

Florida Cities of Excellence Awards

Mayor of the Year Award – Mayor Buddy Dyer - City of Orlando

Mayor Buddy Dyer: Challenging Orlando's Status Quo

Over the last five years, Mayor Buddy Dyer has looked at Orlando and dared to ask “What If?”

- What if Orlando commits to revitalizing its downtown with new businesses, shops and restaurants so that it truly embodies the economic and cultural hub of Central Florida?
- What if Orlando diversified its economy to bring in more high wage, high value jobs?
- What if the City works to attract the next generation of businesses by creating centers for digital media and BIO-medical research?
- What if Orlando leverages public projects to erase blight and bring jobs to Orlando residents.
- What if the City takes the best and brightest ideas for fighting crime from around the country and applies them here?
- What if we make the environment a priority?
- What if we stop caring about who gets the credit – and do everything possible to build partnerships across governments that benefit everyone?

These are just a few examples of the bold, innovative leadership style embodied by Mayor Buddy Dyer; leadership that has put the City of Orlando on course to become the next great American city of the new century and make him the ideal choice for Florida Cities of Excellence Mayor of the Year Award.

In 2007, many of the projects begun in the early years of the Dyer administration either came to fruition or were recognized for their outstanding performance year after year:

Orlando's Public Safety Initiative: Recognizing the beginning of a disturbing nationwide trend of increasing violent crime in America's cities, Mayor Dyer committed to a three-year public safety initiative that added 75 police officers in Orlando's neighborhoods. Year three of the Mayor's public safety commitment bolstered Orlando's police force by an additional 25 officers. The initiative also included a focus on: enforcement, education and engagement

Orlando's Community Venues: Approved in 2007 and set to break ground in the summer of 2008, the Community Venues project, including a new events center where the Orlando Magic will call home, a new performing arts center and a renovated Citrus Bowl, is the single largest public building project in Central Florida history.

The BLUEPRINT: An extension of the City's Community Venues, the *Blueprint for Using Community Venues to Create a Sustainable Economic Impact* is a "new deal" type of plan that leverages the public building projects to create thousands of construction jobs along with job training and apprenticeship programs. Just like FDR used his public works administration in the 1930's to create jobs, build roads and help people during tough economic times, the City of Orlando is using its large projects to extend opportunity and education to its residents

Illegal Gun Bounty: In February 2007, Mayor Dyer started the City's Illegal Gun Bounty, a program aimed at getting guns off the streets before they are used in crimes and motivating citizens to provide information to police by offering financial rewards while guaranteeing

anonymity. To date, the program has taken more than 100 guns off the street and lead to numerous arrests.

I.R.I.S: Mayor Dyer unveiled the I.R.I.S (Innovative Response to Improve Safety) program last year, which uses downtown Orlando's federally-funded homeland security network as a foundation. Specially trained police personnel will be able to monitor those cameras 24-hours a day from a central command center. The cameras will allow officers to intervene in crimes as, or even before, they happen.

Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ): A grass-roots project launched by Mayor Dyer, PKZ is patterned after the nationally acclaimed Harlem Children's Zone in New York and provides at-risk children with pre-kindergarten education, health care, jobs, mentoring, tutoring and after-school programs -- such as sports, arts and technology programs -- to help ensure a smooth transition to adulthood. To date, one in two children have been connected with PKZ services and the program has received federal recognition for its success.

GreenWorks Orlando: Mayor Dyer's Green Works Orlando is an environmental action agenda designed to transform Orlando into one of the most environmentally-conscious cities in America. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, our plan focuses on immediate and dramatic actions to conserve natural resources and protect the environment, invest in green buildings, vehicles and materials and work together as a community to combat the urgent threat of global climate threat.

Faith-Based and Matching Grants Program: The Mayor's Faith-Based and Community Matching Grants (MFBCMG) Program provides funding to not-for-profit and faith-based organizations that offer youth programming in crime prevention and anti-violence. These

organizations receive grant funding to provide adult supervised and structured activities for youth during non-school hours.

Orlando's "Medical City:" Mayor Dyer has lead a partnership to create a 7,000-acre "Medical City" in southern Orlando. The area will use the University of Central Florida Medical School, the Burnham institute, Nemours Children's Hospital and a new VA Hospital as the foundation for a medical research community. The medical city will not only improve medical care in the region, it will make Central Florida a hub for high paying jobs.

Commuter Rail: Mayor Dyer is spearheading the effort to bring commuter rail to Central Florida. Commuter rail will take vehicles off of Central Florida's congested highways, helping to manage our growth while also protecting the environment. The project will connect our Central Florida communities like never before, spurring increased job accessibility and economic growth for our entire region.

Creative Village: Mayor Dyer is developing his vision for a "Creative Village" in downtown Orlando. Using the University of Central Florida's School of Film and Digital Media as an anchor, the City is building a neighborhood around the school specifically for this "next generation workforce," mixing digital and interactive businesses with academic institutions, shops, housing and shaded streets. Last year, the neighborhood added the House of Moves, the world's premier motion-capture service studio, to the Downtown Orlando Creative Village.

Fire Department Excellence: Under Mayor Dyer's leadership, the City has made strategic investments in the City's fire department with the aim of achieving the best service possible. The Department was recognized for its excellence by receiving a national ISO rating of 1, the

highest rating a fire department can receive. The OFD is one of only 55 departments nationally (out of more than 45-thousand) with ISO-1 ratings.

HOLA: Over the course of the last five years, Mayor Dyer has sought to bolster the outreach effort to the City's ever-increasing Hispanic community. A key part of this strategy has been the HOLA (Hispanic Office of Local Assistance) office implemented last year. Members of Orlando's diverse Hispanic community can now visit a "one-stop shop" for information, connecting them and their families with everything they need to know about Orlando.

The "Dyer Method"

Perhaps more than any one, individual project, the methodology that has made all of these advancements possible is what Mayor Dyer is best known for. It's also the quality that separates him from other municipal leaders. Orlando's City Hall staff calls it "The Dyer Method." But, the simplest way to describe Mayor Dyer's leadership philosophy is "You Can't do it Alone."