



PRESS RELEASE

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CITY OF RIDGELAND RECEIVES TOP HONOR DURING THE MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE AWARD LUNCHEON

RIDGELAND, MS - The Mississippi Municipal League (MML) honored the 2025 Municipal Excellence Awards Winners at the 94th Annual MML Conference Award Luncheon held in Biloxi, Mississippi, at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center on Wednesday, July 23, 2025.

The Excellence Awards program, which began in 1993, recognizes cities that utilize innovative problem-solving, excellence in management, citizen participation, and community partnership to provide increased services and a better quality of life for their local citizenry. The competition is divided into two population categories: under 10,000 and over 10,000. Within each population category, cities can vie for awards in City Spirit, Community Health, Economic Development & Infrastructure, Public Safety, and Youth in Action. This year, the League added two new categories, Community Health and Youth in Action. It also changed an existing category, Planning and Economic Development, to what is now Economic Development and Infrastructure to encompass the Public Works category that was eliminated. Judges also select one application as the Best Overall.

Best Overall: City of Ridgeland - "125th Anniversary Year Celebration"

Ridgeland wrapped up its 125th anniversary on December 29, 2024, with a finale at the Waller Craft Center, exactly 125 years after its founding in 1899. The year-long celebration honored the City's history, growth, and spirit through a series of community-driven events and projects. The anniversary was recognized at all levels of government, including a city proclamation, state resolutions, and inclusion in the Congressional Record. Businesses embraced the celebration with window decals, banners, and branded displays, while four special editions of *Ridgeland Life* magazine highlighted the City's journey and progress. Notable initiatives included the official designation of the pecan as Ridgeland's city tree and the launch of the Virtual History Room, preserving stories, archives, and rare photos. The City also unveiled a History Trail—both

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Gene F. McGee, cmo - mayor • Angela E. Richburg, mmc - city clerk / chief financial officer

board of aldermen: D.I. Smith, cmo, mayor pro tempore - at-large • Ken Heard, cmo - ward 1 • Chuck Gautier, cmo - ward 2
Kevin Holder, cmo - ward 3 • Brian P. Ramsey, cmo - ward 4 • Bill Lee - ward 5 • Wesley Hamlin, cmo - ward 6

physical and virtual—allowing residents and visitors to explore Ridgeland’s historic sites. The Ridgeland Historical Society created a kid-friendly version of the trail, and local schools joined in with student art and essay contests regarding Ridgeland’s past, present, and future. A public art project beautified 44 traffic signal boxes across the City, sponsored by dozens of businesses and partners.

A video series titled History Minutes featured reflections from community members, including Mayor McGee and descendants of Ridgeland’s first families. The celebration culminated with a festive final event with live music and Ridgeland’s first drone show. Led by a dedicated planning committee, the 125th anniversary brought the community together, honoring its legacy while looking confidently to the future.

125th Anniversary Planning Committee: Kim Cooper (Chair), Nancy Batson, Jim Woodrick, Pat Truesdale, Donna Dye, Polly Hammett, Robby Carr, Matt Dodd, Jane McGee, Lisa Walters, Bill Lee, D.I. Smith, Kenya Rachal, Bryan Johnson, Karen McKie, Chris Chapman, Kelly Durrett, Amelia Dalton, Chrystal Pham, Carol Fitzgerald, Linda Bynum, Ben McDonald, Mike Porter, and William Gilbert.

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The mission of the Mississippi Municipal League is helping cities and towns excel. MML is a non-partisan association established in 1931, representing 290 city, town and village governments in Mississippi. MML is also affiliated with the National League of Cities, a lobbying, legislative and legal arm representing municipalities before the U.S. Congress. For more information about the Mississippi Municipal League, visit www.mmlonline.com.

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