

Champion Awards

Locality: City of Falls Church

Category: Public Safety

Recognizing: Lt. Ed Lancaster,
City of Falls Church Police Department

Lt. Lancaster worked overtime without extra pay to build protective barriers and a sanitizing station in the police parking garage. As the police department's Safety Officer, he has instituted a weekly "Text Check" on all employees. Every Sunday since March, Lt. Lancaster brings the day shift lunch and the night shift dinner which he pays for himself. On top of these and numerous other acts of kindness, Lt. Lancaster has continued to do a fantastic job as the Threats Assessment Officer.

Locality: City of Falls Church

Category: Communication

Recognizing: City's Public Information Office

During the COVID-19 pandemic the two employees of the Public Information Office worked tirelessly to ensure the health of safety of the community at large. These employees went above and beyond to develop a foundation for the community that is reliable, expedient, and easy to use. New methods developed include establishing a central source for information located on the website homepage to show graphs and information from the Governor, increased professional connections with the Fairfax Health Department, newsletters, meetings, and live streams.

Locality: City of Falls Church

Category: Business and Economic Stability

Recognizing: City of Falls Church Economic
Development Office

Working virtually, the three staff members of the Economic Development Office continued to work hard on many projects including creating liaisons with local businesses, working with police to improve safety, working closely city council, promoting businesses, and keeping streetlights on to honor emergency workers. Using allocated funding, the staff created emergency grants, produced "Grab and Go" banners for the city, increased the part time staff, added hand sanitizer stations, and a developed a series of messaging tactics.

Locality: City of Falls Church

Category: Continuity of Operations

Recognizing: COVID-19 Planning Team

The COVID-19 Planning Team consists of various departments such as human resources, housing and human services, parks and recreation, library, IT staff, and OEM.

Each department brought a unique aspect to the team to help keep the community happy, safe, and happy. Human resources focused on creating a better sick leave program. Housing and human services protected PPE and payments. Parks and recreation opened summer camps. The library became a city-wide resource for everyone. IT staff became the new essential workers as the entire city went virtual. Lastly, OEM provided structure and organization.



Locality: City of Fredericksburg

Category: Education and Youth Initiatives

Recognizing: Jennifer Casarotti

On March 16 when schools shut down, Parks and Recreation knew that the kids needed a way to stay entertained while staying home safe. So, Jenny Casarotti created "Camp@Home" – a program for K-5 children focused on art, nature, STEM, crafts, and physical activity. 200 boxes with twenty-five different items in them were sent out with instructions, supplies, and a special t-shirt. Jenny hosted a remote

program five days a week going through the boxes and demonstrating how to make what was inside. With her "out of the box" thinking, Jenny helped to provide a unique experience for the community.

Locality: City of Fredericksburg

Category: Continuity of Operations

Recognizing: City's IT Department, Attorney, and
Clerk of Council

In response to health restrictions surrounding gatherings, the IT Department, Attorney, and Clerk of Council developed and implemented solutions to ensure that the City Council and others could meet remotely while aligning with the proper FOIA guidelines and the Records Retention Act, meet public comment protocols, allow reasonable authentication of participants, and offer a non-digital means of participation. All done while making it replicable for other boards. The safety and flexibility that this provides the organizations continues to be very significant.

Locality: City of Fredericksburg

Category: Economic and Business Stability

Recognizing: Fredericksburg Department of
Economic Development and Tourism

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has been responsive to the needs of the community amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been done through launching a new website, putting together a COVID resource page, running small grant and business programs, continued the weekly YouTube series "Freehling Finds," blog posts, revamped the visitor center, and designed a line of face coverings.

Locality: City of Fredericksburg

Category: Risk Management

Recognizing: Executive Leadership Team, Safety and
Risk Management, and Public Facilities

The City of Fredericksburg pulled together a team to identify and implement efforts to limit the risks of COVID-19. To follow CDC guidelines Public Facilities quickly implemented cleaning and sanitization of high touch surfaces throughout the day and provided hand sanitizing stations throughout the building. The City Manager closed all city buildings to the public and created a staggered work schedule. The Safety and Risk Managers toured all city buildings and developed assessments based on the work zones and how social distancing regulations had been implemented.

Locality: City of Fredericksburg

Category: Public Safety

Recognizing: Fredericksburg Fire Department

The operations of the Fredericksburg Fire Department have continued unaffected by the pandemic because of various department measures including things such as no outside work allowed, adjusting staffing, daily health screenings, and vehicle decontaminations. City wide emergency actions included the declaration of local emergency, recommendation of limiting technology use, and daily COVID briefings from the Fire Chief. The staff accepted all the challenges as necessary to run smooth during a challenging time.

Locality: City of Hampton

Category: Communication

Recognizing: City of Hampton Mayor, City Manager and Marketing and Outreach Department

The City of Hampton is known for its citizen engagement. However, as COVID hit, it became evident that there needed to be a dramatic shift to virtual channels. Mayor Donnie Tuck, City Manager Mary Buntin, and the Marketing Outreach team began to host frequent Facebook Live updates on COVID and city operations. The first Facebook Live video occurred on March 17 with 1,430 engagements. Live question and answers quickly became extremely popular with a panel of fire fighters, police officers, schools, council members, and the health department. Besides COVID updates this platform was used to conduct a series titled “Standing in Solidarity” to address racial justice, police bias, and inequality.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Category: Communication

Recognizing: Harrisonburg COVID-19 Rapid Response Team

The COVID-19 Rapid Response Team has distributed vital information to thousands of residents with messaging in various languages created for specific the communities. This included going door to door in neighborhoods with spikes, placing flyers in lunch bags, sending direct mailers, and providing interpreters at the Virginia Department of Health testing sites. Languages included Spanish, Arabic, Kurdish, Russian, Swahili, and French. Team members are Paul Helmuth, Michael Parks, Amy Snider, Jessica Newman, Welcoming Harrisonburg Council, Erin Stehle, Katie Caler, Brianna Petit, Charles Grubbs, Vice Mayor Sal Romero, Mayor Deanna Reed, Ande Banks, and Eric Campbell.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Category: Continuity of Operations

Recognizing: Harrisonburg City Manager’s Office

With municipal buildings closed, the city quickly implemented a new secure virtual meeting process to ensure public meetings continued in a safe and accessible manner. When it became obvious that communication between residents and city officials was vital, a call-in system with a caller que was implemented to continue to allow residents to speak during public hearings and public comment period.



A two-person team of city staff manned the phones to ensure the system ran smoothly. Staff members are Pam Ulmer, Amy Snider, Eric Campbell, Ande Banks, and Michael Parks.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Category: Economic and Business Stability

Recognizing: Harrisonburg Economic Development - Brian Shull and Peirce Macgill

Harrisonburg has a vibrant diverse business community- bolstered by the state’s first Culinary District. However, when COVID-19 hit Harrisonburg shops were forced to close and students were forced to go home destroying the thriving business community. To combat this devastation, the Disaster Loan Program went into effect with a zero-interest loan available for businesses. Harrisonburg also made the decision to forgive every dollar of loan funding to alleviate stress from the community.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Category: Public Safety

Recognizing: Harrisonburg Fire & Police Departments

When the City of Harrisonburg started experiencing a rise in COVID-19 cases, the Harrisonburg Fire and Police Departments jumped to action to connect with residents to make sure they had everything they needed. Both departments masked up and went door to door with care packages. Mayor Deanna Reed pushed a daily campaign asking for hand-made masks, one part of a series of efforts to support residents. Department members include Paul Helmuth, Travis Kari-cofe, Erin Stehle, Katie Caler, Brianna Petit, Mayor Deanna Reed, Charles Grubbs, Don Klotz, Mike Gangloff, and Michael Parks.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Category: Education and Youth Initiatives

Recognizing: Chief Eric English, Lt. Charles Grubbs, Don Klotz, Mike Gangloff, Erin Stehle, Eric Campbell

The Harrisonburg Police Department created a Community Convoy which goes through a different section of Harrisonburg every week blowing horns, blaring sirens, and waving to the happy kids and other community members. As popularity grew, teachers and staff from local schools got involved as a way to see students after the sudden end to the school year. The Community Convoy was even used as a graduation ceremony for the seniors.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Category: Community Health

Recognizing: Eric Campbell, Ande Banks, Amy Snider, Gerald Gatobu, Paul Helmuth

A unique collaboration was created between the City of Harrisonburg, James Madison University, homelessness service agencies, and local hotels to develop and implement emergency homeless shelters and a hotel isolation program for potentially ill homeless individuals. With cold weather on the horizon and the continuation of COVID, this collaboration continues to serve a critical function.

Champion Awards

Locality: City of Petersburg

Category: Economic Business Stability

Recognizing: Darnetta Tyus

The Deputy City Manager of Petersburg, Darnetta Tyus, is responsible for the overall management of one of the CARES Act programs to benefit the Petersburg business community. Close to 200 businesses applied for assistance. The city distributed one-time grants based on need ranging from, \$500 to \$5,000. Through a series of eligibility criteria, the city has provided much needed assistance to the business community.

Locality: County of Goochland

Category: Education and Youth Initiatives

Recognizing: Goochland County Public Schools - School Librarians

When schools closed in March, Goochland County School Librarians, with the support of administrators and the Transportation Department, created the Goochland County Public Schools Summer Bookmobile. This program helped get books into students' hands. The bookmobile makes six stops each trip in coordination with the county sponsored free food service. Children who visit the bookmobile select up to three books to keep for free and an icy pop!

Locality: City of Portsmouth

Category: Community Health

Recognizing: Franklin D. (Frankie) Edmondson

In April 2020, the Portsmouth Commissioner of Revenue recorded a special message asking the community to continue to stay engaged with local leaders during the pandemic. Community Health Commissioner Edmondson encouraged the community to keep safe and healthy as well. In doing so, Edmondson positioned his office as a resource and point of contact. This heartfelt message provided much needed assurances and comfort to the community.

Locality: City of Portsmouth

Category: Communication

Recognizing: Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue, Portsmouth, VA

The Office of the Commissioner of Revenue sent out COVID-19 resource and recovery packets with a fact sheet, information on relief from penalties and interest, instructions on how to apply for an economic injury disaster loan, and a personal message from Commissioner Edmondson.

Locality: City of Portsmouth

Category: Continuity of Operations

Recognizing: Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue

Commissioner Edmondson empowered his office to make special appointments with Department of Motor Vehicles customers and taxpayers so they could complete necessary transactions when otherwise not able to do so. This was made possible through customized office schedules and a willing team.



Locality: Town of Middleburg

Category: Economic and Business Stability

Recognizing: Town Council

The Town Council introduced the Restaurant Support Program in which participating restaurants agreed to remain open at least four days a week for two meal periods for the entire month. In return, these restaurants received grants and had vouchers for their

business distributed throughout the community. As a result, 13 of the 19 participating restaurants had Business Support Grant funds in hand the first week of April. Overall, the Town invested nearly \$400,000 in community support during the first two months of COVID-19.

Locality: Town of Vinton

Category: Risk Management

Recognizing: Town of Vinton Safety Committee

The Town of Vinton Safety Committee engaged Senior Safety Consultant Edward Shelton and Public Safety Specialist Gary Dillon to conduct a physical site assessment to determine workplaces vulnerable to violence. The town council implemented emergency funds to help improve security. The actions of the Vinton Safety Committee and the support of the Town Mayor, Council, and Manager have shown a committed approach to building a lasting culture of safety.

Locality: Town of West Point

Category: Economic and Business Stability

Recognizing: Town of West Point, Town Council, Town Manager, and Town Staff

The Town of West Point created the "Helping Our Pointer Economy" (H. O. P. E.) initiative which offers a \$50 voucher book to each household to help alleviate financial stress. The town reimbursed the business after a purchase was made with the voucher. Households that did not need the vouchers were given the chance to donate theirs to a local non-profit that provides food and support to the West Point community.

Locality: Town of Woodstock

Category: Economic and Business Stability

Recognizing: Katie Mercer

Katie Mercer, Woodstock's Director of Marketing and Events, worked overtime to launch several social media campaigns highlighting citizen and visitor access to local businesses. Among her many contributions, she also worked with the Woodstock Enhancement Promotions Committee to create safe and fun activities for families, served on the Small Business Grant Committee, coordinated a COVID-19 safe drive up fireworks display for the Fourth of July, and, with the Community Development Office, worked with small businesses on an outdoor furniture and outdoor heater loan program.