

## Colorado Springs wins national award for cultural diversity

[WARREN EPSTEIN](#)

2010-03-16 14:03:03



Colorado Springs, a place that's been portrayed in the media as a homogenous white bread community, is among four cities in America to win a City Cultural Diversity Award.

Given by the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, a constituency group of the [National League of Cities](#), on Monday, the awards also recognized Enterprise, Ala., Woodridge, Ill. and Milwaukee, Wis.

The award recognizes specific efforts made to enhance and promote cultural diversity, and in Colorado Springs, it was the [Colorado Springs Diversity Forum](#) and its Everybody Welcome festival that impressed the Caucus.

Forum board member Dee Vazquez said she's heard people making fun of the award because it seems to fly in the face of our national image. But she believes that image fails to capture the reality of Colorado Springs.

"The truth is that our community is changing, and this award acknowledges both the desire and the tireless efforts of groups and individuals in the community to honor who and what we really are," said Vazquez, who also works as community relations and development officer for the Pikes Peak Library District. "We are diverse. We are uniquely talented and prodigiously gifted and full of cultural variety. The Pikes Peak region is worth celebrating.

"Colorado Springs Diversity Forum is humbled by the recognition because our work is still in its infancy," she said. "We still struggle with the very basics of diversity awareness. ... Our goals often seem light years away, but this award brings them into focus and encourages us to continue working toward them."

When the Diversity Forum kicked off the Everybody Welcome Festival in 2007, it drew some criticism for being on a Saturday (the Jewish sabbath), and some critics felt it wasn't really in touch with all the various racial and ethnic segments of the community.

Vazquez said the Forum has learned a lot since then and has intensified its outreach efforts.

This year's festival has expanded to a week-long multi-cultural extravaganza, scheduled for Aug. 7 to 15.

© Copyright 2010 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)