City: Independence

Title of Project: "Building Community" through "Community Engagement"

City's Population: 5966

In a few sentences, give a summary of the project and why it was needed:

Over the past four years the City of Independence and its Citizens have made a made an investment to build a thriving community. These projects took considerable investments of volunteers for committees to engage in the planning, designing, and fundraising,

Project 1 River’sEDGE Sport & Fitness – This project renovated an abandoned Fareway store to create a multi-use center for community members and surrounding towns. This facility features 5 indoor baseball/softball cages, 5500 square foot of turf, walking track, bags, courts, HitTrax the world’s only baseball/softball simulator, 2 golf simulators, small rental room, and a multipurpose room large enough for weddings, class reunions, and our growing fitness classes. After four years in the planning process this project opened for business in 2014. In just three years the facility operated in the black.

Project 2 New Aquatic Center – This project spent nearly ten years in the planning phase. The current facility was opened in 1964 and the replacement opened in 2017. The new facility passed with over a 76% yes on the first vote. This project volunteers on the committee met for over 4 years from first meeting to open. The new facility boasts a zero depth entry with play features and a baby slide, two slides a water walk, diving board, outdoor table pavilion, and brand new bathhouse.

Project 3 Indee Bark Park – This project started as a group appointed by the Mayor to investigate ideas, locations, and amenities for the future off leash Dog Park. The group of volunteers quickly took to the task and within one year they planned designed, fundraised and built Independence’s first dog park. The Park opened in October of 2017 and this summer will serve as the first full season. This Park features all new fencing, separate small and large dog areas, new shelter and picnic table in the small dog park, and water spigots in each area. The committee has already began planning for two shelters in the large dog area this summer.

In each of these examples, citizen engagement has made the projects viable. These efforts have demonstrated the effects of collaboration and civic engagement with our community to make the projects a reality which likely would not happen otherwise.
Explain the specific role of your city in this project:

Project 1 River’sEDGE

The building was owned by the City of Independence which enabled the Parks and recreation to redesign the building for the usage. Parks and Recreation staff completely gutted the interior. City staff was very involved in all phases from construction to fundraising.

Project 2 Aquatic Center

Parks and Recreation staff served as liaison’s on the steering committee and later the fundraising committee. This committee met sometimes weekly for hours over the course of four years.

Project 3 Dog Park

Both City staff and council worked with the committee in an advisory role. This project was led by the volunteers on the committee. The property was owned by the City. All final decision rested with the council.

In a few sentences, what future impact will this project have on your community?

The future impact of these projects will be enhancements to the City's offerings to it's citizens and visitors from out of town.

Total cost of project: 4,081,049.18 for all three projects

List where funding came from. (grants, donations, city funds, etc):

In kind work, fundraising, grants, hotel/motel funds, bond referendum

Total time project took/projected to take for completion. Please include start date and end date. (To qualify the project must be operating or completed between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017):

Project 1 Rivers’EDGE Start Date April 2010 Opened February 2014  Project 2 Aquatic Center Start date August 2010 Opened June 1, 2017  Project 3 Dog Park Start Date March 2017  Opened October 2017

Resources. (Please list Web sites judges may reference if they seek additional information.):