



Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Florida Sterling Council honors five role-model organizations, including Shands HealthCare System

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TALLAHASSEE -- Governor Charlie Crist, Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp and the Florida Sterling Council today announced the five organizations that will receive the prestigious Governor's Sterling Award for 2008. The Shands HealthCare System, the Hillsborough County Tax Collector, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Orange County Clerk of Courts and The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota will be honored at the Governor's Sterling Award Banquet at the JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes on May 30, 2008.

"I am honored to recognize this year's Sterling Award recipients," said Governor Crist. "This year's winners have demonstrated their commitment to improving the way they do business. The process of competing for the award alone pushes for results."

For 16 years, the Governor's Sterling Award has recognized organizations and businesses in Florida that have successfully achieved performance superiority within their management and operations. This year's recipients of the coveted award are:

Shands HealthCare (Gainesville) is a private, not-for-profit corporation affiliated with the University of Florida and its Health Science Center. Shands HealthCare serves the health care needs of North Central and Northeast Florida and South Georgia, with key locations in Gainesville and Jacksonville (including Lake City and several other rural outreach facilities). Shands HealthCare has a diverse workforce that includes more than 12,000 employees and 3,500 volunteers.

As one of the most respected health care providers in the Southeast United States, Shands HealthCare is well known for its Centers of Emphasis such as cancer, neurosurgery and cardiovascular services. Through the established health care system, Shands HealthCare provides critical health care services to the underserved as well as patients in Florida and around the country. The use of technology and innovation is apparent in the organization's endeavor to allocate all the resources needed to serve patients with excellence.

Shands HealthCare shows strong performance results across all facilities for 80 percent of reported results, consistently performing in the top 25 percent in key health care industry measures with some approaching top 10 percent or benchmark levels.

Hillsborough County Tax Collector (Tampa) is a constitutional office comprised of 300 employees with an annual budget of \$23.6 million. The office handles the collection and distribution of property, tangible and business taxes, as well as more than a million motor vehicle, vessel, mobile home and driver license transactions annually.

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector was the first in Florida to use Q-MATIC, the provider of key productivity and line-queuing software, which is credited with helping reduce wait times from an hour to 15 minutes. Q-MATIC allows the office to measure employee productivity and deploy strategies based on data, which has improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Over the last six years, the office has maintained consistently high levels of customer satisfaction (from 98 to 99 percent), favorably exceeding the best state peer. The Hillsborough County Tax Collector is the first tax collector's office in Florida and the first government agency in Hillsborough County to win the Governor's Sterling Award.

Marion County Sheriff's Office (Ocala) is a full-service law enforcement agency equipped with a variety of resources to meet the unique needs of its citizens. The Marion County Sheriff's Office workforce includes 894 authorized employees, segmented by 585 sworn officers and 309 civilians.

The agency's four guiding strategies (quality of life, stewardship, safe and motivated workforce and excellence of service) enable the Marion County Sheriff's Office to focus on creating and balancing value for their customers and key stakeholders. The office maximizes money spent through its focus on delivering law enforcement services through its decentralized community policing initiative and a cost-effective corrections facility that includes a work farm program. The Sheriff's commitment of "putting citizens first" is exemplified by key customer requirements such as response time, visibility and professional service.

They have the best crime clearance rate of the 28 highest populated counties in Florida. In addition, the Jail to Work Program has shown favorable increases as the value of inmate labor significantly improved from more than 4.3 million in 2004 to more than 8.6 million in 2007, demonstrating a greater than \$4 million increase in cost savings. The Marion County Sheriff's Office is the first sheriff's office to win the Governor's Sterling Award.

Orange County Clerk of Courts (Orlando) is a constitutional office of the state of Florida with the Clerk serving as an elected officer in the Ninth Judicial Circuit. Orange County has the state's fifth largest population. With a workforce of more than 600 deputy clerks, the Clerk's services include court support, case maintenance, data reporting, customer assistance and collections and disbursement of court fines and fees.

Through the use of innovative technology, including a customer queuing system as well as expanded e-systems to facilitate record sharing and collection, the Clerk has demonstrated both positive financial and customer outcomes.

The Orange County Clerk of Courts has established positive trends in the areas of collection rates, revenue and restitution collection to victims of crime (from \$700,000 in 2001 to \$1.6 million in 2007), which exceeds comparable organizations. Customer satisfaction has increased from 90.6 percent in 2003 to 95.1 percent in 2007. The Orange County Clerk of Courts is only the second Clerk of Courts to win the Governor's Sterling Award.

The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota is a full destination resort consisting of 266 guestrooms and suites. The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota opened in 2001 and currently employs more than 600 people.

The diverse staff comes from more than 44 countries and speaks collectively 28 different languages. With the growth in staff and capital assets, The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota has worked diligently to train and develop employees by implementing a systematic learning and development process.

As a result of this training, The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota is the corporate benchmark in Employee Engagement for 2007. In addition, The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota's systematic leadership system has increased the organization's return on investment in the last four years and has resulted in a major positive impact for the Sarasota community.

About the Governor's Sterling Award

Established in 1992, the Florida Sterling Council is a public/private not-for-profit corporation supported by the Executive Office of the Governor. Sterling's Annual Conference is exclusively designed to teach participants how to elevate performance and increase productivity. More than 1,000 executives and professionals gather at this event for a one-stop source for education, information and inspiration. The conference concludes with the recognition of best practices, the Team Showcase Champion and the presentation of the Governor's Sterling Awards.

The Governor's Sterling Award process is comprehensive and rigorous, and is the highest award an organization can receive for performance excellence in Florida. Organizations submit a 50-page application that is scored against the seven categories of the Sterling Criteria: Leadership; Strategic Planning; Customer and Market Focus; Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; Workforce Focus; Process Management; and Results.

The Sterling Criteria are based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria, which are nationally recognized as the world-class standard for organizational excellence. Expertly trained Sterling examiners independently review the application, and then conduct a substantial five to six day site-visit. The examiner team interviews employees at all levels of the organization and analyzes every aspect of the organization and its performance. Next, the team prepares a detailed feedback report highlighting key strengths and opportunities for improvement. The Sterling Panel of Judges then selects organizations that have successfully implemented the Sterling Criteria and are role-model organizations.

For more information on the Florida Sterling Council, contact Dione Geiger at (850) 922-5316. For other information, visit the Web site listed below:

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