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Longtime City Manager Michael Sykes Receives Kehrli Award

SALEM, Ore. – The prestigious Herman Kehrli Award was presented Wednesday to former Scappoose and Forest Grove City Manager Michael Sykes during the League of Oregon Cities’ 95th Annual Conference, which was held virtually due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The award is given to a city employee who has made exceptional contributions to city government in Oregon, producing lasting benefits for their community.

Sykes has served as a Columbia County commissioner, on the LOC Board of Directors, as a commissioner and assistant manager for the Port of Columbia County, and as city manager of Vernonia, Forest Grove, and most recently Scappoose. He is held in high regard by his peers in government for his dedication to public service and the ability to build consensus among regional partners, create and execute strategic plans, and take the lead on economic development initiatives.

In Scappoose, Sykes helped formulate and execute the city council’s strategic plan, which included local economic development initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and updates to long-range planning documents such as master plans. His work there also included maintaining public safety through community policing, updates to existing parks and the addition of new parks, maintaining regular communication through a monthly newsletter, and the annual town meeting.

“His experience, his understanding, and his patience not only reinvigorated the city itself, but his guidance helped me become a better public servant,” said Forest Grove Mayor Pete Truax, who worked alongside Sykes for five years.

About the Herman Kehrli Award

From 1933 to 1966, Herman Kehrli served as executive secretary of the League of Oregon Cities and director of the University of Oregon’s former Bureau of Governmental Research and Service. A joint effort between the LOC and the Bureau established standards of excellence for local government officials through an agenda that included research, consultation, and training in city government affairs. Today, the quality of city government statewide is due in large part to the success of this joint effort.

About the League of Oregon Cities

Founded in 1925, the LOC is a voluntary association representing all 241 of Oregon’s incorporated cities. The League helps city governments serve their citizens by providing legislative services, policy setting, intergovernmental relations, conferences and training, technical assistance, and publications.

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