

Recognizing the Best in County Government Programs!



2012 Achievement Awards

ATTN: 2012 Achievement Awards Program
Virginia Association of Counties
1207 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

Call for Entries



2012 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2012

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2012.

Program Information

Locality Wythe County, Virginia

Program Title Wythe County Lighting Upgrade

Program Category Environmental

Contact Information

Name Jenna Nichols

Title Public Information Officer

Department Public Information and Grants

Complete Mailing Address 340 South Sixth Street
Wytheville Virginia 24383

Telephone # 276-223-6037 Fax # 276-223-6030

E-mail jvcoleman@wytheco.org

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name Stephen Bear

Title Assistant County Administrator

Signature* Stephen D. Bear

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.



Wythe County
340 South Sixth Street
Wytheville, Virginia
2012 Virginia Association of Counties Award Application
Wythe County Lighting Upgrade

Wythe County is submitting an application for the 2012 Virginia Association of Counties' Achievement Awards. This environmental project provides a county can be both financially and environmentally responsible. When faced with a need for budget reduction, the Wythe County Building and Grounds Department discovered it was possible to lower energy costs through using energy efficient equipment.

The use of this equipment is estimated to reduce the County's electric bill by \$2,000 per month. In addition, it reduces the County's carbon footprint by limiting the amount of energy expended to light County structures.

The solution to the budget reduction problem was innovative in that the department did not take a traditional route to find a solution. The solution had a secondary benefit of aiding in the overall reduction of the County's impact on the environment. In addition, the project can easily be replicated by other governments if the perspective of helping residents through being environmentally aware is taken.



Wythe County
340 South Sixth Street
Wytheville, Virginia
2012 Virginia Association of Counties Award Application
Wythe County lighting upgrade

Problem

When considering necessary improvements to County buildings and structures, environmentally friendly is not always a top priority. However, when looking to improve its lighting systems, Wythe County found environmentally friendly lighting was not only a positive step for the Earth; it was cost efficient as well. With rising electric costs, the evidence was clear something needed to be fixed in how the County was providing lighting to its buildings. The structures included administrative offices, the courthouse, a local library, and other government buildings.

Wythe County welcomed a new Building and Grounds Director in 2010, Billy Bowers. Mr. Bowers was tasked with finding a means to ensure Wythe County's buildings were functioning as efficiently as possible. The County's lighting upgrade began in October 2011 when Mr. Bowers began researching ways the County could save funds through its buildings.

Solution

Mr. Bowers came across an article in an engineering magazine that stated localities could save money and help the environment by upgrading the type of lighting installed in buildings. He then spoke with local vendors who told him the idea was

indeed true. Wythe County could find savings by upgrading its lighting systems and cut down its carbon footprint. One local company, State Electric, was able to show the difference with a lighting display that measured the difference between an incandescent bulb and a florescent light bulb. Money would be saved by smaller electric bills that the County would receive from the power company. In addition, it would have less impact on the environment due to reduced use of fossil fuels that would be needed to generate the electricity.

The lighting upgrade consisted of changing light bulbs and the ballasts from T-12 to a T-8 fixtures. Because technology has led to the improvement of light bulbs, such fixtures are able to produce the same amount of light using seven watts less per bulb. In a four lamp fixture 28 less watts are used. The savings generated equal one bulb for every four changed from a 32 watt T-12 bulb to a 25 watt T-8 bulb. With a square footage of over 140,000, the savings to the County and the environment could produce a small decrease in both areas.

The County was able to take advantage of a grant offered by Appalachian Power that gave the County a percentage back on every light bulb replaced. When the installation is complete, Wythe County will have spent approximately \$45,000 for the materials to upgrade. AEP has reserved \$25,573 of incentive funds for the project. The County expects to recover the rest of the spent funds in about nine months.

Outcome

The Wythe County lighting upgrade project is estimated to bring large savings to the Building and Grounds Department's budget. Energy efficient lighting was installed in official government structures including Wythe County Administration Building, Wythe-Grayson Regional Library, Wythe County Circuit Court, 1901 Wythe County Courthouse, Wythe County Judicial Building, and the Wythe County Water Treatment Plant. With these structures now utilizing the new system, Wythe County estimates a monthly savings of \$2,000.

With a lower energy usage system, Wythe County has reduced its impact on the environment. Through less electricity use, fewer fossil fuels are needed to produce energy once consumed by the Wythe County structures. The reduction will be beneficial not only to Wythe County but the environment as a whole.

An additional outcome of the new lighting system was the clearer, brighter light given off by the change of bulbs. Wythe County employees found the new lights brightened their workspace. The lighting gave a new look to many Wythe County spaces including the Wythe County Boardroom. In photos taken in late 2011, the Boardroom had a dim appearance with a blue tint given off by the existing lighting. In photographs taken shortly after the upgrade, the Boardroom appears brighter with a more natural tint.

The new lighting system provided a brighter, friendlier environment to welcome residents into Wythe County structures.

Criteria

Wythe County's solution to its need of reducing the building and grounds budget was not a conventional one. Many other approaches might have included cutting staff or reducing building usage. Instead, the Wythe County Building and Grounds Department found an innovative way to solve its problem while helping the environment. Taking steps to solve day-to-day problems while keeping the environment in mind is a process easily replicated by other governments if the right perspective is used. Not only does helping the environment show residents the entity is responsible, but also it preserves resources for the future generations of residents. Such a perspective is necessary to sustain the long-term health and sustainability of a community.

Wythe County Boardroom – Before lighting upgrade



Wythe County Boardroom – After lighting upgrade



Appalachian Power
PO Box 1986
Charleston, WV 25327

James Fawcett
Manager, Energy Efficiency & Consumer Programs
304 348-4133
jdfawcett@aep.com



February 3, 2012

William Bowers
Wythe County Board of Supervisors
340 South Sixth Street
Wytheville, VA 24382

Dear Mr. Bowers,

We are pleased to inform you that Appalachian Power (APCo) has received your pre-approval application for phase III of the Virginia Public Authority Lighting Program, and after reviewing your application we have reserved \$25,573.00 of incentive funds for your project. The reserved funding is for the specific energy efficiency measures you noted on the incentive worksheet.

Funds will be reserved until August 3, 2012, unless an extension is obtained. The amount of funds reserved may be reduced or forfeited if the project is not completed by the deadline. This letter confirms that your final application will be processed for payment provided that, after review, your project remains eligible for incentives, is completed within the six month time period, and is accompanied with the appropriate documentation. If you find that you do need a one month extension beyond the installation deadline, please contact me to discuss.

The APCo Virginia Public Authority Lighting Program Team will conduct inspections periodically during the application process and may contact you to schedule on-site inspections. You do not need to wait for an inspection to begin your project.

To facilitate the timely processing of your payment submit the final application; the incentive worksheet that includes all fixtures installed; and invoices to substantiate those fixtures.

This is the final phase of this program and will be your last opportunity to participate. Because there are not limits on the amount of incentive you can receive in this phase, assuming funds remain, you may submit additional applications for projects in this phase until the closing date of March 15, 2012.

We appreciate your participation in the Program and the energy efficiency efforts your organization is undertaking. If you have questions, please call me at 1-304-348-4133 or e-mail me at jdfawcett@aep.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Fawcett'.

James Fawcett
Manager, Energy Efficiency & Consumer Programs

SMART Programs – Saving Money And Resources Together®