

2009

Achievement Awards

Recognizing the best in county government programs.

VACo
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Embracing Change: New Partnerships for Sustainable Communities

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.

2009 Achievement Awards

York County Environmental

Wetlands Interpretive Sanctuary for Education

Faced with the problems of replacing a wetlands area along Hampton Highway and a drainage issue in the local community of Lackey, the county investigated whether it could solve both issues by creating a wetlands area downstream from the drainage problem and adjacent to Charles Brown Park.

The result was a project that provided environmental advantages, including stream restoration, wetlands creation and drainage improvements.

The program promoted and required intergovernmental cooperation in order to address the situation.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the Virginia Association of Counties' 2009 Achievement Awards!

VACo received 72 entries in the association's seventh annual statewide competition honoring county programs. Fifteen entries were selected to receive an award.

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.

The Honorable Kate Hanley, Secretary of the Commonwealth; Tedd Povar, Associate Director of the Virginia Institute of Government; and Elmer Hodge, former Roanoke County Administrator, 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.

Award recipients will be recognized at VACo's Annual Conference after the General Session on Tuesday, Nov. 10. A display featuring the Achievement Award submissions will be available during the conference.

Look for the 2010 awards application in late spring. All counties are encouraged to participate!

2009 Achievement Awards

Carroll County

Regional Collaboration

Economic Milestone

The Blue Ridge Crossroads region has been hit hard by major job losses during the past five years. However, a new entrepreneurial approach to economic development has successfully filled much of the void by providing business counseling, assistance and enhancing growth for citizens in Carroll County.

Under the direction of Dr. Dallas Garrett, SBDC Director, and Bernie Deck, Carroll County's Business Development program has assisted with the creation of 428 new jobs through Entrepreneurial Business Development. The new capital investment of more than \$17 million has given new hope and prosperity to the community. The program has been expanded to Grayson County and the City of Galax.

The program expects to assist an additional 200 individuals in starting their own business over the next two years. Carroll County was named by the 2004 Virginia General Assembly as part of the Entrepreneurial Region of Virginia.

Contact Information

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2009 Achievement Awards

Rockbridge County

Human Services

Rockbridge Area Prevention Coalition

The coalition was reorganized in 2007 under new leadership and has been instrumental in changing the face of drug prevention in Rockbridge and the surrounding area.

The coalition's mission is to reduce substance abuse among youth in the area by increasing community awareness and by promoting a comprehensive network of prevention and intervention services and resources.

The coalition currently has 124 members from nearly 40 local agencies and organizations including local government, law enforcement, schools, media, parents, youth, civic groups, local businesses, public health and treatment providers.

By bringing together local leaders to focus on local problems, the coalition is creating lasting changes in the community.

Contact Information

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2009 Achievement Awards

Roanoke County

Information
Technology

Innovation Without Funding

The county has always prided itself on using technology to improve services and communication with citizens.

Unfortunately, during difficult economic times, innovation often suffers and is replaced with a “maintenance mode” that curtails all but the essential technology spending.

In the fall of 2008, Roanoke County explored inexpensive alternative methods of continual service improvement. After extensive research, the county saw a pattern emerging in the form of using the tools and concepts of Web 2.0 to improve citizen communication.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Chesterfield County

Criminal Justice/
Public Safety

Emergency Worker and Dependant Shelter (EWADS)

In an emergency, police, fire and EMS are typically the first to arrive and assist. However, there has been a historical pattern of emergency workers not reporting for duty following a natural disaster due to concern for their own family’s safety. Such examples include Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and Hurricane Hugo in Charleston, S.C.

To prevent this from happening, Chesterfield County established EWADS, to take care of and to support its most valuable resource--the employees--so they can perform their emergency duties and not worry about their family’s safety.

A major component of the program is the creation, management and staffing of an employee shelter, which is specifically designed to support employees and run separately from traditional citizen shelters.

Contact Information

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2009 Achievement Awards

Fairfax County

*Organizational
Development*

The ART Conference

Fairfax County has a government employee population base of around 14,000. More than 10 percent are administrative assistants. To put a spit-shine on Administrative Professionals Week, the Administrative Resource Team (ART) Conference provides development training to the largest segment of the county's employee population. The conference is held in the county's government center and is free to participants.

The program's success can be measured by its popularity. The conference registration is generally closed after 48 hours of its announcement because of full capacity.

The ART Conference is a proven program that effectively enhances the professional development and morale of the county's largest employee class who might easily be taken for granted.

Contact Information

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2009 Achievement Awards

Prince William County

*Public Affairs/
Communications*

Virtual Public Hearing

Prince William County citizens have hectic daily schedules that include some of the longest commuting times in the nation.

This daily mix of work and personal obligations does not easily allow for citizens to participate in county planning through public hearings.

The solution was to create a "Virtual Public Hearing" by making critical information on the county's planning and development process available online.

The program allows citizens to learn about and to participate in the process as their time and schedule permits.

Contact Information

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2009 Achievement Awards

Prince William County Community/
Economic Development

Home Help Program

The Home Help Program was successful in helping to bolster a flagging real estate market and simultaneously provide employees housing incentives at no cost to the taxpayer. The program enables Prince William County employees renting or living in other jurisdictions to purchase a home in the county while reducing the volume of vacant, foreclosed and for sale properties.

It is a public-private partnership made possible, in part, by investing a portion of the county's investment portfolio in collateralized certificates of deposits with SunTrust Bank. As part of the program, SunTrust provides benefits to county employees that include credits that can be used for interest rate reductions and/or closing costs for \$50 million in mortgage loans per year. The remarkable part of this effort is that it attacks two problems and does so with a zero budget impact.

Contact Information

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2009 Achievement Awards

Fairfax County Criminal Justice/
Public Safety

Road DAWG

The Road DAWG (Don't Associate with Gangs) camps show how a small program can make a big difference. Diverging from the commonly accepted practice of approaching gang prevention solely as a law enforcement issue, this innovative program invests in the prevention and intervention to reach youths before they are drawn into the gang lifestyle.

Road DAWG camps deter gang recruitment of younger children by providing tools to strengthen their resilience, develop positive decision-making skills and encourage leadership characteristics to buffer against the potential lure of gangs.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Gloucester County

*Health/Human
Services*

Full Service School Project

The Full Serve School Project is an innovative and collaborative partnership approach addressing the needs of children and families in an elementary school setting.

It provides for a team of human service professionals to work collaboratively with school personnel to identify needs, recommend services and resources, and to make referrals to serve youth and families.

Parents and families are offered access to resources and educational opportunities to facilitate positive and productive growth and development, as well as academic success.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Loudoun County

Customer Service

Real Estate Assessment Review Online Application

The Loudoun County Office of the County Assessor developed and implemented this innovative program to streamline the assessment review process for staff members, other departments and the public.

The overall administration of the Assessor's Office has been significantly improved by the program because it allows an application to be filed online and the staff is able to immediately access the information and review it in a timely manner.

Citizens with an Internet connection can now submit an application quickly with little or no cost.

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2009 Achievement Awards

James City County

Information
Technology

Neighborhoods Organizing Ways to Achieve Connections

Neighborhoods Organizing Ways to Achieve Connections is a Web 2.0 online database that provides public access to neighborhood information and events registrations.

It is a partnership of Neighborhood Connections (NC) and James City County Information Technology division.

This innovative database has greatly reduced duplication of manual tasks, while offering citizens and county staff and officials access to information when they need it.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Hanover County

Environmental

Citizen-Driven Curbside Recycling Program

Despite the elimination of a small pilot curbside recycling program five years ago, the public desire for such a service continued to grow. County staff members developed a program that established special tax districts or "Curbside Recycling Service Districts." The plan was modeled after an existing program that created water and sewer service districts.

If a subdivision contacts the county expressing interest in starting a program, a notice is sent to all residents in the subdivision announcing a meeting. Subdivision representatives then start a petition drive to achieve 80 percent sign-up. If the petition number is reached, it is presented to the Board of Supervisors. The Board votes to establish a tax district for the service. If approved, all residents in the subdivision are charged for providing the service. About 1,100 homes have joined the program effective July 1, 2009. Another 1,700 have been approved for fiscal year 2010.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Henrico County

Environmental

Electronic Waste Recycling

Early efforts of this program were expensive and lightly attended, which increased the cost per participant. Henrico County focused on the cost side with Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA) by a procurement that allowed the host jurisdiction to pay the staging fee for the event while the customer paid a nominal fee to recycle the most expensive things--items containing cathode ray tubes.

Henrico partnered with Ukrop's Supermarkets, which further assisted through their marketing resources and by providing gift cards to use as door prizes for attendees.

Since the program began with Ukrop's in 2007, attendance is up 400 percent and the cost per attendee and per pound recycled has declined. More than 200,000 pounds of used electronics have been recycled.

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2009 Achievement Awards

Henrico County

Regional Collaboration

Regional Supplier Conference

A basic challenge of local governments is finding and educating qualified diverse suppliers.

In response to this challenge, the Division of Purchasing and Support Services designed a regional supplier conference, Henrico County Connections--a SWAM Initiative that provided an opportunity for SWAM suppliers to come and meet the buyers from various departments in the county and to learn about doing business with the county.

The immediate and enthusiastic response from suppliers to the conference suggested the need to expand this approach to include surrounding jurisdictions and some business resources.

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