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ICMA Recognizes El Paso County for Outstanding Local Government Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C.— El Paso County Officials, including Commissioners Court, Betsy C. Keller, Chief Administrator, Norma Palacios, Executive Director of Public Works, and Veronica Myers, Parks and Recreation Director will be honored by ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, as the recipients of the organization’s 2023 Community Equity and Inclusion Award. ICMA’s Community Equity and Inclusion Awards recognize communities for organizational achievements building or celebrating diversity and inclusiveness. The program may be nominated for either work done within the local government organization or the community at-large. This award came to fruition following a recommendation from ICMA’s Task Force on Inclusiveness and with approval of the ICMA Executive Board.

As the recipient of ICMA’s Community Equity and Inclusion Award, El Paso County All-Abilities Playgrounds Program will be honored in various platforms including ICMA’s Annual Conference, September 30 - October 4, 2023.

A plan to build all-abilities playgrounds was established in 2018 by El Paso County leaders in partnership with Moms on Board, a non-profit organization that works with local leaders to build and improve family-friendly amenities in the community, and to provide safe and enjoyable play spaces for all children and families regardless of their abilities. The first of three all-abilities playgrounds opened to the public at Gallegos Park in Canutillo on November 30, 2022. The other two playgrounds are expected to be completed by fall 2023, one at Ascarate Park and the other at Risinger Park in Fabens.

“The construction of all-abilities play areas in the county encourages inclusion and understanding amongst all members of the community, regardless of their physical or mental abilities,” said Keller. “This recognition is an added achievement to the crowning achievement of inclusivity for our community.”

The ICMA Local Government Excellence Awards Program highlights creative contributions to professional local government management while demonstrating the difference that effective and committed management makes to the quality of life in our communities. ICMA program awards are presented to local governments and their chief administrators in recognition of their innovative and successful programs. Program Excellence Awards can have multiple recipients.

Awards are presented to local governments for each of three population ranges: less than 10,000, 10,000 to 49,999, and 50,000 and greater. Multi-participant nominations will be classified in the population range that corresponds to the population of the largest participating organization.

Nominations are evaluated by an independent, 13-person panel of ICMA members.

“El Paso County continually strives to be inclusive and engaging with the community,” said Commissioner David Stout, Precinct 2. “We were excited to partner with Moms on Board on these projects and are working on other ways of making the County more inclusive for people with disabilities, such as working with advocates to create an advisory board and ensuring that our social media and websites are accessible.”

These recipients set the standard for innovation, effectiveness, and creativity in the cities, towns, counties, and academic institutions they lead. We thank them for their commitment to improving the lives of the constituents they serve every day.

In addition to in-person and virtual conference recognition, the 2023 ICMA award recipients will be highlighted in the September 2023 issue of *PM* magazine.

For more information about ICMA’s Local Government Excellence Awards Program, contact Joyce Lee at jlee@icma.org or 202-962-3625.

About ICMA

ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, advances professional local government worldwide. Our mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional management to build livable communities that improve people’s lives. ICMA provides member support; publications; data and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to nearly 12,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA’s members affect millions of individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas. Learn more at icma.org.

About El Paso County, Texas

El Paso County is the westernmost county in the state of Texas. It is centered in a tri-state area surrounded by New Mexico, Chihuahua, and Texas. As of the 2020 Census, the population was 865,657, making it the sixth-most populous county in the State. The county is surrounded by the Franklin Mountains in the north and the Hueco mountains in the east making El Paso a premiere location for outdoor sports such as hiking and biking. El Paso County is one of the safest places to live in the United States and our historic sites make us a top travel destination. In fact, El Paso County’s Mission Trail was just named “Best Historical Site” in the 2023 Texas Travel Awards.