

# All-America City Award

## 2004 Marketing Manual

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# The All-America City Award

## *A Unique Marketing Opportunity*

As an All-America City (AAC) Award Finalist, your community has earned a tremendous marketing opportunity. Applied to its full advantage, the designation can place your community in the media spotlight both locally and nationally. Each year, All-America Cities receive extensive media coverage within their regions and across the country.

Since the All-America City Award was founded in 1949, more than 500 communities have been recognized as All-America Cities, some multiple times. These communities have marketed their designations in various ways. This information provides dozens of examples of how past communities have publicized their All-America City designation for their benefit.

Taking full advantage of your city's selection as an All-America City requires some time and effort, particularly in terms of planning. An investment of your time and energy in applying for the Award, and planning an organized marketing strategy will yield significant dividends. The marketing guide will assist All-America Cities in designing, funding, and implementing an effective marketing program.

The National Civic League will also place national media and publicity on behalf of the All-America Cities. Our dedicated staff is prepared to assist your community in all marketing and public relations efforts. Please feel free to contact us for advice. We would be pleased to review, critique and assist you in your efforts.

## **Promote Your Finalist Status**

Congratulations! Being selected as one of the 30 Finalists indicates that the National Civic League has spotlighted your community as a model for the rest of the country! This is an exceptional achievement. To raise awareness of your extraordinary effort, we encourage you to market and promote your community. Your community has been selected as a model for the rest of the country. You have already won important recognition, regardless of whether your community is ultimately selected as an All-America City. Take credit for your Finalist standing, and review and remember the beneficial aspects of the All-America City application process. Applying for the All-America City Award has helped you identify and promote the good things that your community is doing, and helped you identify new ways of solving problems. The process has hopefully presented a unique opportunity for your community to evaluate itself and foster new community partnerships. And, finally, you can build on the lessons you learned during this year's competition when your community applies again for the All-America City award.

A wonderful example of raising the level of awareness and marketing a community's efforts is when the City of York, Pennsylvania, was selected as an All-America City Finalist; the York Sunday News printed hundreds of copies of a special section devoted exclusively to the community's status as a Finalist. The section included: articles about the projects discussed in

the application; a message from the Mayor outlining why York was an All-America City; quotes from citizens about what they liked (and disliked) most about their community; and a historical timeline of the development of the City of York. The section provided a great rallying point for the community to celebrate York's Finalist status.

## **Maximizing a Powerful Marketing Tool**

One of the key benefits of the program is that the recognition associated with the All-America City Award provides Finalists with an important avenue to market their communities nationally to prospective businesses and corporations.

*"This prestigious award, for which we are honored to receive, reinforces the core beliefs we share with other All-America City winners; that working together as a community, continues to strengthen the civic democracy in improving and making Huntington, a great place to live, work, and raise a family."*

Dennis Sneden  
Huntington, New York  
2002 AAC Winner

*"Being named an All-America City is a great honor and a long-held goal for our community. The people of Fresno have earned this recognition with years of devotion, innovation and teamwork - which is transforming the landscape and life of our city. Becoming an All-America City is not a destination; it is a journey. We return home energized and encouraged to build on our All-America City momentum to accomplish even greater things for our community."*

Jim Patterson  
Fresno, California  
2000 AAC Winner

## **Benefits to Winning Cities**

1. **Economic Stimulus:** Winners find it easier to attract and retain businesses that generate jobs and a stronger tax base. They also attract and retain residents who want a healthy community. Winners also have seen an increase in tourism, grants and bond ratings. For instance:
  - *"Since winning the award in 1990, 71 companies have relocated here, bringing in 3,900 jobs. These new jobs are generating an annual payroll of more than \$100 million. The Award gave us the credibility to encourage these companies to relocate," Paul Anderson, Jobs Plus, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho.*
  - *"We have created an average of 1,000 new manufacturing jobs per year since winning the All-America City award in 1989," said Shane Homan, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce in Tupelo, Mississippi. "Our service sector jobs have grown equally as fast. The Award validates our community's quality of life and is used proudly in all of our economic development and corporate recruitment efforts."*

- *New Haven, Connecticut used the All-America City Award to help pull in about \$100 million worth of new grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*
  - *Tallahassee, Florida used the award to help keep SunBank from moving its headquarters out of the city.*
  - *Lindsay, California added 1,475 jobs to its economy in the first five years following its All-America Award.*
  - *“Publicity we received from the All-America City Award helped change our negative industrial image to that of a major recreational and tourist area.” Lois Glewwe, City Council Member, St. Paul, Minnesota.*
  - *“The award demonstrates a high quality of life and a community of caring individuals. This is impressive to companies looking to relocate or start a new business in the area,” Bill Shendow, Winchester-Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, Winchester, Virginia.*
2. **Community Pride:** The award has reinvigorated communities with a new sense of pride, accomplishment and teamwork. People are proud to live in an All-America City and they work to keep their reputation.
- *“The All-America City Award is like a Good Housekeeping seal of approval,” Worcester (Massachusetts) Telegram & Gazette.*
  - *“We are very proud of our All-America City Award and will continue to earn its respect,” Larry R. Stobbs, Mayor, St. Joseph, Missouri.*
  - *“We are trying to bottle the excitement from the awards ceremony for everyone back home. We found the energy and excitement somewhere between the Final Four and the Super Bowl,” Larry Kaufman, Project Manager, Independence, Missouri.*
3. **Community Collaboration:** The application process itself encourages communities to evaluate themselves and fosters new partnerships.
- *Worcester, Massachusetts came together to provide free medical services to more than 14,000 uninsured individuals. Over six years, the program contributed more than \$450,000 of free services to people in need.*
  - *Independence, Missouri put together a collaborative effort to overcome distrust in the community, which led to more than \$150 million in public improvements.*
  - *The Greater Racine, Wisconsin area came together to solve a sewer sanitation problem. Their new agreement will bring in \$74 million in revenue from outlying communities over 30 years, which will fund improvements to the sanitation system.*

- *The award pointed us in a real positive direction as far as public/private partnerships and public participation. We've moved from pointing fingers, saying it's a government or city problem, to collaborating to solve the problems facing us," Mayor Dan Speer, Pulaski, Tennessee.*
  
- *Recognition as an All-America City has energized citizens to continue working for a better Laredo, even if it means paying a higher tax," Cynthia Collazo, Department of Community Development, Laredo, Texas.*

## ***Promoting Your Community As An All-America Community***

Taking full advantage of your community's selection as an All-America City/Town/Region/County requires some planning. Start by thinking in advance about how the Award can be used in your community to reinforce your marketing objectives. Then draft a specific marketing plan. For example, Santa Maria, California, created its own marketing manual; the local Chamber of Commerce published the manual and distributed it to the business community. In conjunction with the manual, the city also developed a five-year marketing plan to publicize the award.

In addition to the tried and true ideas listed here, we suggest you enlist the assistance of high school, community college and university marketing teachers/professors and their classes. A marketing plan would make an excellent class project. Student volunteers could be assigned to help implement the program during the course of the year.

### **Community Celebrations**

A community celebration or series of events to commemorate receiving the All-America City Award presents a number of communications and marketing opportunities.

As an example, All-America City winners in Washington, North Carolina, hosted an All-America City Award celebration in the waterfront area for the entire community. The Beaufort County Arts Council arranged for entertainment throughout the day. The All-America City Spirit Parade conducted during the celebration was said to be the largest parade in the city's history. Civic organizations placed booths along the waterfront to distribute information, raise money, and showcase the volunteer activities and civic spirit that won the community its All-America City status. Green Bay, Wisconsin held a block party that included fun, food, refreshments and rides. They also had large flags made for display at the event. As part of Brownsville, Texas' celebration ceremony, Brownsville's AAC delegation re-enacted their jury presentation for the entire community. Fort Wayne, Indiana, designated a special "Pride Week" in honor of the Award. All babies born during this week received a special All-America City birth certificate and post office stamp cancellations commemorated Fort Wayne's All-America City status.

Suggestions for specific community events include:

#### **Host community spirit-building events throughout the year**

You might also want to plan to have a local AAC committee booth at a state or local fair or festival. After receiving the All-America City award, the residents of Wray, Colorado celebrated the honor in the annual Wray Daze Parade. Local businesses sold t-shirts and mugs with the AAC logo and the city sold bumper stickers proclaiming "Wray, Colorado, My Home Town." Gastonia, North Carolina, renamed its annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade as the "AAC July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade".

#### **Organize art, photo or essay contests in public schools**

Several communities have sponsored a school poster contest to coincide with Independence Day. Some communities sponsor a "Why I live in an All-America City" essay contest. Others have asked young people to photograph what is best about their city and write an essay

about their photos. Toledo, Ohio took advantage of the award by sending speakers to grade school classrooms to educate students about what the All-America City Award means.

**Designate an All-America City Day (or Week or Month)**

Encourage governmental bodies, such as the city council or town boards, even the state to pass resolutions recognizing the award, and instituting an All-America City award day, week, month or year.

**Prepare for the All-America City White House event**

In past years, the National Civic League has been fortunate to schedule a White House event at which the President or Vice-President presents the winning communities commemorative plaques. The White House ceremony is part of NCL's plan every year, pending the President and Vice-President's schedule. The National Civic League will also notify members of Congress as soon as winning communities are announced, so that U.S. Representatives and Senators may properly recognize your achievements.

## **Coordinate Your Marketing Efforts with the Local Media**

Local media should be an integral part of your community's All-America City marketing efforts. Hopefully, members of the media will have already played a key role in your community's All-America City efforts, working with your committee throughout the application and jury hearing process. If the media is not currently directly tied to your effort, invite them now to join in your marketing activities. Meet with promotions directors at newspapers, and TV and radio stations to plan yearlong promotions, including the use of your community's AAC logo. Your media campaign can include the following:

**Urge your local newspaper to prepare a special supplement**

Your newspaper could sell advertising to local businesses that would sponsor the supplement, to be published on the day of your celebration. Article suggestions include in-depth stories of your community's application, the strengths of your community, use of the Award in marketing your community, stories of personal triumph from individuals who benefited from the community projects described in your AAC application; and personality profiles on those who spearheaded your application process. Have the supplement available during the year as a marketing tool for economic development and promotional purposes for the local chambers of commerce, other community organizations and government leaders.

**Encourage local television and radio stations to prepare a special program**

Using many of the themes suggested above, urge similar promotion by television and radio stations. If the stations covered the All-America City Award presentation, they will have footage and/or audiotape that can be used for this purpose.

**Write a regular "All-America City" column**

Meet with your local newspaper promotion departments and see if they will run an "All-America City Award" column each week/month highlighting different aspects of your community's application and projects. The Mayor of Anderson County, South Carolina

currently writes periodic letters to the community with the AAC logo prominently displayed in the newspaper column's heading.

**Propose editorials, columns, commentaries, op-ed pieces, guest editorials and letters to the editor to local newspaper editors and radio-television**

An op-ed or guest editorial with the by-line of the committee chairperson would also be appropriate. It should discuss the significance of the Award and how you intend to use it to strengthen your community.

**Produce radio, television and print public service announcements**

In cooperation with a local advertising agency or local station, contact the promotions department of local newspapers and electronic media to enlist their help during the All-America City Award year. Television newscasts in Wichita, Kansas, incorporated the city's All-America City status in their tag lines and public service announcements were aired on local radio and television stations to publicize the designation.

**Take Advantage of Opportunities for Paid Advertising**

This could include billboards located at the entry point to the community, ads in community newspapers, and spot announcements on local radio and television stations, perhaps in lieu of, or as part of, the sponsor's usual commercial message.

## **Use the All-America City Logo As Widely As Possible**

Use your community's AAC logo to publicize your community's designation and to help build civic pride. Having decals made, printing the logo on business cards and adding it to your city's letterhead is a great way to increase the visibility of your community's AAC designation.

### ***Copyright Requirements***

- Your community's name and year must be included in all uses of the AAC logo.
- The logo cannot be used for profit commercial ventures, such as affinity cards (Visa/MasterCard). Such commercial ventures violate the trademark and can result in the decision to seriously curtail the finalist or winning community's further use of the logo.
- All merchandise bearing the All-America City logo must be approved by the National Civic League and the local AAC Committee. It must display the name of the community and the year per NCL guidelines. Profits can be used to defray delegation expenses or to benefit local non-profit projects.
- Remember, the logo, with the year of designation and the trademark symbol, is registered with the federal government and may only be used by communities designated by the National Civic League. The law prohibits any other use of the logo without permission.
- When printing materials professionally, please provide the printers with the correct PMS colors of the logo. PMS Colors: PMS 200 (Red) and PMS 280 (Blue). All text, lines and stars are blue. The year is red.
- You can download the logo from the National Civic League web site:  
[www.ncl.org/aac](http://www.ncl.org/aac)

In Shreveport, Louisiana, a local distributor was asked to place the AAC logo on all Pepsi cans – at no cost. When they realized that Highway 65 in California connected three All-America Cities – Bakersfield, Porterville and Lindsay – community members put forth an effort that ultimately resulted in the highway being named, “the All-America City Highway.” Rocky Mount, North Carolina sent their logo to all area printers and encouraged businesses to use it on their company printing. In New Haven, Connecticut, the logo was placed on the mayor’s and other government departments’ stationary. Ocean City, Maryland, as a resort community hosting 8 million people a year, printed and distributed over 400,000 copies of their visitors guide with the All-America City logo on the front cover. Toledo, Ohio, in addition to placing the logo on city letterhead and posting signs on city property, asked all city employees answer the phone with the words “All-America City.”

The National Civic League only asks that communities check with us on use of the logo, especially if they wish to use the All-America City logo in a way not specifically mentioned in this marketing CD. See the “Utilizing the AAC logo” section of the CD for more details. Further suggestions for using the All-America City Logo follow:

- Use the logo on your local government's printed materials**  
Use it on letterhead and business cards, local business and industry printed materials, Christmas cards and local organizations' promotional materials.
- Encourage the local newspaper to use the All-America City logo**  
Beginning with the week of the celebration, and through the entire year of the award, ask the newspaper to use the logo in its stories and on its masthead.
- Urge TV stations to use the logo on their station identification graphics**  
Or ask them to use it as “filler” graphic.
- Request that local government agencies and private businesses use the All-America City logo as indicia on their postage meters**  
Work with postage meter suppliers to prepare and affix the logo plate.
- Distribute logo bumper stickers**  
Insert as envelope stuffers with property-tax bills, utility bills, or local bank statements, and in waiting rooms of physicians, dentists, hospitals and the like.
- Encourage the display of All-America City decals**  
Place the decals on buses, subways, taxis, and municipal vehicles, including police cars, government service vehicles, trash-removal trucks, snowplows, and other vehicles.  
Brownsville, Texas worked with the public transportation system to have all buses read “AAC Brownsville” on the electronic destination signs.
- Produce commemorative license plates for government and private vehicles**

## **Posters, Signs and Banners**

Banners, signs, posters and decals can help publicize your community's status as an All-America City. Chelsea, Massachusetts, for example, created two large All-America City banners that hung on City Hall. Chelsea also worked with a banner company to make at least 50 banners to hang on poles throughout the city. DeKalb County, Georgia, erected 300 All-America City road signs throughout the county. In Fort Wayne, Indiana, several schools and businesses displayed signs with the logo. Fort Wayne also painted the logo on the intersections of major streets.

Riverside, California placed All-America City decals on its garbage trucks and city vehicles. Rochester, New York also placed All-America City decals on all city vehicles and on 600 public trash receptacles. Even the zamboni machines used at local hockey games in Rochester display the All-America City logo.

Some ways that communities can use posters, signs, banners and decals to publicize their All-America City status include:

- Place All-America City Award signs at city limits, exit ramps from the interstate highways, city parks, airports, water towers, and other public locations**
  
- Erect All-America City award posters or banners**  
Display these across a main street, at shopping malls, or at the local airport; display All-America City Award pennants or flags from lampposts and other appropriate locations. After Oakland, California received the All-America City Award, the certificate was duplicated and given to over 200 businesses for display. In addition, 60 AAC billboards were placed throughout the city. The airport is one of the most effective venues because of the influx of out-of-town visitors. Talk with your local airport manager to determine the possibility and the best location. Enlist the help of local business organizations and government, if necessary.
  
- Consider stenciling a large All-America City logo in the middle of Main Street.**  
This makes an impressive display and serves as a constant reminder to citizens and visitors. Ocala, Florida covered a blank wall of a downtown building (and some graffiti) with a fresh coat of paint and the All-America City logo.

## **Marketing Your AAC Designation Online**

The Internet is an extremely powerful tool that is becoming widely used across the nation. Many people now use the Internet to conduct research, including finding new places in which to live, work, and visit.

Many communities have publicized their AAC designation on their city Web site. For example, Fayetteville, North Carolina dedicated a special section on their city website to the AAC Award, which included links to: their application, presentation, news articles and quotes, the community celebration, sponsors, the AAC committee, photo gallery, and program descriptions ([www.fayettevilleallamerica.com](http://www.fayettevilleallamerica.com)).

Suggestions for Web site content include:

- News Releases**  
Include all community press releases on the web site including the announcement of your community winning the All-America City designation
- Scripts from AAC Jury Presentation**  
Since everyone in your community was not able to attend the All-America City competition, provide a transcript of your community's jury presentation. This will increase the knowledge of the award as well as increase the civic pride within your community.
- Community Celebrations**  
This section can include event information, photos, and special note of thank you to the community for its support.
- Photos**  
On the front page of your community's web site, post photos of your AAC logo, city landscapes, and the projects that have made an impact in your city.  
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### **Create Promotional Materials**

Developing promotional materials and distributing those materials as widely as possible will help market your status as an All-America City. Merchandising can serve as both a means of generating publicity and raising funds for the marketing effort. Stockton, California held a block party and sold AAC merchandise including polo shirts, baseball jerseys, caps, denim shirts, lapel pins and stickers.

As stated in the NCL logo guidelines (See "Utilizing the AAC logo" section of the marketing CD), all merchandise bearing the All-America City logo must be approved by the National Civic League

and the local All-America City Committee, and display the name of the community and the year per NCL guidelines. Profits must be used to defray delegation expenses or for local non-profit projects. Some suggestions for merchandise and promotional materials include:

**Publicize the All-America City Award in all community economic development promotional materials**

A videotape brochure about the All-America City Award, perhaps produced without charge by a local television station, cable company or advertising agency, can be used effectively in community economic development presentations to potential employers, before civic and community organizations, and in local high schools and colleges.

The video could be used in a planned schedule of presentations by the All-America City Award Committee to local service clubs, religious and charitable organizations and schools. A stamp of approval, the All-America City Award says the community is a good place to live, work, play and conduct business.

**Ask local hotels, motels and convention centers to help with distribution**

Ask them to distribute literature that includes the All-America City Award designation.

**Create and Announce the availability of All-America City merchandise**

Work with local businesses to donate and/or develop merchandise with the All-America City logo. Items for purchase could include coffee cups, bumper stickers, lapel pins, baseball caps, banners, store window posters, sweatshirts and T-shirts and a variety of other promotional materials. (Please see “Utilizing the AAC logo” section of this marketing CD to determine regulations of AAC logo in relation to merchandise).

**Make sure local drug stores, newsstands, novelty shops and department stores have promotional merchandise available for sale**

## **Beyond the Year of All-America City Designation**

Although your marketing focus will be on the year of the Award designation, there are ways to perpetuate momentum built-up during the year so that the Award supports your community in ongoing marketing efforts.

Here are some recommendations for adding longevity to the life of the All-America City Award:

**Institutionalize the Award**

Be sure it is always a part of the presentation made by the community to new residents, potential businesses and industries, community development programs, grant applications and so forth. As long as you indicate the Award was for a specific year, you are permitted to use the All-America City logo and Award designation in promotional materials.

**Appoint a community task force**

Ask the task force to report annually, perhaps on the anniversary of the Award, on how your community is progressing toward its goals as reflected by the Award. Consider conducting an evaluation of your community's civic infrastructure on an annual basis. Answer the questions

in the Civic Index in the All-America City application or contact the National Civic League for other suggestions.

- Participate in All-America City alumni activities**  
Join the AAC Alumni Group and attend AAC Alumni meetings at the annual Awards event.
- Serve as a coach to neighboring communities**  
Find out if other communities in your region or state are considering applying for the Award and share your knowledge and expertise.
- Apply again for the All-America City Award**  
There is no limit to how many times a community may apply or win the designation. Four communities – Rockville, Maryland; Kansas City, Missouri; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Roanoke, Virginia – have each won four times. Worcester, Massachusetts and Cleveland, Ohio won five times!

## ***Funding Your Marketing Plan***

First, NCL suggests determining a realistic budget; a minimum, average and maximum budget so that you have flexibility in raising funds. Your community might want to appoint a fund-raising committee of three or four people who are knowledgeable with business and industry in your community. Discuss your funding goals and sources with them. Make sure to set targets and deadlines.

Also, evaluate potential funding sources in your community and set a goal for each:

- *All-America City Finalist merchandise*
- *Local businesses and business associations*
- *Major employers such as industrial corporations*
- *Local foundations*
- *Service clubs and fraternal organizations*
- *Philanthropic individuals*
- *Fund-raising receptions, dinners and other community events.*

## *Getting Media Coverage: What is News?*

News can be defined as having the following characteristics:

1. **Consequence.** Educates and informs; is important to life-style or ability to cope; has a moral or social importance; is “should know” material
2. **Interest.** Is unusual, entertaining, has human interest, arouses emotions or would cause people to talk about it
3. **Timeliness.** Is current; is a new angle on events or a new trend
4. **Proximity.** Pertains to local issues, trends or events
5. **Prominence.** Concerns famous people, famous events; has received other media coverage

Generally, news falls into one of two categories: hard news and soft news.

Hard news is something that's just happened and is what you usually read on the front page of a newspaper or hear as the first report in a newscast. Becoming an All-America City Finalist is hard news on the day that it is announced. Soft news tends to be more about trends than events. The story of the months of hard work that went into earning that designation, or a story of the process of how a city eventually becomes one of the 30 All-America City Finalists is a feature or soft-news story.

Clearly, you want to get both kinds of stories if possible. The key to getting hard news is simple: alert the media in advance of announcements, and call them as you hear news yourself.

The two ideas mentioned above are good ones for pitching feature stories on the All-America City Award. Another perennial winner is a story or series of stories on each of the three community projects that earned your community the All-America City Finalist nomination. With that in mind, here are some general tips on making your story as newsworthy as possible.

- Focus on the community projects**  
Focus on the projects that have earned you the All-America City Finalist nomination.
- Give examples of what the award has meant to other cities**  
Examples and testimonials from other communities can be located on the National Civic League web site at [www.ncl.org/aac](http://www.ncl.org/aac)
- Emphasize that your community is being nationally recognized as a model**  
Your community is being singled out for its creative ability to solve problems, and that makes your hometown special and noteworthy far beyond the city limits.
- Get celebrities involved**  
Have the mayor, well-known business and community leaders, and as many other luminaries participate as possible.
- Put a human face on your story**

Journalism is all about people, so it is in your interest to play up the human stories. For example, spotlight people who have better jobs, health, and housing or enjoy more racial justice and democratic participation because of the projects spotlighted for the All-America City Finalist designation.

## **Directing Your Story to the Right Medium**

One of the biggest mistakes made in pitching ideas to the media is talking to the wrong person. To direct your stories to the best possible medium is to break that medium down into its component parts – or products. Understanding the selling features of a medium’s product will help you place your story. There are three main media categories:

### ***Newspapers***

Whether published daily or weekly, newspapers are divided into various sections: news (national/international), business, entertainment, sports, technology, home living and other sections. Knowing who makes the decisions for each section, and the requirements and schedule for that section are fundamentals to deciding where you should attempt to place stories. It is possible that one story might have several angles and could be of interest to a number of sections. For example, a business editor might be interested in the financial impact of being nominated as an All-America City Finalist whereas a life-style editor might be interested in the revitalized community pride.

Newspapers also have city/metro editors who decide which stories will be covered and what staff will cover them. They are usually the most open to fresh story ideas. When in doubt about whom to approach at a newspaper, always send a story idea to or call the metro or city editor. If you can't get through to a city editor, an Assistant City Editor presents an alternative. Particularly on larger papers, this person usually plays a key role in determining the day's news lineup and as such is another good person to contact.

### ***Television***

The local news shows should be the prime target for your All-America City releases. Assignment editors at the television station determine which stories will be covered for the early and late-evening news. These are the most important contacts in television because they handle the day-to-day decisions about broadcast coverage and which reporters cover which stories.

Different assignment managers exist for the morning and noon broadcasts and for the evening broadcasts (typically 6 to 11 p.m.). Similarly, often-different assignment managers exist for weekday and weekend newscasts.

Local talk shows also provide an excellent medium for your All-America City spokesperson to talk about the All-America City Award. The show’s producer can give you more detailed information about the requirements for the show; time needed for booking guests and capability for live interviews/demonstrations.

### ***Radio***

Radio is perhaps the least complex of the media and, very possibly, the most overlooked. Radio stations follow the trend of print by specializing and appealing to distinct audiences. Determine

the focus of each station to help you decide which stations to cater to. There are all-news stations, all-classical stations, all-country stations and all-listening stations. The majority of stations are a mix of talk, music, commentary, and news. Most radio stations depend primarily on material that comes over the wire services, is delivered to the station or is called in to the news director. Talk with radio news directors and program directors to get detailed information on a station's opportunities.

Clearly, determining what news is and where it should be directed involves more than just writing a release and sending it to every medium in your area. Careful analysis of the information itself and the media to which it should be directed will help you achieve your media goals. For assistance in developing detailed media directories, including contact information, publication and editorial calendars, please contact Megan Brunet, Communications Manager at the National Civic League.

### **Getting Your Message Through**

There are various methods to choose from when contacting the media. No one method is best – it depends on the situation, the newsworthiness of your material, and, most important of all, the preferences of the journalists you're working with.

With today's explosion of information technology, you have quite a few choices of distribution methods. For example, materials can be: emailed, faxed, mailed, or called in via the telephone.

The best technique is usually to email or fax a news release (all faxed materials should be sent by invitation only) no more than two pages long and follow up with a phone call to make sure the release was received. Special note, make sure to paste the body of the news release in your email, as many news agencies are cautious of emails with attachments due to viruses.

Finally, if possible, enlist the help of a seasoned public relations or media veteran. Someone who's worked for a newspaper, TV station, public relations firm, or as a public information officer in an organization will be invaluable in your efforts. You will reap great benefits if you have such a person on board.

### **News Conferences: *Why Have One?***

Good question, and it is one reporters and editors will most certainly ask you. The biggest risk in scheduling a news conference is the embarrassment of having no one show up. Since journalists don't like to waste time, they want to know in advance whether a news conference is worth attending. Therefore, you should always have a strong, newsworthy reason for scheduling one. Otherwise, most journalists would far rather take the appropriate information over the phone.

At very least, you can hold a news conference regarding All-America City news such as:

- *To announce your community has been selected as a Finalist*
- *To announce your community as an All-America City Winner*
- *To announce your community missed being one of 10 All-America City winners this year and will try again next year.*

Of course, the size of your community and local media often determines how much – if any – coverage you get at a conference. Nonetheless, here are some insider tips on getting as much attention as possible:

- *Give the media as much advance notice as possible.*
- *Fax and call newsrooms to advise editors of the conference time, place, and subject.*
- *Schedule the news conference for a morning time before 11a.m., when other news begins to divert reporters' and editors' attention.*
- *Provide news releases at the conference, summarizing your announcement in no more than two pages, double-spaced*
- *Keep it short – no more than 45 minutes, preferably 30 minutes. Reporters want facts and appreciate brevity.*
- *Allow at least 15 minutes at the end of the conference for questions from reporters.*
- *Most importantly, provide the media with photographs. With the exception of radio, all media depend heavily on good video and photographs. The best photos are of the community action upon which your All-America City Award application is based, i.e., a new neighborhood health center, an innovative home ownership project, a revitalized industrial park, rather than people rigidly posing behind a podium or the infamous “grip and grin” poses of shaking hands.*

### **Making Headlines: How to Sell a News Release**

Will your release wind up on the front page or filed away? It's a question you can help answer. Listed below are some ideas to help your news release become a page one story:

- ***Highlight people involved in designing and implementing the programs***  
*Provide contact names. Do not look exclusively to elected officials.*
- ***Provide specifics***  
*Why will the programs last? What makes them different?*
- ***Personalize***  
*Get the names and numbers of the key people who decide on the fate of your release. Whether you convey information by phone or mail, it always helps to be on a first name basis.*
- ***Quote more than one source***  
*Quote as many people as you can.*
- ***Be accessible***  
*Let people know you will help them. Let them know they do not have to work alone.*
- ***Provide phone and fax numbers and email addresses***  
*Your release should put everything at the reader's fingertips.*

# Letter to the Editor

Date: June 12, 2004  
Contact: Gary Chandler  
Phone: 720-931-0834  
Fax: 303-571-4404  
Email: gchandler@ncl.org

## **Congratulations, (Your community, State)!**

To the Residents of (Community):

Congratulations on being named an All-America City (Town/County/Region)! You just took part in a rigorous national competition and succeeded in garnering a highly esteemed designation. Your innovative thinking and contagious enthusiasm contributed to the success of your efforts.

(Your Community) is now a model for communities across the country. Because you successfully addressed your challenges with all three sectors working together, communities across the country will now look to you as they struggle to find solutions to their most pressing concerns. The National Civic League encourages you to continue in this spirit of collaborative problem solving.

Thank you for contributing to the betterment of communities all across our nation by tackling this process. You've made a worthwhile and long-term investment, not only in your own community, but in our country as well.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Gates  
President, National Civic League

# **All-America City Award**

## *Fact Sheet*

### **BACKGROUND**

The All-America City Award is the oldest and most respected community recognition program in the nation. This year marks the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the award that recognizes communities whose citizens work together to identify and tackle community-wide challenges and achieve uncommon results.

Each year, only ten cities are selected as All-America Cities. These communities exemplify the true American spirit at work. Their citizens are actively committed to ensuring that their community is a safe nurturing place to live. Since the program's inception, more than 4,000 communities (neighborhoods/cities/towns/counties/regions) have competed and nearly 500 have been named "All-America Cities."

### **APPLICATIONS**

Each year, the All-America City Award program receives applications from communities across the country. A Screening Committee of public and civic affairs experts reviews the applications and, following a careful and thorough examination, 30 Finalists are announced. This year the Finalists were announced April 30, 2003.

At hearings before the All-America City jury in June, each Finalist community will present its application and answer questions posed by the jury. Once the jury has carefully considered all Finalists' presentations and applications, the ten 2003 All-America Cities will be announced at a special awards ceremony June 14 at the Hilton Washington & Towers Hotel in Washington, D.C.

### **CRITERIA**

For a community to be named an All-America City, it must be able to demonstrate successful resolution of community issues through collaborative effort. Award winning criteria include the following: active citizen involvement, effective and efficient government performance, maximized local philanthropic and volunteer resources, a strong capacity for cooperation and consensus building, community vision and pride, intergroup relations, community information sharing, and intercommunity cooperation.

In 1997, on the heels of the President's Summit for America's Youth, the National Civic League required that all All-America Cities must be able to demonstrate community-wide youth enrichment initiatives. See the National Civic League's web site, [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org) for summaries and contact information for the youth initiatives of each of the 2001 and 2002 All-America Cities and Finalists.

### **NATIONAL CIVIC LEAGUE**

The All-America City Award is a program of the National Civic League, a 109-year-old non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to strengthening citizen democracy by transforming democratic institutions. NCL accomplishes its mission through technical assistance, training, publishing, research, and the All-America City Award, the nation's oldest and most prestigious community

recognition program. The National Civic League is headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

## National Civic League Announces Finalists For 2004 All-America City Award

### *30 Communities Will Compete in Atlanta for Civic Award*

DENVER – The National Civic League announced today the 30 Finalist communities for the 2004 All-America City Award competition, the nation’s longest running and most prestigious civic recognition program.

The All-America City Award encourages and recognizes civic excellence, honoring the communities in which citizens, government, businesses and nonprofit organizations demonstrate successful resolution of critical community issues. Since 1949, more than 4,000 communities have competed and nearly 500 have been designated “All-America Cities.”

The Finalist communities that will compete for the 2004 All-America City title include (listed in alphabetical order by state):

- Stockton, CA
- Stamford, CT
- Clearwater, FL
- Deerfield Beach, FL
- Lauderhill, FL
- Palm Bay, FL
- Pembroke Pines, FL
- Pompano Beach, FL
- Evansville, IN
- Olathe, KS
- St. Martinville, LA
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Taylor, MI
- Montevideo, MN
- Morris, MN
- Red Wing, MN
- Hattiesburg, MS
- Farmville, NC
- Clinton, NC
- Concord, NC
- Sparks, NV
- Springfield, OH
- Lakeview, OR
- Cottage Grove, OR
- Fort Mill, SC
- Orangeburg County, SC
- Hidalgo, TX
- Cedar City, UT
- Spokane, WA
- Philippi, WV

“These communities serve as models for the rest of the country,” said Christopher T. Gates, president of the National Civic League. “They are tackling challenges that seem insurmountable and are producing positive and tangible results with ingenuity and collaboration.”

The 30 Finalists will participate in a final round of the All-America City competition in Atlanta, Georgia, June 10-12. A delegation from each Finalist community will present their innovative programs and local solutions to a 10-person jury. Their presentations will address a wide range of social and community issues, including crime, education, poverty, housing, and race relations. The 10 All-America Cities for 2004 will be announced Saturday, June 12, during a ceremony at the Marriott Marquis.

The 2003 All-America Cities were (in alphabetical order):

- City of Tempe, Arizona
- *City of New Haven, Connecticut*
- City of Miami Beach, Florida
- City of Des Moines, Iowa
- County of Marquette, Michigan
- City of Laurinburg, North Carolina
- City of Wilson, North Carolina
- City of South Sioux City, Nebraska
- City of Corpus Christi, Texas
- Greater Racine Area, Wisconsin

George H. Gallup, one of the award’s founders, described the program as “...a Nobel prize for constructive citizenship.” As such, communities that have won the All-America City Award have realized numerous benefits, including national recognition and enhanced community pride. Many All-America City Award winners also have realized significant economic impacts, including new grants, improved bond ratings, increased tourism, and greater economic activity.

“Since winning the award in 1990, 71 companies have relocated here, bringing in 3,900 new jobs as of 2003. These new jobs are generating an annual payroll of more than \$100 million,” said Paul Anderson, Chair of Jobs Plus, in Coeur d’ Alene, Idaho. “The Award gave us the credibility and pride to encourage these companies to relocate.”

The National Civic League (NCL) is one of the leading proponents of citizen democracy in the United States. Founded in 1894 by Theodore Roosevelt and other government reformers, it is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to building community and promoting political reform at the local level. NCL accomplishes its mission through facilitating community processes and conducting and publishing research on political reform and community building. Through its All-America City Award program, NCL also celebrates community engagement efforts across the nation. For more information, visit [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org).

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# News For Immediate Release

(Date)

## Editorial Contacts:

National Civic League  
Gary Chandler  
Communications Director  
(303) 571-4343  
gchandler@ncl.org

[Your community]  
[Contact Name]  
[Title]  
[Phone number]  
[Email address]

[Your Community] Named 2004 All-America City Award Finalist  
*30 communities vie for nation's most prestigious civic award*

[Your Community, State] - April (date), 2004, [Your community] has been selected as one of the 30 Finalist communities for this year's All America City Award, the nation's longest running and most prestigious civic recognition program.

A program of the National Civic League, the All-America City Award encourages and recognizes civic excellence, honoring communities (neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties and regions) in which citizens, government, businesses and non-profit organizations demonstrate successful resolution of critical community issues. Since 1949, more than 4,000 communities have competed and more than 500 have been named "All-America Cities."

[Insert quote from community leader congratulating efforts of your community]

"These communities serve as models for the rest of the country," said Christopher T. Gates, president of the National Civic League. "They are tackling challenges that seem insurmountable and are producing positive and tangible results with ingenuity and collaboration."

The 30 Finalists will participate in a final round of the All-America City competition in Atlanta, Georgia, June 10-12. A delegation from each Finalist community will present to a 10-member jury their innovative programs and local solutions addressing a wide range of social and community issues, including [include your community issues]. The 10 2004 All-America Cities

will be named on June 12 during a special ceremony at the Marriott Marquis in downtown Atlanta.

For a complete list of the 30 Finalist communities please visit the National Civic League web site at [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org).

Founded in 1894, the National Civic League (NCL) is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to strengthening citizen democracy by transforming democratic institutions. NCL accomplishes its mission through technical assistance, training, publishing, research, and the All-America City Award. The National Civic League is headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and has an office in Washington, D.C.

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