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Contact: Tara Finnigan
Public Information Manager
949-644-3035

Newport Beach Chooses California and “Best in Class” Cities for Benchmarking Comparisons

NEWPORT BEACH, Ca. – Tuesday evening, the Newport Beach City Council endorsed the next step in the city’s organizational improvement process by approving a list of 17 cities that Newport Beach will use to compare, or benchmark, its services.

Councilmember Keith Curry explained, “We have identified a group of comparative cities who share similar issues such as coastal location, tourism, wealth indicators, and the California tax structure. We also identified best-in-class cities from throughout the nation. Our goal is to provide a measure of performance against the best communities in America so that when we say we provide great services, we can truly show how we stack up.”

The list of California cities selected includes Carlsbad, Coronado, Huntington Beach, Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, Palo Alto and Santa Cruz. The “Best in Class” cities chosen for the city’s benchmarking include jurisdictions known for their long-term use of performance measurement. These include:

- Bellevue, WA – Named #1 place to live and launch by CNN Money, 2006 Harvard Innovation Awards finalist
- Coral Springs, FL - First city in nation to win the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Two-time Florida Sterling Council Award for Performance Excellence
- Westminster, CO - 2005 International Award for Livable Communities from the United Nations (only U.S. city), Two-time Money Magazine 100 Best Places to Live in the U.S. designation

- Virginia Beach, VA - Most Technologically Advanced City in America (250,000 population and higher) by the 2004 Digital Cities Survey, 2005 Best of the Web Award from the Center for Digital Government.

“As we transition the organization to a data-driven management process, comparing our efforts to the performance of this group of peer jurisdictions will encourage us to further strive for excellence and demonstrate that this city deserves to be included among those considered “best in class,” said City Manager Homer Bludau.

The City’s organizational improvement process is one of the Council’s 2008 priorities. The first stages of the process involved identifying customer satisfaction levels, identifying the services to be used for comparison purposes, and developing the performance measures that will provide the comparative data. With the benchmark cities now selected, Newport Beach will begin to gather internal data to be used to compare its service measurements against the data collected from these comparable jurisdictions. This process will help determine if there are some efficiencies that can be gained through learning how these cities provide their services.

“Our customer satisfaction survey told us our residents were highly pleased with the manner in which our city services are provided,” Bludau added. “But our residents deserve both the best in services and the best in efficiencies in how those services are provided. This process will help us to accomplish that.”