

PRESS RELEASE



VACo 2013 Achievement Award Program Descriptions



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Orange County—Criminal Justice/Public Safety (BEST ACHIEVEMENT) “Project M.I.T.I.”

Project M. I. T. I. was conceptualized after 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. With his knowledge of still imaging, he undertook the task of learning the programing needed to create the final products.

The project started with the use of a video camera the department received from a grant some time prior to the project’s conception. Lake of the Woods Association, a gated 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. During the same time frame the department spent \$350.00 in materials needed to build the set desk used in the discussion group videos. 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 made an investment of \$5,500 in three HD/SLR cameras and tripods that allowed Project M.I.T.I. to start capturing images in 1080p high definition. As funding is made available, the initiative will continue to build its repertoire of equipment and capabilities.

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.

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 library system already provides information for other county departments and services offered to residents. This was an opportunity to collaborate with the Emergency Services Department and spread emergency preparedness information to the public.

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!

In an effort to reach as many residents as possible, to encourage residents to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season and to spread the word about winning an emergency kit, we scheduled a slot on the monthly meeting docket of the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors to introduce the idea and share kit contents (May meeting). These meetings are aired for residents to watch from the comfort of their homes and provided an excellent vehicle to reach a group of citizens that might not visit the library but could be enticed into the library to win an emergency kit! Also, some people are visual learners and the ability to see what was included in the kits was helpful.

After the presentation, I heard from numerous residents that they visited the library to enter a chance to win!

An exploded kit was on display in both library locations for perusal along with emergency literature. Visitors were intrigued by the kits and enjoyed looking at the contents and hoping to win! Again, because some people are visual learners the chance to see what was included in the kits was appealing.

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!

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 4100 lf of new sidewalk/curb and gutter, constructed 7900 lf of new storm drainage piping/ditches, built 530 lf of new residential street, installed 8 new streetlights and constructed a 3500 sq ft Community Center. The total cost of the improvements was over \$4.1 million.

The project was an ambitious undertaking that accomplished all of its objectives. It directly benefited the project area residents, surrounding community and the county as a whole. The program provides an excellent blue-print for dealing with substandard neighborhoods. It could easily be replicated by other jurisdictions.

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.

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 7 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.

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. The infection is typically diagnosed based on the patient’s symptoms and physical findings, such as the characteristic EM rash; laboratory testing is helpful if used correctly and performed with validated methods. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics, particularly if identified at an early stage.

Steps to prevent Lyme disease include using insect repellent, dressing appropriately, removing ticks promptly, applying pesticides on your property where indicated, and reducing tick habitats. It is also

important to seek medical attention promptly should signs or symptoms occur to help prevent complications of the infection.

Initially Lyme disease was an infection of the Northeast and upper Midwest states in the United States. In recent years, though, an increasing number of Lyme disease cases have been reported in the Mid-Atlantic states and in Virginia. 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% 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) had 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.

In response, the Health Department enhanced its efforts to increase awareness of steps residents could take to prevent infection, particularly on their own property. As the number of cases of Lyme disease continued to increase in Loudoun County, county leadership wanted to take additional steps.

On March 20, 2012, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors passed a 10-Point Action Plan to Mitigate Lyme Disease (attached) 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.

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% 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.

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 *Coffee wood 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.

The significant social contributions of the inmates related to *Coffeewood Canines* are evident far beyond affecting each dog's personal growth. The multi-faceted objectives of the *Coffee wood Canines* program serve to benefit both the residents of the affiliated institutions as well as the at-large communities of Orange and Culpeper Counties.

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 both humans and homeless animals alike.

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% 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.

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.

York County—Criminal Justice/Public Safety
“Virtual PSAP”

The York-Poquoson-Williamsburg Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) partnered with the County of James City PSAP to develop total redundancy by creating a “Virtual PSAP” between the two adjacent agencies. The Virtual PSAP program will allow for each agency to back up the other’s agency which will allow for back up, disaster recovery and overflow operation with the ability to provide reliable service under any unexpected conditions. In simple terms, both 9-1-1 Centers mirror the other in virtually every aspect of the emergency operations.

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

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