



Press Release

Release: Immediate

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Municipal Excellence Award Winners Honored

JACKSON, Mississippi, July 5, 2016 - The Mississippi Municipal League (MML) honored the 2016 Municipal Excellence Awards Winners at the 85th Annual MML Conference held in Biloxi, Mississippi during the Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, June 29, 2016.

The Excellence Awards program, which began in 1993, recognizes cities that utilize innovative problem solving, excellence in management, citizen participation and community partnerships to provide increased services and a better quality of life for its local citizenry. The competition is divided into two population categories: under 10,000 and over 10,000. Within each population category, cities can vie for awards in City Spirit, Planning and Economic Development, Public Safety and Public Works. Judges also select one application as the Best Overall.

The 2016 Excellence Awards winners are as follows:

City Spirit, Population Under 10,000: City of Amory – Frisco Park and Interactive Fountain Project

The revitalization and renewal of Amory's Frisco Park by replacing the outdated style and dangerously non-interactive fountain with an interactive fountain began in 2011 and became a reality in 2015. The park was transformed into a destination place through city leadership, businesses, citizen support, volunteer work, and a LWCF & MDWFP grant. The park reopened September 4, 2015 with an interactive fountain, large areas of outdoor play, and seating for our citizens and visitors.

City Spirit, Population Over 10,000: City of Hattiesburg-“Hattiesburg Reads Project”

The City of Hattiesburg Mayor's office, educators, business owners and Greater Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce unite to create a Reading Council and launch the Hattiesburg Reads Initiative. The program aims to ensure children are prepared for school by age 5. Now, area youth can enjoy their favorite meals at Burger King and O' Charley's restaurants as they read their favorite books within Library Lounges. The community's reaction has motivated Burger King to expand the endeavor statewide.

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Planning and Economic Development, Under 10,000: City of Batesville-“Downtown Square Enhancements Project”

The City of Batesville, along with cooperation and funding from the Mississippi Department of Transportation Local Public Agency (LPA) funds, developed, planned and constructed Phase 1 upgrades and enhancements to the Batesville downtown square. The improvements included removing and replacing sidewalks to meet ADA standards, as well as the addition of new curb, lights, landscaping and handicap ramps to provide a friendlier and more accessible square for downtown businesses. As part of the plan, additional green space was made available for events such as Sprint Fest and the Polar Express Train Ride.

Planning and Economic Development, Population Over 10,000: City of Greenwood-“Greenwood Zoning and Development Code Project”

With a 43 year-old zoning ordinance that was long past its ability to generate high-quality development, the City of Greenwood embarked on an ambitious task to update its zoning and development code with elements that reflect the best in modern planning practice, including a new form-based mixed-use district, design guidelines for commercial development, and an updated zoning map that reflects four decades of growth.

Public Safety, Population Under 10,000: City of Plantersville -“Reflecting On A Safer Future Project”

It was a beautiful but windy fall day in Plantersville, MS. The final stretch of leaves that still clung to the oak and maple trees near Town Hall were finally letting go. Business as usual was taking place in this small but wonderful community where people have a knack for community spirit and getting things done. Yet it was on an unforgettable November evening that the course of public safety in Plantersville would begin to change. An unfortunate turn of events during a routine emergency response call prompts city leaders and volunteers to action in order to make the Town of Plantersville a safer place to live by assisting emergency response efforts through reflective address markers and emergency response coordination.

Public Safety, Population Over 10,000: City of Pascagoula-“Police Department’s CALEA Compliance”

In 2015, the Pascagoula Police Department became a nationally accredited law enforcement agency receiving CALEA recognition. In order to maintain compliance, the police department has since established a Professional Standards Division with the police department to oversee compliance regulations and ensure continued re-accreditation. As a City of Pascagoula project, the City and, specifically, the police department were thoroughly involved in the execution of this project. After receiving accreditation, the police department faced the problem of how to preserve the accreditation to which they developed a new division. By creating these new positions, the police department fortified their efforts to uphold their accreditation. The prestigious award of this accreditation provides objective evidence of an agency’s commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management and service-delivery.



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Public Works, Population Under 10,000: City of Port Gibson-“SRF/592 Drinking Water System Repairs and Improvements Project”

This project included extensive repairs and improvements to the municipal drinking water system serving the Port Gibson Community. The water system serves about 1,400 customers, including about 680 customers inside the City and about 620 customers in the certified area outside the City, and the water system had not been updated since the mid-1980's.

Public Works, Population Over 10,000: City of Columbus-“14th Avenue Ditch Improvement Project”

A \$1.4M project with 13 partners to improve traffic and drainage along a busy city roadway. The project was approximately 1,800 feet long and added a turn lane to a city road and concrete drainage ditches and road shoulder. The ditch was a silt-filled hazard to drivers and also residents due to poor drainage. A new roadway, drainage ditch and road-shoulder are the result of the partners' work for the city. This project has proven to be a great example of what happens when multiple entities combine their own sets of funding, priorities and perspectives and work together towards a common goal. With all of these resources, this 14th Avenue project can serve as a cornerstone to the revitalization of this area. It is something that will better serve the public for years to come.

BEST OVERALL: City of Starkville-“The Mill at MSU Brownfield Project”

More than 100 years of history went into the making of the Mill at Mississippi State, a century of economic prosperity ultimately leading to the rebirth of The Mill as the fabric of Starkville and the economic driver of the area. As it was when the cotton mill opened in 1902, so it is today. The Mill at MSU serves Starkville as the gateway to MS State and a bridge to the community.

Asbestos, underground storage tanks and other solid waste complicated this \$40M planned mixed use Brownfield Redevelopment, which now includes a Conference Center, Marriott Courtyard Hotel and a parking garage just off the campus of Mississippi State University. The Brownfield Agreement was the culmination of a multi-year, collaborative effort by public and private stakeholders to preserve the best of the National Registry of Historic Places-listed mill while creating new economic opportunities.

Established in 1931, MML represents 295 city, town and village governments in Mississippi. The mission of the MML is helping cities and towns excel through training, lobbying at the state and federal level, and providing resources and networking opportunities with state, federal and private entities. For more information about the Mississippi Municipal League, visit www.mmlonline.com.

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