PRESS RELEASE

VACo 2012 Achievement Award Program Descriptions

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Augusta County (on behalf of six counties)—Regional Collaboration
"Fields of Gold Agritourism"

Fields of Gold is a collaborative regional project to promote agritourism, involving six counties and five cities in the Shenandoah Valley: Counties of **Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, Rockingham** and **Shenandoah** and the Cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton and Waynesboro.

The Fields of Gold program brought together local government officials and agritourism representatives from localities across the region to work together on a comprehensive marketing, tracking and capacity building initiative, leveraging resources of the various partners to benefit agriculture, a vital economic asset in the Shenandoah Valley.

Chesterfield County—Customer Service
"Enhancing Customer Knowledge of eReaders and Digital Collections"

eReaders are steadily rising in popularity with American consumers—currently almost a third of adults in the United States own either an eReader or a tablet computer. Chesterfield County Public Library's (CCPL) eBook and audiobook lending service, the Downloadable Digital Library, makes free eBooks available to library customers, and highlights the need for knowledgeable librarians.

With new devices and formats constantly coming available, customers new to eBooks are faced with a sea of information and a need for expert help. Library staff has developed innovative workshops, handouts and other creative vehicles for helping eBook customers learn to use their devices and the library's lending system. Librarians are teaching customers how to take full advantage of their devices, thereby offering the economical reading material and 24/7 access that makes eReaders so convenient.

This free, personalized education and assistance provided by our librarians is a service that is unavailable anywhere else in Chesterfield County— indeed, perhaps nowhere else, period. Through workshops and other methods, librarians at CCPL demonstrated responsiveness to community and customer needs by giving customers the knowledge they need to take advantage of their portable devices and CCPL's Downloadable Digital Library.

Through staff training, continuing feedback and personalized help, CCPL has created a full-spectrum program that serves as a model for comprehensive customer assistance.

Dinwiddie County—Parks and Recreation
"Dinwiddie Sports Complex"

On a cool Friday night in May, in Dinwiddie County you can easily find 1,200 citizens in one place: The Dinwiddie Sports Complex. This would not have been the case a little over four years ago, as

the Dinwiddie Sports Complex was just a rendering on a piece of paper. The residents in Dinwiddie County needed a facility that could accommodate the needs of the growing number of youth recreational programs in the county that included softball, baseball, soccer and football.

Dinwiddie Parks and Recreation, along with help provided by the county's maintenance department, Southside Virginia Community College, the Dinwiddie County Industrial Development Authority, the Titmus Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce and many other local county businesses, they were able to turn this rendering into a 36 acre sports mecca.

The complex currently houses all the local softball associations practices and games, many of the local baseball associations practices, the county's recreation youth football and cheerleading programs, the county's recreation youth soccer programs and many local travel baseball and softball team practices. Along with these user groups, the local middle school held all of its baseball and softball home games at the complex in the spring of 2012.

In the first two months of the complex's first spring season (March and April 2012), over 11,800 residents have visited the complex and over 300 teams have practiced or played at the complex. These numbers are only expected to grow over the next few months and into the future.

Along with the positive response from the residents of the county, the complex has also helped in one other area: job creation. This includes a Park Services Manager and a Concessions Manager. The Dinwiddie Sports Complex has only been operational since June of 2011 and in a short time has already left its mark on the county. Softball and baseball tournaments, becoming a host site for major soccer tournaments, as well as remaining the home venue for the local associations, the complex only looks to be heading the right direction and will continue to be a proud landmark in Dinwiddie County.

Fairfax County—Information Technology
"DIT Court Technology Model: Coordinated County and Courts"

The expansion of the Fairfax County Courthouse introduced the concept and the need to find more efficient and streamlined methods to support increasing public and judiciary demands during difficult economic conditions.

While the courthouse expansion successfully located three separate courts including Circuit Court & Records (CCR), the General District Court (GDC), and the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC), and affiliated offices (e.g., court services, Sheriff, Law Library, etc.) into a single facility, there was concern that multiple and independent court business units would introduce an uncoordinated and more costly process of implementing court technology systems that would hinder the ability to standardize and streamline the implementation of new court technologies.

Fairfax County judicial, legislative and executive management recognized the new courthouse facility introduced unique challenges prompting the need to resolve how to best integrate modern technologies into Fairfax County court and courtroom processes and operations in an effective and seamless manner, while meeting the ongoing budgetary and operational challenges. Thus, the Courtroom Technology Office (CrTO) was created in partnership between the three Fairfax County Courts along with other supporting county and state agencies.

The executive and strategic solution created a unique business model introducing a hybrid organizational structure. The centralized CrTO collaborates with existing court staff within a matrix team environment which facilitates staff sharing and creates resource opportunities necessary to research, develop and implement the best technology solutions to benefit the county and all three courts. This hybrid structure also recognized the need for certain court IT functions to remain independent and autonomous.

While the CrTO began as a courtroom only support function, management found the successful business model supported technology needs beyond the courtroom to include court-wide initiatives. The CrTO soon became an integral component of the Fairfax County Courthouse producing court-wide technology solutions including scanning & imaging projects, docket displays, digital recording, wireless applications and data center management.

The CrTO fully understands the unique requirements of the courts and strategically aligns all projects to the originating principles and objectives: To improve citizens' access to the courts, facilitate trials and hearings in the most effective and efficient means possible, allow for all three Courts to share common resources and provide for flexibility and adaptability to incorporate future changes in technology and court proceedings.

Franklin County—Communications
"Transparency for a Citizen's Dollar"

The County of Franklin identified an opportunity for its citizens to become a crucial part of the budget process by providing them with a free interactive budget website. This website empowered every interested citizen with the very same documents and data that the Board of Supervisors would use during the budget process.

Most importantly, the Board of Supervisors were directly enlightened of citizen values and concerns through the feedback option included on the site.

The feedback received through this portal as well as the linked social media outlets, proved to be beneficial in determining the County's final fiscal year budget.

Greensville County—Community/Economic Development
"Southside Virginia Education Center"

The Southside Virginia Education Center is located in Greensville County. The facility, currently a 28,000 square foot facility, enhances the economic future of Southside Virginia by improving the region's delivery of adult education and workforce training programs thereby correcting substantial workforce obstacles in our community. This modern, high technological facility gives all adult educational providers an opportunity to assist more citizens and further develop their programs.

In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported only 62 percent of Greensville County residents age 25 and older have obtained a high school diploma, compared to 82 percent statewide. GED classes were spread throughout the community in borrowed spaces. There was an evident lack of appropriate and sufficient classroom space to provide technical education in the community. The facility local Southside Virginia Community College classes had a maximum capacity at anyone time of 152 students. As a result of the insufficient classroom space the course offerings of particular interest to existing industries were lacking.

A management team was formed to review the unfavorable demographics and current workforce training programs. The management team consisted of representatives from the local industries, existing educators, workforce program providers, local government, unemployed, underemployed and the VEC. The management group decided to construct a place - The Southside Virginia Education Center - in which to house all workforce development programs.

The Southside Virginia Education Center opened its doors in August 2008. Since that time enrollment in workforce training education has more than tripled. The public focus on educational attainment and the construction of the Southside Virginia Education Center has already had a positive effect on the population. The 2010 Census shows a 7 percent rise in the number of residents 25 years or older who have obtained a high school degree or equivalent.

SVEC was constructed with funding from the Virginia Tobacco Commission, The Department of Housing and Community Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other local and federal grant funds. Annual operational costs are supported by Greensville County and the City of Emporia.

Hanover County—Criminal Justice/Public Safety
"Motorist Assistance Program"

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office is the principal provider of law enforcement services for the county and operates under the leadership of Colonel David R. Hines, Sheriff.

The county has a total area of 472 square miles, a population of just over 100,000, and 1,016 highways and roads. Interstates 95 and 295 are heavily traveled thoroughfares that cross through the center of the county.

With an increase in population, housing, business, industry and especially, traffic, the Sheriff's Office conducted research in developing a way for citizens to volunteer their time to supplement uniform patrol functions. Upon completion of the research in 2010, the Sheriff's Office developed the Motorists Assistance Program.

To be eligible for the Motorists Assistance Program, one must attend and successfully graduate from the Citizens' Police Academy (CPA). After completion of the CPA, students complete an additional 24 hours of training, which is specially designed for the program.

Responsibilities of the Motorists Assistance Program include, but are not limited to, assisting disabled motorists, assisting with traffic direction and control, observing and reporting roadway hazards and helping relocate Sheriff's Office decoy vehicles. The volunteers patrol the county in Ford Explorers that are marked with decals and have amber-colored emergency lights.

The eventual goal is to have enough volunteers that both Motorists Assistance vehicles will be operational seven days a week.

Henrico County—Community/Economic Development
"Historic County Data Book"

The Historical County Data Book is an innovative, cumulative collection of historical data presenting statistics from as far back as 1610 for Virginia and 1790 for Henrico through present day. This data shows how and when Henrico County developed. This is a first-ever compilation of historical Henrico County data brought together in one location. County departments and State agencies contributed historical information, which evolved into an arrangement of eight categorical sections consisting of 48 tables of meaningful facts that include footnotes and references.

The Data Book is available on the main county website for easy accessibility by county residents and the general public, with annual updates each calendar year. Since being published online, the Historical County Data Book has achieved worldwide viewing status on multiple forms of electronic devices that will grow as technology advances. The Data Book was created through a request from the 2011 Commemoration Advisory Commission, due to the county's upcoming 400th anniversary in 2011, which sought to collect historical information back to 1611 when Henrico was originally settled.

Since 1634, 10 counties and three cities were formed out of the original Henrico Shire, now Henrico County. The historical facts and figures about Henrico County that have been kept in separate databases, old reports and files have been dusted off and transformed into meaningful tables of information. The Historical County Data Book will be a legacy known for its informative and educational content for many years to come and a distinguished model for other localities to follow who wish to publish their historical information.

James City County—Information Technology
"Comprehensive Plan Implementation Tracking Tool"

James City County completed an update to its comprehensive plan, *Historic Past, Sustainable Future*, in November 2009. The plan examines ten topical areas and embodies the guidance of citizens, businesses, officials, boards and committees and County staff. The end of each topical area presents a list of adopted goals, strategies and actions (GSAs), which provide a mechanism for turning the written guidance of the plan into tangible steps that can affect positive change in the County.

The GSAs include 20 different agencies that are responsible for reporting progress, and many GSAs have primary and secondary responsible agencies. After plan approval, the daunting task of coordinating and tracking the implementation of the nine goals, 57 strategies and 435 actions and reporting progress on those GSAs to the public fell to the Planning Division.

To streamline and improve the transparency of progress reporting, staff developed an innovative web-based Implementation Tracking Tool that allows updaters to sort the GSAs by responsible agency so that they instantly see only the GSAs that they need to update and implement. Updating is handled electronically with updaters entering their information directly to the site so Planning staff does not have to manually enter data.

The site also archives all previous entries so that progress on a specific GSA can be tracked over time. Individuals can export data to an Excel spreadsheet or print pre-packaged reports to view status updates and to determine which GSAs are complete and which need to be included in future department work programs. The Implementation Tracking Tool has been used successfully for two GSA progress reports and Planning Commission Annual Reports since its launch in 2011.

Louisa County—Parks and Recreation
"Teen Quest Special Program"

When the earthquake hit Louisa County on August 23, 2011 it damaged the only high school in the county so badly that it was deemed unusable. Rather than cancel school for the year, county officials decided to use the county's one middle school for both middle school and high school, alternating the days of the week students attended school.

To address parents concern about supervision for their middle school students on the days they were not in school, and also to give teachers the working hours needed to fulfill their contracts, the parks and recreation department partnered with the county schools to create the Teen Quest Special program.

The middle school students would come to the Betty Queen Center, a Parks and Recreation facility with a gym, cafeteria and multiple classrooms on days that the high school was in session for a

variety of supervised activities that included physical activity, study time, computer and game time and free time.

The school system provided teachers for supervision, transportation to the program and free breakfast and lunch for all participants.

The program was up and running within three weeks of the disaster, and continued for approximately five months, until the new mobile high school was established. The program helped to establish a much more cooperative relationship between the school system and parks and recreation department, inspired a good use of resources (including federal grants) and gave the County the opportunity to provided needed services to the community during a very disruptive time for many of our residents.

Roanoke County—Criminal Justice/Public Safety
"Public Safety on the Appalachian Trail"

Over the last five years, Roanoke County Fire & Rescue witnessed a dramatic increase in rescue calls for lost or injured hikers on or near the Roanoke County portion of the Appalachian Trail (AT). Most of these rescues were for minor injuries and lost hikers that were day-hikers and ill prepared. It was not uncommon for day- hikers to have little or no water, inappropriate clothes, no flashlight and not physically fit to do a strenuous hike.

To effectively manage these types of rescues the Fire & Rescue Department realized that additional training needed to be completed to help mitigate these types of incidents, and moreover to ensure the safety of Fire & Rescue Department personnel responding. During this training, it was realized that a vast majority of hikers becoming lost stated that there were very few signs or trail markings to keep them on the correct path.

A public-private partnership was developed with all the stakeholders to identify solutions to the problem of people becoming lost or injured. The group consisted of Roanoke County Fire & Rescue representing local government, the ATC representing the U.S. Park Police and U.S. Park Service, USFS and RATC. This group moved the meetings from the office to the trail with two stakeholder hikes to actually identify where lost hikers and injuries occurred through detailed GIS mapping. During the hikes the representatives of each group developed strategies on what type of signage would work best, where additional information kiosks should be placed and improvement of public documents of the trail such as brochures and maps.

This Appalachian Trail Partnership took over three years and required multiple organizations that had very different missions to work together for a common goal. The outcome has been a tremendous success in reducing the responses to lost or injured hikers but more importantly has made hiking in Roanoke County a more enjoyable and safer destination for all citizens who want to experience some of Virginia's most breath taking natural venues.

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