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## Maryland

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### Hagerstown recognized for promoting safety in community

By DAVE McMILLION  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2010  
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Hagerstown's emphasis on [safety](#) has earned it an International Safe Community designation.

The city becomes the 12th community in the U.S. and the first in Maryland to receive the designation, officials with the National Safety Council said.

The designation was celebrated Thursday night at a ceremony at Hager Hall Conference & Event Center.

The recognition came as the result of a concentration on safety in the community that started in 1986, when the idea of Children's Village of Washington County was first considered, said Michael Weller, public education officer for the Hagerstown Fire Department.

At Children's Village, on Mount Aetna Road, second-grade students learn safety skills related to fire, traffic, water and pedestrian environments.

Other safety programs that have been launched locally over the years include [SAFE](#) (Smoke Alarms for Everybody), where city firefighters give away smoke alarms to residents.

Most recently, Weller recently designed a program to help local residents ensure they have adequate personal safety equipment in their homes.

Through the Home Safety Makeover program, homeowners can get a "home safety survey" to help them identify problems such as inadequate smoke alarm systems, excessive reliance on extension cords that might pose a fire hazard or clutter that might cause falls.

Hagerstown officials have said they hope the national recognition will allow them to receive more grants to launch safety programs.

Safe Communities Canada, a certifying arm of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, has named Hagerstown a Safe Community for the city's outstanding efforts in developing and offering safety programs to its residents, according to a Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene press release.

The Core Injury Prevention Program at the state health agency assisted Hagerstown's Safe Communities Coalition in completing the application process, according to the release.

In order to be considered for a Safe Community designation, a team of evaluators visited Hagerstown in April to judge the city's public safety programs based on several criteria, including organization, sustainability, evaluation, documentation and how well the program reaches target populations, according to the release.



Colleen McGrath | Staff Photographer  
Michael Weller, public education officer for the Hagerstown Fire Department, accepts an award Thursday during the designation of the City of Hagerstown as an International Safe Community.

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Colleen McGrath | Staff Photographer  
Hagerstown Mayor Robert Bruchey, left, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, right, and John Dalzell, center, of Safe Communities Canada Certifying Center, sign a Safe Community Agreement between Safe Communities Canada and the City of Hagerstown Thursday making it the first designated International Safe Community in Maryland.

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