2017 OLGA Winners

Gateway Lifetime Public Service Award

Dr. Edward Hillhouse
Nancy Thompson

Exemplary Accomplishment by a Local Government Jurisdiction, Agency or Individual

David K. Tan, M.D.
Manufacture/Craft Your Future
Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois
Madison Employment and Training Workforce Investment Board
Mid America Workforce Investment Board
Southern Illinois Builders Association
St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department

Exemplary Intergovernmental Collaboration

St. Louis Regional Freightway
Consolidated Municipal Courts
City of St. Ann
City of Beverly Hills
City of Charlack
City of Northwoods
City of Vinita Park
City of Wellston

Exemplary Public/Non-profit Collaboration

House of Neighborly Service and the city of Waterloo
City Energy Project
City of St. Louis

Leadership in Planning and Design Innovation

St. Louis County Library District — “Your Library Renewed”
Upper Silver Creek Watershed Plan
HeartLands Conservancy
Madison County
## Program

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We are proud to present these 2017 Outstanding Local Government Achievement Awards

The OLGAs:

Each year, East-West Gateway Council of Governments presents its Outstanding Local Government Achievement Awards recognizing the extraordinary work of municipal, county, special purpose and school district officials in the St. Louis region. It does not matter whether a jurisdiction, department or district is large or small, volunteer or professional, part-time or full-time. We look for individuals who provide the highest level of leadership; for projects and partnerships that raise the bar; and for jurisdictions that provide a level of excellence, expertise and service in local government for all to emulate. We challenged you to bring those who embody these qualities forward for consideration and we honor them today.

Gateway Lifetime Public Service Award
Honors exemplary individuals who have given a lifetime of service to the public sector.

Exemplary Accomplishment by a Local Government Jurisdiction, Agency or Individual
Honors local government jurisdictions, special purpose and school districts, public agencies and individuals for unique achievements in the creation and implementation of exemplary government programs or projects and exceptional public sector contributions.

Exemplary Public/Private or Public/Non-profit Collaboration
Honors successful joint ventures between local government jurisdictions or agencies and private or non-profit organizations.

Exemplary Intergovernmental Collaboration
Honors cooperative efforts between local government jurisdictions or agencies resulting in positive changes in the community.

Leadership in Planning and Design Innovation
Honors forward-thinking planning and design efforts for public spaces or community development that challenges the way people think about their surroundings.
We recognize the great work that local governments and local government officials are doing across the region.

Please join us as we applaud all of our 2017 OLGA nominees.

Age-Friendly Community Action Plan and Age-Friendly 2017 Municipal Toolkit
St. Louis County

Barbara Sondag
City of Olivette

Calle Cherokee Designation
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Cherokee Street Business Association

Dr. Steve Brotherton
Affton School District

Kenrick Plaza Redevelopment
City of Shrewsbury

Municipal Merger of Cities of Vinita Park and Vinita Terrace
Beyond Housing, City of Vinita Park, City of Vinita Terrace, St. Louis Boundary Commission

North County Transit Center and Civic Center Transit Center
Metro Transit Department of Design and Construction

P4 Partnership Program
Scott Air Force Base, Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, Air Force Community Partnership Program

“Reimagine Rock Hill” Campaign
City of Rock Hill

Safety Town
City of Kirkwood, the Magic House, St. Louis Children’s Museum

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Advisory Group
Scott Air Force Base

St. Louis Regional Clean Cities Program

Trojan Park in the St. Vincent Greenway
Great Rivers Greenway, City of Wellston, Municipal Park Grant Commission of St. Louis County, St. Louis County Parks Department

Vietnam War Memorial Renovation Project
City of Wentzville
Dr. Edward Hillhouse has served the residents of Franklin County and the St. Louis region as an educator, superintendent, presiding commissioner and executive director. Whenever leadership has been needed, Ed has always stepped forward, providing nearly 50 years of dedicated public service.

Ed began his career in education as a teacher in Pattonville before coming to the Meramec Valley School District where he would work for the next 30 years, eventually retiring as superintendent. A champion of innovative ideas, his leadership left an indelible mark on the school district. Among his many accomplishments at Meramec Valley, Ed established an at-risk program to assist struggling students that dramatically reduced the district’s high school drop-out rate and gained international attention as a model program.

The education profession benefited from Ed’s contributions at the state level as well. He was an active member of the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) and served a term as the organization’s president. In recognition of his impact on the lives of young people, Ed twice received MASA’s prestigious Pearce Leadership Award and, following his retirement, was honored by MASA with an Outstanding Emeritus Educator award.

Ed continued his career in public service following his retirement from the school district and was elected Franklin County Presiding Commissioner in 2002. He served eight years in office, leveraging his finance and administration skills to carry through several significant projects, including the construction of new government and judicial centers and the renovation of the county’s historic courthouse.

In 2010, Ed took on a regional leadership position as the Executive Director of East-West Gateway Council of Governments. In his nearly five years in this role, Ed brought together elected leaders from across the St. Louis area to upgrade the region’s infrastructure and emergency preparedness capabilities. Following a study of the area’s freight assets commissioned during his tenure, Ed was instrumental in the creation of the St. Louis Regional Freightway, which is positioned to be a driver of economic development for the region.

Most recently, the Meramec Valley School District asked Ed to reprise his role as superintendent for the Meramec School District on an interim basis while the board conducted a search for a permanent replacement. A long-time instructor for Missouri Baptist University, Ed has also continued to train a new generation of teachers and administrators as dean of the university’s Franklin County Regional Learning Center.

Throughout his career, Ed has remained dedicated to the county he calls home. His numerous volunteer activities include serving for many years on the boards of the Tri-County Senior Center, the Pacific Chamber of Commerce and the Franklin County United Way.

Reflecting back on his long tenure in public life in a recent newspaper article, Ed said he doesn’t measure success by the titles he’s held but instead by the difference he’s made. As the long list of accomplishments above attests, Ed has been very successful indeed.
Nancy Thompson

Nancy Thompson’s career in public service has had a huge impact on the St. Louis region and the lives of its citizens. One of the region’s foremost planners, Nancy excels in a broad range of planning disciplines and is an extraordinary manager and teacher who leads with compassion and integrity.

Nancy spent the largest portion of her career at Great Rivers Greenway and became the face of the organization for many planners in the region. She joined Great Rivers Greenway as a project manager in 2003 and later became the organization’s community outreach manager. In her 10 years at the organization, Nancy oversaw the implementation of six major greenways, including the St. Vincent Greenway, which has proven to be a major revitalization tool for the communities along its path. She also helped plan and organize many events and community outreach activities, serving as a tireless advocate for connecting people and places to the natural environment.

In 2013, Nancy became the executive director for the St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO) during a tremendously challenging period for the organization. The Great Recession had substantially eroded SLACO’s budget and the number of member neighborhoods had fallen sharply. During the three years that followed, Nancy worked tirelessly to rebuild SLACO and helped restore membership back to its previous levels. She pursued initiatives to bring on Vista volunteers, develop board capacity and revive the organization’s annual conference as a regional conference on neighborhoods. Thanks to Nancy’s hard work and dedication, SLACO now represents a third of the city of St. Louis’ population and has regained its stature as an agent for positive change in the city and the region.

Prior to her work at Great Rivers Greenway, Nancy spent eight years as the manager for the Higher Learning Channel, beginning in 1992. Her responsibilities included all programming, financial, operational and personnel aspects for the channel, which was a consortium of 12 colleges and universities in the St. Louis metropolitan area. She then served as the manager for the planning division at East-West Gateway for nearly two years. While there, she oversaw the Blueprint Project, which studied regional development patterns and neighborhood roles.

Beyond her professional experience, Nancy has poured countless hours into volunteer activities. She’s chaired committees for four different neighborhood organizations and served as a board member on numerous civic, arts, mental health, low-income housing, environmental and faith-based organizations. She’s worked to improve the capacity of the region’s nonprofits, facilitating at least 47 strategic planning initiatives for various organizations. She’s also helped secure the funding required to do impactful work, writing more than 1,000 grant applications over the course of her career.

To her colleagues in the profession, Nancy is a “planner’s planner.” But it isn’t just her technical expertise that is worthy of recognition, it’s how she pairs these skills with a dedication to excellence and to serving communities with humility and respect. This combination of qualities makes Nancy’s career a model for what public service is all about.
Exemplary Accomplishment by a Local Government Jurisdiction, Agency or Individual

David K. Tan, M.D.

For 20 years, Dr. David K. Tan has been a leader in the field of emergency medicine and in training law enforcement agencies and other first responders in tactical medicine. He received his medical degree from Loma Linda University in 1997 and completed his residency in emergency medicine at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in 2001. Dr. Tan currently serves as an Associate Professor at Washington University’s School of Medicine and the Chief of Emergency Medicine at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. In addition, Dr. Tan has devoted countless hours to supporting the region’s first responders as Medical Director for several agencies, including the St. Charles County Police Department, the St. Louis Metro Urban Search and Rescue Taskforce, the Clayton Fire Department and AMR/Abbott EMS. In these roles he has provided special operations medical support, developed disaster and emergency medicine protocols and training, and conducted EMT and paramedic training. Not only does Dr. Tan offer his medical skills, he is a fully committed member of the St. Charles County SWAT team, training alongside other team members and supporting the SWAT team on call-outs. Dr. Tan has also been instrumental in addressing the opioid epidemic in the region. He has trained and equipped police officers and first responders with the overdose antidote Narcan, helping save lives that would otherwise be lost to heroin. Dr. Tan’s tireless efforts have significantly improved the delivery of emergency medicine in the St. Louis region and increased the health and wellbeing of its residents.

Manufacture/Craft Your Future

Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, Madison Employment and Training Workforce Investment Board, Mid America Workforce Investment Board, Southern Illinois Builders Association, St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department

Manufacture/Craft Your Future began with the goal of raising awareness of job opportunities and career options in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) related fields. With significant workforce shortages in these fields, regional leaders and business professionals realized that a solution was needed and Manufacture/Craft Your Future was born. The collaborative initiative involved outreach to thousands of students, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators and parents in Madison and St. Clair counties on the benefits and opportunities that a STEM career brings. Using funding from the Department of Labor and Workforce Innovation, the initiative also helps connect people to real, sustainable jobs through exceptional training and certificate programs. In the past year, this partnership has surpassed expectations by reaching more than 8,000 individuals with an inclusive approach that engaged underserved and minority communities. By defining the skills required to have a career in these vital sectors of our economy, the initiative has given students the knowledge to embark on a career path that will lead to an economically secure future after graduation. In addition, Manufacture/Craft Your Future fits into the larger, regional economic development equation by helping to build the kind of robust workforce pipeline that will enable existing companies to flourish as well as attract new firms to the area.
Exemplary Intergovernmental Collaboration

St. Louis Regional Freightway

Following its launch in 2016, the St. Louis Regional Freightway is poised to play a critical role in growing the region’s manufacturing and distribution sector by becoming the go-to source for coordinating freight activity, providing site selection and offering other assistance to manufacturing, logistics, and multimodal transportation companies and their service providers. In bringing together local governments, railroad operators, port and barge interests and other freight stakeholders, the Freightway was able to develop and build consensus around a list of 20 priority projects needed to modernize the region’s infrastructure. By uniting behind a shared list of priorities, the region is better positioned to secure federal funding and develop private-public partnerships for these vital projects. The Freightway has also been working to produce new and stronger relationships with freight partners throughout the country, highlighted by a memorandum of understanding signed this year with the Port of New Orleans to exchange market and operational information. The Freightway plays an important part in promoting the significant range of assets that contribute to St. Louis’ growing prominence as a national transportation hub, such as our status as the nation’s third largest inland port, our six Class I railroads, and our international passenger and cargo airports. In the coming years, the partnerships developed by the Freightway will have a transformative impact by accelerating the economy and creating success for the entire region.

Consolidated Municipal Courts
City of St. Ann, City of Beverly Hills, City of Charlack, City of Northwoods, City of Vinita Park, City of Wellston

In 2016, the cities of St. Ann, Vinita Park, Charlack, Northwoods, Wellston and Beverly Hills collaborated to consolidate their court systems with absolutely no roadmap or instruction to guide its leaders through this challenging process. Facilitated through the city of St. Ann court administration, the Consolidated Municipal Courts is the first initiative of its kind in the region and serves as a model for other cities to follow. By putting aside political differences to work together, the elected leaders for each municipality have created a standardized system that makes court services more efficient at the local level. The collaboration has provided alternatives to excessive incarceration, enabled flexible judicial dispositions for defendants who cannot afford to pay fines, and saved each participating municipality thousands of dollars in administrative costs. Since the consolidation, the number of active warrants/tickets is down and the participating cities are meeting state-mandated levels for municipal revenue from court fees/fines. Through the courage and persistence of its founding members, the Consolidated Municipal Courts has improved the public’s judicial experience and shown how cities of varying sizes can collaborate to better serve their residents.
The House of Neighborly Service (HNS) is a collection of community organizations, civic groups, churches, agencies and individuals in Monroe County who meet monthly to share their resources and work together to find solutions for people with immediate emergency needs. This group puts into action a phrase coined by Maya Angelou — “When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.” Facing a communitywide lack of funding and decreases in services, the House of Neighborly Service and the city of Waterloo have established a variety of programs that collectively pool resources and energy to serve community members and families. These programs include the Western Egyptian Food Pantry, the HNS Help Line, Senior Lunch and Holiday Outreach. HNS is committed to directly impacting the living conditions for low-income and impoverished residents, as well as offering assistance to those who are facing financial difficulties or other crises. The group’s work also includes providing job coaching workshops, sharing cupboard cooking classes and distributing fresh vegetables from community gardens. With its slogan of “Help for today, hope for tomorrow and a hand up for life,” the House of Neighborly Service is a positive force for empowering families and individuals to be successful, productive and self-sustaining.

City Energy Project
City of St. Louis

In January 2017, the city of St. Louis passed a “Building Energy Awareness” ordinance that requires municipal, institutional, commercial and multifamily residential buildings that met specific requirements to track and report their energy and water usage on an annual basis. To implement this policy, the city of St. Louis secured funding from the City Energy Project, a national initiative to promote energy efficiency in buildings, and hired a technical advisor to assist the city’s building division with enforcing the ordinance. Working closely with the U.S. Green Building Council-Missouri Gateway Chapter, the city has also formed a benchmarking implementation advisory group that brings together stakeholders from the major utilities, trade groups, real estate professionals, nonprofits, unions and energy efficiency firms. This collaborative approach is key to the City Energy Project’s success in maintaining and improving St. Louis’ historic housing stock while pursuing energy and cost savings for the city and other building owners. In addition, the City Energy Project has kept equity and public health benefits at the forefront and is dedicated to making decisions that ensure minority- and women-owned firms and residents benefit from this energy efficiency initiative. The City Energy Project is set to have a lasting impact by making St. Louis a better place for generations to come while setting a standard for sustainability that can be a model for other cities in the region.
Leadership in Planning and Design Innovation

St. Louis County Library District — “Your Library Renewed”

“Your Library Renewed” is a 10-year, $120 million capital improvement project that is significantly changing 19 of the 20 branches and communities in the St. Louis region. Its strategic plan is focused on three areas: increasing literacy, strengthening the district’s sense of community and social connectedness, and creating gathering spaces. The renovations also seek to turn children into lifelong learners through enhancements to the children’s areas, early literacy programs and increased access to technology. However, that doesn’t mean the St. Louis County Library District is leaving adults out of the lifelong learner equation. Whether they are a job seeker, small business owner, parent or student, the redesigned facilities are carefully crafted to maximize usefulness with program offerings that will help adults take their social or professional lives to the next level. “Your Library Renewed” is giving a fresh face to an institution that has provided economic, social and educational benefits to the county’s families for 70 years. It ensures St. Louis County libraries will remain a hub for learning and engagement with staff that thrive on seeing individuals and families reach their full potential.

Upper Silver Creek Watershed Plan

HeartLands Conservancy, Madison County

The Upper Silver Creek Watershed Plan illustrates how a robust planning process that brings together partners and stakeholders to create a holistic picture of the watershed can have a lasting impact. One of ten watersheds in Madison County, the 120,000-acre Silver Creek Watershed is 75 percent agricultural and 25 percent urban with thousands of acres of prime farmland and 13 municipalities. The Upper Silver Creek Watershed Plan, developed by Madison County and HeartLands Conservancy, is a roadmap that communities, agencies and landowners can follow to improve water quality, reduce flooding, increase opportunities for recreation and support healthy wildlife habitats. In developing the plan, Madison County and HeartLands Conservancy employed innovative data methods and stakeholder engagement. These included an extensive survey of residents in the watershed to identify flood prone areas, delineation of the smallest sub-watershed units (a first for a watershed plan in Illinois), use of advanced GIS tools and targeted outreach to owners of large parcels. Its success has spurred the creation of three more watershed plans in Madison County and a fourth in St. Clair County. The data, strategies and findings in the Silver Creek Watershed Plan are already translating into action with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency awarded more than $570,000 to HeartLands Conservancy to implement a suite of projects recommended by the plan.