

2007 Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program ▶

Category (Please check one) See Award Criteria for more information. Please print or type. One nomination per page.

Name of Municipality Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Municipality Nominated City of Belleview
Nominated Project FREEDOM WALK
Nominated by City of Belleview
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Title _____ Department _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

[OVER]

The following person will be the main contact if your city's nominee is selected as a finalist.

Please print or type.

Name TAMMY C. MOORE
Title MAYOR
Government CITY OF BELLEVUE
Address 5343 SE ABSHIER BLVD. - BELLEVUE FL 34420
Telephone Number 352-454-4678 Fax 352-245-6532
E-mail Address tmoore@bellevuefl.org

This nomination has been voted on and approved by a majority of the city council/commission.

Signed Dandi McKamy
City Clerk

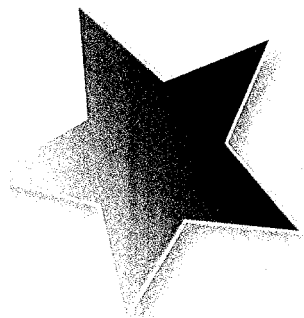
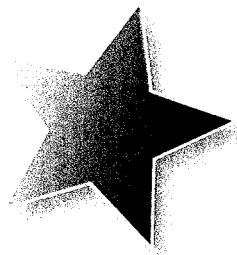
The judges will use the narrative and supportive information to select the award winners. Nominators/nominees are asked not to contact the judges directly.

In the narrative, please be clear and concise, using the Award Criteria to support the selection of your nominee. Please type (or print in black ink), up to 1,200 words, double-spaced on white 8-1/2" x 11" paper.

Please include a word count: 918
Number of words

Up to 10 pages of supportive information (newspaper clippings, photographs, letters from constituents, etc.), on 8-1/2" x 11" paper (single-sided) may be provided. Please do not include videotapes, DVDs, CDs or Power-Point presentations.

Submit nominations by **August 10, 2007**:
Florida League of Cities, Inc.
Attn: Florida Cities of Excellence
301 S. Bronough Street, Suite 300 (32301)
P.O. Box 1757
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1757



**NOMINATION
CITY SPIRIT AWARD**

CITY OF BELLEVUE – FREEDOM WALK

Alison Barber, the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of Defense, visited Bellevue in May, 2006 to meet with a local resident named Mary Harper. Mary, at one time, had five family members stationed in Iraq, including her husband. She founded “Operation Shoebox” as a way to collect items from home, pack them in a shoebox, and ship them to our servicemen in Iraq to remind them that they are remembered and appreciated back home. To date, she and her volunteers have shipped over 60,000 shoeboxes. Mrs. Harper contacted the City, and a luncheon with City Officials was hosted for Ms. Barber and Ms. Harper.

At the luncheon, Ms. Barber explained the concept behind the Freedom Walk. She stated that the Department of Defense held the first annual “*America Supports You Freedom Walk*” in 2005. Over 15,000 people gathered near the crash site at the Pentagon and, after a moment of silence, a walk was held. The family members of those who lost their lives on 9-11 expressed how the Freedom Walk was truly healing because it showed them that our country has not and will not forget their loss. The unifying spirit of the crowd provided a moving experience for those who participated in this incredible event.

As 2006 was the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks that took the lives of thousands of our fellow citizens, the Department of Defense wanted to make the “*America Supports You Freedom Walk*” a national endeavor. As a result of Mrs.

Harper's support of our troops overseas, Belleview was chosen as the Florida representative for the first national walk. Our Commissioners and staff immediately embraced the idea. The Mayor formed a committee of staff members, city commissioners, local businesses and citizens to implement the project. Support was immediate and overwhelming.

The purpose of the event was to establish a national tradition to reflect on the lives lost, to renew our commitment to freedom and the values of our country, and to show our gratitude for our military men and women, past and present to protecting our freedom. This event was a non-partisan/non-exclusive event open to the general public. This was not used as a fundraiser for any organization, nor a platform to discuss politics or policies.

Donations from local businesses started to pour in. The event was planned for 6:00pm on September 11th. Prior to the start of the ceremony, a local radio station was on hand to play patriotic music and broadcast the event. The opening ceremony was held in front of City Hall, with our local Representative Dennis Baxley speaking. Also addressing the crowd was Henry DeGeneste, the head of the New York Port Authority at the time of the attacks. Awards honoring two local young men who tragically lost their lives, one in the Twin Towers and one in Iraq, were given to their families before the walk began. After taps and the release of doves, the walk was started, led by representatives of our law enforcement and fire departments, as well as other various color guards.

After the walk, which started and ended at City Hall, there was a “picnic in the park” for all of the participants, again at no charge with all of the food donated. We also had an “open mike” for those who wanted like to speak about and remember loved ones who lost their lives in the September 11th event or any past/present military.

Entertainment was provided while the citizens were eating by a local DJ. A "Recognition Wall" was created which was a pictorial collage of loved ones in the military or 9-11 victims. This turned into a gathering place for people to meet and talk with one another, sharing memories of those who have lost their lives for our freedom or who were in the military, both past and present.

While the Freedom Walk t-shirts with the names of the local honorees on the back were ordered and distributed free to the first 1,000 walkers, we could have easily given away more than twice that amount. It is estimated that between 2,500 and 3,000 people attended the event. Small hand flags were also given away to the first 1,000 participants, as well as a commemorative pin that marked the occasion. We had groups and walkers participate from all over the state from as far away as Jacksonville and Tampa. After all of the expenses from the event were tallied, a check was given to our local “Operation Shoebox” to continue the “care packages” to our military overseas.

This event was far more successful than we ever imagined it would be. As a country, many have tried to identify the appropriate way to observe this tragic day and at the same time focus on the strength of our nation and the importance of freedom. The

purpose of the event was to keep the support of our troops and the war on terrorism in the forefront of our residents' minds. To this end, the mission was accomplished. The Commission, staff, citizens, businesses united to remember those who did lose lives as a result of the 9-11 event, those who have lost lives as a result of any of our military conflicts, and to show support for our military men and women, both past and present. That is why the City Commission of the City of Belleview supports Belleview's First Annual "*America Supports You Freedom Walk*" as the nomination for the Florida League of Cities Spirit Award.