

2013

Achievement Awards

Recognizing the best in county government programs

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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.**



2013 Achievement Awards

BEST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

For the fourth time in the program's 11-year history, a "Best Achievement" designation was given to a submission. This year, **Orange County** earned the distinction.

Here's what judge **George Drumwright**, retired Henrico County deputy county manager for community services, had to say about Orange County's entry titled, "**Project M.I.T.I.**"

"Orange County's Department of Fire and EMS, like other departments across the nation, has seen the number of volunteer firefighter and first responders decline. To tackle this issue, Orange County used technology to address training needs and community awareness. This successful M.I.T.I. approach has been shared with 12 other EMS organizations and three other hospital groups. This is a low-cost, high-tech training approach."

Congratulations to Orange County for an excellent program that can be replicated throughout the state.

VACo looks forward to announcing the 2014 "Best Achievement" winner.

2013 Achievement Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Virginia Association of Counties' 2013 Achievement Awards!

VACo received 38 entries in the association's 11th annual statewide competition honoring county programs. Twelve entries were selected to receive an award. Orange 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.

Tedd Povar, associate director of the Virginia Institute of Government; George Drumwright, retired Henrico County deputy county manager for community services; and Wendy Wingo, former Botetourt County supervisor; served as judges for this year's statewide competitive awards program. VACo thanks 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 to address a similar problem or situation your county is facing.

Also visit www.vaco.org/membership/achievement-awards and click on 2013 entries to view all submissions.

Award recipients will be recognized at VACo's Annual Conference Banquet on Sunday, Nov. 10. Look for the next awards application in early 2014. All counties are encouraged to participate!

2013 Achievement Awards

VACo Presents Awards

Orange County Criminal Justice/Public Safety

BEST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Project M.I.T.I.

Project M.I.T.I. was conceptualized after the County of Orange Fire and EMS (COFEMS) made good on the promise of creating a video discussing Rappahannock EMS Council's new guidelines in June of 2012. It was at this time, the department realized what a valuable tool it had stumbled upon.

The project was headed up by Assistant Chief Tom Joyce. With Chief Joyce's years of public service in the emergency medical field as well as law enforcement, he has become the driving force in deciding the topics of discussion as well as recruiting some of the top providers in the field to participate. He has provided the vision for the creation of every video and has filled the role as our on air talent. Firefighter/EMT Tim Bullock has taken on the role of producer/director utilizing his prior 20 years of experience in the commercial photography field.

The project started with the use of a video camera received from a grant prior to the project's conception. Lake of the Woods Association, a community in the eastern part of the county, was gracious enough to lend the department two additional cameras and microphones.

Bullock provided his personal studio set equipment to complete the initial videos. In September of 2012, COFEMS invested \$2,600 in video production software that is the foundation of all the project's productions. The desk itself was designed and built by Bullock incorporating a 55-inch flat panel television that is used for viewing training films. In April 2013, the department invested \$5,500 in three HD SLR cameras and tripods that allowed Project M.I.T.I. to capture images in 1080p high definition.

Contact Information

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Orange County wins Best Achievement Award for its program Project M.I.T.I. VACo General Counsel **Phyllis Errico** (right) presented the award to the Orange County Board of Supervisors and recognized **Tom Joyce** (left), Assistant Chief of Operations and **Timothy Bullock**, Firefighter/Medic.

Congratulations Orange County.

VACo Presents Awards



Congratulations to **Greensville County** for its award-winning "Washington Park Community Improvement Program, Phase I, II, III."

Pictured from left to right: **James C. Vaughan**, Supervisor; **Moses Clements**, Public Works/Assistant Authority Director; **Michael W. Ferguson**, Supervisor; **Brenda Parson**, Deputy County Administrator; **Peggy R. Wiley**, Chair, Board of Supervisors; **Lucretia Jones-Pegram**, Customer Accounts Assistant; **Brian Petty**, Building Inspector/Rehab Specialist; **Dr. Margaret T. Lee**, Supervisor; **Erik Johnston**, VACo Director of Government Affairs.

2013 Achievement Awards

Chesterfield County Community/Economic Development

Moving Forward... The Comprehensive Plan for Chesterfield County

Moving Forward...The Comprehensive Plan for Chesterfield County is the county's new long-term growth and development guide. The plan functions as the county's comprehensive policy manual on a variety of topics including: economic development, housing, revitalization, historical and cultural resources, environment, land use, special area plans, water and wastewater, transportation, and public facilities; and explores the relationships between these varied, but connected themes.

The plan explores these topics through a chapter structure outlining current issues and providing guidelines to address them in an easily understood, reader-friendly format. A critical component of this plan for the county is the Implementation chapter that identifies projects such as regulatory, policy and plan amendments, strategies and studies that will be carried out to bring life to the plan's recommendations. These projects are divided into Phase I and Phase II steps – with Phase I projects having an identified completion schedule adopted within the plan that provides accountability.

The process used to develop the plan is the result of successful close and interactive collaboration between county staff, citizens/stakeholders and elected/appointed officials. It will be used to guide nearly all future county programs, policies and regulations concerning growth and development.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Gloucester County Criminal Justice/Public Safety

Public Library + Emergency Services = Stay Informed, Make a Plan, Get a Kit!

After working with Emergency Services during several county emergency events, we realized that the residents of Gloucester County are not prepared for emergencies. Using the venue of the public library and in an effort to spread information about emergency preparedness to the community in a fun and unique way, we decided to offer the chance to win an emergency kit!

The Gloucester Friends of the Library were approached and asked if they would provide monetary support of this endeavor for the community. Our Friends are great and always willing to support a new venture!

Once the monetary support was established the kit contents were purchased, put together and stored. The promotion of winning a kit would coincide with the annual summer reading program and the beginning of hurricane season, both which begin on June 1. In our library system, the summer reading program runs from June 1 through July 31. Two months of programming, two library locations, a winner at both locations for both months of programming = 4 winners!

We marketed the emergency kit giveaways in numerous ways: displays of exploded kits, displays of weather related books, Ready Virginia literature, posters, library website content, library newsletter and local newspapers. By providing a fun activity, we were able to spread the importance of emergency planning to residents! Libraries make learning fun!

Contact Information

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2013 Achievement Awards

York County Criminal Justice/Public Safety

Virtual PSAP

York County's PSAP partnered with James City County's PSAP to provide backup services to each other in case of a power failure or other interruption in service. The PSAP partnership solves a myriad of potential problems and has already proven effective.

Past problems have showed that human interface or intervention sets the stage for system failure. Setting these technologies to automatically overflow, through a Virtual PSAP, eliminates human error. We no longer depend on the local exchange carrier to reroute emergency calls from one 9-1-1 Center to another that in the past had proven unreliable and time consuming on too many occasions. Often it could take up to 45 minutes to have communications rerouted to another agency in emergency situations leaving a critical gap in public safety functions that could potentially reduce responses to citizens in need. The Virtual PSAP Program empowers the 9-1-1 Center to deter potential outage caused by man-made or natural disasters.

The Virtual PSAP allows dispatchers from both PSAPS to be cross trained to process calls using their same login ID and credentials at either PSAP. Both agencies share the same fire run responses, policies and procedures, Emergency Medical Dispatch protocols, GEO based mapping system, and radio system.

If, during heavy call volume, one PSAP becomes over saturated with calls, the other PSAP is able to process the calls that have not been answered by the seventh ring. Furthermore, if one PSAP were to have a catastrophic event and requires them to immediately evacuate the PSAP, all the dispatchers have to do is log off and all calls for service are automatically routed to the other PSAP. This eliminates having to get the Local Exchange Carrier involved in doing a manual transfer of all phone lines to the other PSAP.

The Virtual PSAP program concept was vindicated for the first time when the James City County PSAP was forced to evacuate its 9-1-1 Center due to an electrical malfunction. The system was seamlessly rerouted to the York-Poquoson-Williamsburg PSAP with no interruptions in service to the citizens of James City County.

Contact Information

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2013 Achievement Awards

Stafford County Customer Service

311: Providing More Services with Limited Resources

With a limited budget and a burgeoning population requiring more services, more information and a more accessible government, Stafford County faced a dilemma – how to provide a central location to answer citizen’s questions in a quick and efficient way without having the funds to build a state-of-the-art call center. Using creativity, teamwork, and a strong belief in customer service, the Public Information and Citizens Assistance staff found a way to establish a 311 Center using available resources. By persuading departments to lend personnel to answer calls re-routed to the 311 Center, and by using the expertise of a well-trained corps of volunteers, Stafford was able to offer a new service to benefit citizens at a time when most governments were cutting back on services.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Greensville County Community/Economic Development

Washington Park Community Improvement Program, Phase I, II, III

Greensville County has successfully created and implemented a unique community improvement project in the Washington Park Neighborhood. The community improvement effort was a multiple activity program focusing on housing improvements, homeownership creation, infrastructure improvements and the construction of a new community center. It was an effort that partnered the local Boys and Girls Club, a housing advocacy group, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, community activists, utility service providers, VDOT, local landlords and area families.

Greensville County administrated the projects and the County Staff assumed all of the leadership/oversight roles. The programs: converted 28 rental units into single-family (SF) homeownership opportunities, substantially reconstructed 34 substandard SF units, rehabilitated 20 substandard SF housing units, demolished 11 dilapidated, derelict housing units, installed 4,100 LF of new sidewalk/curb and gutter, constructed 7,900 LF of new storm drainage piping/ditches, built 530 LF of new residential street, installed eight new streetlights and constructed a 3,500 sq ft Community Center. The total cost of the improvements was over \$4.1 million.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Henrico County Criminal Justice/Public Safety

Comprehensive School Safety Audit Process

A goal of Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) is to provide its students and staff with a learning environment that effectively supports the instructional program by maintaining a safe and inviting environment in which to learn and work. To that end, the school division's safety office wrote the HCPS Safety & Crisis Manual. The following year the Department of Research and Planning and the Office of Safety and Security collaborated with public safety officials to write a comprehensive safety audit protocol as a companion to the Safety & Crisis Manual.

The first provides guidance to schools to enable each to maximize the safety and security of the learning environment and to develop a crisis plan that puts the school in a position of emergency readiness while meeting divisional expectations and the unique needs and characteristics of the school. The second provides an audit tool by which to measure the safety standards and practices actually in place in each school. A comprehensive safety audit is conducted, on site at every school, by a team of relevant practitioners. Each year one-third of our schools receive a comprehensive audit while the other two-thirds receive an interim audit, to complete a three-year cycle.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Roanoke County Parks and Recreation

Walrond Park Trail Project

In 2007 Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism received a \$57,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to complete 2/3 mile loop trail around a pond and wetland area within Walrond Park. The project was almost scrapped in 2010 as we were not able to begin the work due to budget and staffing cuts. Finally, after a grant deadline extension and some innovative department planning, our crews set to work completing the trail and wetland boardwalk system 100 percent in-house between September 2011 and February 2012.

This project's unique design and execution can serve as a model for other Parks and Recreation departments to follow. First, Roanoke County was among the first municipalities in Virginia to utilize the cost effective and environmentally friendly "Diamond Pier Pin" foundation system for raised boardwalk sections of the trail. This allowed staff to complete the work without use of external contractors and design firms. Second, the department partnered with the Roanoke County Sheriff's Office to get inmate crew assistance in trail construction. Not only did the inmate crew provide several hundred hours of low cost labor for the project, but the partnership expanded to include other areas of interdepartmental cooperation after the conclusion of this work. Finally, the project was carried out in a way that minimized environmental impact.

The end result was combination crushed stone upland trail and wetland boardwalk that has already become one of the County's most popular walking spots.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Orange County Regional Collaboration

A Collaboration of Mutual Benefit: Orange County's 'Coffeewood Canines' Training Program

The Orange County Animal Shelter is an open-admission municipal facility handling an annual average of 2,200 animals. Because the canine population consists of predominantly large breeds lacking in basic obedience and social skills, they are more difficult to place in lifelong loving homes in a timely manner. The Coffeewood Correctional Center, located in Mitchells, VA, has a history of promoting public service and boasts a total of six inmates trained as canine handlers by both the Virginia Department of Corrections and the Department of Homeland Security.

The Orange County Animal Shelter partnered with the Coffeewood Correctional Facility to create the Coffeewood Canines training program with the first shelter dogs in residence at the facility by July 1, 2009.

As the Coffeewood Canines training program approaches its fourth anniversary, in excess of 200 dogs have been rehabilitated and adopted through this initiative. Success has been achieved in large part because the participating inmates have demonstrated great skill and compassion in their work with dogs of all different breeds, needs and ability. They have achieved such remarkable feats as instructing a deaf Border Collie in sign language and training several unruly Retrievers for service as therapy dogs.

In turn, the presence of the dogs at the facility has reinforced positive traits in their human companions such as patience, perseverance, teamwork and problem-solving.

In addition, the plight of animals lost, abandoned or seeking sanctuary at local shelters is brought to the forefront through dialogue relating to Coffeewood Canines, resulting in increased adoptions and public awareness.

The Coffeewood Canines program has proven a successful model of regional collaboration between the Orange County Animal Shelter and the Coffeewood Correctional facility, benefiting humans and homeless animals alike.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Henrico County Park and Recreation

Museum Collection Management Program Database Documentation

The County of Henrico has a collection of over 40,000 historical artifacts. The collection was established in 1978 with the donation of Meadow Farm, an 1810, 150-acre farm and the entire contents of furnishings, decorative art, farm equipment and family documents. That particular donation consisted of over 20,000 items. In subsequent years the Historic Preservation and Museum Services section of the Henrico Division of Recreation and Parks has served as a repository for any and all historical materials related to the history of Henrico.

With seven museums furnished with 18th, 19th and early 20th century artifacts in permanent and changing exhibits, the collections management function has grown and developed to keep accurate records using up-to-date technology, which includes recognized and approved museum documentation software. The goal of the county's museum department is to collect, document, preserve and interpret the material culture of previous generations at the highest level of museum standards. The issue of documentation is essential to realizing the full education value of the collection and making that information accessible to the local community and beyond.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Loudoun County Health/Human Services

Loudoun Targets Lyme

Lyme disease, an infection with the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks (formerly called deer ticks). Typical symptoms of Lyme disease include feeling like you have the flu and a characteristic target shaped skin rash called erythema migrans (EM). If left untreated, this infection can spread to the joints, the heart, and the nervous system, with potentially serious complications.

In 1999, there were 29 cases of Lyme disease in Loudoun County, which grew to 106 cases in 2005 and 223 in 2010. In 2011, the number of cases in Loudoun County reached 261, representing 25 percent of all of Virginia's cases. The large majority of all Loudoun cases during this period became symptomatic in May through July, with infections likely occurring several weeks earlier.

In 2006 the Loudoun County Health Department (also known as the Loudoun Health District) conducted a survey of Lyme disease cases (available online at www.loudoun.gov/lyme) to better determine the risk and protective factors for becoming infected. The results showed a low proportion of residents engaging in behaviors that could protect them before being diagnosed with Lyme disease, and a perception from respondents that they most likely became infected on their own property.

On March 20, 2012, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors passed a 10-Point Action Plan to Mitigate Lyme Disease and assigned the Health Department to act as staff support for this initiative.

Key aspects of this plan involved the creation of a Lyme Disease Commission and increasing community outreach and education, with a focus on awareness of prevention and treatment of Lyme disease in Loudoun County. They subsequently approved \$100,000 to cover any printing, tick evaluation and spraying costs associated with this initiative.

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2013 Achievement Awards

Mathews County Criminal Justice/Public Safety

Improving EMS Response Times in a Rural County

The number of volunteers at the Mathews Volunteer Rescue Squad (MVRS) was shrinking. Excellent medical care was at risk. Initially, two problems were identified: 1) average-time-with-patient was too high at 19 minutes and 2) an average of less than 15 Emergency Management Technicians (EMTs) was responding to 95 percent of all calls. Working in collaboration with County Officials, a process was developed to create a hybrid volunteer-paid staff, install a 911-GPS system, and institute compassionate billing. Concerned about public reaction to a billing program, steps were taken to educate residents about the challenges. Squads throughout the country had lost a majority of volunteers when going through similar transitions. MVRS did not. With more Emergency Management Technicians (EMTs) based at the Rescue Squad building, average "wheels rolling" response time began to improve almost overnight.

In just four months, MVRS reduced average-response-time to less than five minutes and average-time-to-patient to less than 12 minutes!

Mathews County made a commitment to reduce response times and improve patient care. In addition to planning, success required coordination, communication and combined efforts from the Mathews County Board of Supervisors, County Administrator, MVRS leaders and dedicated MVRS members.

It is hoped that the experience of the MVRS can serve as a model for other rural Counties who face similar challenges: inadequate funding, unacceptable response times, and a decreasing pool of skilled volunteers.

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