

top 100 fleets named 2006

The 100 Best Fleets in North America Awards for 2006 were announced Oct. 2 in Norfolk, Va., at a national fleet conference sponsored by CCG Systems in conjunction with Fleet Equipment magazine. The conference, which was attended by more than 300 fleet personnel, was held to recognize outstanding fleet operations.

And the winner is ...

Fort Wayne was named the best fleet operation in 2006 by Fleet Equipment magazine. This privatized fleet said it is the only fleet operation in the country to be ISO 9001:200 certified in comprehensive fleet maintenance services.



Fleet employees of the city of Fort Wayne, Ind., received the award as the Best Fleet in North America.



From left, Mayor Graham Richard; Larry Campbell, fleet superintendent; and Kelly Reagan, general manager, First Vehicle Services.

In addition, it has received an OSHA award called VPP to recognize voluntary safety activities and awareness. The fleet has operated for six consecutive years with no lost time due to injury. The fleet has a short safety meeting daily, which allows personnel to communicate face to face. A safety message begins the meeting and attendees may express concerns.

It is the only municipal Blue Seal shop in Indiana with an average of nine ASE certifications per technician. That correlates to 159 ASE certificated technicians on the floor at any one time. There are 25 employees who hold both CPR and first aid certifications.

An employee safety committee is charged with keeping the shop a safe and clean place to work. The committee is empowered to effect policy change, correct safety violations and raise any concerns relative to safety of all shop employees. It also has its own line item budget. All employees are encouraged to express their opinions on all issues, managers said. This dedication to communication on all levels has provided feedback that prevents misunderstandings and increases employee morale.

Six Sigma is employed to ensure quality. Six Sigma can be characterized by a "push and pull" methodology. Concepts and techniques are pushed down through the organization. Ideas, project implementation and involvement are pulled through the organization. It is strictly focused on organization efficiency and elimination of waste. Brainstorming and thinking outside the box are key components of any quality movement.

Key performance indicators measure this orientation to quality, an important measurement of daily quality. The fleet has grown 17 percent in the past five years to 1,400 vehicles with the "in-sourcing" of surrounding cities.

The overall maintenance of the fleet costs 15 percent less than 10 years ago at today's prices, managers said. The savings to the city over the past five years through increased efficiencies has been \$730,000 net. Overall availability has averaged 99 percent during the past four years.

Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard was so impressed he was inspired to write a book called "Performance is the Best Politics: How to Create a High Performance Government." He was present to hand out the awards for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Voluntary Protection Program on Aug. 3. The mayor also started, through the fleet department, a "green fleet" policy that has reduced cancer causing harmful emissions by 50 percent.

Award criteria

A panel of fleet experts, with 100 years combined fleet experience put together the 12 criteria for the award. These criteria are considered the drivers of excellence in any fleet operation. The judges were from Laird Consulting in Houston, Fleet Counselor Services in Phoenix and the 100 Best Fleets Corp. in San Francisco.

A partial list of criteria includes:

- promote ever-increasing levels of productivity and operational effectiveness;
- promote pride in the industry and provide national recognition; and
- encourage more individuals to consider fleet operations as a career choice.

All fleets considered for the award had a common mindset of excellence. They shared the belief that their shops could and should be great places to work. They could visualize the future and create it with their employees. They all believed in and practiced process reviews for continual improvements. Their belief systems allowed them to bring out the best in themselves by bringing out the best in others.

The selections were based on applications, site visits, peer reviews and other national recognitions. The judges looked for honest assessments of situations at hand and worked

toward improvement in the areas that can be controlled in fleet operations.

The emphasis was on measuring where the fleet began and where it aspired to go. The battle cry of all 100 Fleets was continuous improvement and ongoing education.

Mayor Richard instituted a fleet management practice called "Lean-Six-Sigma." This business improvement methodology helped cure local government bureaucracy. Within the program, fleet managers were expected to lead the way with a proven track record to show other departments how to operate with maximum efficiency, customer service and cost effectiveness.

The city of Ft. Wayne fleet is operated by First Vehicle Services. **FE**

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2006 100 Best

Abilene, Texas
Alyeska Pipeline, Fairbanks,
Alaska
Allegheny County, Pa*
Anaheim, Calif.
Arapahoe County, Colo.*
Atlanta*
Aurora, Colo.
Austin, Texas
Beverly Hills, Calif.
Charlotte, N.C.*
Chicago*
Cincinnati*
Clark County, Wash.
Coconino County, Ariz.
Collier County, Fla.
Colorado Springs, Colo.
Culver City, Calif.*
Dallas County, Texas
Daytona Beach, Fla.
Dayton, Ohio
DeKalb County, Ga.
Denver
Denver Water, Colo.*
Des Moines, Iowa
District of Columbia*
Englewood, Colo.
Evanston, Ill.
Everett, Wash.*
Fayetteville, Ark.
Florida Power & Light*
Fort Wayne, Ind.*
Fort Worth, Texas
Fulton County, Ga.
Galveston, Texas
Glendale, Calif.

Greensboro, N.C.
Greenwich, Conn.
Groton, Conn.
Harford County, Md.
Henrico County, Va.
Inglewood, Calif.
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa
Illinois Central Management
Services, Springfield, Ill.*
King County, Wash.*
Knoxville, Tenn.
La Plata County, Colo.
Las Vegas Valley Water District*
Lee County, Fla.
Lewisville, Texas
Littleton, Colo.
Long Beach, Calif.
Longmont, Colo.
Loudoun County, Va.
Lynchburg, Va.
Manatee County, Fla.
Marietta, Ga.
Miami
Milwaukee
Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources
Moline, Ill.
Montgomery County, Md.
Montgomery County Sheriff's
Office, Texas
Nevada Department of
Transportation
Ohio State University
Omaha Public Power, Neb.
Oneonta, N.Y.
Ontario County, N.Y.

Palm Beach County, Fla.
Palm Springs, Calif.
Pasco County, Fla.
Peoria, Ariz.
Philadelphia*
Plano, Texas
Polk County, Fla.*
Portland, Ore.
Richardson, Texas
Richland County, S.C.
Rochester, N.Y.
San Bernardino County, Calif.
San Diego County, Calif.*
San Luis Obispo County, Calif.*
Salt Lake County, Utah
Salt River Project, Ariz.
Snohomish County, Wash.
Springfield Utilities, Mo.
State of South Dakota
Syracuse, N.Y.
Tacoma, Wash.
Tallahassee, Fla.
Topeka, Kan.
Troy, Mich.*
University of Kentucky, Lexington
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis
University of Washington, Seattle
Vancouver, British Columbia,
Canada
Volusia County, Fla.
Westminster, Colo.
Williamson County, Texas
Wilmington, Del.
* Denotes a top 20 fleet