

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)

X

City Manager

Name of Individual Nominated Lee Feldman

Nominated by City of Palm Bay

(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 _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

Name of Individual Nominated _____

Nominated by _____

(Name of City/Town/Village)

Please print or type.

Name Suzanne Sherman

Title Management Analyst


Government City of Palm Bay

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E-mail Address sherms@palmabayflorida.org

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

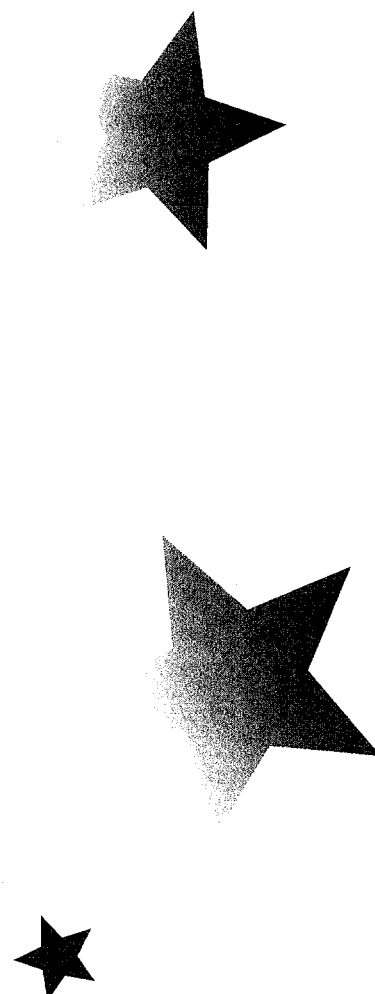
Signed 
City Clerk

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





CITY MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

City of Palm Bay's City Manager, Lee Feldman

When Lee Feldman joined the City in the fall of 2002, it was a time when the City was just starting to recognize its potential, but was threatened by financial challenges, infrastructure decline, employee morale issues and overall uncertainty as to its future.

Extraordinary leadership was needed and Lee delivered. One of his first actions as City Manager was to bring in a facilitator to develop a strategic action plan for the City. This document, entitled "Vision 2020: Focused on the Future" was developed in consultation with citizens, staff and Council and provided a list of specific goals and action steps that directed our work and investment of public funds. However, what is unique about this plan is that we **use** it to guide our work. Our City Manager makes sure that the plan's tenets are included in the City's budget, annual report, State of the City address, website and staff meetings.

Lee has also initiated Palm Bay's new performance management system – known as PALMSTAT – where departments are held accountable to senior staff and department heads monthly on progress, challenges and issues. PALMSTAT has not only achieved improved accountability, but has inspired departments to work together on our most challenging problems. For example, our most egregious code violators are now addressed more quickly through a team focus from the legal, police, code compliance, building and public works departments. PALMSTAT has also led to process changes in the support departments – such as internalizing fingerprint processing, saving several weeks in the hiring process – allowing Palm Bay to move ahead of other local cities in the recruiting of police officers and other critical talent.

Challenges motivate Lee. With Council support he led the development of the City's first municipal charter school. This project was initiated to help provide needed school capacity in our community and has exceeded expectations, opening with almost 800 students. Lee negotiated an operating agreement with a private charter school operator that minimized the risk to taxpayers and provides a top caliber school. Lee has also taken the lead in bringing municipal ambulance transport into the City. The City successfully challenged the County and invalidated its special assessment for ambulance service, paving the way for the elimination of duplicative service delivery and the enhancement of patient care.



Both of these issues required courage and the ability to skillfully handle very sensitive intergovernmental issues.

Fairness, consistency and open communication have become the hallmark of Lee's administration. He has regular meetings with the City's four unions and spends time talking with individual employees. He brings in motivational speakers for blue-collar employees and encourages professional staff to serve in leadership positions in state and national organizations. Lee leads by example, serving as President of FCCMA and as a member of ICMA, serving as a Finance/Administration chair of ICMA's Governmental Affairs Policy Committee and has twice participated in the CityLink program that assisted communities in India with their tsunami recovery efforts.

Lee also represents the City on the National League of Cities Public Finance Panel and is an active member of the Florida League of Cities. He has served on several FLC policy committees and has been a speaker at several FLC conferences. Lee also volunteers his time to teach the Public Finance section of FLC's IEMO program.

Locally, he hosts a monthly "Brown Bag" lunch to discuss the latest in management trends in local government with the next generation of administrators. Through that lunch program, Lee brought Harvard's Bob Behn to talk at the Brown Bag. And another successful program, "Lunch with Lee", is a bi-monthly opportunity where 20 employees can break bread and discuss the latest happenings in Palm Bay. Without question, Lee has energized the senior staff and all employees.

Lee's commitment to Palm Bay is evident in his 24/7 availability to Council, staff and citizens, his quarterly meetings with the presidents of homeowners' associations and his leadership during a crisis. Whether a hurricane, major brush fire or tornado strikes Palm Bay, Lee is on the scene and leading the response effort. He has delivered ice to residents without electricity, helped secure temporary housing for residents displaced by fires and assisted residents whose homes were destroyed by a tornado. He will also outreach to citizens on routine issues, looking at potholes, drainage problems and code violations.

In addition, Lee partners with the development community to bring in quality projects that contribute a fair share towards necessary infrastructure including roads, utilities, schools and public safety. A recent example is the agreement with a major home improvement chain locating to the City, which resulted in cost sharing on road improvements, building a model "safety city" for children and purchasing a mobile fire safety house.



Lee has brought to the City Council a Citizen Participation Ordinance – requiring increased citizen involvement in all land use cases; and he developed an innovative mixed use ordinance along the US 1 corridor that preserves commercial land use while permitting additional residential density. He has also developed a new prototype police/fire substation concept that will bring both police and fire personnel closer to the neighborhoods.

Another example of innovation is Lee's recent concept of a bond issue for road improvements that while secured by sales tax, will use new dollars generated from growth to pay the debt. Funding the City's basic road system has been a problem for several decades, but Lee found a way to establish a financially viable and stable plan.

Lee's relationship with the City Council is outstanding. His priority is to make sure that all Council Members are informed. While this seems like standard operating procedure for a City Manager, Lee provides an exemplary level of service to his Council. He is completely accessible and advises Council of any issue that may be raised by a constituent. But, most importantly, Lee stays in touch with the Council's collective vision to ensure that he is staying on the right course.

Lee has also strengthened the relationship between City government and the citizens of Palm Bay. Small gestures, such as a quarterly breakfast with homeowners' association presidents and personally meeting with constituents regardless of the magnitude of the problem have sent a strong message that Palm Bay cares about its citizens. He also initiated an annual citizen survey, which is used to track trends and shape policy. He has encouraged a significant increase in events that bring the City together and celebrate our diversity (such as the annual city-wide garage sale, the Mayors' Ball, farmers' markets, and the July 4th Freedom Fest which attracted over 10,000 people) and has tried new approaches (such as converting underutilized tennis courts into a roller hockey rink with family skate night) to bringing our citizens together.

Although Lee has only been leading Palm Bay for a few short years, the community has seen some remarkable changes resulting from his initiative and innovation – and more is on the way! Lee is all about helping Palm Bay reach its full potential and then he will set the bar even higher. His talent is "bringing notions to fruition" and he continues to demonstrate his tenacity in this regard every day.