

**Achievements that
brought recognition to the**

Eleven "All-America" Cities of 1953

THE ANNUAL "All-America Cities" competition, as previously mentioned in THE AMERICAN CITY, was an important feature of the 1953 National Conference on Government, held by the National Municipal League in Richmond, Va., November 9-11. Co-sponsor of the competition was *Look* Magazine, which is devoting five pages to the subject in its current (February 9) issue.

Twenty-two cities were invited by the National Municipal League to submit at the Richmond meeting their claims for a place on this "All-America" team. From these the award jury had the difficult task of selecting 11 as the more outstanding examples of progress achieved in community betterment as a result of energetic, purposeful, intelligent citizen effort.

All 22 of the statements presented impressed the jury

as meriting special recognition. In addition, therefore, to selecting 11 for the major awards, honorable mention was accorded to the 11 others, here listed:

Corpus Christi, Texas	Hamilton, Ohio
Fair Lawn, N. J.	Lawrence, Mass.
Glendale, Calif.	Norwich, Conn.
Grand Rapids, Mich.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
Greenwich, Conn.	Rome, N. Y.

Toledo, Ohio

The stories, in brief, of the cities that made the "All-America" team are presented in alphabetical order on this and the following pages. De Soto, the smallest city to qualify, is intentionally accorded the greatest amount of space. The "honorable mention" group will tell their stories in THE AMERICAN CITY next month.

Canton, Ohio

CANTON, OHIO, an industrial town having a population of approximately 18,000 people, has had a national reputation for commercialized vice and racketeering. An aroused citizenry, aided by press, radio, and the Citizens Committee for Good Government, gave Canton, starting in 1951, the good administration it needs and deserves.

This concerted effort placed in office officials who have done an outstanding job of cleaning up the unsavory conditions which had prevailed for more than a century. The notorious redlight district was eliminated. Fifty-four federal gambling stamps were turned in. There has been a drug traffic crackdown. The American Social Hygiene Association lauded the clean-up by announcing in November 1952 and in May 1953 that the city had lost its "vice center" tag.

The Safety Director, Stanley Omich, who was appointed by Mayor Carl Wise, was the leader in this cleanup. In February 1953, as a result, he was awarded the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce award for good government. Only four similar awards have ever been given. He was named Canton's outstanding young man in 1952 and the outstanding young man in the State of Ohio the same year.

The Citizens Committee for Good Government has tried to encourage the best men in both political parties to run for office and to encourage more people to vote. The press did a terrific job of alerting the community to

the conditions which have prevailed over the years. The radio helped by good news coverage which helped keep the people informed.

This story is not the action by any one individual or any one group. The citizens of Canton have, through their action, given their children and their children's children a cleaner, better place in which to live.

NORMAN H. PETERSON
Citizens Committee for Good Government

Daytona Beach, Florida

DATING FROM 1948, when private citizens formed a Civic Affairs Committee to combat corruption, strong-arm government, and open gambling, Daytona Beach has progressed toward better government through intelligent and energetic citizen action.

First, citizens had themselves named elisors by the State Court and personally conducted raids on gambling establishments which had gone unmolested by elected law officers.

The reform group, defeated at the polls by election frauds, drafted a fraud-proof election law which was passed by the State Legislature. This cleared the way for purging of election rolls.

A last-minute write-in campaign in 1950 gave the reform group a 3-2 majority on the City Commission. Progress was temporarily halted, however, when the reform mayor switched sides and moved to replace an

the eleven "All-America Cities" of 1953

laurels. Since November 1952 a well-organized citizens' committee of a permanent nature has dedicated itself to the improvement of educational service within the district. On September 14, 1953, the doors opened for 500 high-school students in a modern, functional building housing a competent faculty and offering a curriculum tailored to local needs. *All this was made possible through the organized efforts of 292 lay citizens, spending 6,590 hours on behalf of the school.* Volunteers are still doing yeoman service as a representative advisory body. The soundness and effectiveness of local school planning and operating policy is thus insured.

JAMES M. PATTERSON
*Board of Education
Rich Township High School*

Peoria, Illinois

LED by a nonpartisan organization, Peorians for Council-Manager (PCM) citizens went to the polls in January 1952 and voted two to one to replace their 107-year-old form of government with the efficient council-manager plan. Realizing that the plan would need capable and sympathetic leadership, PCM sought out and supported a full slate in the first candidate election, in the spring of 1953. Six of the nine PCM candidates (total field, 54) were elected.

In its first meeting, the new council knocked \$23,000 worth of political padding off the yearly payroll . . . then went to work enforcing the laws. Total fines and parking income suddenly jumped 52%. Next step was the hiring of George E. Bean, currently president of the International City Managers' Association, to administer city affairs.

In its first few months, the new administration routed gambling and put vice on the run with 35 raids on entrenched Peoria brothels. Council authorized a \$285,000 bond issue to pay a pile of bills, some of them three years old.

With the retirement of other debts and improved city services as objectives, new cigarette and wheel taxes were enacted. A local business college dean contributed a comprehensive job classification and wage-scale study. Outdated city equipment had to move over for 23 new city vehicles, including 11 police cars and 5 street department trucks.

Peoria's governmental renaissance is well on its way.
BYRON DE HAAN

Petersburg, Virginia

LIKE A GREAT MANY of our cities during the depression years and the war years following, Petersburg could not carry on a comprehensive program of municipal improvements, and had accumulated a great reservoir of community needs. The city government, recognizing the great need for a new and modern hospital facility, in 1949, created a Hospital Authority, composed of nine prominent business and professional men. After consultation and careful planning, a community campaign was organized and carried on with so much enthusiasm that the financial goal of \$800,000, by public subscription, was exceeded by more than 80%. Thirteen

thousand people, a number greater than one-third of all the men, women, and children living in the city, subscribed a total of \$1,449,761, and, as of November 1, 1953, \$1,287,085 of these pledges has been paid.

The tremendous enthusiasm generated by this highly successful community effort proved to be a reawakening of community spirit and interest, and, from the closing date of this campaign, the city has marched forward, not only to the completion and occupancy, on January 15, 1953, of a \$3,176,000, 180-bed hospital, but the city government, backed by citizen cooperation, the support of the press, radio, churches, and civic groups, has completed:

- A \$1,000,000 Negro high school
- A \$500,000 white elementary school
- A \$100,000 fire station in the central business district
- A \$250,000 Farm Market Center
- Water plant improvements costing more than \$200,000

A Planning Commission, with the aid of a consulting engineering firm, has completed a long-range comprehensive plan for orderly city development.

- A seven-member Traffic Commission has been created and engaged in a traffic study. It has provided off-street parking lots to accommodate approximately 700 cars, adopted a one-way street plan, and taken many other steps to alleviate the critical traffic problem.

- A Recreational Advisory Board has been created, and its study and recommendations have resulted in the employment of a full-time recreational director and staff who carry on a year-round recreational program.

- In addition to a 50-man paid fire department, a volunteer company of 50 men has been organized and fully equipped to supplement the regular department.

- A group of citizens, with city participation, acquired what was known as Centre Hill Mansion and grounds, and has converted it into a museum in which is housed one of the finest collections of Civil War relics in the country.

- A group, known as the Southside Emergency Crew, composed entirely of volunteer personnel, is completely equipped for rendering first-aid and emergency service, and answers calls 24 hours a day.

- Ten active garden clubs, with approximately 350 enthusiastic members, are continuously engaged in carrying on many projects of city beautification.

- There is a citizen Welfare Advisory Board, composed of 21 members, which coordinates the city welfare program.

We believe that Petersburg (1950 population 35,054) stands second to no other city of comparable size in this significant fact—in the last 3-year period the city operated within its budget and with a surplus of \$600,000. During this period the city completed approximately \$5,500,000 in capital improvements with a net debt increase of only \$1,000,000 and with its legal debt margin unimpaired.

Second to the hospital project, in the way of citizen participation, stands our civil defense organization job:

- Since January 1, 1951, more than 1,100 citizens have volunteered for training and service in the civil defense program.

- Trained in this program have been 125 auxiliary police, 146 auxiliary firemen, 101 first-aid and 91 home-nursing personnel, and 37 nurses' aides. Three hundred thirty-seven civil-defense meetings have been held, 206 lectures given, and 5,767 letters mailed. Ten civil-defense films have had 181 showings.

- Emergency hospital locations have been established throughout the city as well as first-aid stations, housing and kitchen service, and also an emergency morgue.

- Three siren stations are located in strategic positions throughout the city. Three radio transmitters are maintained. Sixty-five airplane spotters have been trained, and a post is manned 45 hours per week.

- Emergency communications are maintained between Fort