



International Dark-Sky Association

"... to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies"

3223 North First Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85719, USA
tel +1 520.293.3198
fax +1 520.293.3192
www.darksky.org
ida@darksky.org

Homer Glen Recognized for Excellence in Night Sky Conservation

29 November 2011 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rowena Davis

IDSPlaces Coordinator

Tel: 520-293-3198 x 412

Email: rowena@darksky.org

Homer Glen Board of Trustees

Margaret Sabo

Email: earthapril022@aol.com

Tucson, AZ - The Village of Homer Glen, Illinois became the world's fourth International Dark Sky Community on 21 November. Located 30 miles southwest of Chicago, Homer Glen's proximity to a major city presented large challenges but also valuable opportunities to raise awareness on the negative effects of wasteful outdoor lighting.

A primary goal of the International Dark Sky Places program is to improve sky quality relative to an area, and Homer Glen has worked hard to provide a respite to the famously excessive lighting of Chicago. Sky glow prohibits astronomical quality skies, but Homer Glen's statewide leadership and education campaign for smart lighting policy has earned the recognition of this prestigious award.

Work in Homer Glen is --hands down-- the initiator of the dark sky movement for the entire state of Illinois. The Village passed the state's first stand-alone lighting ordinance in 2007, and its promotion of Earth Hour attracted the support of then-Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, who commended Homer Glen for its "environmentally friendly" outdoor lighting ordinance in 2008 during a ceremony held jointly by representatives of IDA and the World Wildlife Fund.

"Homer Glen's dark sky ordinance conserves energy, protects wildlife, and reminds all of us of the natural beauty of a starry night," Quinn said at the news conference.

Founded in 2001 as a town committed to sustainable growth and conservationist principles with a motto of "Community and Nature in Harmony," Homer Glen's stringent dark skies policy is a vital part of their identity. So is outreach. A group of citizens started the Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting (ICROL), an advocacy group that is striving for outdoor lighting changes throughout Illinois.

Persistent efforts by the ICROL resulted in the 2010 adoption of a *statewide* Resolution (State Resolution #0884) condoning responsible outdoor lighting that "*Expresses the support of the House of Representatives for improved night preservation practices in the State of Illinois and encourages municipalities and State agencies to research and adopt suitable outdoor lighting practices.*"

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Washington, DC, USA | Hever, Belgium | Turrumurra, New South Wales, Australia

Outdoor lighting improvements in Homer Glen have influenced lighting plans in other communities, such as Arlington Heights and the Village of Compton Hills. Homer Glen actively participates in Earth Hour and Lights Out! events, and has earned the Sustainable Development Award by the Conservation Foundation for their lighting ordinance. Stargazing events are held twice a year, with local astronomy groups providing telescopes to approximately 250 members of the public.

Communities like Homer Glen are vital to the health of the dark sky movement, as they help awaken citizens living under light pollution to the fact that an alternative view is possible. Homer Glen joins Flagstaff, Arizona Borrego Springs, California and Sark Island in the English Channel as the world's only International Dark Sky Communities.

Meanwhile, work within the community continues. All 184 of Homer Glen's drop lens fixtures have been replaced with notably low 70 W HPS fixtures that are dark sky friendly. Additional lighting upgrades are moving forward throughout the community, set to be completed in 2018.

The ICROL continues to work for statewide improvements in lighting policy and maintains an extensive website at <http://www.illinoislighting.org>.