



NEWS

For Immediate Release

Local Information Contacts:

Mayor Bob McCaslin
479-271-5966 or bmccaslin@bentonvillear.com

Shelli Kerr, Planning Services Manager
479-271-6826 or skerr@bentonvillear.com

Bentonville wins Arkansas Shine Award

City honored for holistic approach to community, environmental improvement

BENTONVILLE (Nov. 22, 2011) – The City of Bentonville has won its first Arkansas Shine Award from the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission (KAB) for outstanding environmental and community improvement efforts. KAB representatives presented the award to city officials today at a reception at the Bentonville Downtown Activity Center.

The Arkansas Shine Awards program recognizes communities that are making significant strides in providing programs and instituting policies to create sustainable communities. Bentonville is one of six statewide recipients of the fourth annual Arkansas Shine Awards.

“Bentonville is an excellent community to live in and to visit,” wrote Mayor Bob McCaslin in Bentonville’s Arkansas Shine Awards entry. “We pride ourselves on taking a comprehensive approach to sustainability and improving quality of life for our more than 35,000 residents and approximately 250,000 annual visitors.”

Bentonville’s award entry highlighted the city’s efforts to prepare the community for the November opening of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, which is estimated to attract more than 250,000 visitors annually. In addition to introducing extensive wayfinding signage, the city launched a variety of beautification and tourism initiatives, including a monthly landscaping recognition program for community homeowners and businesses, large-scale public landscaping efforts, and the opening of the Downtown Activity Center.

Long-standing attractions such as community bike trails and parks and well-established community initiatives – including the city’s tree-planting and downtown enhancement programs – have also been expanded in anticipation of the Crystal Bridges grand opening.

“The opening of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art will establish Bentonville as an important Arkansas tourist destination and makes community appearance a top priority,” McCaslin stated. “We are embracing the museum’s opening as a catalyst for future economic

development and hope to create an experience that will convince visitors to make Bentonville their hometown.”

The city’s Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG) Campaign was also featured in Bentonville’s award entry. This community education program is designed to increase residents’ awareness of the negative impact these food waste products have on the city’s sewer system and water quality when disposed of improperly. The program is presented to adults via a city newsletter, while a complementary children’s program was created to reach local elementary students with materials featuring a superhero character, the “Bentonville FOG Fighter.”

“KAB is eager to recognize the well-rounded efforts by communities all across the state and their commitment to civic improvement,” said Robert Phelps, director of KAB. “It takes dedicated leaders and volunteers in many organizations to keep towns clean and green, from litter prevention to recycling programs to beautification and community development.”

Arkansas Shine Awards entrants were evaluated and ranked using performance standards for 1) creating environmental initiatives to reduce litter, encourage recycling and enhance natural beauty; 2) positively impacting economic development; 3) developing public-private partnerships to accomplish goals; 4) securing project funding; and 5) enforcing litter laws and city ordinances for property upkeep. One Arkansas Shine Award winner was named in each of several population categories, and a statewide Superstar Award was presented to one community that had won multiple Shine Awards in previous years.

Other 2011 Arkansas Shine Award recipients are Brookland (Craighead County), Harrison (Boone County), Little Rock (Pulaski County), Nashville (Howard County) and Arkansas Shine Superstar Award winner Fayetteville (Washington County).

About Keep Arkansas Beautiful

As a certified state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful Inc., Keep Arkansas Beautiful works to inspire and educate individuals to reduce litter, recycle and keep Arkansas beautiful. It operates as a division of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and is overseen by a nine-member commission appointed by the governor. KAB is funded by 1 percent of the eighth-cent conservation tax and, by utilizing volunteers, returns to the state a cost benefit of \$15.34 in community service for each program dollar spent. For more information about KAB, call toll-free 888-742-8701 or visit KeepArkansasBeautiful.com, or stay connected at [Facebook.com/KeepArkansasBeautiful](https://www.facebook.com/KeepArkansasBeautiful) or [YouTube.com/DontLitterAR](https://www.youtube.com/DontLitterAR).