



CEDA NOMINATION FORM

INTRODUCTION

The 2013 VEDA Community Economic Development Awards (CEDA) will be presented during VEDA's Spring Conference in Charlottesville, March 28-29, 2013. One winner can be selected from each of the 5 population categories. These selections will be based on the most significant contributions to economic and community development in the nominees' respective communities.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The CEDA may be given to one community from each of the following five population categories: (population will be based on the most recent published decennial census)

- I. Population less than 5,000
- II. Population of 5,001 to 15,000
- III. Population of 15,001 to 40,000
- IV. Population of 40,001 to 100,000**
- V. Population of over 100,000

For the purpose of this award, a "community" shall be defined as any unincorporated town or city, incorporated town or city, county/parish, formally established multi-jurisdictional region, metropolitan statistical area, or state. The "community" should reflect work responsibility of the VEDA member submitting the entry.

A maximum of five awards will be given, one in each of the population categories listed above. Each project has to fall under one or more of the four areas mention in this document under "Purpose."

NOMINATION

NAME OF COMMUNITY **Bedford County**

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (IF A CITY OR COUNTY, CITY MANAGER OR MAYOR) **Frank Rogers**

ADDRESS **122 E. Main Street, Suite 202**

CITY, STATE, ZIP **Bedford, VA 24523**

PHONE **540-586-7601**

FAX **540-586-0406**

WEBSITE **www.bedfordcountyva.gov**

EMAIL **f.rogers@bedfordcountyva.gov**

COMMUNITY POPULATION **69,246**

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY **Diana Cocke**

TITLE **Existing Business Coordinator**

PHONE **540-587-5670**

EMAIL **d.cocke@bedfordcountyva.gov**

SUBMITTED FOR: (CHECK BELOW ALL THAT APPLY)

Business Retention/Expansion
 Community Development

Business Attraction
 Community Involvement

SUMMARY REVIEW

Please attach a brief description of the economic development efforts and accomplishments (projects and programs). Within this description, address the awards criteria of innovativeness, transferability, community commitment, measured objectives and secondary benefits. The nomination can be no longer than four conventionally formatted 8.5" x 11" pages. Also please submit up to 5 digital photographs related to the community program/project to veda@associationbuilders.com. These photos need not be a part of the nomination form.

The Virginia CEDA winner(s) will be announced and recognized during the CEDA luncheon at the VEDA Spring Conference in Charlottesville, March 28-29, 2013. The 2013 Virginia CEDA winners' nomination(s) will also be sent to SEDC by Virginia's SEDC State Director to compete with other southern states' winners. SEDC winners will be recognized later in 2013.

VEDA Member Submitting Form **Diana Cocke**

Name **Diana Cocke**

Address **122 E. Main Street, Suite 202**

City, State, Zip **Bedford, VA 24523**

Phone **540-587-5670**

Fax **540-586-0406**

Email **d.cocke@bedfordcountyva.gov**

Submit to:

VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION

1340 North Great Neck Road, #1272-128

Virginia Beach, Virginia 23454

757-412-2664 Fax: 866-873-3690

veda@associationbuilders.com

All Nominations Must Be Received By February 15, 2013

Bedford County Office of Economic Development

CEDA Nomination, 2013

Bedford One Program – Offering New Experiences from Classroom to Career

Overview

Strategically located between the metropolitan cities of Lynchburg and Roanoke, Bedford County (population 69,246) offers a good mix of industry, technology, commerce, and agriculture. To ensure a strong, diversified economy and positive business climate, Bedford County's Office of Economic Development is pro-active in the establishment of long-standing working relationships with the existing business community. During the county's Existing Business Roundtable Meetings, held quarterly by the office, local business managers kept pointing to the difficulty of finding well-prepared and qualified workers. With this overriding concern among its business community, the Office of Economic Development initiated a program called the Bedford One Program that links high school students with local businesses based on the students' career interests. Since 2007 when the program was initiated, nearly 1,000 students have participated in 40 company tours to learn about the work and education involved at each company. The Office works in partnership with Bedford County Schools, Central Virginia Community College, the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, and an advisory committee that includes representatives from the county's industries.

Innovativeness

The opportunity arose when the Bedford County Office of Economic Development was introduced to a workforce development pilot program, entitled the One Programs, that the City of Lynchburg's Office of Economic Development had up and running. Impressed by their ideas, the Bedford County Office of Economic Development formed a Steering Committee to begin studying the benefits of the program. The vision was to connect students with career opportunities that would prepare them for the workforce whether the student was college bound or not and the need to convince students to stay in work in the area. Economic development staff would serve as a conduit for the important link between business and education, and a Steering Committee made up of representatives from both industry and education would guide the program. The collaboration of the Steering Committee members and the support of the Bedford County Board of Supervisors, the Bedford County School Board, and high school principals resulted in the undertaking of a comprehensive survey of Bedford County Public Schools' high school seniors to identify their career interests. From this information, a spreadsheet was devised to report back the aggregate numbers. These numbers provided what career interests to target and served as a valuable tool to match students with appropriate employers to participate in the tours. When the surveys were first administered to the students, not all students took it seriously. That changed, in subsequent years, when the students realized that the adults were actually going to follow through on the information the surveys were producing. In 2008, juniors were included in the surveys and at the same time, the high school Career Coaches joined forces with the Steering Committee.

Transferability

The One Program is a series of career development initiatives designed to create pathways for the workforce of the future. Bedford County has made many presentations on the on-going success of the One Program since 2007 and has received requests from other localities to share the program's strategy and results. We believe that the One Program is beneficial to any locality's own economic development team to reach out and build business and public school education partnerships in the community. The success of the program is based on the partnerships and introducing students to a better understanding of career choices. It's a win-win as it helps the schools meet its goal of equipping students for future careers, while helping the local businesses educate and engage students and their families.

Community Commitment & Leverage

The staff of economic development already had relationships with the existing business community and partnered to connect the students and public school officials with visits to area businesses. It was and continues to be a challenge that takes commitment and engagement across traditional and untraditional lines to build this type of partnership. Facilitating a productive connection between employers and emerging young workers was a challenge that we were up for. The majority of the businesses had never been approached about conducting student visits to their facility and the Steering Committee had a number of logistics to go through. But the businesses were eager to work with the committee and structural procedures were set up to guide the process as businesses wanted to know the expectations and specific information to convey to the students during their visit. Once a connection with the businesses was established, the next step was to determine the number of students to take according to specific career interest. The student surveys administrated by the Career Coaches provided that valuable information. Students were then contacted by the Career Coaches and upon parent approval, were scheduled for a business tour. The tours consisted of no more than 30 students plus chaperones. Timing was important, as the Steering Committee worked around the businesses schedules, the school's schedule, and at times, adverse weather conditions. The public school system was very accommodating and all transportation arrangements for students to visit a business from all three of the high schools ran very smoothly.

Because the One Program has been so successful, the schools have leveraged the program to ask the businesses to take on high school interns in a new program that began in 2011 in which high school seniors may sign up for a class that involves working three hours a week at a local business. We are proud that the One Program opened up doors for the schools to sign up interns to work at these businesses.

Measurable Objectives

Our efforts to coordinate an effective program linking the business community to rising high school graduates continues to grow and has achieved a long standing partnership between economic development, our businesses and the public school system. To date, nearly 1,000 students have visited 40 businesses and surveys are given out to the students immediately following the tour. Survey results show 90% of the students feel the tours are informative and reinforce their ideas about their career choices. Also, 92% of the students surveyed said they are more likely to work or return to work in Bedford County as a result of what they learned on their tour.

As a result of the tours, internships, apprenticeships, and actual full-time jobs in some cases have become available to students. Other signs of success include:

- We have seen an increase in parent involvement around their child's career options as a result of this program.
- Businesses have responded favorably to this program and have indicated their desire for it to continue.
- Employees of businesses have expressed regularly to visiting students that they wished they had had the opportunity to tour and learn about job opportunities when they were in school.
- A prime example of the program involves a senior high school student in 2010 who took a tour of Griffin Pipe in Lynchburg. According to the student, once he visited Griffin Pipe he knew that he wanted to go to work for the company. The One Program made this possible because he would have never been exposed to that company otherwise. Today, he continues to work for Griffin Pipe.
- The One Program was featured in the Lynchburg *News and Advance* newspaper featuring a student tour at Sterling Blower Company in Forest, Virginia.
- The One Program has been featured in the *Trailblazer* newsletter entitled: *School – Business Partnerships in Bedford County*.
- Annually, the Office of Economic Development and the Bedford One Program Steering Committee host a Business Appreciation event to honor and recognize the businesses that have participated in the student tours throughout the year and encourage new companies to become involved.
- On June 16, 2011, we were selected as the Region V winner of the Business and Industry Partnership Creating Excellence Award from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education.

Of great importance are some of the following comments received from students and businesses.

Student Comments:

- “This was a very informative tour. I was pleased that they gave advice as to how to have a successful interview.”
- “Great tour – very informative. The tour exceeded my expectations.”
- “I considered the tour useful to me because I can learn about something that I didn't know and it gave me ideas on what I want to do after high school.”
- “It reinforced my career choice.”

Business Comments:

- “It was good to see young people show a genuine interest in the work atmosphere.”
- It was a pleasure to give the tour and answer questions. I hope that we can once again host something like this in the future.”
- “I think it is great that you are bringing students to us.”

Secondary Benefits

We are now looking at expanding the program to include local teachers as part of the tours. We may do the teacher visits during the summer months. It has been a surprise to learn that many local teachers are unaware of the level of sophistication and diversity of jobs in the area.

Summary

In Summary, Bedford County is a prime example of what can be done when the public school system, businesses, and economic development work together and become ideal partners. Because of the One Program, junior and senior high school students have been given exposure to career opportunities in their field of interest,

as well as an avenue in connecting and introducing students to employment opportunities that they did not know exist, both in Bedford and the region. What is equally important is that the program is not limited to certain categories of students. It is open to college bound as well as those who want two-year degrees or no degree at all. The tours are customized for the group in attendance.