



# Amesbury

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## \* PRESS RELEASE \*

For Immediate Release:  
September 2, 2009

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## Amesbury Named a Trailblazer by Center

The National Center for Civic Innovation's (NCCI) Center on Government Performance has named the Town of Amesbury as a 2009 Trailblazer. The designation comes with the prestige of joining the ranks of a select group of government agencies in the United States and Canada recognized for embracing performance management. The designation also includes a \$5,000 grant that will be used to support a public-outreach program proposed by the Mayor.

The Mayor applied to the Trailblazers program to support AmesStat. AmesStat is an internal management tool used to direct the operations of the city. A data-driven performance management approach, AmesStat information is used to track progress on spending, project implementation, priorities and outcomes. Information from AmesStat reporting has also been used to support requests and report progress to the Municipal Council, and is the backbone for the changes first seen in the city's 2007 Annual Report.

With his application to the Center on Government Performance, the Mayor proposed a year-long public outreach program that will gather input from citizens on how they measure performance in government, and solicit feedback on the reporting mechanisms and formats. A key goal of the program is to improve readability and use of performance reports in the Annual Report. Arguing that the key to sustainability of performance-based management is public ownership, he proposed incorporating public-defined measures into AmesStat and fostering an expectation from residents that government will report on its ability to meet key goals. "This award will help us take the next step in advancing AmesStat by giving us a platform to share it with the citizens and gather input on measures key to them," said Mayor Kezer.

The city will use the \$5,000 from the NCCI to implement its public outreach program. The public outreach program will include formal and informal discussions with elected officials, citizens, businesses and others who may be interested in performance information from the city. The program will work with key audiences to identify preferred reporting formats and dissemination approaches such as hard copy, electronic, and other media for reporting. The program will culminate in a new performance report that meets the needs of key audiences. The city is currently looking into working with an outside partner to help organize and implement the plan.

Amesbury is one of 41 Trailblazers recognized since 2003. Other Trailblazers include Boston, Somerville, Springfield, New Bedford, West Boylston, Des Moines Iowa, Minneapolis Minnesota, Newark New Jersey, City of Ottawa Ontario and Saco Maine.

The Trailblazers program encourages local and county governments to engage the public in their performance measurement and reporting processes. The program has two major objectives: to produce greater alignment between the public's point of view and the priorities of its local government, and to provide non-confrontational opportunities for the public and government to discuss matters of mutual concern. The Trailblazers Program is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation among other foundations. For more information on the Center for Government Performance visit <http://www.fcny.org/fcny/cgp/>.

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