



April 9, 2013

City named 2013 All-America City finalist

THE COLONY — For the first time in the city’s history, The Colony has been named a finalist in the National Civic League’s 2013 All-America City Award program.

The National Civic League recognizes 10 communities each year for outstanding civic accomplishments. To win, each community must demonstrate innovation, inclusiveness, civic engagement and cross-sector collaboration by describing successful efforts to address pressing local challenges.

In their applications, All-America City finalists tell their community stories, list two of their most-pressing challenges and three outstanding community projects. In The Colony, those projects were the rebuild of Kids Colony 2 community park, the Grandscape Project and the Volunteer Assistance Program.

The All-America City designation has helped communities win grants and new resources and attract new employers. This year, the program is spotlighting community-wide initiatives that honor and benefit veterans and military families.

More than 600 communities have won the award, some as many as five times. All-America Cities have shown the ability to innovate in such areas as job creation, neighborhood revitalization, crime reduction, new housing for low-income people, improving education and engaging youth.

“AAC is more than an awards program,” NCL Interim Chair Liz Hollander said. “It gives communities a unique opportunity to celebrate their successes, but also to take a clear-eyed look at their civic capacities.”

The award program was founded in 1949 when a newspaper reporter approached the National Civic League (then known as the National Municipal League) with the idea of naming the 10 best governed cities each year. Instead, the league created a program that recognized cities for civic achievements.

“All-America Cities set an example and a standard of excellence for local problem-solvers throughout the country,” NCL President Gloria Rubio-Cortes said. “This is an award that gives us hope, ideas and inspiration as we look for ways to address the difficult challenges we face as communities and as a nation.”

The award program culminates in a three-day event where community delegations from the 20 finalists tell their stories of successful change to a national jury of business, nonprofit and local government experts. This year’s event is scheduled for June 14-16 in Denver, Colo.

Other finalists, listed alphabetically by state, are: Birmingham, Ala; Downey, Calif.; Brush, Colo.; Colorado Springs, Colo.; Montrose, Colo; Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Miami Lakes, Fla.; Sarasota County,

Fla.; Peoria, Ill.; Dubuque, Iowa; Owensboro, Kent.; Natchitoches, La.; Canton, N.Y.; Dunn, N.C.;
Garner, N.C.; Thomasville, N.C.; Folly Beach, S.C.; Norfolk, Va.; and Platteville, Wis.

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