



ICMA Award

2017 Program Excellence Award Nomination Form – Descriptive Narrative

Community Partnership Awards

Program Title: **Keep Balch Springs Beautiful**

Balch Springs had been perceived as a rural town for a long time and unfortunately has not always had the most progressive outlook. Because there had been no formal initiatives in place, the City had become stagnant and litter prevention was not always a priority. As a result, residents have not always been proud to live here and economic development was not as robust as it could have been. We needed change! With support and guidance from the City Council and City Manager’s office, the City has been working hard to change the perception of Balch Springs. In 2014, the City began having clean up events. In 2015, City staff was tasked by City Council to create a sustainable litter awareness campaign. This program would promote litter awareness in Balch Springs. Thus Keep Balch Springs Beautiful was born.

Keep Balch Springs Beautiful is an affiliate member of Keep Texas Beautiful as well as the State of Texas Alliance for Recycling North Texas. The program is funded by the Balch Springs Community and Economic Development Corporation Type B Board. The FY 15-16 operating budget was \$10021. KBSB donations are welcome and are in a dedicated KBSB donation fund. The BSCEDC Type B Board serves as the Keep Balch Springs Beautiful Board,

department heads serve as KBSB Committee members and the Economic Development project coordinator serves as the KBSB coordinator. A representative from each department participates in the planning of each event and the KBSB coordinator oversees the planning and events. Full time paid staff and community volunteers participate in events. In order to meet its formal goals, Keep Balch Springs Beautiful implemented cleanup programs for 2016. They were overwhelmingly successful.

The Balch Springs Community Clean Up, part of the Don't Mess with Texas Trash Off, was held on April 16, 2016. The City partnered with residents, schools, Police dept, Fire dept as well as several local businesses including the Home Depot, Wal-mart, and Community Waste Disposal. Teams consisting of school children, residents and businesses were sent to various areas of the City to pick up litter. Safety was of utmost importance. To ensure safety, staff members were team captains. Each team was flanked with a city vehicle. GIS mapping systems were used to determine and map out clean up locations. Each team location was outlined individually as well as on the main command center map.

Locations were assigned to teams based on team age, location safety and capabilities. For example, school aged children were not sent to high traffic areas. Team captains were briefed about their teams and locations in planning sessions prior to the clean up. Team captains communicated by radio and police and fire departments were on standby for any incidents. There were a total of 11 teams comprised of 23 staff members and 92 volunteers who picked up 2900 lbs of trash and rubbish in a three hour period. A total of 276 volunteer hours were served.

The North Texas Ten on Tuesday reverse litter campaign was adopted by Mayor Carrie Marshall and under the direction of the City Manager brought to a whole new magnified level. The Ten on Tuesday initiative was adopted by the City of Balch Springs. Staff participated in the campaign from May 2016 thru September 2016. The Ten on Tuesday employee kick off was held on Tuesday May 3. All City personnel started the day with a kickoff breakfast and speech from Mayor and City Manager. Staff wore special Ten on Tuesday t-shirts. After breakfast, with the assistance of GIS mapping, staff blitzed various areas of the city and picked up trash throughout the day. Thereafter, each Tuesday staff donned their Ten on Tuesday shirts and went into various areas of Balch Springs to pick up litter for a minimum of 10 minutes. There was 100% employee participation in this initiative. We understand that City staff *visibly* leading the charge is vital to change.

The Keep Balch Springs Beautiful Trash Round Up was held on Saturday November 5th, 2016. In this program, the City partnered with its waste management company, Community Waste Disposal, and invited Balch Springs businesses and residents to bring their bulk trash to one location and drop it off free of charge. The Public Works department and other staff were on hand to unload the vehicles making it an easy and convenient to drop off. It was a great opportunity for the Community to not only clean out their offices, homes, yards and garages but also discard said brush, rubbish, unwanted appliances, furniture and other bulky items. Document shredding services were also available. The event was a success with 38.25 tons of brush and rubbish collected. Several residences who had received code violations were extremely relieved that they were able to not only clean up their residences but also drop off the debris for free. Twenty seven staff members gave up their Saturday morning to work the

event. Although some were paid and some were salaried, it was not mandatory to work the event, but most felt strongly enough about the program to work 7 hours on their Saturday off.

We are beginning to see the rewards of our initiatives. In 2016, the City of Balch Springs was awarded the State of Texas Alliance for Recycling's Outstanding Greenscape Program Award for its initiative in diverting brush from the landfill. This program diverts between 40,000 – 45,000 yards annually. Management has received countless compliments from residents. Residents have started coming out of their homes to beautify their yard. Beautification has become contagious. A new pride in the City of Balch Springs is emerging and new development opportunities are presenting themselves.

There have been several lessons learned. Event planning is crucial and planning must start several months out. It is imperative that each staff member not only knows their respective role in each event but is also given the information and tools necessary to successfully implement their role. Knowledge of state programs is helpful. After each event, in order to continuously improve, a wrap up meeting is held to discuss what worked and what did not work. We have also learned that time management and organizational skills are key to success.

City leaders lead by example. By continuously partnering with our waste management company as well as local businesses, by striving to implement and improve beautification programs and by offering programs to our businesses and residents that familiarize them with anti litter initiatives, the forward progressive direction is evident. Most importantly, the City is changing the mindset of litter once and for all! Changing the mindset of litter...Does not take forever...But it does take time..... IT STARTS WITH US!



4.13.2016 Community Clean Up: Door prize drawings and photo ops after event



11.5.2016 KBSB Trash Round Up: Staff unloads a truck full of rubbish



Ten on Tuesday May – September 2016: 100% employee participation