



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2009 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 13, 2009

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: City of Cedar Hill Government Center

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Cedar Hill, TX

Jurisdiction population(s): 46,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2008, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: 10 Year: 2006

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Montréal, Québec, Canada, September 2009. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name:	<u>Rob Franke</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Cedar Hill</u>
Title:	<u>Mayor</u>		
Name:	<u>Alan E. Sims</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Cedar Hill</u>
Title:	<u>City Manager</u>		
Name:	<u>Dan Hernandez</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>Cedar Hill I.S.D.</u>
Title:	<u>School Board</u>		

President

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Corky Brown

Title: Public Relations Jurisdiction: City of Cedar Hill
Mgr.

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**ICMA Award nomination
Community Partnership Award
City of Cedar Hill, Texas and Cedar Hill Independent School District
Cedar Hill Government Center**

Problem Assessment: challenge or need that prompted the local government to develop the program

City Hall, on the square in downtown Cedar Hill, Texas, was last remodeled in the '60s when the city's population was barely 7,000. The older School Administration building was built in the '50s. City offices were housed in seven buildings spread across the city. Citizens and others doing business with the City were often directed to satellite locations which meant crossing the street or driving several miles to the appropriate City office. City Hall was not citizen friendly nor efficient for staff.

Serving a growing population of over 45,000 was overtaxing the facilities for both the City and School District. City and School administrators began to consider ideas on how to provide facilities that could improve services and handle the growth.

Program Implementation

Separate bond elections, approved overwhelmingly by voters, had set aside funds to build new administrative offices for each entity that would handle the community's growth. In 2005, as preliminary plans were started separately, a former City Council member asked why the City and School District didn't look into building one facility to serve both groups, since they served the same population. The boundaries of CHISD closely follow the city limits. A quick check revealed that no other local government and ISD in Texas had tried this solution, but the idea seemed so natural that it was immediately adopted by both bodies and planning was redirected to focus on developing one campus.

The need to improve service and provide citizens access to City and School administrators was obvious. Citizens had approved funding for both buildings separately, all that was needed was some innovative thinking and inter-entity cooperation on a scale unmatched in Texas. A joint committee from both administrations was created to assist in defining the needs of both groups and, as a result, several efficiencies became apparent. Obviously, a single campus meant lower land acquisition costs and offered savings in shared parking and landscaping. This was the beginning of a grand partnership.

As the project specifications began to take shape it seemed natural to include the Police Department instead of building a new police station to replace the one they had outgrown. With the City of Cedar Hill at just more than halfway to buildout, it was a high priority to create a facility with the capability to serve citizens' needs well into the future.

Selecting the location was a challenge because the City Council was very sensitive to the fact that moving City Hall out of downtown could create a hardship on the downtown square businesses. The Council made it a priority to be sure that the community and downtown businesses would not be negatively affected by the move. At the same time, the city was experiencing an increase in retail development activity within a mile of the downtown area.

A high-volume traffic-generating tenant was found for old City Hall and a location was selected that gives the Government Center greater visibility and easier accessibility in the developing Uptown area, anchored by the Uptown Village shopping center.

Tangible results or measurable outcome

Ground was broken for the 116,000 sq. ft. Government Center in November of 2006 and School and City departments began moving in in July 2008. Construction cost was \$27.5 million. Building a shared facility saved taxpayers about \$4 million in immediate construction costs. Ongoing maintenance efficiencies will also stretch taxpayers' dollars. More importantly, the increased service efficiencies and community pride in the new facility are invaluable benefits.

As the joint planning committee assessed needs of both entities they began to see that some expensive elements could be shared. The City Council and CHISD Board of Trustees agreed to share a large meeting room and the design included sharing a spacious lobby, mini-conference rooms off the lobby, the elevator, IT facilities and the HVAC system.

The logical layout of the new facility offers unsurpassed convenience to citizens. The building is easy to find and once inside, the most frequently used City services including Utility Billing, Municipal Court and Human Resources are conveniently found on the first floor near the entrance. Also on the first floor is the spectacular T.W. 'Turk' Cannady/Cedar Hill Room shared by the City Council and the Board of Trustees for their public meetings. The late Mr. Cannady served the community for over 30 years at different times as school superintendent and mayor.

Residents can meet with City staff members in one of several conference rooms on the first floor. The Municipal Court judge uses a larger multi-purpose room that can be easily reconfigured for other uses. The Police Department has its own attached lobby that welcomes visitors 24/7.

The second floor includes a convenient one-stop shop counter where developers and others who desire to do business with the city can go to get questions answered and receive services. Everything a citizen or developer may need is located in one centralized location. A vast improvement over the old location.

To residents, the Cedar Hill Government Center presents a unified presence for local government services and education. The function is decidedly citizen-centric and the inspiring design is a source of civic pride. The wise use of resources shows that those chosen to lead this community are continuing long-standing traditions of community betterment through partnerships.

Lessons learned during planning, implementation, implementation and analysis of the program

Cooperation between the two largest taxing entities in the community is a natural extension of the community's values. But it represents an extremely rare trait in local government. The process was not without bumps along the way. The vision came from the elected officials who represented the citizens. It was the professional managers of the City administration, working with their ISD colleagues, who kept the project focused on citizen service and responsible fiscal management. It was the managers who maintained the vision and helped turn a great idea into a premier government center.

Unique vision, unparalleled cooperation and service-focused management have delivered an impressive government center that will serve the people of Cedar Hill for generations to come.