

VACo 2009 Achievement Award Program Descriptions

Carroll County—Regional Collaboration

“Economic Milestone”

The Blue Ridge Crossroads region has been hit hard by major job losses during the past five years. However a new entrepreneurial approach to economic development has successfully filled much of the void by providing business counseling, assistance and enhancing growth for citizens in Carroll County.

Under the direction of Dr. Dallas Garrett, SBDC Director, and Bernie Deck, Carroll County’s Business Development program has assisted with the creation of 428 new jobs through Entrepreneurial Business Development. The new capital investment of more than \$17 million has given new hope and prosperity to the community. The program has been expanded to Grayson County and the City of Galax.

The program expects to assist an additional 200 individuals in starting their own business over the next two years. This program truly reflects the “entrepreneurial spirit” of Carroll County and the entire region. Carroll County is known as a leader in Entrepreneurial Business Development and was named by the 2004 Virginia General Assembly as part of the Entrepreneurial Region of Virginia.

Chesterfield County—Criminal Justice & Public Safety

“Emergency Worker and Dependant Shelter (EWADS)”

In an emergency, police, fire and EMS are typically the first to arrive and assist. However, there has been a historical pattern of emergency workers not reporting for duty following a natural disaster due to concern for their own family’s safety. Such examples include Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and Hurricane Hugo in Charleston, S.C.

To prevent this from happening, Chesterfield County established EWADS, to take care for and to support its most valuable resource—the employees—so they can perform their emergency duties and not worry about their family’s safety.

A major component of the program is the creation, management and staffing of an employee shelter, which is specifically designed to support employees and run separately from traditional citizen shelters.

-Fairfax County—Organizational Development

“The ART Conference”

Fairfax County has a government employee population base of around 14,000. More than 10 percent are administrative assistants. To put a spit-shine on Administrative Professionals Week, the Administrative Resource Team (ART) Conference provides development training to the largest segment of the county’s employee population. The conference is held in the county’s government center and is free to participants.

The program's success can be measured by its popularity. The conference registration is generally closed after 48 hours of its announcement because of full capacity. Also, other county organizations have used ART Conference as a model while other nearby jurisdictions have expressed interest in creating comparable training events for their support staff.

The ART Conference is a proven program that effectively enhances the professional development and morale of the county's largest employee class who might easily be taken for granted.

Fairfax County—Criminal Justice & Public Safety

“Road DAWG”

The Road DAWG (Don't Associate with Gangs) camps show how a small program can make a big difference. Diverging from the commonly accepted practice of approaching gang prevention solely as a law enforcement issue, this innovative program invests in the prevention and intervention to reach youths before they are drawn into the gang lifestyle.

Road DAWG camps deter gang recruitment of younger children by providing tools to strengthen their resilience, develop positive decision-making skills and encourage leadership characteristics to buffer against the potential lure of gangs.

Gloucester County—Human Services

“Full Service School Project”

This program is an innovative and collaborative partnership approach addressing the needs of children and families in an elementary school setting. It provides for a team of human service professionals to work collaboratively with school personnel to identify needs, recommend services and resources and to make referrals to serve youth and families.

Parents and families are offered access to resources and educational opportunities to facilitate positive and productive growth and development, as well as academic success.

Hanover County—Environmental

“Citizen-Driven Curbside Recycling Program”

Despite the elimination of a small pilot curbside recycling program five years ago, the public desire for such a service continued to grow. County staff members developed a program that established special tax districts or “Curbside Recycling Service Districts.” The plan was modeled after an existing program that created water and sewer service districts.

If a subdivision contacts the county expressing interest in starting a program, a notice is sent to all residents in the subdivision announcing a meeting. After the meeting,

subdivision representatives start a petition drive to achieve 80 percent sign-up. If the petition number is reached, it is presented to the Board of Supervisors. The Board votes to establish a tax district for the service. If approved, all residents in the subdivision are assessed for the cost of providing the service. About 1,100 homes have joined the program effective July 1, 2009. Another 1,700 have been approved for fiscal year 2010.

Henrico County—Environmental
“Electronic Waste Recycling”

Early efforts were expensive and lightly attended, which increased the cost per participant. Henrico County focused on the cost side with Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA) by a procurement that allowed the host jurisdiction to pay the staging fee for the event while the customer paid a nominal fee to recycle the most expensive things—cathode ray tube containing items.

Henrico partnered with Ukrop’s Supermarkets, which further assisted through their marketing resources and by providing gift cards to use as door prizes for attendees.

Since the program began with Ukrop’s in 2007, attendance is up 400 percent and the cost per attendee and per pound recycled has declined. More than 200,000 pounds of used electronics have been recycled.

Henrico County—Regional Collaboration
“Regional Supplier Conference (SWAM)”

A basic challenge of local governments is finding and educating qualified diverse suppliers. In response to this challenge, the Division of Purchasing and Support Services designed a regional supplier conference, Henrico County Connections—a SWAM Initiative that provided an opportunity for SWAM suppliers to come and meet the buyers from various departments in the county and to learn about doing business with the county.

The immediate and enthusiastic response from suppliers to the supplier conference suggested the need to expand this approach to include surrounding jurisdictions and some business resources.

James City County—Information Technology

“Neighborhoods Organizing Ways to Achieve Connections (NOWAC)”

This program is a Web 2.0 online database that provides public access to neighborhood information and events registrations. It is a partnership of Neighborhood Connections (NC) and James City County Information Technology division.

This innovative database has greatly reduced duplication of manual task, while offering citizens and county staff and officials access to information when they need it.

Loudoun County—Customer Service

“Real Estate Assessment Review Online Application”

The Loudoun County Office of the County Assessor developed and implemented this innovative program to streamline the assessment review process for staff members, other departments and the public.

The overall administration of the Assessor’s Office has been significantly improved by the program because it allows an application to be filed online and the staff is able to immediately access the information and review it in a timely manner. Citizens can now submit an application quickly with little or no cost as long as they have an Internet connection.

-Prince William County—Community & Economic Development

“Home Help Program”

This program was successful in helping to bolster a flagging real estate market and simultaneously provide employee workforce housing incentives—at no cost to the taxpayer. The program was designed to provide an incentive for home ownership for employees renting or living outside the county and concurrently reduce the volume of vacant, foreclosed and for sale properties in the county.

It is a public-private partnership made possible, in part, by investing a portion of the county’s investment portfolio in collateralized certificates of deposits with SunTrust Bank. As part of the program, SunTrust provides benefits to county employees that include credits that can be used for interest rate reductions and/or closing costs for \$50 million in mortgage loans per year.

The remarkable part of this effort is that it attacks two problems and does so with a zero budget impact.

Prince William County—Public Affairs/Communications

“Virtual Public Hearing”

Prince William County citizens have hectic daily schedules that include some of the longest commuting times in the nation. This daily mix of work and personal obligations does not easily allow for citizens to participate in county planning through public hearings.

The solution was to create a “Virtual Public Hearing” by making critical information on the county’s planning and development process available online. The program allows citizens to learn about and to participate in the process as their time and schedule permits.

Roanoke County—Information Technology

“Innovation Without Funding”

The county has always prided itself on using technology to improve services and communication with citizens. Unfortunately, during difficult economic times, innovation often suffers and is replaced with a “maintenance mode” that curtails all but the essential technology spending.

In the fall of 2008, Roanoke County explored inexpensive alternative methods of continual service improvement. After extensive research, the county saw a pattern emerging in the form of using the tools and concepts of Web 2.0 to improve citizen communication.

Rockbridge County—Human Services

“Rockbridge Area Prevention Coalition”

The coalition was reorganized in 2007 under new leadership and has been instrumental in changing the face of prevention in Rockbridge and the surrounding area. The coalition’s mission is to reduce substance abuse among youth in the area by increasing community awareness and by promoting a comprehensive network of prevention and intervention services and resources.

The coalition currently has 124 members from nearly 40 local agencies and organizations including local government, law enforcement, schools, media, parents, youth, civic groups, local businesses, public health and treatment providers. By bringing together local leaders to focus on local problems, the coalition is creating lasting changes in the community.

York County—Environmental

“Wetlands Interpretive Sanctuary for Education (WISE)”

Faced with the problems of replacing a wetlands area along Hampton Highway and a drainage issue in the local community of Lackey, the county investigated whether it could solve both issues by creating a wetlands area downstream from the drainage problem and adjacent to Charles Brown Park.

The result was a project that provided environmental advantages, including stream restoration, wetlands creation and drainage improvements. The program promoted and required intergovernmental cooperation in order to address the situation.