



## Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award

\*\*\*\* Media Advisory \*\*\*\*

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### **NATaT to Salute “Hometown Heroes” as a Co-Sponsor of the new *Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award* Program**

The National Association of Towns and Townships is joining other prominent organizations in supporting a new, national program to honor extraordinary public service volunteers throughout the Country. The program is called the *Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award* (STACVA). NATaT joins the National Association of Counties, the National Volunteer Fire Council, Points of Light (the Nation’s largest volunteer service organization – founded by President George H.W. Bush) and the National Main Street Center as STACVA co-sponsors.

STACVA is intended to spotlight a growing crisis facing thousands of smaller townships, cities and rural counties: the decline in the availability of citizens to serve in critical public safety and service roles including, volunteer firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and on local government boards and commissions. The program, which will launch on June 1, is open to localities of 5,000 people or less. Nominations must be submitted no later than August 15 using an online application form ([www.civic-volunteer.com](http://www.civic-volunteer.com)).

The *Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award* is being underwritten by CivicPlus, the largest local government technology company in the Country. Localities represented by top three winning honorees will receive cash grants of \$10,000, \$7,500 and \$5,000. Local governments represented by the top 100 STACVA nominees will receive custom CivicPlus websites (and one year of website hosting) at no charge. The program has an estimated total value of over one million dollars in donated services and cash awards.

NATaT Board Member David Sanko was selected to serve on the STACVA advisory team. Sanko is NATaT's Immediate Past President and is the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors. "In some places, democracy and self-government are being taken for granted. Apathy is on the rise. Some municipalities struggle to fill local government vacancies, whether it's finding candidates for civic service on boards and commissions or recruiting volunteer firefighters to help ensure citizens' safety", Sanko said.

NATaT is the voice for more than 10,000 towns and townships across the country seeking to enhance the ability of smaller communities to deliver public services, economic vitality, and good government to their citizens. NATaT was formed more than 40 years ago to give those smaller communities a strong voice in Washington, D.C. The association's purpose today, as it was then, is to champion pro-town and -township federal initiatives and to promote legislative and regulatory policies designed to strengthen smaller units of local government.

The Barton Russell Group has been chosen to design and manage the STACVA program. BRG has built and/or consulted on several national award and grant programs including the *Best Small Towns in America* contest, the *American Hometown Leaders Award*, the *Small Town Economic Assistance Program* and the *America's Best Communities* competition. Bart Russell, former Executive Director of the National Association of Towns and Townships, founded the Barton Russell Group. He is a nationally recognized expert on "everything small town" (its 32,000 communities and 120 million people). One former U.S. President called him "the voice of small town America".

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