

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 York County

Program Title Expanding the Use of the Knox Box Entry System

Program Category 3. Criminal Justice & Public Safety

Contact Information

Name Stephen P. Kopczynski

Title Fire Chief

Department Fire & Life Safety

Complete Mailing Address P.O. Box 532, Yorktown, VA 23690-0532

Telephone # 757-890-3600 Fax # _____

E-mail flsafety@yorkcounty.gov

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name James O. McReynolds

Title County Administrator

Signature 

Call for Entries

**2014 VACO Achievement Award Program
Nomination Summary
York County, Virginia**

Program Category: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

The York County Department of Fire and Life Safety consistently strives to provide efficient and effective fire and rescue response in order to minimize property damage and loss, as well as minimize pain and suffering from injuries and illnesses that affect our community members. In an effort to provide additional support to those affected by fire in their home or business and/or sudden illness/injury, the department has adapted the KNOX-BOX® Rapid Entry System to provide a value added service to both our community and department personnel in a manner that streamlines operational effectiveness while minimizing the after effects for residents and/or business owners following a fire loss. This concept also provides critical unimpeded access to someone suffering from injury/illness without a friend or loved one close enough to provide access to the patient. Additionally, through the use of a master key retention system to control the KNOX-BOX® Master Key, accountability is provided which includes an audit trail for each key release.

In an effort to provide additional support to those affected by fire in their home or business and/or sudden illness/injury, the department has taken a proven access concept and modified it in order to provide a value-added service to both our community and department personnel in a manner that streamlines operational effectiveness while minimizing the after effects for residents and/or business owners following a fire loss. This concept also provides critical unimpeded access to someone suffering from injury/illness without a friend or loved one close enough to provide access to the patient. The department has adapted the KNOX-BOX® Rapid Entry System, which has been in use by the department to provide rapid access to commercial facilities for a number of years, in order to provide access to fire stricken buildings that require post fire monitoring and checks, as well as to community members suffering from injury or illness until a key holder can be established on their behalf. The KNOX-BOX® Rapid Entry System was specifically developed for fire departments. With one master key, department members can gain access to commercial and residential properties. The KNOX-BOX® System includes UL listed lock boxes coupled with the KeySecure® Master Key Retention Systems to control the KNOX-BOX® Master Key. These Master Key Retention units provide accountability with an audit trail giving the date, time and user ID for each key release. Knox also offers an optional Remote Administration program for these units.

The need for this program was two fold; first, provide rapid access for department members to access homes and businesses without the need to interrupt owners/occupants for periodic after the fire follow-up checks, without having to be responsible for a key and without having to inconvenience the owner/occupant if they did not want to return to the scene. Second, provide a rapid access to community members with medical conditions and/or potential medical conditions where their residence is secured and they cannot get to the door to provide access to emergency responders and/or those cases where a key holder/relative/friend is not immediately available.

The KNOX-BOX® securely stores the building keys so that the fire department can quickly enter a building without having to force entry, have to wait for a key-holder or maintain and find individual keys held at the fire station. While researching products, the department discovered that the Knox Box company had a small residential KNOX-BOX® vault that could be easily moved from one place to another. After researching the product more in depth, the department acquired a limited number of the residential Knox Box Vaults (using grant funds) to make loaner residential KNOX-BOX® vaults available in cases of certain significant fire incidents at residential structures that require a follow-up visit to prevent re-ignite and where it is not convenient for the occupant(s) to meet Fire and Life Safety personnel back at the residence. The vaults are also used as a short-term temporary loaner to citizens who have medical issues, are non-ambulatory, that

typically have required EMS response on a routine basis, do not have other means that can provide us access to their residence, cannot afford to purchase a secure access system, and/or are waiting for a secure access system to be acquired.

This program uses the modern technology available in the KNOX-BOX® vault coupled with the KeySecure® Master Key Retention System to control the KNOX-BOX® Master Key. York County has programmed the KeySecure® Master Key Retention System so that it requires a unique employee access code assigned to each department member to provide them access to the KNOX-BOX® Master Key. The KeySecure® Master Key Retention System also uses a flashing light to signal users that the KNOX-BOX® Master Key has been removed from the system, serving as a reminder to stow the key before leaving the scene.

Each loaner KNOX-BOX® vault costs approximately \$295. Each KNOX-BOX® vault is retrieved within several days of the incident and is redeployed for use at another location. The department currently has four (4) loaner KNOX-BOX® vaults which were purchased with grant funds awarded to the department, therein making this a no-cost program for the department.

This innovative problem-solving program resulted in the development of an entirely new value-added customer service initiative. Having already deployed this new program to support community members following both fire and emergency medical services incidents, this system has allowed the department to continue to provide service in a more efficient and effective manner without the need to

obtain, maintain and return an owner/occupant's personal key to their resident/business. Additionally, when providing post-fire follow-up evaluations, the program has enabled department members to return to the structure and conduct the evaluation without having to inconvenience the owner/occupant whom has already experienced a traumatic life altering incident, therein minimizing their repeated return to a scene where they have suffered property damage and loss.

The York County Department of Fire and Life Safety believes this program is worthy of this important award because it serves as a definitive example of the benefit that value-added services can provide in creating opportunities for no/low cost community service programs that provide efficiencies in local government and a direct benefit to our customers. More importantly, the program helps the department achieve its mission of preventing further potential injury and property damage that might occur when rapid access must be gained and keys are no available to unlock doors.

Expanding Use of the Knox Box Rapid Entry System for Improved Customer Service
York County, Virginia

Page 6



KNOX-BOX® vault

KeySecure® Master Key Retention System



Easy Over the Door Installation



Easy Access to the Owner/Occupants Key