

# West Chester, Wyoming to be 'All- America'?

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West Chester Township and Wyoming each have a chance to become one of 10 communities in the nation to be named an All-America City by the National Civic League.

They are two of 27 finalists for the annual national recognition award that honors communities that have made significant accomplishments through efforts involving residents, businesses and other organizations. The National Civic League, based in Denver, has been giving the awards since 1949.

This is the first time that a community from Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky has been a finalist since 1980-81, when Cincinnati won the award for the third time. The only other All-America City winner from this region was Middletown, which won in 1957. Hamilton was a finalist in 1953, but didn't win.

"Just being nominated a finalist is an honor," said Judy Boyko, West Chester Township administrator. "It means that a third party has reviewed our efforts and decided there is merit in the many contributions our residents and businesses make."

Wyoming City Manager Bob Harrison said the All-America City Award is one of the most prestigious honors a community can receive.

"Being nominated is really a great recognition of the unique sense of life we have here in Wyoming," he said.

Winning or being a finalist for this award garners no money, but is a tool for attracting businesses and development to communities.

In its application for the award, West Chester touted the township's involvement in the recent construction of a new library, the installation of playground equipment at Beckett Park that children with disabilities can use, the development of long-range community plans and the creation of initiatives to assist senior citizens.

"People are very forward-thinking here," West Chester Township Trustee Lee Wong said. "We have the amenities people expect for a dynamic community."

Wyoming's application for the award detailed its economic development efforts in collaboration with Lockland and other neighboring communities and the projects accomplished largely with volunteers, Harrison said. The city also mentioned its work with the Wyoming School District in creating programs to help at-risk students and to encourage students to get involved in community service projects.

Delegations from West Chester and Wyoming will make presentations before a panel of judges in Kansas City in mid-June. The panel will select the top 10 All-America Cities.

The primary purpose of these awards, said National Civic League spokesman Mike McGrath, is to help communities throughout the country

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learn what other communities are doing to be successful.

It used to be uncommon to have two communities from the same metropolitan area make the All-America Cities finalist phase, he said.

"In recent years," McGrath said, "it's happened a few times."

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