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County Presents Recognition and Excellence Awards

DINWIDDIE, VA – County Administrator, Kevin Massengill, Board of Supervisors Chair Dan Lee, and the County’s Leadership Team, met with all full and part-time County employees last week for the annual Workforce Briefing and Presentation of Recognition & Excellence Awards. Forty-two employees received recognition for years of service to the County, in five-year increments. Of this number, three employees received recognition for 30 or more consecutive years of service. The combined number recognized was 465 years.

In his remarks, Dan Lee, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors stated, “We are proud of our workforce and honored to recognize so many. Thank you for your years of service.”

In addition to Service Awards, the County presented eight Excellence Awards and also named Employees of the Year for 2019. Excellence Awards were presented in the following categories:

- Behind the Scenes – Emergency Communications Team
- Distinguished Accomplishment – 2019 County Fair Coordination Team
- Innovation – Harold “Hal” Good
- Outstanding Leadership – J. Rayfield Vines, III
- Rookie of the Year – Parker Finch
- Volunteerism – Stephanie Wray
- Astounding Part-timer – Jacob Williamson
- County Employee of the Year – Rosa Somoza
- Public Safety Employee of the Year – Candace Townsend

Regarding this fourth-annual event, Kevin Massengill, County Administrator stated, “We are blessed with a phenomenal workforce. Our people are second-to-none and truly embody the Core Values of Dinwiddie County. It is an honor to work alongside you in service to the citizens of Dinwiddie County.”

For a full description of each category, along with biographical information on each recipient, please visit: www.Dinwiddieva.us.

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2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards Behind the Scenes

Emergency Communications Officers

The behind the scenes award recognizes those who contribute consistent dedication and commitment to the job with their efforts behind the scenes. With a departmental mission that is focused on work behind the scenes, the true first responders in an emergency situation are often heard, yet rarely seen. These employees are the ones who drive our emergency response from the time they take the initial 911 call to delivering lifesaving medical instructions, keeping frantic callers calm, and getting assistance to the right place in the quickest amount of time. You will not find these mission critical employees traveling the roads with lights and sirens, fighting fires, performing live saving procedures, or chasing down criminals; however, without their presence behind the scenes and over the radios, none of this happens. They are committed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. They do this with little expectation for recognition or fanfare, yet they are worthy of recognition beyond this award. At this time, our Emergency Communications Officers and Supervisors are asked to come forward from behind the scenes to accept this special recognition.





2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards Distinguished Accomplishment

2019 Dinwiddie County Fair Coordination Team

Our distinguished accomplishment award was established to recognize a team or individual for contributions towards a notable event or achievement that is significant in scope, effort or impact on County operations, advancement of the County's mission statement, or service to citizens. The Fair Coordination Team accomplished all of the above and more. Less than two months prior to the County Fair, the County employee responsible for leading this large project accepted an opportunity with another locality, leaving a great responsibility with little time to complete. Immediately after becoming aware of this void, employees who routinely play a support role in the fair, stepped up to the plate and led the event. Amidst many obstacles and challenges, including working with numerous vendors, entertainers, attractions, civic groups and County departments, this team of individuals implemented a great event for the County and the region. Without the time, dedication, energy, effort and teamwork from this group of people, this annual event would not have been such a success. The 2019 Fair Coordination Team includes Ray Vines, Marquis Allen, D.J. Martin, Chris Walters, and Barbara McKitrick.





2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards Innovation

Harold "Hal" Good

The innovation award was established to recognize a team or individual for contributions towards a significant process improvement, removal of barriers or creative use of resources. In early fall, the Division of Fire & EMS received new drying cabinets for the fire stations. Hal Good realized the wood crates that were used for shipping were going to be discarded. Knowing the need and benefits of firefighter training and recognizing that much of the discarded crates could be repurposed, this employee took it upon himself to reclaim the crates. He utilized the materials to build training props. The most innovative and difficult props built were three "Palmer's Doll Houses". These are intricate scaled replicas of two story residential structures that are used to train firefighters on fire behavior and dynamics without subjecting them to the dangers of a real fire. The props are instrumental in teaching concepts in a safe environment. By using creativity and innovation this employee provided the department with an invaluable tool and training opportunity.





2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards Outstanding Leadership

J. Rayfield Vines, III

The outstanding leadership award is presented to an individual who demonstrates a unique ability to guide and inspire others, which in turn contributes to the efficient and effective functioning of the team or department. There are few times in an individual's career that he or she has the opportunity to lead a cultural transformation. Ray Vines has done just that. Over the past year and a half, this individual has demonstrated compassion for his workforce through his personal commitment to help his team achieve their best. He has served as a counselor, mentor, problem solver, barrier-mover, and innovator with a genuine interest in leading his department and the County as a whole to success. Under his leadership, his department's programs are growing in quantity and quality, all the while he has established a culture where employees are exemplifying integrity, value-added customer service and teamwork. Under his leadership, the best is yet to come for Dinwiddie County Parks and Recreation.





2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards
Rookie of the Year
Parker Finch

Our Rookie of the Year award places recognition on an individual who has been with the County one-year or less as a full-time employee. He or she must have embraced the mission of the County while consistently demonstrating our core values. Parker Finch came to the County in June of last year. In a short amount of time, he has proven himself an asset to his Department, the County, and our citizens. While he is still considered new in his career field, he is recognized for exhibiting a depth and breadth of knowledge that exceeds the expectations of someone with his level of experience. He displays a humble confidence while providing aggressive patient care. He is known for offering to help others, even with tasks that others may avoid. He displays kindness, respect, and a positive attitude with each interaction, whether it is with the public or County staff. He represents integrity by always striving for the “higher road”. With contributions that far exceed someone of rookie level, Parker’s commitment and hard work are worthy of recognition.





2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards Volunteerism

Stephanie B. Wray

Recognizing that many employees' dedication to service extends beyond their role as an employee, the volunteerism award recognizes an individual who provides an outstanding level of volunteer service outside the normal work hours. Whether it is making sure that children in need have food to eat on the weekends through a backpack program or encouraging and recognizing third graders through the BUGs or Bringing Up Grades Program, Stephanie Wray can often be found contributing time to the Dinwiddie Kiwanis. She spends countless hours planning, coordinating and supporting the efforts of this non-profit organization. Kiwanis is an organization with clubs worldwide that are dedicated to improving the lives of children one community at a time. Because of her leadership and dedication to the Dinwiddie Kiwanis, many children in the Dinwiddie community are touched by her efforts.





2019 Recognition & Excellence Awards Astounding Part-timer

Jacob Williamson

The astounding part-timer award was established to recognize an employee who has made a significant impact on County operations, the advancement of the County's mission statement, or a notable display of one or more of the County's core values. Described by one of his nominators as being "the example" of work ethic, Jacob Williamson is known for routinely picking up shifts and making himself available to assist the department in any way possible. He approaches his position and the opportunity to serve our citizens with a positive attitude and a level of dedication that is obvious to those around him. During the last year, Jacob furthered his education and in turn increased the level of service to our citizens by obtaining his paramedic certification. The County is better served because of his contributions.





County Employee of the Year Rosa Somoza

Since joining Dinwiddie Department of Social Services in 2014, Rosa Somoza has consistently proven herself a leader in customer service. She routinely receives accolades from co-workers and clients regarding her ability to maintain calm, her pleasant attitude and her professionalism.

As a bilingual employee, Rosa is a tremendous asset to the Spanish speaking citizenry. She uses this skillset on a regular basis within her department and is known for contributing her skills in this area to other County departments as well.

Rosa displays a constant commitment to progressing the agency, often presenting ideas for improvement to management. Her level of dedication has been confirmed by her willingness to delay a vacation to ensure work within her unit was completed in a timely manner, even completing work that was not assigned to her.

Her desire to help others is evident on a daily basis. If it is determined that someone does not qualify for services or benefits, Rosa immediately begins trying to think of other ways to help them. It is not uncommon for her to drive to citizens' homes to deliver items when families do not have transportation. During the past year, she became aware that a client had an upcoming court date. Without being asked, Rosa took it upon herself to provide the citizen with professional attire for her court appearance. She met the client before court and helped her get ready, this involved fixing the client's hair and make-up. This client, who is not known for being pleasant, displayed a smile and confidence the agency had not seen before.

Rosa's dedication and commitment do not end with the citizens she serves. She is often found representing the agency at events outside the office including the County's Live Well Expo, Christmas Sharing, and Supplies for Success.

While Rosa has shared that retirement may be in her near future, the level of compassion and respect that she displays in her position are anything but retired. She is a true asset to the Department, the County, and every citizen she serves.





Public Safety Employee of the Year Candice Townsend

Candice Townsend, Program Support Specialist, is an instrumental part of Dinwiddie County Public Safety on a day-to-day basis. While Candice is a high performer in normal daily responsibilities, what sets her apart is her willingness to improve herself professionally as well as her approach in always looking for ways for Fire & EMS to reach the community and citizens in need.

Within the last two years, Candice has self-initiated and completed training programs that have not only improved herself but have also allowed Dinwiddie County Fire & EMS to provide new and improved services. Candice voluntarily completed the Car Seat Safety Technician course; this class allows Fire & EMS to offer car seat education and safety inspections to citizens. In addition, she became certified as an Ambulance Provider HIPPA Officer. This again was not required but Candice felt it would improve our department. Immediately after attending the training she began implementing new measures that protect the County and its citizens' healthcare information.

In addition to these accomplishments and contributions, Candice coordinates Fire & EMS' Interactive Education Tent at the Dinwiddie County Fair. This has become one of the most successful displays at the fair and has allowed Dinwiddie Fire & EMS to interact with and educate well over 1000 citizens. This project requires months of planning and coordination; Candice assumes this responsibility, dedicating work and personal time, while never letting her daily responsibilities suffer.

In December 2019, Candice received the Employee of the Month award for going above and beyond to comfort a grieving citizen. This act of kindness was completed on her own time. After working with the citizen on an issue with her ambulance aide subscription, Candice recognized this citizen needed a lift. She, on her own accord, bought the citizen flowers and a fruit basket. She personally delivered the items on her own time and made time to sit and visit with this citizen. Her nominator remarked "it meant the world to this citizen who simply needed a hug and 30 minutes of company."

During 2019, Candice also coordinated a Christmas event in which several of the Public Safety departments within the County were able to reach out to 12 senior citizens and make their holiday brighter. These citizens were part of the Senior Check program; Candice picked up on the fact that many may not have a very bright Christmas. She coordinated all of the departments to adopt a citizen and supply Christmas items for them. In addition she coordinated with a business to supply each citizen with a Christmas meal which she and several other employees delivered on a Sunday. The impact this had on these citizens has been immeasurable. This is just one more example of Candice initiating projects without prompting and dedicating her personal time to the efforts.

Candice not only makes Public Safety's operation run smoothly on a daily basis; she is extremely instrumental in helping us reach out to citizens whether it be through education opportunities, outreach projects or just a visit and a hug.

