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Contact: Elena Temple(etemple@usmayors.org)
202-309-4906 cell
Jocelyn Bogen (jbogen@usmayors.org)
202-352-5405 cell

CHARLESTON, SC AND CHAPEL HILL, NC NAMED "MOST LIVABLE" CITIES IN AMERICA

U.S. Conference of Mayors Announce 2009 City Livability Award Winners

Miami, FL — Mayors Joseph O. Riley, Jr. of Charleston (SC), and Kevin C. Foy of Chapel Hill(NC), have been awarded first place honors in the *2009 City Livability Awards Program* during the Mayors' Annual Meeting in Providence.

For the past 30 years, cities have competed for this very prestigious award, which recognizes mayoral leadership for developing and implementing programs that improve the quality of life in America's cities. The winning cities were selected by former mayors from a pool of over 200 applicants for their healthy hometown program and river revitalization project respectively.

Sponsored by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Waste Management, the program focuses on mayoral leadership, creativity and innovation, and broad impact on the lives of city residents.

Tom Cochran, Executive Director and CEO of the U.S. Conference of Mayors commented, "Our City Livability Awards Program gives the Conference a chance to highlight mayoral leadership in making urban areas cleaner, safer and more livable. We are grateful to Waste Management for its 19 years of support of the City Livability Awards Program, and for the opportunity to showcase the creativity and commitment of mayors and city governments across the country."

Barry H. Caldwell, Senior Vice President Government Affairs and Corporate Communications of Waste Management, Inc., presented the awards. Waste Management is the nation's largest provider of waste management services and its support makes the City Livability Awards Program possible.

"We are honored to again partner with the USCM and sponsor for the 20th time the City Livability Award. It's a big deal to us and we care passionately about the livability of our cities," said Mr. Caldwell.

Outstanding Achievement Awards were named for cities with populations of 100,000 or more: Akron (OH); Denton (TX) Little Rock (AR), Oklahoma City (OK), and Philadelphia. Outstanding Achievement Awards for cities with populations of fewer than 100,000 people went to: Albany (NY), Cerritos(CA), Meridian (MS), Oak Lawn (IL), and Schenectady (NY).

Honorable Mention Citations were awarded to cities with populations of 100,000 or more to Chattanooga (TN), Frisco (TX), Pasadena (CA), and Providence (RI). Cities with populations of less than 100,000 that received Honorable Mentions were Aguadilla (PR), Carbondale (IL), Dublin (IL) , and Sugar Land (TX).

FIRST PLACE PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS:

Charleston,SC (Large City) - The Palmetto Artisan Program is an entrepreneurial skill program that was created to help local youth who were selling roses fashioned from palmetto tree fronds become legitimate business vendors. The program was created as an answer to the growing concerns about local youth referred to as "Rose Kids", who developed a negative reputation for exhibiting aggressive behavior, littering, blocking sidewalks and removing

palmetto fronds from private property. Business owners, residents and visitors to Charleston complained about the children and the challenges that they posed. The City decided that rather than prohibit the children's business venture that they would promote their creativity, encourage their entrepreneurial spirit and provide an opportunity for the children to sell their wares while serving as a complementary activity to the City's tourism market. The program includes a week long after-school program called BIZ Camp. The camp is taught by National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship professionals and YEScarolina (Youth Entrepreneurship South Carolina). The purpose is to engage the youth in business and entrepreneurship learning in a recreational setting. BIZ Camp teaches customer service, marketing techniques, social skills and provides real world applications of math and reading skills. The City has provided a downtown recreation center where graduates of the program check in to receive free fronds for their roses, nourishment and mentoring.

Chapel Hill, NC (Small City) –

In 2001, Mayor Kevin Foy championed the creation of the Chapel Hill Transit fare free system and today Chapel Hill has the 2nd largest transit system in North Carolina, second only to Charlotte, and one of the largest fare-free system in the United States. Since that time ridership has risen more than 130 percent, from 3 million riders a year to over 7 million riders annually projected for 2009. This program is unique in that while some university transit systems provide fare free service for university students, faculty and staff, very few communities provide fare-free transit service to all riders. The commitment in this community went beyond the University to all residents in the community in an effort to encourage greater usage of public transportation and reduction of reliance on the single occupancy automobile. Public transit is an integral part of the Chapel Hill community. The significant commitment to public transit has made Chapel Hill a sustainable community in which people do not need to rely on the automobile.

*For Programs Descriptions for Outstanding Achievement Awardees and Honorable Mentions,
please visit our website www.usmayors.org.*
