



2008 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 14, 2008

Complete this form and attach to 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: **Yuma Regional Communication System**

Jurisdiction where program originated: **City of Yuma, Arizona**

Jurisdiction population: **93,212 @ July 2007**

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, 2007 to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase)

Month: **December**

Year: **2006**

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Richmond, Virginia, September 2008. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: **Mark Watson**

Title: **City Administrator**

Jurisdiction: **City of Yuma, Arizona**

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact:

Name of person who should be contacted with questions regarding the nomination: **Laurie Neinast**

Title of nominator: **Director, Information Technology Services** Jurisdiction of nominator: **City of Yuma, Arizona**

Street address: **One City Plaza, P.O. Box 13013**

City: **Yuma**

State/Province: **Arizona**

Zip/Postal Code: **85366-3013**

Country: **USA**

Telephone: **(928) 373-4900**

Fax: **(928) 373-4908**

Email: **Laurie.Neinast@YumaAz.gov**

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

**ICMA 2008 Annual Awards Program - Community Partnership Award Nomination
Submitted by the City of Yuma, Arizona**

Project Title and Description:

Yuma Regional Communications System (YRCS): Since the tragic event of 9/11, US government agencies have been focusing on how to significantly enhance communication capabilities for first responders. The City of Yuma is no exception. More than four years ago, the City took the lead and began to address the age old issue of interoperability. After four years of continual great leadership, hard work and dedication, the City rolled out a multi-jurisdiction interoperability communication system which is now being used by all first responder agencies throughout Yuma County. Additionally, the system is being used by local Indian tribe law enforcement and provides coverage into northern Mexico for US mutual aid support to Mexican public safety agencies. The system has also been designed to allow for connectivity capabilities throughout the state of Arizona, Southern California and the entire California/Mexico border. This project is not only being recognized state wide, but world wide as well. Significant funding has been committed to this project by all members and has exceeded our expectations. The events and successes of this project are defined as follows.

Problem Assessment:

- At one point there were 30 separate radio systems funded by taxpayers within Yuma County and surrounding California and Mexico border agencies
- The current systems lacked the ability to:
 - Provide interoperability communications between agencies
 - Provide extended coverage within certain facility types
 - Provide radio coverage to all service areas of Yuma County
- Public safety agencies needed the ability to better protect and serve law enforcement personnel, other first responder agencies and the citizens of our community on a daily

**ICMA 2008 Annual Awards Program - Community Partnership Award Nomination
Submitted by the City of Yuma, Arizona**

basis and during a disaster through immediate response capabilities and joint cooperation efforts

- The ability for each agency to replace their radio systems would be financially unattainable
- Taxpayers are demanding that governments look at ways to save tax dollars
- Major grant opportunities were not being made available to single agencies, but rather only through joint agency efforts

The Challenge:

- We needed a way to improve trust and collaboration efforts between multiple public safety agencies, their leadership and elected officials, therefore there were two critical items at the beginning of the project to overcome:
 - Developing trust between the agencies
 - Defining who and how to manage and maintain a multi-agency system
- In 2002 the City of Yuma took the lead and began to outreach and promote the vision, goals and objectives of the project. Agencies contacted included:
 - Law enforcement and first responder agencies within Yuma County, Public Works Departments and other on-call disaster agencies outlined in Emergency Management plans, State of Arizona emergency responders and surrounding County public safety agencies within the State of California
- After the presentation and through the efforts of leadership and the commitment to better protect and serve, these obstacles were soon overcome. Letters were signed by each agency showing their support and concurrence to move forward with such a project

Project Implementation:

**ICMA 2008 Annual Awards Program - Community Partnership Award Nomination
Submitted by the City of Yuma, Arizona**

- The City of Yuma, Yuma County Sheriff Department, other Yuma County departments, and other Cities within Yuma County developed a partnership and signed Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) to establish a joint YRCS and governing Council
- The YRCS Council was formally established by the Yuma City Council and Yuma County Board of Supervisors and subsequently between other Cities and agencies
- It was agreed that the YRCS Council would provide oversight of its membership and operations and maintenance budget and would expand as other agencies joined
- The YRCS membership has now expanded to include the partnership with San Diego and Imperial County California radio systems
- The YRCS Council voted that the City of Yuma Information Technology Services (ITS) Telecommunication division would be the lead technical advisors of the system and provide complete maintenance and management of the system. All employees who support the system are paid for from YRCS funding fees but work directly for the City of Yuma ITS department
- The key players and current YRCS membership include:
 - **City of Yuma**
 - ITS, City Administration, Yuma City Council, Police and Fire and City lobbyists
(assists with Capital Hill support and funding requests)
 - **Yuma County**
 - Sheriffs Office, Board of Supervisors, Administrative Services, County Courts, Health Department and Public Works
 - **Other Agencies**
 - US Army Proving Ground and Marine Corps Air Station (Yuma), Cities of San Luis and Somerton, Arizona, Town of Wellton, Arizona, Yuma County Rural

**ICMA 2008 Annual Awards Program - Community Partnership Award Nomination
Submitted by the City of Yuma, Arizona**

Metro Fire and Ambulance, Yuma Regional Medical Center, San Diego and
Imperial Counties, San Luis Sonora, Mexico and State of Sonora, Mexico,
Arizona Department of Public Safety/Public Safety Communications
Commission, Arizona Public Service and Cocopah Indian Tribe

Costs and Funding Sources:

- The City of Yuma initially received a COPS More grant for 2.8 million and an additional 1.5 million through various grant applications from the Department of Homeland Security
- The initial start-up costs were funded with a 50/50 cost share of 1.5 million dollars between the City of Yuma and Yuma County
- The City of Yuma and partners to date have received approximately 9.1 million in various grants from federal and state sources towards this project
- Each agency contributes the same fee per radio. This fee pays for operations and maintenance of the system and personnel support costs

How Long Has System Been Activated?

- Project implementation started in 2002 with implementation on-going as new agencies join and the user base expands. The City of Yuma Police and Fire departments were the first agencies to be migrated to the new system with completed deployment the last quarter of 2006. Currently, there are more than 1,200 radio users on the system. The in-progress implementation currently includes:
 - US Customs/Border Patrol and Port Authority (interface to their new P25 system)
 - Department of Corrections (local prison) and Arizona Department of Transportation

Tangible Results/Measurable Outcomes of the Project:

**ICMA 2008 Annual Awards Program - Community Partnership Award Nomination
Submitted by the City of Yuma, Arizona**

- The system implemented is a Motorola Project 25 (P25) 700/800 MHz Trunked Interoperability Radio System
- This system is extremely scalable and conforms to the federal standards set for new radio equipment
- Agency users have experienced a dramatic improvement in both coverage and day to day operations
- We exceeded the anticipated grant funding and original goals set forth for coverage as well as the number of participating users within the first year
- There is one system to manage and maintain with each agency benefiting by sharing the upkeep and maintenance costs
- The system is also capable of expanding state-wide. As a result, the State of Arizona Public Safety Communications Commission has recently determined the state will be implementing a state-wide P25 700/800 MHz radio system. Part of their inter-operability solution will be to expand the YRCS to tie into the Phoenix Metro system

Lessons Learned:

- Many said this type of undertaking could not be achieved within a government structure, however, through great leadership and the removal of individual political agendas, great things can be achieved
- Governments can proficiently and affectively work extremely well together and by doing so can save significant taxpayer dollars