

Racine Mayor Mason: City of Racine designated Wisconsin's first Smart City

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Mayor touts' strong partnerships and commitment to use technology to address inequities in community

San Diego – In a ceremony today at the Smart Cities Week Conference in San Diego, California, the City of Racine was announced as one of the five winners of the 3rd annual Smart Cities Readiness Challenge. The Readiness Challenge is a competition where cities must demonstrate their commitment to becoming a Smart City by using technology and data-informed decisions to better deliver City services and create a more equitable community. The competition is open to cities across North America and more than 100 cities applied.

“I couldn’t be more excited about being designated Wisconsin’s first Smart City. Winning the Smart Cities Readiness Challenge is the culmination of more than a year’s worth of work in which the City has brought together amazing community partners around the idea that we can use technology to deliver better services to our residents while at the same time creating an more inclusive and equitable City,” said Mayor Cory Mason. “I have always said we get things done in Racine through collaboration. I want to thank Gateway Technical College, UW-Parkside, RCEDC, Racine County, and Foxconn their continued partnership, vision, and leadership.”

In the Smart Cities Council Readiness Challenge, applicants are judged on the potential that the communities and their collaborations presented. The judges looked for entities that demonstrate a clear vision and ecosystem of stakeholders

and community partners who could implement smart city projects that are cross-cutting, impactful, and inclusive.

The winners of the Smart Cities Readiness Challenge receive several benefits that will help propel the City's smart cities initiatives.

- * Access to best practices. The application process is almost like a smart cities workshop. Knowledge resources coach you on best practices as you go along.
- * Access to the Smart Cities Project Activator, an online tool to help cities and their public and private partners plan, manage, and finance smart city projects.
- * Access to other cities to share lessons learned and expand the peer network.
- * Access to financing to explore alternative business models and financing options.

The five winners also receive a full-year Readiness Program, including mentoring, an outcome-oriented Readiness Workshop in their cities, a Readiness Roadmap based on their priorities, and regular progress calls and follow-up workshops. Winners also receive nationwide publicity as a great place to live and work, plus travel scholarships to Smart Cities Week twice per year to continue their learning. To top it off, winners also get access to financiers who can structure public-private partnerships and other forms of alternative financing.

"A key to successful community initiatives is collaboration. Industry, government, education, and social services working together generate measurable outcomes. I believe the Smart Cities Council saw what we know is taking place in Racine – innovative partners working toward common goals. This is a real opportunity for Racine to transform itself as a Smart City, and the UW-Parkside learning community is excited to be a part of the transformation," said University of Wisconsin-Parkside Chancellor Deborah Ford.

The City, in collaboration with their partners, competed for the Smart Cities designation as a 2019 Smart City in order to address specific opportunities and inequities facing the community such as:

- * Community-wide connectivity to address the digital divide. Access to high speed internet is essential to ensure that we level the playing field for everyone — from students doing their homework to adults who need to access to online education and training.
- * Providing multimodal methods of transit to provide better access to jobs and address the needs of employers.

- * Creating intelligent intersections that prioritize public safety, emergency services, and public transit.
- * Launching a comprehensive municipal energy audit in cooperation with the Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation as part of the City's efforts to lower its carbon footprint and meet the goals of the Paris Climate Accords.

Being a city at the forefront of innovation is nothing new for Racine. For generations, Racine has been known as "Invention City." The blender, the garbage disposal, hair clippers, gas-powered lawnmower engines, early versions of automobile, and even malted milk were invented in Racine, improving the quality of life for millions around the globe. At one point in its history, Racine held more patents per capita than any other U.S. city.

"Receiving this Smart Cities designation builds upon Racine's foundation of industrial leadership and technological innovation to leverage the economic opportunities emerging in the cyber and digital economies," said Dr. Bryan Albrecht, President of Gateway Technical College, which has a campus located the City.

The City of Racine is the smallest city to ever win the Smart Cities Readiness Challenge. On average, cities that make the finalist list have an average population of over 800,000 - more than ten times the population of the City of Racine. However, Racine is more representative of the 98.5% of U.S. cities that have populations of fewer than 100,000 residents. Because of its size, Racine will serve as an effective Smart Cities laboratory for small-to-mid-sized cities.

Dr. Alan Yeung, Foxconn Director of U.S. Strategic Initiatives, said the Racine Smart City Initiative will be a great outcome for the City and Foxconn, and is in line with Foxconn's vision for an AI 8K+5G ecosystem.

"Foxconn extends its congratulations to the City of Racine for its recognition by the Smart Cities Council. Foxconn is proud to have contributed to the City's drive to transform into a 'Smart City,' and will continue to deepen our partnership's positive impact on the community by leveraging technologies developed in the Wisconsin Valley ecosystem," said Dr. Alan Yeung, Foxconn Director of U.S. Strategic Initiatives.

In March, the City formalized a relationship to partner with Foxconn on Smart City Initiatives. Foxconn owns two buildings in the City of Racine - 601 Lake Avenue, which will be a hub for Smart City projects, and One Main Street, named Foxconn

Place Racine. The building will also be home to the Wisconsin Valley Innovation Center, part of the AI 8K+5G ecosystem that Foxconn is building in Wisconsin.

“On behalf of the RCEDC Leadership Council, we offer our hearty congratulations to the city for receiving this designation. This opportunity will position the city as a leader in smart city planning and confirm the city as an exciting destination in the region and Wisconsin,” said Racine County Economic Development Corporation Executive director, Jenny Trick.

“I am very proud of Racine County, the City of Racine, and all our partners from across our region who are working to build a smart community. We are at an exciting moment, with smart city initiatives potentially transforming the way we deliver services and improving the lives of all our residents. Much work lies ahead, and we will continue to work with the community and engage the public as we move forward,” said Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave.

Over the coming months, the City and its partners will plan public outreach and engagement campaign with the help of Smart Cities Council. The goal is to engage stakeholders from every sector of the community and to meet residents in their neighborhoods so that there is a clear understanding of what Smart Cities means and how it can benefit their lives.

The Mayor is committed to making sure the benefits of Smart Cities technology are broadly shared and help create a more equitable city for all our residents.

“We know the City faces a number of very serious challenges. We have housing, workforce, and educational attainment needs that we must address. There is no one solution to solve the inequities of our community, but if we are intentional about our planning, making sure the community is engaged, and the benefits of smart cities initiative are broadly shared, investing in smart city solutions will be an important component of creating a more equitable Racine,” said Mayor Cory Mason.