



NEWS RELEASE

September 7, 2007

THREE PAGES WITH PHOTOS

City Receives Statewide Award of Excellence for Rotary Centennial Park and Robin Ventura Field

The City of Santa Maria has been honored as a 2007 Helen Putnam Award winner by the League of California Cities, for its popular Rotary Centennial Park and Robin Ventura Field.

The park and adjacent baseball field, which were developed through an innovative partnership with the City and three local Rotary clubs, earned the City the Award for Excellence in the category of Health and Wellness Programs.

The Helen Putnam Award for Excellence program “recognizes outstanding cities that deliver the highest quality and level of service in the most effective manner possible,” according to the League. This is the fourth time that the City has been honored with the award.

Of the 115 nominations submitted statewide this year, 27 cities were honored with awards. The winners were announced this week at the League of California Cities annual conference in Sacramento.

The park at 2625 South College Drive near City Fire Station No. 4, features the Robin Ventura baseball field, a 10-station exercise station trail system, playground equipment, a toddlers “tot lot”, a restroom, basketball court, park clock, flagpoles, gazebo and numerous benches and tables including a covered group picnic area. The park was dedicated on May 19, 2006.

The park was inspired as a way to celebrate both the 100-year anniversaries of the City’s incorporation and the founding of Rotary International, in 1905. But this park also was a rare opportunity to create more programs and a new venue to promote and encourage healthier activities and lifestyles for both youth and seniors alike.

PAGE 2 of 3

In 2001, the City's Recreation and Parks Department created a Leisure Action Plan based on the input received through a community wide survey and focus group meetings. When it was recently updated, it was found that one in every three residents in Santa Maria were 19 years of age or younger and many of them were overweight; that 24.2 percent of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders were overweight; that none of the 9th graders tested in the local schools met all of the national fitness standards; and that only 42.9 percent of 9th graders met five of the six fitness standards.

These dismal results prompted the City to take action and create programs that provide children with safe places such as parks, gymnasiums and ball fields to be active before, during and after school. Also, at the other end of the age spectrum, the City recognized that more retirees were relocating to Santa Maria because of its ideal year-round climate and best regional value for home buyers. Many of them were baby boomers, who have come to expect "amenity-rich" parks with exercise and fitness stations.

The challenge was finding funding to pay for a park with "amenity-rich" types of activities given the fact that the City had limited funding for park construction and development.

Through an innovative, collaborative partnership with local service clubs, private and corporate sponsors who raised \$425,000 in cash and donations for equipment, the City created a large community park with modern recreational and wellness amenities that offers healthier recreational activities for all ages. Community health walks co-sponsored by the City also are held at the park.

Questions may be directed to the City Manager's Office, 925-0951, ext. 372.

Department:	City Manager's Office
Contact Person:	Mark van de Kamp, Management Analyst II
Telephone Number:	(805) 925-0951 ext. 372
Email Address:	mvandekamp@ci.santa-maria.ca.us





One of 10 exercise stations (above) and a playground (below) are part of Rotary Centennial Park.

