



**ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
WINNER**

2009 VML ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

And the winners are ...

THE NUMBER OF responses to the call for entries in this year's Virginia Municipal League Achievement Awards competition is evidence that the commitment to creative, imaginative and cost-effective local government remains alive and well across the Commonwealth.

From some of the smallest towns to the largest cities and counties, the entries reflected the highest standards of professionalism and innovation, two traits that remain cornerstones of local government in Virginia.

More than 50 entries were received for judging in seven categories, which include the league's top honor, the President's Award for Entrepreneurial Government. In addition, entries were received in an open communications category and in five categories based on population.

The VML Achievement Awards program has a distinguished history as the most prestigious local government awards program in the state, attracting more entries than any other competition. Thirteen years ago, the contest added the President's Award category to encourage the ideals of entrepreneurial government. The league continues to encourage local governments in Virginia to submit to regular, rigorous self-examination of how the delivery of services to citizens can be improved.

This year's winner of the President's Award is **Virginia Beach**. The city's entry describing its efforts to stop and roll back encroachment surrounding the sprawling NAS Oceana Master Jet Base was judged as the best project or program in the President's Award for Entrepreneurial Government category that was open to localities of all sizes.

When notified of the potential loss of NAS Oceana, the city acted decisively to formulate a plan to retain the installation as the Navy's East Coast Master Jet Base. The city took a leadership role in developing and implementing essential components of a plan that includes land use, acquisition of property and roll back

of existing private properties. The partnership it forged with the state and the Navy was deemed an excellent example of major governmental entities working together to achieve a complex mission.

The winners of the population categories for 2009 are:

The **Town of Broadway** - for acting decisively to turn a potentially devastating situation - the failure of a private regional wastewater facility - into an opportunity that will benefit the region's citizens for years to come.

The **Town of Ashland** - for engaging residents and cutting in half the number of crimes and calls for police service in a three-street corridor.

The **City of Falls Church** - for undertaking an initiative that built upon its longstanding commitment of planting trees in public rights of way by expanding the plantings onto private property.

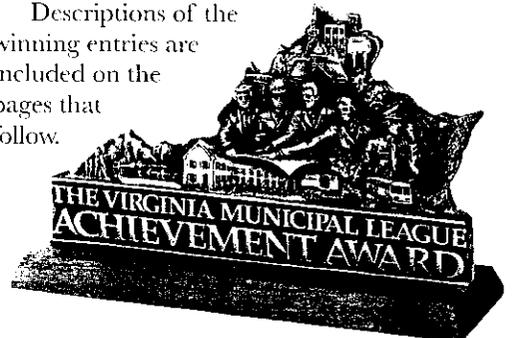
The **Town of Leesburg** - for taking a \$4 million private gift and leveraging it into \$10 million to benefit parks and recreation projects.

And **Henrico County** - for the leadership role it assumed in opening a one-stop regional Employment Transition Center to help workers who had lost their jobs as a result of the prolonged, devastating recession.

The winner of the communications category is the **City of Alexandria** - for execution of a communications plan in response to its mishandling of an ethanol transfer facility project.

The winners will be presented their awards at a banquet during the VML Annual Conference in Roanoke on Oct. 20.

Descriptions of the winning entries are included on the pages that follow.



Past VML Achievement Award winners

2008

Town of Louisa - under 5,000
Bridgewater - 5,000-10,000
Fredericksburg - 10,001-35,000
Lynchburg - 35,001-90,000
Portsmouth - over 90,000
Chesapeake - Communications
Virginia Beach - President's Award

2007

Purecellville - 5,000-10,000
Radford - 10,001-35,000
Blacksburg - 35,001-90,000
Virginia Beach - Norfolk, Portsmouth,
Chesapeake - over 90,000
Blacksburg - Communications
Roanoke County - President's Award

2006

Hillville - under 5,000
Pulaski - 5,000-10,000
Winchester - 10,001-35,000
Roanoke County - 35,001-90,000
Alexandria - over 90,000
Virginia Beach - Communications
Culpeper - President's Award

2005

Luray - under 5,000
Wytheville - 5,000-10,000
Winchester - 10,001-35,000
Lynchburg - 35,001-90,000
Fairfax County - over 90,000
Chesapeake - Communications
Chesterfield County - President's
Award

2004

South Hill - under 5,000
Bridgewater - 5,000-10,000
City of Fairfax - 10,001-35,000
Manassas - 35,001-90,000
Roanoke - over 90,000
Lynchburg - Communications
Danville - President's Award

Town acted decisively to correct private treatment plant failures

THE TOWN OF Broadway acted decisively when it turned a potentially devastating situation – the failure of a private regional wastewater facility – into an opportunity that will benefit the region’s citizens for years to come.

In 1997, SIL Cleanwater (SIL), a corporation specializing in wastewater treatment, approached the towns of Broadway and Timberville, as well as two large poultry processing companies in the immediate area (Pilgrim’s Pride and Cargill), about abandoning each of their existing wastewater treatment plants, and allowing SIL to construct a large regional facility for all four users. The timing was excellent. Each of the four individual facilities faced significant upgrades at the time. Following lengthy negotiations, due diligence and permitting procedures, the four customers signed on to the SIL project and construction began in 1998.

At the time, the proposed facility was considered to be an innovative, non-conventional way to treat waste-

water. It was designed to be a “no discharge” facility, whereby treated wastewater, along with its abundance of nitrogen and phosphorous, would be spread on hundreds of acres of farmland as irrigation, instead of being discharged into the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The facility never performed as intended.

began accepting wastewater in August 2000, the Department of Environmental Quality issued SIL the first of numerous notices of violation for excess phosphorus and nitrogen discharges, toxicity and an assortment of overflows and unauthorized discharges. The notices would continue for seven years. There was little that the four customers could do at the time since SIL held the discharge permit, and each customer was locked into a 20-year contract.

As the violations continued, environmental groups took notice and threatened to sue the state. When SIL’s proposal for a 60 percent rate increase to pay for plant improvement was rejected by the four customers, the company filed for bankruptcy and sued the four and the state for breach of contract.

Broadway had already initiated internal discussions on how to proceed if SIL failed. It was the town’s intention to work with Timberville, as well as the two poultry companies, to resolve the issue.

The four customers began meeting regularly. Broadway, it was

soon determined, was in the best position to own the plant. It appeared that the town might be able to acquire the facility at a bargain price through bankruptcy, construct the needed capital improvements to meet DEQ compliance and keep sewer rates very affordable. In short, after consultants assured the town that a re-engineered facility could meet DEQ water

quality requirements affordably, that is basically how the deal played out. In addition, Broadway was able to negotiate an arrangement to treat wastewater from the neighboring Town of New Market, which was facing a \$25 million upgrade to its own treatment plant.

Broadway bid out the facility upgrades in December 2008. It awarded an \$11.9 million contract early this year. Work began in February and is on schedule to be completed in September 2010 in advance of the 2011 water quality requirements.

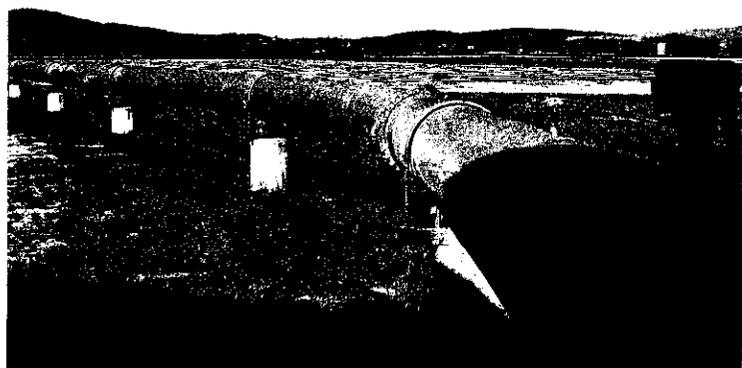
The benefits of this project will have long lasting repercussions for the citizens and businesses of northern

Rockingham and southern Shenandoah County. Broadway was able to take a potentially financial and environmental disaster and turn it into a fully compliant and revenue producing regional wastewater treatment facility, consisting of three towns and two large industries. This regional facility will maximize efficiency and expenses through economy of scale, while benefiting the environment through reductions in nutrient releases to the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, which ultimately flows to the Chesapeake Bay. The three towns involved in the project devised a creative solution by forging a meaningful alliance to tackle the problem.

What the judges said: “This project illustrates why citizens should continue to look to local government elected officials and staff to address important community issues and solve complicated community problems on their behalf. It reinforces the value of entrepreneurial community leadership and governance whereby leaders see problems as opportunities and take best advantage of given circumstances to create positive outcomes for citizens.”



**Under 5,000 Population
Broadway**



Broadway turned a potentially financial and environmental disaster into a fully compliant and revenue-producing regional wastewater treatment facility.

Just six months after the plant