



Notable Practices of Florida Counties, Cities, and Schools

*Adapting and Implementing Successful Management, Performance, and Fiscal Initiatives
Can Boost Service Delivery and Produce Millions of Dollars of Taxpayer Value*



**A Florida TaxWatch Special Report
May 2008**

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Introduction

Now that Florida voters have approved more than \$9 billion in property tax cuts through Constitutional Amendment One, the state's cities and counties are under pressure to do even more with even less. This Florida TaxWatch publication is a compilation of more than 150 best practices of Florida counties, cities, and schools that have been recognized by the state and national entities listed below. It is intended as a tool for government officials, managers, and citizens to consider for their own community to help improve service delivery and stretch resources. Integral to this effort, an appendix provides material to help instill a culture of efficiency, savings, and accountability.

Continuous improvement in Florida counties, cities, and schools is more important today than ever in light of our rapidly changing economy, a baby boomer generation about to retire and become more reliant on government services, and a trend of more services devolving from the federal and state governments to local entities.

Florida TaxWatch believes that **before considering reductions in vital services, local governments should ensure that they are operating in the most effective and efficient manner possible.** A view from the private sector is that corporate America has undergone a transformation to become more efficient, innovative, and customer centric to strengthen its ability to compete in global markets. By contrast, some government entities have not kept pace and lack 21st century leadership approaches and tools to dramatically improve their effectiveness and efficiency.

The following organizations and awards programs are gratefully acknowledged for providing the exemplary local government and school practices and achievements summarized in this publication:

American City and County Magazine, Crown Communities Awards

Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Ash Institute and IBM International Awards Program

Association of Local Government Auditors, Knighton Awards

Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Center for Digital Government

CityEthics.org

The Council for Excellence in Government

Florida Association of Counties

Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence recognition and City Innovations Showcase

Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

Florida Sterling Awards for Organizational Performance Excellence

International City/County Management Association

National Association of Counties

National Civic League, All-America City Awards and MetLife Ambassadors in Education Award

National League of Cities, Awards for Municipal Excellence

The Performance Institute

Pew Partnership for Civic Change

Pew Partnership Solutions for America: What's Already Out There?

Public Technology Institute

Sustainlane Government

U.S. Conference of Mayors

U.S. Government National Performance Review, Benchmarking Study Report

Florida TaxWatch Can Help

An important part of the Florida TaxWatch mission is to help taxpayers, officials, and managers improve the accountability and efficiency of government operations. The TaxWatch Center for Local Government Studies conducts research on city and county governments, including budgeting and taxation, prioritization of services and service delivery options, and auditing and performance measurement, in order to recommend improved effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability to benefit taxpayers.

The Center's objectives are to promote improvement of local government operations, modernization of local government structure, and competition for delivery for local government services, as well as to identify and promote local government best practices such as those in this publication, and recognize and reward performance results above and beyond the call of duty via an employee recognition program.

Accountability and Finance

1. Prudent Budgeting Hillsborough County

In February 2007, the Board of County Commissioners voted to limit annual spending increases to the rate of inflation plus the county's population growth. This policy has been a recommendation by Florida TaxWatch to local governments across Florida, and is in keeping with cost cutting and tax saving proposals outlined in a Florida TaxWatch budget study on Hillsborough County government in 1999.

For more information, please contact Eric Johnson, Budget Director, Hillsborough County (813) 272-5890.

2. Transparent Budgeting City of Miami Beach

The city received a 2006 "Transparent Budget Award" from The Performance Institute and The Council for Excellence in Government for linking the results of a citywide customer survey to allocation of budget dollars.

Sources: The Performance Institute, 2006 award; and Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

3. Improved Tax Payment Processing Systems Miami-Dade County

The county Tax Collector's Office automated manual processing and recording of real estate property tax payments, local business tax receipts, and auto tag vehicle and vessel registration renewal payments received by mail from customers. More than 2,500 vehicle and vessel registration and decals mailed to customers daily are now automatically inserted in envelopes and sealed. Processing time and labor costs are reduced by contracting with a mail consolidation company to pick up and bulk mail daily.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:
Rachel Baum
Finance Director
Finance Department
111 NW 1st Street, Suite 2550
Miami, FL 33128
Phone: (305) 375-5245

4. Audit of Highway Construction Division Orange County

An audit of the Highway Construction Division by the County Comptroller used an innovative approach to assess whether contractors complied with contract specifications. The audit unit hired outside geotechnical engineers to drill core samples of roads under construction. These samples demonstrated that contractors had failed to build to depths required in contract specifications. In its response to the revelation, county management agreed to implement the core sampling technique on future road projects.

Source: Association of Local Government Auditors, 2005 Knighton Award

5. Audit of Traffic Calming City of West Palm Beach

This audit used citizen surveys, video-taping, and photos to conclusively document a need for more efficiency and effectiveness throughout the traffic calming program.

Source: Association of Local Government Auditors, 2002 Knighton Award

6. Audit of Insurance Broker's Records City of Gainesville

The city auditor's office reviewed the records of an insurance broker to determine how much the city had been overcharged and the amount of interest due from a contractor. The end result of the review was a half million dollars in repayment to the city. Issues addressed in the audit are similar to those investigated in other parts of the country regarding contingent fees in the insurance brokerage industry. The audit examined internal city procedures relating to insurance brokerage services and recommended improvements.

Source: Association of Local Government Auditors, 2006 Knighton Award

7. Audit of Pension Investments City of Tallahassee

The city's audit of its approximately \$1 billion pension plans confirmed that the plans were fully funded and that investments were made in compliance with state and city legal requirements. The audit identified needed improvements in the areas of monitoring and oversight, format policies and procedures, documentation, and internal controls. An action plan was developed by appointed officials and city staff.

Source: Association of Local Government Auditors, 2006 Knighton Award

8. Audit of Payroll and Timekeeping Practices Miami-Dade County Public Schools

An audit of payroll and timekeeping practices in the maintenance operations and facilities construction unit uncovered systemic problems with employee supervision and control. Audit staff demonstrated that some employees were not performing their duties. As a result of this audit, school district management, with employee unions' concurrence, implemented additional controls to improve employee performance tracking and monitoring.

Source: Association of Local Government Auditors, 2005 Knighton Award

9. Performance Measurement Sarasota County and GovMax

GovMax is a web-based application that integrates strategic and business planning, performance management, and budgeting to help maximize investment performance and communicate results to citizens. It is said to be the first integrated system of its type designed specifically for government organizations.

Source: International City/County Management Association

10. Performance Management Miami-Dade County

The county was recognized by the Performance Institute for performance-based management in five core areas: strategic planning, budgeting, human resource management, procurement/contracting, and information technology.

Miami-Dade developed county-wide goals and measures with the following characteristics:

- Priorities and mission statement based on focus groups and workshops
- Annual agency business plans aligned with strategic goals and measures
- Annual budget linked to priorities and results
- Methodologies to measure and analyze performance, including community surveys, “secret shopper” programs, and a 311 answer center
- Strategies to ensure accountability and transparency to the public, including quarterly reporting and management performance appraisals
- County Manager’s endorsement of an overall change in organizational culture

Source: The Performance Institute, 2004 Award

11. Performance Measurement City of Coral Springs

An intergovernmental benchmarking team worked with 32 study partners, including the City of Coral Springs, that were drawn from more than 100 organizations nationwide considered “best-in-class” in the area of performance measurement. These organizations:

- are recognized as leaders in performance measurement;
- have a mature performance measurement process;
- communicate this process throughout the organization;
- clearly link strategic plans and accountability;
- use compensation and rewards systems effectively;
- operate effective information management systems; and
- use performance measurement results to drive continuous improvement.

Source: U.S. Government National Performance Review, Benchmarking Study Report, June 1997

12. Budgeting Principles Recommended by the 2007 Leon County Citizens Budget Review Initiative

Principle: The budget should identify spending priorities that reflect the core purposes of county government and change as conditions change

A. Conduct an annual review of the base budget. The county commission should review the base budget of each department as a regular feature of the annual budget cycle.

B. Identify core functions and allocate dollars accordingly. The budget should reflect spending priorities by allocating funds in a manner consistent with these core purposes. The commission should consider hosting a community forum on the appropriate role of county government.

C. Link budget growth to specific benchmarks. Overall budget growth should be tied to a set of benchmarks based on increases in wages, cost of living or population. Benchmarks should be used to monitor spending by individual departments.

D. Avoid taxing at rates that generate excess unspent cash for the county. A recently adopted fund balance policy should be amended to reduce the level for the General Fund (10-20 percent cash balance reserve and 5-10 percent contingency reserve for a fund balance of 15-30 percent), apply it to three Special Revenue Funds considered part of General Revenue funds, and include a separate standard for the remaining Special Revenue Funds.

The level for the cash balance reserve portion should be 12-15 percent (i.e., 45-60 days) for General Revenue Funds and 8-12 percent (i.e., 30-45 days) for Special Revenue Funds. This level is consistent with industry standards.

The Fund Balance Summary chart in the budget should calculate the available excess fund balance using the mid-point (i.e., 22.5 percent) in the current policy range of 15-30 percent, rather than the maximum.

E. Identify a mechanism to return excessive fund balances back to taxpayers. Options could include tax rebates or a credit against future tax bills.

F. Budget a salary lapse factor. It is common practice to budget salaries at 95% - 98% of what is needed to fully fund the cost of positions. This practice is called a lapse factor. The county claims to adjust for vacancies in calculating salary increases, but there is no explanation of this practice in the budget document and the amount of the lapse adjustment is not provided.

G. Explore opportunities for shared efficiencies and elimination of duplication. The budget should promote opportunities for shared service delivery and elimination of any duplication between the county and city, and among the constitutional officers.

Principle: The budget should incorporate long-range planning, standards, and trend data

A. Instill public confidence in the budgeting process. The commission should review the compensation and benefits for top managers and review county employment contracts. It should also examine the classification of capital projects as mandatory and non-mandatory to insure that projects for the community are not sacrificed for those serving county government.

B. Present future obligations and anticipate needed cost controls. Present the complete picture of future obligations, and anticipate and plan for future fiscal liabilities, such as those resulting from health and retirement plans. As an example, the county should accelerate projection of future retiree health costs, rather than waiting for FY 2008-09.

C. Control rapidly increasing costs to reduce long-term budgetary impacts. The county should focus on ways to control health insurance and energy costs since these can have a significant impact on overall operational expenses. These costs are increasing at a significant rate and, if not appropriately managed, may jeopardize service delivery in staff-intensive areas such as libraries. The budget should provide more detailed analysis of these costs.

D. Include more expenditure and revenue trend data. More historical data should be included, for

example, for certain categories of expenditures such as those experiencing rapid growth.

E. Earlier involvement in the budget process. Commissioners should consider engaging in the budget process much earlier in the budget cycle. They should consider holding workshops to review the budget and program outcomes for each department beginning in early spring.

Principle: The budget should reflect management for results through quality review and performance accountability

A. Evaluate program results. The commission should evaluate program outcomes against criteria and benchmarks it approves. The Leon County Citizens Budget Review Initiative has developed a “*Framework for Analysis*” as a useful tool to conduct this review.

B. Insure independent fiscal and program accountability and information. The commission should create an independent office of fiscal and program accountability, much like an Inspector General. Reliance on county staff for much of its budget information poses significant risks to the quality and objectivity of information available for decision-making.

C. Reward and recognize managers and employees for saving money and increasing productivity. The county should implement the government productivity awards program it approved unanimously last year.

Principle: The budget should be accessible to the public to allow for meaningful participation

A. Promote budget clarity. For example, in some areas, the “Other” category is the largest budget category (see “Other General Governmental Services” on p. 4-51) rather than a collection of miscellaneous and leftover expenditures one would expect to find.

B. Accurately identify major policy decisions. Salary increases, for example, should be presented as a distinct item rather than included in funds labeled “budgeted reserves.” This makes the policy decision difficult to identify.

C. Show and describe changes to the base budget. Make it easy to tell how much of proposed spending is a continuation of the existing budget and how much is new programs or enhancements, and describe new issues.

D. Evaluate the rationale for inter-fund transfers. Resources are transferred in and out of funds in ways that make it difficult to comprehend and track the flow of dollars. The reason for transfers to funds that project large cash balances is unclear.

E. Review the need to continue certain funds. The “Non-Operating” budget category appears to be a misnomer since it includes items that are clearly an integral part of county operations, such as fire control and worker’s compensation. In addition, Fund 126, the Non-Countywide General Revenue Fund, exists solely as a vehicle for inter-fund transfers.

F. Develop a clear policy for setting aside funds for unanticipated events and communicate the policy

to the public. Why have “reserves”, “budgeted contingency,” “reserve for fund balance,” “reserve for cash balance,” and “fund balances”? If they are necessary, distinctions among them should be expressly noted as part of a coherent policy that is clearly articulated to citizens.

G. Provide a more detailed level of budget data and expenditure history to the commission and to the public in order to show how taxpayer money is being spent, and post this information on the county web site. The county posts the budget online, but the budget does not contain information at a level of detail (i.e., object code) sufficient for citizens to really know how tax dollars are being spent. This data should be posted online for public use, rather than having to request it from staff. Object code categories should be clearly labeled so the commission and taxpayers can see how much each division or department, and the county as a whole, is spending on items such as life and health benefits, general insurance, publications, and on and on, rather than being included in broad budget categories that are relatively meaningless (e.g., Personal Services and Capital Outlay). This is a necessary level of detail for those making decisions on how to spend tax dollars, and those seeking to understand those decisions.

H. Identify the document that the commission actually approves and provide it to the public. It is unclear what budget document the commission actually approves.

I. Provide summary information on each fund so that interested citizens can easily determine its financial status. At a minimum, the summary should include beginning cash balance, projected revenues by source, projected expenditures, and the projected cash balance at year-end. Currently, one must look in several different places in the budget to piece this information together.

13. Activity Based Costing

Activity Based Costing (ABC), which has been called one of the most important management innovations of the past 100 years, is rooted in the late 1940s introduction of performance budgeting to the U.S. Department of Defense. Many combat activities have been managed with cost-per-unit-measures for some time.

In the 1980s, ABC gained prominence in the civilian world due to the work of Professor Robert Kaplan of the Harvard Business School, and others. ABC responded to an increasing lack of relevance of traditional cost accounting methods, which were designed between 1870 and 1920 when industry was labor intensive, there was little automation, product variety was small, and overhead costs were a substantially lower percentage of product cost than today.

Most local governments aggregate costs for organizational units within a department and compare the total from one year to the next. Overhead costs are allocated according to factors such as the number of square feet occupied and the amount of direct labor costs. By contrast, ABC assigns overhead to units of output (products or services) resulting from “activities” that directly contribute to desired outcomes.

ABC Fundamentals

- Activity Based Costing (ABC) is an extension of, not a replacement for, traditional accounting and management. A key assumption of ABC, by contrast to cost accounting, is that overhead costs are necessary to produce a service, product, or other output. ABC is seen by some in the accounting industry as the wave of the future because it shifts the focus *from* organizational

units to service and product life cycles, thereby better reflecting actual costs. Unit costs are particularly germane to service level budgeting decisions in fast growing areas whose local governments are continuously challenged by increasing service demands.

- ABC provides the ability to track and forecast both revenues and expenses. It directs attention to the *causes* of costs and the cost of quality.
- Consistent with Total Quality Management, ABC identifies factors that promote continuous improvement of local government services by allocating costs to where they actually occur in processes that cross departmental boundaries, rather than simply apportioning costs among production units.
- ABC focuses on changes in cost that result from changes in activities that create units of output. Compared to traditional accounting, ABC enhances opportunities for increased productivity and efficiency by identifying factors such as lack of capacity, misallocation of capacity, or surplus capacity.
- ABC establishes the average total cost of producing one unit of service by dividing the total cost of production by the number of units of output. Costs include the number of labor hours, wages per labor hour, materials, and equipment required to perform an activity one time. Total cost is the number of times an activity is performed.

ABC involves a multi-step resource allocation process: (a) identifying activities that are related to services, products, or other units of output that require the activities; (b) identifying cost objects and their direct and overhead costs; (c) selecting a cost-allocation base for assigning overhead costs to cost objects; and (D) developing a rate per unit for allocating overhead.

Customer Services and Participation In Local Government Affairs

1. Citizen Action System City of Boynton Beach

This windows/web-based geographic information system tracks citizen inquiries and concerns, enabling city employees to quickly and effectively respond. Citizens' calls are logged into the system and routed to the appropriate department or point of contact. Also logged are actions taken by city employees and follow-up with citizens.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices, and Florida League of Cities, Inc.-www.flcities.com

Contact Information:

Carisse LeJeune
Administrative Assistant
City Manager's Office
City of Boynton Beach
100 E. Boynton Beach Boulevard
Boynton Beach, FL 33435
Phone: (561) 742-6012
E-mail: lejeunec@ci.boynton-beach.fl.us

Additional Information: www.boynton-beach.org

2. Customer Service Professional Program Broward County

Broward County's Customer Service Professional program (CSP), offered in partnership with a local university, builds on mandatory customer service training that is taken by each employee during their first year in county government. The CSP program is designed for individuals to demonstrate proficiency in seven critical service areas, either through training or life experiences.

Competencies defined for each service area provide an opportunity for individuals to identify, assess, and customize their customer service portfolio. Employees at all levels of county government are encouraged to obtain the CSP designation, which helps demonstrate commitment to provide exemplary customer service, and to serve as mentors to others in the organization.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Susan Dell Cioppa
Employee Development Manager
Human Resources Division
Broward County Board of County Commissioners
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301
Phone: (954) 357-6588
Fax: (954) 357-8414

Additional Information: www.broward.org

3. Interactive Government City of West Palm Beach

The city's e-government initiative provides its citizens 24/7 access to services. Through a "one-stop shop" web site, www.cityofwpb.com, customers have a virtual city hall from which to download and submit applications for permits and occupational licenses, download real-time access to plan review comments and status, schedule and obtain results of building inspections, file complaints, report code-enforcement violations, make e-payments, and more.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices, and Florida League of Cities, Inc.-www.flcities.com

Contact Information:

Neil Melick
Director of Construction Services
Department of Construction Services
City of West Palm Beach
P.O. Box 3366
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Phone: (561) 805-6650
E-mail: nmelick@wpb.org

Additional Information: www.cityofwpb.com

4. Building Plans and Permits Information Miami Dade County

This initiative replaced microfilm services, which were on a first-come-first-serve basis and regularly created long customer lines. The new program enables customers to view and obtain copies of building plans on file. Customers schedule 20-minute appointments and pay a \$15 research fee online. The system includes an internal quality control review process regarding appointments, fee payments, legal subpoena requests, and historical records tracking. Overdue customer requests appear as automatic e-mails for immediate follow-up with staff.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Donna Romito
Information and Permit Support Division Director
Miami-Dade County Building Department
11805 SW 26 Street (Coral Way)
Miami, FL 33175-2474
Phone: (786) 315-2335
Fax: (786) 315-2929

5. Online Parking Citation Payment System City of Fort Lauderdale

This system, located at www.6ci.fort-lauderdale.fl.us/parkingtickets, enables citizens to pay parking tickets via the Internet. Secure payments using 128-bit encryption can be made with major credit cards. The system has increased customer satisfaction and revenues for the city.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices; and Florida League of Cities, Inc.-www.flcities.com

Contact Information:

Mark Dennin
Webmaster
Public Information Office

City of Fort Lauderdale
101 N.E. Third Avenue, Suite 300
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
Phone: (954) 828-4740
Email: webmaster@fortlauderdale.gov

Additional Information: www.ci.ftlaud.fl.us

6. Assessing Customer Service City of Miami Beach

In FY 2004-05, all 2,000 city employees were trained in updated customer service standards. A “service shopper program” includes quarterly evaluation of how well the city is doing to meet these standards. Each department is “shopped” through telephone calls, in-person site visits, and exit interviews with customers in order to assess how well the standards are met.

Source: Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

7. Customer Service Week City of Palm Bay

The city’s Customer Service Division joined companies across the nation in celebrating Customer Service Week in October 2005. This was an opportunity for the city to acknowledge the importance of customer service excellence and recognize its customer service professionals for their day-to-day work. Employees celebrated the week with costumes and decorations for different theme days. At a council meeting, a proclamation recognizing Customer Service Week was presented to the Customer Service Division by the mayor.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, Employee Programs

Contact Information:
Dawn Reid
Customer Service Manager
City of Palm Bay
120 Malabar Road S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 952-3400

8. Welcome Program Miami-Dade County

Welcome material for new residents, new property owners, and first time homeowners informs them about government services and ways to get involved in their communities. It is distributed at block parties, health fairs, homeowners’ association meetings and similar events.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:
Suzanne Salichs
Acting Director
Team Metro
111 NW 1st Street
Miami, FL 33128
Phone: (305) 375-4845
Fax: (305) 375-4124

9. Community Building Sarasota County

In 2005, three organizations were recognized for addressing community challenges:

▶ Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team is a volunteer organization that raises awareness of native habitats.

▶ "A Special Time" and "Comfort Connection" are non-profit, non-denominational respite programs offering relief to caregivers of adult patients.

▶ Home Computers for Sarasota County Students is a community network of businesses and individuals that donates upgraded, used computers to students whose families cannot afford to buy them.

Organizations such as Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence helps citizens perform these and other initiatives.

Source: National Civic League, All-America City Award, 2006

Economic Development, Redevelopment and Growth Management

1. Economic Development Oversight Committee City of Palm Beach Gardens

To help understand how the business community perceived the city, an Economic Development Oversight Committee, composed of representatives from industry sectors that the city wished to target for future growth, was formed. The committee identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats from a business point of view. Positive items were incorporated into a marketing package and action plans were formulated to address weak areas. The committee then developed an expedited permitting program.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Dolores Key
Economic Development and Marketing Administrator
City of Palm Beach Gardens
10500 N. Military Trail
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
Phone: (561) 799-4100
E-mail: dkey@pbgfl.com

Additional Information: www.pbgfl.com

2. Development and Permitting Processes Business Assistance Team (BAT) City of Orlando

The team's mission is to provide the business community with accessible, accountable, efficient and effective services. Each team member is a point person who leads a small business to the appropriate city department, serves as a liaison, and ensures that every effort is made to resolve issues. Since its inception, the team has helped more than 3,000 customers and expanded from two to twenty members covering all areas of city government. BAT services include:

- Site Selection
- Streamlined Permitting
- Land Development
- Code Enforcement
- Public Works
- Evaluation
- Downtown Parking
- Non-Profit Referral
- Economic Development

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices
http://www.cityoforlando.net/executive/eco_dev/incentives3_old.htm

3. Small Business Information Center Hillsborough County

First Stop, an information and referral center, promotes growth and development of small business by providing general information, workshops, free business counseling, and referral to technical and financial assistance providers.

Source: International City/County Management Association, 2006 award finalist
<http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/econdev/sbic/>

4. Construction Services Center City of Tampa

This center is a one-stop shop for activities ranging from minor repairs to high-rise buildings. Assistance personnel represent 11 agencies with functions relating to construction activity. Services are divided into three areas for increased customer convenience and assistance.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices
http://www.tampagov.net/dept_Construction_Services/

5. Business and Tourism Improvement Project Osceola County

A decade-long, three-phase project redeveloped a 13-mile commercial corridor of U.S. Highway 192 that had hazardous drainage ditches, poor lighting, unattractive signs, and no landscaping. The county reduced the cost of this project by timing its three phases to coincide with road-widening projects scheduled by the Florida Department of Transportation.

The corridor now has 10-foot-wide sidewalks and bike lanes shaded by more than 300 palm trees. Intersections have crosswalks and lighting, and rest stops are equipped with benches, water fountains, bike racks, and informational kiosks. Markers direct tourists to local attractions.

Project funding came primarily from a special tax assessment known as a Municipal Service Benefit Unit, which was approved by the community to deal with concerns about the long-term viability of its tourist district. Aesthetic and safety improvements strengthened tourism, boosted competitiveness, and increased property values for approximately 600 businesses.

Source: Crown Communities Award, 2004

6. Improved Water Quality and Affordable Housing City of Winter Park

Community opposition to upgrading a water plant and replacing rundown rental housing with new apartments was overcome by an aggressive public relations campaign that helped secure support for the project. City officials worked with residents to design the new water plant and apartments, and the city paid to relocate low-income families while replacement housing was built.

The project improved the neighborhood's long-term economic prospects, including gentrification and developers wanting to build on a block across the street.

Source: Crown Communities Award, 2004

7. Urban Infilling
City of Pensacola

The city used an urban infill implementation grant and funds from other programs to acquire 12 lots, construct seven homes, and pay for 1,700 overtime hours that were worked by police officers patrolling the urban infill and redevelopment area. These activities helped encourage private developers to build housing in this area.

Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, State of Florida, Report 05-32. Additional information is provided in a status report titled *Urban Infill and Redevelopment Areas Have Uncertain Impact But Perceived as Useful*, Report No 04-14.

8. Revitalization Project
City of Orlando

A revitalization project in the economically distressed Parramore District included apartment buildings, retail office space, and a parking garage. City officials used state, local and federal sources listed below to create a package of incentives and funding for the estimated \$43.7 million project.

Incentive Sources	Amount
Federal	
New Markets Tax Credit	\$ 4,500,000
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit	3,712,000
Community Development Financial Institutions Fund	1,750,000
HOME	1,550,000
Community Development Block Grant	700,000
State	
Brownfield Program Sales Tax Refund	\$ 500,000
HOME match	473,000
SHIP	250,000
Local	
Orlando CRA	\$12,500,000
Housing Finance Authority Tax-exempt bonds	12,000,000
Taxable bonds	2,000,000
Private	
Bank of America Community Development Corporation	\$ 3,747,000

Sources: Orlando Neighborhood Improvement Corp. and the City of Orlando, and Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, State of Florida, Report 05-32

9. Neighborhood Redevelopment Partnerships
City of Tarpon Springs

Revitalization and redevelopment of the Union Academy neighborhood involved a number of city departments in partnership with Pinellas County, the Tarpon Springs Housing Authority, community groups, and private enterprise.

Revitalization included purchase of properties through tax lien sales and demolition of condemned structures; construction of affordable homes on the cleared sites; increased code enforcement;

beautification of rights-of-way; and renovation of the main thoroughfare, Martin Luther King Drive. These improvements assisted in reducing neighborhood crime.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Judy Staley
Information and Research Officer
City of Tarpon Springs
P. O. Box 5004
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
Phone: (727) 938-3711 ext 2270
E-mail: jstaley@ci.tarpon-springs.fl.us

Additional Information: www.ci.tarpon-springs.fl.us

10. Community Redevelopment City of Hallandale Beach

A revitalization project in a part of the community that had been languishing began with community meetings to determine residents' needs and desires. This was followed by the city budgeting more than \$1 million to purchase properties for redevelopment, and to make improvements such as planting palms along a corridor; repaving roadway and installing curbs and gutters; creating a park on one end of the corridor and expanding an existing park on the other end; building new bus shelters; installing traffic-calming devices and brick pavers at key crosswalks; installing entrance features at both ends of the corridor; and installing decorative lighting on existing poles. The community chose to name itself Palms of Hallandale. This project resulted in an aesthetically enhanced community with increased property values and strengthening of community pride and hope.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Jenny Cheretis, P.E., Director
Public Works, Utilities and Engineering Department
City of Hallandale Beach
630 N.W. 2nd Street
Hallandale Beach, FL 33009
Phone: (954) 457-1600

Additional Information: www.ci.hallandale.fl.us

11. Community Neighborhood Renaissance Program City of Tallahassee

Initiated in 1999, this program is operated as a 501(c) 3 organization by the city and county, higher education institutions, businesses, non-profits, schools, and faith-based organizations. Its purpose is to revitalize Tallahassee's inner city neighborhoods and promote development on the city's south side.

Source: National League of Cities, Awards for Municipal Excellence

12. Housing and Neighborhood Development Strategy City of Hollywood

In 2000, the city created a Department of Housing and Community Redevelopment to evaluate neighborhood and housing issues. Through involvement of neighborhood associations, non-profit agencies, local businesses, and local government, new affordable housing has been developed,

individual homes improved, streetscapes enhanced, and new home buyers assisted. Neighborhoods coalesced around core values of empowerment, responsibility, accountability, authority, and focus. One result is that crime rates fell in Hollywood's most distressed neighborhoods.

Source: All American City Awards, 2007

13. Partnerships Represented In Diverse Environments **City of Hollywood**

The city's Partnerships Represented In Diverse Environments (PRIDE) brings together diverse cultural segments to work for a better community by sharing skills, attitudes, languages, and behaviors. To help accomplish this goal, the city created one of the most extensive volunteer programs in the country, known as Volunteer Hollywood.

Source: All America City Awards. Contact Mike McGrath, (720) 270 7822

14. Students Help with Community Redevelopment **City of Hollywood**

The city's Department of Housing and Community Redevelopment staff recruited high school students who were too old for summer camp, but too young for employment, to volunteer for a redevelopment project. During a two-month period, 40 students in grades nine through 12 helped repair and renovate homes of elderly residents, single parents, and disabled people. Under the supervision of city firefighters, they primed and painted building exteriors, fixed screen doors, mended fences, sealed blacktop driveways, operated pressure-cleaning tools, mowed lawns, and weeded flowerbeds.

Working on homes in their own neighborhoods helped students learn the importance of connecting with the community. They gained practical skills while earning high school credit. They also visited city departments and met with city officials to learn about the workings of government.

As a result of the program, several at-risk students improved their school attendance and grades, while others found part-time jobs through references from program coordinators. Additionally, many formed friendships with fellow program participants outside of their own ethnic and religious groups.

Source: Crown Communities Award, 2006

15. Neighborhood Team **City of St. Petersburg**

The city's oldest, most fragile and architecturally significant neighborhoods are populated by poor, elderly, and disabled citizens who live on fixed incomes and often are unable to make home repairs. Since 1993, this initiative has helped more than 2,500 homeowners bring their properties up to code, in part by utilizing correctional system inmates.

Source: National League of Cities Awards for Municipal Excellence

16. Rehabilitation Program **City of Clearwater**

The city offers assistance to income-eligible homeowners to make property improvements to correct

code deficiencies. Assistance is provided in the form of grants, deferred payment loans, and/or low-interest loans.

The city also provides assistance to persons purchasing homes that need repair to correct code-related items.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Howie Carroll
Assistant Director of Housing
Economic Development and Housing Services
City of Clearwater
P.O. Box 4748
Clearwater, FL 33756
Phone: (727) 562-4031
E-mail: hcarroll@clearwater-fl.com

Additional Information: www.clearwater-fl.com

17. Prosperity Through Partnerships

Polk County

A campaign brought civic organizations, government agencies, and businesses together to share resources, market assets, and develop strategies to revitalize the economy. This initiative had two key components: A Polk County Bonus Incentive Program, which rewards quality job generation, and an award-winning Hurricane Heroes campaign, which thanked and marketed Polk County to thousands of out-of-county electric company line workers, insurance adjustors, and FEMA staff who assisted in 2004 hurricane recovery.

Source: 2007 All America City Award from the National Civic League, Contact Mike McGrath (720) 270 7822

18. Residential Reconstruction Incentive Grant

City of New Port Richey

A residential reconstruction incentive grant provides up to \$5,000 in dollar-for-dollar matching funds for owners or builders who improve the value of their property.

The owner/builder must agree that the home or property will be used as a single-family, owner-occupied dwelling. Eligible homes or properties must be valued at or below \$125,000 prior to improvements. The value of the improvements must be at least \$5,000. Improvements considered for reimbursement include room additions, new construction, lot or unit combination, remodeling, and expanding existing homes. Building and permitting fees, as well as impact fees, can also be reimbursed.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Gerald Paradise, APA
Assistant City Manager/Redevelopment Director
City of New Port Richey
5919 Main Street
New Port Richey, FL 34652
Phone: (727) 841-4500
E-mail: paradisejd@cityofnewportrichey.org

Additional Information: www.cityofnewportrichey.org

19. Paint-Up Fix-Up Grant Program City of New Port Richey

This program provides dollar-for-dollar matching funds up to \$1,000 for home improvement projects including exterior painting, window and door replacement, landscaping and irrigation system installation, front porch upgrading, shutter or awning replacement, driveway pouring, roof replacement, replacement of dilapidated fencing, outdoor lighting installation, and exterior architectural design.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Gerald Paradise, APA
Assistant City Manager/Redevelopment Director
City of New Port Richey
5919 Main Street
New Port Richey, FL 34652
Phone: (727) 841-4500
E-mail: paradisejd@cityofnewportrichey.org

Additional Information: www.cityofnewportrichey.org

20. Historic Preservation Program City of Coral Gables

The city has one of the nation's most innovative and influential programs for conserving historic properties from the early 1920s to the 1940s. Owners of designated properties are eligible for an exemption from increases in ad valorem taxes for up to 10 years, thereby freezing taxes at the rate paid before improvements were made.

Source: Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

21. Development Patterns Study: Public Participation Component Martin County

Martin County underwent an extensive public participation process to help determine its future development. The process helped create a series of policy guidelines that articulate principles under which development will occur. It focused on both permitted and non-permitted development patterns by the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

The public participation process included face-to-face public meetings, video-on-demand TV, an up-to-the-minute web site, and overview by a panel of professional planners. The process spanned 16 months and concluded with a report on key findings and recommendations on seven potential development patterns for county officials to consider.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award.

Contact Information:

Nicki van Vonno
Growth Management Director
Martin County Growth Management
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, FL 34996
Phone: (772) 288-5495
Fax: (772) 288-5960

22. Growth Management Department Bus Tour Martin County

Martin County residents are focused on growth management issues, and have implemented one of the most rigorous land development regulatory programs in the state.

The county's Growth Management Department consists of code enforcement, community development, comprehensive planning, and environmental planning divisions. Planners, plan reviewers, site inspectors, and other staff focusing on their day-to-day tasks sometimes lose sight of overall department goals, and how they and their colleagues fit into that picture. Moreover, because there are always new projects to work on, it is difficult for individual staff members to assess how effective their work is over time.

To help cope with this situation, department staff annually board a tour bus for a rolling staff meeting, field exercise, and retreat. For very little cost, the tour enables professional, technical, and support staff to review dozens of locations and project sites. Throughout the tour, staff members lead discussions concerning past and present development sites, pointing out successes and areas for improvement.

The bus tour is a unique platform for reconnecting busy professionals with core goals of the Growth Management Department. It provides an opportunity for senior employees to showcase the work they have done throughout the year, and to share lessons learned with others. The tour is also an excellent way to introduce new staff members to the county and the work of their new department.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Nicki Van Vonno
Growth Management Director
Martin County Growth Management
2401 SE Monterey Road
Stuart, FL 34996
Phone: (772) 288-5495
Fax: (772) 288-5960

Education

1. Urban Academies Program Broward County School Board

This program addresses teacher retention problems in predominantly poor and minority hard-to-staff schools. It recruits students who aspire to be educators, provides specialized training for college students already committed to education, and works with classroom teachers, all for the purpose of helping give children in these communities the education they deserve.

Source: 2006 recognition by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

<http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu/Ash/news.htm>. A short film showcasing this initiative is available.

2. Academic Village City of Pembroke Pines

Academic Village brings educational, recreational, and cultural resources to a community that formerly had few resources. Partners include Broward Community College, Florida International University, Pembroke Pines Charter High School, Southwest Broward County Regional Library, and River of Grass Cultural Arts Center, which has a theater, classrooms, studios, and outdoor performance and gallery space. The village includes a sports facility with an Olympic-size pool, tennis and basketball courts, and a 30-acre environmental studies wetland.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Charles F. Dodge
City Manager
City of Pembroke Pines
10100 Pines Boulevard
Pembroke Pines, FL 33026
Phone: (954) 431-4884
E-mail: cdodge@ppines.com

Additional Information: www.ppines.com

3. Brevard Public Schools

Brevard is the tenth largest of Florida's 67 public school districts, serving more than 75,000 students in 17 municipalities at 85 schools, 14 special centers, and 13 charter schools.

The district seeks community and parental involvement to promote student achievement through advisory councils, district committees, community input meetings, an interactive Web site, and televised school board meetings.

From 2004 to 2006, the district achieved an overall grade of "A" on the state's A+ Plan, with 83 percent of its schools receiving an "A" rating, which exceeded the statewide average of 53 percent. In 2006, Brevard ranked in the top six districts in 19 of 22 FCAT data points for reading, math, science, and writing.

Source: Florida Sterling Award, 2007

4. Howard D. McMillan Middle School Miami Dade County

Howard D. McMillan, Florida's first middle school to win the Governor's Sterling Award, is one of 67 middle schools (grades 6 through 8) in the Miami-Dade County public school system. It addresses unique needs of a multi-cultural community, including 51% of the nearly 1,200 student body who are eligible for free lunches.

McMillan became a Title 1 school in 2006 and earned an "A" grade from the Florida Department of Education. Innovative practices in marketing to parents increased the number of students participating in the Saturday School Tutoring Program from nine to 179 students between the 2006 and 2007 school years.

One hundred percent of staff surveyed said that they feel that students are safe at the school, compared to 88 percent of staff responding for their schools district-wide.

Source: Florida Sterling Awards, 2007

5. Ramblewood Elementary School Broward County

Ramblewood Elementary, the first school in Broward County to receive the Governor's Sterling Award, has a student population of more than 1,000, of which 52% is Caucasian, 23% Hispanic, 17% African-American, 3% Asian, and 5% Multi-Racial. Located in the City of Coral Springs, this school emphasizes reading as the framework for success, and every teacher is considered a reading teacher. One of the school's key strengths is a team-based leadership system that gives teachers, support staff, parents, and students what they need to succeed.

Ramblewood Elementary earned an "A" rating for the years 2002 to 2007, and has met federal No Child Left Behind standards for adequate yearly progress in learning for all subgroups of students.

Source: Florida Sterling Award, 2007

6. Born to Read Program City of Hollywood

This program is designed to break the cycle in low-income families of illiteracy and a lack of home-based educational support. Parents are encouraged to read to their children to help them develop and use their creativity and skills while increasing the level of literacy so often lacking in low-income households.

A full-time librarian at the Memorial Primary Care Clinic interacts with families, giving them a library application, a resource guide, and often a child's first book. New parents are instructed on how to improve their children's intellectual abilities through reading. This instruction is reinforced during succeeding visits to the health care clinic.

Source: 2007 All America City Award, National Civic League

Contact Information:
Mike McGrath
Phone: (720) 270 7822

7. Reading for Elementary Achievement and Development Program City of Clearwater

This program is a partnership among the City of Clearwater Public Library System, Pinellas County Schools' Dropout Prevention Program, and local daycare centers and elementary schools. Children's librarians train high school students to conduct story times in elementary schools and day-care centers.

As a result, younger children are entertained and the self-confidence of older students improves, thereby helping accomplish the goal of keeping the latter in school. Senior citizens are also involved in this program.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

John F. Szabo
Library Director
Clearwater Public Library System
100 N. Osceola Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33755
Phone: (727) 462-6800, ext. 227
E-mail: jszabo@clearwater-fl.com

Additional Information: www.myclearwater.com

8. Public Employees Teaching Students City of West Palm Beach

City employees are compensated for one hour each week to work with students at schools rated "C" or below in order to help increase the student's skills in reading, math, and science. Both salaried and hourly employees are encouraged to participate in the program.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Carol Drouillard
Senior Human Resources Analyst
Human Resources
City of West Palm Beach
1000 45th Street, Suite 12
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
E-mail: cdrouillard@wpb.org

9. Partners in Education Village of Wellington

Wellington has created the following initiatives:

► Challenge grants for reading resources to assist the village's five elementary schools with reading coaches, materials, and continuous training and evaluation. Each school receives \$25,000 for three consecutive years.

► A funding program that assists each public school in the village with the purchase of curriculum-based materials. Annual funding is \$5 per student (\$65,000 total).

► Participation of the Children’s Services Council, United Way, and the State of Florida in contributing local matching funds for school readiness services for working poor families.

► An interlocal agreement with the Palm Beach County School District for joint use of facilities. This agreement allows more money to be spent in the classroom because additional buildings and fields do not need to be built.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Jill Badger
Assistant to the Village Manager
Administration
Village of Wellington
14000 Greenbriar Boulevard
Wellington, FL 33414
(561) 791-4125
E-mail: jbadger@ci.wellington.fl.us

Additional Information: www.ci.wellington.fl.us

10. TEAM UP Program City of Jacksonville

Goals of the TEAM UP after-school program are to increase school attendance, test scores, and on-time grade promotion while reducing teen pregnancy. Activities include academic assistance, cultural enrichment, life skills, youth councils, social and recreational activities, and community service. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged. TEAM UP includes two special needs centers and 22 elementary and middle schools. The program operates three to four hours a day, five days a week, and provides transportation, dinner, and a snack to participants.

Source: National League of Cities - [City Practices](#) collection, Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families.

Contact Information:

Laurie Bourdon, Program Director
City of Jacksonville
Children's Commission
421 West Church Street, Suite 222
Jacksonville, FL 32202
(904) 630-6401
lbourdon@coj.net

Additional Information: www.jaxkids.org

11. MAM in the Neighborhood Miami-Dade County

This initiative brings free art activities, supplies, and museum experiences to the Parks and Recreation Department and community center summer camps. Since 2003, it has served more than 3,000 youth each summer, over 50 percent of whom are from disadvantaged areas of the county. A full-time community programs coordinator and four part-time teachers conduct educational activities. Youth are provided opportunities to create personal and collaborative artwork, increase cultural awareness, and build self-confidence.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Kerry Keeler
Community Programs Coordinator

Miami Art Museum
101 W. Flagler St.
Miami, FL 33130
Phone: (305) 375-1723
Fax: (305) 375-1725

12. Community Mentor Scholarship Program **City of Hallandale Beach**

This program provides full tuition and technical support to individuals in the community who are interested in a career in fire and emergency medical services. Scholarships cover tuition, books, and supplies for completion of basic firefighter, emergency medical technician, and paramedic certification. Fire Rescue personnel participate as mentors during training, and candidates are required to spend 12 hours a month at the fire department reviewing procedures and lecture information.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
Daniel P. Sullivan
Fire Chief
City of Hallandale Beach
121 S.W. 3 Street
Hallandale Beach, FL 33009
(954) 457-1470
E-mail: dsullivan@hallandalebeach.org

Additional Information: www.ci.hallandale.fl.us

13. Academy of Fire and Rescue Service Magnet Program **City of Gainesville**

The Academy is offered at Loften High School in Gainesville. Alachua County students entering 10th grade can apply for admission, regardless of their school zone. The program includes a three-course sequence to prepare for entry-level employment as a firefighter. Students learn first-responder techniques, firefighter duties and responsibilities, elements of fire behavior and extinguishing, fire-safety procedures and protection devices, and handling, movement, and storage of hazardous materials. Students also have the opportunity to earn an emergency medical technician certificate through Santa Fe Community College.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Lieutenant Richard Saulsberry
Program Instructor
Gainesville Fire Rescue Department
1025 N.E. 13th Street
Gainesville, FL 32601
Phone: (352) 334-5078
E-mail: saulsberre@cityofgainesville.org

14. Firefighters Explorer Program **City of Margate**

This program provides 14 to 19 year old students an opportunity to learn what it is like to be a firefighter/paramedic. The curriculum provides an overview of a firefighter's and paramedic's job, first-

responder training, information on fire-rescue truck and paramedic ride-along calls, and CPR. Students interact with the public, hospital staff, and patients. The program offers community service hours that can be credited toward graduation.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Charlie Wohlitka
Fire Department Division Chief
600 Rock Island Road
Margate, FL 33063
Phone: (954) 971-7010

15. Specialty Vehicles for Resource Officers and Crime Prevention Unit City of Margate

School resource officers assigned to four public schools, plus the Police Department's crime-prevention officer who coordinates neighborhood-watch groups, drive specialty vehicles purchased at no cost to taxpayers from law enforcement trust funds. The vehicles feature distinctive school mascot symbols and neighborhood-watch markings that are representative of schools and neighborhoods to which resource officers are assigned. The vehicles are a tool to enhance relationships between students and officers.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Warren Wyatt
Deputy Police Chief
City of Margate
5790 Margate Boulevard
Margate, FL 33063
Phone: (954) 935-5403

16. Riverside Youth Enrichment Center City of Palm Beach Gardens

The center is a licensed pre-school and after-school facility operated by the city for children of its employees and the public. Open 11 hours a day, Monday through Friday, the center is located less than three miles from the municipal complex, making it easy for employees to visit their children and participate in school programs.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Charlotte Presensky
Recreation Director
City of Palm Beach Gardens
10500 N. Military Trail
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
Phone: (561) 630-1105
E-mail: cpresensky@pbgfl.com

17. Student Ethics Commission Program Miami-Dade County

This program engages students in policies and issues concerning public governance and accountability. Each two-hour module is organized as a mock ethics commission hearing. Students serve as commissioners, staff counsel, and requesters as they review and present ethical case studies and dilemmas in local, national, and international arenas. The goal is to equip them with the capacity to recognize and apply various approaches to decision-making.

Source: www.CityEthics.org

18. Florida City Government Education Program City of Safety Harbor

The city educates youths and community members on the impact of local government in their lives through a program that coincides with the Florida League of Cities' Florida City Government Week. In 2003, the city kicked off its program with a student essay contest at the beginning of the school year. One winner from each school was recognized at a City Commission meeting. Puppet shows helped to connect city officials to children in the audience in order to communicate how the city responds to community needs. City officials taught in classrooms at elementary, middle, and high schools during this special week.

In 2005, the city developed an informational "zoosafari" program with oversized admission tickets, paw prints, animal graphics, and exhibitors sharing city/community service information and giveaways. Narrated by "Doctor Do A Lot," the program took off when city officials held a mock commission meeting with a kids' podium for young audience members to be heard. Animal puppets were part of city officials' presentations on local government, conducting new business, and reading proclamations.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices; Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:

Julie Yaeger
Public Information Officer
City of Safety Harbor
750 Main Street
Safety Harbor, FL 34695
Phone: (727) 724-1555
E-mail: jyaeger@cityofsafetyharbor.com

Additional Information: www.cityofsafetyharbor.com

19. My City: I'm Part of It, I'm Proud of It Village of Wellington

In 2006, Wellington held a contest for fourth and fifth graders in recognition of Florida City Government Week. Students were asked to submit posters with the theme "My City, I'm Part of It, I'm Proud of It," and depict what their city means to them. The posters were displayed for the public to cast their votes. The top three posters in each grade level were awarded savings bonds and winners were announced at a Veterans Day Event. All participants were given a goody-bag with logo items from the village and pens from the Florida League of Cities. Additionally, village staff conducted tours of municipal facilities for scouts to help them earn merit badges.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
Jill Badger
Assistant to the Village Manager
Administration
Village of Wellington
14000 Greenbriar Boulevard
Wellington, FL 33414
Phone: (561) 791-4125
E-mail: jbadger@ci.wellington.fl.us

Additional Information: www.ci.wellington.fl.us

20. Student Art Program Village of Wellington

The Village works with the Wellington Art Society to bring art to the forefront in the community. Middle and high school students submit artwork, which is displayed for three months at the village's community center, to help promote creativity and confidence of young artists.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Jill Mausteller
Assistant to the Village Manager
Administration Department
Village of Wellington
14000 Greenbriar Boulevard
Wellington, FL 33414
Phone: (561) 791-4125
E-mail: jmausteller@ci.wellington.fl.us

21. Teen Council Village of Wellington

The council is part of a series of life-enrichment programs with a focus on volunteerism and peer-related events that involve all ages and interests in the village. Teens are invited to meet and discuss their interests and needs. A mission statement reflects the council's goals and objectives.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Jill Mausteller
Assistant to the Village Manager
Administration Department
Village of Wellington
14000 Greenbriar Boulevard
Wellington, FL 33414
Phone: (561) 791-4125
E-mail: jmausteller@ci.wellington.fl.us

22. Youth Leadership Seminar City of Titusville

The city's Student Advisory Council sponsors annual projects, such as a Youth Leadership Seminar, mock City Council, and Government Shadow Week for high school juniors and seniors in order to broaden their knowledge of city government and teach basic leadership skills.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Judy Renaud
Administrative Assistant
City Clerk's Office
City of Titusville
P.O. Box 2806
Titusville, FL 32796
Phone: (321) 383-5862
E-mail: judy-city@cfl.rr.com

23. Cops and Kids Program City of Tarpon Springs

This program reaches out to at-risk children and teens through mentoring that provides positive activities and role models. The police department operates the Cops and Kids Youth Center, which is staffed by a full-time police officer and includes after-school and summer programs. Funding is provided by community donations, public/private sponsorships, forfeiture funds, and grants.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Mark LeCouris
Police Chief
City of Tarpon Springs
444 S. Huey Avenue
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
Phone: (727) 938-2840
E-mail: mlecouris@tspd.us

24. Student of the Month Program City of Margate

This program recognizes students from four public schools located in the city. At the first City Commission meeting each month, students chosen by their schools are honored for academic achievement, helpfulness, volunteer work, or improved behavior. Winners receive a city pin and certificate of achievement from the commission. Photos taken of students, their families, principal, and teachers are posted on the city's website (www.margatefl.com).

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Emergency Preparedness and Recovery

1. Model Emergency Management Program City of Tarpon Springs

The city's emergency management program is designed to restore operations as quickly as possible following a disaster. Its emergency facilities are an annual stop on the Governor's Hurricane Conference tour. A 2005 award from the International City/County Management Association stated that if a disaster occurs, residents of Tarpon Springs are guaranteed the highest level of emergency services possible.

Source: International City/County Management Association, 2005 Program Excellence Award

2. Disaster Recovery Sister City Program City of Hallandale Beach

A mutual-aid pact between Hallandale and "sister" city Fort Walton Beach provides that if a disaster occurs in one city, its internet site and computer-based operations (such as payroll) will be run by the sister city. This agreement helps assure continued services for city residents and staff in Hallandale and Fort Walton Beach in the event of a disaster.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices, and Florida League of Cities, Inc.-www.flcities.com

Contact Information:

Theodore LaMott
Assistant Director of Information Technology
City of Hallandale Beach
400 S. Federal Highway
Hallandale Beach, FL 33009
Phone: (954) 457-1351
E-mail: tlamott@hallandalebeachfl.gov

Additional Information: www.ci.hallandale.fl.us

3. Emergency Logistics and Management Operations Charlotte County

This program, which is part of the county's crisis communications plan, tracks supplies, manpower, and information flow during emergency operations. It was recognized by the International City/County Management Association in 2006 with a first place trophy for technology services, and a judges' award for best in class.

Source: International City/County Management Association, 2006 award and <http://charlottecountyfl.com/Pressrelease/pressdetail.asp?PrID=1065&print=yes>

4. Center Broadcast Facility City of Hollywood

The City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located in a fire station, includes digital broadcast and state-of-the-art presentation equipment. When the EOC is activated for emergencies, it broadcasts live over the city's government access channel to provide residents with the latest information. This equipment also enables city fire training instruction to be broadcast live from the EOC to all stations via the city's internal video network, thereby increasing efficient use of staff time. This project was funded by a grant from a local cable company, as well as from police department/law enforcement forfeiture funds.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices, and Florida League of Cities, Inc. www.flcities.com

Contact Information:

Dennis Pellarin
Director
Office of Public Communications
City of Hollywood
2600 Hollywood Boulevard
Hollywood, FL 33020
Phone: (954) 921-3620
E-mail: dpellarin@hollywoodfl.org

Additional Information: www.hollywoodfl.org

5. Hurricane Public Education Program Martin County

Forecasters project that Florida is in an active cycle for hurricanes that will last between 10 and 20 years. In January 2006, Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Toni Jennings launched a program to help establish a culture of preparedness for hurricanes as a top priority for the State of Florida.

Embracing this objective, Martin County Emergency Management, in partnership with the City of Stuart, Florida Power and Light Company, the University of Florida Extension Service's Florida Yards & Neighborhoods, the Martin County Chapter of the American Red Cross, and Project Hope, began work on a hurricane preparedness public education program "team concept" for citizens. The program emphasizes that citizens must prepare early and cannot depend on government to meet their essential needs during and immediately after a hurricane.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Keith Holman
Emergency Management Director
Emergency Services Department
Stuart, FL 34997
Phone: (772) 219-4942
Fax: (772) 286-7626

6. Hurricane Preparedness Program City of Sanibel

The city won a 2005 award for developing the most creative public safety program nationwide among cities under 10,000 population. When Hurricane Charley struck in August 2004, the city implemented a model evacuation, reentry, and recovery plan which, according to the award, illustrated municipal management at its finest, including use of new technology under adverse conditions that kept both the community and the entire world informed.

Source: International City/County Management Association, 2005 Program Excellence Award

7. InfoMap Secure Orange County

The 2004 hurricane season showed that Orange County's information collection and distribution technologies fell far short of what was needed by emergency responders for decision making. Information was spread across many departments with differing technologies and mandates. The improvement challenge was to gather that information in one place and provide it in an easily understood format to decision makers.

With cooperation from every department in county government, a geographic information systems team developed a simple, but powerful, web-based mapping system with access to both static and real time information that anyone with a browser can access. The new system, called InfoMap Secure, is ready to provide the best possible information to those charged with saving lives and property in Orange County.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:
Louis Schoolkate
GIS Coordinator
Growth Management
201 S Rosalind Ave
Orlando, FL 32802
Phone: (407) 836-5304
Fax: (407) 836-0955

8. Flood Determination and Mapping Program Lake County

An ArcGIS-based county program performs flood determinations in an average of 15 minutes, versus up to several hours under a previous system. Determinations are stored with related parcels and revisions to floodplains.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:
Donna Bailey
GIS Analyst, Stormwater Section
Public Works
437 Ardice Avenue
Eustis, FL 32726
Phone: (352) 483-9083
Fax: (352) 483-9015

9. Shuttering Your Home Pinellas County

Shuttering Your Home is a half-hour video program that takes viewers step-by-step through the process of protecting their windows by using plywood shutters. Selecting the proper materials, choosing the right tools, and safe installation practices are addressed. Easy-to-follow instructions with time-saving tips enable viewers to handle this job themselves.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award.

Contact Information:

Marcia Crawley
Director
Pinellas County Communications
333 Chestnut Street
Clearwater, FL 33756
Phone: (727) 464-4600
Fax: (727) 464-4432

10. Domestic Pet Friendly Sheltering Program City of Stuart

Citizens can pre-register their pets and leave them in the care of the Humane Society during disaster-related evacuations. This service is made possible by a partnership among city emergency management officials, the Humane Society, the local veterinarians' association, the local chapter of the American Red Cross, the Martin County School Board, and the Sheriff's Office of Animal Control.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Keith Holman
Emergency Management Direction
Stuart, FL 34997
Phone: (772) 219-4942
Fax: (772) 286-7626

11. Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program City of Miami

This program assists uninsured low-income elderly homeowners with structural damage caused by hurricanes. In addition to renovations, participants receive recovery assistance and services, and hurricane preparedness kits.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Suzanne Salichs
Acting Director
Team Metro
111 NW 1st Street
Miami, FL 33128
Phone: (305) 375-4845
Fax: (305) 375-4124

12. Employee Emergency Kits City of Palm Beach Gardens

When a hurricane approaches, employees often do not have time to personally prepare because they are focused on the storm's impending impact on the city. For this reason, the city's Human Resources Department created tote bags for employees that are easy to store and readily available. Each bag has a weather radio, flashlights, first-aid kit, floating lantern, batteries, waterproof matches, a lighter, sunscreen, mosquito repellent, hand sanitizer, and disposable tooth brushes.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, Employee Programs

Contact Information:

Mary Lands Smith
Assistant Human Resources Administrator
Human Resources Department
10500 N. Military Trail
City of Palm Beach Gardens
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
Phone: (561) 799-4227
E-mail: msmith@pbgfl.com

Employment in Local Government

1. New Employee Orientation Program Polk County

The county's employee orientation program was redesigned from low-energy lectures to dynamic interactive sessions. A one-hour information fair facilitates employee involvement with subject matter experts. Employees learn about the county's mission/vision/values and the Board of County Commissioners organizational chart, receive customer service training, and engage in interactive diversity bingo.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Jackie Guenther
Employee Development Specialist
Financial and Strategic Planning
330 West Church Street
Bartow, FL 33830
Phone: (863) 534-6047
Fax: (863) 534-7676

2. Strategic Initiative for Village Excellence (STRIVE) Village of Wellington

STRIVE provides information on how village employees are recruited and evaluated, as well as on issues such as employee wellness. It also helps employees enhance customer service by providing them with information on the village's daily activities.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, Employee Programs

Contact Information:

Jill Mausteller
Administration Department
Village of Wellington
14000 Greenbriar Boulevard
Wellington, FL 33414
Phone: (561) 791-4125
E-mail: jmausteller@ci.wellington.fl.us

3. Annual Employee Training City of Palm Bay

The city annually conducts training for all full-time employees on harassment, sexual harassment, employee safety, nutrition, basic first aid, and homeland security.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, Employee Programs

Contact Information:

Erlinda Fenster
Human Resources and Benefits Coordinator
City of Palm Bay
120 Malabar Road, S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 952-3421
E-mail: fenste@palmbayflorida.org

4. Risk Management Service City of Palm Bay

In October 2002, the city's risk management administration was brought in-house to handle claims pertaining to liability, property damage, and workers' compensation. Risk management employees respond to accident/injury scenes involving city personnel or city vehicles/property, accompany injured workers to the emergency room, and coordinate with hospital personnel to ensure that follow-up medical care is scheduled.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, Employee Programs

Contact Information:
Bobbi Kidd
Risk Manager
City of Palm Bay
120 Malabar Road, S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 952-3421
E-mail: kiddb@palmbayflorida.org

5. Fleet Management Recruitment DVD Polk County

To address a shortage of skilled technicians, the Fleet Management Department and Communications Division produced a DVD recruiting tool to promote the advantages of county employment. The DVD utilizes current employees who relate, in their own unscripted words, what it is like to work for Polk County Fleet Management. The DVD is given to technician candidates during the interview process to reinforce the beneficial aspects of Polk County's work environment and to differentiate the county from its competition in a memorable way.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:
Robert Stanton
Fleet Management Director
P.O. Box 9005
Bartow, FL 33831
Phone: (863) 534-5660
Fax: (863) 534-0390

6. Open Enrollment: One-On-One City of Palm Bay

October is open enrollment month for city employees to select their benefits. Every employee meets one-on-one with human resources staff who answer questions and help employees feel comfortable as they select benefits for the upcoming year.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, Employee Programs

Contact Information:
Denise A. Burgin
Human Resources Director
City of Palm Bay
120 Malabar Road, S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 952-3421
E-mail: burgid@palmbayflorida.org

Environmental Protection, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability

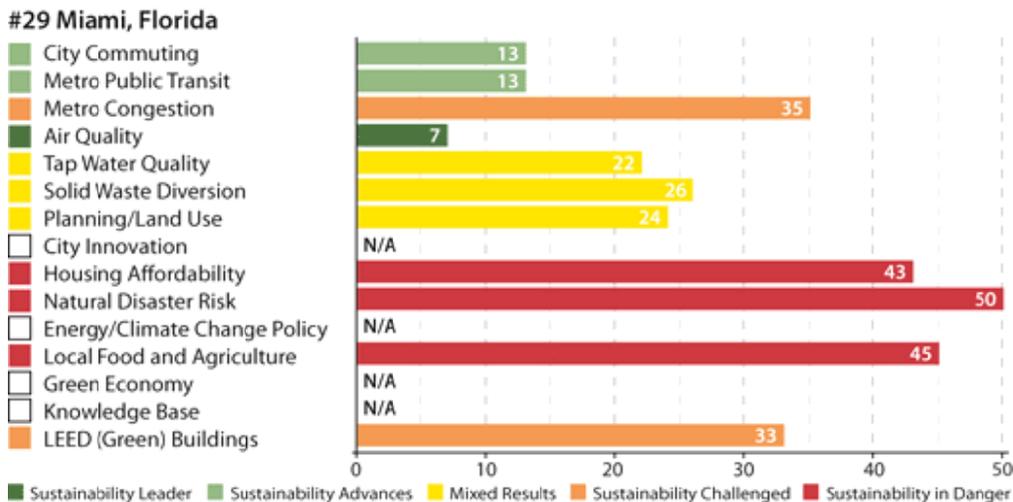
Most Sustainable Cities

In 2006, SustainLane evaluated America’s largest cities in terms of how their residents’ quality of life, and city economic and management preparedness, are likely to fare in the future. The indicators gauge, for example, which cities’ public transit, renewable energy, local food, and development approaches are more likely to limit or intensify negative economic and environmental impacts of fossil fuel dependence. Miami and Jacksonville were ranked among the top 50 cities.

1. City of Miami

Miami received high marks for superior air quality and decent transit options, but was found to have an unfocused approach to sustainability. Known as the Gateway of the Americas, SustainLane notes that Miami has an opportunity to set the example for Latin and South American development. To do so, SustainLane suggests that Miami consider developing a comprehensive sustainability plan to better shape the transformation of its urban space.

Source: Sustainlane.com

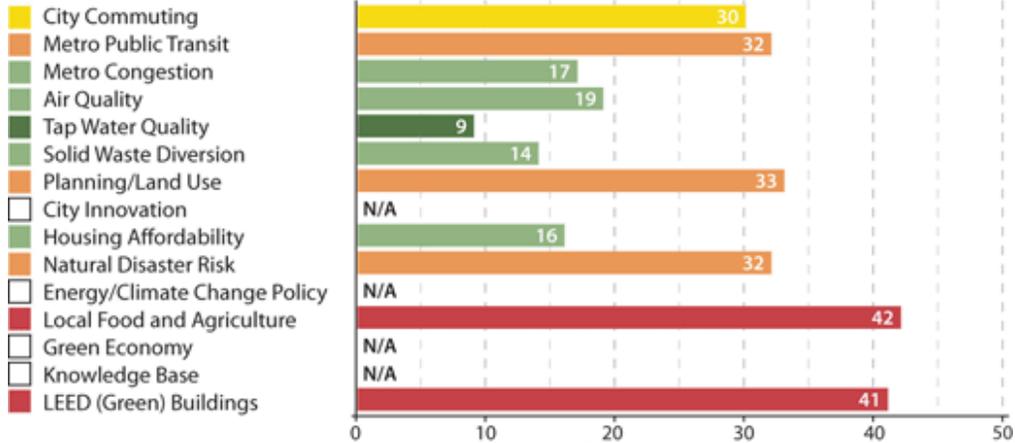


2. City of Jacksonville

The Jacksonville Community Council (JCCI) annually addresses problems confronting the city. Any citizen can volunteer to participate in a study group, whose findings are published by the council and publicized by advocacy programs. Since the early 1990s, The JCCI has produced an annual Quality of Life Progress Report that assesses the city’s overall health in terms of economics, education, environment, social equality, mobility and the arts. The JCCI serves as a national model of citizen-powered, forward-thinking examination of local problems. SustainLane suggests that including energy conservation and other indicators of sustainability would make the JCCI efforts even more significant.

Source: Sustainlane.com

#36 Jacksonville, Florida



**3. Volusia Forever Program
Volusia County**

In 1986, Volusia County established one of the state's first land conservation programs. Since then, it has partnered with state agencies and nonprofits to acquire \$79 million worth of properties in the path of development. Of this total, \$28.5 million has come from other funding partners, demonstrating the county's ability to leverage public funds. A nine-member citizen advisory committee reviews and ranks properties, then makes recommendations to the county commission.

Following extensive public input, the commission renewed the open space program in 2000 and renamed it Volusia Forever. In the same year, voters approved a referendum levying a 1/5 mill property tax, which is expected to generate \$162 million for Volusia Forever over the next 20 years. Up to 10 percent of annual tax revenues are earmarked for restoration, public access, and management of acquired lands.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2006 County Leadership in Conservation Recognition

**4. Kapok Floodplain Restoration
City of Clearwater**

Restoration of the Alligator Creek floodplain east of Cliff Stephens Park involved wetlands, trails, boardwalks, bridges, and the relocation of sanitary sewer and water transmission mains. The project facilitated upstream flood improvement projects and extension of a park system.

Source: International City/County Management Association, 2006 award finalist.
http://www.myclearwater.com/gov/depts/public_comm/documents/pdf/CIPNewsletterWinter05.pdf

**5. The Sawgrass Sanctuary
City of Sunrise**

The Sawgrass Sanctuary, a 20-acre park and learning center at the edge of the Everglades ecosystem, balances environmental needs of a natural habitat with the need for a recreational facility. Originally conceived to highlight the state's wetlands environment and preserve it for future generations, the site is tucked into a residential community adjacent to a school and near three major highways. To

maximize public viewing and enjoyment of the park, the city constructed nature trails and jogging/bike paths that do not disturb plant and animal habitats.

Source: Crown Communities Award, 2002

6. Environmental Preservation

City of Oldsmar

Almost one third of the land in this city is parks and preserves. Long-range planning has made it a Florida west coast leader in environmental preservation.

Source: Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

7. Proactive Maintenance

Seminole County

The county's Facilities Maintenance Division achieved a goal of proactive maintenance through a facilities forecast system that projects repair and maintenance costs at 10, 20, and 50 years. The system manages work orders, preventive maintenance schedules, inventory, project and contract management, and includes the use of palm pilots to generate, monitor, and complete work orders and facility inspections by staff and vendors. These applications respond to increasing demand for cycle-time reduction, accurate information in a real-time mode, and help to reduce operating costs.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Rich Steiger
Project Manager
Administrative Services/Facilities Maintenance
205 West County Home Road
Sanford, FL 32773
Phone: (407) 665-5260
Fax: (407) 665-5285

8. Showerhead Exchange Program

Miami-Dade County

This program encourages residents to install high-efficiency, water-saving fixtures in their homes as a cheap and simple way to conserve potable water. The county offers brand new, high-efficiency showerheads in exchange for existing fixtures.

This initiative has increased awareness of environmental issues that often go unnoticed. The fact that South Florida is surrounded by water gives many residents and visitors the mistaken impression that their drinking water supplies will always be abundant. That is not the case.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Adriana P. Lamar
Chief, Public Affairs
Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department
3071 SW 38 Avenue
Miami, FL 33146
Phone: (786) 552-8088
Fax: (786) 552-8634

9. Solar Hot Water Billing Program City of Lakeland

Lakeland Electric bills customers at a favorable rate for using solar hot water. The utility saves on generating fuels, including high-priced natural gas. Solar water heaters reduce utility transmission and distribution losses because they produce energy right where it is needed.

Source: www.sustainlane.com

10. Building Green Maintenance Policy Sarasota County

County policy is for county buildings to be cleaned and maintained with less toxic products that reduce negative impacts on indoor air quality and occupant/ employee health.

Source: www.sustainlane.com

11. Pay-As-You-Throw City of Gainesville

Responding to a county landfill closure, this program encourages recycling through economic incentives. A volume-based disposal fee system incentivizes residents and contractors to reduce waste, thereby benefiting the city and the environment. A two-stream system increases recycling efficiency. Yard waste is reused as organic fertilizer in a neighboring county. A county document includes the disposal fee pricing system, success rate, obstacles, and recommendations.

Source: www.sustainlane.com

12. Discount on permits and processing for energy efficient construction

The City of Gainesville gives a \$300 discount on building permits for certified green projects, as well as free fast-track permitting worth \$350.

Source: Florida Green Building Coalition, Inc. Overview of the Florida Green Local Government Standard.
www.floridagreenbuilding.org/db/?q=node/5751

13. Energy Saving Construction

The Dunedin Community Center has a white roof that reflects more heat than a black roof, thereby reducing the cost of cooling such a large facility.

Source: www.tlc-engineers.com/dunedin_community_center.htm

14. Florida Energy Achievement Award

Sarasota County was the 2005 winner of this award, which is presented annually to an entity that demonstrates statewide leadership and significant achievement in sustainability and energy savings.

Source: The Energy Chronicle. *Research Project to Help Develop Higher-Performance Fuel Cells for Aerospace Power Needs*. January 2007.
www.fsec.ucf.edu/en/media/newsletters/echron/archives/2007/Q1/fuel_cells.htm

15. Certified Green Local Government

Pinellas County was the first winner of the Florida Green Building Coalition's Local Government Standard. Developed by researchers at the Florida Solar Energy Center, it focuses on improving local governments' environmental performance in the areas of energy, water, air, land and waste. The standard examines practices, incentives, ordinances, and educational activities aimed at improving the environment, and designates cities and counties as "green" for outstanding environmental stewardship.

Source: Henzmann, Adrienne. The Energy Chronicle. Pinellas County Designated a Certified Green Local Government. January 2007.

<http://news.ucf.edu/UCFnews//index?page=article&id=002400415bc28a54010f97070b37007e26>

Ethics

1. Ethics Training Miami Dade County

The county's online ethics training and assessment initiative is part of an ongoing effort to build and maintain integrity, accountability, and public trust in government. Since the mid-1990's when the county experienced some highly publicized scandals, it has been a national leader in the area of ethics training. To preserve gains achieved by previous ethics training, the county developed and implemented a web-based system to deliver a refresher course to more than 25,000 employees.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 award

Contact Information:
Donald Allen
Director, Employee Relations Department
Stephen P. Clark Center
Miami, FL 33128
Phone: (305) 375-1589
Fax: (305) 375-2459

2. Business for Ethical & Accountable Management Miami-Dade County

An interactive ethics education and training program for companies that contract with local government, which is designed to increase their understanding of best business practices and ethics rules. Topics include conflicts of interest, lobbying, procurement, and ethical decision-making.

Sources: www.CityEthics.org or www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/ethics/beam.asp

3. How to Run an Ethical Campaign Miami-Dade County

The county holds free workshops for candidates for municipal office twice a year in collaboration with the State Attorney's Office, the Public Corruption Unit, and the County's Supervisor of Elections. Topics covered include:

- Reporting and filing requirements
- The role of the campaign treasurer
- The ethical campaign practices ordinance
- Post-election Audits
- Prohibited uses and other requirements of public funds

Source: www.miamidade.gov/ethics/campaigns.asp

4. City Attorney Roundtable Miami-Dade County

County Ethics Commission staff host a quarterly roundtable lunch with city attorneys to review the Code of Ethics and its application in Miami Dade's 32 municipalities. Each session's discussion is focused on a subject area or provision within the ethics code, and its policy considerations and effects on

administration of government. City attorneys are provided updates on recent interpretations and enforcement decisions.

Source: <http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/ethics/beam.asp>

Health and Human Services

1. Community Health and Safety Polk County

The county's healthcare plan provides services to approximately 120,000 uninsured or underinsured residents. It also provides "gap" coverage for individuals awaiting disability determination and coverage by Medicaid or Medicare; for children with pending Medicaid or Florida Kid Care eligibility; and for individuals covered by the state's Medicaid Share of Cost Program, who often are unable to meet their monthly out-of-pocket expenses. The plan credits its success to numerous private-public partnerships with hospitals, physicians, pharmacies, ambulatory surgery centers, and others.

Source: International City/County Management Association, 2006 Award

2. Avian Flu Summit Orange County

When worldwide attention focused on the potential for an Avian Flu pandemic, the county organized a summit to lay the groundwork for a regional response in the event it arrived in Central Florida. More than 500 leaders from businesses, schools, government, non-profit agencies, the faith community, and health care organizations heard representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Florida Departments of Health and Emergency Medical Operations, the American Red Cross, the Chamber of Commerce, and local health providers, energy providers, and businesses frame issues regarding the potential for a pandemic. They also heard explanations of what federal and state government, private corporations, and Orange County government are doing to address health issues and maintain adequate emergency response capabilities in the event of workforce reduction due to illness. A similar event, provided in Spanish, informed local Hispanic leaders and businesses, and a town meeting was held for the community.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:
Peter Clarke
Deputy Director
Health and Family Services
2100 E. Michigan Street
Orlando, FL 32806
Phone: (407) 836-7510
Fax: (407) 836-7583

3. Bike Medics City of Fort Lauderdale

The city's Fire-Rescue Department established a Bike Medics Team that provides emergency medical response at events involving large crowds. Bike Medics move through crowds faster and travel over some terrains better than rescue vehicles. Bikes are equipped with supplies which enable medics to perform everything that paramedics perform, except back-boarding and transporting patients. A bike medics team reduces response time and operational costs, and is environmentally friendly.

Contact Information:

Robert Edgar
EMS and Training Division Chief
Fire-Rescue Department
City of Fort Lauderdale
101 N.E. 3rd Avenue, Suite 500
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
Phone: (954) 828-6831
E-mail: redgar@fortlauderdale.gov

Additional Information: www.ci.ftlaud.fl.us

4. Emergency Medical Services Alliance, Inc. City of Ocala and Marion County

Marion County Emergency Medical Services Alliance, Inc., is a nonprofit partnership among the Marion County Commission, Ocala Regional Medical Center, the City of Ocala, and Munroe Regional Medical Center. These entities share the cost of providing emergency care to a community of more than 275,000 citizens. This partnership continues the level of service offered by Munroe Regional Medical Center for 25 years prior to 2003.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Monte Martin
Public Affairs Officer
City of Ocala
151 S.E. Osceola Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471
Phone: (352) 629-8401
E-mail: mmartin@ocalafl.org

Additional Information: www.ocalafl.org

5. Coalition Keeps A Steady Beat Leon County

During cardiac arrest, automated external defibrillators (AEDs) shock the heart, restoring it to a normal rhythm until the patient can receive advanced care. When Leon County assumed responsibility for ambulance service from a local hospital, response to cardiac arrests was an area identified for improvement.

In 2004, the Leon County/Tallahassee Heart Ready Coalition, a partnership of public and private organizations, worked with Leon County Emergency Medical Services (LCEMS) to facilitate CPR training and AED availability. AEDs were installed in 10 county buildings, all 65 county schools, LCEMS' 20 ambulances, Tallahassee Fire Department vehicles, police cruisers, and sheriff's uniformed patrol cars. As a result, Leon County saves more heart attack victims than the national average. Of 101 cardiac arrests that LCEMS responded to between Oct. 1, 2004, and Sept. 1, 2005, 21 percent experienced spontaneous return to circulation on arrival at the emergency room — well above the 7 percent average for EMS systems nationwide.

Source: www.americancityandcounty.com/awards-entry-forms. Crown Communities

6. Health and Human Services Facilities

City of Pembroke Pines

The city converted a former mental hospital into a human services park, which now houses an affordable rental apartment complex for senior citizens; agencies that provide recovery, rehabilitation, and health services; and a recovery center. By forging innovative partnerships, formerly blighted property has evolved into a vibrant campus offering benefits to the entire community.

Source: National League of Cities, 2007 Award for Municipal Excellence

7. Criminal Mental Health Project

Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Miami Dade County

Under court ordered de-institutionalization, many states, including Florida, have released patients and closed hospitals without providing adequate community-based treatment. This has resulted in unintended re-institutionalization of this population into state and local jails.

Miami Dade County is home to one of the nation's highest percentages of people with mental illness. More than 9% of the general population, or 200,000 people, have a severe mental illness, and a higher percentage than in the general population is in the criminal justice system. The county jail houses approximately 1,200 people (20% of all inmates) who have serious mental illnesses.

The county responded to this crisis by implementing the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida Criminal Mental Health Project, which serves individuals with serious mental illnesses who become involved, or are at risk of becoming involved, with the criminal justice system. This initiative is a partnership among the county, the judiciary, defense and prosecuting attorneys, local law enforcement agencies, community service providers, and other community representatives. It has improved access to mental health treatment, saved lives and tax dollars, reduced police and civilian injuries, reduced recidivism to jails, and enhanced public safety.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Alina Perez-Sheppe
Criminal Mental Health Project Coordinator
Administrative Office of the Courts
1351 N.W. 12th Street, Room 104
Miami, FL 33138
Phone: (305) 548-5139
Fax: (305) 548-5298

8. Fit for Life

City of Kissimmee

This program encourages youth fitness by providing opportunities for exercise in after-school programs at recreation centers. It combines city resources with those of local agencies, the school district, and the county health department.

Each community center and major park in the city includes a walking path of one to three miles. Youth are encouraged to challenge themselves to make progress by exercising every day. The centers offer programs and activities that highlight the importance of fitness, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle choices.

Sources: National League of Cities - [City Practices](#) collection. "Kissimmee promotes youth fitness through its 'Fit for Life' campaign," by Julia Recker, *Quality Cities*, v76 n6 (March/April, 2003) p32, 42, Florida League of Cities, Tallahassee, FL.

Contact Information:

Julia Recker, Parks and Recreation Department Superintendent
City of Kissimmee
101 North Church Street
Kissimmee, FL 34741
Phone: (407) 518-2501

9. Youth Leadership Team Polk County

The team is comprised of an ethnically diverse group of students between the ages of 10 and 19 years who represent 19 public and private schools, plus home schooled students. Its mission is to educate teens and encourage them to set healthy goals and make appropriate and responsible choices. Members advise the Healthy Start Coalition's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance and provide unique perspectives and opinions of teens throughout the county.

Source: National Civic League, 2007 All America City Award. For more information, contact Mike McGrath (720) 270-7822

10. The Bridge of Northeast Florida, Inc. City of Jacksonville

The Bridge's mission is to help develop healthy, productive, self-sufficient youth by providing free educational, social, and medical programs to children, youth, and families in need. Services include

- One-to-one tutoring and homework assistance for adolescents;
- Recreational and nutritional activities;
- Teen pregnancy prevention programs; and
- Healthy families sites.

Source: Pew Partnership Solutions for America: What's Already Out There

Additional information: (904) 354-7799; www.thebridgeofnefl.com

11. Parks and Recreation Department City of Tamarac

This department offers the following programs and facilities to help meet residents' cultural, social, physical, wellness, and recreational needs.

► Hearts N-Parks

Tamarac was one of 51 places nationwide chosen to participate in the Hearts N-Parks initiative, sponsored by the National Recreation and Parks Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Consumer-oriented materials communicate heart-healthy messages relating to weight management, physical activity, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and heart disease. The Parks and Recreation Department offers a senior program Monday through Friday, within which are specialized activities to promote health and wellness, including a walk club, arthritis self-help classes, and bi-monthly health, and fitness lectures. Seniors report feeling healthier and experiencing less pain in their daily lives by the end of this program.

► **Fall into Fitness**

The department offers youth and teen programming after school, on weekends, and during summer camp, including -- through the Hearts N-Parks initiative -- "Summer Shape Up" for kids ages six through eleven years, and "Are you staying fit?" for teens. These initiatives work to reduce a growing trend of obesity and risk of coronary heart disease by encouraging participants to aim for a healthy weight, follow a heart-healthy eating plan, and engage in regular physical activity.

Department staff have partnered with elementary school physical education classes and conducted diet and exercise classes. These efforts incorporate CATCH games (modified versions of regular sports) plus lectures, and pre- and post-surveys. Children report learning new physical activities and improving their performance in others.

A "Start Smart" program of instructional sports development helps prepare children ages three to five years for the world of organized sports. Parents work with their children to learn basic skills.

► **Healthy Staff Equals Happy Staff**

The city offers heart healthy information to its employees through a bi-monthly newsletter containing exercises and recipes. It also offers free fitness center memberships to employees and sponsors a yearly health fair.

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors, March 28, 2005

Contact Information:
Michelle Zimmer
Recreation Superintendent
8601 W. Commercial Blvd.
Tamarac, FL 33321
Phone:(954) 724-1287
E-mail: michellez@tamarac.org

Public Safety

1. Public Safety Systems Integration City of Tallahassee

The city replaced a police and fire computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and records management system with applications that integrate 911, automatic vehicle location technologies, advanced technical mapping, querying tools, imaging technologies, electronic field reporting, crime and fire analysis tools, wireless data transmission via cellular technologies, and an 800 MHz data system.

As a result of this project:

- ▶ Dispatchers now transmit call information data, together with voice communications, to police officers and firefighters, giving public safety personnel access to intelligence and analysis through real-time information sharing.
- ▶ Police officers and firefighters monitor the status of all CAD call activity on mobile computers in their vehicles.
- ▶ Geographic mapping functionality, together with automatic vehicle location technologies, dispatches the closest vehicle (when appropriate), assists in determining most efficient travel routes, and visually shows crime analysis trends for resource management and strategic planning.

The city has saved thousands of dollars by eliminating duplicate entries of police reports, and has reduced personnel costs by enabling officers to review and submit reports from the field rather than spending time traveling to the police station.

Tallahassee now serves as a resource for governments interested in improving public safety operations. A report highlighting this project is available on the city's website.

Source: Public Technology Institute, 2007 recognition as an innovation lab.

2. Police Department Information Delivery System City of Margate

A paperless information delivery system enables police officers, on laptops in police vehicles, and on computers, to check "be on the lookouts" (BOLOs) and other crime information.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:
Ed Cassesa
Police Captain
Margate Police Department
5790 Margate Boulevard
Margate, FL 33063
Phone: (954) 935-5449

3. Identify Our Children City of Sebastian

The police department used CompuKid (Computerized Child Fingerprinting) software to develop files on children, except their DNA, and saves this information in a database. This initiative's goal is to safeguard children in the community against becoming missing or exploited and, if necessary, to e-mail files worldwide to assist law enforcement agencies in searching for missing children.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

James Davis, Chief of Police
Paul Graves, Community Policing Officer
Theo Robinson, Traffic Homicide Investigator
Sebastian Police Department
City of Sebastian
1201 Main Street
Sebastian, FL 32958
Phone: (772) 589-5223
E-mail: pgraves@cityofsebastian.org

Additional Information: www.cityofsebastian.org

4. Youth Empowered to Succeed Program Miami Dade County

This program for youth at the Miami Dade Juvenile Justice Center emphasizes education, personal development, accountability, and self discipline while focusing on three areas of growth: academics, socialization, and vocations. The program provides a foundation for success by empowering youth with resources that address education, decision-making, self-discipline, conflict resolution, self-esteem, and personal development. More than 2,000 youths have participated.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:

Suzanne Salichs
Acting Director
Team Metro
111 NW 1st Street
Miami, FL 33128
Phone: (305) 375-4845
Fax: (305) 375-4124

5. Victim Services Unit City of Palm Bay

The police department assists victims of domestic violence 24/7 with crisis counseling, transportation, securing emergency financial aid, emergency legal advocacy, obtaining injunctions, courtroom orientation, and victim-compensation claims.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Lynne Nungesser
Deputy Chief
Bureau of Administration

Palm Bay Police Department
City of Palm Bay
130 Malabar Road, S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 953-8954
E-mail: nungel@palmbayflorida.org

Additional Information: www.palmbayflorida.org

6. Weekender Program City of Haines City

Growth creates challenges for many municipalities. To help meet increasing demands, the city partnered with the Polk County Sheriff's Office to utilize persons required to perform community service. Their labor helps reduce city costs, and enables offenders to give back to the community.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
Steve Pruitt
Parks Superintendent
Haines City Parks and Recreation
City of Haines City
P.O. Box 1507
Haines City, FL 33845
Phone:(863) 421-3685
Suncom: 515-2690
E-mail: hcparksdiv@tampabay.rr.com

Additional Information: www.ci.haines-city.fl.us

7. Ride for Your Life City of Sebastian

In conjunction with the police department's bicycle-safety program, a city ordinance mirrors state law for bicycle violations and addresses concerns of children injured in bicycle accidents. Bicycle safety is taught at public forums, schools and daycare centers. Children receiving violations for not wearing helmets can attend a bicycle-safety class and have their fine waived. The program helps children understand and obey traffic laws, and reduces the number of traffic/bicycle-related injuries.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
James Davis, Paul Graves
Chief of Police, Community Policing Officer (CPO)
Sebastian Police Department
City of Sebastian
1201 Main Street
Sebastian, FL 32958
Phone:(772) 589-5233
E-mail: pgraves@cityofsebastian.org

Additional Information: www.cityofsebastian.org

8. Protecting Senior Citizens From Fraud City of Pinellas Park

More than 20% of the city's residents are over the age of sixty-five. Some are victimized by criminals who use slick talk and confusing scams to fleece them of their money. The complex nature of some of these scams, and demand for other police services, formerly resulted in senior victims being passed from agency to agency.

To help address this situation, the city created a Seniors vs. Crime Office which assists residents who feel they have been victims of fraud by directing civil and criminal complaints for investigation and resolution. This initiative includes a Citizen Police Academy (CPA), whose graduates are invited to join a Volunteers in Policing Program.

This program dovetails with a Florida Attorney General's Office program called "Senior Sleuths," which uses volunteers to assist seniors who feel they are victims of fraud. Volunteers examine details of complaints and determine if matters are civil or criminal. If the former, a volunteer attempts to reach a solution with the other party. If the latter, it is forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The office has investigated more than 230 cases and recovered over \$200,000.

The major lesson learned is that Seniors vs. Crime effectively addresses a need in the community. Many seniors are embarrassed about calling law enforcement to report victimization. They feel more comfortable telling a peer who can assist them. Because complaints often are civil in nature, law enforcement formerly told seniors to contact lawyers. By contrast, the Seniors vs. Crime program offers residents assistance with their issues and gives them the attention they deserve.

Mayors who are interested in replicating this program are advised that, while extensive time and money may be needed to start the program, they are quickly recouped in volunteer hours and saved by a reduced volume of calls for police services.

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors

Contact Information:
Officer Brian Unmisig
Office of Professional Standards
Pinellas Park Police Department
7700 59 Street North
Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Office: 727-541-0861
Fax: 727-541-0889
E-mail: BUnmisig@Pinellas-Park.com

9. Promotion of Neighborhood Protection and Community Involvement City of Hollywood

The police department partnered with Crime Watch America to promote neighborhood protection and community involvement. Information including "be on the lookout" (BOLO) and messages from the chief of police are sent via e-mail and text messaging to more than 365 citizen participants.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
Tony Rode
Captain, Public Affairs Unit
City of Hollywood Police Department
City of Hollywood
3250 Hollywood Boulevard
Hollywood, Florida 33021
Phone: (954) 967-4316
E-mail: trode@hollywoodfl.org

Additional Information: www.crimewatchamerica.com; www.hollywoodfl.org

10. Park Partners

Polk County

Park Partners enlists neighborhood volunteers to work on park rejuvenation in low-income, high-crime areas prone to vandalism. The program asks community members to assume ownership of a park by signing an adoption pledge to care for and maintain its facilities, including planting and maintaining greenery. Park staff overseeing the program meet monthly on-site with community participants.

Source: 2007 All America City Award from the National Civic League. Contact Mike McGrath, (720) 270-7822

11. Neighborhood Security Summit

City of Wilton Manors

Working in conjunction with the Westside Association of Wilton Manors, the city developed a security summit to inform residents how to protect and safeguard themselves and their homes, vehicles, and neighborhoods to help avoid being victims of crime. Information on the Neighborhood Watch Program was disseminated and citizens were encouraged to sign up. Information was also presented on how to prepare and what to do in the event of a domestic disaster, such as a weapon of mass destruction being released.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
Richard Wierzbicki
Chief of Police
Wilton Manors Police Department
City of Wilton Manors
524 N.E. 21 Court
Wilton Manors, FL 33305
Phone: (945) 390-2155
E-mail: sierra90@bellsouth.net

Additional Information: www.wiltonmanors.com

12. Citizens' Police Academy

City of Margate

The city's academy is a law enforcement education program for citizens and business owners whose goal is to promote a better understanding of police officers' jobs. An 11-week program addresses the police department's organizational structure and mission, how officers are recruited and trained, legal issues they encounter, and how crime patterns are detected. Other sessions address crime scenes, traffic crashes, weapons, and the department's communications system.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:
Warren Wyatt
Deputy Police Chief
Margate Police Department
5790 Margate Boulevard
Margate, FL 33063
Phone: (954) 935-5403

13. Downtown Initiative City of Melbourne

This initiative informs business owners about alcohol, burglary, prostitution, and homeless problems in the downtown area. An action plan increased bike and foot patrols, coordination with city code enforcement, and assistance to businesses with site and security surveys. At least one undercover operation is conducted each month to enforce narcotics and prostitution statutes. Monthly reports go to the command staff to determine whether the action plan needs adjustment. An outcome of this initiative is a quarterly business-owners' newsletter that includes safety tips.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:
Donald L. Carey
Chief of Police
Melbourne Police Department
650 N. Apollo Boulevard
Melbourne, FL 32935
Phone: (321) 409-3314
E-mail: dcarey@melbourneflorida.org

14. Neighborhood Resource Team (NRT) Miami-Dade County

This team, consisting of police, housing, health, homeless, and other public and private agencies, delivers a full range of family and community services. The NRT uses a two-part strategy:

► Family-centered intervention, including (a) assessments conducted in residents' homes; (b) immediate response to emergency needs identified during assessments; and (c) monitoring and follow-up of cases to verify that needs have been met and referrals completed.

► Community-wide intervention, including (a) a public safety initiative grounded in community-oriented policing principles of resident involvement and NRT visibility; (b) efforts to change public perception of the neighborhood in order to reduce fear of crime; and (c) channeling tenants' energies into maintenance, clean-up efforts, and other improvement activities.

The partnership consists of four lead agencies — the Police Department, the County Department of Health, the Florida Department of Children and Families, and the Metro-Dade Housing Agency — plus more than 40 entities including the Miami Dade Department of Solid Waste, the South Dade Homeless Assistance Center, the Perrine-Cutler Ridge Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, and 15 area schools.

Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors

Contact Information:
Sergeant Jeff Lamper
Phone: (305) 234-4904

15. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design City of Palm Beach Gardens

Principles of this program are based on the direct relationship of an environment – its design and management – to human behavior. Growth management and police officials work side-by-side in reviewing development plans to take a proactive approach to crime prevention.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:

Julius Barone
Police Officer
Palm Beach Gardens Police Department
10500 N. Military Trail
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
Phone: (561) 799-4545
E-mail: jbarone@pbgfl.com

16. Crime Reporting Rewards Program City of Palm Bay

The city's police department and the Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency teamed up to address crime in the city's redevelopment district by creating a crime reporting rewards program. Similar to a crime line, monetary rewards are given to individuals who provide tips on criminal activity occurring in the redevelopment district. Rewards vary from \$50 to thousands of dollars, depending on the crime.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:

Tim Ford
Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency Administrator
Economic Development Division
City of Palm Bay
5240 Babcock Street, N.E. #201
Palm Bay, FL 32905
Phone: (321) 952-3426
E-mail: fordt@palmbayflorida.org

17. Coordinated Planned Response City of Palm Bay

Police department senior staff - both sworn and civilian supervisors - developed an accountability system that is the basis for monthly meetings to discuss crime issues and action plans. Although the meeting is held to provide a forum to exchange information within the department, it includes music and refreshments to help make it both informative and relaxed.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:

Douglas F. Muldoon
Deputy Chief of Police
Palm Bay Police Department
130 Malabar Road, S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 952-3460
E-mail: muldod@pbfl.org

18. "Don't Drink and Drive" City of Palm Bay

The police department and a local radio station annually join forces to educate the public on the effects of drinking and driving. A disc jockey (DJ) drinks alcohol while broadcasting on the air, and is monitored by members of the police department's DUI Enforcement Unit. While drinking, the DJ talks about effects that the alcohol is having on him. At the end of the broadcast, the DJ is removed from a simulated wreck, and taken away by a First Flight helicopter. The goal is to remind people about negative impacts of drinking and driving.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:
Douglas F. Muldoon
Deputy Chief of Police
Palm Bay Police Department
130 Malabar Road S.E.
Palm Bay, FL 32907
Phone: (321) 952-3460
E-mail: muldod@pbfl.org

19. Traffic Enforcement Program City of Tarpon Springs

This program was developed to reduce alcohol-related crashes and increase compliance with seat-belt laws. The police department created a Focused Traffic Enforcement Unit which targets problem areas for enforcement. Tactics include undercover vehicles, a trailer that displays the speed of approaching cars, and a mannequin placed in a marked police unit. The unit also uses fatal vision goggles, which simulate various blood alcohol levels, and it holds public safety events and community presentations.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase, City/School Partnerships

Contact Information:
Jeff Young, Sergeant
Tarpon Springs Police Department
City of Tarpon Springs
444 S. Huey Avenue
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
Phone: (727) 938-2840
E-mail: jyoung@tspd.us

20. National Night Out City of Palm Beach Gardens

National Night Out generally is considered a police department event. In Palm Beach Gardens, however, crime prevention is seen as a citywide responsibility. The police, fire, recreation and parks, community services, and public works departments jointly plan the event. Attractions include SWAT and vehicle-extraction demonstrations, a children's play area, and displays on security issues by local businesses. Palm Beach Gardens received national recognition for this event.

Source: Florida League of Cities, 2006 City Innovations Showcase

Contact Information:
Jack Schnur
Sergeant
Police Department
City of Palm Beach Gardens
10500 N. Military Trail
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
Phone: (561) 799-4565
E-mail: jschnur@pbgfl.com

21. Blueline CPD

City of Clearwater

Blueline CPD is a monthly full-color newsletter designed to inform city residents, visitors, employees, and retirees about accomplishments of the police department that often are unseen by the public. Each issue features timely articles, regular columnists, photographs and event calendars of interest to the public and city employees. Each month, 2,000 copies of Blueline CPD are distributed citywide. Available online at www.clearwaterpolice.org, it is sent to about 600 subscribers via an Internet listserve.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:
Sid Klein
Chief of Police
Clearwater Police Department
City of Clearwater
645 Pierce Street
Clearwater, FL 33756
Phone: (727) 562-4343
E-mail: sklein@clearwaterpolice.org

Additional Information: www.clearwaterpolice.org

Public Works

1. Reusable Concrete Form Board City of Palm Bay

The city's Public Works Department uses plastic form boards to build concrete sidewalks. Dramatic cost savings and productivity enhancements resulted in the staff member who initiated the program being recognized as public works employee of the year by the Florida Association of County Engineers and Road Superintendents. The city hosted a seminar for the University of Florida Technology Transfer Center on the topic "Reusable Form Boards, an Innovative Cost-Saving Construction Method."

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

Contact Information:

Jim Proce

Public Works Director

Public Works

City of Palm Bay

5240 Babcock Street, N.E.

Palm Bay, FL 32905

Phone: (321) 952-3437

E-mail: procej@palmbayflorida.org

Additional Information: www.palmbayflorida.org

2. Advanced Sidewalk Maintenance Martin County

County staff, working with equipment manufacturers, vendors, and fabricators, developed machinery to mow, edge, and sweep approximately 170 miles of county-maintained sidewalks, increasing productivity by approximately 400% and improving worker safety.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Don Donaldson

Engineering Director/County Engineer

Department of Engineering

2401 SE Monterey Rd

Stuart, FL 34996

Phone: (772) 288-5927

Fax: (772) 288-5955

3. Capital Improvements Information System (CIIS) Miami-Dade County

The CIIS helps to coordinate all county capital improvement projects. On-line information enables administrators, elected officials, and the public to track projects. A sorting function enables personnel to produce timely, customized reports addressing inquiries and concerns. This system improves oversight and accountability among user departments.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:
Roger Hernstadt
Director
Office of Capital Improvements
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite 2130
Miami, FL 33128
Phone: (305) 375-2724

4. Reducing Nitrogen Runoff Hillsborough County

The county evaluated storm water management practices to decrease the amount of pollutant discharge into Tampa Bay and other water bodies. Nitrogen, a common element in wastewater treatment plant discharge and storm water runoff, encourages algae growth in surface water, blocking sunlight needed by natural vegetation that supports aquatic animal life. Over the past 50 years, as a result of development and population growth have increased nitrogen loadings to Tampa Bay to approximately 17 tons a year. One result is that the area at the bottom of the bay covered by sea grass decreased from 60 square miles in the 1950s to 40 square miles in 2002.

Reducing nitrogen is an important step toward improving water resources in the Tampa Bay area. Typical storm water ponds remove 30 to 40 percent of the nitrogen load; the county's current initiative seeks to improve that by using a new two-chamber filter. As of April 2006, it had treated 1.5 million gallons of pond water with promising results.

Source: www.americancityandcounty.com/awards. Crown Communities

5. Toward Water Independence City of Oldsmar

The city used reverse osmosis technology to eliminate its demand on Tampa Bay water, help accommodate future growth, and add quality drinking water capacity.

Source: Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

6. Renovation of Water Treatment System City of Pompano Beach

The city expanded its water supply, treatment, and recycling capabilities to meet long-term drinking water needs. The process of reaching consensus among regulatory agencies as to the city's needs was aided by development of a master plan addressing storm water, reuse water, wastewater, and potable water. The city expects the improvements to supply sustainable raw water and drought-proof irrigation water well into the 21st century.

The Florida section of the American Public Works Association recognized this program as an Environmental Project of the Year in 2002.

Source: Crown Communities, 2002

7. Enhanced Sewage Collections System

City of Stuart

A radio-based Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system provides 24-hour monitoring of sewage pumping equipment. This facilitates immediate response to emergency situations that might cause a spill or backup, as well as scheduled preventive maintenance to minimize equipment failure. SCADA saves money by reducing manpower requirements to monitor equipment by efficiently scheduling maintenance and repairs without additional costs associated with emergency procurement and overtime. It also avoids having to pay damages and/or fines due to sewage spills. The value of preventing health hazards for the public and damage to the environment is incalculable.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Tom Howard
SCADA Coordinator
Department of Utilities/Solid Waste
P.O. Box 9000
Stuart, FL 34995
Phone: (772) 221-1448
Fax: (772) 221-1448

8. Multi-Media Program

Orange County

This program enables eight environmental inspectors to conduct an annual average of 5,000 field inspections that include hazardous waste, wastewater, and landfill facilities; complaints; compliance checks for boat docks and lakeshore protection; home heating oil tank removal; and household hazardous waste pickups.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:

Andrea Stermer
Senior Environmental Engineer
Environmental Protection Division
800 Mercy Drive, Ste. 4
Orlando, FL 32808
Phone: (407) 836-1426
Fax: (407) 836-1499

9. Measuring Cleanliness

City of Miami Beach

The city developed a set of standards, called the public area cleanliness index, to measure and report quarterly on the cleanliness of its parks, parking lots, streets, sidewalks, and waterways.

Source: Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

Technology

1. Government Information Center Miami-Dade County

This center consolidates management of existing service delivery initiatives and sets the stage for more centralized, customer-driven data collection, analysis, and cross-cutting solutions. It is one of 20 programs, selected for recognition by IBM and the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government from more than 100 applicants representing over 30 countries and all levels of government. Achievements range from healthcare, education, and social services to national security, and reflect tangible and sustainable improvements in policy, processes, quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of public services.

Source: Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

2. E-Filing Probate and Guardianship Program Pasco County

E-filing of probate and guardianship court cases reduces average staff time by 90%, from more than two hours to thirteen minutes per case, for estimated first year savings of \$87,712. Judges and staff of the Clerk, State Attorney, and Public Defender, plus private attorneys, can obtain court information, access court legal records, conduct legal research, interact with the Clerk's office, file documents, and communicate electronically with other subscribers 24/7.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Awards

Contact Information:

Paula O'Neil
Chief Deputy Clerk
Pasco County Clerk's Office
PO Box 338
New Port Richey, FL 34656
Phone: (727) 815-7062
Fax: (727) 847-8121

3. Voter Reconciliation Process Miami-Dade County

After each election, precinct registers (books that voters sign) are verified to match the number of signatures to the number of votes cast, and to credit voters for voting. This task was improved from a semi-manual to an automated process using existing technology. Previously, employees manually reviewed precinct registers page-by-page. When a signature appeared on a line, a hand-held bar code reader scanned the voter identification number. This process resulted in many signatures being missed due to inaccuracy of scanning guns and user error. By placing all precinct registers through scanner process, signatures are identified programmatically. This innovation reduced the time required to complete the task by seven days and increased the voter reconciliation process accuracy rate by more than 90 percent.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Award

Contact Information:
Christina Bacogiannis
Assistant to the Supervisor of Elections
Miami-Dade Elections Department
2700 NW 87 Avenue
Miami, FL 33172
Phone: (305) 499-8403
Fax: (305) 499-8501

4. Barcode Identifier for Voting Equipment Miami Dade County

Tracking electronic voting equipment (iVotronics) was prone to inventory error. If an iVotronic was removed from its assigned case, it was often difficult to later determine which iVotronic was assigned to which case.

An Elections Department employee suggested the simple solution of placing a nylon strap (similar to that of a seat-belt) across the back of the iVotronic. Its bar code is affixed to the end of the strap in a stitched pocket. The result is a two-foot long color coded strap with a bar code that is easily scannable, thereby creating a better means of tracking inventory.

This solution reduced inventory tasks by ten days, saved more than \$44,000 in labor costs, and created the ability to scan each iVotronic signature by election, precinct, and type, and make the information readily available to staff and the public.

Source: National Association of Counties, 2007 Achievement Award

Contact Information:
Christina Bacogiannis
Assistant to the Supervisor of Elections
Miami-Dade Elections Department
2700 N.W. 87 Avenue
Miami, FL 33172
Phone: (305) 499-8403
Fax: (305) 499-8501

5. Water Meter, Parking Enforcement, and Building Inspection Technology City of DeLand

The city uses radio-read meters to determine residential water, and personal digital assistants for parking enforcement and building inspections.

Source: Florida League of Cities, Cities of Excellence

6. Top Digital Local Governments

The Center for Digital Government's "Best of Web" is a national awards program that annually judges state, city, and county web sites on innovation, delivery of public services, efficiency, economy, and functionality for improved citizen access. The following Florida county and city governments were recognized between 2004 and 2007 for best practices, policies, and progress in the use of digital technologies to better serve citizens and streamline operations.

- Lee County
- Marion County
- Martin County
- Miami-Dade County
- Orange County
- Sarasota County
- Seminole County
- City of Boynton Beach
- City of Delray Beach
- City of Hollywood
- City of Jupiter
- City of Miami
- City of St. Petersburg
- City of Sarasota
- City of Tampa
- City of Titusville
- City of West Palm Beach
- Village of Wellington

Source: Center for Digital Government, http://www.centerdigitalgov.com/surveys.php?survey=cdg_bow

Acknowledgements

The following organizations, associations, and groups are gratefully acknowledged for providing exemplary local government practices and achievements listed in this publication:

American City and County Magazine's Crown Communities

The *American City and County* magazine's Crown Communities awards annually recognize extra steps that local governments take in the interest of public safety and health that have positive impacts on residents, businesses and the environment. www.americancityandcounty.com/awards

Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and IBM International Awards Program

In 2007, IBM and the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government created a \$100,000 award program to recognize the world's most transformative government programs.

All levels of government are eligible to apply for recognition of innovations that reflect tangible and sustainable improvements in policy, process, quality, timeliness, or effectiveness of public services. Achievements can range from healthcare, education, and social services to national security. Nominees must demonstrate exceptional results in five key areas: innovation, effectiveness, scope, collaboration, and transferability.

Association of Local Government Auditors Knighton Awards

Knighton Awards annually recognize local government performance audit reports for best scope and potential for significant impact; persuasiveness of conclusions; focus of recommendations on effective and efficient government; clarity and conciseness of communication style; and innovation.

Atlanta Regional Commission, Local Government Best Practices

The Commission is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for a 10-county area around the City of Atlanta. Its website has a collection of local government best practices that includes Florida.

Center for Digital Government

The "Best of Web" is an annual awards program that recognizes the most innovative, user-friendly state and local government portals. This national awards program judges state, city, and county web sites on innovation, web-delivery of public services, efficiency, economy, and functionality for improved citizen access.

Digital Government Achievement Awards recognize outstanding agency and department web sites and applications that enhance information interactions, transactions, and/or services. The categories include government-to-government, government-to-business, government-to-citizen, and government internal.

CityEthics.org

A website for an international project designed to exchange best practices in government ethics programs.

The Council for Excellence in Government

Founded in 1982, the Council is a nonpartisan, nonprofit national organization that works to improve the performance of government at all levels and government's place in the lives and esteem of American citizens. It seeks to help create stronger public sector leadership and management that is driven by innovation and focused on results, and to help increase citizen confidence and participation in government through better understanding of government and its role.

Florida League of Cities - City of Excellence Awards

Recognize overall excellence in a city government in governance/administration; city leadership; intergovernmental cooperation; citizen outreach and involvement; technology; innovative programs and services; and fiscal management.

Florida League of Cities - City Innovations Showcase

First published in 1988, City Innovations Showcase highlights the good things being done in Florida cities. The showcase also provides a resource outlet for innovative ideas that encourages peer sharing of new ways to enhance services, save taxpayers' money, and meet local needs.

Florida Sterling Awards for Organizational Performance Excellence

Established in 1992, the Florida Sterling Council is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to enhance Florida's competitive edge and quality of life through promotion, assessment, and recognition of performance excellence.

The Governor's Sterling Awards recognize public and private organizations, including local governments and schools, for success in leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resource focus, process management, and business results.

International City/County Management Association Awards

ICMA's mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advocating professional management of local government worldwide. Its annual awards recognize innovative and successful programs.

National Association of Counties

NACo annually presents a variety of awards to counties, elected officials, and employees:

- ▶ *Achievement awards* recognize unique and innovative county government programs.
- ▶ *County Courthouse Awards* recognize innovative governance in NACo member counties.
- ▶ *County Leadership in Conservation Awards* recognize leadership, innovation, and excellence in local land conservation by county officials.
- ▶ *The Dale Sowards Award* recognizes a county official who makes a significant contribution to the maintenance and governance of public lands at the local, state, and national level.
- ▶ *Acts of Caring Awards* honor community-based, government volunteer programs that provide a legacy for the future. Programs must exist at least one calendar year prior to the application date; enlist community participation on a volunteer basis; include the participation of the county (officials and/or staff) in a significant and ongoing role; serve as a model program and be replicable; and demonstrate measurable outcomes that benefit the community.

For more information, please contact [Tom Goodman](mailto:Tom.Goodman@naco.org)
http://www.naco.org/Content/NavigationMenu/County_Resource_Center/Awards/Awards.htm

National Civic League

Founded in 1894 by Theodore Roosevelt and other government reformers, the National Civic League is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to strengthen democracy at the local level through training, technical assistance, publishing, facilitating community-wide strategic planning, and awards programs.

Now in its 58th year, the League's All-America City Award is the oldest community recognition program in the nation. Each year, ten winning cities are selected for tackling, through collaborative efforts, community issues such as healthcare, environmental protection, demographic change, economic development, innovations in parks and recreation programs, education, neighborhood revitalization, and public safety.

Awards criteria include active citizen involvement, effective and efficient government performance, capacity for cooperation and consensus building, community vision and pride, inter-group relations, community information sharing, and intercommunity cooperation.

The League also presents MetLife Ambassadors in Education Awards.

National League of Cities - Awards for Municipal Excellence

The awards recognize outstanding programs that improve the quality of life in America's communities.

State of Florida, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA)

This office, within the legislative branch, performs evaluations and justification reviews of state programs, including those that include local government-related components. Reviews include the cost and purpose of programs; why a program does or does not achieve projected results; whether a program could be administered more efficiently by another public or private entity; and the consequences of discontinuing a program.

OPPAGA has issued hundreds of reports and briefings on Florida government, helped to establish performance measures for state programs, and reported on performance using those measures.

The Performance Institute

A private, nonpartisan think tank improving government results through the principles of performance, competition, transparency and accountability.

Pew Partnership Solutions for America: What's Already Out There

What's Already Out There attempts to accelerate the civic inventing process by highlighting programs that effectively address urgent community issues.

The Pew Partnership for Civic Change is a civic research organization that provides consulting and program support to communities, governments, foundations, and non-profit agencies. The partnership was established in 1992 as a civic research organization with primary funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts. In 2004 the Partnership moved from an intermediary organization for the Trusts to a stand-alone non-profit consulting firm as an administrative unit of the University of Richmond. Today, the Pew Partnership for Civic Change is funded by foundations, non-profits, and governments. For more information about the history of the Pew Partnership, review the historical timeline available at <http://www.pew-partnership.org/whoweare.html>

Public Technology Institute is a national non-profit technology research and development organization created by and for cities and counties, to help use technology to improve the effectiveness of public safety agencies.

Sustainlane Government advances cross-sector sustainable development for state and local government. Its web-site has more than 100 best practice documents and a directory of participating government officials from over 450 cities, counties, and states.

U.S. Conference of Mayors

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.

The primary roles of The U.S. Conference of Mayors are to:

- Promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy;
- Strengthen federal-city relationships;
- Ensure that federal policy meets urban needs;
- Provide mayors with leadership and management tools; and
- Create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information.

U.S. Government National Performance Review, Benchmarking Study Report

In 1993, President Clinton and Vice President Gore initiated the National Performance Review (NPR) to reinvent government. One of NPR's initiatives was to foster collaborative, systematic benchmarking of best-in-class organizations, both public and private, to identify best practices. In 1997, NPR published its *Benchmarking Study Report Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*. As part of this study, an intergovernmental benchmarking team worked with 32 study partners, including the City of Coral Springs, that were drawn from more than 100 organizations considered "best-in-class" in the area of performance measurement.

Appendix A

Establishing a Culture of Innovation and Organically Growing Cost Savings in Florida's Local Governments

Culture of Innovation

A culture of innovation in Florida's local governments can provide the bedrock for organically growing efficiencies which are critical to providing world class public services while containing unit costs.

Culture means "the environments in which things are done" in an organization.

Innovation means transforming an organization's processes and practices to increase value, and helping employees change to implement them.

A culture of innovation emphasizes continuous quality improvement, including benchmarks for performance, incentives, and recognition. Productivity is a desired outcome of, but not a proxy for, innovation.

The late management guru Peter Drucker cited seven sources of innovation in work environments: The unexpected, incongruities, process needs, changes in organizational structure, demographics, changes in public mood or perception, and new knowledge.

Innovation, according to Drucker, involves six steps: identify an opportunity, create a new possibility to address it, create a business plan that includes costs, benefits, risks, responses to risk, and key milestones, listen to fellow employees and customers, fine tune and execute the business plan, and focus attention on a simple idea behind a change to minimize distractions.

Richard Florida, an economist and urban studies theorist at George Mason University, notes that creativity and innovation in organizations run the gamut from engineers and scientists developing new designs that are readily transferable and broadly useful, to professionals practicing creative problem solving, to technicians applying complex bodies of knowledge to processes and tasks, and to secretaries devising and setting up new clerical systems and ways to channel flows of information.

Perhaps the best example of a culture of innovation is Phoenix, Arizona, which has been cited as one of the best-run governments in the U.S. and indeed the world for 15 years. The city's 2006 survey of residents found that 89% were satisfied with the overall performance of the city in providing services.

Lessons Learned from Phoenix, Arizona

Researchers at Arizona State University's School of Public Affairs published the following lessons learned from studying Phoenix city government's culture of innovation:

1. Organizational stability is critical to creating a culture of innovation and change. Essential ingredients are reliable budgeting, accounting and performance data systems, open communication, and mutual reliance.
2. Internalize organizational values by empowering employees to help shape them. Important core values for success are dedication to serving customers, working as a team, and focusing on results.
3. Train employees to be the city's contact with citizens. Avoid trouble by focusing on customers and engaging them by sincerely welcoming their suggestions. Seek improvements, explore innovations, and take risks to improve services.
4. Face new challenges with the power of open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.
5. Treat risk as an inherent part of innovation, and innovation as necessary to success. A study of risk culture in public and private organizations found that managers who do not abandon their employees in the face of failure are likely to have employees who will take calculated risks.
6. Grow trust between elected officials, managers, employees, and their unions. Empower people to do their best and achieve excellent results on prescribed goals. Allow staff to take the reins on projects. Encourage new approaches.
7. Respect employees and treat them well by showing confidence in them and supporting their efforts to make a difference. A survey conducted in the 1990s found that 97% of employees agreed "the City of Phoenix is a good place to work," and 88% agreed that their supervisor allowed them to use their own judgment.
8. Use pride in past accomplishments to continually ask: What can we do better as we face new challenges?
9. Build employees' pride in their jobs and in individual, departmental, and city-wide accomplishments, as exemplified by internal recognition and external awards.
10. Recognize and reward employees' efforts with frequent celebrations and events. Likewise, recognize managers and supervisors who don't get in the way.

Definitions

Invention - A new idea, product, or service.

Innovation - Changing an existing process or practice to increase the value of a service or product to its customers, to employees delivering it, or to policy makers providing its funding. Innovations may or may not be preceded or enabled by inventions.

Organizational Culture - “How things are done” in an organization.

About Innovation

- Rapid incremental improvements are considered innovations if they are difficult to copy.
- Creative breakthroughs are rare, so it is better to focus on quality and performance improvements that foster innovation.
- Innovations bring change. Most people tend to be conservative and do not embrace change unless they see some value other than the change itself.

In an Innovation Culture...

- Innovation is embedded in the social and physical environment, language, day-to-day operating procedures, and routines.
- Innovation is a value that is accepted by employees for guiding and motivating behavior.
- Basic underlying assumptions and patterns of belief are taken for granted to the point that they are not questioned.

Ingredients of a Culture of Innovation

- With consistency, persistence, and over time, build an organizational culture that makes innovation the norm.
- Remove constraints from people by sharing knowledge and decision making.
- Foster expanding horizons, not internal needs.
- Create an environment of creativity and intellectual satisfaction – identify those who fit and those who do not.
- Set up benchmarks for performance, action, and continuous improvement.
- Use measurement to change behavior.

- Share ideas in a team.
- Hold annual innovation education boot camps.
- Make front-line supervisors better coaches of their teams.

Stages of Creating an Innovation Culture

Foundation Level – A hierarchical and risk-focused organization typically concentrates on transactions, providing more services, and keeping costs in check.

Advanced Level – Organizational silos are integrated so that departments work with each other for productivity improvements and increased flexibility of response. Operating decisions are pushed down to the front line.

Breakthrough Level – Strategy alignment is extended to goal alignment. There is an increased emphasis on customer behavioral factors.

Obstacles to overcome in creating a culture of innovation

- Lack of a shared vision, purpose, and/or strategy
- Constantly shifting priorities
- Rewarding crisis management rather than crisis prevention
- Absence of idea management processes
- Lack of innovation in the performance review process
- Lack of incentives for innovation and cost-saving
- Penalizing organizations that create savings by cutting their budget the following year
- Lack of reward and recognition programs

Recommendation

Florida's local governments should work to develop a culture of innovation where employees and managers are incentivized, recognized, and rewarded for identifying and implementing program and process improvements that add value to services while producing unit cost savings. Rewards to employees should include cash bonuses that reflect their contribution to productivity improvements.

Organically Growing Efficiencies

Incentives to implement government cost savings and innovations should be endorsed and formalized by local governing bodies.

An ordinance such as the following requires county and city departments to find ways to save instead of only asking for more and, if pressed, defending what is currently spent.

The effort begins with a 1% savings target in year one and ramps up one percent each year to level off at 5% in year five, with an additional 1% in each succeeding year thereafter. Each department budgets and reports quarterly concerning progress in achieving cost savings and efficiencies. Annual adjustments are made to the cost base for inflation and to include amortization of investments in non-recurring items such as equipment and software. This does not mean that overall budgets cannot have net increases, simply that there are targeted cost savings within units of each department

Savings are redirected to higher priorities and demands of today and tomorrow, not those of yesteryear. This is an essential way for local governments to be responsive and productive, and to create a culture of cost-effectiveness and increasingly better public stewardship.

As the old saying goes: *We treasure what we measure and we account for what we budget.*

Model Ordinance

Be It Resolved by the _____(county/city commission/council):

"Local Government Productivity Improvement and Accountability."

The _____ (county/city commission/council) finds that there is a need to establish a productivity improvement and accountability process that is fully integrated with the budget process. This will provide a vehicle for reviewing and implementing ideas that improve productivity and reduce the costs of government services through the budgeting process. Ideas to improve efficiency and productivity may originate from any source or productivity and accountability review forum, including the county/city commission/council, special committees, departments, and private citizens.

In order to carry out this resolution, departments are directed to continually improve the efficiency of the processes used to provide each of its activities. For each activity provided, departments are directed to institute new improvements in efficiency and productivity by reducing the average unit cost to produce each of its activities by 1% in fiscal year 08-09, 2% in fiscal year 09-10, 3% in fiscal year 10-11, 4% in fiscal year 11-12, and 5% in fiscal year 12-13, with 1% each succeeding year thereafter.

A part of each department's budget request must include a description of the change in its processes to produce each of its activities that will result in the required efficiency and productivity improvements. These descriptions must include estimated time frames for implementing the changes and preliminary estimates of the total dollar amount of cost savings expected to be realized. The total amount of the reductions in the average unit cost for all of the activities provided must equal, at a minimum, the percentage reduction identified for the associated fiscal year from the preceding fiscal year.

The proposed productivity and efficiency improvements must be incorporated into the annual budget.

Departments must report quarterly to the governing body in a public hearing on the results of their implementation of the required productivity enhancements and include available internal and external auditor report. The reported reduction in the unit costs for each activity must include an assertion as to the validity and reliability of the information.

All departments must extend maximum cooperation and assistance in the furtherance of this program.

This ordinance shall take effect upon being enacted by the governing body.

Recommendations

1. Ideas for cost savings should originate within departments and offices and from suggestions by commissioners/councilmen, management, and auditors, or from organizations including the National and Florida Associations of Counties, the National and Florida Leagues of Cities, the International City and County Management Association, and others.
2. Department and office savings targets should start at 1% of their budgets in FY 2009, increasing in 1% annual increments until a 5% annual savings is required; then instituting a 1% savings target for each succeeding year thereafter.
3. To assure fidelity, internal and external auditors should report at least annually on actions taken and savings achieved.

**This report was researched and written by
David Davis, Senior Research Analyst
under the direction of Kaye Kendrick, CPA, Senior Vice President of Research**

**David A. Smith, Chairman; Dominic M. Calabro, President, Publisher, and
Editor; Steve Evans, Chief Operating Officer**

Florida TaxWatch Research Institute, Inc.

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About Florida TaxWatch

Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan taxpayer research institute and government watchdog that over its 29-year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies, and programs, and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government.

Florida TaxWatch's research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of economic and tax and spend policies and practices on citizens and businesses. Florida TaxWatch has worked diligently and effectively to help state government shape responsible fiscal and public policy that adds value and benefit to taxpayers.

This diligence has yielded impressive results: in its first two decades alone, policymakers and government employees implemented three-fourths of Florida TaxWatch's cost-saving recommendations, saving the taxpayers of Florida more than \$6.2 billion -- approximately \$1,067 in added value for every Florida family, according to an independent assessment by Florida State University.

Florida TaxWatch has a historical understanding of state government, public policy issues, and the battles fought in the past necessary to structure effective solutions for today and the future. It is the only statewide organization devoted entirely to Florida taxing and spending issues. Its research and recommendations are reported on regularly by the statewide news media.

Supported by voluntary, tax-deductible memberships and grants, Florida TaxWatch is open to any organization or individual interested in helping to make Florida competitive, healthy and economically prosperous by supporting a credible research effort that promotes constructive taxpayer improvements. Members, through their loyal support, help Florida TaxWatch bring about a more effective, responsive government that is accountable to the citizens it serves.

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With your help, Florida TaxWatch will continue its diligence to make certain your tax investments are fair and beneficial to you, the taxpaying customer, who supports Florida's government. Florida TaxWatch is ever present to ensure that taxes are equitable, not excessive, that their public benefits and costs are weighed, and government agencies are more responsive and productive in the use of your hard-earned tax dollars.

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www.floridatxwatch.org

106 N. Bronough Street
P.O. Box 10209
Tallahassee, FL 32302

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