



10TH ANNUAL REGION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

MAY 13, 2015

2015 EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

Controlling the Cost of Government

Gaston County
*Radio Communications
Towers Construction &
Co-Location and
Interoperability Project*

Growing the Economy

City of Kings Mountain
*Downtown Small
Business Success Project*

Growing the Economy

Town of Huntersville
*Strategic Economic
Development Plan*

Improving Quality of Life

Town of Indian Trail
*Resident Recreational
Pass Project*

Clean Cities

City of Concord
*for
leadership in clean
transportation and
fuel activities*

BACKGROUND

Centralina COG celebrates the work of local governments in our region through the Excellence Awards. These awards honor the outstanding achievements that work collectively to achieve regional goals.

Elected officials, managers and other staff from our local governments were encouraged to nominate innovative projects implemented by their jurisdictions that contribute to significant and positive advancements in the community.

A panel of impartial judges reviewed each submittal and selected award winning projects based on the following award criteria:

- Innovation and creativity
- Commitment to goals
- Contributions to regionalism
- Program successes and sustainable benefits
- Engagement of community members
- Interaction with public/private partners

Our judges this year included: Zachary Mohr, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Political Science and Public Administration at UNC-Charlotte and Sean Flaherty, Program Director at Envision Charlotte. A separate committee reviewed and selected the winner of the Clean Cities Award. Please read page 4 of this brochure for more details on our judges.

EXCELLENCE AWARD CATEGORIES

“Controlling the Cost of Government”

The recipient of this award has been creative in implementing a new or innovative program or initiative that is effective and delivers the most value with public funds. Such program exemplifies efficiency through: utilizing economies of scale; partnering with other local governments to maximize the impact of public funds; and/or encouraging best practices to maintain or expand services.

“Growing the Economy”

The recipient of this award has implemented innovative solutions to community development/investment challenges and engages in best practice strategies that: utilize public/private sector partnerships to maximize investment opportunities; prepares existing sites and infrastructure to meet the needs of target industries; and/or implements economic development including job creation/retention initiatives, etc.

“Improving Quality of Life”

The recipient of this award best leverages resources to improve the quality of life for citizens. The award recipient has implemented innovative program offerings such as those that: enhance social equity; encourage community participation through public and private sector leadership; develop solutions that build on the community’s strengths and improve upon its weaknesses; or use cooperative volunteerism to maintain or expand services.

“Clean Cities”

The recipient of this award best recognizes the environmental and economic benefits of reducing consumption of fossil fuels. This recipient has lowered the use of traditional transportation fuels by: purchasing alternative fuel and/or fuel efficient vehicles, using alternative fuels in their fleet, implementing idle reduction policies and/or has partnered with fuel providers to expand alternative fuel availability.

“Controlling the Cost of Government”
Gaston County
Radio Communications Towers Construction Project



The new tower addresses radio coverage gaps and improves reception for police, fire and EMS emergency communications.

In an effort to overhaul and expand the existing emergency radio system as well as to enhance reliability and effectiveness, Gaston County established a partnership with the NC Highway Patrol to build a emergency communications tower.

The new radio tower, built on the grounds of the Springfield Elementary School, was completed in late 2014 and went “live” on March 11, 2015.

The tower addresses radio coverage gaps that the NC Highway Patrol was experiencing in the northern part of the County. The tower also improves reception for Gaston County police, fire and EMS emergency communications.

The radio tower is the fourth collaboration between Gaston County Police Department and the NC Highway Patrol to create more dependable emergency communications throughout Gaston County for emergency first responders.

This continuing partnership has saved Gaston County over three million dollars in construction costs and provided a vital addition to the County’s current and future radio system.

“Improving Quality of Life”
Town of Indian Trail
Resident Recreational Pass Project



Indian Trail residents receive free entry to Carolina Courts, a state-of-the-art recreational facility, during Open Gym Hours.

The Town of Indian Trail capitalized on a business-retention opportunity in order to offer its residents a recreational space at no additional cost to them.

As part of a Town agreement with Carolina Courts, Indian Trail residents have access to the facility’s courts and indoor walkway with no entry fee during Open Gym Hours. Through the “Resident Recreational Pass” project, Indian Trail residents enjoy free access to a state-of-the-art recreational facility and activities such as volleyball, basketball, pickleball and indoor walking.

The need for a recreational space was evident as the Town continued to grow throughout the 2000s. The Town creatively benefitted from this business opportunity to initiate the successful Resident Recreational Pass program and create a space comparable to a community recreational center at a fraction of the cost.

The community’s response to the project has been tremendous with more than 3,000 residents having registered for the pass.

For Indian Trail, whose motto states that the Town is a great place to “live, work, play and learn,” providing its residents with budget-conscious health and wellness benefits is at the heart of its mission and promise to residents.

“Growing the Economy” Town of Huntersville Strategic Economic Development Plan

The Town of Huntersville developed a Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP) to improve the Town’s long-term economic viability.

From a population of just 3,014 in 1990, the Town has grown to 46,773 residents according to the 2010 Census. This makes the Town of Huntersville the 19th largest municipality and one of the fastest growing towns in North Carolina since 2000.

The Town partnered with RKG Associates to develop a plan aimed at promoting job creation, private investments and tax-base expansion for the Town.

The SEDP builds upon previous efforts by the Town of Huntersville and the Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation (LNREDC) to provide a vision and action plan to guide economic development activity in Huntersville over the next 15 years.

The Town has been commended on its economic development efforts to date and for its active business retention and expansion program that is managed by the combined efforts.



“Growing the Economy” City of Kings Mountain Downtown Small Business Success Project

The Downtown Kings Mountain Small Business Success Project is a unique partnership that connects the City of Kings Mountain and small business owners.

Interviews with business owners revealed that few took advantage of the resources, materials and technology available through the library and the City administered Main Street program. Further, these interviews revealed that 73% of downtown businesses lacked basic business fundamentals such as business friendly email accounts, web pages, business plans and market research capability. The Mauney Memorial Library, the Main Street program and the Planning and Economic Development department of the City of Kings Mountain partnered together to work on solutions for this problem.

The Downtown Kings Mountain Small Business Success program was designed to educate and assist business owners with business plan creation, marketing, customer service, social media, recordkeeping and taxes, safety, security and much more.

The project has been extremely successful for the City, downtown Kings Mountain business owners, and the economy by providing a business friendly community that has boosted economic development, job creation and retention, hence growing the economy.



The Downtown Kings Mountain Small Business Success project has produced a unique and extraordinary learning and growth program for downtown Kings Mountain small business owners.



The City has implemented dedicated parking spaces for electric vehicle charging.

“Clean Cities” City of Concord

The City of Concord has recognized the environmental, economic, and national security benefits of reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and has implemented programs and initiatives to lower their use of traditional transportation fuels.

Through the Clean Fuels Advanced Technology (CFAT) grant, the City of Concord installed six publicly accessible Electric Vehicle charging stations throughout the City and two Ford Focus all-electric vehicles to replace older gasoline powered cars for City employee use. They also purchased a neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV) called the Firefly for their downtown parking enforcement officer to use.

Concord’s desire to decrease their dependence on petroleum goes beyond alternative fuels. By right-sizing their fleet, they have decreased their fuel usage, even though they have increased miles-traveled due to growth. Concord also has smaller scout vehicles to locate yard waste and bulky pick-up items at the curb and track the locations using a GPS, allowing the larger, less fuel-efficient trucks to go directly to these pick-up locations without wasting fuel traveling around the entire city. They also implemented a customer service center in the Police Department to take routine police reports over the phone, eliminating the need to dispatch an officer.

Congratulations to the City of Concord for taking big steps to reduce petroleum dependence in unique ways that have reduced costs and improved the quality of life for their community.

Thank you to all our Excellence Award judges!

Sean Flaherty

Sean Flaherty is responsible for planning and executing Envision Charlotte’s model programs for energy, water, waste and air. Prior to joining Envision Charlotte Flaherty worked for over 6 years as a senior planner focused on energy and the environment at the Triangle J Council of Governments in Research Triangle Park and the Centralina Council of Governments in Charlotte. Prior to that, Flaherty worked for Advanced Energy and the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Zachary Mohr

Dr. Mohr is an Assistant Professor at UNC-Charlotte. His research focuses on cost accounting and organizational control. His work has been published in top public administration and budgeting journals. He recently received a large Department of Defense grant to study cost behavior in Major Defense Acquisition Programs with Professor Maureen Brown at UNCC. In a former life, he was a city administrator in Kansas, and he helped to start the non-profit organization FUSE to help young adults with neuromuscular conditions.

Clean Cities

A separate committee reviewed and selected the winner of the 2015 Clean Cities Region of Excellence Award. This committee included: Marcie Smith, CCFC Stakeholder (Gaston County Public Works), Megan Green, CCFC Stakeholder (Mecklenburg County Air Quality), and Dave Navey, CCFC Chair (Duke Energy). The Clean Fuels Coalition appreciates the work of this committee and thanks them for their time and participation in the awards program.

Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)

CCOG is the state-designated lead regional organization for our nine county region and is one of 16 regional councils in the state. The organization represents 60+ county and municipal governments and encompasses a population of close to 2 million people.

Serving Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union Counties and the municipalities throughout the region.