officer instructing criminal justice college courses to engage students. The objective for the project is to attract minorities and develop a more educated and diverse police workforce through innovative and sustainable scholastic architectures. An underlying purpose of the project is to establish a new model for all aspects of law enforcement grooming, recruiting, and hiring, with an emphasis on minorities, for other governments and institutions to adopt as the standard. The project's objective has been achieved as evidenced by the completion of two semesters of education and engagement with students. The project is co-managed by Colonel Jeremy Ihler, Chief of Police with the Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department and Professor of Police Supervision, and Dr. Wesley Bell, Professor and Program Coordinator of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. Other cities can apply this project by partnering with their local higher education institutions to prepare members of their own community for law enforcement careers within their regions.

**Blue Springs – Blue Springs Fieldhouse
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

Blue Springs continues to be a growing city with a population of more than 53,000 residents. In order to meet the ever-changing needs and challenges of the community, citizens had a vision of providing an indoor recreation facility the entire community could use. The Parks and Recreation Department used a community input process that determined what amenities the community wanted in a facility. Involvement from the Parks Commission and the City Council was extremely important in making sure the project was achieved. Along with SFS Architecture, the development and construction of what is now the Blue Springs Fieldhouse, became a reality and the facility opened in October, 2015. We offer four full basketball and volleyball courts, one large soccer turf field, three party or meeting rooms, two indoor tracks, fitness center with advanced fitness technology, aerobic studio, spin studio, child watch, support offices, concessions and an administration area. With approximately 76,560 square feet of space, the Blue Springs Fieldhouse is now a usable municipal recreation space with a simple mission of providing fitness and recreation for all! The facility serves more than just residents of the city, but surrounding communities that do not have family friendly recreation or fitness establishments.

**Bolivar – Youth Park
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

Our project began by identifying that the children and teenagers of Bolivar lacked an area to socialize, to be active, and enjoy the outdoors. At the same time, the old city pool site had become a city eyesore. Abandoned in 2011, it sat empty in a depressed area of Bolivar. These two needs resulted in the formation of the Friends of Dunnegan Park – a nonprofit 501-C3, formed by the Mayor and composed of six citizens. Friends of Dunnegan Park canvassed the city for needs and ideas. They developed a plan, enlisted architects, and began a fund raising campaign. Ultimately, with the Friends of Dunnegan Park and the city workers, they developed a youth park with splash pad, basketball courts, playground equipment, and a rebuilt pool house was turned into a civic recreation center.

**Branson – New Biosolids Wastewater Treatment Facility
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

The Ozark Mountain region boasts clean water systems and air quality, thriving forests and mountains and abundant wildlife habitats. Committed to sustaining this green ecosystem, planners across Taney and Stone Counties collaborated to develop a sustainable alternative to wastewater treatment. The new state-of-the-art Biosolids Drying Facility at Branson’s Cooper Creek wastewater treatment plant is the first of its kind in Missouri and is focused on environmental-sustainability and processing efficiency. Planning for growth and future capacity needs, public entities from Taney and Stone Counties formed the Tri-Lakes Regional Biosolids Coalition to process waste received from communities within a 450-square mile-area, through an advanced framework utilizing natural resources and new technologies to process wastewater treatment sludge.

A component of the region's “Big Five” infrastructure improvement plans across water, sewer, natural gas, electric and fiber components, this facility adds value in that wastewater treatment improvements considered future business and industrial growth while meeting the resource demand of millions of visitors to this tourism-based economy each year. The facility now provides a distinct advantage to participating communities through its critical water/wastewater treatment infrastructure, a framework so advanced that it actually preserves and sustains the environment with advanced technologies.

**Cape Girardeau – New Solid Waste Transfer Station
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

The City of Cape Girardeau Solid Waste Transfer Station (SWTS) proved to be a very unique project. The project required partnerships between a large private solid waste company, a qualified private design engineering firm, the municipal government, and a long-term contract. The project had challenges including limited space, limited funding, short timeframe for completion (due to an obligation to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources), recurring natural calamities, initial City leadership opposition, and State restrictions for design/build projects. The City set specific goals including easier access to the SWTS for the community, expanded recycling capability, improved customer service, the ability to process increased tonnage of solid waste through the facility, and no increase in fees. Although challenged in many ways, the project achieved all the set objectives including meeting the budget constraints and the accelerated schedule. The city of Cape Girardeau, Republic Services, and Cambridge Companies innovatively used creativity, cooperation, and commitment to complete a stellar design/build project that will provide excellent service to the residents of Cape Girardeau and the surrounding area for many years. Other cities in Missouri may learn from Cape Girardeau's experience and successfully utilize the design/build concept for their projects.

**Clinton – City Ordinance Regulating Small Houses
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

The City of Clinton, through a cooperative effort of our staff, Planning Commission members and our City Council, has taken a proactive approach towards affordable housing alternatives for individuals and families, by providing a section in our zoning ordinance allowing "Small Houses" through a rezoning process. We had several goals in mind, such as cleanup of abandoned properties, new construction to get the properties back on the tax roll, providing the opportunity for first time homeowners and maintainable housing for retirees, seniors as well as individuals with challenges. We understand lifestyles are changing and as a result, home owners/renters are looking for more affordable ways to make ends meet while still being able to own affordable property, build credit and have less maintenance to contend with. To date we have had three properties purchased by a private firm in one of our older neighborhoods with the intent to build small houses. This process will work for many communities, in fact we encourage it and would be happy to provide any information regarding our process, challenges and success. We are further pursuing a manufacturing facility to produce small houses thus creating jobs.

**Crystal Lake Park – Hunter Park: Accessible to All
(Small City Category – population under 5,000)**

On February 28, 2105 the City received the Round 15 Municipal Park Commission Grant. The objectives were to upgrade the outdated playground equipment and create a more accessible environment. The grant allowed for a new playground with swings that now serves children from ages 2-12. The upgraded play surface from mulch to a resilient rubber surfacing allows all abilities access to the playground as well as the installation of an ADA accessible walkway from Putter Lane to the playground and seating areas. The old playground was donated to Kids Around the World for repurposing in underprivileged locations. The project involved the city clerk, Mayor and Board of Alderpersons, and SWT Design. The City's park master plan was developed from the input of the community. The park has truly become a community park with daily usage. The city of Frontenac does not have any public parks and the parks closest to Hunter Park range from 1.97 to 2.13 miles away. For families that wish to utilize a park for play, the distance to a community park poses a challenge. However, the renovations to Hunter Park provided a recreational mainstay not only for Crystal Lake Park but also for surrounding communities.

**Gladstone – Northland Innovation Campus
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

The Northland Innovation Campus (NIC) is a public-private partnership between the North Kansas City School District, Northwest Missouri State University, CBC Real Estate Group and the City of Gladstone. The \$20 million, 90,000 square-foot research and education complex, designed to incorporate high standards of energy efficiency and sustainability, will provide collaborative space for businesses and educational programs while serving as a cornerstone in the heart of the City's newly developed downtown. This educational collaboration provides a unique opportunity for multiple organizations to work together to solve future needs. The NIC gives the quickly growing suburban school district the ability to increase their square footage for classroom space and offers undergraduate completion programs in the areas of wellness, elementary education, special education, early childhood, computer sciences, and business along with graduate programs in education and business. Northwest also offers dual credit coursework as part of its partnership with Northland Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS). The development of the Northland Innovation Campus truly is a progressive vision, with a non-traditional environment of office and research space and a variety of educational resources, amenities and programming to inspire and grow a highly skilled 21st century workforce.

**Grandview – Move Toward the Badge
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

Officer involved shootings and other factors are making it harder and harder to recruit people to become police officers, particularly qualified candidates who are women and/or people of color. Grandview Police Chief Charles Iseman has trained his officers based on the mantra he brought with him: move toward the badge, not away from the badge. The City started a community policing program in 2011, before it became the new way to police. After a roundtable discussion with city, school, and community leaders, the idea of a recruitment video grew and eventually came to fruition thanks to a flexible video production company. The videos put faces with police as a way for people to connect. Grandview High School hosted a "Pizza with Police" screening of the videos. Since then the videos have been viewed at career fairs, schools and police conferences across the state.

**Jackson – Jackson Civic Center Initiative
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

The story of the Jackson Civic Center Initiative is special because this city is built on a history of people coming together to tackle challenges bigger than their own. That spirit of organizing and progress is alive and well in Jackson. During an annual planning exercise, an unfulfilled community need was discovered. The City's Comprehensive Plan and Parks Master Plan showed the City was lacking in parks and recreation facilities to accommodate the needs of a growing community. It was clear that adequate funding simply was not available, and it became apparent to elected officials that it was necessary to locate other sources of funding for the construction of a new civic center facility. Staff soon developed a strong partnership with local non-profit groups, the State of Missouri, an area developer, and the residents of Jackson to help fund the project. This approach not only yielded the necessary funding to build a new state-of-the-art facility, but also brought an entire community together. The City cut the ribbon on the new Jackson Civic Center in January 2016, less than five years after the need was identified.

**Kansas City – WE: Women’s Empowerment Initiative
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

Kansas City has a strategy and a series of programs to improve our city’s corporate culture: WE: Women’s Empowerment. Through education, mentorship and policy development, the city is building an inclusive, diverse organization in government that can be easily replicated and encourages the growth of entrepreneurial women-owned businesses. Anecdotal evidence showed that women were underrepresented among city government and community organizations; data illustrated and magnified the significance of the issue. In 2014, women made up 29% of the city’s workforce and 23% of leadership positions. Mayor James noted that, “when compared to the private sector, that isn’t too bad. But under my watch, the City won’t settle for good enough when it comes to anything”. In the two years since its founding, WE has made an impact.

- The City implemented a city-wide policy on flexible work schedules that have been mirrored in other work environments
- The City embarked on multiple public/private partnerships to grow the initiative beyond the City government
- Through UMKC, the City hosts bi-annual panels to recruit and mentor young women leaders at the UMKC Women’s Center

The city continues to support the WE initiative and remains committed to establishing a culture that best represents the city itself.

**Kirkwood – Downtown Restrooms
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

The City of Kirkwood, Missouri, has a thriving downtown business district, anchored by the City’s historic Train Station and the Kirkwood Farmers’ Market. To accommodate customers to the Market and to support downtown businesses, the City added new restroom facilities and an improved vendor work area at the Market. The Downtown Kirkwood business district is home to retail shops and restaurants, as well as, the Train Station and Farmers’ Market. Visitors to the downtown area often entered downtown businesses and asked to use their restrooms, which hampered the merchants’ ability to serve customers. On any busy Saturday morning, there were only two public restrooms available - one set at the Train Station and one set at the Farmers’ Market, and all were small and cramped, with only one stall for men and one for women. The Market restrooms also had no heating or air-conditioning. The objective was to expand restroom availability to Market customers and to anyone visiting the downtown area and to ensure restroom availability during Train Station renovations. Two large ADA-compliant restrooms now accommodate customers who drive to downtown and those who are on foot or bicycle. Additionally, the vendor area at the Farmers’ market has been expanded and renovated.

**Lee’s Summit – Yours Truly Community Branding Campaign
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

The City of Lee’s Summit, Missouri has undertaken a multi-organizational, public/private Community Branding and Marketing Campaign. The “Yours Truly” branding campaign has been integral to its recent economic development milestone of \$1 billion in private and public investment over an 18-month period. The effort required collaboration and buy-in from four separate stakeholder organizations, including the City of Lee’s Summit, the Lee’s Summit Chamber of Commerce, the Lee’s Summit Economic Development Council and Downtown Lee’s Summit Main Street. The campaign created a timely and relevant brand messaging platform shared across multiple organizations. It was an effort that demanded cooperation and collaboration but that has paid off mightily in terms of community brand recognition and business recruitment. In addition, the “Yours Truly” campaign has been deemed a “benchmark community” for demonstrated brand marketing implementation and success by North Star Destination Strategies.

Manchester - Manchester Arts

(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)

Manchester Arts is a municipal arts council that seeks to inspire engagement in and appreciation for the arts. In St. Louis County, there is a vibrant interest in the arts; however, very few cities have programs in place to foster the arts. So in 2011, when a Manchester resident came to the city with the vision of cultivating a rich and diverse art community in the Manchester area, the city formulated an initial plan. Five years later, this small but dedicated team has grown to include a full arts board, partnerships with local businesses, school districts, regional art organizations, and has included almost every department of the municipal government. They discovered that beyond serving the basic needs of their community, the city can utilize art to enrich community vibrancy, regardless of age, religion, gender, or ability. It has empowered residents to become more involved in their community through their government and has opened new avenues for discourse and connection. Manchester Arts believes their program is an important initiative as municipalities look for innovative ways to connect with and serve their citizens.

Maryland Heights – Public Engagement & Outreach Program

(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)

The purpose of Maryland Heights' Public Engagement and Outreach Program is to organize the public involvement effort in a transparent, efficient, and deliberative manner. The objectives of the City's public involvement program are to:

- Help the community visualize what is possible in the long and short-term
- Educate the community about the elements that make the vision a reality
- Consensus building
- Provide timely and thorough resources for residents, businesses, and visitors
- Outreach to historically underrepresented communities

The City of Maryland Heights proactively engages in meaningful public participation through a coordinated program of outreach, education, and engagement. The program is guided by a Public Engagement Plan for community development issues, and supplemented by a series of traditional outreach programs, printed guides, and a variety of social media. In addition to traditional public engagement programs, the City uses innovative tools and strategies to proactively engage the public as challenges arise.

Mount Vernon – Veterans' Way

(Small City Category – population under 5,000)

Veterans' Way is a citizen-led effort in Mount Vernon, Missouri, established to express gratitude to a large segment of our population who served or who are presently serving in the military. The project's main objective is to instill a sense of pride in our small community, using the one thing we have in common: liberty. Other objectives are to honor our service people past and present, to beautify our city, and to give Mount Vernon an identity of being a Veteran-friendly city. The project began by Mount Vernon City Council's designating the main thoroughfare in Mount Vernon as Veterans Way. Linking our efforts with that of Mount Vernon's Regional Arts Council and the Mount Vernon City Council, the committee created works of art that stand as constant and daily reminders that Mount Vernon appreciates veterans. Commissioning a world-class muralist, Veterans Way has begun to transform our cityscape with red, white and blue themes. The art has birthed an effort with local businesses to offer discounts to veterans and their families. The success of the Veterans Way project is evident through major press coverage, social media and national recognition. The city' efforts will apply to any municipality that wishes to honor its country and those who served to protect it.

**Nixa – Nixa Continuous Improvement Planning (NCIP)
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

Strategic planning – love it or hate it, it is necessary for any organization to move forward. In 2014, the City of Nixa needed to focus on its future. Nixa is not a stranger to strategic planning, but the City Council wanted something different – more community involvement throughout the process. Knowing the Nixa School District always used input from its stakeholders, the city investigated the district’s approach – the Cambridge Model of Strategic Planning, a nationally and internationally recognized leading strategic planning model for school districts.

Two Nixa staff members received Cambridge training, and the new strategic planning process began in August 2014 as the Nixa Continuous Improvement Planning (NCIP) committee was formed. Comprised of city staff, community leaders, residents, and business owners, the NCIP committee spent three days formulating new beliefs, parameters, objectives, and strategies for the city. After the plan came to fruition, action teams comprised of residents were formed to create plans to accomplish the new strategies. Less than a year later, Nixa has its first five-year strategic plan (NCIP) using the Cambridge Model of Strategic Planning. Currently Nixa is in year two of the plan and has already achieved five of 24 goals. The community’s response has been so supportive that Nixa plans to use the Cambridge Model again after this current plan is achieved. Even though the model was created for school districts, Nixa has modified the method to work for municipal government. Now that those modifications have been made, there’s no reason why other cities could not use this method to form its roadmap for the future.

**North Kansas City – Dagg Park Spray Ground
(Small City Category – population under 5,000)**

Located in the heart of the greater Kansas City area is the City of North Kansas City. This quaint “Virtually Urban, supremely Suburban” community has a population of 4,400 residents and consists of 4.2 square miles. In 1999 the community’s only large outdoor public pool, enjoyed by all ages, closed its doors indefinitely. There was a very small wading pool in Dagg Park that operated Memorial Day to Labor Day. This outdated feature only allowed children under 48 inches to splash around. For many years the community voiced their concern that a new outdoor pool needed to be built in North Kansas City. An aquatic study was conducted and showed that the City could not afford the cost of construction or daily operations of a new aquatic facility. The Parks and Recreation Board presented to the City Council the idea of replacing the outdated Dagg Park wading pool with a state of the art spray ground that would allow all ages to play, get wet and soak up summer fun. This approach was financially feasible for the City of North Kansas City and with completion in May, 2016 the spray ground brought back the joys of summer.

**Osage Beach – Wow\$ a Ca\$h
(Small City Category – population under 5,000)**

Working on Wellness and Safety Awareness Incentive Program (Wow\$ a Ca\$h). The City realized that keeping health insurance and workers’ compensation expenditure increases to a minimum are very important. Individual attitudes, practices, and employee engagement in the areas of wellness and safety are crucial for the City to maintain health insurance and workers’ compensation costs. The Wow\$ a Ca\$h program focuses on areas of wellness and safety by giving employees an opportunity to receive a monetary incentive annually by participating in a wide variety of activities. The Wow\$ a Ca\$h program has proven to be a viable tool for the City to maintain minimal increases and even a decline in workers’ compensation and health insurance costs over the past several years. Human Resources and a committee representing all City Departments work to offer a variety of activities for the program. Municipalities struggle to find funding for this type of program; however, this program can be implemented by any size of entity. The program is designed to have as many or as little resources/activities; therefore, cost to each entity is flexible. The cost of the Wow\$ a Ca\$h program is far less than the savings realized in future health insurance and workers’ compensation costs.

**Peculiar – Motor Fuel Fee (1%) Passage
(Small City Category – population under 5,000)**

On November 3, 2015 the voters approved the \$0.01 Motor Fuel Fee with a 70% “yes” vote. This meets the required supermajority needed by Article 4 section 30a of the Missouri Constitution. The proposed Ordinance will set forth the means to assess and collect the new fee as well as what the monies collected can be used for. This ordinance will force the fueling stations to begin assessing and collecting the Motor Fuel Fee January 1, 2016.

**Raymore – Reimagine Raymore: a community conversation
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

In early 2016, the City of Raymore began an in-depth strategic planning process to develop a plan for the City for the next 5-10 years. Rather than write a plan and wait for public comment, city leadership decided to put our residents first and invited them to a series of interactive community conversations where we asked residents to reimagine Raymore. Partnering with the University of Kansas Public Management Center and CoVision, a company specializing in creating interactive meetings, we invited residents, not only to come up with new ideas and initiatives to include in the strategic plan, but also to vote on the ideas and areas of focus they saw as a priority for Raymore in real time. Under the guidance of trained meeting facilitators, Raymore received an incredible number of ideas and input from more than 350 residents who helped build a foundation for a strategic plan that will guide the growth and prosperity of our community. Not only will this input strengthen the strategic plan itself, along with our bi-annual citizen survey, but it also created community-wide buy-in and a new level of excitement in the process that is necessary to see the plan succeed in future years.

**Richmond Heights – Aging in Place Study
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

The City of Richmond Heights Aging in Place Study began as a request from our City Council for an increase in services for older residents. City officials responded by creating the Aging in Place Steering Committee. This committee worked alongside Washington University - St. Louis to create focus groups to see where the City could improve. The findings of the study stated that although the needs extend beyond Richmond Heights’ city limits, there are additional services that can be offered. City officials and staff are determined to take these findings and turn them into reality so that older adults can continue to live and thrive in the city.

**Springfield – Integrated Plan for the Environment
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

Like many others across the nation, our community is addressing the challenge of increasingly stringent environmental regulations from every front. From storm water and wastewater to air quality and drinking water, and as regulations continue to evolve, our community is required to devote more money and resources to comply. The concern is that if communities, such as ours, are pushed too hard to address mandates for which our community sees little value, we could see a backlash which might swing the pendulum in the other direction and we will relinquish the gains that we’ve made over the last several decades.

In response to this issue, leaders from the City of Springfield, Green County and City Utilities developed a local approach to integrated planning titled “A Citizen Focused Approach.” This holistic approach uses local knowledge to examine and prioritize our environmental investments related to wastewater and storm water as well as solid waste, drinking water, and air quality. The Springfield – Green County community is working hard to implement an Integrated Plan that will ensure our vital natural resources are protected in a manner that is affordable to our community.

**St. Peters – Employee Fitness Challenge
(Large City Category - population more than 15,000)**

The Human Resources Department spearheaded an Employee Fitness Challenge program in October 2012, to give participating employees an extra incentive to keep off weight during the holiday season. Participants could also take part in two-week “mini challenges” that encouraged them to limit TV time, eat vegetables and fruits, drink water, get enough sleep, etc. People who met those challenges went into a drawing for the chance to win awards. Top finishers for the overall Employee Fitness Challenge also received rewards. The Employee Fitness Challenge was so successful that the city has implemented the program into a bi-annual twelve-week program with challenges in the Fall and Spring.

**Webb City – Cardinal Valley Habitat Restoration
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

Webb City has partnered with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to find a creative solution to the problem of high levels of zinc in our wastewater effluent and sludge. EPA personnel first approached staff with the idea of using a wetland to absorb the zinc prior to reaching the public waterway. DNR personnel were advertising for Request for Proposals to fund habitat on reclaimed old mining lands. Webb City submitted a proposal to manage a habitat project with the assistance of the USFWS, DNR, and EPA, and found a solution to use the sludge from our treatment facility to produce compost into needed topsoil for the habitat. This cost-saving project will create hundreds of acres of habitat that will be open to the public; provide recreation, trails and a wetland that will be planted with vegetation to absorb zinc; and provide a natural wildlife refuge. In years past, these lands were barren contaminated rock. The sludge now used to create compost, had been shipped to hazardous waste landfills at very high costs to the three member cities to the 201 Canter Creek Waste Water Treatment Facility.

**West Plains – West Plains Community Branding Project
(Medium City Category - population 5,000 – 15, 000)**

Tucked in the Ozark Mountains, near pristine wilderness areas and spring-fed streams, West Plains has always attracted nature lovers, entrepreneurs, and families searching for that small-town “feel”. Yet, despite its rural setting, visitors are surprised to learn of the big-city conveniences found in West Plains – from the local two-year college to a 3,000-seat multi-use arena, from a 114-bed medical center to a small business incubator, from outdoor music festivals to 15 public parks and walking trails.

To its residents, West Plains is many things to many people: Home. Family. Career. Adventure. When marketing itself to attract more visitors and potential investors, however, West Plains lacked a single identity to define itself. West Plains lacked a brand identity. In late 2013, the City of West Plains – with support from various community leaders, the local college, hospital, school district, and Chamber of Commerce – worked with North Star Destination Strategies to uncover that brand identity. Three years later, that brand is now fully implemented in the community, and is being used both locally and coast-to-coast to promote West Plains as a city of promise, ingenuity, and progressiveness.