

The Alaska Chapter of APA (AK-APA) is pleased to announce the results of its 2012 Awards Program.

<b>Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>
<p><b><u>Planner of the Year</u></b></p> <p>This award is for a professional planner, currently employed in the planning profession, for a sustained contribution to the profession through distinguished practice, teaching, or writing.</p>	<p><b><u>MITZI BARKER - RurAL CAP</u></b></p> <p>Mitzi Barker has been an extraordinary leader in the planning field for over 35 years. Mitzi has championed social equity in planning practice, not only in her own work, but within the profession itself. She has worked at all levels of government, as a private consultant, and in the non-profit sector. Her accomplishments range from rehabilitating homes of indigenous peoples in rural Alaska to shaping housing policy at local, state and federal government levels. In 2004, Mitzi was elected to the AICP Colleges of Fellows, the first Alaskan to be so honored.</p> <p>Grounded in the belief that quality of life begins at home, she has made affordable housing her professional focus. She has played a key role in developing each of the American Planning Association's housing-related policy guides, and as a long standing member of the association's Legislative and Policy Committee, keeping housing on APA's policy agenda.</p> <p>She is responsible for programs, projects and initiatives too numerous to recite this afternoon. Mitzi exceeds every criterion for the Planner of the Year and it is appropriate that she is our first honoree.</p>	<p><b>CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>History of significant accomplishments</i></li> <li>• <i>Work recognized by APA, local or national organization</i></li> <li>• <i>Indication of significant investment in planning as a career</i></li> <li>• <i>High ethical standards</i></li> <li>• <i>Comprehensive View of planning and advance of the visibility and understanding of planning</i></li> <li>• <i>Experience as a mentor</i></li> <li>• <i>Work has had state wide significance</i></li> <li>• <i>Success in initiating activities</i></li> <li>• <i>Contributions to and active participation in AK-APA</i></li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Best Practices</u></b></p> <p>This award is for a specific planning tool, practice, program, project, or process. This category emphasizes results and demonstrates how innovative and state-of-the-art planning methods and practices help to create communities of lasting value.</p>	<p><b><u>STEPHANIE QUEEN - City of Soldotna - Storefront Improvement Program</u></b></p> <p>The Storefront Improvement Program is a reimbursement grant program to promote the development of the downtown area to attract visitors and residents, encourage redevelopment of key areas, and improve the streetscape along the Sterling and Kenai Spur Highways.</p> <p>Grant amounts available were 50% of the cost of the eligible improvements, up to a maximum of \$5,000.</p> <p>The program has been very popular with local businesses and the City Council recently approved additional funding for the program based on the level of interest in it.</p>	<p><b>CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Originality and innovation</i></li> <li>• <i>Implementation and transferability</i></li> <li>• <i>Participation</i></li> <li>• <i>Effectiveness and results</i></li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Comprehensive Plan</u></b></p> <p>For a comprehensive or general plan that advances the science and art of planning. The award honors America's most famous planner, Daniel Burnham, for his contributions to the planning profession and to a greater awareness of the benefits of good planning.</p>	<p><b><u>BIG LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - Agnew::Beck, Big Lake Community Council and Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Division</u></b></p> <p>The update of the 1996 comprehensive plan took two years from start to final approval by the Mat-Su Borough Assembly. The community was at the crux of several major projects likely to bring changes to the community. The public involvement plan for the process was robust with over 40 members of the community signing up to participate in the planning team. One of the most useful tools was a graphically based "guidemap" summarizing the issues, goals, and process of the comprehensive plan that was widely distributed in the area.</p> <p>The planning process built relationships within the community and addressed a diverse set of local, regional, state and federal policies. Community leaders have incorporated or used outcomes of the plan as a foundation for a number of other projects in the community. The benefits of the plan are demonstrated by the nonprofit Big Lake Trails Work Group, the Water Quality Improvement Project, the Big Lake Incorporation Process and the Big Lake Community Impact Assessment.</p>	<p><b>CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Originality and innovation</i></li> <li>• <i>Engagement</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of planners</i></li> <li>• <i>Implementation</i></li> <li>• <i>Effectiveness</i></li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Grass Roots Initiative</u></b></p> <p>Honoring an initiative that illustrates how a neighborhood, community group or other local non-governmental entity utilized the planning process to address a specific need or issue within the community. Emphasis is placed on the success of planning in new or different settings, with total project budget (including staff, consultant, and direct expenses) not exceeding \$25,000.</p>	<p><b><u>SPENARD FARMERS MARKET STEERING COMMITTEE - Mark Butler, Rene Haag, Marilyn Leland, Kim Varner Wetzels, Cindy Shake, Laura Minsku, Kathryn Powers, Lisa Wedin, Sharon Schlicht, Susan Miller</u></b></p> <p>"More than a neighborhood, a frame of mind." The 100% volunteer run Spenard Farmers Market is a project by residents to shape the future design and feel of their neighborhood. Born out of conflict over a local road project, members of the North Star and Spenard Community Councils worked to find common ground between the anti-road business owners and pro-road residents.</p> <p>Some council members started to donate time and money to Spenard business events. After the success of a small one-time event, the Spenard Farmers Market has grown and has just completed its third season. The market provides opportunities for non-profits to interact with the community and creates free performance space for entertainers. Where can you find palm reading, homemade vinegars, oysters, quail eggs and get your pants hemmed? Under the windmill in Spenard at the Farmers Market.</p>	<p><b>CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Effectiveness and results</i></li> <li>• <i>Engagement</i></li> <li>• <i>Education</i></li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Hard-Won Victory</u></b></p> <p>The Hard Won Victory - For a planning initiative or other planning effort undertaken by a community, neighborhood, citizens group, or jurisdiction in the face of difficult or trying circumstances. This award recognizes the positive effect of hard-won victories by professional planners, citizen planners, or both working together under difficult, challenging, or adverse conditions because of natural disasters, local circumstances, financial or organization constraints, social factors, or other causes.</p>	<p><b><u>KARLUK MANOR PROJECT - Melinda Freemon &amp; Kenny Scollan - RurAL CAP</u></b></p> <p>In 2010 RurAL CAP began the development of a Housing First Project to address housing for the chronically homeless alcoholics in Anchorage. Housing First is a new approach towards ending chronic homelessness where people are provided access to low-cost apartments, with vital medical, mental health and other support services available on site. At any given time in Anchorage approximately 1,700 people are homeless, and 300 to 400 of them are chronic homeless inebriates.</p> <p>The project faced many obstacles, chief among them neighborhood opposition. RurAL CAP's work with the community council as well as a coalition of other social service providers, and their hosting a site visit to Housing First Project in Seattle, helped to make the project become a reality. Leveraged partnerships with the state and federal government helped to finance the facility, which is fully occupied and has given the residents some degree of dignity and quality of life.</p>	<p><b>CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Originality and innovation</i></li> <li>• <i>Effectiveness</i></li> <li>• <i>Overcoming challenges</i></li> <li>• <i>Participation</i></li> <li>• <i>Achievement</i></li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Implementation Award</u></b></p> <p>Recognizing an effort that demonstrates a significant achievement for an area—a single community or a region—in accomplishing positive changes as a result of planning. This award emphasizes long-term, measurable results.</p>	<p><b><u>MOUNTAIN VIEW VILLAGE - Cook Inlet Housing Authority</u></b></p> <p>In 2002 Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) identified the Mountain View neighborhood as the best location to develop a revitalization program. Mountain View had the highest need, and the lowest income. Using a scattered site development approach CIHA purchased blighted structures and thus far has invested \$84 Million in Mountain View land acquisition, redevelopment and development of rentals and immediate homeownership homes for sale and low interest loan financing.</p> <p>The program was aligned with the community's goals and preferences to vitalize a depressed neighborhood by building houses that attract families who set up root, be a catalyst for change, inspire other businesses to invest, and to change the perceptions that those needing affordable housing can't be good neighbors. Thus far CIHA's efforts include the demolition of 130 blighted structures, building 277 quality affordable homes and assisting hundreds of families.</p>	<p><b>CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Originality and innovation</i></li> <li>• <i>Effectiveness</i></li> <li>• <i>Overcoming challenges</i></li> <li>• <i>Participation</i></li> <li>• <i>Achievement</i></li> </ul>