



**City Attorney of The Year  
Award Nomination**

**James R. English  
City of Tallahassee  
August 2006**

# 2006 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated Project \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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)

X

Name of Individual Nominated James R. English

Nominated by City of Tallahassee

(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)

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Please print or type.

Name Stefanie Long

Title Public Information Officer

Government City of Tallahassee

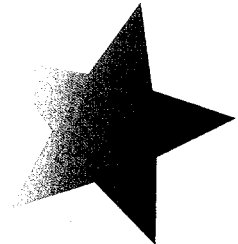
Address City Hall, 300 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL 32301

Telephone Number 850-891-8533 Fax 850-891-8777

E-mail Address longs@talgov.com

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

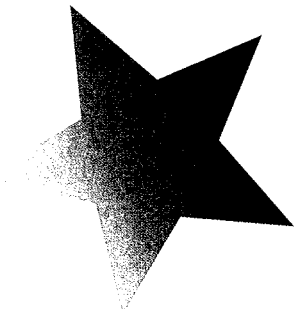
Signed   
City Clerk



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.

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 18, 2006**:  
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



**Florida League of Cities, Inc.**  
**Florida Cities of Excellence**  
**James R. English – City Attorney of the Year**  
**Nomination Narrative**

In his 22 years as Tallahassee City Attorney, James R. English has been credited with numerous accomplishments that have created a high quality of life for Tallahassee citizens. The past year has been especially fruitful for Jim. Many projects that have been years in the making came to fruition in 2005-2006, with key events unfolding within the past 12 months. Following are just a few major accomplishments demonstrating the qualities and values that make Jim English an ideal choice for City Attorney of the Year.

**Judgment Promotes Bold Ordinance**

In April 2005, Tallahassee passed Florida's first inclusionary housing ordinance. Jim helped make it defensible to opponents by including numerous incentives and waivers. Still, developers and the Florida Home Builders Association voiced concerns.

In February 2006, a prominent developer, K2 Urbancorp, threw down the gauntlet in an interview with industry magazine *Big Builder*. CEO David Wamsley challenged the City to prove it will make inclusionary housing worthwhile. "If the other guy has to wait 90 days for an environmental permit, I better get mine in three weeks," Wamsley said. "Show me I go to the top of the list."

After seeing the article, Jim came up with an idea: accept Wamsley's challenge and prove that the ordinance works. Jim teamed with other departments to help K2 receive expedited permitting and waivers for select requirements for a mixed-use development. K2 Urbancorp has since become a supporter of the ordinance. "Wamsley said the city rushed his project through the permitting process, cutting the time by perhaps 30 percent," a July 2006 article in the *Tallahassee Democrat* noted.

Seeing K2's success, two additional developers have committed to inclusionary housing plans. Jim's forethought and wise judgment created forward movement on an ordinance that will create workforce housing for hardworking citizens. Industry support is building as the City walks the talk.

### **Initiative Moves Stalled Project**

Rapid growth in Tallahassee has resulted in the need for a new east-west passage, but property owners were slow to respond to City land purchase offers to gain right-of-way and the project stalled.

A private developer successfully buying land in the area contacted Jim to offer assistance in acquiring property for right-of-way. Construction of Welaunee Road would aid the developer as well as meet the City's need. Knowing that assistance from private industry could speed the process, Jim devised a plan that would move the roadway project forward and get the City the necessary property.

The property trade agreement Jim developed was completed in late 2005 and succeeded in getting the City right-of-way for \$2 million less than what was initially planned for land acquisition. In 2006, ground broke for the road building and plans are proceeding smoothly thanks to Jim's initiative.

### **Integrity Yields Huge Community Returns**

In the 1960s, the City of Tallahassee sold property to the State of Florida that had previously been the site of a City gas facility. In the late 1980s, contamination was discovered and Cascades Park was closed.

Jim assumed the primary City role and established a coordinated City-State effort to remediate the contamination. His efforts resulted in the execution of a Settlement Agreement among the City, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Florida Department of Management Services, which provided for the conveyance of the Cascades Park site back to the City and for certain State funding for remediation activities.

With Jim's leadership and perseverance, the City subsequently received an additional \$4.2 million in grants from the State of Florida for the remediation of this historical area. Remediation is scheduled for completion by late 2006.

This project required legal expertise, executive leadership, and management skills. Jim's efforts will culminate in the transformation of Cascades Park into a state-of-the-art recreational area that will be enjoyed by citizens for years to come. In July 2006, Jim and others involved with the project were honored by the EPA, which recognized the project with particular emphasis on intergovernmental cooperation and community input.

### **Innovation Solves Growing Problem**

As the final stage in code enforcement, foreclosure is a weighty step that city governments like to avoid. Tallahassee's code enforcement liens had reached vast proportions. Jim devised a program to give property owners an amnesty period to enable them to reduce fines and/or remove liens. The City Attorney's office conducted an aggressive campaign to notify property owners, including setting up a phone bank where staff made repeated calls and established means to communicate with violators. The program dramatically reduced liens by 68 percent.

As the amnesty period concluded in late 2005, foreclosures have proceeded through 2006 with no complaints or hurdles for city staff. Jim took the initiative to proactively address an ongoing problem through this innovative program.

### **Professionalism Noted by Peers**

For more than two decades, Jim English has achieved an AV Martindale Hubble rating. He is a past recipient of the Paul S. Buchman Award as Florida's Outstanding Municipal Attorney of the Year (1992).

Jim has assisted municipal governments throughout Florida with difficult issues. His expertise in legal issues related to siting electric utilities, stormwater utility fees, regional transportation, permitting large developments, and conducting a local government in a city with a vast amount of tax-free property has proved invaluable to his peers. Jim is always glad to help.

### **Pro Bono Commitment Builds Citizen Relations**

More than 20 years ago, Jim provided the leadership to establish a pro bono program with Legal Services of North Florida, a non-profit legal aid organization. He and the attorneys in the City Attorney's office provide assistance through staffing a legal services hotline, participating in clinics and representing individual clients. He continues to lead his attorneys in providing over 1,600 hours of pro bono services to the Tallahassee community.

### **Long Standing Leader in Professional Associations**

In 1985, the cities of Tallahassee and Orlando created the Sunshine State Governmental Financing Commission. The program was the brainchild of former Treasurer-Clerk Bob Inzer, and Jim, as City Attorney, was also instrumental in its creation. Jim has served as the Commission's General Counsel, the Commission's Chairman and as a Commissioner.

The Commission serves the capital financing needs of its members and other participating public agencies. Many Florida municipalities have been able to construct millions of dollars in infrastructure vital to the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens.

Jim is involved in other professional organizations, including the State and Local Government Law section and the Government and Public Sector division of the American Bar Association. He has been a member of the International Municipal Lawyers Association for the past 21 years; and served as the Chair for Florida from 2000 to 2002. Jim is also a member of the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, having served on the Board of Directors and as the Association's President (1988).

### **A Lifetime of Service**

Jim has served as City Attorney in Tallahassee for 22 years. He served as Assistant City Attorney for eight years. During this time he has dedicated himself to Tallahassee, its citizens and the City organization. He remains a model of professionalism and ethics for the many attorneys he has trained in local government law.

Jim and his wife Pat have lived in Tallahassee for more than 30 years and have two sons and two grandchildren.