



# press release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Akron Public Schools Superintendent Sylvester Small named NewsNight Akron's 2006 Newsmaker of the Year**

*Under Small's leadership, the district saw passage of a school levy, continued  
improvement in proficiency test scores and new building construction*

KENT, Ohio — Friday, Jan. 12, 2007 — Sylvester Small, the Akron Public Schools superintendent who helped lead the district's levy passage and the development of rebuilt or renovated schools, was named 2006 Akron Newsmaker of the Year by panelists of the PBS 45 & 49 series **NewsNight Akron**. The award recognizes the greater Akron individual whose work has had the most significant news impact during the past year.

The panel made the decision after a lively debate about seven nominees during the show's 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12 broadcast. Panelists for the show were Vincent Duffy, director of programming and operations at WKSU/89.7; Jody Miller, owner and publisher of *Bath Country Journal*; Steve Hoffman, editorial writer at the *Akron Beacon Journal*; and Ed Esposito, news director at WAKR/WONE/WQMX. The program is now available for viewing as video on demand on the PBS 45 & 49 Web site at [www.pbs4549.org](http://www.pbs4549.org).

Small was chosen because of Akron Public Schools' many successes in 2006, including passage of a needed school levy, continued improvement in proficiency test scores and new construction taking place, all of which have contributed to an overall change in attitude about the school district in the community. The superintendent was praised for his "quiet but effective leadership" and the practice of "always putting the needs of the kids first." Steve Hoffman also noted that Small had "a strong supporting cast, including the mayor."

Other 2006 nominees were David Black, whose company Black Press purchased the *Akron Beacon Journal* in June; Carol Cartwright, newly retired president of Kent State University, who was nominated in recognition of her 15 years of leadership at the university; LeBron James, Cleveland Cavaliers superstar, nominated because of his charitable foundation work and his commitment to helping his hometown; Robert Keegan, head of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, who led the organization through a difficult year that included a three-month strike; Summit County Children Services Board, whose leaders generated both negative and positive news stories throughout the year; and Paul Testa and Joel Testa of Testa Builders, downtown developers whose Northside Lofts in downtown Akron added a new dimension to Akron's urban renewal efforts

For nine seasons, PBS 45 & 49 has produced **NewsNight Akron**, a weekly show that reviews and analyzes Akron-area news. This is the fifth year that the show has presented the Akron Newsmaker of the Year Award. Past recipients are Dan Dahl, the Rev. Curtis Thomas, Mayor Donald Plusquellic, Connie Humble and Melinda Elkins.

PBS 45 & 49 is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation. A trusted community resource, PBS 45 & 49 uses the power of non-commercial television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire.

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