

NEWS RELEASE

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TEMPLE PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

(Temple) – On Tuesday, October 13, the National Recreation & Parks Association recognized the finalists for this year’s prestigious Gold Medal Award. The Gold Medal Award is the highest award the parks and recreation profession recognizes amount the city’s and states across the United States. Among that elite group of finalists was the Temple Parks & Leisure Services Department. This is the first time that a Central Texas city has ever been recognized in the Gold Medal program.

“We were extremely honored,” Parks & Leisure Services Director Ken Cicora said. “To stand alongside cities like Milwaukee, Fort Worth and Raleigh, really says a lot about how far we have come as a community.”

Temple was one of only four communities in the nation to be selected as a finalist in Class III (population 50,001 – 100,000). Finalists in the six different population categories hailed from nine different states. Temple and Fort Worth were the only Texas cities to be recognized.

In fact, Temple was the only finalist in the Class III category that was not a Park District. Park Districts are government tax districts that are able to raise their own tax funds to pay for projects and programs.

“I think it says a lot about the support we have from both the Temple community and our city government that we are able to compete with groups like those,” Cicora said. “It really is obvious to me that this award belongs as much to the people of Temple as it does to our department.”

On Wednesday morning, October 14, the 2009 Gold Medal winners were announced. In the Class III division, the winner was Hoffman Estates (Illinois) Park District.



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“Of course we were a little disappointed not to have won the big award,” Cicora admits. “But it became very clear throughout the remainder of the conference that just having been selected as a finalist really was a huge honor.”

“As you’d talk to other conference attendees, a number of them would say things like, ‘You’re from Temple? Congratulation on being a finalist this year!’” Parks & Leisure Services Marketing Coordinator James Stafford said. “It really made me realize how this Gold Medal recognition has really helped to put Temple on the map for the parks and recreation industry.”

The Gold Medal Award is the most prestigious recognition available in the parks and recreation industry. It is given to agencies that have reached the highest levels of excellence in developing parks and open spaces, protecting the environment, and serving every area of their community.

As a finalist, the Parks & Leisure Services Department was required to produce a 12 minute video communicating the achievements of the Department. On October 26, that video will be available for viewing on the city’s government access channel (channel 10 on Time Warner Cable) and on the Department’s website (www.templeparks.net).

“We’re very proud of the video,” Stafford said. “I think it does a great job of showing some of the great features of our department and the Temple community.”

For more information about the NRPA Gold Medal program or to arrange an interview, please contact James Stafford at (254) 298-5414.

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