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Excellence award for Milliman

By Jane Stebbins
Pilot staff writer

Brookings City Manager Gary Milliman was selected for a Career Excellence award from the International City Managers Association.

The announcement was made at a city council meeting Monday – five years to the day Milliman began his work in Brookings.

The award is presented in honor of former ICMA Executive Director Mark E. Keane and recognizes “an outstanding local government administrator who has enhanced the effectiveness of government officials and consistently initiated creative and successful programs.”

“Gary was up against some really big hitters,” said Mayor Ron Hedenskog.

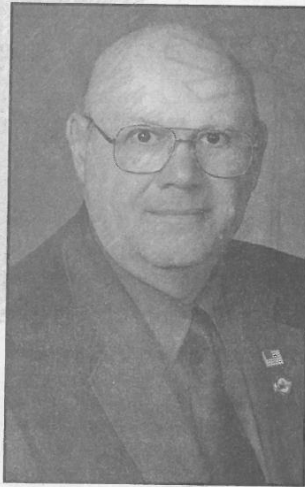
He was among five city managers nominated nationwide.

“I was surprised,” Milliman said. “I enjoy working in a profession where public service is the foundation, and where you are often required to develop innovative approaches to problem solving. The work I did in California relates to continuing to serve here in Brookings, as well.”

Only elected city managers with lengthy careers are eligible to be entered. Former Mayor Larry Anderson nominated Milliman in March, and was endorsed by the mayors of four California cities, a county supervisor and Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber.

Milliman began work as the Brookings city manager in 2007, bringing with him more than 30 years of experience in city management and public affairs.

Prior to his arrival here, Milliman worked as the city



Gary Milliman

manager for the City of South Gate, a city of 105,000 near Los Angeles, for three years.

He was instrumental in the city's recovery, which had fallen victim to political corruption and mismanagement, and was on the verge of bankruptcy.

Raul Salinas, the city attorney there, said Milliman's negotiating skills brought about one of the highest recoveries – \$8.5 million – in the state's history for conflict of interest violations and \$3.5 million from law firms.

“In his term as city manager, the city regained its luster and financial standing,” Salinas wrote in his nomination letter. “Employees once too embarrassed to admit they worked for the city, now boast of being a part of its renewal. And at the end of his tenure, the city's general fund balance topped \$15 million and the city had secured a AAA bond rating.”

Milliman also served as the city manager for the City of Fort Bragg for 17 years, during which he oversaw the transition from a resource-driven economy to one based

on tourism.

That work included revitalization of the historic downtown, recruiting a community college facility, rebuilding the city's water treatment plant and police station, historic restoration of the city hall and tripling the city's water storage capacity.

Other experience includes serving as city manager in Cotati, Calif., deputy city manager in Bell Gardens, Calif., as city councilmember in Maywood, Calif., as the director for the Southern California branch of the League of California Cities, and as a newspaper editor.

In 1996, Gary organized a group of local business owners in Fort Bragg and Willits to purchase the historic “Skunk Train,” which operates between the two communities and was being threatened with abandonment and dismantlement. After its purchase, he served as its president and chief executive officer.

Milliman earned a master's of public administration from the University of Southern California, a bachelor's degree from California State College at Los Angeles, and an associate's degree from East Los Angeles College.

Community involvement has included serving as a 4-H leader, chair of a local Boy Scout district and a museum docent. He currently serves on the National Community Relations Committee for the Boy Scouts of America.

Gary and his wife, Carolyn, have been married for 36 years. They have two daughters and two grandchildren.

The award will be presented Oct. 10 at the ICMA Annual Conference in Phoenix, Ariz.