



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lee County honored as 'Complete Streets Champion of the Year'

BikeWalkLee (BWL), a local community coalition advocating for complete streets in Lee County, has selected Lee County Administration and its Complete Streets Interdepartmental Performance Team (IPT) to receive the 2011 Complete Streets Champion of the Year Award. BikeWalkLee will present the award to the team at today's Lee County Commission meeting.

In November 2009, the Lee Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) adopted a Complete Streets resolution, which was the first step in making Lee County's streets safer and more accessible for all the people who use them. It set in motion planning and regulatory changes to ensure that all users of Lee's roadways are included in transportation planning at the front end of the process. For the past two years, County Manager Karen Hawes and her team have worked diligently on developing and implementing a complete streets program. This award recognizes those efforts.

"As we said in 2009, the resolution was the beginning of the process and the hard work of implementation was ahead," said Darla Letourneau, a member of BikeWalkLee's steering committee. "A complete streets approach is about a paradigm shift in traditional road construction philosophy, and implementing complete streets requires policy and institutional change."

This award recognizes the outstanding leadership by Hawes, her management team, and the innovative Complete Streets IPT, which includes members from the following county departments or divisions: Transportation, Community Development, Human Services, County Lands, Parks and Recreation, Utilities, Transit, and Sustainability.

This team approach breaks down interdepartmental barriers and uses a collaborative team approach of working together at the front-end to plan transportation projects in a holistic fashion.

BikeWalkLee cited the following accomplishments by the team in making the award:

- The county manager embraced the complete streets policy from the start and set up a new interdepartmental team to ensure that all the internal players were involved in the planning and decision-making process.

- The IPT sought input from citizens through the involvement of the Community Sustainability Advisory Committee, the Complete Streets Working Group, and the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Through this process, county citizens and advocacy groups such as BikeWalkLee have participated in development of the implementation plan.
- The IPT developed a comprehensive complete streets evaluation tool that was used in 2010 and 2011 to evaluate opportunities for complete streets improvements on roadways scheduled to be resurfaced. This process successfully identified ways to improve connections and safety on some of these roadways. A GIS tool is also being developed that can be used for the evaluation of all roadway projects.
- This year the team developed the most important building block for complete streets implementation—the redesign of the county’s transportation planning and budgeting process. This process ensures that the front-end planning includes the needs of all the users and the many stakeholders, and explores a broad array of multimodal transportation options.

“Those who bicycle, walk and use public transit in Lee County know there’s still a lot of work to be done to make our streets safer and more accessible to all,” said Letourneau. “But the county is putting in place the institutional and organizational changes that integrate complete streets into the way the county does its day-to-day business, and ensures complete streets implementation over the long haul. The county has made great strides — progress that would not have been possible without the leadership of County Manager Karen Hawes and her team, and the commitment and hard work of the county’s Complete Streets Interdepartmental Performance Team.”

Members of the Lee County Team Receiving Award:

County Administration:

*Karen Hawes – County Manager
 Doug Meurer – Assistant County Manager
 Pete Winton - Assistant County Manager
 Holly Schwartz – Assistant County Manager
 Dave Loveland – Interim Transportation Director
 Pam Keyes – Director of Utilities*

The Complete Streets Interdepartmental Performance Team:

*Andy Getch – Transportation
 Mikki Rozdolski – Community Development
 Cyndy Calfee – Human Services
 Lynda Thompson – County Lands
 Dan Calvert – Parks and Recreation
 Thom Osterhout - Utilities
 Dan Rudge/Wayne Gaither – Transit
 Tessa LeSage – Sustainability*

BikeWalkLee is a community coalition raising public awareness and advocating for complete streets in Lee County—streets that are designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Other information, statistics and background is available online at www.BikeWalkLee.org. Also see our blog at <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com>, and look for us on Facebook & Twitter.