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City of the Year

'League' names Garrison state's top community

By STU MERRY

The City of Garrison is once again North Dakota's City of the Year.

City officials received the news last week. The award will be presented Saturday at the League of Cities Conference in Bismarck.

Garrison was also N.D.'s City of the Year in 2007.

The nomination form was submitted to the N.D. League of Cities in early August by Auditor Diane Affeldt and Mayor Shannon Jeffers.

Jeffers said it is an honor to receive recognition as North Dakota's City of the Year.

"I believe that it represents recognition of a community's commitment to its well being and is a measure of the success of a community," he said.

Jeffers said the recognition is a testament to those who strive to better the make the community better.

"It doesn't just happen," he said. "It takes a lot of hard work by many dedicated individuals and organizations within the community to bring it all together. And it takes consistency."

The mayor said, looking back through the years, consistency has been a common thread in the success of Garrison.

"You know a successful community when you see it," he said. "It just has that feel. And Garrison is one of those communities."

"Garrison continues to be successful because of the vigor of eager and motivated individuals," the form said.

A number of community improvements were listed, including replacement of the twin "Hot" and "Cold" water towers with a new 400,000-gallon tower that wears the Get Hooked on Garrison logo. Funds from a 1-cent city sales tax for water related projects offset the cost of the tower replacement.

"It's a proud and fulfilling experience to be recognized as the N.D. City of the Year, an award that showcases our progressive community," said Affeldt.

"As a second time, or repeat recipient, it tells me Garrison is an 'on the move' city not a 'we cannot do that' city. We are meeting the needs of our residents plus thinking out of the box on new ideas and projects."

The nomination form gives a laundry list of accomplishments including the Parks & Recreation Department's improvements to the Little League Field, a project completed with city finances, donations and volunteers.

The Parks & Recreation Department's City Park and pool shelter upgrades are also listed.

Another civic accomplishment is the recently completed upgrade at the Garrison Municipal Airport.

Recreation opportunities are listed, including the new visitor center at Fort Stevenson State Park, the state's top park for annual attendance.

Other community projects include the Garrison School District upgrading the football complex with a new concession building, bleachers, restrooms and storage.

Senior citizens center upgrades are also listed as well as CHI-Garrison's expansion of its fertilizer plant.

The Garrison Chamber of Commerce installed two lighted "Welcome to Garrison" highway signs on Highway 37, a new comprehensive plan was approved and Garrison became a N.D. Cares Community.

The form closes: "As a community, we are very proud of our annual events and the volunteers that work so hard to ensure that each and every one continue to be a success.

"Events like the Skyfest Over Fort Stevenson kite festival, N.D. Governor's Cup Walleye Derby, CANDISC bike tour, Beach Party and Dickens Village Festival are just some of the happenings in Garrison that set us apart. Our residents are the heart of the city we call Garrison."

The North Dakota League of Cities provides service, advocacy, leadership, education and support to the state's 357 cities. The League's mission: "Strong. Dynamic. Cities." expresses the value of services offered by the League.