



ATTN: 2010 Achievement Awards Program
 Virginia Association of Counties
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address service requested

Call for Entries



Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

Program Information

Locality County of York
 Program Title Mosquito Management-A Green Initiative
 Program Category Environmental
 Population Category Four

Contact Information

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Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

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 Title _____
 Signature* _____

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

2010 VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Mosquito Management - A Green Initiative County of York

Program Overview: In York County there is no such thing as a “mosquito-free” environment as there are an estimated 43,000 acres of fresh and salt marsh opportunities for prodigious breeding. To fight the bite of public health disease, concern entails surveillance and management of the invasive mosquito population by awareness and eco-friendly initiatives. Standard approaches to mosquito abatement for the most part fail to effectively reduce the threat that mosquitoes pose. Therefore, various best practices green interventions have been instituted are synergistic and have proven effective. They entail using a combination of spatial information to identify breeding sites targeted for biological applications along with using mosquito fish for larval control, making a mosquito beater school presentation, involving citizens in surveillance activities and using media outreach to keep our citizen customers well informed as to their role in mosquito prevention.

Problem/Need for the Program: Mosquitoes are the proclaimed #1 vector of disease as there are an estimated 41,000 of them as a public health threat for all citizens. In recent years, populations of a particular invasive species, the Asian Tiger, have been increasing dramatically despite traditional eradication methods to reduce their number. Therefore, it poses a serious challenge because of the ubiquitous larval habitats in residential areas. In fact, six debilitating arboviruses have been isolated from this species since its recent introduction in the local area. For such an urban pest, an area-wide approach for its management has been imperative as populations diffuse and the potential for a disease outbreak is high. In order to alleviate the real threat, there has been an aggressive environmentally sensitive approach taken by various means for enhanced awareness and prevention to fight the potential bite.

Program Description: York County's mosquito management program objectives are efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and environmental consciousness. The "going green" initiative has incorporated proactive ways to reduce the threat of mosquito-borne diseases. In doing so, they entail various proven components promoting awareness, prevention initiatives and continuing citizen interaction:

- The program promotes integrated mosquito pest management to greatly reduce the disease threat by various means with minimal environmental impact. The emphasis cornerstone is a combination of surveillance, source reduction, biological application, and judicious chemical treatment. It's a process and not a reaction as surveillance and elimination is at its best before mosquitoes are old enough to bite.
- Our innovative mosquito breeding fish and stocking initiative has provided another means of biological control. They have been used for retention/detention ponds along with other prodigious breeding habitats and, upon request, have been used to stock backyard ornamental ponds. This not only saves on costly commercial larvicide but also has enabled long term mosquito larval control. The positive outcome has been substantial as it has helped residents to take part to lessen the potential public health threat. This creative program, being the only such known one in the state, has realized much notoriety and recognition. The little fish have been a big plus for efficacious mosquito management.
- To better meet the County's obligation to the public's health and welfare, a "Mosquito Beater" elementary school program involving ten schools is instituted to promote awareness and prevention. The third grade age group was selected because they are attentive and able to retain the important non-pesticide mosquito management

information the program is designed to impart. It stresses the importance of not leaving mosquito prevention to luck, but instead taking decisive action to dump out containers of water as a breeding source in the yard at least once a week. One big payoff is that the students themselves are becoming well informed about insect biology for their Standards of Learning testing, along with increasing interest about the importance of mosquito prevention. The program's underlying philosophy is that prevention begins at home.

- Another successful mosquito green initiative has been to encourage citizens to become volunteers as mosquito monitors. For those who elect to participate; training is provided and a trap issued so as to provide inputs on the gender and number of mosquitoes captured. Such surveillance feedback has proved useful as it enables better determining what areas in the County are most in need of mosquito abatement. It's a win-win initiative as it again promotes enhanced customer service and saves costly unnecessary preventive treatments.
- The media outreach initiative as a public information source has served to keep the citizens well informed about what is being done and how mosquito prevention is being accomplished. Several sources are being used such as an up-to-date web page, telephone hot line, letters to homeowner associations, "Mastering the Mosquito" pamphlets, special event displays and local television presentations. Also offered is free biological larvicide to citizens as self help for their mosquito breeding standing water environments. It has all translated into a well informed citizen customer who is supportive of our environmentally friendly efforts.

Use of Technology: From a spatial GIS and GPS perspective, information is being used to identify existing potential mosquito breeding sites and to track biological applications for larval

treatments. It has proven invaluable for regulatory compliance and human disease incidence for epidemiological purposes. In addition, it provides an accurate visual depiction of where mosquito habitats are located along with visualization of where other hidden habitats may exist.

Program Cost: There have been inappreciable operating costs incurred in developing and implementing the program due to the fact that the County information resources were already available to support the effort. However, there have been minimal costs involved in establishing and maintaining the fishery. In essence the County realizes a big bang for their invested buck.

Program Results/Success: Needless to say, the overall mosquito green awareness and prevention initiatives have been a rousing success as significant results have been achieved. The citizens have been exposed to the wide variety of available information in becoming more aware of the role mosquito management plays in protecting the public's well being. Survey results have shown there is high satisfaction with County services which gives credence that customer and environmentally sensitive prevention initiatives are now a recognized reality.

Worthiness of an Award: The County's "Going Green" mosquito management program is truly noteworthy as it informs, involves the citizen and reduces the mosquito-borne disease threat. Positive citizen feedback has been favorable to the overall effort. Being innovative, it has been recognized as a model to others who are seeking to improve their programs and therefore is an excellent candidate for the award.