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Cities, Organizations Recognized for Ethics Rules

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Four cities and two organizations were recognized at Mayors Day for adopting ethics rules. The cities of Cochran, Mountain Park, Thomaston and Thunderbolt were all named Cities of Ethics, while the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center and Central Valdosta Development Authority were named Organizations of Ethics.

There are now 109 cities in the four-year-old City of Ethics program, and six organizations in the Organization of Ethics program.

The voluntary program, developed by a panel of business and government leaders, encourages cities to adopt and adhere to a set of key ethical principles and a comprehensive model ethics ordinance. The ordinance guides city officials conduct in areas such as financial disclosures, conflicts of interests and outside employment. The ordinance also contains strong penalty provisions including public reprimands, fines and removal from office for city officials who violate the ordinance.

The City of Ethics program recognizes cities that make a tangible commitment to ethical conduct, said GMA Executive Director Jim Higdon. This program is an excellent opportunity for city officials to improve their public image and to regain the trust of their constituents. There is a lot of discussion at the Capitol these days about ethics, and Im pleased that cities have taken the lead on earning and maintaining the publics trust in government.

A panel of attorneys reviewed the ordinances to determine if they comply with the criteria set by GMA. The cities received a plaque and are now authorized by GMA to use a Certified City of Ethics logo on city stationery, road signs, city vehicles and for other uses.

The Organization of Ethics program encourages organizations to adopt and adhere to a set of key ethical principles and reflect that commitment to ethics in their bylaws.

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