

Program Excellence Award for Outstanding Partnerships: Public- Private Partnerships

POPULATIONS 50,000 AND UNDER



GARY B. O'CONNELL

ICMA's Award for Public-Private Partnerships recognizes a local government and its private sector partner (including nongovernmental organizations) that have demonstrated the value of public-private partnerships as an effective technique for introducing greater efficiency, innovation, and civic awareness into a variety of local government services. The 2003 recipient of this award in the 50,000-and-under population category is the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, and City Manager Gary O'Connell for the ArtInPlace program.

with a local, nonprofit corporation (ArtInPlace) to display original art in public spaces for the community to enjoy at no cost while at the same time providing free marketing for local and regional artists. Each piece of artwork is displayed for an 11-month period (from late October to late September) before being replaced by a new original work. The program's goal is to introduce residents to the vitality and value of art and its importance in public spaces.

The result: The city of Charlottesville has become an open-air art gallery, surprising and delighting viewers. Under the auspices of the program, large-scale sculptures are displayed in the medians of major streets at designated key locations. The public art adorning the gateways and entrance corridors to the community provide a creative and sometimes unexpected welcome to visitors.

As part of the program, each sculpture contains a sign that provides a digital connection to a Web site (www.artinplace.com). In addition to information about the specific work of art, a brief biography of the artist, and the price of the sculpture, the Web site has a feedback mechanism for the general public and potential buyers. (So far, 80 percent of the responses have been positive about the art on display.) Finally, the site provides information about the ArtInPlace

program and includes procedures, an application form, and a schedule for artists who wish to have their work considered for display.

ArtInPlace manages the program; the city's role is to provide potential sites for the display of art on high-traffic corridors and to contribute nominal funding, with additional funding coming from private citizens. ArtInPlace organizes the annual contest, identifies local jurists, and selects and places the artwork. Six public sculptures, valued from \$5,000 to \$15,000, were displayed in the program's first year of operation; nine sculptures were displayed in the second year. Artists are not paid for the display of their work and they must provide their own insurance, but they do receive a \$300 honorarium to cover the cost of transportation and installation. In addition, ArtInPlace receives a 25 percent commission on any pieces sold, with the expectation that this income will eventually make the program self-sufficient. Any pieces that are sold cannot be removed until the 11-month term of the contract with the city has expired.

Public art enlivens the urban experience. While not all of the artwork has garnered unqualified praise, the program itself has been greeted with great enthusiasm by the citizens of Charlottesville. ArtInPlace adds beauty and provides a more varied landscape for residents and visitors. ■

The city of Charlottesville, Virginia (pop. 40,000), is fast becoming a world-class community. Long renowned for its charm and beauty, the city has capitalized on its attributes and has turned what was once just another college town into one of the nation's most exciting places to live and work.

ArtInPlace is just one of the many innovative programs of this progressive community. In 2001, the city of Charlottesville partnered

Charlottesville City
Manager Gary
O'Connell and
Strategic Planning
Director Satyendra
Singh Huja study
ArtInPlace display.

