

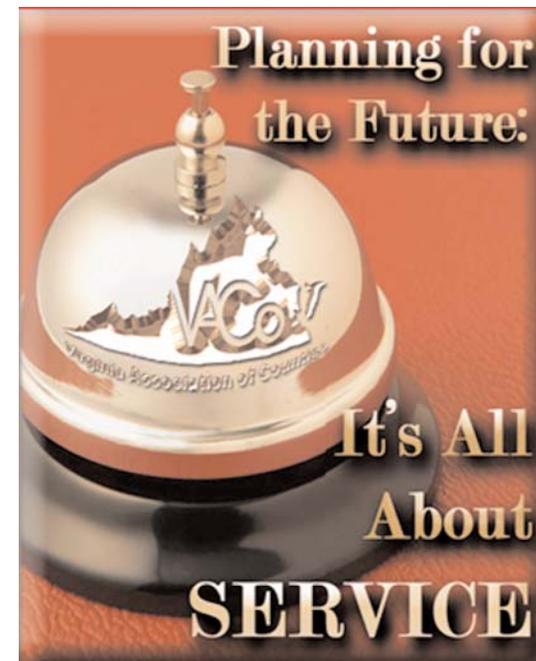
2011

Achievement Awards

Recognizing the best in county government programs

VACo
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The Virginia Association of Counties exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.



2011 Achievement Awards

Best Achievement Award

For the second time in the program's nine-year history, a "Best Achievement" designation was given to a submission. This year, Isle of Wight County earned the distinction.

Here's what judge Tedd Povar had to say about Isle of Wight County's entry titled "Performance Improvement Teams-Employee Driven Long-Term Planning."

"In this time of economic uncertainty, it's admirable that a county would develop a program that helps its citizens manage their finances," Povar said. "Isle of Wight's program gives its citizens flexibility in paying their taxes while helping the county improve its cash flow timing, reducing its tax billing and collections costs and generating a significant amount of goodwill. This is the epitome of customer service."

Congratulations to Isle of Wight County for an excellent program that can be replicated throughout the state.

VACo looks forward to announcing the 2012 "Best Achievement" winner.

2011 Achievement Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Virginia Association of Counties' 2011 Achievement Awards!

VACo received 33 entries in the association's ninth annual statewide competition honoring county programs. Twelve entries were selected to receive an award. Isle of Wight County's submission was chosen as "Best Achievement."

An independent panel of judges with expertise in county programs and challenges had the monumental task of reviewing the entries, all of which exemplify that Virginia counties strive to provide their citizens with innovative, cost-efficient and environmentally-friendly services.

Tedd Povar, associate director of the Virginia Institute of Government; Barbara Rose, former Hanover County deputy county attorney; and Pete Stith, former Chesterfield County deputy county administrator for community development, served as judges for this year's statewide awards program. VACo would like to thank them for their time, dedication and enthusiasm.

The difficult selection of winning programs was based on innovation and collaboration, as well as the potential for the program to provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement. This brochure highlights the award-winning programs and can be used as a resource. You may find that your county is facing a similar problem or situation.

Also visit www.vaco.org/AchievementAwards.html and click on 2011 entries to view all the submissions from this year.

Award recipients are recognized at VACo's Annual Conference after the General Session on Tuesday, Nov. 15. Look for the 2012 awards application in late spring. All counties are encouraged to participate!

2011 Achievement Awards

Notes

Botetourt County Parks & Recreation

Upper James River Water Trail

The mighty James River finds its source at the confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers in Botetourt County. These headwaters commonly known as the Upper James River have played an important role in the economies of the communities along the river. Today, the river is a recreational corridor used for fishing, canoeing, kayaking and water viewing along its 45-mile stretch in Botetourt.

In order to capitalize on the many assets of the Upper James, the Botetourt County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department developed a strategic analysis to use as a tool to improve, enhance, and preserve the environmental, historic, and recreational opportunities on the river for future generations to enjoy.

The goal is to create a water-based trail system that will link the different assets found on the river to form the Upper James Water Trail. A "Water Trail" is a small boat and/or paddling route (or series of routes) along a waterway that combines recreation and environmental awareness while linking communities and land-based attractions such as recreational trails, historic sites, and parks.

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

Chesterfield County

Health/Human Services

Build-A-House

The Build-A-House Project is a cooperative project through which students at the Chesterfield Technical Center construct homes on vacant County-owned land with Chesterfield Alternatives, Inc. funding the construction expense and the homes ultimately being used by Chesterfield County Community Services Board to provide affordable and accessible housing to county citizens with disabilities.

The purpose of the program is to provide real work experience for Chesterfield County Public School's Technical Center students. It also provides long-term permanent accessibility for individuals with disabilities at below fair market rent.

The first house was completed in 2010 with over 300 Chesterfield County students perfecting their skills in drywall, electricity, plumbing, woodwork, HVAC, carpentry and landscaping contributing to the completion of the four-bedroom, 2,300-square foot single family home. It is now home to three individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

Chesterfield County

*Community/Economic
Development*

My Business Starts Here

Starting and growing a business in Chesterfield County just got easier! With the launch of "My Business Starts Here," Chesterfield Economic Development (CED) and the Chesterfield County Public Library (CCPL) have partnered to offer residents seamless service and resources for their small business needs.

This initiative creates a multipronged approach to getting residents the small-business information they need. Chesterfield County appreciates the contributions of small businesses to the local economy and works to provide programs and services that support their growth and success.

"My Business Starts Here" truly brands Chesterfield County as "your place for entrepreneurship and business solutions."

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

York County

*Criminal Justice/
Public Safety*

Automatic External Defibrillators in the Parks

York County is proud to offer the community several park facilities with playing fields, including a new Sports Complex with lighted baseball fields, soccer fields and playground equipment covering many acres of land. Injuries during sporting events are fairly common occurrences and, in 2007, a volunteer coach experienced a cardiac arrest at one of our sports fields. The need for access to Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) in county parks became apparent because of this incident and the potential for future injuries/health concerns.

The county applied for and received grant funds from the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation to equip park facilities with an AED housed within a cabinet or free-standing pedestal that is connected directly to the Emergency Communications Center (911). The installation of these life-saving devices has already proven successful when a child received a laceration that required medical care.

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

Washington County Regional Collaboration

MERG: Mountain Empire Regional Geographic Information System

MERG is a collaborative regional project involving five counties and one city: Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Washington and the City of Bristol.

The MERG project has created a secure and accessible regional data repository, which includes data, web mapping and map services. It streamlines the process for data sharing among localities and the state through development of a regional GIS data replication system in near real-time.

It significantly improves public safety in a large region of the state, and is the largest regional geographic data repository project in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

Hanover County Environmental

Organic Waste Diversion

Nationally, the yard waste portion of an organic waste stream comprises 13-15 percent of the total. Hanover County developed a policy of aggressively recycling this significant portion of its tonnages.

Five distinct areas of emphasis were identified for inclusion in the organic waste diversion program. Leaves, grass and wood waste were the waste materials determined to have the greatest value upon recycling.

Product generation and marketing of the product are critical to the success of any similar program. The five components that comprise the Hanover County initiative are presented in detail within their submission. Also, citizen acceptance and participation are an essential part of this comprehensive undertaking.

Finally, having the governmental flexibility to deal with rapid market changes must be part of any program. Hanover County's Organic Waste Diversion Program turned a large segment of the waste stream into a valuable end product.

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

Isle of Wight County Customer Service
BEST ACHIEVEMENT

Isle Pre-Pay

Through the Isle Pre-pay Program, the County has addressed and alleviated some of its Dec. 5 tax collection burden without the cost of increasing its tax assessments to a bi-annual process.

Rather than face the full payment amount in December, Isle Pre-pay encourages tax payers to make prepayments of their taxes in installments through the use of a payment coupon book. Isle of Wight is at the forefront of tax prepayment promotion in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is the first to utilize payment coupon booklets. In addition to the benefits of the Program enjoyed by taxpayers, Isle Pre-pay has enhanced the County's cash flow timing, reduced its tax billing and collection costs, generated a significant amount of goodwill, and has created an additional revenue source for the County.

Isle Pre-pay has increased the County's cash flow timing during the year by over \$4.3 million dollars and personal property tax delinquency rates have decreased six percent (6 percent).

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

Roanoke County Communications

Crisis Management and Communication: Critical Steps Localities Need to Take During and In Advance of an Emergency

On December 6, 2010, Tina Smith was found murdered in her home. Realizing Smith's 12-year-old daughter Brittany was missing, police issued an Amber Alert fearing she was abducted after the attack by her mother's boyfriend, Jeff Easley.

To find Brittany, Roanoke County Public Information staff managed a communications plan that kept the search in the national news.

The plan included message development, media relations, news releases, press conferences, and social media.

Five days later a woman who saw the story on CNN recognized Brittany panhandling in California.

Brittany returned home to Virginia and Easley is in jail awaiting trial.

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2011 Achievement Awards

Prince William County Criminal Justice/
Public Safety

Air Track Management/Advanced Fire Behavior

The Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue has introduced a fire behavior training program 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.

Contact Information

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2011 Achievement Awards

James City County, York County and
City of Williamsburg Customer Service

Outstanding Customer Service for Prospective Employees

While local governments recognize the importance of providing outstanding service for both citizens and their own employees, an equally vital customer, yet often overlooked, is the job applicant or prospective employee.

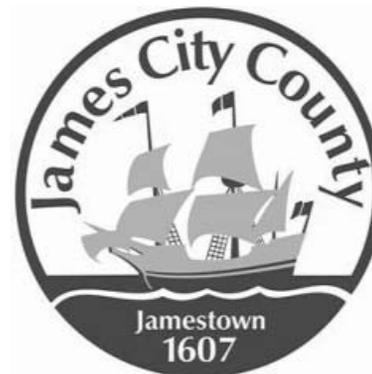
Given the widespread challenge of attracting a highly qualified workforce, providing outstanding customer service for prospective employees is imperative, especially as we emerge from these difficult economic conditions.

"Providing Outstanding Customer Service for Prospective Employees" is noteworthy for both its achievements and how they were accomplished.

As a result, James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and York County, along with its partners, are now able to provide outstanding customer service to prospective employees in an appealing way that is efficient and effective, with easy access to resources that will aid them in deciding to live, enjoy and work in this area.

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2011 Achievement Awards

Louisa County

Health/Human Services

Louisa County Parks and Recreation VIEW Partnership

Since December 2008, the Louisa County Department of Social Services has collaborated with the Parks and Recreation Department to create work activities for participants in the Virginia's Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) program.

One goal of the VIEW program is to encourage partnerships between public, nonprofit and faith-based organizations to end individual's dependence on public assistance by moving participants from a structured job search to paid employment.

VIEW participants assist with the management and maintenance these properties by performing various grounds keeping and landscaping duties. By working with the department, VIEW participants learn the importance of basic work principles such as attendance and punctuality, gained a sense of self-worth by working daily and are able to take pride in beautifying their community.

The savings realized through the partnership is twofold. The Department of Social Services actualized a reduction of participants' TANF benefits, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits, transportation assistance and Medicaid.

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2011 Achievement Awards

Prince George County

Criminal Justice/
Public Safety

'iGotcha' Anonymous Tip Text

The Hopewell/Prince George Crime Solvers program is located in South Central Virginia. This organization serves the city of Hopewell and the county of Prince George with a combined population of 59,123. This program assists with operating a system in which citizens can anonymously report information related to criminal activity. This program works in conjunction with the law enforcement agencies for both jurisdictions.

A need for this text-a-tip service was identified as an avenue to reach the younger generation of each locality by utilizing the capabilities of cellular phone technology. This target group was identified as a viable means of obtaining information in reference to criminal activity. The use of this system would provide an alternate means of obtaining information as opposed to the existing tip line, which uses a conventional telephone line. This text-a-tip service originated as an idea by the members of the Hopewell/Prince George Crime Solvers in conjunction with the Prince George County and Hopewell Police Departments in January of 2011.

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