



Missouri Municipal League

2012 Innovation Award Nominees

Medium Cities Category

BETHANY – Walking Challenge

Bethany's project involved a walking challenge where the city asked employees to volunteer to participate in a ten-week walking program, with each employee completing 50,000 steps per week.

With rising insurance costs and more claims being processed due to health issues, the City wanted to educate employees on a healthier lifestyle by incorporating exercise into their daily routine. The City had 20 out of 38 employees participate during the challenge.

Part of the success came from the participants breaking out into teams, in order to encourage each other. Employees walked before work, during breaks, during lunch, after lunch and in the evenings. Fifteen out of the 20 participants completed the full challenge. In total, employees took more than 13 million steps!

BRANSON – Neighborhood Walks

Branson has focused attention on its citizens and neighborhoods through a series of "Neighborhood Walks," where city staff and elected officials walk with neighbors and stakeholders on an evening stroll around their neighborhood. During this casual feedback session, everyone is able to contribute or listen to other's concerns or praise for their area of the community. In contrast to a typical town hall meeting, the walks allow all participants to see a concern first hand (i.e. traffic, property maintenance and safety). Often the neighbor who shares a concern is able to get an immediate response, a timeline for resolution, and a direct contact with the city staff who will follow up.

After each walk, staff compiles the feedback and begins addressing the critical issues and concerns. For issues that cannot immediately be resolved, a follow-up meeting is scheduled with neighbors to discuss progress and future plans to address them. To date, more than a dozen neighborhood walks have been held in five residential areas and two commercial districts, with hundreds of citizens benefitting from a more personal interaction between city officials and their own neighbors.

HARRISONVILLE – Brown Bag Lunches Foster Communications

Discussing business over lunch is a time-honored tradition, and the city of Harrisonville has found a way to utilize the all-American business lunch to improve communications with local business people and foster understanding of city issues and policies.

The local chamber of commerce first approached the City last year about setting up a series of roundtable discussions where business people could discuss their issues with city representatives. They felt a smaller group setting would be more comfortable for all involved and could foster a dialogue that would be beneficial to all involved. The noon hour seemed to be the optimum time, and to make matters simple for all, it was determined that everyone would bring his or her lunch – hence the name, Brown Bag Lunches.

The City and the chamber worked together to get this program off the ground. In addition, the park board made the meeting room available free of charge, and the senior citizens center, also located in the community center, offered to provide hot meals at a reduced cost to those who called ahead. The expenses incurred for the program are truly minimal.

After the first few lunch meetings, it was obvious that the program needed a more focused approach. City Administrator Keith Moody stepped in to draw up a list of topics, then assigned each to a department head. Now the public knows ahead of time what the program will be and people can plan their attendance accordingly.

PACIFIC – Trash For Cash Recycling Collaboration

In 2010, the City of Pacific confronted two long-standing community problems: (1) funding shortfalls for the City's senior center and (2) very low recycling rates. The City addressed both problems through an innovative partnering with a solid waste hauler during negotiations for a new franchise. The City negotiated a contract that provided free large recycling containers to all residents and payment to the City of 50 percent of all recycling revenue received by the waste hauler. By agreeing on revenue sharing (rather than 0 percent or 100 percent), both the City and the waste hauler had an incentive to increase recycling. Next, the City formally committed to donate its share of the revenue to the senior center, securing the support of the community leaders and center volunteers to promote the project. In a short time, the City's collaborative effort with the waste hauler and community volunteers resulted in successfully addressing both issues. Recycling in Pacific more than doubled between January 2010 and March 2012. Additionally, Pacific generated over \$11,000 dollars in 2011 alone. The citizens of Pacific now recycle at unprecedented levels; not only because it benefits the environment, but also because it provides a revenue stream for a favorite community cause.

Large Cities Category

ST. CHARLES – C.O.P.S. Camp

C.O.P.S. Camp (Challenge, Overcome, Persevere, Succeed) is a weeklong camp designed to provide 120 children, ages 9-14, with the opportunity to learn about and perform some of the duties of police officers and fire fighters without the barrier of uniform, badge and gun. The camp teaches the importance of teamwork, forms friendships and gives participants a positive experience of public safety professions. Registration is free to surviving children of public safety officials who were killed in the line of duty. The camp is a joint project of the St. Charles Ranger Division, the St. Charles Police Department and the St. Charles Fire Department. Additional training is also provided by many other local and State public safety agencies, making the camp a multiple-agency partnership.

INDEPENDENCE – Independence Home Energy Loan Program (HELP)

The Independence Home Energy Loan Program (HELP) is a partnership between the city of Independence Power & Light Department, City Credit Union and the Metropolitan Energy Center to provide low-interest weatherization loans to local residents for eligible energy efficiency measures. The HELP Program is a loan-loss reserve program, funded with \$250,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The objective of the HELP program is to enable residents to install energy efficient equipment through low-cost financing.

The impact for the City is reduced electrical demand and consumption that is a direct result of citizens purchasing more energy-efficient equipment. Also, citizens who didn't previously qualify for financing can now qualify and benefit from lower interest rates, making financing more affordable. Building contractors also have another option open to them to make energy-efficient electric equipment available to their customers. This program is less expensive to customers than traditional contractor financing. The achieved objectives are: (1) savings for the individual customer in reduced electric bills, (2) an opportunity for the individual customer to contribute to greenhouse gas emission reduction, (3) less overall energy consumption, and (4) a reduced carbon footprint for the community at large.

JEFFERSON CITY – eJCMO Mobile App Contest

Jefferson City launched a mobile app contest in April 2012. The contest, which ends Sept. 28, 2012, is open to anyone and must be Jefferson City centric. Criteria used to judge the apps is based on originality. The public can win one of three cash prizes.

The objectives of the contest are to initiate a program allowing the city to engage with citizens about ways to improve the city through technology, encourage potential local software developers and demonstrate the city's commitment to innovation.

The city has received positive press from the app contest locally and nationally. The chair of the computer programming department at Linn State Technical College was stated the college would offer its first app development course in spring 2013 and, if the city continues to hold an app contest, students would be encouraged to participate.

City officials have been encouraged by the public feedback on the contest and believe it is a project that can easily be adopted in almost any city, allowing engagement with a rapidly growing number of citizens who use smartphones on a daily basis to conduct business, socialize and learn about the world around them.

KIRKWOOD – Kirkwood Park Tennis Court Replacement

This project called for the replacement of eight of the 10 tennis courts in Kirkwood Park as the first phase of an effort to revitalize the tennis facilities that dated back to the 1960s. The objective of the project was to replace badly cracked and worn out traditional asphalt courts with state-of-the-art, post-tension concrete courts intended to last up to 50 years. The project brought together resources of the Kirkwood Parks and Recreation Department, the Kirkwood R-7 School District, the Municipal Park Grant Commission of St. Louis County, and the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

The new courts were completed and commissioned in May 2012. Since that time they have served as the home courts for the Kirkwood High School Pioneer tennis teams, hosted a regional USTA event, and received rave reviews from local tennis players.

LEE'S SUMMIT – Citizens Leadership Academy

The city of Lee's Summit has a long history of involving citizens in strategic planning to improve and develop the community. During the last planning event, the citizens' group recommended creation of a city leadership

program to provide training for citizens wishing to be appointed to one of the many citizen boards and commissions; file for an elected office; or, improve their understanding of local government.

From this goal evolved the city of Lee's Summit Citizens Leadership Academy. This year was the second Academy class and 25 citizens enthusiastically participated. City staff created the curriculum, facilitated the sessions and taught the classes.

Three 2012 City Council candidates were involved in the program, one of which was elected. A majority of the participants turned in interest forms requesting to serve on a citizen board or commission. Evaluations from the participants included rave reviews for the program.

SPRINGFIELD – CAmP Springfield – City Ambassador Program

During the fall of 2011, the city of Springfield instituted a new employee development program – City Ambassadors Program (CAmP). CAmP Springfield is designed to convert employees into community ambassadors by accomplishing the following four objectives:

- Provide employees an opportunity to learn about all of the departments and divisions within the City's government services.
- Provide interesting and fun professional development opportunities to employees.
- Promote a better understanding by employees as to the value of their role within the City and their contribution toward our mission.
- Foster increased communication across departments and divisions by creating a bond among the members of each class.

During the 10-month program, the class learned about everything from the airport and art museum to wastewater plants and the zoo.

In June of 2012, the City graduated its first CAmP class in a graduation ceremony. Post-program surveys indicated the objectives were achieved.