



News Release
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Effort to Recognize Business Philanthropy Kicked Off At City Hall

AUSTIN -- January 18, 2011 Austin area businesses have a long standing history of giving back to the community, often with little or no public recognition. A new program announced today called, *Austin Gives: Business Giving Back*, is designed to recognize these unsung heroes of the business community and encourage more businesses to engage in community philanthropy.

Mayor Lee Leffingwell joined Bobby Jenkins, 2011 Austin Chamber Board Chair in making the *Austin Gives* announcement at City Hall. "Austin is known for its generosity to those in need. Resource constraints do not allow Government, whether at the local, state or federal levels, to meet all of our community needs -- especially during the past few years given the global economic challenges," said Mayor Leffingwell. "Austin businesses have always been supportive of community-based organizations and I am pleased that this program will highlight business philanthropy in Austin."

"I am particularly excited that the Chamber was able to bring this type of business recognition program to Austin businesses," said Jenkins. "*Austin Gives* will provide a spotlight on the generosity of those businesses helping the many worthwhile charitable organizations fulfill their missions of community service."

The idea of creating the business recognition program came as a result of a Central Texas leadership best practices trip to Minneapolis-St. Paul in 2010. The 100+ delegation from Central Texas learned about the *Keystone Program*, the Twin Cities business philanthropy recognition program, which has been in existence for more than 30 years. The key element of the program is to annually recognize businesses that contribute a minimum designated percentage of earnings to community based charitable organizations.

Austin Gives was developed through a collaboration among the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Entrepreneurs Foundation; Austin Community Foundation; the United Way Capital Area; I Live Here, I Give Here; and Successful Giving.

Any business, regardless of size, is eligible and invited to be a recognized participant in *Austin Gives*. To participate, businesses can download participant's commitment form online at austingives.net. To receive annual recognition, businesses agree to contribute one percent or

more of pre-tax earnings to any community based 501c (3) organizations of their choice during the calendar year.

A community celebration event will be held to honor the philanthropy of all businesses meeting the one percent threshold in the Austin Gives program. The awards will recognize three categories of businesses, small, mid-size and large, as well as honor volunteer impact.

More information on Austin Gives is available online at www.austingives.net.

About the Austin Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Austin Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership that facilitates the creation of a prosperous regional economy and effective advocacy for its members. Visit austinchamber.com

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