

PRESS RELEASE



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City Manager

Cynthia O'Banner Honored as National Code Enforcement Officer of the Year

Last Thursday night, the American Association of Code Enforcement (AACE) announced the City of Plano's Director of Property Standards Cynthia O'Banner is the 2008 Code Enforcement Officer of the Year. The presentation was made during the AACE's 2008 Annual Educational Code Conference in Portland, Oregon.

Cynthia was nominated for the award by her City of Plano colleagues, whom she has served with and mentored for the past 12 years. During her tenure at Plano, Cynthia has built a small nine-person division of the Building Inspections Department into a 26-person stand-alone department.

City Manager Tom Muehlenbeck said, "From the time Cynthia came on board, she has literally changed the way we view property standards. She's built a strong team of community-oriented employees who rally to find innovative solutions to complicated code enforcement issues. This acknowledgement from her peers has been a longtime coming and we are very happy for Cynthia."

She took the department to a new level of environmental consciousness by developing the first full-hybrid vehicle code enforcement fleet. Today 18 hybrid vehicles buzz around Plano monitoring code violations while saving the City significant fuel costs. Cynthia reduced costs further by equipping her team with wireless laptops, which allow them to access, research and process cases in real time in the field.

Another notable accomplishment began when Cynthia implemented a Multi-family Rental Registration and Inspection Program. The program started as a pilot to ensure residents living in apartments were able to live in safe and properly maintained homes.

In the two and a half years of the program, 3,576 life safety violations have been identified and corrected.

Today Cynthia focuses on earning Plano's Property Standards Department the National Code Enforcement Accreditation, which would make it the first accredited independent code enforcement department in the nation.

On a professional level, she has actively participated in the Texas Code Enforcement Association and AACE. She has shared her experiences by working on regional projects, programs and networks to develop and improve the code enforcement profession locally and nationally. She has been involved in the North Central Texas Council of Governments DFW Code Enforcement Milestone Project, City Council Neighborhood Roundtables, University of Texas at Dallas Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management program and Chamber of Commerce Leadership Plano program.

Most recently Cynthia's Property Standards department was the first of the City of Plano's departments to participate in the Gatekeeper Program, a program developed in coordination with the Geriatric Wellness Center of Collin County (GWCCC), Adult Protective Services and the North Central Texas Council of Governments' Area Agency on Aging. Her team was trained to identify older residents in need of social services to easily connect them to local providers.

For information about the Property Standards Department and the codes that the City of Plano enforces visit www.plano.gov/departments/propertystandards.