

GOVERNING



GOVERNING MAGAZINE ANNOUNCES 2011 PUBLIC OFFICIALS OF THE YEAR

Nine Leaders Recognized as Best and Brightest in State, City and County Government

(WASHINGTON, D.C., October 27, 2011)—GOVERNING today [announced the top state and local government officials](#) being honored for leadership and excellence. The 2011 Public Officials of the Year are leaders from state, city and county government and are being recognized for outstanding accomplishment in their positions and communities. The annual awards program is in its 18th year.

Public Officials of the Year are selected from nominations submitted by readers, experts in the public and private sectors, and the GOVERNING editorial team. Among the qualities recognized are leadership, courage, innovation, creativity and good management. With the nine officials honored this year, GOVERNING has named a total of 167 people as Public Officials of the Year.

“These dynamic state, city and county public officials faced both economic and political challenges,” said GOVERNING Publisher Fred Kuhn. “Through their collective vision, these stellar leaders worked to better not only their communities but to set an example for future leaders to follow.”

GOVERNING’s 2011 Public Officials of the Year are:

Mike Beebe, Governor, State of Arkansas. Under Governor Beebe’s leadership, Arkansas has weathered recent financial storms as few other states have. As the 2011 fiscal year approached, it was one of just four states that didn’t face a budget shortfall, and it repeated that fortune this year. As a result, Arkansas has been spared the deep cuts and rounds of layoffs that other states have endured. Followers of Arkansas politics say the state’s stability is largely due to the governor’s steady fiscal hand, which explains why Beebe enjoys such wide bipartisan support and a 67 percent job approval rating.

Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor, The City University of New York. Chancellor since 1999, Matthew Goldstein has been instrumental in CUNY’s transformation from “an institution adrift” to “a veritable American dream machine.” Central to his strategy has been a unique sustainability partnership with the city of New York in which together, school and city have paved the way for the foundation of a new type of infrastructure based on renewable energy. The result: A game-changing model of sustainability for urban growth and a new era of excellence for CUNY.

Ronald Haddad, Chief of Police, City of Dearborn, Michigan. Home to the nation’s most concentrated Arab community, Dearborn, Michigan, boasts one of the most widely admired approaches to counterterrorism—one pioneered by the city and state’s first Arab-American police chief. Heralded as “a model for the nation and for federal policy,” Haddad’s approach uses community-based policing to defend against violent extremism. A 7 percent drop in crime in 2010 and Dearborn’s culture of trust and civic engagement are testaments to Haddad’s success.

Lee E. Haworth, Judge, 12th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida, Sarasota-Manatee-Desoto Counties.

When the number of foreclosure lawsuits in his circuit rose from 900 in 2006 to 8,500 in 2008, Judge Haworth started requiring that banks meet with homeowners about their options before filing for foreclosure. As a result, 25 percent of those facing foreclosure resolved their cases, and the program became the framework for the statewide mediation program enacted by the Florida Supreme Court in 2010.

Nigel Jacob and Chris Osgood, Co-chairs, Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics, City of Boston. The co-chairs of a unique IT agency are changing the way citizens interact with cities. Their first initiative, Citizens Connect, is a maintenance-request app that has been downloaded more than 16,000 times and replicated in more than 20 countries since its 2009 launch. Today, the duo is working with small development firms, nonprofits and colleges, and is managing almost 20 new projects that address needs in infrastructure, education and what they call "participatory urbanism."

Dan Liljenquist, Senator, State of Utah. State Senator Dan Liljenquist braved political fallout to architect Utah's pension reform, closing the existing, unsustainable system to new workers and offering them instead a defined-contribution plan. His actions effectively removed the possibility of the retirement fund ever bankrupting the state and won accolades from *The Wall Street Journal*, which called his plan a model other states should replicate. Senator Liljenquist is currently consulting with the Laura and John Arnold Foundation as he works with multiple states on implementing much-needed pension reform.

Joanie Mahoney, County Executive, Onondaga County, New York. County Executive Joanie Mahoney attracted a lot of attention when she challenged a U.S. EPA consent order aimed at cleaning up Syracuse's Onondaga Lake, considered to be one of the most polluted in the country. The EPA order would have meant three new treatment plants. Instead, Mahoney got the city and county to work together on a much greener approach. From planting green roofs on municipal buildings to ecologically sound landscaping plans, the dozens of programs that make up her "Save the Rain" initiative have become a national model for dealing with overloaded sewer systems and toxic runoff.

Kasim Reed, Mayor, City of Atlanta, Georgia. Kasim Reed, a mayor who believes that "a lot of the work I'm doing is really for the next mayor," engineered a major overhaul of the city's pension plan, solving a \$1.5 billion problem and putting the city on its soundest fiscal footing in a generation. Under his watch, Atlanta's reserves grew from \$7.4 million to more than \$70 million by the end of this year. While many cities were cutting services, Reed managed to reopen community centers and pools, added 100 new police officers to city streets and even instituted a modest pay raise for police and firefighters.

GOVERNING's 2011 Public Officials of the Year are profiled in the [November issue](#) of the magazine and on <http://www.governing.com/POY>. They will be honored at a dinner at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 17, hosted by GOVERNING and sponsored by Motorola, NIC, Oracle and SAP. Press passes to the event are available.

About GOVERNING and GOVERNING Institute

More than 75,000 public officials turn to GOVERNING for the trusted information they can't find anywhere else. GOVERNING covers [state and local government politics, policies and programs](#) essential to this audience.

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