

2007 Florida Cities of Excellence Awards Program ▶ Nomination Form

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

FLORIDA CITY OF EXCELLENCE AWARD
Name of Municipality Nominated THE CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH
Nominated by THE CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY SPIRIT AWARD
Name of Municipality Nominated _____
Nominated Project _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

MAYOR OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

COUNCIL MEMBER OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Title _____ Department _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY MANAGER OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY CLERK OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY FINANCE OFFICIAL (DIRECTOR OR OFFICER) OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

CITY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR
Name of Individual Nominated _____
Nominated by _____
(Name of City/Town/Village)

[OVER]

Contact Person

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

Please print or type.

Name CAM JOHNSON

Title PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Government CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH

Address 107 MIRACLE STRIP PARKWAY SW FORT WALTON BEACH, FL 32548

Telephone Number (850)833-9505 Fax (850)833-9640

E-mail Address CJOHNSON@FWB.ORG

Nomination Certification

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

Signed *Helen G. Spencer*
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.

Narrative

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: 1179
Number of words

Supportive Information

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:**

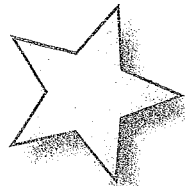
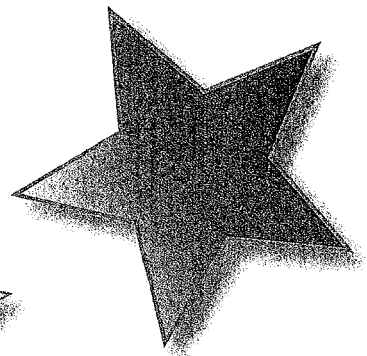
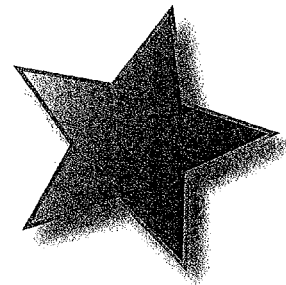
Florida League of Cities, Inc.

Attn: Florida Cities of Excellence

301 S. Bronough Street, Suite 300 (32301)

P.O. Box 1757

Tallahassee, FL 32302-1757



**Florida League of Cities
Cities of Excellence
Florida City of Excellence Award**

City: Fort Walton Beach

Twelve-thousand years ago, Native Americans first settled this area, later known as Brooks Landing, Brooksville, Camp Walton, Fort Walton and finally, Fort Walton Beach. The City is a leader among other municipalities in Florida, providing its 20,000 residents with superior services. Along with the usual planning, utilities and public works duties, Fort Walton Beach offers services not found in every town. There is a full service Fire Department, a Police Department with accreditation through the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement, activities through the Parks and Recreation Department, and two 18-hole championship golf courses at the Fort Walton Beach Golf Club, named one of the "Best Places to Play" by *Golf Digest*. The City has been recognized for its excellence with a ranking of #10 on *Money Magazine's* "Best Places to Live" list in 1997, a #19 ranking by *Inc. Magazine's* "2007 Best Cities for Doing Business", and a #2 ranking by *Moody's Economy.com*, just behind Austin, Texas, on its "Business Vitality Index" in June 2007.

Fort Walton Beach is governed by a Mayor and seven member City Council who are elected at large. A City Manager and twelve department heads run the daily operations of the City. Council holds two regular meetings and at least one workshop every month, allowing citizens several opportunities to participate.

Every January, the City holds a strategic planning process with the Mayor, Council and senior staff. A “Strategic Plan” outlining issues of greatest importance to the City for the upcoming year is formed. Tasks are assigned and a target date of completion is set.

The 400 plus employees of Fort Walton Beach work as a team to provide the best customer service possible and to be a leader among other governments in the area. Employees give back to the community through various charities. They have fundraisers for the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and the United Way. The City was recognized as the “Top Fundraiser” for the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life this year. This attitude to help others starts at the top. Mayor Mike Anderson has been honored as the “Local Government Mentor of the Year” by the Florida Mentoring Partnership, and received the “Chairman’s Award” from the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce; Council Member Jim Hartwell was one of only five individuals presented with the “National Public Service Award” by the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) for contributions to their community; and City Manager Joyce Shanahan was selected as the “Rotarian of the Year” and made a “Paul Harris Fellow” by the Fort Walton Beach Rotary Club.

Fort Walton Beach, the largest municipality in Okaloosa County, works hand in hand with other local agencies to improve the quality of life for all residents. With close proximity to Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field, the City works on projects with the military. Several City representatives serve on military subcommittees including the

Vision 2015 and Eglin Installation Growth Committee. The City and Hurlburt Field recently completed a mutually beneficial project that brings treated wastewater from the base's Wastewater Treatment Plant into the City's utilities system as an alternative irrigation supply.

The City also partners with Okaloosa County and other cities to do joint projects. One major project is the construction of a new Okaloosa County Courthouse Annex. When the County had trouble securing enough property for the project, the City offered to sell over 15 acres of land.

Fort Walton Beach offers family friendly events year around that provide a sense of community. The City sponsors a Sunday in the Park concert series featuring area musical acts, a children's Easter Egg Hunt, an Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration, a 4th of July Celebration, and a Kid's Day featuring magicians, juggling acts and educational displays. The City's Tennis Center plays host to the AVT \$25,000 Women's Challenger - Okaloosa County's only professional tournament, and the Southeast Regional BMX race is held at the City's BMX/Skateboard Park.

Located in downtown Fort Walton Beach is the City's Heritage Park and Cultural Center. The park features the 1912 Garnier Post Office, the Camp Walton Schoolhouse and the Indian Temple Mound Museum. Visitors can see artifacts from the earliest Native Americans, the area's first school and post office, and get a birdseye view of downtown from the Indian Temple Mound, a nationally registered historic landmark.

The City publishes six newsletters, including a neighborhood newsletter, weekly update newsletter, golf club newsletter, utilities newsletter, quarterly mail-out newsletter and an Annual Report. Newsletters inform residents of ongoing projects, events and City news. The Annual Report outlines activities of each City Department and financial information for the previous year.

Fort Walton Beach is divided into 11 geographic neighborhoods. Each month, these neighborhoods hold meetings, staffed by City employees. The Great Neighborhood Partnership has been a huge success, and meetings are very well attended. As part of the program, the City recognizes one nominated household from each neighborhood every quarter for their efforts in keeping their property beautiful.

For those residents who are unable to maintain their own properties, the City offers help through the City Changers program. City Changers matches the needs of low income residents with organized volunteers from the area. The group helps residents with painting, re-roofing and yard projects.

The City's youth is very active in City government. The City has programs such as the Student ACE award and a youth committee. Each month, the Mayor presents two senior high school students with the Student Achievement for Civic Excellence (ACE) award. The award not only recognizes academic and athletic accomplishments, but also community involvement and government participation. The Fort Walton Beach Youth

Committee is a new program starting this fall. The goal is to allow the youth to develop programs, activities and other issues important to the young people of the community.

In April 2007, the City began broadcasting the first government run television channel in Northwest Florida, FWBTV. City Council meetings and workshops, along with tape delayed advisory board meetings, original City productions and outside government programming is broadcast 24-hours a day, seven days a week. FWBTV is funded by a \$50,000 grant from Cox Communications. The program schedule for FWBTV can be found on the City's website, www.fwb.org. While on the site, residents can also view press releases, upcoming meeting agendas, past agendas and minutes and other information.

For the 11th consecutive year, the City received the Distinguished Budget Award from the Government Finance Officers Association in 2006. The award is given to entities publishing budget documents meeting criteria as a policy document, an operations guide, a financial plan and a communication device. The City also received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 21st consecutive year.

Over the years, Fort Walton Beach has maintained its small town atmosphere. Whether you call it home, or vacation here every year, everyone knows it's the people, places and programs that make Fort Walton Beach the crown jewel of the Emerald Coast. Fort Walton Beach truly is a "City of Excellence".