

Community Sustainability Award

POPULATIONS OF 50,000 AND GREATER

DAVENPORT, IOWA

ICMA's Community Sustainability Award in the 50,000-and-greater population category goes to the city of Davenport, Iowa, City Administrator Craig Malin, and Assistant City Administrator Dee F. Bruemmer for the Green City initiative.



CRAIG MALIN



DEE F. BRUEMMER

Recycled paper? Check. Hybrid cars in fleet? Yes. LED traffic signals? Years ago. Waterless urinals? Sure, and an internationally recognized sewage treatment plant! Paperless office? Ah, we're trying....

The largest Farm Belt city on the Mississippi, Davenport, Iowa, had a long, proud manufacturing history.

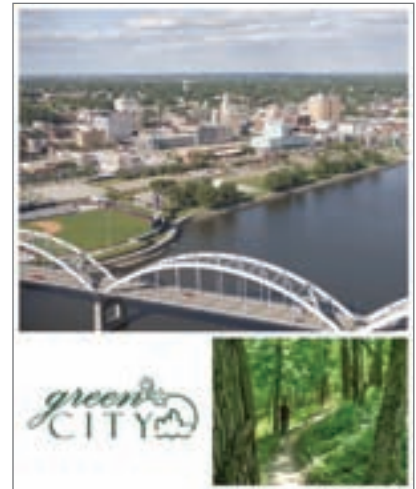
But like many old manufacturing cities, it lost jobs by the thousands and, as globalization hit, suffered double-digit population losses. Some thought it would be another cast-off America city that was once great but no longer.

But Davenport lacks neither resilience nor pluck. Not surprisingly, then, Davenport set out to overcome 50 years of urban disinvestment and its attendant population and job loss—and to do so while ensuring the city's environmental, fiscal, and social sustainability. And it is succeeding! Through its Green City initiative, the city is on the leading edge of nationally significant, comprehensive, and fully integrated revitalization and sustainability strategies. Examples of its recent accomplishments, grouped under four basic headers, are as follows:

- **Reduce global warming pollution and improve air quality:** Built the first LEED city building

in Iowa; added hybrid vehicles as pool cars and replaced all non-emergency V8 vehicles with fuel-efficient models; used recovered methane in its wastewater plant to generate 90 percent of the electricity needed and reduced energy consumption by 33 percent.

- **Create a healthy, livable urban center:** Completed adaptive reuse of vacant warehouses to reduce sprawl and encourage transit-friendly development; invested \$66 million in rehab housing projects; strengthened the curbside recycling program; invested \$3.7 million to transform a former brownfield into a regional park; committed more than \$75 million in downtown public and nonprofit arts and culture capital investments.
- **Enhance the urban forest/increase open space:** Created 12 community gardens in underserved areas, restored 4.5 acres of native prairie, and planted over 800 trees annually on major streets and in neighborhoods; acquired and converted to green space nearly 100 flood-prone homes; significantly reduced pesticide use in parks and on city-maintained properties.
- **Protect the river and streams:** Developed compost product for erosion control; instituted community and neighborhood clean-up activities, including EarthWeek Coalition Programs; identified and implemented opportunities to improve water quality and aquatic habitat;



Green City initiative cultivates extraordinary revitalization and sustainability efforts

installed pet waste stations and signs at 35 locations.

And while compelling stories abound, three merit more than a bullet point:

Regional Model for Community Revitalization. Davenport's "River Renaissance" program, approved by 73 percent of voters in 2001, launched a revitalization of the historic downtown. The countywide vote permitted Davenport's partners in Scott County to contribute \$5 million to match a state grant of \$20 million and the city to contribute \$25 million in order to leverage an initial \$113 million of private-public redevelopment. Revitalization began with two new parking ramps, a move of the city's art museum downtown, an adaptive reuse of long vacant department stores into a mixed-use project including the River Music Experience, expansion of the city-owned art deco theater, and the unique "Skybridge." With the only successful "Vision Iowa" bond referendum in the state, River Renaissance has kick-started a downtown rebirth that now exceeds \$300 million in reinvestment.

(Continued on page 27)

substance abuse professionals, and students—have attended educational sessions designed to ensure appropriate referrals and treatment options and to help participants work with the target populations.

A new model for a reengineered crisis response system, involving 22 organizations, was implemented in February 2005. This model includes a 24/7 crisis assessment center in the emergency department of Poudre Valley Hospital, 24/7 transport to detox services when needed, immediate follow-up with the client or family the next day, and training for key personnel. Since its inception, the Crisis Assessment Center has served more than 12,200 people.

The partnership has succeeded largely because of the ongoing commitment of its members—providers, consumers, advocates, and others—to system change. With each system change, additional areas of need are revealed. The partnership continues to address the logistical challenges of combining and coordinating the efforts of so many different agencies and service providers; other priorities have included creating a different approach for those with different levels of need; increasing early identification and intervention to prevent or lessen serious illness; creating a local combined acute treatment unit and detox center; supporting improvements in the criminal justice system to yield better identification and treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders; and continuing to identify and advocate for policy changes. Despite the challenges, consumers, families, and partner organizations are overwhelmingly supportive of the Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership and of its efforts to improve delivery for those citizens in need of mental health and substance abuse services. ■

Centralia, Illinois, from page 15
times since its inception—for façade improvements to accommodate new businesses, for building renovations, for loans to facilitate business

expansion or renovation, and in all cases for the concomitant creation of new jobs. One loan was for \$56,000, another was for \$25,000, and in four cases staff proposed using \$5,000 for projects located outside the boundaries of the TIF district.

These funds are attractive because they are more flexible to use and can be applied up-front for a given project. The rules and provisions governing their use ensure that they will be used judiciously and in conjunction with other programs.

In the past, the city was unable to meet the needs of many of its existing or potential businesses because those businesses did not meet certain criteria of existing incentive programs. The Centralia Opportunity Fund has eliminated this problem, successfully retaining, attracting, and revitalizing business in Centralia. Now, instead of being considered hostile to business, Centralia is receiving praise from the local business community for its proactive approach to economic development. The program will be used successfully for many years to come, and is sure to be replicated by other communities that are engaged in economic development. ■

Davenport, Iowa, from page 16

International Model for Sewage Treatment and Composting: The Davenport Compost Facility annually processes more than 135,000 cubic yards of mixed yard waste and biosolids from the city's sewage treatment facility. These materials are converted into environmentally beneficial soil amendments using a high-tech, aerated static pile composting system, and finished products are sold to offset the cost of operation. In use since 1995, the composting facility is the nation's oldest and most successful facility of its kind, attracting visitors from around the globe to understand how composting translates into waste management. The facility was selected Composter of the Year by the U.S. Composting Council, and is accredited and listed as a "Model Program" by the American Public Works Association.

The Promise of Davenport's

Future: Tackling workforce development, a key issue in social and fiscal sustainability, the Davenport Promise Task Force is currently researching and refining a breakthrough community revitalization and growth strategy in which post-high school tuition (college, trade apprenticeship, or vocational training) for each Davenport student would be paid for through a community partnership. By year's end, Davenport may be guaranteeing the American dream for all its children.

The overall impact of the city's revitalization and sustainability efforts is extraordinary. Over the past five years, crime is down by more than a third, the tax base has increased by more than a billion dollars, and the population is on the rise. A riverfront that was once an industrial workplace is becoming a public showplace. New office buildings are being built downtown, and long-vacant industrial warehouses are being reborn as loft apartments. Hundred-year-old neighborhoods are attracting new investment while citizens have planned a new, traditional neighborhood that offers the area its first smart-growth, greenfield choice.

No question about it: Davenport is back, and is here to stay! ■

Lewiston, Maine, from page 17

depression and stress after the death of a family member.

Health awareness and preventive care are becoming the norm among Lewiston municipal employees and spouses; from January 2007 to January 2008, the percentage of participants who met their goals in programs targeting blood pressure control, weight reduction/diet, cholesterol reduction, tobacco use, stress, and depression rose between 6 percent and 20 percent.

Which is not to say there were no obstacles to overcome! Although some participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss health education and goal setting, others resisted even blood pressure checks, and for many spouses, the premium-reducing components of the plan were seen