

2008 Awards Program Recipients

Code Enforcement Officer of the Year

William F. "Bill" Skiles has dedicated more than 25 years to helping others in the public safety field. Bill started his career as a Los Angeles Police Officer after serving in the armed forces during the Vietnam War. Bill worked patrol services as a training officer, and also did a tour of duty in the narcotics, detectives and community relations bureaus.

After being critically wounded in the line of duty, Bill recuperated and embarked upon a new career as a code enforcement officer with the city of Monrovia. During his tenure as a code enforcement officer, Bill volunteered as the SCACEO Educational Chairperson and was involved with the development and implementation of the certification program. Bill has become an integral part of the city of Monrovia's "Problem Oriented Policing" program and has presented various code enforcement topics to state and local associations.

Bill also served as a code enforcement manager in San Bernardino and Glendale, and then returned in that capacity to the city of Monrovia, where he reinvigorated the Code Enforcement program and developed a comprehensive neighborhood preservation strategy. The Neighborhood Strategy Team (NST) was initiated by Bill and is a multidepartment approach to neighborhood problem solving. His efforts and those of the NST were recognized and awarded the 2008 Team Accomplishment Award by the Federal Executive Board.

Bill is also responsible for developing the Monrovia Area Partnership (MAP) program, which focuses specifically on neighborhood preservation activities in "at-risk" neighborhoods. The objectives of the MAP program are to eliminate crime and blight, while empowering neighborhoods through citizen activism, volunteerism and community pride. The MAP program was recently awarded the 2008 Best Neighborhood Program Award by Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA).

Bill is noted for his energy, initiative and foresight. His efforts have exhibited the highest levels of dedication to public service and have provided benefit beyond the city of Monrovia.

Innovative Program Award

The Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office established the "Florence Firestone Community Enhancement Team" (FFCET) code enforcement program in 2003. The program was created to provide municipal service to the Florence Firestone community. Specifically, the program's goals were to change the view of the community from an urban unincorporated land island to a small city, and to provide a range of services to meet a variety of needs identified by an actively engaged community leaders group.

The community leaders were concerned with the area of code enforcement and requested that the county initiate more focused action in dealing with county code violations. The county responded by funding two Nuisance Abatement Teams (NATs) and two Neighborhood Enhancement Teams (NETs).

The NATs are made up of task forces of code enforcement staff from the county's Departments of Public Works, Planning and Public Health. The NATs address properties with violations from multiple county agencies, which include some of the longest-standing problems in the community.

The NETs are a smaller task force based on the NATs' model, which only consist of the Departments of Public Works and Planning. The NETs were originally established under the "broken window theory." The theory says that if one property in a neighborhood has a broken window and it remains unrepaired that over time, other property owners will begin to let their property become run down, and that reversely, if properties were maintained that it would benefit the community as a whole. The NETs participate in concentrated code enforcement activities by conducting proactive surveys of targeted areas in order to address code violations of a visually blighting nature.

Additionally, the NETs take part in community outreach and education. The NETs educate residents about code violations, methods to abate violations, and relevant county services and community resources. Through education and outreach, the NETs are able to increase awareness of code violations among residents.

One of the most innovative aspects of the FFCET program is the ongoing and active engagement with community leaders. County code enforcement officials from the Departments of Public Works and Planning meet monthly with a small group of interested community leaders to address and develop strategies for both emerging and long-running issues.

Since 2004, the NETs have covered the approximately 8,000 residentially-zoned properties in the Florence Firestone community at least once. During the 2007-08 fiscal year, more than 900 properties were cited by the NETs and 120 properties were cited by the NATs. The NETs have been well received by community residents because the citations are fair and everyone is being held accountable for property maintenance. Nearly 80 percent of property owners abate their violations within two weeks.