

Recognizing the Best in County Government Programs!



# 2014 Achievement Awards



## 2014 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 2, 2014

### Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2014.**

#### Program Information

Locality Orange County, VA

Program Title Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative

Program Category Community & Economic Development

#### Contact Information

Name Rose Deal

Title Senior Administrative Assistant

Department Administration

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Orange, VA 22960

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#### Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name R. Bryan David

Title County Administrator

Signature 

## Call for Entries



## 2014 VACo Achievement Awards

**Deadline for Entry: June 2, 2014**

### 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. 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 January 1, 2014, 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.

### Website

To view past Achievement Awards winners and all the entries from the 2013 competition, visit [www.vaco.org/membership/achievement-awards](http://www.vaco.org/membership/achievement-awards).

### Questions?

Contact Gage Harter, VACo's Communications Director, at 804.343.2502 or [gcharter@vaco.org](mailto:gcharter@vaco.org). Additional application forms are also available at [www.vaco.org](http://www.vaco.org).

### Program Categories

(Program categories are used as a guide and are not considered in judging)

1. Communications (Public Relations)
2. Community & Economic Development
3. Criminal Justice & Public Safety
4. Customer Service
5. Health & Human Services (Youth, Elderly and Others)
6. Information Technology
7. Parks & Recreation
8. Transportation
9. Organizational Development
10. Environmental
11. Regional Collaboration

### Rules of Entry

1. All entries must be submitted in electronic format--PDF or WORD document. Please e-mail the electronic entry to [gcharter@vaco.org](mailto:gcharter@vaco.org). Supplemental materials or hard copies may be mailed but are not required.
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. Please be concise.
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 judges. **Please include the application form.**

### Judging

Entries will be judged by a three-member panel selected for its expertise in local government. One entry will be named "Best Achievement."

### Award Presentation

Award plaques will be presented at VACo's Annual Conference held on November 9-11, 2014, in Bath County. The winning entries will be featured in a booklet that will be distributed during VACo's Annual Conference, and winners will receive a special ribbon to be worn on their nametags. Winners will be recognized on the VACo website and in a news release sent to statewide media. VACo staff members also attend Board of Supervisors meetings to present awards.

### Deadline

All entries must be dated no later than June 2, 2014, and e-mailed to Gage Harter at [gcharter@vaco.org](mailto:gcharter@vaco.org). As an option, supplemental materials or hard copies can be mailed to VACo Achievement Awards, 1207 East Main Street, Suite 300, Richmond, Va., 23219-3627.

# ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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### **2014 Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award**

Submission Date – May 2, 2014

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#### **TITLE:**

#### **Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative**

#### **1. OVERVIEW:**

Following a joint meeting on May 9, 2013, the Orange County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, and Planning Commission, reached a consensus that expansion of the County's economy must be a priority. These elected and appointed leaders recognized that an economic development vision and strategy initiative was imperative to bring lasting prosperity and opportunity to Orange County residents and businesses.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, and Planning Commission subsequently met in early July 2013, to hold a two-day retreat to begin a long-range planning effort for the Route 3 Corridor. This corridor serves as the best location to support public and private investment in order to promote business growth. It was a historic first step which challenged these elected and appointed officials to collaborate on a shared vision about Orange County's economic growth.

In September 2013, the Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, and Planning Commission formed the Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative Steering Committee. The committee was comprised of two members from each body with County staff supporting the committee's work. The Steering Committee was tasked with developing the vision and strategic direction for the project on behalf of the County's elected and appointed leadership.

#### **2. PROBLEM/NEED FOR THE PROGRAM:**

In April, 2013, several members of Orange County Board of Supervisors expressed concern about the economic distress and negative impacts the recession caused for the County's residents and businesses.

These members determined that county- provided services could no longer remain viable given the stagnant business tax base. This stagnation was attributed to the loss of jobs, an aging population, and a significant increase in the number of residents commuting to other localities for employment, particularly to the Northern Virginia and Fredericksburg markets. A location map is attached.

At a joint meeting held May, 2013, the Orange County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, and Planning Commission unanimously agreed to undertake a planning process to direct and energize economic development in the area of the county most suitable for business development. For several decades, this area was identified as an *Economic Development and Mixed Use Area* in the Orange County Comprehensive Plan. However, no policy meaningful initiatives were ever undertaken to develop future land use goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for the area.

It is important to note this joint effort would rely greatly on the perspectives and areas of expertise among elected and appointed officials to build support for a sustainable plan of action among the community as well as identified stakeholder groups. When completed, this initiative would give sound policy guidance to both the public and private sectors guidance which should facilitate decisions on investing, infrastructure, land uses, and development standards and expectations.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM:**

The Orange County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, and Planning Commission, jointly developed and adopted a vision statement for its work with the Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative.

This vision focuses on the strategic categories of Jobs/Employment, Consumer Goods/Services, and Recreation/ Culture/History. The following is a synopsis of the vision and its supporting categories:

#### Vision

*The Route 3 Corridor is a place to live, work, and play with a higher standard of design and development which is a self-contained, complete community that is appealing to current and prospective residents and is a place clearly differentiated from other places.*

*It will be a dynamic destination that results in an economic engine for the entire county. A “Go To” location for business, employment, entertainment, and education, it will include business and trade park(s) which utilize a cohesive, planned campus setting. There will be a focus on medical/health services as well as other desired targeted industries.*

*Other features will include a town center, convention/conference center, multi-use sports and recreational complex. It will also be well integrated with historic, cultural, recreation, and educational aspects which capitalize on the assets of the region and maximize what already exists.*

*In concert with partners and stakeholders we will seek intelligent development with high quality business, industry, commercial, and residential components. The development will embrace aesthetically pleasing design standards that reflects Orange County's best image including traditional design that is visually stimulating and context sensitive. We will ensure that there is a consideration to the needs of the future including both foresight and flexibility.*

*We will create: a place that is important; a place that feels good and looks good; a place that reflects a local vibe which is attractive to our citizens. We will create a beautiful development which both preserves its natural assets and provides for "fun stuff."*

The following Purposes and Principles and corresponding priorities will be employed to successfully achieve the Vision:

### **Jobs/Employment**

In partnership with landowners and existing businesses, we envision a center for employment on a cohesive, planned campus that includes more than one development. This center for employment may be a combination of many sites – perhaps one for Research & Development (R&D) and another for light manufacturing. The R&D campus may be located near a resort, hotel, or conference center to provide interconnectivity between uses for a cohesive development strategy. We will identify business targets and exclude others that are undesirable. The planned campus area will reflect traditional Orange County architecture with a theme, buffering, setbacks, arterial connectivity, underground utilities, specific design standards, with flexibility for future needs.

### **Consumer Goods/Services**

We will plan for the Route 3 Area to include a series of aesthetically and functionally unique, mixed-use areas connected by a common parkway and buffered by various cultural and recreational centers. The connection from the existing population center to eastern Route 3 will incorporate destinations that build upon Orange County's unique needs and topography. Transportation between activity areas will be efficient and all elements of a larger economic, cultural, and recreational plan will be incorporated into one cohesive path to success.

### **Recreation/Culture/History**

The development along Route 3 will take advantage of its cultural, historic, and natural resource assets to provide recreational opportunities that are attractive to citizens and visitors alike. These types of endeavors will be featured to contribute to the economic prosperity, health, and well-being of Orange County and its citizens. Orange County will establish public and private partnerships to create recreational and educational opportunities and leisure facilities to promote family-oriented activities.

### **Action Plan Development**

Following the creation of the vision and its supporting elements, the Route 3 Steering Committee determined the need for a deliberate plan of action which prompted the creation of the *2014-2015 Major Activities and Milestone Timeline*. This timeline established an outline of goals and objectives with specific deadlines intended to keep the energy of the vision on target, ensure the continued communication between the three (3) bodies, and to keep the community and the stakeholder groups informed and engaged.

One of the first major milestones on the timeline was to conduct a *Master Planning Charette*, a collaborative session of intense design and planning for solving a problem within a limited time frame, involving local knowledge, concerns and values coupled with outside subject matter experts.

Given the extensive land use and urban planning challenges and opportunities, the stakeholders and experts involved with the charette are to include utility providers, municipal officials, commercial and industrial developers, civil engineers, financial advisers, landowners, and others of similar perspective. Once the charette is completed, the results will be used to help create the Route 3 Small Area Plan which will be drafted by the steering committee. The draft plan will then be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and finally to the Board of Supervisors for adoption as a part of the Orange County Comprehensive Plan.

This plan is a requirement of the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan and there will be ample opportunities for public input during the process.

The charette was held March 31, 2014, to April 1, 2014. The final report from the charette will be sent as a supplemental document when it becomes in early May, 2014.

#### **4. RESPONDING TO ECONOMIC DOWNTURN:**

Orange County, like similarly situated rural and exurban localities in Virginia, face a new economic reality of limited and diminishing methods in place to maintain the level of local tax revenues. To address this reality, the county's elected and appointed leadership developed the *Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative*. This collaborative and coordinated planning process will provide opportunities to expand and diversify the county's tax base and by extension increase local tax revenues from business and industry in lieu of imposing higher tax levies on local landowners.

#### **5. USE OF TECHNOLOGY:**

This program utilized numerous forms of technology through a cross-departmental collaboration between community development, economic development, information technology, and county administration. This collaboration included software programs such as ESRI ArcGIS, Adobe Photoshop, and Microsoft Office programs. Moreover, the county's new website, launched May 31, 2013, was extensively utilized to keep

citizens and stakeholders informed throughout the visioning process including upcoming meetings, public comment periods, and the charrette planning process.

## **6. THE COST OF THE PROGRAM:**

Various costs associated with the program were incurred to date, including engaging the services of an experienced facilitator to organize and distill the vision and the ensuing process during joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Economic Development Authority. Additionally, a number of collateral documents, which produced informative documents including a rack card and poster detailing the vision and priorities. The costs are detailed below.

### Operating Costs (approximate):

- Retreat Facilitator (*July 2013/Travel Accommodations*) – \$8,340
- Design Cost and Printing Costs for Communicative Documents (*rack cards/posters*) – \$1,000
- Various other Printing Costs – \$1,250
- Charette costs (venue, facilitator, panelists, transportation, research etc.) - \$20,000

## **7. THE RESULTS/SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM:**

While the visioning process continues, the results to date are remarkable. For the first time in recent history Orange County's, elected and appointed leadership were challenged to collaborate to create a joint vision for the future growth and development of Orange County's primary transportation corridor. Further, implementation of the comprehensive planning and economic development priorities of the vision will be critical to long-term sustainable economic for the entire county.

## **8. WORTHINESS OF AN AWARD:**

Like similarly situated communities in the nation, Orange County was hit particularly hard by the recession. The demand for local government services has continued unabated as a result of exceptional population growth of 29% in the county between the years of 2000-2010. The demands of this population growth are juxtaposed with an aging population. Each of these have driven the need for the initiative to promote business investment and expand the tax base.

This program and its efforts emphasize the vital importance of having a positive and welcoming atmosphere for business investment and job creation. Correspondingly, it emphasizes citizen engagement on county

programs, services, and functions. Finally, this program highlights the need for sustainable land use and sound development practices which are built on a shared problem solving.

In conclusion, the Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative could be replicated by other localities desiring to improve the ability of the elected and appointed leadership to focus their energy on solving a shared challenge by creating a shared opportunity.

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**Respectfully Submitted Electronically By:**  
**Rose Deal, Senior Administrative Assistant**  
**May 2, 2014**