



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

# REGION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

NOVEMBER 30, 2018

## 2018 EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

### **Growing the Economy**

Greater Gaston  
Development Corp  
and Partners

*Gaston County CLT Airport  
Connected Economic  
Positioning Strategy*

### **Controlling the Cost of Government**

Town of Huntersville  
*Recreation Center Project*

### **Improving Quality of Life**

City of Mount Holly  
*River Front Greenway  
Expansion Project*

### **Aging in Action**

Union County  
Council on Aging  
*Group Respite Program*

### **Leadership Award**

W. Lane Bailey  
*City of Salisbury*

### **Clean Cities**

Gaston County  
*Propane Vehicle  
Conversion Project*

## BACKGROUND

Centralina Council of Governments celebrates the work of member governments 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 member governments were encouraged to submit nominations that have contributed to significant and positive advancements in the community. Our judges this year included: Julie Burch, former Assistant Manager for the City of Charlotte; Bill Deter, former Mayor for the Town of Weddington; and John Metcalf, President of Workforce Systems Associates. A separate team reviewed and selected the winner of the Clean Cities Award. A special thank you to all of our Excellence Award judges!

## EXCELLENCE AWARD CATEGORIES

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***Aging in Action***

The recipient of this award serves as a leader in impacting communities so adults can age with choice, dignity and independence. The awardee has implemented a program that demonstrates a commitment and contribution to older and/or disabled adult issues, engagement, participation and/or volunteerism of older adults and advocacy for and behalf of older and disabled adults and their families.

### ***James D. Prosser Excellence in Government Leadership Award***

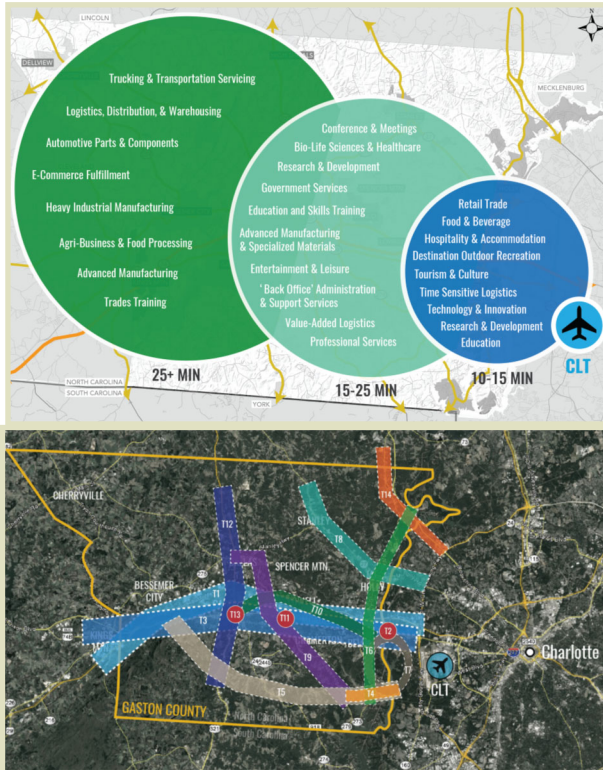
The recipient of this award exemplifies and promotes excellence in government, outstanding leadership and high ethical standards. The award recognizes the cumulative achievements of a local government professional who has served as a role model for others and has consistently exhibited high professional and personal standards throughout his or her public career.

### ***Clean Cities***

The recipient of this award is a stakeholder organization that best demonstrates leadership and excellence in clean transportation and alternative fuel activities. The awardee has recognized the environmental, economic and national security benefits of reducing consumption of fossil fuels and has implemented programs and initiatives to lower their use of traditional transportation fuels.

## GROWING THE ECONOMY

### Greater Gaston Development Corp and Partners Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy



Gaston-CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Directions Diagram (top); Economic Mobility Corridors (bottom)

The Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy is a public-private initiative to provide Gaston County, its cities and towns and the private sector a plan to more effectively harness the economic benefit of proximity and access to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (CLT Airport). Realizing that the CLT Airport presented a unique opportunity, the county's political and business leaders came together, provided the needed funding and guided the development of a blueprint for intentional future economic growth related to the Airport.

In October 2015, CLT Airport launched an economic master planning effort to produce an Airport Area Strategic Development Plan (AASDP), encompassing the 24 square miles in Mecklenburg County immediately around the airport. Gaston County business and governmental leaders were asked to and became engaged in that effort as stakeholders.

In September 2017, stakeholders worked with consultants to launch the Strategy project, which featured 20-year growth projections by land use, identification of key existing and future mobility corridors, economic opportunity areas, catalytic projects and a compelling rationale for increasing transportation capacity between Gaston County and Charlotte, including transit. The Steering Committee unanimously adopted the Strategy and supporting Report in September 2018 and initiated a process for its implementation.

## CONTROLLING THE COST OF GOVERNMENT

### Town of Huntersville Recreation Center Project



The 24,000 square foot indoor recreation facility represents public-private partnerships saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

The new Huntersville Recreation Center opened in January 2018. This 24,000 square foot recreation center includes two high school sized basketball courts, eight side basketball goals, four volleyball courts, four pickleball courts, café/lounge area, multipurpose room, office space and outdoor walking trail. This facility was designed for a future expansion due to anticipated future growth.

This project was made possible by both public and private partnerships. The land that the Recreation Center is located on is leased by the Town of Huntersville from Mecklenburg County. One of the most important partnerships for this project includes a Joint Use Agreement with Central Piedmont Community College Merancas Campus. The Town also developed partnerships with NovantHealth and Pepsi.

These partnerships have saved the taxpayers more than \$2.2 million and the Town's Joint Use Agreement/Partnership has allowed the Town to save over \$20 million in Park and Recreation capital costs in addition to ongoing operating costs.

The project also demonstrates the success of the Huntersville Parks and Recreation Department's model of the 4 P's. The first P is for the PEOPLE - everything starts with the needs of the people. The second P is for the PROGRAMS that are provided to serve the people. The third P is for PLACES - the facilities that are needed to provide the programs for the people. The last P is for PARTNERSHIPS that are formed to provide the places and programs for the people.

This is the Town's 16th Joint Use Agreement/Partnership. It has been recognized as one of the most complex agreements but also one of the most successful.



## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

### City of Mount Holly

#### River Front Greenway Expansion Project

The City of Mount Holly greenway system has a long and interesting past, present and future.

The history of the greenway project can be traced back to 2003 when a group of citizens and civic officials came together for a series of charettes, formally known as the 2003 Vision Process. It was during this process that residents and stakeholders made known their desire for greenways and green connections.

In 2007, the City adopted the Catawba River Corridor Master Plan the City's greenway master plan that set the route for future greenways. By 2015, the City held a groundbreaking ceremony for Phase I of the Mount Holly River Front Greenway.

The City opened a new stretch of the greenway in March 2018. The 1.59 mile stretch is near Mountain Island Dam and runs alongside the Catawba River through lush forest. It is estimated that it took 900 man hours to create the wide, graveled trail and construct five pedestrian wooden bridges. Greenway amenities include benches, trail markers, trash cans and picnic tables. Signage and mile markers are present throughout the trail and have numbers that can be relayed to Police and Fire Dispatch in case of emergency. In addition to the City, many organizations helped make the greenway a reality.

From the very first greenway meetings, the themes of encouraging public participation through public and private sector leadership and enhancing social equity have been at the forefront of this endeavor.



*The recently completed River Front Greenway Bridge.*

## AGING IN ACTION

### Union County Council on Aging

#### Group Respite Program

The Council on Aging in Union County has expanded its services to offer a respite program called The Next Door Group Respite program. The program serves as another resource for caregivers. Group respite is a new model of care for the region and this program is the only one of its kind in the area. The goal of the program is to improve everyday life for caregivers and their loved ones.

Family caregivers need respite from caregiving to attend to their own needs. By having respite time, the caregiver is more likely to continue to provide care in the home, allowing older adults to age in place. The group respite experience provides social and mental stimulation leading to enhanced well-being for participants. Isolation is a common side effect of dementia and adds burden for caregivers. The program offers a homelike environment where the caregiver feels comfortable bringing their loved one and engaging activities encourage participation and interaction.

There is especially a need for respite for individuals caring for someone with memory loss. Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, affects 1 in 7 North Carolinians over age 65. The 60 and older population of Union County increased from 26,159 in 2008 to 58,305 in 2013. By 2033, this population is expected to reach nearly 137,000. A large portion of this population will eventually be impacted by some form of memory loss. The group respite program strives to proactively address this need by providing additional caregiver options for the increased number of older adults with memory loss and their caregivers.



*The Next Door Group Respite program serves as another resource for caregivers.*

## **JAMES D. PROSSER EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP**

### **W. Lane Bailey** *City of Salisbury City Manager*

W. Lane Bailey has been the City of Salisbury City Manager since March 2015. Employees recognize him as an outstanding leader because of his accessibility, genuine care for others and eagerness to tackle the most challenging of issues.

Mr. Bailey has created a re-energized shift in the organization's culture through implementation of the "Salisbury Way," an internal service philosophy. He encouraged staff to create the "Salisbury Way" or "Sway" to create a change in the culture of the organization. Through the implementation of "Sway" employees have developed and defined the organization's core values. With "Sway" the employee culture has experienced a positive shift and employees recognize customer service as not only what they do but who they are.

Mr. Bailey has also developed ways to increase citizen engagement through transparency and communication. He seeks innovative solutions to critical issues in the City, successfully leading the transition of the municipally owned broadband utility to a public/private partnership. It is anticipated that this new relationship will benefit the City financially and provide continued broadband services that are unmatched in speed and reliability. Mr. Bailey has provided outstanding leadership through community challenges and created unique opportunities that move both the community and the organization forward.



*W. Lane Bailey*

## **CLEAN CITIES**

### **Gaston County**

#### ***Propane Vehicle Conversion Project***



Gaston County is no stranger to doing more with less when it comes to advanced vehicle and clean energy technologies.

Gaston County Public Works began utilizing alternative fuel propane in 2011. Initially the County converted 16 vehicles to the liquid propane gas (LPG) bi-fuel system, funded through the Clean Fuels Alternative Technology Grant (CFAT) and later converted an additional 24 vehicles to operate on the LPG bi-fuel system.

In converting county vehicles to this system, Gaston County joined other NC counties in the movement toward clean transportation and has been successful at reducing their petroleum usage and environmental impact. In addition to reducing emissions and improving air quality, one of the leading motivators for the selection of this clean transportation technology is the ability to control costs through vehicle operations that includes a traditionally lower price per gallon than gasoline.

Not only will Gaston County save thousands of dollars in reduced fueling costs, but it will also help reduce harmful vehicle emissions in Gaston County and beyond.

Gaston County has been awarded a 2018 CFAT grant for the conversion of ten additional county-owned vehicles to the LPG bi-fuel system.



## **Centralina Council of Governments**

*Serving Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties since 1968.*