



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2010 Annual Awards Program Professional Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010

Complete this form (sections 1, 2, and 3 as applicable) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominee

Professional Award Category (*select only one*):

- Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane
- Award for Career Development in Memory of L. P. Cookingham
- Assistant Excellence in Leadership Award in Memory of Buford M. Watson, Jr.
- Academic Award in Memory of Stephen B. Sweeney

Name of person being nominated: Thomas M. Markus
Title of Nominee: City Manager
Jurisdiction/organization where nominee is employed: Birmingham, Michigan

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Christian Wuerth
Title: Management Analyst Jurisdiction: Birmingham, Michigan
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City: Birmingham State/Province: MI
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SECTION 3 Endorsement of Elected Official (for Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane nominations only) **or CAO** (for Assistant Excellence in Leadership Nominations only)

Signature of endorsing elected official or CAO:



Name of endorsing elected official or CAO:

Rackeline J. Hoff

Title:

Mayor

Jurisdiction:

Birmingham, Michigan

Street address:

151 Martin

City:

Birmingham

State/Province:

MI

Zip/Postal Code:

48009

Country:

USA

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

**Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane
Nomination of Thomas M. Markus (2010)**

The City of Birmingham, Michigan is pleased to nominate Thomas M. Markus, its City Manager of the past 21 years, for the ICMA Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane. Mr. Markus' career in public service spans almost thirty-six years and he has served a total of six communities in three Midwestern States. His distinguished career began as an Administrative Assistant in Waseca, Minnesota in 1973 and he went on to serve in the capacity as chief administrator beginning in 1977. His current tenure with the City of Birmingham, Michigan began in May 1989 and his profound leadership has resulted in numerous achievements that have fostered the City's desirability as one of the premiere communities to live, work and experience in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Throughout his career with the City, Mr. Markus has exercised his leadership and commitment to his profession by supporting and advocating for the Council/Manager form of government and the tenets of the ICMA Code of Ethics. Mr. Markus has been an active member in the ICMA, which includes serving as a Credentialed Manager since 2002 and a Legacy Leader since 2009. Locally, Mr. Markus has served as Past President, Board Member and Chair of several committees with the Michigan Local Government Management Association and as a Board Member with the Michigan Municipal League. Additionally, Mr. Markus served as President of the Oakland County Manager's Association in 1992. This commitment to service was recognized when Mr. Markus was accepted into the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University in 1999.

Over the nearly 21 years Mr. Markus has served as City Manager for Birmingham, he has fostered the transformation of the City's downtown through the development and

implementation of the Downtown Birmingham 2016 plan, an urban design plan created with the assistance of Andres Duany, which has made the City more pedestrian and business friendly. Mr. Markus recognized the potential threats to the City's core downtown area by the construction of a new 1.5 million square foot, upscale indoor mall just miles from Birmingham. Among the initiatives that resulted from his efforts were the updating of the zoning regulations and streetscape standards throughout the commercial corridor, development of a beautification program throughout the commercial district, and the reconstruction of one of the major downtown roads to improve pedestrian safety. These efforts have resulted in a substantial transformation and investment in both public and private properties while preserving key elements of the City's historic downtown. In further recognizing the need to enhance the City's downtown, Mr. Markus was instrumental in the development of new state legislation that allowed for the creation of Principal Shopping Districts, which was enacted to benefit commercial districts throughout the State of Michigan.

Mr. Markus has also led an effort to strengthen the city's neighborhoods and commercial districts through aggressive infrastructure improvements resulting in the replacement of over 18 miles of water main, 20.6 miles of sewer lines, complete reconstruction or significant improvements to all 13 bridges within the City, the reconstruction of over 21 miles of roads, and the resurfacing of over 12 miles of roads. All this was completed in a City of only 4.73 square miles. Under Mr. Markus' direction, the City has also constructed three retention treatment basins to treat flows from the City's mostly combined-sewer infrastructure, resulting in less runoff into area streams and rivers. Other initiatives directed by Mr. Markus include improved effectiveness of solid waste collection and resident access to information through the City's website. He has also led efforts to collaborate with a neighboring community to construct a

multi-modal transit center to serve the region and spur economic development in both communities.

In 2001, the City's voters approved a \$25 million parks and recreation bond, which provided for a number of significant parks and recreation projects being completed under Mr. Markus' leadership. These projects include the purchase and conversion of a former school site into an 8.32 acre community park near the City's downtown and a current project to redevelop and expand a community park adjacent to City Hall and the public library. Another project involved the complete restoration of Quarton Lake, including work to improve water quality and improve adjacent park space. This project received numerous state and national awards, including being named the *Project of the Year (Less than \$2 million)* by the American Public Works Association. Similarly, the renovation of Booth Park, which included a community-wide effort to construct a new playground area and received more than \$170,000 in private contributions, received several state and national awards, including the *Outstanding Site Design Award* from the Michigan Parks & Recreation Association and being named the *Project of the Year (Less than \$2 million)* by the American Public Works Association in 2008. Other projects included upgrades to the two nine-hole golf courses, construction of an inline-skating and skateboard park, and enhancements to natural trails along the Rouge River.

From a financial standpoint, Mr. Markus has continued to focus staff and elected officials on thinking ahead through the use of annual 5-year financial forecasts and the recent conversion to biannual budget process to better understand long-term projections and challenges facing the City. He has pushed for improvements to City facilities in order to reduce ongoing utility costs through installation of more energy efficient equipment and lighting and led an effort to renovate the City's historic City Hall to better serve the public. The City was able to develop a strong

financial position under Mr. Markus' leadership, resulting in the earning of a "AAA" bond rating, which has been retained despite the difficult economic circumstances in Michigan during the past decade.

Mr. Markus' efforts have not gone unnoticed. On a national level, the City of Birmingham has received recognition as a "walkable community", was named one of the top 25 cities to live in by relocateamerica.com (2007), and named by CNNMoney.com as one of the top 20 "Best places for a healthy retirement" (2009). The City was also recognized by the Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports as one of only communities in the state to earn the Gold Level designation of the *Promoting Active Community Award* in 2009. Throughout all of these projects, and those for which the future path has been laid during his tenure, Mr. Markus has continued to focus on the long-term vision for the City of Birmingham to remain as one of the premier communities in the State and region. He has been a vocal advocate for seeking input from the community, both residential and business, through the use of community forums, charrettes, and 20 city advisory boards. He has worked with a variety of individuals and organizations and is one of the most respected public officials in both the immediate area and the State.

During his career, Mr. Markus has earned the respect of the City's elected leaders, community leaders and staff, as well as State and regional organizations for his profound knowledge, professionalism, ethics and effectiveness in his position. Mr. Markus has served as a transformational leader offering transparency, open communication, accepting new ideas and always abiding by the highest ethical tenets and standards of the profession. When needed, he reaches out for input and ideas but does not hesitate in making the tough and necessary decisions in support of City policy and direction. This style has afforded him the ability to adapt to the

changes occurring in the community during his 21 years in Birmingham. His openness to new ideas and views, complimented by a friendly personality has made him approachable from anyone from State and Federal elected officials to the City's maintenance staff.

Mr. Markus has also been known for mentoring junior members of his staff and pushing for their involvement in professional development programs, such as the ICMA Emerging Leadership Development Program. These efforts also include a successful intern program which has produced a number of "graduates" who have gone on to a variety of careers following their Birmingham experience, including successful City Managers, Planners, Civil Engineers. Mr. Markus successfully implemented a staffing succession and development plan several years ago to develop the next generation of City Department Heads to ensure a smooth transition upon the retirement of the existing Department Heads. Though Mr. Markus plans to retire from the City of Birmingham in 2011, his 21 years of leadership have prepared the City and its staff for a successful future.

For these reasons, the City of Birmingham respectfully nominates Thomas M. Markus for the Award for Career Excellence in Honor of Mark E. Keane for 2010.