

CHANDLER REPUBLIC

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# 'All-America' nod speaks to Chandler's livability

Chandler is a finalist for the 2010 All-America City Award, the oldest and most prestigious civic recognition award a city can receive.

That deserves a round of applause. The award is given by the National Civic League, a 100-plus-year-old, non-partisan, non-profit organization that

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promotes community democracy.

The league picked Chandler as a finalist for its work to curb underage drinking, provide medical attention to uninsured children and use resources wisely.

The city touted to the league its efforts with ICAN's underage-drinking task force. Part of that effort included teenagers with Improving Chandler Area Neighborhoods approaching strangers outside a convenience store to buy alcohol for them while program sponsors and

local police officers stood by. Some adults agreed to make the purchase. Those who said no were thanked for doing the right thing.

ICAN was at it again Saturday with a town hall-style discussion to fight underage drinking, which is more prevalent in the city core. The discussion was in conjunction with National Alcohol Awareness Month.

Chandler's efforts to help its youth do not end there.

The city also highlighted to the league the Chandler CARE Center, which has provided medical attention and immunizations to more than 51,000 uninsured children in its 15 years, thanks to medical, dental and other professionals who donate their services. The CARE Center recently moved into a larger, LEED-certified facility, which will accommodate more children in need.

Chandler has a lot invested in its youth.



MICHAEL SCHENNUM/THE REPUBLIC

Recreational amenities, such as parks, also are part of Chandler's charms.

But it hasn't lost sight of other precious resources.

The city also was proud to talk about the Chandler Heights Community Facilities, which houses a police substation, the Environmental Education Center and a water recharge facility. This multi-purpose development uses municipal resources wisely and provides public safety,

water-conservation and environmental education, and open space and recreation to residents in one spot.

At a time when the city is instituting painful budget cuts, it is nice to be recognized for civic achievements, not only locally but nationally. The award could serve as an economic-development tool to show businesses the city works to overcome adversity and build prosperous neighborhoods.

Chandler is the only Arizona city this year to be recognized. Phoenix won last year.

But even the prospects of winning the award do not erase frugal responsibilities. The city is seeking sponsorships to defray the costs of sending community and staff members to Missouri to make presentations to civic experts.

Winners will be announced in June. Here's hoping the efforts pay off.