

Recognizing the Best in County Government Programs!



2011 Achievement Awards

ATTN: 2011 Achievement Awards Program
Virginia Association of Counties
1207 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

Call for Entries



2011 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2011

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2011.

Program Information

Locality _____

Program Title _____

Program Category _____

Population Category _____

Contact Information

Name _____

Title _____

Department _____

Complete Mailing Address _____

Telephone # _____ Fax # _____

E-mail _____

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name _____

Title _____

Signature* _____

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.



2011 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline for Entry: June 1, 2011

Description

The VACo Achievement Awards is a competitive awards program open to local government members of the association. The awards program is held annually to recognize local government programs that exemplify innovation, model practices, partnering or collaboration with other local governments, a private enterprise or state and federal government. The competition will be divided into five population categories so that projects compete with other localities of comparable size. Please encourage all county departments to apply!

Eligibility

All local government members of the Virginia Association of Counties, which are in good standing with the association, may participate. There is no limit to the number of applications a county may submit.

All applications must comply with the following standards:

1. The program must have become operational before Jan. 1, 2011, and must be currently operational.
2. Local government officials and/or staff must have played a significant role in developing and implementing the program, with only limited assistance from outside experts and/or consultants.
3. All steps in the application must be completed.
4. Awards will be given to departments or units, not individuals.
5. Programs that have received a previous VACo Achievement Award are ineligible.
6. The program must meet one or more of the criteria outlined below, and must be signed by the county administrator or chief administrative official before submission.

Criteria for Selection

The nominated program must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Offer an innovative solution to a problem, situation or delivery of services.
2. Promote intergovernmental cooperation and/or cooperation with local, state and federal entities and/or a private enterprise in addressing a problem or situation.
3. Provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement in their own localities.
4. Programs may be based on programs from another public or private entity but must represent innovative approaches or customization by the local government.

Populations

The population categories are: (1) under 15,000 (2) 15,001 to 30,000 (3) 30,001 to 50,000 (4) 50,001 to 100,000 (5) 100,001+

Website

To view past Achievement Awards winners and all the entries from the 2010 competition, visit www.vaco.org/AchievementAwards.html.

Categories

Program Categories:

1. Community/Economic Development
2. Customer Service
3. Communications (public relations)
4. Criminal Justice & Public Safety
5. Health/Human Services (youth, elderly and others)
6. Information Technology
7. Parks and Recreation
8. Transportation
9. Organizational Development
10. Environmental
11. Regional Collaboration

Rules

Rules of entry:

1. All entries must be submitted in duplicate. Mail two copies of each entry bound in a notebook or presentation folder. Include the entry form, all appendices and supplemental materials, photographs, DVD, etc. Additionally, submit one copy in electronic format--PDF or WORD file (e-mail electronic entry to gcharter@vaco.org).
2. Entries must be typed and double-spaced. State the problem, challenge or situation faced by the locality and how the program fulfilled the awards criteria (innovation, partnering or collaboration and a model for other localities). Tell how the program was carried out, including financing and staffing, and the program's results. Be concise and submit no more than eight one-sided typed pages plus photos or supporting materials.
3. Include a short overview of the program (no more than one page double-spaced) that can be used as a quick reference guide for the judges.

Judging

Entries will be judged by a three-member panel selected for their expertise in local government. When there are no selected nominations, no award will be made.

Award Presentation

Award plaques will be presented at VACo's Annual Business Meeting on Nov. 15, 2011, in Bath County. The winning entries will be featured in a booklet that will be distributed during VACo's Annual Conference. Award-winning nominations will be displayed appropriately at the Annual Conference and winners will receive a special ribbon to be worn on their nametags. Winners will also be recognized on the VACo website and in a news release sent to statewide media outlets.

Deadline

All entries must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2011, and mailed to VACo Achievement Awards, 1207 East Main St., Suite 300, Richmond, Va., 23219-3627. Entries will not be returned.

Questions?

Contact Gage Harter, VACo's Communications Director, at (804) 343-2502 or gcharter@vaco.org. Additional application forms are also available at www.vaco.org.

**Prince William County
Air Track Management/Advanced Fire Behavior Training**

Summary - The Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue has introduced a fire behavior training programs to its personnel that is based on a European curriculum that emphasizes a working knowledge of the physics of fire to enable firefighters and their officers to make better risk assessments on the fire ground. Because of an opportune availability of surplus staffing, the staff was able to provide this training to all career personnel assigned to suppression equipment at twenty fire stations. The goal is prevent fire fighter injuries, deaths and near misses by arming them with knowledge about fire behavior and how air affects fire development.

The training has been offered without large costs and has been made available to departments to generate interest and to promote fire fighter safety. Positive results have been realized with incident commanders and crews making better risk assessments and tactical decisions based on knowledge gained from the training.

Prince William County

Air Track Management/Advanced Fire Behavior Training

Problem Statement – The United States fire service loses approximately 100 firefighters a year in the line of duty. Approximately 20% of those deaths are due to significant fire events such as flashover or back draft. These events result in extreme temperatures that exceed the capabilities of the protective clothing and breathing apparatus worn by the firefighters. In many cases, these events are triggered by the firefighters who fail to recognize fire conditions that may have changed because of openings they have made in the structure to attack the fire or to search for victims. Changes in building construction including the use of lightweight wooden members has promoted rapid fire growth and structural failures that has caused an increase in near misses, injuries and fire related deaths.

Unfortunately, the United States fire service does not require a lot of training in fire behavior and lags far behind their counterparts in Europe. Prince William County suffered a line of duty death attributed to one of these significant fire events in 2007 and has been taking steps to increase the knowledge base of firefighters to help them make better tactical decisions on the fire ground.

Challenge – Prince William County has a large fire and rescue department with almost 500 uniformed career personnel and 800 volunteers operating out of 20 stations. Rolling out any training program so that all personnel receive the same training is a logistical and financial challenge. However, an opportunity arose in

the spring of 2011 that allowed the staff to train close to 100% of the career personnel assigned to suppression apparatus. This was due to some additional personnel who had been hired to address a deficiency in volunteer staffing of a ladder truck that was resolved by the volunteer company before their deployment was finalized. While the Prince William County Fire & Rescue Association worked on a solution for relocating those personnel, they were made available to allow for backfilling of units for training.

The training program, Air Track Management/Advanced Fire Behavior is based on a curriculum developed in partnership with John Taylor, a retired fire officer, author and fire behavior expert from England. Mr. Taylor was first introduced to Prince William County in 1994 while on a visit to the area and subsequently collaborated in focusing on fire behavior training as a way to be safer and more efficient on the fire ground. This was a long, slow process and included several visits on his part to Prince William County and several staff visits exploring training options in England and Sweden by staff starting in 2002. The line of duty death that occurred in 2007 became a catalyst for putting more focus into this type of training. This scope of this training is unique in the United States and is breaking ground in the area of fire ground safety.

Between 2007 and 2010, Prince William County and Mr. Taylor worked on the curriculum and sorting out the logistics that would allow him to deliver the training at the Prince William County Public Safety Training Center. This involved resolving Customs and Immigration issues, financial and issues and the construction of a live fire-training prop based on his exclusive design. Because

of liability concerns and intellectual property requirements, Mr. Taylor then had to train a cadre of instructors to deliver the program to operate the live fire-training prop safely and in accordance with strict safety protocols. This preliminary work was completed in May 2010.

Based on initial estimates on needed student throughput, instructor and staffing availability, it was originally thought that it would take over three years of constant training to deliver a five-day program to all of the career operational personnel. That would have the additional impact of taking the training cadre away from their normal assignments for that time. When the window of opportunity freeing unallocated staff opened in January 2011, the decision was made to make the excess personnel available to facilitate the rotation of crews to the Academy for this training in February and March. Later on, this was extended to May and June as the process for determining the final assignments for the excess personnel would not take effect until 1 July 2011 .

The cadre determined that if the five-day curriculum was modified to a two-day course that covered the basics thoroughly, more personnel could receive the training. This was coordinated with Mr. Taylor and modifications to the curriculum were agreed upon.

With the additional time afforded by May and June training dates, all personnel assigned to 40 suppression units, over 250 personnel will receive the training.

This training is a model for the United States fire service and has generated great interest, especially with our neighboring jurisdictions. It far

exceeds the fire behavior training generally offered in the United States and better prepares firefighters to make safer tactical decisions on the fire ground through the use of lectures, case studies, laboratory experiments on fire behavior theory and is reinforced with hands on live fire training evolutions. This training has been integrated into the recruit school and has increased their fire behavior training from the minimum required three hours to over 40 hours.

While the personnel available for back filling tactical units crews did not involve any additional costs, some of the training cadre were field personnel and they were compensated for working on their days off through aid to locality funding provided annually by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Funding for the training props and textbooks has also come from that source. Those costs were approximately \$40,000 spread out over two fiscal years.

Results – While the program is still young, there have been positive results in the field. Many officers and crews have used the training to make more thorough risk assessments of the structure and situation and in some cases have altered their tactics with success. We have also seen an increase of firefighters opting not to go into a well-involved structure when the occupants have been accounted for and fire conditions were not favorable for entry. In these cases, defensive, outside tactics were used to first control the fire. These changes represent a cultural shift from the tradition of running through the front door without consideration for the fact that the enemy (fire) gets a vote in the situation.

This training has also included participants from Fairfax County, Manassas, Manassas City, Quantico Marine Corps Base, Stafford County, Spotsylvania County, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Richmond, Virginia Beach, Utica, NY, and the editor of FireRescue Magazine. Information has been shared internationally through fire journals articles and presentations at conferences and the National Fire Academy.



Backdraft unit in operation



Inside the live fire training prop

Live fire training prop – sliding vent on top is safety release and can be controlled from the inside as well as by the safety person on the outside.

