



We are proud to present these 2020

# 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 2020 OLGA nominees.*

**Laborer's Disaster Response Team (LDRT),**  
Marissa, IL

**Mayor Kevin B. Hutchinson,**  
Columbia, IL

**Gerald Brown,**  
Director of Parks and Recreation of Sunset Hills, MO

**City of Arnold Crime Suppression Team,**  
Arnold, MO

**Illinois State Representative Latoya Greenwood,**  
Belleville, IL

**City of Dardenne Prairie,**  
Dardenne Prairie, MO

**The Real "Change" Campaign,**  
Richmond Heights, MO

**Chief Brian Gaudet - Hillsboro Fire Protection District &  
Superintendent John Isaacson - Hillsboro R-III Schools, Hillsboro, MO**

**Saint Louis Alderman John Collins-Muhammad,**  
**MoDOT & St. Louis City Streets Department,**  
St. Louis, MO

**Village of Swansea,**  
Swansea, IL

**Citizens for Modern Transit, AARP in St. Louis,  
The City of Maplewood and Citizens National Bank**

**Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Holiday Inn Express of Troy, IL  
St. Louis Road and Collinsville Road Great Streets Initiative Plan,**  
Collinsville, IL

**Great Rivers Greenway for the Brickline Greenway Framework Plan  
City of Town & Country, MO**

**Mayor Len Pagano,**  
St. Peters, MO



# Gateway Lifetime Public Service Award

## Kevin O'Keefe



Mr. Kevin O'Keefe has dedicated his professional life to serving municipal governments with a career spanning 40 years. Kevin provides effective legal representation to cities of all sizes within and outside the St. Louis region as well. Kevin specializes in municipal law, urban development and redevelopment, and tax increment financing along with other economic development tools. Kevin's informed guidance in legal and political matters has helped numerous communities, and his practical application of the law transcends political ideology.

Kevin's dedication to public service resonates through the time and effort he spends serving the residents of the region, from communities with 40,000+ residents to smaller communities with less than 10,000 residents, from economically stable communities to financially struggling communities. Kevin started his career representing municipalities in north St. Louis County, and while he's come to represent other cities in the St. Louis region and beyond, Kevin hasn't forgotten his roots and continues to represent cities in north county. City councils benefit

from Kevin's efforts to fully inform them of legal aspects of decisions from small-scale neighborhood matters to large-scale city-wide matters.

Kevin is a gifted attorney and provides services that include drafting ordinances and regulations, consulting on employment matters, providing enforcement supervision in administrative matters as well as litigation involving damage claims, contracts, civil rights and land use issues. Kevin's years of exemplary municipal government representation have earned him numerous awards from his peers and various local, regional and national organizations.

The awards and recognitions Kevin has received include Lawyer of the Year (four times), the Distinguished Service Award from the Missouri Municipal League (one of the few non-elected officials to receive that award), the Lou Czech Award of the Missouri Municipal Attorneys Association, and he has been on the list of Best Lawyers in America and Super Lawyers of Kansas and Missouri. Kevin is a member of the Missouri Bar, the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri Municipal Attorneys Association and International Municipal Lawyers Association.

Kevin is an experienced trial lawyer and has successfully argued cases in state and federal courts as well as the United States Supreme Court. In 1989, Kevin was lead counsel in litigation regarding the Board of Freeholders, a case that went to the Supreme Court. The Court found in favor of the plaintiff, represented by Mr. O'Keefe, who challenged the legality of the makeup of the board.

Numerous university programs have benefited from the seminars Kevin presented as a lecturer, such as the University of St. Louis graduate program in Public Policy Administration, St. Louis University graduate program in Public Administration and University of Missouri Government Affairs Program. He has presented seminars for the Missouri City Management Association, Municipal League of Metropolitan St. Louis and the American Planning Association. He is known for his sharp wit, sense of humor and stage presence. His lifetime of service to municipal government, his consummate professionalism, skill and intelligence, and his depth of knowledge in the field of local government law is remarkable and a testament to his dedication to public service.

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

## Cahokia School District #187, Comanche Rolling Pantry



The Cahokia School District #187 student population is largely comprised of African American students who live at or below the poverty line. Many students qualify for free or reduced lunch and rely on meals provided by the school district to fulfill their nutritional needs. In many cases, the breakfast and lunch that students receive at school are the only meals they received during the week and they do not eat much, or at all, over the weekend. School closures related to COVID-19 put nearly 4,000 students in danger of experiencing food insecurity. School district administrators recognized this need and responded by creating the Comanche Rolling Pantry.

The Comanche Rolling Pantry provided students with meals that they routinely would have found at school by delivering the meals directly to them. Students were also provided non-perishable items to eat over the weekend. Approximately 4,024 meals were served per week during the school closure. Given the strong partnerships the District has in the community, several private sector entities contributed to make the project successful. The District's food service partner, Sodexo, created nutritional and great tasting meals that could be transported easily and be shelf-stable. The local Aldi's grocery store provided additional food items and made the special effort to deliver when they received their normal product shipments so that the food was fresh for the students. First Student, the district's transportation provider, identified delivery routes and made scheduled stops to pass out meals to students. Additionally, a donation of \$10,000 from T-Mobile provided more food items for the weekend packs. Cahokia School District #187 went above and beyond to ensure that student food needs were taken care of during the trying times of the pandemic and it is a shining example of public service for the region.



## St. Louis County Board of Elections

Voting on Election Day may be the most visible aspect of the election cycle, but it represents only a small fraction of the effort that is required to get to that day. St. Louis County Board of Elections is the largest local election administrator in the St. Louis region and in the State of Missouri, serving approximately 725,000 registered voters, roughly 800 elected officials, and 324 political jurisdictions. The scope and scale of operations by the Board for any given election is already considerable: up to 350+ polling places, 3,000 poll workers, 3,100 pieces of election equipment, 2,100 election devices.



The St. Louis County Board of Elections was well prepared to handle the task in 2020. Thanks to budgeting foresight, the Board of Elections invested in state-of-the-art equipment such as on-demand ballots, in-person paper voting and Vote Anywhere election technology. Where's My Polling Place App and Sample Ballot Lookup improved voter accessibility to the voting process. Absentee ballot processing and automation led to streamlined data entry into the Missouri Central Voter Registration system and MyBallotTracking.com allowed voters to track their ballot through a web-based tracking slip with a scannable QR code and Ballot Track ID. A Safety Coordinator was on site at each polling site and ensured the public health of voters was protected to enforce safety protocols.



A presidential election year, especially one during a pandemic, is one that tests planning and preparation, operations, voter and poll worker interactions, communications, and crisis management abilities. The public is largely unaware of the complex operations, logistics, and technicalities of administering elections. The St. Louis region should be proud of the professional, innovative, and exemplary work of the St. Louis County Board of Elections.

## Exemplary Collaboration, Partnership or Regional Initiative

### Eastern Region Alliance

After two years of planning, the Productive Living Board of St. Louis County, St. Louis Office of Developmental Disability Resources, Developmental Disabilities Resource Board of St. Charles County, and Developmental Disability Advocates of Jefferson County established the Eastern Region Alliance (Alliance). The Alliance is a collaboration of four county tax fund boards who came together to align their funding requirements, processes, and tools in order to more efficiently and effectively meet their mission, reduce the administrative burden on the agencies they fund, and unleash the power of data in driving process improvement, decision-making, and measuring and demonstrating impact.



In 1969, Missouri Senate Bill 40 (SB40) was enacted, which allowed each county in the state to levy a property tax to fund support services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Formerly known as SB40 Boards, and now known as County Boards, these entities administer funds raised through property tax levies. In the summer of 2018, these four County Boards began a planning process to examine opportunities to align each entity's standards, processes and tools. The Boards fund services to many of the same organizations, but their terminology, funding processes and requirements were unique enough to cause confusion and inefficiencies for the agencies they fund.



This collaborative planning effort led to uniform policies and procedures. A common manual and administrative portal, called the Alliance Portal, is available for all agencies working with one or more County Board. One site visit/audit is conducted collectively rather than subjecting agencies to multiple audits depending upon what funding they receive. These Boards came together to improve the system for accessing funds for the needs of those with developmental disabilities across four counties, which is a true act of public service.

### Team St. Clair

Team St. Clair was formed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2020 to respond to the needs of the communities within St. Clair County, Illinois. St. Clair County Board Chairman Mark Kern identified the need for a reliable platform to provide accurate information to keep the residents of St. Clair County informed of the developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Clair County was the only county in Illinois to provide daily live Covid-19 updates.





Chairman Kern partnered with the St. Clair County Emergency Management Agency and the St. Clair County Health Department to provide daily live briefings. These updates included a sign language interpreter and English to Spanish translation. Written updates were provided to the citizens, businesses, civic leaders and social media followers of the St. Clair County initiative. The daily live updates included representatives from Hospital Sisters Health System (HSBS), St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Memorial Hospital Belleville, Touchette Regional

Hospital along with community leaders, mental health experts, COVID-19 survivors, education leaders, clergy members, community business leaders, and chamber of commerce executives.

Team St. Clair evolved into a community partnership in which thousands of members banded together to help develop strategies to help guide St. Clair County through the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage people to practice the 3'Ws: Wear A Mask, Wash Your Hands, and Watch Your Social Distancing. Additional agencies assisted in the Team St. Clair effort, namely the St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department, St. Clair County Mental Health Board, St. Clair County Highway Department, St. Clair County Public Building Commission, St. Clair County Auditor's Office, and St. Clair County Sheriff's Department. The Team St. Clair motto is "let's be part of the solution, not the problem."

## Leadership in Planning and Design Innovation

### Hazelwood OCR

Improving Howdershell Park provided the City of Hazelwood, Missouri with a chance to bring a unique and exciting new program, called Hazelwood Obstacle Course Racing (OCR) to the community. Hazelwood OCR builds on the popularity of the American Ninja Warrior shows and gives the City the opportunity to host competitions and demonstrations as well as build a culture of health, wellness, and fitness in the community.

Howdershell Park is Hazelwood's marquee park and is the location of the City's annual Harvestfest, summer food truck nights, and many other community events. In 2017, the City made improvements to the park, which included the installation of the Ninja Course. This course has 12 obstacle stations and allows athletes ages 13 and over to flow from one obstacle to the other. Obstacles include the Spider Walk, Angled Globe Grasp, and the Cliffhanger Challenge. In addition to installing the obstacle course, the Parks and Recreation Department replaced the old racquetball courts, added a new playground structure for children ages 2-5, a new softer artificial turf at the playground structure for kids ages 5-12 as well as a track that circles the park.



The City has hosted five official obstacle course races that generated over \$15,000 in revenue and brought in competitors from five states. In order to create an authentic Ninja obstacle course and a credible OCR program, Hazelwood Parks & Recreation Division Superintendent Doug Littlefield worked with local professionals and athletes that specialize in Ninja and Obstacle Course Racing training such as House of Ninjas, LLC and KOR Komplex. This created a team of local experts to create a safe yet challenging course, a respected OCR program and an innovative local government venture.

# Leadership in Planning and Design Innovation

## The West Florissant Corridor District

The West Florissant Corridor District (the Corridor) serves as an example of how municipalities in the region can coordinate their land use and zoning ordinances to achieve a cohesive zoning district that is rooted in community engagement and multijurisdictional benefits jurisdictions. The collaboration, facilitated by the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership with the assistance of PGAV, and Armstrong Teasdale, led to a coordinated land use plan, consistent zoning code, and development guidelines that fulfill the objectives of the community as expressed in the West Florissant Avenue Great Streets Master Plan. The multijurisdictional zoning ordinance consists of all properties with frontage to the east or west side of West Florissant Avenue between Interstate 270 and Lucas-Hunt Road in St. Louis County in the cities of Dellwood, Ferguson and Jennings, Missouri.



WEST FLORISSANT CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
EXHIBIT A



The three municipalities coordinated and implemented a standardized zoning code to create a vibrant walkable corridor with a diverse mix of land uses that benefit existing property owners and facilitates new development. An intergovernmental agreement was approved by the three municipalities to ensure adherence, coordination, and support for the zoning district moving forward. The agreement established an intergovernmental advisory panel comprised of members from each municipal planning and zoning commission and residents from the three communities.

The collaborative process also yielded the official incorporation of the nonprofit One West Florissant, a collaborative group of residents from Jennings, Dellwood, and Ferguson whose mission is to ensure strong alignment and collaboration between municipalities and community stakeholders in the revitalization of the West Florissant Corridor.