



FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

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Florida League of Cities Announces 2024 Florida Municipal Achievement Award Winners

DeLand, Oakland, Sarasota and St. Cloud recognized for innovation and excellence

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TALLAHASSEE, FL – The **Florida League of Cities** (FLC), the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments, today announced the winners of the 2024 Florida Municipal Achievement Awards. Hosted annually, the Florida Municipal Achievement Awards provide municipalities the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for superior and innovative efforts in four award categories: Economic Advancement, Environmental Stewardship, Local Action and Public Engagement.

This year’s winners and their projects are:

- **Economic Advancement Award** – City of St. Cloud, Economic Gardening Program
- **Environmental Stewardship Award** – Town of Oakland, Oakland Nature Preserve
- **Local Action Award** – City of Sarasota, Attainable Housing Density Bonus Program
- **Public Engagement Award** – City of DeLand, DeLand Digital Historic Tour.

“Across Florida, our cities, towns and villages are innovating and working hard to make their communities even better places to live,” said **FLC President Greg Ross, Mayor of Cooper City**. “These projects are outstanding examples of how cities are on the front lines of hearing from our residents and planning for the future. On behalf of the League, I’m proud to recognize this year’s outstanding winners and celebrate their success!”

The **Economic Advancement Award** focuses on a city program that supports, highlights or partners with a city’s local business community to improve the economic well-being of a city. The **City of St. Cloud** developed a Downtown Economic Gardening Program, an approach that promotes companies growing from within their own structure. The St. Cloud Program was multiple layers of financial and technical assistance programs for businesses affected by the pandemic and prolonged construction of the city’s streetscape project. The program offered \$190,000 in grants, technical support, fee waivers and marketplace information for small and mid-size businesses.

The **Environmental Stewardship Award** focuses on a city program that promotes environmental sustainability, improves and protects environmental conditions or provides environmental education and outreach programs. The **Town of Oakland** supports the Oakland Nature Preserve (ONP), which offers diverse ecosystems, engaging classrooms and outdoor pavilions that welcomed 40,000 guests in

2023. The Preserve hosts students for hands-on science education as well as summer camps and a Youth Climate Project. For adults, it offers programs that include firefly hikes and senior walking groups. Supported by the Town, the ONP's conservation efforts include tree planting and land acquisition.

The **Local Action Award** is given to a city for a specific, single citywide effort that successfully addresses a local need. The **City of Sarasota** has been focused on a voluntary density bonus program to incentivize the private development of attainable housing units. In 2023, the Sarasota City Commission adopted a downtown attainable housing density program. Several projects have been submitted for an estimated creation of 87 attainable housing units downtown. In March 2024, the Commission approved a second attainable housing density program that will incentivize the creation of mixed-use development and require housing for a mix of incomes along the major commercial corridors and commercial centers.

The **Public Engagement Award** focuses on a city program that builds a more vital, participative community. The program develops civic awareness, increases education and knowledge of local government functions or promotes active participation among residents, businesses and visitors. The **City of DeLand** developed a campaign showcasing the city's historical assets. The city launched two digital historic tours on Google Maps and Google Earth. These self-guided tours take participants on a journey to explore some of DeLand's most iconic landmarks dating back 140-plus years. More than 20 sites are featured on the tours, which map out the city's four historic districts.

All winning cities will receive a trophy and be featured in the FLC's award-winning magazine, Quality Cities (QC), as well as on the website and social media outlets.

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Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida's municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida's cities, which are formed and governed by their citizens. The League believes in "Local Voices Making Local Choices," which focuses on the impact citizens and city leaders have in improving Florida's communities. For more information, visit flcities.com.