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CITY OF PALMDALE

NEWS RELEASE

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DATE: December 9, 2014

City of Palmdale Awarded Village Square Grant

PALMDALE – The City of Palmdale has been named as one of two cities in California to receive a 2014 Village Square Grant through Pepperdine University’s Davenport Institute.

Along with Palo Alto, Palmdale will receive services and expenses valued at \$15,000 through the Village Square’s “Dinner at the Square” program, which is designed to improve the way residents in diverse communities engage with one another.

"When I read the Palmdale grant I got very excited as I knew this grant would help move the city to its full potential," said Ed Everett, Senior Fellow at the Davenport Institute. "Without civic engagement and a partnership between the citizens and the city officials, a city can never achieve greatness. Civic engagement doesn't always means agreement but it does mean people understand and respect other's points of views and everyone tries to reach solutions for the common good of the community."

"We are honored to have been chosen to receive this grant," said Director of Administrative Services Anne Ambrose. "Despite our rich aerospace history and strong family resources, we face somewhat of an image crisis. To some, Palmdale remains a blighted, desert space with little to offer. The facts say otherwise. We enjoy over 320 days of sunshine a year, have a vibrant retail presence, feature outstanding parks and amenities, and a crime rate that is at its lowest rate in over 30 years---- which would be the envy of

most cities in our nation. But that's not to say there aren't real issues that challenge us as a community. But to find solutions, we must first start the conversation -- and what better way to do that than by breaking bread together," Ambrose said.

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the City of Palmdale to build civic community and unique engagement opportunities for citizens in Palmdale," said Liz Joyner, the Executive Director of the Village Square. "The grant application written by the City of Palmdale demonstrated all the rare qualities we look for in a governmental partner – creativity, thoughtfulness, a deep understanding and love for the community they serve and a willingness to employ outside-the-box thinking to engage their citizens more effectively. They presented a host of cutting-edge programming ideas that will be fun for us to help them implement and we hope will become a wonderful addition to the assets of the Palmdale community for years to come."

Joyner explained that the Village Square is founded on the notion that getting involved in the civic life of your community shouldn't be dull. "We're all busy with the responsibilities of our lives, so for people to bother to come out in their free time to participate, we think it better be worth it," said Joyner. "We chose Palmdale for this grant because we think their ideas are highly deserving of their citizens' valuable time."

About the Davenport Institute

Since its founding as a multi-partisan and non-profit organization in 2005, The Davenport Institute has worked to engage the citizens of California in the policy decisions that affect their everyday lives. It is their firm belief that, in today's world of easy access to information, and easy connectivity to others, California's municipal and education leaders

are seeking ways to involve the residents of their communities in the important issues they confront. Done legitimately, this new kind of leadership produces better, more creative policy solutions and better, more engaged citizens committed to the hard work of self-governance.

For more information on the Davenport Institute, please visit www.publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenport-institute/about/.

About the Village Square

The Village Square is a nonprofit organization devoted to building vibrant civil dialogue across partisan and ideological divides on matters of local, state, and national importance in communities across America.

Founded in Tallahassee, Florida eight years ago after a contentious debate on a local issue, the Village Square builds social civic community in a 21st century revival of the old-fashioned American town hall. The Village Square offers a menu of cutting-edge civic engagement programs, many in partnership with local government. Named by U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe as one of eight organizations to support if you're concerned about building common ground, the Village Square launched its first California location in Sacramento this fall. You can read more about the Village Square in this recent piece in *The Christian Science Monitor*: <http://digbig.com/5bknejd>

The Grant

The Village Square Public Engagement Grant will bring the Village Square's Dinner at the Square series to the City of Palmdale. It is a capacity-building grant to improve the local civic dialogue and support an ongoing constructive relationship between

government and citizens around various issues for years to come.

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