

2010

Achievement Awards

Recognizing the best in county government programs.

VACo
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The Virginia Association of Counties exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.



SERVING
COUNTIES IN
TRYING TIMES 

2010 Achievement Awards

Something Different this Year

For the first time in the program's eight-year history, a "Best Achievement" designation was given to a submission. This year, Campbell County earned the distinction.

Here's what judge Lane Ramsey had to say about Campbell County's entry titled "Performance Improvement Teams-Employee Driven Long-Term Planning."

"It is admirable for a county Campbell's size to create a comprehensive high-performance model, one that is transferable to small and large counties alike," said Ramsey, who retired in 2007 after 20 years as Chesterfield County administrator. "Campbell County's program has been in place since 1999, and usually these types of models come and go. But this program has endured and that is a testament to its strength and productivity."

Congratulations to Campbell County for an excellent program that continues to make a difference.

VACo looks forward to announcing the 2011 "Best Achievement" winner.

2010 Achievement Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Virginia Association of Counties' 2010 Achievement Awards!

VACo received 60 entries in the association's eighth annual statewide competition honoring county programs. Fourteen entries were selected to receive an award. Campbell County's submission was chosen as "Best Achievement."

An independent panel of judges with expertise in county programs and challenges had the monumental task of reviewing the entries, all of which exemplify that Virginia counties strive to provide their citizens with innovative, cost-efficient and environmentally-friendly services.

Lane Ramsey, former Chesterfield County administrator; Tedd Povar, associate director of the Virginia Institute of Government; and Marilyn Blake, former Hanover County assistant administrator, served as judges for this year's statewide awards program. VACo would like to thank them for their time, dedication and enthusiasm.

The difficult selection of winning programs was based on innovation and collaboration, as well as the potential for the program to provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement. This brochure highlights the award-winning programs and can be used as a resource. You may find that your county is facing a similar problem or situation.

Also visit www.vaco.org/AchievementAwards.html and click on 2010 entries to view all the submissions from this year.

Award recipients are recognized at VACo's Annual Conference after the General Session on Tuesday, Nov. 9. A display featuring the Achievement Award submissions will be available during the conference. Look for the 2011 awards application in late spring. All counties are encouraged to participate!

2010 Achievement Awards

Campbell County Organizational Development
BEST ACHIEVEMENT

Performance Improvement Teams Employee Driven Long-Term Planning

In 1999 Campbell County took innovative steps to work toward becoming a High Performance Organization, based on the University of Virginia's Leading, Educating, and Development (LEAD) model. Fundamentally rooted in the principles of democracy and energized with creative thinking, this process established a set of employee-led teams called Performance Improvement Teams (PITs).

This parallel organization created a venue through which staff at all levels of service could collaborate equally, to address the issues, problems, and future planning which affect all county citizens, staff and stakeholders. Over the past eleven years, this process has grown into a highly successful program which is equally as beneficial to the organization as it is to the employees and local citizens.

A Leadership Team, comprised of department heads, the County Administrator, and the County Attorney, identifies issues and areas within the organization where improvements could be made, and channels these issues to one of the ten established Performance Improvement Teams.

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2010 Achievement Awards

York County Regional Collaboration

Bats, Balls and a BMP

An Intergovernmental Project Produces Regional Benefits

Discussions between York County and Newport News Waterworks (NNWW) officials to identify a potential site to develop an athletic field complex began in 1999. NNWW, which is owned by the City of Newport News, is one of the largest landowners in the County and provides water for a multi-jurisdictional region of over 400,000 people.

In addition to its sizable land holdings, some parcels were ideally located close to the population base needing to be served by the additional fields. Because of these factors, NNWW was invited and agreed to partner with York on this project.

As planning progressed, a scenario emerged for partnering in the construction of a regional Best Management Practice (BMP) to treat stormwater runoff from a 60-acre watershed in York County that was part of a water quality protection study previously adopted by NNWW. Although the proposed BMP was not on the property being developed for the sports complex, its adjacent location more than justified its construction.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Stafford County

Criminal Justice/
Public Safety

The Opening of Fire Station No. 14

Just south of our nation's capital sits a 1920s farm house in Stafford County. But this dated country bungalow is not just another house whose time has passed-it is now a county fire station.

At 1,064 square feet, the old house is one-eighth the size of a typical fire station and only holds enough space for four career fire fighters and one fire engine. Despite the unconventional appearance of Fire Station 14, its existence saved Stafford County residents thousands of dollars in homeowners insurance and required the cooperation of almost all county departments to become a reality.

What is most amazing about this station, which is now one of the busiest in Stafford County, is that it was renovated and prepared for operations in just 60 days.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Chesterfield County

Health/Human Services

Whoa Baby

Whoa Baby is a preconception health campaign developed with the assistance of high school students in Chesterfield County. Presented with the challenge of decreasing the infant mortality rate in Chesterfield, preconception health education to youth is a priority strategy.

Chesterfield County went directly to the teens to ensure the messages utilized in outreach to adolescents would be meaningful. Using ideas presented by students at the Mass Communications Specialty Center at Manchester High School, Whoa Baby was created to highlight the importance of healthy habits for a lifetime.

The student-directed campaign, including posters, buttons, bookmarks, cards, displays/billboards, reinforces the concept that the choices teens make now affect their future health and the health of their families. Whoababy.org, a complimentary Web site created to reach the technology-perceptive adolescent population, is a major component of the campaign. All print materials refer teens to the Web site.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Hanover County

Community/Economic
Development

Dominion Resources Greentech Incubator

Hanover County approached the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park (VBRP) in February 2009 to explore the possibility of starting a business incubation program. During discussions with the VBRP and Virginia Biosciences Development Center (VBDC), the concept of a green technology incubator was developed as a unique and valuable niche for the mid-Atlantic region.

Dominion Resources agreed to sponsor the incubator through its Alternative Energy Solutions Group. Shortly after securing Dominion's sponsorship, the Town of Ashland agreed to become a major sponsor as well.

The incubator opened in January 2010 and currently has admitted four companies to its program. The goal of DRGI is to incubate 25 companies and 15 graduates within the first five years. DRGI staff is working on a partnership agreement with the City of Nottingham, UK, and is planning to travel to Israel in early 2011 to identify potential companies for its international program.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Roanoke County

Community/Economic
Development

Green Ridge Recreation Center

An Innovative Public/Private Partnership

The Green Ridge Recreation Center is a publicly-owned and developed 76,000 square foot state-of-the-art multi-generational recreation facility designed to serve the growing needs of the community and region. But the \$30 million Green Ridge Center is not just another recreation center; it is a one-of-a-kind facility that will serve as a catalyst for new economic development opportunities throughout Roanoke County and the entire Roanoke Valley.

Green Ridge is the first multi-generational recreation center in the Roanoke Valley. A multi-generational recreation center (also called a multi-gen center) is a recreational community center designed to serve all age groups in a community. Although mainly indoor facilities, many of these centers also have outdoor features such as walking trails and mini water parks. Multi-gen centers offer programs and services for people with a wide range of ages, abilities, and income.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Prince William County Organizational
Development

Revenue Forecasting Process

Prince William County, despite being the unofficial foreclosure capital of Virginia, has achieved outstanding accuracy in its annual revenue forecast during the current economic recession. While most jurisdictions were reducing budgets due to revenue shortfalls during Fiscal Year 2009 (FY2009), Prince William County actually ended the fiscal year with a \$4.8 million general revenue surplus (a variance of 0.6 percent from the adopted budget).

This was accomplished despite experiencing over 13,000 foreclosures between calendar years 2006-2009 which accounted for nearly 10 percent of the County's total housing stock.

Prince William County is also anticipating an accurate revenue forecast for FY2010 as current projections again indicate a small revenue shortfall of \$4.2 million and another variance of less than one percent (0.6 percent) compared to the adopted general revenue budget.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Henrico County Organizational
Development

The Fitness and Wellness Certification

In August 2009, Henrico County implemented a new fitness and wellness initiative - The Fitness and Wellness Certification program. This comprehensive program lays the path for improved health by exposing employees to, and encouraging participation in daily fitness and wellness activities.

The results of this initiative were phenomenal. In just seventeen weeks a select group of employees lost 580 pounds, 780 inches (or 65 feet), experienced a 14 percent decrease in heart rate, a 27 percent increase in muscular strength, a 35 percent increase in muscular endurance, a 9 percent increase in flexibility, and a 34 percent improvement in HDL cholesterol.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Isle of Wight County Environmental

Isle Be Green--Plastic Bag Recycling Program

In early 2007, Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisor member, Thomas J. Wright, III, began talking about the possibility of banning the use of plastic bags in Isle of Wight County. Supervisor Wright's driving concern was the County's agricultural industry - primarily the cotton and livestock farmers. Isle of Wight's agricultural community has been impacted by plastic bag litter.

Recognizing that the littering of plastic bags is an environmental hazard and an eyesore, as well as a nuisance and a financial burden to farmers, Supervisor Wright didn't just talk about banning plastic bags, he introduced a resolution to the Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors requesting that the General Assembly adopt legislation that would grant localities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia the enabling authority to ban or discourage the use of plastic bags.

The Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution and requested that Isle of Wight's representatives in the Virginia General Assembly bring forth the enabling legislation.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Prince William County Transportation

Design-Build Process

Under the Design-Build process, Prince William County has collaborated with private contractors to develop road construction projects that can be completed in a far more streamlined and cost effective manner than traditional road construction projects.

Utilizing a design-build framework, the phases of a road construction project occur concurrently rather than consecutively. Therefore, certain elements of one phase of a project can begin before the prior phase is fully complete. This can bring a project in under a significantly shorter timeframe than is seen in traditional road construction projects.

Under Prince William County's Design-Build Process, several road projects have been constructed in far shorter timeframes than projects of comparable scale constructed under traditional processes.

Road projects under the Design-Build process are completed faster than usual, and therefore are turned over to VDOT for maintenance in a more timely fashion, resulting in overall project cost savings.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Pittsylvania County

*Regional
Collaboration*

Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority

The County of Pittsylvania and the City of Danville created the Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority (RIFA) under the new code requirements of the Commonwealth.

RIFA has performed miracles in changing the economy of this southside community. The application for a regional collaborative effort is supported by the success of this partnership.

Danville-Pittsylvania RIFA is responsible for numerous joint projects between the County of Pittsylvania and the City of Danville, which has helped to offset the loss of 7,264 jobs since the year 2000 with the replacement of over 57 percent of those jobs lost or 4,108 new jobs within its service area.

The collaborative effort of RIFA will touch all the surrounding jurisdictions-in Virginia and North Carolina. It is our hope that this collaboration will provide as many as 15,000 new jobs that will compensate for more than double the job losses for the past 10 years.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Loudoun County

Health/Human Services

Homeless Services Center

In 2007, Loudoun County faced multiple challenges that impacted service delivery to the homeless population.

County agencies, federal, state and local funding sources collaborated to develop a program to design and construct an 8,500 square foot expansion to the existing Transitional Housing facility.

The result was a state-of-the-art, LEED certified building with more beds consolidating four facilities under one roof.

In addition, the creative architectural design lent perfectly with the solution, and achieved many cost efficiencies. The new facility combines the Emergency Homeless shelter which provides 45 beds for single men, women and families; the Cold Weather Shelter which provides overflow beds for single women and men during the winter months to prevent hypothermia and related illness; the drop-in center which provides laundry and shower facilities, food and case management to homeless individuals 40 hours per week and the Transitional Housing program which provides 8 apartments for families and single females for up to 24 months.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Louisa County

Community/Economic
Development

Homebuyer Assistance Program

In 2005, the Louisa County Board of Supervisors formed an Affordable Housing Committee for the purpose of improving affordable housing opportunities in Louisa County.

The purpose of the Homebuyer Assistance Program is to help families under 100 percent area median income with financial assistance in the form of deferred loans that can be used toward a down payment on a new home. Some of the qualification requirements are that families must live or work in Louisa for six months prior to application and complete a home buying counseling class. Funding for the program was made possible by the Board of Supervisors, which set aside 1/4 of 1 percent of the real estate tax revenue.

The Board of Supervisors has continued to fund this program each year. Each family receiving assistance would not have been able to purchase their home without this assistance. It has allowed county employees and young families to live and work in Louisa County in an affordable home.

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2010 Achievement Awards

Montgomery County

Regional
Collaboration

New River Valley Regional Training Program

The training and development of employees is very important to Montgomery County, but the cost of offering training programs is difficult to fit into local government budgets.

Neighboring localities often compete for the same resources; in this case, several localities have a common need and share resources to accomplish the goal of training and developing employees.

In order to reduce costs and time involved in training new employees, Montgomery County and the towns of Christiansburg and Blacksburg within the County began a collaborative effort to provide orientation training for new employees. Success with this collaboration has expanded to joint training in other areas.

This regional effort demonstrates creativity and effectiveness and brings value to the taxpayer through well-trained government employees.

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