

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

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

(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 of the Year

Name of Individual Nominated Rene Gonzalez, Finance Director

Nominated by City of Pembroke Pines

(Name of City/Town/Village)

### City Citizen of the Year

Name of Individual Nominated \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of City/Town/Village)

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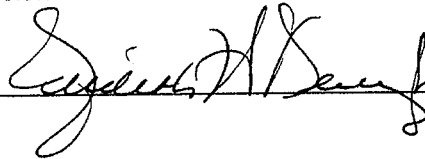
**Person Completing Nomination Form**

Please print or type.

Name Gordon J. Keibler  
Title Deputy Director, Public Services Department  
Government City of Pembroke Pines  
Address 13975 Pembroke Rd. Pembroke Pines, FL 33027  
Telephone Number 954-437-1115 Fax 954-437-1121  
E-mail  
Address gkeibler@ppines.com

**Nomination Certification**

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.

**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.

**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 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  
2006 City Finance Official of the Year Award**

**René Gonzalez, Finance Director  
Nominated by the City of Pembroke Pines**

*This award is given to a City Finance Official for his or her exemplary efforts on behalf of the city during the past year. Nominations for the award must be made by a majority vote of the nominated city's commission. 1200 word narrative, up to 10 pages of supportive information. In the narrative, comment on the employee's excellence in these areas: Judgment, Initiative, Integrity, Innovation, Professionalism, Commitment, Citizen Relations, Involvement with his professional association.*

René Gonzalez has been Finance Director for the City of Pembroke Pines since 1981. It is fitting that in his 25<sup>th</sup> year of service, the City Commission voted unanimously and enthusiastically to nominate him for the Florida City Finance Official of the Year.

During René's tenure, the population of the City more than tripled to 151,000. Over the past 25 years, he has grown as a professional, embraced technological innovation, met the challenges of exponential growth, and steered the City's fiscal operations and finances with exacting standards.

Under René's leadership, the City's Finance Department has had a "banner year." In 2005-06, the department:

**Awards Garnered**

- Earned the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the ninth year since 1997.
- Earned the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Award from the GFOA for the 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive year. This award is given by the GFOA to government units whose CAFRs achieve the highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting.

### **Budget Management**

- Implemented a process that incorporates the balanced scorecard model to gauge how effectively the City's mission is being achieved. This Performance Management System translates organization-wide strategies into specific measures and targets.
- Implemented an in-house paperless web-based database to streamline the budget process. Added a Task List to monitor department progress and facilitate follow-up in 2006.

### **Accounts Receivable Management**

- Implemented an entity-wide application to automate and improve collection practices.
- Developed systems for accurate record-keeping for the 600 new affordable-senior housing rental apartments built, owned and managed by the City.

### **Investments**

- Begun to develop cash flow forecasting systems that will project revenues and disbursements in order to schedule investment maturities.
- Implemented "reverse positive pay." On a daily basis, the City downloads from the website checks presented for payment and loads it into the bank reconciliation software developed in-house. The bank is notified by 11:00 am of any unauthorized checks.
- Designed a system to safeguard against unauthorized ACH debits.

- Instituted performance benchmarks for investment managers. This new method encourages managers to use their best professional knowledge without fear of being measured against a static benchmark.
- Negotiated with a local bank to earn 50 basis points above the State Board of Administration rate. This earned the City an additional \$178,000 over the past year.

### **Pension Oversight**

- Recommended an increase in the maximum equity allocation of the General Employees Pension Plan from 50% to 60%, generating additional income of \$1.53 million during the twelve months ending July 2006.
- Negotiated the ICMA plan administration fee from .70% to 0% in 2006, resulting in \$260,000 in employee savings annually.

### **Training**

- Designed a database to ensure certification requirements are being met for job functions

### **Data Management**

- Adopted a Department agenda database, which notifies Finance employees of important timeline actions.
- Established a system to verify address databases used by FPL, the State and the Tax Collector to allocate revenues to the City
- Streamlined the reporting process, reducing the run time from 36 hours to approximately seven minutes.

### **Citizen Relations & Committee Participation**

- Worked to establish positive relationships with residents. He arranged for the City to offer a lien search service to residents and companies to facilitate title searches.
- Served on the Investment, Information Technology and Safety Review committees.
- Served as the liaison between the City, Fire and Police Pension boards.

### **Disaster Recovery Management**

- Streamlined the FEMA claim process by modifying the claim form design. The new process ensures that all hurricane-related invoices are submitted for reimbursement.

### **Fixed Asset Management**

- In 2006, began to revamp the process of automating the physical inventory of City-owned computers and vehicles in order to tighten controls and provide more accurate reporting.

René provides visionary leadership in technological innovation. In 2005-06, the City's Information Technology Steering Committee evaluated the viability of a new "I-Net" system for internal communications, a project that will likely result in significantly reduced long-distance telephone rates and streamlined inter-departmental communications through the use of fiber optic cable.

## **Bonds**

Over his tenure, René has been involved in the structure of 29 bond issues totaling more than \$503 million to fund innovative programs to improve City residents' quality of life.

A few examples are: the \$60 million **Academic Village** an education campus for students of all ages, incorporated partnerships with Broward Community College, Broward County Library, and Florida International University; the \$6.5 million **Southwest Focal Point Senior Center**, the 586-unit, \$40.4 million **Affordable Apartment Complexes for Seniors**, a 5,200 student **Charter School System**, the \$12 million **River of Grass Cultural ArtsPark**, and **29 parks**.

René was involved in structuring four bond issues totaling approximately \$126 million in 2003 and 2004, and structured the following bond issues within the past year:

General Obligation Bonds, Series 2005	\$47,000,000
Variable Rate Cap Improvement Rev Bonds, Series 2005	7,910,000

In addition, René:

- Performed the annual arbitrage calculations for all debt outstanding
- Developed a concept of credit enhancement fee in a conduit borrowing, generating \$50,000 annual revenue to the City.
- Structured the City's taxable pension bonds, issued in the amount of \$89.8 million, to provide present value savings of \$21 million in pension cost

### **Community Involvement and Professional Associations**

René Gonzalez is an active community volunteer. He is a committed fund raiser and team walker for the Heart Association and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

René's professional development has kept pace with the City of Pembroke Pines' rapid growth. His current memberships include:

- Government Finance Officers Association – in past years he has served on the Florida chapter's logo committee (2001) and hospitality committee (2005).
- Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants
- American Institute of Certified Public Accounts
- Florida League of Cities – Municipal Finance and Taxation Committee (2003)
- South Florida Government Finance Officers and City Clerks Association. René is just beginning his term as President of the Chapter (July 1, 2006) and has already updated the by-laws and established controls for educational reimbursement. He just completed his term as Vice President and the Chairman of the Education Committee (2005-06).