



By Gregory E. Brooksher, PCAM

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Community Association of the Year



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Each year the Washington Metropolitan Chapter holds a Community Association of the Year contest and considers recognizing a Humanitarian of the Year and Communicator of the Year.

The Community Association of the Year Award was created and designed to recognize communities that best demonstrate excellence in all facets of association operations and governance by following CAI's Best Practices. There are four categories: Very Large (1,000+ units), Large (500-999 units), Medium (150-499 units) and Small (1-149 units).

Winners in each category are awarded passes to the Chapter's Annual Conference & Expo, are recognized at the Proven Best Practices education seminar at the Conference & Expo, are awarded a plaque, and are featured in *Quorum* magazine. Additionally, many winners will show receipt of the award on their webpage, in their newsletters, and in community marketing materials. The benefit is that the award is something that they can showcase to potential buyers to promote that their community is a great place to live, all of which can help resale values.

The application is divided into sections with simple "yes" or "no" questions on operational matters, a few short answer questions, and an essay on what makes the community special. The application is not arduous to complete, but we do require the applicant be a current member of WMCCAI, and that the application be completed by a community association volunteer leader, not the association's community manager or management company. We want to hear from the association leaders as to their excellence!

A panel of chapter volunteers, including community association managers and busi-

ness professionals, reviews each year's applications. If a judge works for the management company of an applicant, that judge recuses him or herself from reviewing the application.

The Call for Applications is announced in August of each year with applications due in October. Applications are then judged and winners are announced at our Jump Start January event.

Why should an association consider completing an application? Past winners feel the award is valuable recognition for all the time and energy community association volunteers provide and excellent recognition of the association in the greater community. So many associations operate in an excellent manner, and the Community Association of the Year award recognizes these accomplishments. Additionally, in a competitive real estate sales market, recognition of excellence helps promote the community to potential buyers.

Board members who have completed the application have also commented that just reading the application questions can highlight operational and governance items that the board and management may need to consider. Managers have also expressed that being able to show the questions on the applications to the board has assisted in better appealing the need to address operational and governance items. Therefore, communities have benefitted just by considering applying.

We know the level of excellence so many of our member associations exhibit in their operations and governance. Let's celebrate these accomplishments! We encourage our member community associations to apply for the award and look forward to seeing your application this year. 