



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Powhatan County

Program Title: Proudly Powhatan Produced

Program Category: Community Development, Economic Development, & Land Use

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Roxanne Salerno

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Bret Schardein

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

## **Nomination for 2025 VACo Achievement Award**

This application is submitted on behalf of Powhatan Economic Development to highlight a program that was created to support the agriculture, small business and tourism efforts of the Economic Development department. The program is supportive of the category that is evaluated for the Achievement Award in the area of Community & Economic Development.

### **BACKGROUND**

Powhatan's Economic Development department was re-established back in 2018 with a renewed focus on business retention and expansion, new business development and tourism. Over the next six years and through the rough waters of a pandemic, the Economic Development department re-created programs to engage and retain the business community. Business retention and expansion was successful in retaining 100% of businesses which was particularly strong during the 2020 pandemic and following recovery years.

An area of business development that was hard to reach although highly celebrated was reaching out and fostering the beloved agricultural and locally made community of Powhatan. Local pride is a mainstay of the Powhatan business community making it one of the best features of doing business in Powhatan, yet small makers and producers are hard to find on their own which spun the idea of branding what makes Powhatan special from within. The **Proudly Powhatan Produced** brand initiative was created from the Economic Development department to discover, brand and promote these makers and farmers with a recognizable brand.

## **DESCRIPTION OF POWHATAN COUNTY**

Originally settled by French Huguenots in the early 1700s, Powhatan County was created by The Virginia General Assembly in 1777. The County was named in honor of the Indian Chief Powhatan, father of Pocahontas. Located in Virginia's Central Piedmont between the Appomattox and James Rivers, Powhatan is 20 miles west of Richmond. Distinctly rural and facing development push along its eastern boundaries, Powhatan is home to unique businesses including Envestnet (a Richmond "Best Place to Work" winner 2017, 2018 Top 65 Workplaces in Richmond); DRP Collision (2020 Governor's Economic Gardening grant recipient, Eagle Teleservices (customer care for Michelin Tire); Rapid Manufacturing (fabrication and coatings); and Three Crosses Distilling ( Multi-award winning distillery of Whiskey, Rum, Vodka, Moonshine and Gin). The County is challenged by encroaching development from the east, principally Chesterfield and Henrico. With limited infrastructure and selective zoning, the County has managed to contain development; implementing a sustained economic development approach becomes the County's proactive method to achieve its vision of a "strong, robust and diverse economy".

### **Goal Specific Branding: Proudly Powhatan Produced**

Seeing a budding locally made community develop in Powhatan through discovery of small batch products to watching the Village Farmer's Market attract over 800-1,000 people each Thursday to come shop locally, there was a clear need to show what businesses were making and producing right in Powhatan. The Economic Development department has a mission of

creating and promoting business development and tourism although wrapped in the everyday commercial work, the importance of rural values and niche agriculture remains an important to the County. The Proudly Powhatan Produced program would allow makers and consumers to remember the heritage and uniqueness of a rural county on the outskirts of the Richmond metro. A logo was designed to reflect that agricultural theme and display Powhatan prominently as the place where the products originated.



### **Implementation & Execution of the Proudly Powhatan Produced Program**

To start the program, the department developed guidelines to guide makers and producers into the minimal requirements to be a part of the program but also get their buy-in of promotion for the brand. The promotion was meant to be dual purposed with not only the department promoting the brand that would promote the maker but also the maker promoting the brand as well. Display of the logo on their website, social media and products, if possible, would be the main requirements to receive branded logo marketing materials from the department which included the digital logos, stickers and a large sign to hang on their booths or tents at markets. The department started outreach to local makers through the Village farmers market



which turned out incredibly successful as many were local Powhatan businesses and wanted a



way to market themselves to buyers as truly Powhatan locals. The department also developed in conjunction with the farmers market a loyalty program where buyers could receive a free Proudly Powhatan Produced tote bag after a certain number of purchases at the market. Stickers were also placed on front



windows and doors of local stores where Proudly Powhatan Produced products were sold to promote cross-promotion.

The program caught the attention of the community and quickly took off with over twenty-three vendors and growing who produce items like fresh-cut flowers, bagels, wooden bowls, chocolates and candles. The program promotes the brand and vendors at the twenty-two farmers market days, at the local Quarter Field Markets held spring through fall and at all eight local stores throughout the year.





Today the marketing is becoming more and more known throughout the community, and beyond which allows the region to know that the rural agriculture heritage of Powhatan is strong and booming.

A sub-program also developed from the Proudly Powhatan Produced program which was the pitch event. A known issue for smaller local makers was how to get their local made products into local stores. The idea was created for a shark-tank like event where producers would be given the ability to pitch their products to local stores at one event during a 10–15-minute presentation time. The makers could bring samples and pitch their products while also leaving their cards with the store owners to hopefully have outreach to buy their products later. No pressure was placed on the store owners, only to come discover, sample and walk away with new contacts for local products for their stores. The event being part of the branding program meant that the products were cross-branded from product to stores. This event brought nine vendors out to pitch their products and reserve their space at local stores.



In summary, through an innovative approach to finding a way to identify and promote a niche market in Powhatan, the Economic Development department developed what is now known as a locally loved and supported branding program that celebrates the heritage of Powhatan while also continuing to promote and develop revenue. The department continues to discover new companies and ways to collaborate to spread the branding of Powhatan's best made products through not only the locality but beyond. Supporting local products has been made a little simpler for consumers now, they just look for the recognizable logo brand and know they are supporting a niche Powhatan company and their community!



## Executive Summary

The **Proudly Powhatan Produced** brand initiative was created from the Economic Development department to discover, brand and promote these makers and farmers with a recognizable brand. The Economic Development department has a mission of creating and promoting business development and tourism although wrapped in the everyday commercial work, the importance of rural values and niche agriculture remains an important to the County. The Proudly Powhatan Produced program would allow makers and consumers to remember the heritage and uniqueness of a rural county on the outskirts of the Richmond metro. A logo was designed to reflect that agricultural theme and display Powhatan prominently as the place where the products originated. The program caught the attention of the community and quickly took off with over twenty-three vendors and growing who produce items like fresh-cut flowers, bagels, wooden bowls, chocolates and candles.

The program promotes the brand and vendors at the twenty-two farmers market days, at the local Quarter Field Markets held spring through fall and at all eight local stores throughout the year. Through an innovative approach to finding a way to identify and promote a niche market in Powhatan, the Economic Development department developed what is now known as a locally loved and supported branding program that celebrates the heritage of Powhatan while also continuing to promote and develop revenue. Supporting local products has been made a little simpler for consumers now, they just look for the recognizable logo brand and know they are supporting a niche Powhatan company and their community!