



NEWS RELEASE

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Township celebrates National Gold Medal Award for parks and recreation

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS (October 4, 2019) – The Woodlands Township celebrated its recent Gold Medal Award, one of the most prestigious awards in the parks and recreation profession, during a recognition event at Northshore Park.

The Woodlands Township received the 2019 National Gold Medal Award Grand Plaque for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA), in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), awarded this honor to The Woodlands Township live during the Opening General Session at the Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, held in September.

“The Woodlands Township congratulates the entire Parks and Recreation Department and thanks the staff for their efforts to make The Woodlands a remarkable place for residents and visitors to enjoy,” said Township Chairman Gordy Bunch. “This is quite an honor for our residents and our staff. When we do surveys, the singular areas that residents focus on are our trees and recreational amenities. This is who we are as a Township, and your daily commitment to excellence makes this community great.”

The celebration also included an Commendation from Congressman Kevin Brady’s Office, presented by Vita Swarers.

The Woodlands Township won the Grand Plaque in the Class III for populations of 75,001 – 150,000 category through months of preparation and commitment to the highest level of service. The Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains numerous facilities and amenities including:

- Over 220 miles of hike and bike paths
- 14 community pools and 5 spray grounds
- Thousands of recreational programs, including the all-new aerial adventure course, Texas TreeVentures
- More than 60 high-quality special events
- Facilitates the provisions of its services through three pillars of service – equity, conservation and health and wellness

The Woodlands Township Parks and Recreation Department represents the first community in the Houston region to earn the NRPA Gold Award. An extensive application process was required to compete for the award, including written essays and information related to how the department is unique, outstanding and positively impacts its community, including public

support, citizen involvement, staff engagement, creativity, innovation, social equity, health and wellness, conservation, challenges faced, strategic planning and much more. The Township was in competition with Greely, Colorado; Thornton, Colorado; and Waukegan, Illinois.

Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of community members, staff and elected officials. A panel of five park and recreation professionals reviews and judges all application materials. Judges are chosen for their considerable experience and knowledge in parks and recreation on both the local and national levels.

About the National Recreation and Park Association

Founded in 1965, The National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Gold Award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development, agency recognition and innovative approaches to delivering superb park and recreations services with sound business practices.

For more information on the Gold Medal Awards, visit www.nrpa.org/goldmedal or www.aapra.org.

For more information on The Woodlands Township, please call 281-210-3800 or visit www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov.

Pictured, left to right with the Gold Medal Award, are Township Secretary Dr. Ann K. Snyder, Assistant General Manager John Powers, Director of Parks and Recreation Chris Nunes, General Manager Don Norrell and Township Chairman Gordy Bunch.

