

# 2008

## Achievement Awards

Recognizing the best in county government programs.

VACo  
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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.



Congratulations to the recipients of the Virginia Association of Counties' 2008 Achievement Awards!

VACo received 34 entries in the association's sixth annual statewide competition honoring county programs. Twelve entries were selected to receive an award.

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; Wendell Seldon, former Winchester city manager and former director of Virginia's department of general services; and Brenda Garton, newly hired Gloucester county administrator; served as judges for this year's statewide awards program. VACo would like to thank 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. You may find that your county is facing a similar problem or situation.

Award recipients will be recognized at VACo's Annual Conference after the General Session on Tuesday, Nov. 11. A display featuring the Achievement Award submissions will be available during the conference.

Look for the 2009 awards application in early spring. All counties are encouraged to participate!

## Albemarle County Communications

### **Public Planning Program and Staff/ Management Resources Intranet Site**

The development of Albemarle County's public participation planning program by the Community Relations Department began with the recognition that more and more citizens expect to participate in decisions that affect them.

The county also recognized that involving citizens would ultimately create a more successful project that better meets community needs.

Officials knew that to build strong relationships with the community members, they would need to assure that their participation was meaningful and that expectations for their participation were clear.

### **Contact Information**

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

## *Something Different this Year*

For the first time, a new category was created to accommodate a slew of entries. Several environmental-based projects were submitted, prompting the judges to recognize the trend toward greener programs. Thus was born the environmental category.

If some of the entries are any indication, Virginia's counties are indeed cognizant of the need to protect and preserve our environment.

"I expect we'll receive more and more environmental submissions in the future because Virginia's counties have always been at the forefront in trying to solve national and global problems," said James Campbell, VACo executive director. "Right now, one of our biggest concerns is the environmental."

Also, for the first time in recent memory, no county won more than one award. That's because the quality of submissions reached an all-time high.

"Since I've been a judge, this year was the best because almost every submission was worthy of winning," Tedd Povar said. "The quality of programs throughout the state tells me that we have many talented and skilled county employees in every region of the Commonwealth."

Campbell added, "This is more than just an awards program. These projects represent the very best in innovative ideas that have produced positive results. An added benefit is that the programs can be replicated throughout the state and the country."

# 2008 Achievement Awards

## *Bath County*

## *Health/Human Services*

### **Free Dental Program**

Bath County is a rural, sparsely populated county of 5,073 people, and is nestled in the Allegheny Mountains on the western border of Virginia. As a result, it is often difficult or impossible for some residents to receive the health care and services they need.

The Rural Health Outreach Consortium was formed to sponsor community wellness programs for Bath County. Through the consortium, the Free Dental Program was started.

The first time the program was offered Oct. 19-21, 2007, 65 patients were treated.

### **Contact Information**

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

*Chesterfield County*

*Criminal Justice/  
Public Safety*

## **Central Virginia Most Wanted**

The program was developed by Chesterfield County personnel and is a partnership effort among area law enforcement, corrections and media professionals.

Development of [www.centralviriniamostwanted.com](http://www.centralviriniamostwanted.com) and regular exposure through local media has increased public awareness and enhanced opportunities for reporting information.

As a result, participating agencies are realizing an increase in information provided by residents regarding the whereabouts of fugitives.

### **Contact Information**

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

*Spotsylvania County*

*Environmental*

## **Patriot Park**

Patriot Park is a 134-acre facility featuring two basketball courts, 12 baseball, softball and multipurpose fields that are surfaced with Patriot Bermuda Grass as well as other areas that are surfaced with 5.9 acres of Fescue sod. The entire construction process took 10 months at a cost of less than \$7 million.

Patriot Park's answer to irrigating the facility and potential water restrictions came as an innovative idea that changed the design of the irrigation process and its components.

The park uses 100 percent recycled and natural water to irrigate its 12 athletic fields, making it a facility that incorporates modern and environmentally friendly measures.

### **Contact Information**

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

Prince William County

Customer Service

## Mediation Swap

Prince William County and Alexandria City Human Rights Commission (HRC) began a mediation swap in October 2005. The purpose of the swap was to maintain a firewall between mediation and charge investigations, a new contractual requirement by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

The program has allowed both agencies to meet the EEOC requirements with little or no cost. It has fostered a closer working relationship between the two offices. This successful program can easily be duplicated.

### Contact Information

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

Cumberland County

Information  
Technology

## Cooperative and Budget-Minded Approach to an Innovative Countywide Communications System

Cumberland County deployed a comprehensive countywide IP-based communications system. The project took two years to complete but was the genius of an unprecedented collaboration of volunteer first responders, state and federal agencies, county administration and Board of Supervisors.

The project budget required a mere 10 percent out-of-pocket cost to the county. Fiscal prudence and forethought reduced the entire budget of the system to an estimated one-quarter the cost for a comparable system.

### Contact Information

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

Fairfax County

Health/Human  
Services

## Healthy Women: Healthy Babies

In the spring of 2007, the Fairfax County Health Department responded to the “Request for Results” made by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to reduce the number of babies who die in the first year of life.

Fairfax County was awarded \$100,000 by the VDH to implement the Saving Babies Initiative as part of a statewide campaign to reduce infant mortality. In 2005, approximately 8 percent of Virginia’s infant deaths occurred in Fairfax County. Based on that figure, Fairfax County is dedicated to saving seven of the Commonwealth’s goal of 80 prevented infant deaths.

The Saving Babies Initiative is an excellent example of how local government can bring together a diverse community of providers and citizens, with little resources, and create a lasting impact.

### Contact Information

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

New Kent County

Communications

## New Kent University

New Kent University (NKU), a citizen education program, is designed to give participants a first-hand look and in-depth understanding of how county government functions in New Kent.

The free program explains services provided by New Kent, how its governing process works and how citizens can participate in that process. Through hands-on activities and lectures, participants have learned how local government affects quality of life.

### Contact Information

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

Loudoun County

Organizational  
Development

## Career Development Program

The evolution of this professional career development plan contributes to the success of the county's overall mission. Developed in response to individual career goals and expectations, the program answers a variety of county needs while using minimal resources.

This program has allowed the Office of the County Assessor to streamline the career development process of each employee by establishing a framework for succession planning, developing a reputation as a continuous learning organization and delivering exemplary service to internal departments as well as the entire county.

### Contact Information

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

Fauquier County

Environmental

## Recycling Innovations

In 2005, Fauquier County was faced with the twin dilemmas of potentially losing several million dollars of annual revenue in the near term and the loss of locally available landfill capacity within several years.

Today, the county has truly outstanding processing facilities in place to allow cost effective diversion of recyclable materials from the landfill waste stream.

Future programs and services will be designed to take advantage of these new systems to maximize material diversion.

### Contact Information

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

*Isle of Wight County*

*Information  
Technology*

## **GIS Cemetery Layer for Historic Preservation Best Practices**

Isle of Wight County developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) layer and corresponding database for the identification of gravesite locations and features within the county.

This innovative model for tackling the difficult issue of identifying historic cemeteries using the county's technological system stands out in light of one of the most pressing problems facing Virginia's historic resources today-the loss of cemeteries through neglect or endangerment by land development.

### **Contact Information**

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# 2008 Achievement Awards

*James City County*

*Organizational  
Development*

## **Succession Management Assignments: Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders**

While temporary assignments may be commonplace, succession management assignments are distinctive due to the frequency, regularity, duration and level of authority attached to them.

They are annual, six-month assignments providing hands-on, real-time experience in key, top-level positions such as assistant county administrator, budget director, community services director and public information officer.

Twenty-five employees have completed assignments since its implementation in 2003.

### **Contact Information**

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