



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

## 2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

**Deadline for Nominations Extended to March 30, 2015**

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: Mayor's Roundtable

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Menifee, CA

Jurisdiction population(s): 85,000

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 for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2014

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Rob Johnson

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Menifee

Name: Scott Mann

Title: Mayor Jurisdiction: City of Menifee

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Gina Gonzalez

Title: Sr. Management Analyst      Jurisdiction: City of Menifee

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## **Mayor's Round tables**

The Menifee Mayor's Roundtable was established in 2013, and started in January 2014 to provide a forum for networking between a variety of business owners with common interests and City Government through:

- Direct, formal and informal, discussions between the Mayor, City staff, and business leaders
- Exchange of ideas concerning city-wide issues and improvement of the city's development processes
- Information sharing, networking, and support among the business community themselves

## **The Challenge**

The Mayor's Roundtable was prompted by the Mayor of the city getting feedback from the business community that they felt they were not being heard at the city. Prior to the Roundtable events the typical form of established communication was more formal and typically only being heard at city council meetings. The City's Mayor worked with city Staff to come up with a program that would allow for a more informal exchange of ideas between organizations that were critical to the growth of the city and to the city's service delivery system, especially since the business community a significant backbone of the city. The City needed a way to accelerate development both residentially, and commercially, to increase sales and property tax revenues to provide quality service delivery to residents, and a way to address systemic failures that could be potentially hampering progress within the city by way of the business community and splitting the city's residents who supported incorporation (urban community) and those who were against the city's incorporation (rural community).

### **Program Implementation/Cost**

City staff and the Mayor brainstormed and decided to team up with the Menifee Chamber of Commerce to assist in reaching out to various sectors in the business community such as bankers, developers, real estate brokers, etc. The Mayor meets regularly with the city Economic Development Department and the Chamber to get direct feedback on needs, trends and issues. Once the issues are determined, the agenda is then set and the Chamber would invite each business sector-within four separate events each year, one per month between January and April, to a roundtable meeting. The Chamber also worked with community businesses to sponsor the refreshments for each event and the Chamber would highlight the sponsorship at each event.

### **Outcomes/Lessons Learned**

The Mayor's Roundtable events have been highly successful and have garnered close to 15-20 people at each event. They have been so successful that great things have come from these meetings resulting in our award winning "Business Incentive Program" which has lured additional businesses into the city, also benefiting the Chamber of Commerce membership and overall, City sales taxes. Additionally, the city's revised sign ordinance came out of these meetings, and as a result businesses now have more options for signage which provides increased flexibility for sign permit approvals. These meetings also assisted the city's businesses and provided additional capital to the city by affording businesses the ability to generate additional visibility and customers thus, increasing individual business revenue and ultimately, city sales tax revenues. Furthermore, the Roundtable meetings led to the "Rural

Business License Registration Program” in the city, later coined the “Land-Use and Business Registration Program” which aims to address issues from the pre-incorporation County Business Registration Program that did not address Conditions of Approvals from businesses, or ignored the mere existence of businesses within the County at the time.

Through the Mayor’s Roundtable meetings, city staff took to task this issue and started working on a program to help assist these businesses and bring them into compliance to the city’s regulations based on the health and safety codes requirements. This has proven to be a very successful effort and has helped the city bridge the rural and urban communities, which has been difficult thing to do since incorporation until the Roundtable program was created.

This has also lead to many issues, from typical frequent City Council meeting visitors to have their issues vetted transparently and assisted in creating a healthy dialogue for resolution. The Roundtable meetings allowed the Mayor to build trust with the select few and create happy customers for the city. For the first time in six years, the city is flowing smoothly, the community is supportive, and processes are streamlined. Lessons learned would that when the community feels divided, sometimes creating an outlet for free and healthy dialogue with decision makers and businesses in the community can lead to increased trust, satisfaction, increased community pride and an increased quality of life for residents.

