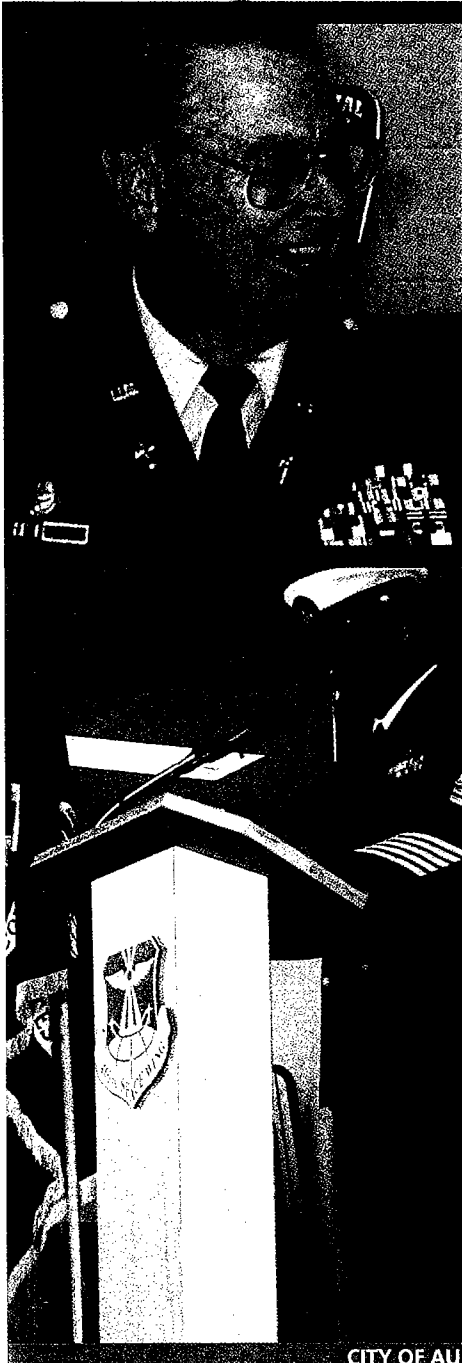


2005 ICMA Program Excellence Award Nomination

Population Category: 50,000+

AWARD CATEGORY

Program Excellence Award for Outstanding Partnerships-Intergovernmental Cooperation



SCOPE, IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF THE ACTIVITY/CONTRIBUTION

Aurora, Colo., is steeped in military tradition dating back to 1921 when the U.S. government tapped the community as the new site for Fitzsimons Army Hospital, a medical facility to treat the wounded of World War I.

Military presence in Aurora further developed in 1942 when the Army Air Corps constructed Buckley Field. This, combined with the burgeoning Lowry Field nearby, bolstered the military's impact on Aurora.

For decades, military servicemen and civilian workers served as a driving economic force in this growing city on Colorado's Front Range.

Closures of Lowry Air Force Base and Fitzsimons in the early 1990s led to creative transformations of former military installations into a master-planned residential development and a "life sciences city," respectively.

The military tradition in Aurora, however, continued into the 21st century with Buckley. The Air Force base plays a leading role in U.S. defense and aerospace endeavors, making military servicemen an ever-more crucial component of Aurora's population.

In 2004, Aurora celebrated its rich military history with the 10th anniversary of its Veterans Salute, a grand tribute to veterans that emerged a decade ago as a modest picnic lunch recognizing Veterans Day and those locally who had served.

The City of Aurora's Veterans Salute was created in 1994 as an alternative to more common outdoor Veterans Day celebrations. The inaugural event attracted 100 veterans and guests for a meal at the Aurora Senior Center.

In subsequent years, the event has grown in breadth and depth, selling out annually since its inception. Because of this, the event moved permanently to Buckley Air Force Base, making Buckley a critical intergovernmental partner in this annual salute. In 2004, more than 560 guests attended the Veterans Salute social and luncheon.

The City of Aurora honors and recognizes local veterans of all branches of the



military and reserves through the Veterans Salute. The event is both social and intergenerational, giving veterans who served a chance to visit with fellow veterans, active duty personnel, reservists and youth.

In addition, the recognition that occurs during the event inspires positive feelings among the veterans toward the City of Aurora, Buckley Air Force Base and the community partners who participate. More importantly, the veterans feel respected and acknowledged for their service and sacrifices, enjoying the opportunity to express their gratitude to the active-duty military and reservists also in attendance.

EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

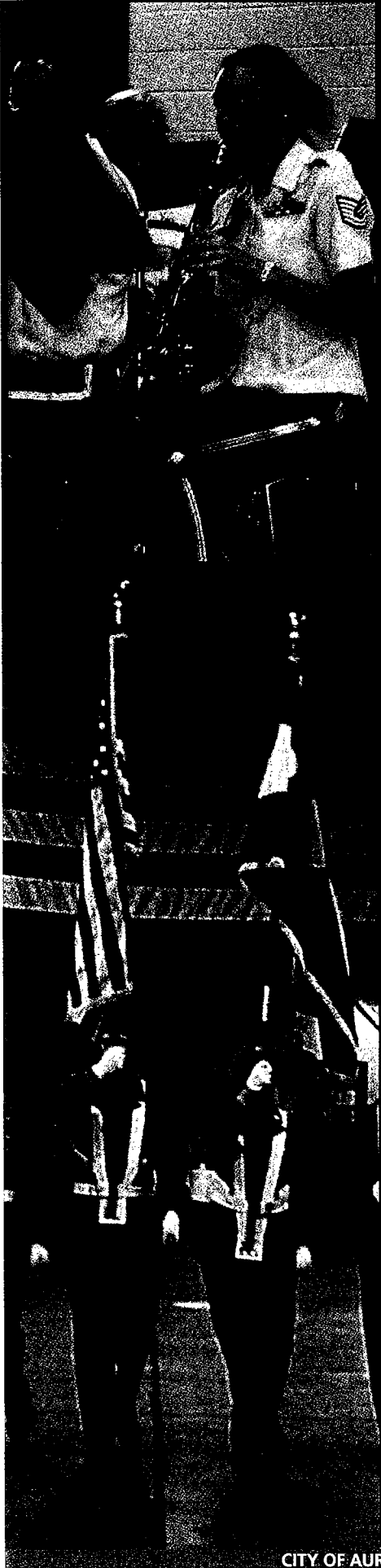
The partnership between the City of Aurora and Buckley Air Force Base has enabled the Veterans Salute to evolve into a truly stellar community event.

Buckley Air Force Base extended the hand of partnership to the City of Aurora in 1998, inviting the city to move the event to the base to enable more veterans to attend. From 1998 to 2000, the event took place in Buckley's Colorado Air National Guard Dining Facility, which accommodated 250 guests. The event continued to sell out, prompting the City of Aurora and Buckley to shift the Veterans Salute to Buckley's Hangar 909 in 2001 and allowing for 500 guests. In 2004, Buckley's new state-of-the-art fitness center allowed the event to relocate again, accommodating 560 guests for the 10th anniversary celebration.

Using Buckley Air Force Base is a special privilege, and access to the base is a key logistical issue each year. Those event attendees who do not have security clearance to enter the base provide their social security numbers when registering, and most participants travel in groups to the event using Regional Transportation District (RTD) buses to the base. RTD's service simplifies access and security measures, and has kept attendance costs reasonable.

Buckley's willingness to supply the event venue and staff assistance at no cost to the city is significant, contributing to the thousands of dollars in total in-kind support and donations that allow planners to keep the ticket cost at \$10, less than half the actual cost per person.

In 2004 alone, the Veterans Salute directly affected more than 560 veterans, active-duty military and other attendees and more than 250 youth participants



while indirectly impacting countless others through media coverage, the ongoing partnership between Buckley and the City of Aurora, and the business relationships forged because of the event.

QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE

Buckley Air Force Base's commander embraces the Veterans Salute and enjoys the positive public relations and goodwill the event generates metrowide for the base. As a result, Buckley Air Force Base, the 460th Space Wing and the Colorado Air National Guard, 140th Wing, continue to supply essential in-kind assistance for the event.

Furthermore, the event planning committee reflects the community's commitment to the event. Chaired by a veteran, the committee consists of representatives from the United Veterans of Colorado; the Air Force Association; the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Defense Council; Buckley Air Force Base; the Colorado Air National Guard, 140th Wing; KEZW-AM 1430; sponsor representatives; and the Aurora Senior Center.

During the 2004 event, Aurora's mayor, Colorado's top military leadership and the state's lieutenant governor made remarks honoring veterans. More than 40 Air Force Joint Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFJROTC) Cadets assisted in last year's Veterans Salute with event-related logistics. Ten of the cadets performed an impressive precision drill. A group of 120 fifth-graders performed an inspirational song during the program, moving many in the audience to tears. Another group of 75 middle-school students performed a skit explaining the significance of Veterans Day and the history of The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Indeed, the positive outcomes of the event are numerous.

The veterans feel honored and recognized, and the organizations that participated conveyed their satisfaction in participating through positive feedback. The young people who participate enjoy the opportunity to serve. Buckley Air Force Base and Colorado Air National Guard feel the event is a substantially positive way to demonstrate their support for the community and local veterans. Finally, participating organizations now ask to be involved in future Veterans Salutes.