Virginia Association of Counties

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Loudoun County

Program Title: Virginia Agriculture Development Officers and Marketing Professionals Conference Calendar

Program Category: Communications

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Lois Kirkpatrick

Title: Marketing & Communications Manager

Department: Economic Development

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Email: Lois.Kirkpatrick@Loudoun.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Tim Hemstreet

Title: County Administrator

Signature:

Program Title

Virginia Agriculture Development Officers and Marketing Professionals Conference Calendar

Program Category

Communications

The Problem

We wanted to increase attendance for the VADO/AMP Conference. The goal was to build excitement for the conference, which was being held in Loudoun County for the first time. Participants included agricultural development officers from Maryland and Virginia, as well as Loudoun County administration, members of the Loudoun County Rural Economic Development Council, and Virginia Department of Agriculture staff. Participants were sent calendar inserts in the months leading up to the conference. Each insert featured a photo taken in our county, and factoids about things the attendees would experience when they came to the conference. Once the conference was over, they received a calendar insert which included a group photo that was taken at the conference, and a save-the-date for the 2018 annual conference.

The Challenge

The challenge was: how to build interest and anticipation for an annual meeting of regional agricultural officers? We wanted to do something unique and memorable that would not be too expensive. Along the way, another challenge presented itself: the tour sites changed, so we had to get different photos than we had originally planned, plus additional participants were added.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

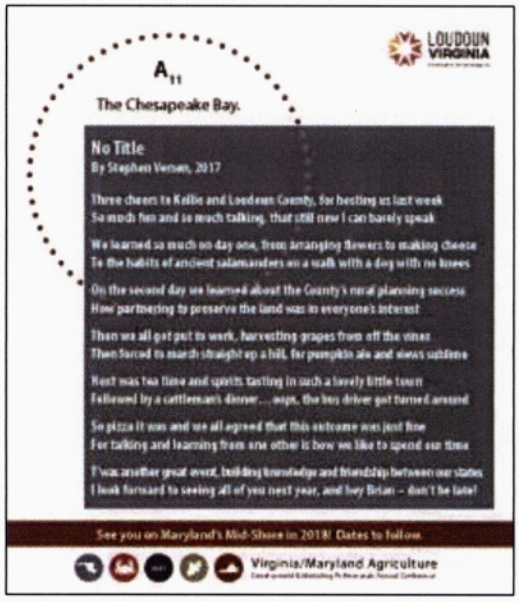
Award Criteria

Innovation

The great thing about this project is that the calendar served many purposes. #1, it allowed recipients to have a compact calendar on their desks that they could quickly glance at when needed. Secondly, it promoted our event all year. Thirdly, it helped to market the Loudoun businesses pictured on the calendar inserts. Finally, the monthly quiz was entertaining and educational. Each calendar insert featured a trivia question about the picture on the front. The trivia questions were then answered on the next month's insert. It's rare to have a marketing piece that achieves so many goals in such a simple, creative and cost-efficient way.

Partnering or Collaboration

In addition to this project being a cross-department piece, it was also cross-state. We coordinated the event with agricultural development officers from Maryland and Virginia. The piece was so successful that there was a small competition on who would get the last word on the final page; the winner provided a poem.



Model for Other Localities

This format can easily be replicated for any event.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How the Program Was Carried Out

Program Was Carried Out

The Virginia and Maryland Agricultural Development Officers and Marketing Professionals Annual Conference calendar was a year-long promotion that featured clear jewel cases that could sit on recipients' desks and show them the current calendar month, an insert which was specially designed to promote the conference, which took place September 19-22, 2017.

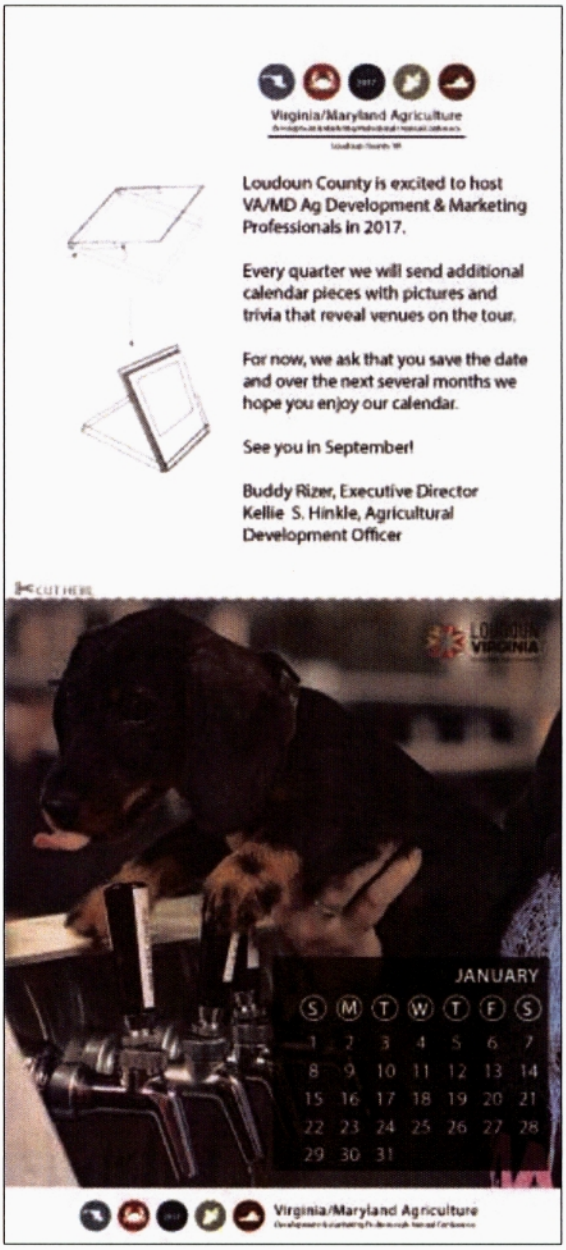
In December 2016, we sent them the jewel case and the inserts for the months of January, February and March. In March, we sent them the calendar inserts for the months of April, May and June; in June we sent the inserts for the months of July, August, September and October, and in October we sent the final set of inserts for the months November and December.

Each insert promoted our county and the event we wanted them to attend. The calendar showcased some of the businesses that participants visited during their meeting in our county. It raised the profile of our county among this group of key stakeholders.

Financing and Staffing

The two primary participants in this project were

1. The Loudoun County Agricultural Development Officer had to plan which businesses would be featured during the conference. She also had to obtain the mailing list, and host the visiting agricultural development officers during the actual event.



2. Loudoun Economic Development's Communications Program Manager proposed the idea for the calendar, and assembled all the photos and the factoids presented on each card. She also designed the calendar and managed the printing process.

Cost totaled: $1051.90 for 120 sets.

- Printing Round 1: 626.43
- Printing Round 2: 226.08
- Cases Round 1: 35.96
- Cases Round 2: 49.06
- Printing Round 3: 114.37

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Program's Results

There was a 10 percent increase in the number of agricultural development officers who attended the 2017 conference in Loudoun County. The calendar increased awareness of the event, and a fresh round of discussion resulted each time a new set of calendar inserts was mailed to recipients.

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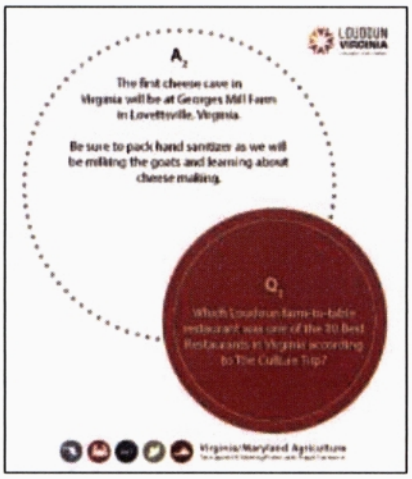
Samples



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Executive Summary

We wanted to increase attendance for the VADO/AMP Conference. The goal was to build excitement for the conference, which was being held in Loudoun County for the first time. Attendees which included agricultural development officers from Maryland and Virginia were sent calendar inserts in the months leading up to the conference. Each insert featured a photo taken in our county, and factoids about things the attendees would experience when they came to the conference. Once the conference was over, they received a calendar insert which included a group photo that was taken at the conference, and a save the date for the 2018 annual conference. There was a 10 percent increase in the number of agricultural development officers who attended the 2017 conference in Loudoun County.

LOUDOUN VIRGINIA
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Brief Overview

The VADO/AMP Conference calendar showcased Loudoun businesses and raised awareness of Loudoun's agricultural economy in a unique, interactive way. We used this special printed piece to invite attendees to our fall event, and then we took a picture of the participants at our event and put their photo into the last calendar insert at the end of the year. What other piece of marketing collateral actually puts attendees into the marketing piece itself? That special personalization actually turned the marketing calendar into a wonderful keepsake.