



HENRICO COUNTY VIRGINIA

November 2013

November 27, 2013

CONTACT: Justin House, Chair, Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition

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Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition receives nonprofit status

The Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition has qualified as a nonprofit charitable organization under the federal tax code, which will help it play a greater role in reducing substance abuse and other risky behaviors among youth.

The Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition received its 501(c)(3) designation in July, making the organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.

The coalition is now working toward recognition under the Drug-Free Communities Program of the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. Substance Abuse Free Environment Inc. (SAFE) of Chesterfield County has received a mentoring grant to help the Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition become eligible to seek funding through the Drug-Free Communities Program. The mentoring process aims to strengthen a coalition's organizational structure, increase its leadership and readiness to address youth substance abuse problems and use a strategic planning process to create a comprehensive action plan.

"I am excited about the growth and development of the Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition," said Justin House, chair of the coalition's board of directors. "We look forward to working with our partners and residents to make Henrico County the healthiest community for families and youth."

With origins dating to 1995, the Henrico Too Smart 2 Start Coalition promotes health and wellness among Henrico residents and uses education and advocacy to reduce substance abuse and other risky behaviors among youth. The coalition consists of an evolving group of community partners, which include local nonprofit organizations, Henrico County Public Schools and Henrico Area Mental Health and Developmental Services.

Gov. Bob McDonnell in June recognized Henrico County Public Schools as a Promising Program under the state's Substance Abuse Awareness is Vital for Virginia Youth initiative. Henrico Too Smart 2 Start collaborates with Henrico County Public Schools on its substance abuse prevention efforts.

November 25, 2013

CONTACT: Gene Walter, Henrico County Director of Finance

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Henrico considers May 1 start for meals tax, pending approval by supervisors

Henrico County officials have identified May 1 as a potential start date for a 4 percent meals tax that was authorized by voters in a Nov. 5 referendum.

Before a meals tax could apply in Henrico, the Board of Supervisors would have to approve an ordinance establishing an effective date and other details, such as parameters for what purchases would be taxed. The board is expected to receive a proposed ordinance and hold a public hearing in the coming weeks.

“At this time, a meals tax has been authorized for Henrico, but it has not been formally adopted by the Board of Supervisors,” County Manager John A. Vithoukaskas said. “As we move forward, we want the public to understand where we are in the process. We also want to work closely with restaurants, grocery stores and convenience stores to answer their questions and to help them prepare to begin collecting the tax.”

The Henrico Department of Finance has fielded questions in recent weeks about whether a meals tax has taken effect. Officials emphasize that only Virginia’s 5.3 percent sales tax should be charged currently in Henrico on purchases of prepared food, such as a meal in a restaurant.

If adopted by the board, a 4 percent meals tax would provide an estimated \$18 million annually for operating and capital expenses of Henrico County Public Schools.

November 12, 2013

CONTACT: Jerry L. Walker, Energy Manager, Henrico County Department of General Services
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Henrico earns fifth Go Green Award

Henrico County received a 2013 Go Green Award from the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) for demonstrating a commitment to environmentally friendly practices and sustainability in government operations.

VACo honored Henrico and six other counties Sunday, Nov. 10, during the association’s 79th annual conference in Bath County. Henrico also earned awards under the Go Green Virginia program in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012.

Henrico qualified for a 2013 award as a result of various initiatives, which include having 17 buildings registered and eight certified at the Silver level or higher under the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Henrico also meets or exceeds regulatory standards for waste management, air quality and water quality. In addition, the county conducts an annual energy symposium, offers energy-related classes at libraries and participates in Earth Day events.

The Virginia Municipal League started the Go Green Virginia program in 2007 to encourage local governments to become more energy efficient and to reduce the costs of providing services. VACo, which supports county officials and represents the interests of counties in Virginia, has participated since 2009.

In addition to Henrico, the counties of Albemarle, Arlington, Chesterfield, Frederick, James City and York received a 2013 Go Green Award.

November 8, 2013

CONTACT: Gerald M. McKenna, Director, Henrico County Public Library
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Henrico County Public Library receives Star Library honor

Henrico County Public Library (HCPL) earned a Star Library designation from Library Journal based on national rankings that consider per-capita circulation, visits, program attendance and public computer access.

HCPL received a Star Library honor for the first time and was among six library systems in Virginia and 263 libraries or library systems in the United States recognized in 2013.

Library Journal, a national publication for library professionals, has compiled its list of Star Libraries annually since 2008. For 2013, Library Journal rated a total of 7,572 public libraries across the country and awarded Star Library status to the top 30 libraries in groups with similar levels of expenditure. Henrico was one of three libraries in Virginia to receive a four-star rating, which is the second highest class.

“We are proud to serve a community that recognizes the value of a strong public library system,” said Gerald M. McKenna, director of Henrico County Public Library. “The Star Library recognition reflects the important role that Henrico libraries play in the lives of our residents.”

In Henrico, library patrons checked out 3.8 million items during more than 2 million visits to HCPL's 10 locations in fiscal year 2012-13.

Also recognized from Virginia were Arlington Department of Libraries, Arlington; Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church; Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg; Loudoun County Public Library, Leesburg; and Williamsburg Regional Library, Williamsburg.

For information on the Star Library ratings, go to www.lj.libraryjournal.com.