

# 2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Prince William County

Program Title: Potomac Mills Holiday Initiative

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Tara Van Horn

Title: First Sergeant

Department: Prince William County Police Department

Complete Mailing Address: 1 County Complex, Woodbridge VA 22191

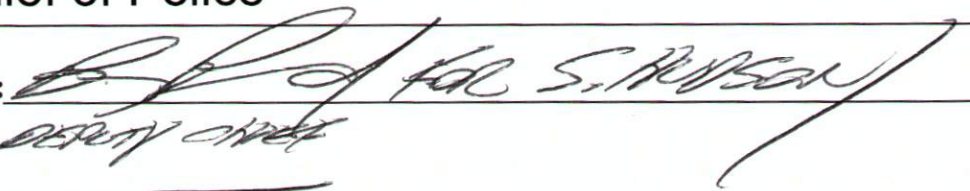
Telephone # 703-792-6615 Fax # 703-792-7056

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Stephan M. Hudson

Title: Chief of Police

Signature:   
Stephan M. Hudson

## **2015 VACO Achievement Award Nomination**

Sergeant Dave Moore, Officer Nick Waymire, Officer Mark Search and Officer Travis Steelman comprise the Police Department's Bicycle Team. They are assigned in a patrol capacity and supplement those officers working the street given their unique abilities. These four officers are tasked with riding their bikes and being visible 365 days a year in areas most needed. They are extremely mobile and can get into areas patrol vehicles cannot and often without being detected.

Throughout November and December of last year, the Department utilized this team in a different and challenging capacity. Potomac Mills Mall hosted nearly 1.8 million shoppers this past holiday season. This is an astronomical number of people frequenting that or any facility for that matter. This number of people is a huge safety concern given all that could happen. This increase in Mall traffic was also going to bring an increase in crime and added burden to patrol officers. These four bike officers were redirected from their regular patrol duty to exclusively work the Mall in order to provide 7 day coverage during this peak time. These officers provided security, visibility, safety and relief to other patrol units who could be utilized elsewhere.

These officers were presented with the challenge of switching their normal duties and schedules to assist in the Mall through the holiday season. This was a task they had never been assigned or were familiar with. These four officers enthusiastically accepted the challenge and understood the "bigger picture." They were intent on making the holiday shopping season a successful and safe one. These four officers proactively sought out specific training regarding retail theft and trends. They held meetings with Mall staff to coordinate efforts and communication. They introduced themselves to every merchant and educated them about their mission. They provided their cell phone numbers so merchants could call them directly with any questions and/or concerns. They interacted with shoppers and remained visible to create a safe and comfortable environment for all customers. And lastly, they were readily available and on-hand to quickly handle anything that arose. These officers were exemplary in their actions and went above and beyond what was expected.

During the two months (Nov-Dec) these officers were reassigned to the Mall, they were responsible for the following. In 56 days, these officers handled nearly 170 calls, wrote nearly 80 reports, made over 100 arrests and recovered more than \$40,000 in stolen property. Additionally, they acted on almost 100 tips and educated all merchants on crime prevention strategies. Their presence enabled other patrol officers to be utilized elsewhere creating more resources. Most importantly, these four officers were successful in making Potomac Mills Mall a safe environment through the 2014 holiday season. Their cooperation with each other, Mall security, Mall management and Mall merchants demonstrated ingenuity and outstanding performance.