

**2008 Clerk of the Year Award
Jacqueline M. Lawhon**

Narrative

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FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.
2008 FLORIDA CITIES OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS PROGRAM
“CITY CLERK OF THE YEAR”

JACQUELINE (JACKIE) M. LAWHON, MMC
CITY CLERK
CITY OF SOPCHOPPY, FLORIDA

The City of Sopchoppy is proud to nominate Jacqueline Lawhon, City Clerk, for the 2008 City Clerk of the Year Award for the Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program. Since her appointment as Clerk of the City of Sopchoppy in 1979, Ms Lawhon has exhibited all of the attributes listed as criteria for this award.

Judgment: Ms. Lawhon exhibits excellent judgment in carrying out her daily duties. Her duties and responsibilities as City Clerk extend into areas of those of a city manager, finance director, planner and city ambassador. The Council depends on her judgment for the daily operation of the City. Ms. Lawhon directly oversees the budget and finances of the City and keeps the Council informed of the process. She serves as the City zoning and permit official, daily using her judgment and knowledge on zoning issues.

Initiative: Many times in her years of service, Ms. Lawhon has taken the initiative to create programs, write grants and negotiate contracts. Recently, Ms Lawhon was instrumental in negotiating an inter-local agreement for the City to provide county sewer billing services avoiding duplication of services.

Integrity: Ms. Lawhon is sincere and honest. She ensures that the members of the City Council are aware of ethics laws and adheres to the laws herself. She serves the Council and the people of our community with a sincere spirit, striving to meet the needs of our residents.

Innovation: In her twenty-nine years of service to the City of Sopchoppy, Ms Lawhon has found

innovative ways and ideas to meet each and every challenge and to face much change.

Professionalism: Ms Lawhon sets a standard of professionalism within the City in the way that she conducts her daily service to the citizens of Sopchoppy and toward her staff. Her consideration of the needs of our residents and her determination that everyone is treated fairly and efficiently are notable qualities. She is dedicated to improving herself through educational opportunities. In 1994 through the educational opportunities provided to her by the Florida Association of City Clerks, and the Florida Institute of Government, she became a Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC). In October of 2003, she was accepted into the Master Municipal Clerk Academy to pursue a higher certification. Working on a fast track to accomplish this feat, in January of this year she earned the prestigious Master Municipal Clerk certification.

Commitment: This is the one word that probably best describes Ms. Lawhon. Jackie is committed to her family, her faith, her work and to her community. She is that person you go to when you want a job done by a responsible person and when you want it to be right. She will not give up! Her twenty-nine years of service to Sopchoppy speak to her dedication and commitment.

Citizen Relations: Having lived here all of her life, Ms. Lawhon personally knows most of our residents. She is always willing to take the time out of her busy schedule to spend a few minutes talking with people and finding out their needs. Through the years, she has done things like using her personal time to take a resident, who had no family, 35 miles to the doctor. Helping the elderly interpret legal and medical forms and helping them solve other personal problems gives her great satisfaction.

Involvement with Professional Association: Ms. Lawhon joined the Florida Association of City Clerks (FACC) and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) in 1991. She is currently serving as the 2nd Vice President of Florida Association of City Clerks, being sworn into office in July 2008. Prior to this she served two terms as the North West District Director. In 2008, she served on the FACC President's Task Force examining the idea of mini education institutes being established throughout Florida rather than holding one statewide institute. Ms. Lawhon served on her first FACC committee in 1995 as a member of the Membership Committee. She served two years on the Nominating Committee in 1996-97 and 1997-98. In 2001-02 & 2002-03 she was appointed to serve as a member of the Goals Committee. She became a member of the Membership Committee again in 2003-04 and 2004-05. She became Chairman of the Membership Committee for 2005-06 and in 2006-07. During the two years as chair of the Membership Committee she planned and conducted the "First Time Attendee" orientation at the 2006 and 2007 Annual FACC Conferences. In addition to FACC and IIMC, Ms. Lawhon serves on the Board of Directors for the Wakulla Business Women's Association. She served as President of this organization in 2005 and 2006. This organization awards scholarships each year to graduating seniors and adult learners re-entering the job force. Ms. Lawhon is active in raising funds for these scholarships and serves on the scholarship committee which has awarded thousands of dollars to deserving recipients.

Ms. Lawhon has many responsibilities as the Clerk of a small town. As Clerk of the Council she is responsible for advertisements, agendas, presentation of agenda items, minutes and public request. As finance director she prepares and administers the budget, monthly financial reports

and payroll of the City. As Elections Official, she qualifies candidates and insures that elections are held annually in proper compliance of State Election Laws. She is considered the Zoning Official for the City and is currently working with the City Attorney on updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. She is currently overseeing an +8 million-dollar sewer project for the City and a FRDAP grant to build city tennis courts. Ms. Lawhon represents the City on many committee's and boards. She is currently active on the Wakulla County Infrastructure Committee, which examines economically feasible ways of providing paved roads, sewer, water, drainage and parks to historic communities of the County. She has served for four years in the local elementary school as a community member on the School Advisory Committee. She served as a member of the School Concurrency Committee. She also represents the City on the Big Bend Scenic Highway Committee, the Wakulla County Local Mitigation Board and the Wakulla County Emergency Management Team. In 1995 Ms. Lawhon became concerned that being a rural community that our citizens needed more immediate medical attention than was available. As a result of her concern and desire to help her neighbors she was trained as a medical first responder through the Wakulla County Ambulance Service with the ability to administer oxygen, perform CPR and basic first aid. Since that time she has had the opportunity to provide first level medical service (including CPR), to many members of the Sopchoppy community. In December 2005 her quick actions in administering oxygen to her brother, who was suffering a heart attack were credited with reducing the damage to his heart. It is for these reasons and many others that we, the Mayor and Council of the City of Sopchoppy submit Jacqueline M. Lawhon, MMC, City of Sopchoppy as a candidate for City Clerk of The Year, 2008.