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## Virginia Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) Names Award Winners

**STAUNTON, VA** – The **Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC)** announced several award recipients at its annual Summer Conference held last week in Staunton, VA.

The VAPDC awarded **Mike Hawkins, Virginia Housing** (retired) the **2022 Robert W. Baker Achievement Award**. This award recognizes persons who have been involved in planning district commission activities and who have contributed significantly to promoting regional planning and development, while impacting more than one planning district commission. Hawkins spent 16 years with Virginia Housing, including eight years as its Managing Director of Community Outreach. “Mike’s leadership at Virginia Housing has been in alignment with VAPDC, personally and professionally and he has been a tremendous champion of PDCs across Virginia”, said Martha Heeter, PlanRVA Executive Director in her nomination of Hawkins. “This is a well-deserving recognition of him, as well as of the Virginia Housing team, and for the investment that Virginia Housing has made across our regions, particularly this past year.”

**Jim Baldwin** received the **Gordon N. Dixon Achievement Award**, recognizing his 50 years at the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CCPDC). “Jim began his career at the CPPDC in 1972 as a planner, and in 2006, became the executive director, continuing a long career leading collaborative and cooperative initiatives in the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell,” said Martha Heeter, PlanRVA Executive Director. Baldwin continues to serve CPPDC as CEO until his formal retirement later this year. The Dixon Award recognizes an executive director or a commissioner who has provided leadership and made outstanding contributions to promoting the concept of regionalism in Virginia.

The **President’s Award** was presented to **Robert K. 'Bob' Coiner**, who has devoted much of the past two decades to public service and has championed the role and importance of regional coordination across Virginia and the country. Coiner has served as Mayor of the Town of Gordonsville since 2004. He joined the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) in 2005 and has served as Chair of the RRRRC on two separate occasions. Also a past president of the Virginia Municipal League and VAPDC, Coiner joined the VAPDC Board in 2012. During his time as President of VML and of VAPDC, he actively sought to bring those two organizations into closer collaboration. “Bob is a true public servant,” said VAPDC President Kim Callis. “He has made outstanding contributions to VAPDC and we are grateful for his ongoing passion and dedication to regionalism and the work of PDCs.”

The **Robert M. deVoursney Best Practices Award** was presented to two PDCs, the **George Washington Regional Commission's Continuum of Care**, and the **New River Valley Regional Commission's Business Continuity Team**. The Best Practices Award recognizes organizations that have initiated innovative regional activities which have contributed significantly to the effectiveness of a region.

**The George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC)** reported recently that the entire homeless population of Planning District 16 is now sheltered and has a safe place to quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic. The GWRC managed the local Continuum of Care, the planning body that coordinates housing and services for the area homeless population, and also was in partnership with the Rappahannock Health District, the Medical Reserve Corps and area hospitals to ensure that those who test positive for COVID-19 and cannot safely isolate at home have somewhere else to go.

**The New River Valley Business Continuity Team (BCT)** was developed through a collaboration of the New River Valley Public Health Task Force and began working under New River Valley Regional Commission in August of 2020. The team consists of a Public Health Director, Public Schools Health Liaison and a Program Manager. The BCT provided services for businesses, public schools and childcare facilities to navigate and operate in the COVID environment to keep the region's workers both safe and productive. This project demonstrated the effectiveness of a team that is able to act as a trusted resource for businesses seeking information regarding not only COVID-19, but other public health concerns, and acting as a clear communicator accessible to businesses.

Planning District Commissions (PDCs) were enabled by state legislation in 1968 and most were established the following year. There are 21 PDCs and Regional Commissions in Virginia made up of elected officials and citizens appointed by local government. The purpose of the Planning District Commissions is to encourage and facilitate regional solutions to problems of area-wide significance. This is done by promoting the efficient development of the physical, social, and economic policies of all districts by assisting local governments to plan for the future. The PDCs of Virginia created the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions to share best practices, and further regionalism across the Commonwealth.

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