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Finalists Named for 2008 All-America City Award

The National Civic League announced the finalists in the annual all-America City Award today.

The finalists are: Goodyear, Arizona; Marana, Arizona; Cerritos, California; Aurora, Colorado; New Haven, Connecticut; Kissimmee- Osceola County, Florida; Sarasota County, Florida; Somerville, Massachusetts; Gladstone, Missouri; the St. Louis Region, Missouri-Illinois; Lenoir, North Carolina; Reidsville, North Carolina; Akron, Ohio; Upper Dublin Township, Pennsylvania; Abbeville County, South Carolina; Selma, Texas, and Caroline County, Virginia.

Each finalist completed an extensive application providing detailed descriptions of the challenges they face and the impacts of three community projects to address those challenges.

The next step is for each community to send a delegation to Tampa, Florida, for a three-day awards competition and innovations forum (June 4-6). The winners will be announced on the evening of Friday, June 6.

The All-America City Awards recognizes communities for collaboration, inclusiveness, and successful innovation. All-America Cities demonstrate community-wide civic accomplishments, cross-sector cooperation, grassroots participation, and creative approaches to issues such as the need for low-income housing, support for at-risk youth, downtown revitalization, and healthcare for the uninsured.

“The original community award, the All-America City Award is the ‘Oscar’ for communities of all sizes,” noted National Civic League President Gloria Rubio-Cortés. “It recognizes the efforts of entire communities and exemplifies extensive civic engagement. When people attend the event for the first time, they are energized by the can-do spirit, excitement and optimism of the participants. The spirit of community-pride and unlimited possibility is contagious.”

During the three-day competition, a delegation from each community will present its programs and solutions to a jury of national experts from across the United States. Their presentations will address the community's social and economic issues, including at least one project that focuses on the needs of young people.

A jury of national business, government, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders will select the top 10 communities based on their presentations and applications. The 2008 All-America City Award winners will be announced Friday June 6 at a ceremony beginning at 7 p.m. at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel and Marina.

This year the awards program will feature Innovation Forums to promote peer-to-peer dialogues among the finalist communities and regional and national leaders. The topics include best practices of All-America Cities, effectively marketing your community, a youth forum, and a chief elected and appointed officials forum on civic issues. Hot topic workshops are being developed on green solutions, immigrant integration, the community-side of the subprime lending crisis, and other issues.

Now in its 59th year, the All-America City Award is an honor achieved by more than 500 neighborhoods, villages, towns, cities, counties, and regions across the country. Some have won the award multiple times.

This year's AAC Awards are sponsored in part by Jones Day, MWH, RBC Capital Markets, Southwest Airlines (The Official Airline of the AAC Awards), Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel and Marina (The Sole Official Headquarters Hotel of the AAC Awards), and Marriott International.

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, the National Civic League strengthens democracy by increasing the capacity of our nation's people to fully participate in and build healthy and prosperous communities across America. We are the nation's best at the science of local government, the art of public engagement, and the celebration of the progress that can be

achieved when people work together. Founded in 1894 by Theodore Roosevelt and other government reformers, NCL is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that accomplishes its mission through training, technical assistance, publishing, facilitating community-wide strategic planning and awards programs. It publishes research on government structures and reform and community building innovation (The National Civic Review, The Civic Index, and The 8th Edition of the Model City Charter). In addition to the All-America City Awards, NCL conducts the MetLife Foundation Ambassadors in Education Awards to be announced in April. www.ncl.org