



# Small Cities Share Solutions

*A City Practice Brief*

**Fall 2008**

The Small Cities Council of the National League of Cities focuses on leadership and local government performance in communities of less than 50,000 people. The elected officials in small cities and towns face unique challenges but also have unique opportunities to capitalize on the strengths of America's hometowns.

Peer to peer learning is one of the most valuable components of participation and membership in NLC. The examples presented in this brief are the product of hard work in communities all over the country. These programs contribute much to the well being and prosperity of smaller cities and towns. The National League of Cities will regularly produce a Small Cities Solutions brief as part of its support for the Small Cities Council.

The topics covered include: job incentives, public-private partnerships, public safety, recycling, community leadership, sustainable development, landscaping, and government transparency. These programs demonstrate how, regardless of size, local governments can implement beneficial programs in multiple policy areas.

For more examples, visit the City Practice database on the NLC website at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org) → Resources for Cities → City Practice Resources.

Visit the Small Cities Council online at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org) → Inside NLC → Committees and Councils.

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## **Public-Private Partnership Business Expo**

City: **Walton Hills, Ohio**

Population: 2,400

For more information, contact: Dana Pinkert  
(440) 232-0496  
[pinkertd@winstonhillsohio.gov](mailto:pinkertd@winstonhillsohio.gov)

Walton Hill's Public-Private Partnership Business Expo provides an opportunity for citizens to meet with federal, state, and local officials, civic and business agency representatives, and small business groups while networking with business professionals. The agencies and community representatives provide information on the benefits and services available to businesses and communities in the Cuyahoga Valley region. The expo has improved citizens' knowledge about various services and has also informed citizens of various job opportunities.

## **Master Government Program**

City: **Bullhead City, Arizona**

Population: 33,769

For more information, contact: Susan Betts, Assistant City Manager  
(928) 763-0157  
[susan@bullheadcity.com](mailto:susan@bullheadcity.com)

The Bullhead City Master Government Program is the product of a partnership between the City and the Women's Council's Colorado River Leadership Program. The Women's Council is an auxiliary of the Bullhead Area Chamber of Commerce. This program provides a community-based interactive 9-session educational program designed to enhance awareness and understanding of City operations. It is a way to build bonds of trust that are essential to the democratic form of government and an opportunity to build

collaborative relationships among participants and City personnel. The program also encourages volunteerism and participants gain awareness of community resources. The program's benefits have been increased community participation and improved communication.

### **Show Low Showcase**

City: **Show Low, Arizona**

Population: 7,695

For more information, contact: Ann Kurasaki  
(928) 532-4061  
akurasaki@showlowaz.gov

Show Low Showcase is a program recognizing property owners for landscaping and maintaining the appearance of their home or business. One residence and non-residential property are chosen each month for the award. Nominations are submitted by residents, business owners, and Show Low Showcase board members. Entries are judged on vegetation type and maintenance; weed control; upkeep of trees and shrubbery; litter and debris control; parking of vehicles; landscaping; decorative items such as fountains, bird houses, etc.; and outdoor storage. Commercial properties are also judged on signage and right-of-way treatment. Each winner is recognized in the city's monthly newsletter, the city's government access television stations, and the city's website.

### **Show Low Shines for the Holidays**

City: **Show Low, Arizona**

Population: 7,695

For more information, contact: Joel Weeks, Deputy City Manager  
(928) 532-4014  
jweeks@showlowaz.gov

Show Low Shines for the Holidays is an annual extravaganza of holiday events. City parks and facilities, private residences and businesses participate by decorating buildings yards and trees with colored lights and traditional holiday themes. The displays draw onlookers from the entire White Mountain region in northeastern Arizona during the winter holiday season. The displays begin after Thanksgiving and are taken down after New Year's Day. A brochure with a self-guided map is provided for residents and the many visitors that flock to see the finery.

### **Kids ROCK (Reach Out for Community Knowledge)**

City: **Show Low, Arizona**

Population: 7,695

For more information, contact: Ann Kurasaki  
(928) 532-4061  
akurasaki@showlowaz.gov

Kids ROCK teaches local third graders about their community, how city government operates and how they can be good citizens. Each year, students are given an activity book that provides puzzles, problem-solving situations, connect-the-dots and other activities that pertain to city departments. Then, staff members from different city departments visit the students in their classroom to talk about what they do. Students also go on walking and bus tours to visit various facilities. At the end of the school year, the students are treated to a pool party, with swimming and lunch, at the city's aquatic center.

### **Community Update Event**

City: **Hercules, California**

Population: 19,488

For more information, contact: Michelle Harrington  
(510) 245-6533  
Mharrington@ci.hercules.ca.us

Every year, the City of Hercules hosts a community update event, in which the whole city is invited to learn about projects the city is working on and programs offered. Project managers, developers, city staff and local community organizations all have tables to discuss their project or programs. The City Manager also makes a presentation at the beginning of the event for the entire group. Residents are able to get questions answered and obtain up-to-date information about what is happening in the city. The feedback received from the events is outstanding. City staffs are also able to get feedback about concerns or issues residents may have. This allows staff to address those issues earlier in a project.

### **Job Creation Incentive Program**

City: **Walton Hills, Ohio**

Population: 2,400

For more information, contact: Dana Pinkert  
(440) 232-0496  
pinkertd@winstonhillsohio.gov

The Job Creation Incentive Program provides incentives to eligible businesses in an effort to establish and/or expand operations in Walton Hills. The program creates new jobs and services for the local economy. The specific grant to any one company is based on the company's gross payroll, net profits, and the amount of future income tax profits it will generate for the Village of Walton Hills.

### **Tomorrow Community Vision and Strategic Action**

City: **Tualatin, Oregon**

Population: 22,791

For more information, contact: Carina Christensen  
(503) 691-2065  
cchristensen@ci.tualatin.or.us

The City of Tualatin sponsored a community based 25-year visioning process to guide the city's future. To create the vision and action steps, the City Council connected and engaged the community to identify the community's values and emerging issues. The resulting Tualatin Tomorrow Vision and Strategic Action Plan provides a road map for Tualatin's future. During the development of the plan, a variety of innovative venues were included. One of these was the creation of VisionCorps, which expands as necessary to meet the needs of community events. Additionally, Tualatin's youth was engaged creating a paid five-member youth "foot patrol" in order to hand out information at community gathering spots. The financial support for the program is \$200,000, with a budgeted \$31,000 to support a part time employee and supplies. The goal of Tualatin Tomorrow is to become self supporting with community contributions to provide permanent sustainability for the future.

### **Operation Line of Sight**

City: **Athens, Tennessee**

Population: 13,220

For more information, contact: Bo Perkinson  
(423) 744-2769  
Slindsey@cityofathens.com

Operation Line of Sight started in the spring of 2006 to identify and correct line of sight problems at intersections in order to increase the safety of roads within the City of Athens. Citizens report problem areas to the Public Works Department. The areas are then categorized and studied to find possible solutions. Corrections are made to the problem areas and are included on a list to be periodically checked throughout the year to ensure that the problems have been mitigated and solved. The city has paid only for minor landscaping projects on some city right-of-ways. However, major problems that require street realignment or major excavation are funded through grants. The program reduces complaints and calls involving line of sight problems on local and state roads.

### **Outdoor Warning Siren System**

City: **Maple Heights, Ohio**

Population: 26,156

For more information, contact: Fire Chief James Castelucci  
(216) 662-6035  
Maplefirechief@wowway.com

The City of Maple Heights has nine emergency outdoor warning sirens located throughout the city, which alert the public if a life-threatening situation exists. The sirens are activated for natural disasters and homeland security/attack and/or chemical emergencies. The sirens are a regional effort of eight communities to increase public safety and emergency preparedness. These communities, along with several other communities in the surrounding area test the sirens at the same time across municipal and county lines.

### **Creation of Utility Service Center**

City: **Pontotoc, Mississippi**

Population: 5,253

For more information, contact: Mayor Bill Rutledge  
(662) 489-4231

The Utility Service Center is a consolidation of all utilities to include water/sewer/natural gas/purchasing & receiving, mechanic shop, and training room into one location to provide a one-stop show for public access and accountability. The Service Center includes individual offices for each department and storage space for all equipment and material. This center was created by converting an old 45,000 square foot industrial building into a useable asset for the city. The goal is to improve inter-agency communication as well as improve accessibility.

### **Energy Star Ordinance**

City: **West Chester, Pennsylvania**

Population: 17,861

For more information, contact: Carolyn T. Comitta  
(484) 678-9243  
Carolyn@comitta.com

The Borough of West Chester, Pennsylvania, is the first municipality in the country where, by law, private commercial buildings must earn the Energy Star designation due to a new ordinance passed by the municipality's Borough Council. The Energy Star program ensures that these buildings will be among the most energy efficient in the country. According to the new ordinance, a developer who is required to seek a "conditional use" approval for a project must design the building(s) to meet the energy performance goals of the Energy Star program. One year after operation, the building owner must assess energy use and apply for the Energy Star label. Savings from the program will be realized in greenhouse gas emission reductions and lower energy costs.

### **Drop-Off Recycling Program**

City: **Bullhead City, Arizona**

Population: 33,769

For more information, contact: Tim Ernster, City Manager  
(928) 763-0122  
Ternster@bullheadcity.com

In 2008, the City of Bullhead launched its first city-wide drop-off recycling program in an effort to reduce waste in the landfill, conserve natural resources, and help preserve the environment. The City received two grants from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and created a partnership with local businesses. The recycling program will be in place for approximately two years and then evolve into a curb-side recycling program. In the first five months, the recycling program has diverted a total of 101,046 pounds of recyclable products, and generated approximately \$2,023.00, which is deposited in the "Park Amenities" fund for future improvements to the parks.

This Brief was developed by Lesley-Ann Rennie, Jim Brooks, and Tim Davis, National League of Cities. Special thanks goes out to all those who sent in examples of programs from their cities. Also, special thanks to the members of the Small Cities Council Steering Committee for their commitment to this project.

City Practice Briefs contain examples from NLC's City Practice database, available at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org). Series editors: Bruce Calvin and Larry Foxman. For more information, contact the NLC Municipal Reference Service at (202) 626-3130 or email [mrs@nlc.org](mailto:mrs@nlc.org)