

Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane



GEORGE D. DI CIERO

Established in honor of former ICMA Executive Director Mark E. Keane, the Award for Career Excellence recognizes an outstanding local government administrator who has fostered representative democracy by enhancing the effectiveness of local government officials and by consistently initiating creative and successful programs. Candidates must be voting members of ICMA; have a minimum of 10 years of executive, senior-level service to the profession; and be endorsed by a past or present elected official. This year, ICMA presents the Mark E. Keane Award to George D. Di Ciero, city and county manager of Broomfield, Colorado.

In 1968, George Di Ciero came to a small, newly incorporated, statutory city of 6,500 people and 1.5 square miles, and took the reins as its manager. With effective administrative management, he successfully guided Broomfield as it grew into one of the most exciting, livable, safe, well-planned, and well-managed communities in Colorado, if not the nation. Now at over 33 square miles and a population over 50,000, Broomfield is a home-rule, council-manager, combined city and county government with a remarkable manager at its helm.

Until November 2001, portions of Broomfield lay in four different counties. Throughout the 1990s, backed by overwhelming support from citizens and elected officials, Mr. Di Ciero pursued efforts to consolidate in order to more effectively and efficiently serve the community. After state legislative approval in 1998 and a three-year transition period, the county government functions were successfully incorporated into a combined—and reformed—city and county organization. Under Mr. Di Ciero's guidance and energy, Broomfield has established an integrated system of health and human service delivery that allows access at any point, a Central Records Office that avoids duplication of resources and provides a one-stop counter for residents seeking information on properties and voter services;

combined municipal, county, and state courts in a single location, and a police department that fulfills sheriff's detention and civil responsibilities while working to coordinate human services cases under the single umbrella of the city and county manager's office.

Balanced growth has always been a key component of Broomfield's master plan. With Mr. Di Ciero's help, Broomfield has achieved retail development to bolster sales tax revenues that pay for residents' amenities; commercial and industrial development to bolster job opportunities; housing development to ensure a reliable workforce; transportation improvements to ensure a safe and healthy environment; acquisition of open space, greenbelts, and park areas through development agreements; and new entertainment opportunities for the region. Broomfield's strong and diversified economic base places the community near the top of every revenue-producing category.

Mr. Di Ciero's accomplishments in Broomfield are legion. In the early 1990s, with residents' approval of a sales tax to purchase open space and parks, he and elected officials led collaborative efforts to acquire over 6,760 acres of publicly owned open land and easements and to set aside 901 acres of privately owned, permanently open land. Today, Broomfield has one of the highest ratios of open

land to development in Colorado and is well on its way to meeting its target of 40 percent open land at build-out.

And the list goes on. Mr. Di Ciero implemented a home-rule charter; established development review policies to ensure high-quality residential and commercial neighborhoods; oversaw the administration of budgets that grew from a few hundred thousand dollars to over \$253 million; oversaw a growing asset base; and authored a critical *Long Range Financial Plan* to guide Broomfield's policies and development into the future. Under his management, annual budgets have had surpluses and reserves to protect against economic downturns, and his recommendations have helped community and elected officials manage future land use designations to achieve a positive ratio of revenues to expenditures at build out.

Throughout his career, Mr. Di Ciero has remained responsive to the community's desires and willing to educate, coach, and support successive mayors and city council members. He instituted a customer-service model—what the staff refers to as “the Broomfield Way”—that represents his own friendly, inquisitive, “can-do” attitude. He recruits and empowers high-quality staff members, encouraging innovation, creativity, fiscal responsibility, and personal accountability, and taking pride in their awards, recognition, and eventual accession to leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. He values people who can connect with others and embraces the concept of teamwork.

Understanding the importance of citizen input into the workings of government, Mr. Di Ciero structured the city's decision-making processes to include the public on citizen

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George D. Di Ciero, from page 6
committees, boards, and commissions. That hundreds of residents apply for positions on Broomfield's advisory boards, commissions, and committees each year is testament to Broomfield's open government.

A firm believer of transparency in government, Mr. Di Ciero has gained and kept the confidence of Broomfield's citizens, as evidenced repeatedly in their approval of such initiatives as a funding package to build a new interchange facilitating access to a new retail district; a financing package to build a new municipal complex; and a lodging tax to finance landscaping improvements and maintenance at key gateways to the city.

Broomfield has been recognized professionally by numerous local, regional, and national entities. The city's newest recreation center received *Recreation Management Magazine's* prestigious Great Expectations Award for innovative architecture. The wastewater treatment plant expansion received the American Public Works Association's environmental Project of the Year Award for medium-sized communities and was also honored by EPA as the best-operated plant for its size in North America. For eight consecutive years, Broomfield has received the Government Finance Officers' Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, and for 13 consecutive, its Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. Six times over the past ten years, *Site Selection Magazine* has named Broomfield among the top ten economic development programs in North America for netting the largest relative number of new jobs and capital investments for its size.

And over the years, Mr. Di Ciero himself has been widely recognized for his efforts, receiving the Boulder Valley School District Service Award, the Broomfield Chamber of Commerce Local Government Community Service Award, and the Distinguished Local Government Award from the Denver Federal Executive Board. In 2008, Mr. Di Ciero

celebrates 40 years of creating, planning, managing, and effectively building a masterpiece of a community whose residents call "Hometown USA!" ■

Thomas O. Forslund, from page 7
gift for explaining options and issues without ever telling the other manager what to do, she describes his advice as often coming in the form of a useful "decision-making framework." "After talking to him," she says, "you feel like you've worked out a way to move to the future."

As the second-largest city in the state, Casper's ranks of professional staff tend to be larger than those of other communities. Thus Mr. Forslund is generous not only with his time and advice but with his staff as well, lending them out to other towns in need of technical support. For example, Linda Witko, Casper's assistant city manager, spent several days in Douglas helping to revamp that city's planning and zoning operation.

A year after Mr. Forslund became city manager of Casper, he was elected to lead Wyoming's Great Open Spaces City Management Association, which at the time served all of Wyoming and much of Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and northern Colorado. Other managers still credit him with fostering the culture of mutual support that is now vibrant in Wyoming's management community.

Expanding the ranks of Wyoming city managers has been one of his personal missions. In 2002, when the Riverton city council was considering creating a city administrator position, Mr. Forslund made several trips to Riverton and met repeatedly with the mayor, several members of council, and Riverton's citizens to explain what an administrator would do and why it would be a good idea to have one. It was not the first time that he had supported the profession in Wyoming. He made a similar effort in Cody a few years earlier and in Sheridan in 2008. Cody and Riverton now have city administrators. In

Sheridan the referendum failed despite strong support from the city council, but if the issue comes up again, it is safe to assume that Tom will be back. ■

Frances A. Gonzalez, from page 8
variety of initiatives to mobilize city departments in a coordinated effort to clean up and improve selected neighborhoods. Under her leadership, Neighborhood Sweep received ICMA's 1999 Award for Program Excellence, Innovations in Local Government, and was a semi-finalist for the 1999 Innovations in American Government Award from the Ford Foundation and the Kennedy School of Government.

Among her other accomplishments, Ms. Gonzalez has served as special projects officer with the San Antonio Office of Dome Development and as planner in the Department of Economic and Employment Development. In addition, she is a member of numerous ICMA committees, including the current Strategic Planning Committee, helping to shape and provide input into the national discussions regarding the profession. She chaired the Host Committee for the 2006 ICMA Annual Conference, and has a strong commitment to the growth of the International Hispanic Network, for which she served as board president for three years. She has also been a longtime supporter and one-time president of the regional assistants' organization, the Urban Management Assistants of South Texas.

With a clear understanding of the importance of professional development and its relationship to the success of an organization, Ms. Gonzalez has been a role model and a mentor for numerous city employees. Modest and unassuming, she is probably unaware of the impact she has had on her fellow employees. However, her positive attitude, patience, compassion, and ability to empower others have set a positive example for others. These qualities not only make Ms. Gonzalez a trusted colleague, but also exemplify her true leadership style. ■