



We are proud to present these 2019

# 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 Collaboration, Partnership or Regional Initiative

Honors cooperative efforts or joint ventures  
among local government jurisdictions, nonprofit  
organizations, and/or the private sector that  
result in high impact, positive change.

## 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 2019 OLGA nominees.*

**Capt. Scott Amos**

City of Calverton Park Police Department

**Information Technology Partnership**

Cities of Clayton, Brentwood and Richmond Heights

**City of Fairview Heights**

**City of Brentwood**

**City of Olivette**

**Mark Grueber, Perry Eckhardt and Danny Mancheski**

Missouri Department of Conservation

**Eastern Missouri Pavement Consortium**

**Jefferson County Public Works Department**

**Jennifer Wendt**

City of University City Green Practices Commission

**Jonathan D. Raiche**

City of Kirkwood

**Lt. Keaton Strong**

City of Bel-Ridge Police Department

**Military Affairs Committee and Public Policy Committee**

Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois

**Southwestern Illinois Development Authority and Bywater Development**

**State Rep. Latoya Greenwood**

**St. Charles County Police Department**

**St. Louis College Kids**

**Yolanda Austin**

City of Jennings



# Gateway Lifetime Public Service Award

## Herbert Simmons



Herbert Simmons might actually possess the super-human power to be in two places at once. It's the only possible way to explain his incredible public service contributions over the course of his long career. The current executive director of the St. Clair County Emergency Management Agency, Simmons is also a board member or commissioner for 10 different organizations, the mayor for the Village of East Carondelet, and the deputy coroner for St. Clair County. And that's to say nothing of his 46 years as a promoter of independent professional wrestling.

Simmons started his career in emergency management in 1969 in the ambulance industry. By 1976, he had founded his own company—Simmons Ambulance—which he ran until 2004, switching to a role as operations manager for Medstar Ambulance until 2011. During the late 1960s, Simmons also received firsthand law enforcement experience, working as a police officer for the Village of Washington Park, Illinois, for a decade and then as the police chief for East Carondelet until 1985. He currently lends his unique blend of public safety expertise to a number of organizations focused on regional security, serving on the boards of the Southwestern Illinois Police Chiefs Association, the Southwestern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission, the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS) and the Illinois Terrorism Taskforce.

Simmons' passion for public service extends to issues large and small, including the well-being of his own community. As mayor for 34 years, Simmons has provided East Carondelet (pop. 499) with decades of leadership. Meanwhile, he has been a key voice on regional issues, particularly those facing the Metro East, through his chairmanship of the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Board, the St. Clair County Transit District, and the Southwestern Illinois Metropolitan and Regional Planning Commission. Simmons also serves as a board member for area-wide organizations such as East-West Gateway Council of Governments and Bi-State Development.

In 2013, Simmons was tapped to lead the St. Clair County Emergency Management Agency. True to form, his role at the county is not singular in nature. In addition to being responsible for emergency preparations and disaster response, Simmons also manages the county's centralized dispatch operations and the emergency telephone systems board. His leadership during recent flooding events in Illinois helped ensure the county was included as part of a federal disaster declaration. It was not Simmons first experience with a major disaster—he played an important part in the Illinois response to the Great Flood of 1993.

Through this tireless dedication, Simmons possesses an unparalleled knowledge and insight on emergency management and public safety in the St. Louis area. His accomplishments also reflect a commitment to the values of regional collaboration and partnership with much of his service focused on organizations that emphasize cross-jurisdictional cooperation. These qualities make Simmons a one-of-a-kind public servant who has contributed countless hours to the betterment of our region.

## Gerry Welch

First elected to the post in 1998, Gerry Welch is the longest serving mayor in the 123-year history of Webster Groves and has an impressive record of leadership at the local, regional and state levels.

Welch is an economist by training, but some of her most noteworthy accomplishments as mayor have been in the areas of sustainability, the arts and senior services. As mayor, she helped lead the establishment of a green space advisory board to promote tree planting and care, an arts commission with a focus on funding public art, and a sustainability commission for fostering environmental programs and facilities. Welch has also worked to secure private funding for new pieces in the city's Sculpture Park and a proposed Barbre Park sculpture honoring the history of North Webster, a historically black neighborhood in Webster Groves. To help identify and resolve issues that impact older adults in Webster Groves, she created and co-chaired the city's Senior Roundtable.



Welch has been recognized for efforts in these areas with a Public Official Achievement Award from the Missouri Parks and Recreation Association and an Otto Bean Art Advocacy Award from the Missouri Art Education Association. Webster Groves as a whole has also been honored, receiving an America in Bloom Heritage Award and a Missouri Creative Community Award.

Another one of Welch's passions as mayor is community involvement, driven by a belief that an active citizenry is a necessary ingredient for a thriving city. She played an important role in organizing "300 Trees for Webster" in 2015, a single-day community project that mobilized an army of volunteers to plant 300 native saplings throughout North Webster. Since 1992, Welch has spearheaded the city's participation in the annual Make-a-Difference Day volunteer event each fall, which regularly involves 500 residents.

Welch is a powerful advocate for local government in the St. Louis region and the state of Missouri. She is a co-founder of Missouri Mayors Statewide, current member and past president of the Missouri Municipal League and the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis, president of Metropolitan Mayors Statewide, and vice president for CitiesStrong. Through her leadership and service in these positions, Welch has earned the respect of her peers. She has received the Buzz Westfall Award for Excellence in Local Government, the Distinguished Service Award for Statewide Leadership and Service from the Missouri Municipal League, the Heart of Gold Award from the Webster Groves-Shrewsbury-Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce, and a Distinguished Alum Leadership Award from her alma mater, Seton Hill University.

In between serving on city committees and boards for civic organizations, Welch can be found welcoming new businesses, introducing students from the Webster Groves School District to city government or attending countless community events, among other activities. In her four years as a council member and 21 years as a mayor, Welch has set the bar for other elected officials with her dynamic energy and enthusiasm for all things local government.

# Exemplary Accomplishment by a Local Government Jurisdiction, Agency or Individual

## City of Dellwood



As a small municipality of just over 5,000 people, the City of Dellwood had limited resources to face the significant challenges posed by the aftermath of protests following Michael Brown's death in 2014. Despite these and other obstacles, Mayor Reggie Jones and the Dellwood city council united behind a strategic plan and implemented a host of quality-of-life-improving projects and programs. Much of this work has focused on substantial upgrades to the city's physical infrastructure — improvements to the entire street grid, a gut renovation of city hall, the construction of new playgrounds, and the purchase of a vehicle to provide transportation services for senior residents.

The city also displayed tremendous leadership in galvanizing community members to take ownership of these efforts and in forging partnerships with neighboring municipalities and regional organizations. As an example, the cities of Dellwood, Ferguson and Jennings have signed a memorandum of understanding to standardize and coordinate their zoning codes, creating a unified set of rules for developers and business owners. Dellwood has worked closely with the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership and the Urban League to undertake a variety of economic revitalization initiatives, including the planned construction of a business incubator, new commercial space and a home base for the Save Our Sisters women's support program. Taken all together, these accomplishments represent significant strides for the City of Dellwood and its residents that have only been made possible through the hard work and tireless dedication of its elected officials and administrative staff.

## City of Wentzville Stormwater Program

The City of Wentzville Stormwater Program has established a standard for other cities to follow that will not be easily met. Elected officials and staff crafted a program that has engaged over 16,000 young people and more than 12,000 community volunteers in projects that will improve and maintain the health of the city's waterways for decades to come.

As an example, the Student Civic Action Projects paired students with General Motors and Stream Team mentors for initiatives with real impact, such as a recycling policy drafted by students and adopted by the city council, a contest for decorating trash bins with environmental messages, and in-school curriculum on water quality issues. Other community-led projects include a residential outreach program for demonstration areas called Landscapes for Rain, annual stream clean ups that have collected 89,000 lbs. of trash and several green infrastructure retrofit projects using federal 319 grants.

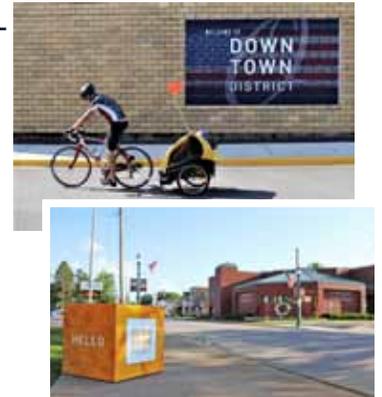


In addition, city staff have worked across departments to implement a variety of projects that support the Stormwater Program. Wentzville's community development and public works departments host a biannual educational symposium for builders and homeowner's associations while the city's parks department has integrated green infrastructure into the design of three parks, among other activities. The result of these extraordinary efforts is a stormwater program that is one of the best in the St. Louis region and that will ensure a better quality of life for citizens and future generations.

# Exemplary Collaboration, Partnership or Regional Initiative

## O'Fallon Downtown District

After years of very little attention and investment, the City of O'Fallon, the O'Fallon-Shiloh Chamber of Commerce and local businesses banded together eight years ago to create a coordinated strategy for revitalizing downtown O'Fallon, Illinois. With the support of residents and taxpayers, the city's downtown area has been transformed into a flourishing hub of community activity and commerce. The proof is in the receipts: over the past eight years, sales tax collected in downtown O'Fallon has increased by 177 percent and the food and beverage tax collected has increased by 134 percent.



Several key initiatives served to spearhead this revitalization. First, the City of O'Fallon commissioned a downtown action plan and established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district for the area. This was followed by the construction of O'Fallon Station, a \$1.5 million pavilion and gathering space that holds events throughout the year, including a popular farmers market that draws thousands every week. As the city was undertaking these efforts, business owners and the O'Fallon-Shiloh Chamber of Commerce formed the O'Fallon Downtown District, which completely revamped the branding, marketing and online presence for the area. This coordinated approach from planning to action steps makes downtown O'Fallon's resurgence from forgotten commercial corridor to a bustling hub of energy and source of community pride a truly remarkable accomplishment.

## St. Clair County Head Start Apprenticeship Program

The Head Start Apprenticeship Program established by the St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department and the Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (SIUE) East St. Louis Center represents an innovative approach to empowering individuals and addressing a critical workforce need. The program trains parents with children enrolled in the Head Start program at the East St. Louis Center as early childhood educators while employing them as teacher's assistants. The outcome is a unique "win-win-win": the parents receive tuition assistance and training in a high-demand living wage career; the East St. Louis Center has a systemic solution to solving critical staff shortages; and the children in Head Start have a parent with an increased understanding of early childhood development and the ability to better support their growth.



Since the program began in 2017, 25 participants have completed a 288-hour Child Development Associate Credentialing Course. A further nine apprentices have finished their professional portfolios, sitting for and passing the Child Development Associate exam, while four have either received or are now working towards Associates Degrees in Early Childhood Education from Lewis and Clark Community College. St. Clair County and SIUE have worked hand-in-hand to make this program a success, from structuring the program to finding space to host classroom training to assessing and enrolling participants. By thinking creatively and exercising flexibility, the St. Clair County Head Start Apprenticeship Program has become a model for the region on solving challenging workforce problems.

# Exemplary Collaboration, Partnership or Regional Initiative

## STL.works

The launch of STL.works is an unprecedented cross-sector collaboration of governments, businesses, nonprofits and educators to connect job seekers with opportunities in the fields of manufacturing, trades, technology and healthcare. At its core, STL.works is a web portal and centralized source of information highlighting pathways and resources to employment options in these skilled careers. The initiative is uniquely positioned to help St. Louis residents understand the wide variety of career choices available and understand how to get the training or education they need.



STL.works grew out of a recognition by members of the Regional Business Council (RBC) that it is critically important for young people and other workers to understand that a college education, while important, is not the only route for finding good, well-paying jobs. The RBC enlisted the support of St. Louis Civic Pride foundation, BJC Healthcare, Emerson, Explore St. Louis, McCarthy Holdings, Paric Corporation, St. Louis Community College and SSM Health to assemble a diverse and comprehensive group of more than 50 partners to guide this initiative. In the two weeks following its launch in August, STL.works hosted 2,000 new users, generated 41 news stories that reached more than 6 million people, and featured more than 115 career opportunities. By working together across jurisdictions and uniting around a common strategy, STL.works and its many partners are working to address the shortage of skilled workers in our region and creating a new generation of builders, doers and problem-solvers.

# Leadership in Planning and Design Innovation

## City of St. Louis Downtown Multimodal Plan

Adopted in 2018, the Downtown St. Louis Multimodal Plan is a visionary transportation plan that seeks to enhance connections for pedestrian, bicyclists, transit users and motorists of all ages and abilities. Among the plan's impressive accomplishments is the creation of a hierarchy for every downtown street that prioritizes travel by modes. This inventory will be a critical tool for guiding future investment decisions. By fostering a safer, more vibrant, more walkable downtown, the plan also serves as an economic development tool by increasing foot traffic to businesses, shops and restaurants.



The Downtown Multimodal Plan is already translating into action by the City of St. Louis and other partners. Examples include the installation of multiple Leading Pedestrian Intervals at intersections throughout downtown to enhance pedestrian safety and the awarding of a grant to Trailnet for studying the feasibility of a protected cycle-track on Tucker Boulevard. The downtown St. Louis street grid has experienced major changes in recent years with the opening of the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge and the completion of the Gateway Arch Park renovations. In addition, shifting commute patterns and the proliferation of micromobility devices are creating new challenges. With a focus on shaping streets for people, the Downtown Multimodal Plan tackles this evolving landscape by rethinking traditional transportation planning, ensuring the region's urban core remains a vital place for commerce, entertainment and recreation.

## 2019 In Memoriam

Each year, East-West Gateway Council of Governments honors those elected officials and public servants who we have lost since last November. Please join us in remembering the following individuals.

**Officer Katlyn Alix**, St. Louis Metropolitan Police

**Officer George Boggs** , St. Louis Metropolitan Police

**Captain Jake Ringering**, Godfrey Fire Department

**Firefighter Brett Korves**, Swansea Illinois Fire Department

**C. Barney Metz**, former Circuit Clerk for St. Clair County

**John Ervin**, Ward 3 Alderman for City of Venice, IL

**Councilwoman Carol Clark**, St. Clair County, District 29

**Barry Flachsbart**, who was among Chesterfield's founders and longest-serving City Council members

**Chris Moore**, Firefighter-paramedic with the Maryland Heights Fire Protection District

**Officer Mike Langsdorf**, North County Cooperative

**Robert Waechter**, City of Hazelwood Board of Appeals

**Lt. Colonel Charles E. McCrary, Sr.**, retired City of St. Louis Assistant Police Chief

**Trooper Nicholas Hopkins**, Illinois State Police Waterloo, IL

**Deputy City Clerk Patricia Villmer**, Richmond Heights, MO

**Officer Mitch Ellis**, St. Louis County

**Lucinda "Cindy" Ostmann**, Former State Representative of St. Peters, Missouri,

**John Hanneke**, Past President of St. Charles City Council

**Marty Braeske**, Planner for Southwest Illinois Metropolitan Area Planning Commission



**EAST-WEST GATEWAY**  
**Council of Governments**

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

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