



NEWS RELEASE

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Code Compliance program wins statewide recognition *Texas Municipal League bestows its highest award*

SACHSE (October 19, 2016) Sachse's Happy Grams, the Code Compliance alternative to the customary nasty gram, have completely transformed the way code violations have been handled, and TML, the state's organization of towns and cities, agrees.

The Happy Grams have been awarded the 2016 Award of Excellence in Communication for cities under 25,000 in population by TML (Texas Municipal League), an organization composed of 1,150 Texas cities. The award, one of only 10 such recognitions awarded statewide, was presented to the Sachse contingent that attended the organization's 104th annual conference and exhibition held in Austin earlier this month.

Conceived and developed by Catherine "Katie" Munson of the Code Compliance staff, the Happy Grams reposition the customary complaint forms that have been the hallmark of the sometimes contentious relationship between cities and residents who may not be in full compliance with codes and ordinances, according to Dusty McAfee, Director of Community Development. The Code Compliance Department is part of Community Development.

"Code Compliance officers are our first line of defense against the deterioration of our quality of life, cleanliness and sanitation," he said. "They ensure that violations such as high grass, weeds, junk vehicles among others, are brought to the attention of the resident or landlord. And, up to now, that interaction was decidedly negative."

Convinced that a higher rate of compliance could be achieved by changing tactics, the staff discussed the idea of changing violators' behaviors by addressing the violations in a more positive, light-hearted way. The Happy Grams grew from that discussion.

"The program has exceeded our expectations," said McAfee. "People are really motivated by positive reinforcement, and addressing them as adults in a non-confrontational way provides a higher level of compliance, and far fewer complaints about the work of the officers."

The TML award provided further proof that the program's innovative approach was indeed worth the effort. Code Compliance will continue to use the Happy Grams, hoping that the positive response will continue.

"We're very optimistic about the program and how we might keep improving it," he added. "So far, the program is helping us meet our goals and objectives, and we see no reason that it won't continue to help us deepen our relationship with residents."

The TML Award of Excellence awarded this year is the second for the City of Sachse.

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Note: A photo file and cutline accompany this release.

ABOUT THE CITY OF SACHSE – Sachse is an emerging city in Collin and Dallas Counties with a population of 20,329 according to the 2010 census. Located about a mile north of the President George Bush Turnpike off State Hwy 78, the City is chartered as a Council-Manager municipality. Founded in 1845 by William Sachse, the City enjoys an eclectic mix of older, established neighborhoods and new residential and commercial developments. Proud of its history, the City is home to a strong historical restoration movement which includes an extensive history museum.

PHOTO AND CUTLINE



SACHSE WINS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE – Mayor Mike Felix (center) holds the Award of Excellence presented to the City of Sachse during the recent Texas Municipal League conference in Austin. The City was recognized for its Happy Gram program in Code Compliance. In addition to the Mayor, attendees at the conference included (left to right) City Secretary Michelle Lewis Sirianni, City Manager Gina Nash, Community Development Director Dusty McAfee, City Council member Jeff Bickerstaff, City Council member Paul Watkins, Mayor Pro Tem Charlie Ross, and Police Chief Bryan Sylvester.