2004 Florida City of Excellence

The First Award of its Kind
From the Florida League of Cities
City of Coral Springs — A Florida City of Excellence

Governance/Administration

The City of Coral Springs Florida has demonstrated governance and administration to the highest degree of efficiency, effectiveness and performance by becoming the first corporation — private or public — to twice win the Florida Governor’s Sterling Award for Organizational and Performance Excellence. Claiming the honor first in 1997, and again in 2003, this achievement validates our sustained commitment to delivering the highest quality of customer service to our community in the most responsive way.

Four City Commissioners and a Mayor, elected at large by the residents, establish City priorities and policies. They are the City’s “Board of Directors”. The City Manager, with the Senior Management Team, directs staff in the implementation of Commission policies and manages senior operations. Twenty-six citizen advisory committees provide input on customer requirements and priorities.

The City’s business model begins with a two-year strategic plan to set priority areas and key intended outcomes. Next, an annual Business Plan is developed to include specific project initiatives. The City’s Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Plan are linked to these project initiatives; which are in turn linked directly to departmental performance measures and individual workplans. Results are reported quarterly for 84 departmental performance measures and 29 key intended outcomes. Final outcomes are published in our Annual State of the City Report, which features key highlights in each of the six priority areas: Customer-Involved Government; Neighborhood and Environmental Vitality; Financial Health and Economic Development; Excellence in Education; Family, Youth and Community Values; and Respect for Religious and Ethnic Diversity.

City Leadership

Our City Leadership operates as a collaborative and collegial team, an attitude that extends throughout the ranks of our 900+ City employees. All members of the City’s Senior Management Team (Department Directors) have attended the week-long Leadership Development Program at the highly-acclaimed Center for Creative Leadership. This program involves a 360-degree review and in-depth development of leadership skills. All of our supervisors (100+) have also gone through the SkillScope Supervisors Assessment, a 360-degree review process designed by the Center for Creative Leadership.

The 360-degree review gives peers, supervisors, direct reports, and independent observers an opportunity to provide feedback on an individual’s performance; which is then shared in a private coaching session, along with tools and techniques for improvement. Professional development, empowerment and leadership are encouraged at every level, resulting in a high level of employee satisfaction and therefore a low turnover rate.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Coral Springs has a long tradition of intergovernmental cooperation with many successful examples, such as:

- A partnership with the School Board to construct a new high school on City land; as well as development and operation of the City’s successful Charter Middle and High School. The Charter School offers a number of innovative programs, including the ACE Academy, which integrates accelerated academics with professional mentoring from corporate leaders. These efforts have reduced the percentage of school overcrowding from 122% in 2001 to 113% in 2003.
Narrative continued

• Expansion of our environmentally-sensitive land program, such as the 14-acre Red Lichen Sanctuary, opened in partnership with Broward County, March 2004. The City has also completed 46 other environmental projects since 2001.

• Construction of a 72,000 square foot regional library; designed and built on-time and under budget by the City of Coral Springs and operated by Broward County. This branch has more than 150,000 items, and has maintained the highest monthly circulation rate in the County since its opening in February 2001.

• In 2003, City, County and State officials approved the necessary development agreements to begin the Downtown Coral Springs project. An inter-local agreement with Broward County will provide the City’s Community Redevelopment Agency with up-front tax increment financing funds upon commencement of commercial development. By agreement, the County and Hospital District will share in approximately two-thirds the cost of public improvements, which would have otherwise been fully absorbed by the City.

Citizen Outreach and Involvement

Citizen participation is actively encouraged through citizen outreach and involvement programs that create a sense of community for all. This inclusion is generated through visioning exercises; multicultural programs, such as our Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, Asian-Pacific Heritage Month, and Fiesta Coral Springs; interfaith celebrations such as the Festival of Eid and National Day of Prayer; and tolerance programs such as Unitown & Unikids.

Other unique ways in which our citizens can get involved include our Citizens Police Academy, Volunteer Firefighters, and other volunteer programs that resulted in 47,982 hours of service last year. This saves taxpayer dollars and keeps citizens involved in the process. The City also uses a variety of communications techniques to reach out to citizens, from print, web and direct mail; to television programming, and face-to-face interactions.

Along with our system of performance measurements, citizen feedback is an important indicator of our progress. Citizen opinions are collected through an annual telephone survey that in 2003, resulted in a 96% customer service rating and a 93% overall quality rating. Questions for the survey are established by using focus groups to make sure all emerging issues are explored. Other feedback sources include our “Slice of the Springs” neighborhood meetings, advisory committees, visioning exercises, complaint tracking/service request system, annual employee survey and other transactional surveys at City facilities.

Technology

Coral Springs is a leader in using innovative services and technology to better reach and serve its customers in a cost-effective manner. Key aspects include:

• The use of AVL technology to enhance police and fire response times; wireless laptop computers to allow for field reporting for police, fire and code officers, and more. Coral Springs recently implemented a shared unit response for fire services with the neighboring City of Margate, interfacing both dispatch centers to allow for closest available unit response. This project is the first of its kind in the area.

• The City’s web-based e-complaint tracking system, which allows anyone to input a complaint, comment or request for service. A drop-down menu helps route the inquiry to the appropriate department for response within 48 hours.

• The City’s TV station, which was recently named “Best Station in the Nation” in the Excellence in Government Programming Awards sponsored by the NATOA and the Discovery Channel Networks. This all digital station is also streamed live on the internet 24/7.

• The City’s website www.coralsprings.org, recognized for the third consecutive year by The Center for Digital Government, in partnership with the National League of Cities and Microsoft, as one of the “Top 10” best sites in the nation.
Innovative Programs and Services
The City of Coral Springs has incorporated innovative programs, services and public/private partnerships into its annual Business Plan Initiatives, reflecting the goals and overall mission of this City, “to be the premier City in Florida to Live, Work, and Raise a Family”. Some examples include:

• The use of community-oriented policing and innovative field reporting technologies, resulting in the lowest crime rate in Florida (cities over 100,000 population) and the highest percentage of cases cleared by arrest (94%) of any Broward County agency.

• The formation of more than 225 formal and informal neighborhood partnerships to provide matching grants to residents seeking to improve their neighborhoods.

• A world-class Aquatic Complex that attracts the finest caliber coaches and athletes, including Olympic-bound National Champions in both swimming and diving. This facility is part of our Sportsplex, an innovative public/private venture that includes a Tennis Center, Ice Complex, Dog Park, and Nature Center/Wildlife Hospital.

• A combination volunteer/career Fire Department, with a response rate of 4 minutes, 10 seconds (for emergency-only calls; calendar year 2003). The department also operates the only state-certified municipal EMS Training Center in Florida. Since its creation in 2001, more than 20 classes have graduated from our Firefighter Training Academy with a 91% overall pass rate on the state certification exam; and remarkably, three recruit classes had a 100% pass rate on state exams.

• Development of a false alarm reduction program which has resulted in savings of more than $308,250 per year. More importantly, the reduction in false alarm callouts permits staff to tend to other police services, which supports the key intended outcome of decreasing the crime rate.

Fiscal Management
The City’s financial strategies and techniques have led to Wall Street’s highest distinction — a AAA credit rating from both Moody’s and Fitch. FY ’04 was ushered in with no increase in the operating tax rate (for the 10th consecutive year), a 21% decrease in the debt service tax rate, no change in water and sewer rates, and no increase in parks/recreation user fees.

The City of Coral Springs believes in open and effective communication regarding the City’s financial condition, and citizens are given easy access to the City’s Budget, Business Plan and Strategic Plan through a variety of sources. These documents can be viewed or downloaded via the internet, or citizens may request it in publication form or our popular “eSource” resource CD. The CDs are a cost-effective way of sharing all of the City’s strategic and business process documents with residents and other benchmarkers.
The Walk at University is an example of the vibrant mixed-use development that is underway as part of the Downtown Coral Springs project.
Governance/Administration

Sterling & State of the City

Sterling Award Application

This comprehensive document (enclosed) outlines and details the foundations for the City’s success as an organization, and preceded the intensive site visit from Sterling examiners. The overall application and feedback from the site visit not only secured the City’s second Sterling Award, but also received the highest score total ever.

State of the City Report

This annual report (enclosed) is published annually and mailed to more than 50,000 residents and businesses in the City. The report outlines all of the major business plan initiatives and accomplishments from the previous year.

Please note that both documents, in addition to other City publications, are available in PDF format at www.coralsprings.org and on the Coral Springs eSource CD.
City of Coral Springs
Strategic Planning System

This diagram shows how the Strategic Plan, Business Plan, Annual Budget, Capital Improvement Program, and related performance measures are linked and interdependent. It also shows how the plans are developed over the course of each year.

This diagram first was developed in 1999 and has been used as a training tool, communication device, and as the starting point for improvement cycles.
Sources of Customer Feedback and Input

City staff members participate in strategic planning by using input from various customer sources, as well as management and policy analysis of emerging issues, demographic trends, and financial conditions.

| Sources of Customer Feedback and Input | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Elected Officials                     | Annual Citizen Survey           |
| “Slice of the Springs” Meetings      | Resident Advisory Committees    |
| Visioning Exercises                   | Neighborhood Partnership Teams  |
| Focus Groups                          | Service Requests                |
| Complaint Tracking System             | Workorder System                |
| Internal Surveys                      | Transaction Surveys             |
| SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Threats-Opportunities) Analysis | City Commission Meetings and Planning Workshops |
| Comprehensive Plan                    | Operational Data                |
| Trend Analysis                        | CityINFO Use Statistics         |
| Website Utilization Statistics        | Employee Surveys                |
| Cross-Functional Task Teams           | Internal Surveys                |
| General Elections                     | Requests for Proposals          |
| Senior Staff Retreats                 | Public Hearings                 |
| Local News Sources                    | Industry Associations           |
| Benchmarking                          | Professional Literature         |

Design Process for Services and Delivery Systems

All major City services and delivery processes are designed and revised using this model, which provides not only a proactive feedback loop, but also contributes to organizational learning that helps in the development of future services and processes.
City Leadership

A Commitment to Quality

The City Commission, Manager, Senior Management Team and staff members all work together toward one mission — “to be the premier City in Florida in which to live, work, and raise a family.” Leadership and empowerment at all levels are the key to success at the City of Coral Springs.

City staff members are committed to continuous quality improvement, and enjoy sharing their knowledge with other public and private organizations through the Sterling Council and other local and national groups.

All members of the City’s Senior Management Team have attended the highly-acclaimed Center for Creative Leadership.

City officials have hosted members from other cities and organizations on many occasions.
Coral Springs is committed to working in partnership with parents, teachers and the Broward County School Board to help ease school overcrowding and enhance the quality of education for all students.

The City has aggressively pursued the addition of new classroom space for Coral Springs students, resulting in 9,153 total new student stations over the past five years. This includes donating the land for the construction of Parkside Elementary, which provided 1,100 student stations upon its opening in August, 2001; and partnership for a High School JJJ. While the School Board is responsible for the construction of the high school, the City is providing the recreational amenities and other infrastructure improvements. The City will own and maintain the school’s athletic fields, which will be available for use by the public during non-school hours.

In 1998-99, the City secured state funding to operate the Coral Springs Charter School, which serves 1,600 middle and high school students. This project began when the City bought a nearly vacant mall and converted it into the Coral Springs Charter School; and partnered with the Broward County Libraries Division to build a new 72,000 sq. ft. regional library, next to the school.

Overall, the City’s efforts have reduced the percentage of school overcrowding from 122% in 2001 to 113% in 2003.

Students at the City’s Charter School can focus on technology and science, earn certification for computer skills or participate in executive internships with local businesses.
Intergovernmental Cooperation

Community Projects

The City continues to pursue a vigorous pro-environmental strategy that got its start back in 1995 with the passage of a General Obligation Bond to fund acquisitions of Environmentally-Sensitive Land (ESL). Capital funds are used as grant matches for county and/or state grants to purchase additional ESL sites and allow for wetland banking. These protected sites are now used for environmental education and outdoor learning opportunities, as well as for public tours.

The Coral Springs Charter School was recognized by the South Florida Business Journal as the “Real Estate Deal of the Year” due to its innovative redevelopment — the school was created through the redesign of an aging shopping mall.

Opened in 2001, the two-story Northwest Regional Library shares a common wall with the Charter School and features over 150,000 items for use by students and library patrons.

This new showcase of learning became a reality thanks to an interlocal agreement between the City and Broward County. The City was contracted to oversee design and construction of the facility, based on its reputation for completing such large scale construction projects on time and on budget. The project actually came in almost $800,000 under budget — which was used to fund additional site improvements such as landscaping and parking expansion.

In 2003, City, County and State officials approved the necessary development agreements to begin a comprehensive Downtown Coral Springs project. This mixed-use project involves the development of office, retail and entertainment/dining establishments around a central downtown intersection.

This new commercial development will help keep the residential property tax rate down and provide additional cultural and economic opportunities within the community. A Development Regional Impact (DRI) study was conducted to analyze the location, magnitude and impact of this project.

Traffic improvements were completed this summer and site work has begun on Phase I, which features 95,000 square feet of office and retail space, to be known as One Charter Place. The proposed plan includes a four-story office building, two retail structures, a free-standing bank building and a multi-use parking garage.

Florida League of Cities • Florida City of Excellence Award Entry • City of Coral Springs, Florida
Each year, the City hosts six district “Slice of Springs” neighborhood meetings. Residents are notified prior to their district meeting, and asked to return a survey card with any issues they want addressed. The meeting gives residents an overview of specific neighborhood issues, with the City staff assigned to that area (such as code, fire, police, parks, etc.) on hand to answer questions. Results are posted on the City’s website, www.coralsprings.org.
Meeting attendees receive information about projects in their area, as well as City publications, informational fact sheets, and giveaways. Post-meeting surveys show that 96.7% of all attendees found the meetings to be productive.

Department Directors and City staff members who cover the district, such as Code, Police, Fire, Parks and Public Works, are on hand to answer any questions or concerns.
Citizen Outreach and Involvement

Multicultural Events

The City is committed to recognizing our community’s rich and diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Festival of Eid

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Fiesta Coral Springs

National Day of Prayer

International Dinner Dance
Citizen Outreach and Involvement

Community Visioning

Citizen Outreach and Involvement

Community Visioning

The April 2004 “Reaching New Heights” Visioning Summit will allow residents and business owners to give input on their ideas for the City's future.

Participants in the 2003 CS YES Youth Empowerment Summit were given the opportunity to express their views among their peers, and to City staff.

The 2001 Unity in the Community promoted an active dialogue on diversity issues and resulted in many new multicultural activities.
Citizen Outreach and Involvement

Communication

The City’s Communications and Marketing Department works through a multitude of channels to ensure all citizens are informed on the latest news. The website and CityTV spread information electronically, and publications for residents and businesses are readily available at all City locations. The department is involved in the promotion of City events and programs, and produces flyers, banners, signs, displays and brochures, in addition to the quarterly Citizen magazine and the State of the City Report. Design and television pieces have been recognized on the state and national level, including the National Recreation and Parks Association’s award for Best Overall Communicator.

Flyers and posters at City locations draw attention to recreation classes and events, and are also made available on the website.

Vibrant displays highlight programs at City facilities.

Election banners were created to encourage high voter turnout.
Citizen Outreach and Involvement

Communication continued

The quarterly Citizen magazine is mailed to every resident and business owner.

Direct mailings of the State of the City Report and other pieces deliver important information, including business accomplishments and survey results.
Citizen Outreach and Involvement

40th Anniversary

In 2003, we celebrated the City’s 40th Anniversary with a year-long schedule of themed community events.
In response to continuing community concerns about traffic violations, the Police Department has been steadily increasing traffic enforcement. An ongoing initiative was launched to increase awareness about the importance of safe driving. Residents who signed a pledge to obey posted speed limits were given bumper stickers stating “It’s Our Town, Slow it Down.” The City also posted similar signs in neighborhoods and launched a series of televised public service announcements.

The Police Department continues to work with our public and private schools to provide a safe environment for all of our children. This includes proactive information to parents, and new training programs for School Crossing Guards and School Resource Officers in spotting and dealing with bullying behavior. Every school, from elementary to middle to high school, has its own School Resource Officer on site. The Police Department’s Special Response Team also worked extensively with all school principals to develop a uniform “active shooter” emergency response plan. (Prior to this, procedures varied from school to school).

The Police Department has maintained national accreditation since 1988. Coral Springs has the lowest crime rate in Florida (cities over 100,000 population) and the highest percentage of cases cleared by arrest (94%) of any Broward County agency.

Both patrol and motor officers use wireless laptop computers to allow for field reporting, thus increasing efficiency and response.

With a School Resource Officer now at every elementary school, more interaction and activities with students are possible, such as this visit from a U.S. Customs helicopter.
The Coral Springs Fire Department is unique in many ways — most notably, its structure as a combination volunteer/career fire department. (EMS service is staffed by full-time, career personnel, 24/7). The City has seven stations, and all engines and rescue units are equipped to handle advanced life support.

Innovative AVL technology is used to provide closest unit response, and incidents and trends are tracked closely using GIS-based mapping. Over the past four years, response times have improved significantly going from 8 minutes or less, 90% of the time to 4 min. 10 sec., 90% of the time (for emergency calls/calendar year 2003).

The Department is remarkably self-sufficient, generating revenue by providing service to the neighboring City of Parkland, and operating an inter-facility transport service for non-emergency patients. In 2001, the City began the Coral Springs Fire Academy that has quickly gained a reputation for having the best instructors and a high average pass rate of 91% on the state certification exams.

Coral Springs recently became the only municipality in Florida authorized to operate a state-certified EMS Training Academy. Flashover training is just one of the scenarios Coral Springs Fire Academy recruits experience. The dive team trains regularly to ensure they are prepared for an underwater rescue. Firefighters frequently give demonstrations to the public to promote public safety and fire awareness.

All engines and rescue units are equipped with advanced life saving equipment.

Ground clearing has begun for a new Public Safety Training and Technology Center.
The City’s website, www.coral springs.org, contains over 4,000 pages of information about City services, and was recognized for the third consecutive year by The Center for Digital Government, in partnership with the National League of Cities and Microsoft, as one of the “Top 10” best sites in the nation. Underwritten by Microsoft, the annual Digital Cities survey ranks and examines how city governments have used digital technologies to improve delivery of services to citizens. Online services include building permit and inspection scheduling and tracking; recreation signups, water payments, interactive community calendar and more.
The City of Coral Springs clearly demonstrates the idea of “Excellence in Government Programming”, and has become a standout station for our innovative programming, despite extremely limited resources. This has been accomplished by establishing a variety of community partnerships, to enlist volunteers as on-air talent and expand our outreach into the community.

Our CityTV channel was established as part of a cable franchise agreement in April, 2001. Programming began with just 30 hours a week, M-F, and the station was shared with another entity. In February 2002, the station began to broadcast directly from City Hall, instead of the Cable hub. In April, 2002, a full-time videographer was hired. And in December 2002, the station went full-time, 24/7. Less than one year later CityTV was named “Best Station in the Nation” in the Excellence in Government Programming Awards, sponsored by NATOA, and was featured on a 60-second national commercial that aired on Discovery Networks as a tribute to community programming.

The City of Coral Springs is committed to providing viewers with quality programming covering a broad range of government information and services. Shows and highlights cover topics such as: environmental; educational; cultural and sporting events; community news; fire and crime prevention; youth and family; economic development; and more. Helpful text slides, such as our A-Z Guide, upcoming events, Homeowner’s Code Manual, and job postings are run on a daily basis.

“Behind the Scenes” segments highlight City departments, and use staff members to explain their job duties.

The “Codes & Courtesies” series covers topics from the Homeowner’s Manual, which helps educate residents about frequently asked questions and code enforcement concerns.
The Coral Springs’ Neighborhood Partnership Program makes matching grants available to neighborhoods interested in community outreach or beautification.

Community Outreach Grants enhance the safety of neighborhood residents. Examples include: upgrading facilities at a neighborhood park, providing education at the neighborhood level, neighborhood watch organizations programs, citizen patrols, child safety programs, code compliance programs and planning special neighborhood events. Grant money cannot be used to fund ongoing operations.

Beautification Grants encourage the beautification of rights-of-way or City-owned property in or around a neighborhood through low maintenance landscaping or other improvements. Examples include: neighborhood or park signage, median or neighborhood park landscaping, additional street tree planting, low water use landscaping projects, enhanced lighting for safety purposes, removal of nuisance species and removal of inappropriate trees near above-ground utility lines. Grant money cannot be used for maintenance or to replace required landscaping.

A neighborhood is required to match at least 50% of the value of the project. The City and the association can match with cash, in-kind services or sweat equity. Sweat equity consists of volunteer hours measured at $10 per hour, unless professional services are rendered.

Since the program’s inception in 1995, more that 225 formal and informal neighborhood partnership projects have been completed. For the last six years, this program has generated more than 30 projects a year.
Innovative Programs and Services

Sportsplex

The Sportsplex offers a wide variety of recreational and educational areas, all on the same 180-acre property.

The Aquatic Complex is a premier swimming and diving facility, complete with two competition pools and a diving pool, a unique shallow-entry teaching pool, and dry land training and fitness center. This world-class facility is host to national and international meets for swimming, diving, synchronized swimming and water polo.

The Tennis Center of Coral Springs, built to host competitive tournaments, is South Florida’s only municipal red clay tennis facility. Features include a clubhouse with restaurant and media room, as well as hard and clay courts.

The City of Coral Springs expanded the Sportsplex through private partnerships, leading to the opening of the dual-rink, Incredible Ice, which is open to the public when not in use as a training facility by the Florida Panthers.

A new high school, slated to be open in August 2004, will bring with it a state-of-the-art athletic complex, complete with football, baseball, basketball, softball, soccer, track and handball facilities, that will be used by the students during the day and open to the public after school hours.

Dogs are not allowed in many City parks, but at the Sportsplex they are welcome in Dr. Paul’s Pet Care Center Dog Park. The two-acre park, developed in partnership with a local veterinarian, features an obstacle course with exercise and play equipment, water fountains, asphalt pathways, benches and picnic shelters.

The Sawgrass Nature Center & Wildlife Hospital is being built on five acres of land donated by the City of Coral Springs. A two-story Environmental Learning Center will offer children and adults a chance to learn about Florida wildlife, visit with animals and walk a nature trail through a beautifully restored South Florida wetland preserve. The Wildlife Hospital will rehabilitate and release injured, sick and orphaned birds, mammals and reptiles. Non-releasable animals will be housed in natural habitats on view to the public.

The Sportsplex is conveniently located to both residents and out-of-town visitors, making it a perfect location for sporting events.
In 1997, due to the rising number of false alarms in both residential and business applications, the City began a comprehensive program to reduce the number of false alarms. The City’s false alarm rate has decreased from 10,836 false alarms in 1997 to its annual current rate of 6,726 false alarms.

Efforts continue to improve the false alarm rate with several new initiatives, such as alarm dispatch management and control, alarm company partnerships stressing the implementation of “best practices” and elimination of unlicensed alarm companies.

Costing out the response of officers to a false alarm at $75 per false alarm, the savings to the City is now more than $308,250 per year. More importantly, the reduction in false alarms permits staff to tend to other police services, which supports the key intended outcome of decreasing the crime rate.
Fiscal Management

Budget and Strategic Planning

The eSource CD contains an archive of documents from 1996 to 2004, including the City’s Annual Budgets, Strategic Plans, Business Plans, Annual Reports, Citizen magazines, the Codes and Courtesies Homeowner’s Manual, and many other publications.

The CD is available on the City’s website, and is an environmentally-friendly way to provide copies of the many publications in a small, easy-to-distribute package.
Award Entry

Additional Materials

Also supplied with the Award Entry:

• State of the City Report 2003
• Coral Springs In the News
• Summer Fun Guide 2004
• Citizen Magazine