

2012 VACo Achievement Awards
Category: Regional Collaboration
Applicant: Shenandoah County Parks & Recreation

Brief Overview

It all started with the answer to a question, “You want to do *what?*” That was Shenandoah County Parks & Recreation’s response to the idea of re-enacting 40 horses pulling an 80,000 lb. locomotive along a major state highway as part of a Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the Civil War weekend event. This brief conversation started a three-year planning process for what would ultimately become the *Great Train Raid*, one of several events held as part of the Town of Strasburg’s year-long 250th Anniversary Celebration.

In 2008, several community stakeholders gathered to discuss the idea of reenacting Col. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s raid of locomotives from Harper’s Ferry as part of the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War and part of the five-year Sesquicentennial Commemoration set to begin in 2011.

At almost the same time, the Town of Strasburg was considering the creation of celebratory events for the town’s 250th anniversary also in 2011. It happened that Sarah Mauck, a member of both grassroots committees and a member of Strasburg Town Council, asked for the groups to come together and combine efforts. So, what started as two separate events combined into one collaborative enterprise called the “Strasburg 2-5-0 Committee.” From late 2008 through 2010, this group discussed how to celebrate the town’s anniversary while also commemorating the area’s Civil War events as part of the Sesquicentennial Commemoration. What came from these meetings ultimately created Strasburg’s year-long 250th Celebration.

The hard work and dedication of this regional committee, made up of county government officials, town officials, local citizen volunteers, and a myriad local business stakeholders, not only had a very successful three-year planning and implementation process, but initiated two new legacy events that will continue to promote cooperation and collaboration and provide keepsake mementos from every event. There remains also a great foundation upon which the communities can plan and implement future partnership events and activities.