



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2009 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 13, 2009

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Brazos Valley African-American Museum

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Bryan, Texas

Jurisdiction population(s): 72,500

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2008, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: July Year: 2006

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Montréal, Québec, Canada, September 2009. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: David Watkins Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: Bryan, Texas

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: April Saginor

Title: Communications Director Jurisdiction: Bryan, Texas

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## **Brazos Valley African-American Museum: Nominated for Community Partnership Award**

### ***Problem assessment, challenge or need that prompted local government to develop the program:***

The City of Bryan's challenge was to showcase our cultural diversity and preserve history in a venue that could be available for future generations.

### ***Implementation and costs:***

The Brazos Valley African-American Museum began as a collection of news articles and photographs. Through community donations of more than \$700,000 and more than \$150,000 in grant funds secured by the City of Bryan, the museum has grown into a community landmark that chronicles the tragedies and triumphs of African-American life from ancient civilizations to present day.

The City of Bryan also donated the land on which the museum sits – a site that formerly housed an African-American school as far back as 1885. The surrounding area was known as Freedman Town, where the first free slaves and their ancestors lived. The City of Bryan secured state funding to build sidewalks around the museum, and renamed a street in honor of the facility's founders, Willie and Mell Pruitt.

The Brazos Valley African-American Museum opened to the public in 2006.

### ***Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program:***

A significant objective of the museum, according to its founders, is to "portray, specifically, to the younger generation, the strong foundation, struggles and accomplishments of their ancestors." As evidenced by hundreds of visitors to the museum each year, we believe a tangible result is being realized.

### ***Lessons learned during planning, implementation and analysis of the program:***

One lesson learned from this experience is the tremendous power of a determined grassroots effort. The museum was the vision of a few individuals in the community. These few individuals collected historical documents, art and other material in their houses for years. Once a "collection" was gathered, a facility was needed to display the collection. More years were spent raising funds.

Through many partnerships, sponsorships, contributions and creative funding methods, a quality facility was finally opened. The effort of these few individuals is proof that anything worth pursuing is possible.