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## **Keep Texas Beautiful Kicks off its 2010 Awards Season**

*Governor's Community Achievement Awards highlight Texas communities*

(Austin, Texas) – Ten communities from across Texas will have the opportunity to share \$2 million in environmental and landscaping funds thanks to the Governor's Community Achievement Awards, one of the state's most prestigious environmental awards program. The GCAAs are administered through a partnership between Keep Texas Beautiful and the Texas Department of Transportation, a relationship forged more than 40 years ago.

"This presents a wonderful opportunity for Keep Texas Beautiful and the communities we serve," said Cathie Gail, executive director of KTB. "In past years, GCAA winners have split \$1 million, but with the increase in funding to \$2 million, we anticipate even more excitement and interest for 2010."

The landscaping funds are awarded in several different categories based on population; communities are judged on their accomplishments in the following areas: community leadership and coordination, education, public awareness, litter prevention and cleanup, illegal dumping enforcement, beautification and property improvement, and solid waste management. Nine communities were selected in 2009, but 10 Texas communities will be recognized for 2010, with grants ranging from \$90,000 for communities with 3,000 or fewer people, to \$310,000, which is reserved for populations in excess of 180,000.

"We are always thrilled with the excitement surrounding the Governors Community Achievement Awards, and are hopeful the increased funding will lure even more communities to participate," said Doris Howdeshell, director of TxDOT's Travel Information Division.

"Each year, the judge's task becomes more difficult, as there are so many wonderful grassroots programs at work across the state. Ultimately, it is the strength of those programs that will help us succeed in having a litter-free Texas. That's our vision," said Howdeshell.

Every community in Texas is eligible to apply for a Governor's Community Achievement Award and winners will be recognized during the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference, scheduled for June 21-24, 2010, in Austin.

**Keep Texas Beautiful**, a statewide grassroots environmental and community improvement nonprofit, strives to educate and engage Texans to take responsibility for improving their community environment. KTB and its more than 360 affiliates work with government, businesses, civic groups and volunteers to ensure that every Texan has the opportunity to make Texas the cleanest, most beautiful state in the nation. The organization has partnered with TxDOT to administer the GCAAs since 1985. For more information on programs and events, call 1-800-CLEAN-TX or visit [www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org).

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