Recognizing the Best in County Government Programs!

2013 Achievement Awards

Virginia Association of Counties

ATTN: 2013 Achievement Awards Program
Virginia Association of Counties
1207 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

Call for Entries

2013 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2013

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2013.**

Program Information

Locality **Middlesex County**

Program Title **E-Government in the 21st Century**

Program Category **Communications**

Contact Information

Name **Kevin Gentry**

Title **Director**

Department **Information Technology**

Complete Mailing Address **PO Box 428, Saluda, Virginia, 23149**

Telephone # **804-758-4330**   Fax # **804-758-0061**

E-mail **gentry@co.middlesex.va.us**

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name **Matt Walker**

Title **County Administrator**

Signature*

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

Middlesex County Submittal

2013 VACo Achievement Award - Communications Category

E-GOVERNMENT IN THE 21st CENTURY

Program Overview

Increasing public access to information through various digital and analog means presented a plethora of options for our Technology Department. Realizing that we were still stuck in an old paradigm of outdated web pages and press releases, we knew that to apprehend the immediacy of modern communication, we would have to be innovative in new and exciting ways.

By leveraging the power of modern computers and smart phones, we endeavored to take a five prong approach to adding and enriching our current methods of communication:

1. *A complete revamping of our county website and a commitment by staff to maintain current and relevant information to the citizenry.* A complete overhaul of the County Website was undertaken with the goal of improving information and transparency. Our hard work paid off in that we were awarded an A+ by the Sunshine Review, a non-profit organization focused on promoting transparency in government.

2. *Utilize social media to get timely information out quickly and also allow for dialogue in an informal setting.* We are excited about the possibilities of the county having its own Facebook page wherein we are able to disseminate information and promote county events. We expect that in times of crisis and natural disaster, having this communication avenue will greatly benefit the citizens as word tends to spread much faster in this type of environment.

3. *Create a mobile application that will provide easier access to the County information and services.* Middlesex County currently has an Android App in the Google Play Store that is available for all citizens at no cost. We are currently developing an iOS equivalent. Within the application, there are quick links to information such as:
   A. County Website which has been reformatted for mobile devices.

   B. Meeting Calendar

   C. GPS aware mapping of important locations in the County.

D. Searchable Parcel Information

E. A method of signing up for our Emergency Alert System.

F. A reference of all County Ordinances

G. A link to a concise History of Middlesex County via Wikipedia

H. The County's Facebook Page

4. *Provide an Emergency Notification System for County.* The County now has an Emergency Notification System which has the ability to contact all of the citizenry through land lines, mobile phones, and email. We were able to utilize this during Hurricane Sandy to notify our citizens about breaking information.

5. *Provide Software as a Service (SAS) to inter-county entities such as the Town of Urbanna and School System to allow them to forego the expense of a costly hardware investment and instead remotely access the resources hosted by the County.* In addition to offering these E-Services, the County IT staff has partnered with our local libraries to help provide computer support and facilitate upgrades to their IT infrastructure.

All of this was accomplished using a minimum of county funds and with limited personnel. The IT department consists of two individuals, the Director of Information Technology and the GIS Coordinator/IT Technician.

Middlesex website earns A-plus rating

by Larry Chowning

The Middlesex County government website was recently given an A-plus ranking for transparency in government by the Sunshine Review, a non-profit organization focused on promoting transparency in government.

The website address is www.co.middlesex.va.us.

At the May 7 board of supervisors meeting, county director of information/technology Kevin Gentry told supervisors, "When we set out to revamp the county's website, we knew that simply making it aesthetically pleasing was not going to be enough. We knew that to truly serve the citizens of the county, we had to be sure to provide as much access to information as we could, in a way that was easy to navigate. We believe we've achieved much of that goal. However, we will continue to strive to improve the site as we add more content in the days and weeks to come.

"Middlesex County has worked diligently to keep up with the fast changing technology landscape," continued Gentry. "To that end, we were one of the first counties to offer a mobile app for the Android platform. We also now have a presence on Facebook and are excited about the way in which social media can allow for commu-

Website . . .

nity involvement and faster dissemination of information. All of these various services are a means to an end in which transparency in local government is the ultimate goal.

"Recently we began issuing electronic tablets for our board of supervisors," he said. "These tablets will be configured to allow each board member to receive their emails when they're on the go. It also will allow us to do away with the traditional board packets, which will mean we are not going to be printing hundreds of sheets of paper every month and we won't have to deliver them, saving fuel in the process. The new system allows us to simply drop a file into a folder and the documents will replicate to all devices at once. The board gets their information faster than ever and the time consuming task of assembling multiple board packets is gone.

"When I look at other localities, I'm amazed at what we are able to accomplish with a fraction of the staff," said Gentry. "By leveraging the power of the latest advances in technology and good old-fashioned hard work, we plan to continue to improve on what's come before. I'm excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and how we can use them to better serve the public."

Board chairman Carlton Revere thanked Gentry and Glenn Nix, the E911 and Geographical Information Services Coordinator for an excellent job of revising and upgrading the county's website.

"We are very proud of the way the website looks now," said Revere. "It has become one of the best governmental websites in the state."

Middlesex County Board of Supervisors chair Carlton Revere (left) holds a new electronic board that is being used by supervisors. The new electronic device is being used to contain board packets and other information. Through the efforts of county director of information/technology Kevin Gentry (right), the county recently learned its updated and revised website received an A-plus rating for transparency in government from the Sunshine Review, a non-profit organization that promotes government transparency.

(Photo by Larry Chowning)

Middlesex County Virginia

Top Transparency Website in 2013

Meetings & Events

Landscape Committee (Historic Jury Room)10am
05/22/2013-10am

EDA 9:30am
05/23/2013-9:30am

Board of Supervisors Meeting 3pm
06/04/2013-3pm

Ordinance Committee(Old Jury Room) 1
06/05/2013-10am

County Government Calendar »

News & Notices

County seeks Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator »

County seeks Emergency Services Coordinator »

Grant Funds Available to Dam Owners and Local Governments »

"Signatures in Time - A Living History of Middlesex County, Virginia" Now on Sale »

View All »

May 31, 2013
Saluda
82°F
AccuWeather.com
Weather Forecast

Citizen Alert
Notification Sign Up ►

Find us on
facebook

Signatures In Time

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
VACo

Go

○ The Web ● Middlesex County

Middlesex County, Virginia

73 likes · 5 talking about this · 95 were here

Government Organization

Middlesex County is a county located on the Middle Peninsula in the U.S. state of Virginia. As of 2010, the population was 10,959. Its county seat is Saluda.

About

LAND OF THE FREE

👍 **73**

Photos   Likes   Map

Highlights ▾

📄 **Status** 📷 **Photo / Video** 🔵 **Offer, Event +**

How are you doing, Middlesex County, Virginia?

Middlesex County, Virginia
May 24

Likes   See All

Upper Middlesex Volunteer Fire Dept
Community Organization

Hummel Field
Local Business

Middlesex County Volunteer Rescue Squad
Health/Medical/Pharmaceuticals

Central Middlesex Vol. Rescue Squad
Non-Profit Organization

Deltaville Fire Department - LMVFD
Community Organization

Middlesex County, Virginia shared Virginia Association of Counties's photo.
May 22

#VACoJobListings. EMERGENCY SERVICES COORDINATOR.
Middlesex County. Salary range for the position is $30,000 to
$45,000. Applications must be received by June 10.
http://www.vaco.org/Employment.html

Middlesex

Middlesex County Website
The County Website Formatted for Your Mobile Device

Middlesex on Facebook
Find us on Facebook!

Important Locations
GPS Aware Location of Notable County Places

Calendar
Keep Up To Date With Our Meeting Schedule

Parcel Info
Parcel Information Searchable by Name

Historical Markers
GPS Aware Links to our Historical Markers

Sign Up for Alerts
Sign Up for Our Emergency Notification System

Ordinances
Handy Reference for County Ordinances