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# Missouri Municipal League

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For Immediate Release

## **Innovation Award Winners Announced**

Warrensburg, Jackson, and New London winners of the 2009 MML Innovation Awards; Ferguson receives an honorable mention.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Missouri Municipal League announces the winners of the 2009 Missouri Municipal League Innovation Awards. Awards were given in three population categories: large cities (over 15,000), medium cities (3,000 to 15,000) and small cities (under 3,000). Warrensburg won in the large cities category, Jackson in the medium sized cities category and New London in the small cities category. Ferguson received an honorable mention in the large city category.

The Innovation Award Program is intended to spotlight municipal programs that solve community problems in an effective and creative manner. The nominated projects were judged based on how well the program met its stated objectives, the creativity of the solution and most importantly the ability of the program to be replicated for use by other municipalities.

The Award winners were recognized at the Missouri Municipal League's Annual Conference, held October 4-7 at Tan-Tar-A, Osage Beach, Mo. Each award winner was presented with an Innovation Award glass obelisk during the awards luncheon at the Conference. Representatives of the honorable mention category received an engraved plaque.

Warrensburg's project addressed the alcohol related problems in the City's downtown area. From 1998 to 2006 liquor arrests in the city of Warrensburg's downtown district increased by 89%, from 155 annual arrests to 293. Assault/fight/disturbance calls for the same period and area increased by 223%, from 64 to 207. In response to the increased crime and violence, in 2007 the city of Warrensburg collaborated with the University of Central Missouri to establish the Warrensburg Area Partners in Prevention (WAPIP) Alcohol Management Program. This program brought together University of Central Missouri, city staff, local liquor license holders, state agencies, and Whiteman

Air Force Base leadership to collaborate in addressing the two objectives of the program: 1) reduce the number of alcohol-related crimes and 2) ensure the public's safety and health. The City and WAPIP utilizes five strategies of ordinance revision, training, prevention efforts, increased enforcement, and system changes. Since implementing the city of Warrensburg and WAPIP's alcohol management program, the city of Warrensburg's downtown district liquor arrests have been reduced from 293 in 2006 to nine in 2008, a 97% decrease. Assault/fight/disturbances calls have been reduced by 92%, from 207 to 17. Compared to the state alcohol compliance check rate of 61% for liquor license holders, the city of Warrensburg since April 2009 has consistently achieved 100% compliance rate of their license holders.

The city of Jackson won for its Community Outreach Program. Jackson's Community Outreach Board was born on April 7, 2003, from an idea hatched by former Mayor Paul Sander. His goal was to fuse together two pre-existing committees – the Human Relations Board and the Health Board – into one definitive group that could help make long-lasting connections with Jackson residents and businesses. With an eye to developing stronger ties to the community, the board was designed to address constituent needs and concerns in an on-going fashion. By approving Ordinance No. 03-35, the mayor and board of aldermen officially created the Community Outreach Board, which consists of thirteen (13) members who are qualified voters of the City. Each member is appointed by the mayor and approved by the board of aldermen. Additionally, the mayor assigns elected officials and staff members to serve as voting members. All members are volunteers who serve without compensation and represent different sectors of the community including: the business sector, academia, local government, special interest groups, and the general public. The mission of the Community Outreach Board is to address health, youth and senior issues, as well as to improve understanding and communication within the community at-large through training, education, and involvement in community outreach initiatives and events.

The city of New London won in the small cities category for its Outdoor Classroom for Earth Day. This project was a joint effort by the city of New London, New London Park Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New London Elementary School, Mark Twain High School, Missouri Department of Conservation, and Ralls County Soil and Water Conservation Service, which resulted in an Earth Day project that rejuvenated the New London Community Park. This gave the students an opportunity to have an enjoyable day outdoors while discovering new lessons along the way. The objective of the project was to offer a learning experience for local school children. The project focused on the New London Community Park that is adjacent to the New London Elementary School. Many of the children's influences focused on the theme of "Being Green." What better way to involve children than having the opportunity to actually "Be Green." 2009 was the initial introduction of the outdoor classroom plans for the project to be an annual event for the elementary school students.

The city of Ferguson received an honorable mention for its "Responsible Landlord Initiative." The Landlord Initiative is an innovative, performance-based approach to regulating residential rental property in the city of Ferguson that emphasizes the use of

code enforcement as a tool for neighborhood stabilization. The Responsible Landlord Initiative is linked to the City's Neighborhood Agenda, established in 2004 to focus on the values and needs of area neighborhoods, maintain high standards for the community, and raise property values. The Initiative and the Agenda will balance the City's planning and regulatory efforts to increase more livable neighborhoods. The Initiative was created to hold landlords responsible for property maintenance and tenant conduct by establishing a three-tiered classification of the City's landlord license - responsible, provisional, and suspended. Each classification sets different guidelines about how landlords can continue to do business with the City and provide quality living opportunities for residents. The concept of the Initiative was developed out of a proposal from a neighborhood association to have the City conduct interior inspections of rental property. The City was not in a financial position to increase its inspection staff; therefore, City staff developed the Responsible Landlord Initiative to be consistent with the Neighborhood Agenda.

The Missouri Municipal League is a voluntary, non-partisan association of 659 Missouri municipalities.