



**“Clean Cities”
City of Charlotte
Solid Waste Services**

Solid Waste Services (SWS), one of the City of Charlotte’s 14 departments, is arguably one of the most visible departments within the City. Whether it’s a rainy spring day or the cold of winter, Charlotte residents can count on Solid Waste Services to provide garbage and trash collection to approximately 212,000 residents in the City per week.

Since 2007, the City of Charlotte's Environmental Cabinet's aim has been to reduce environmental burdens from business activities and promote green purchasing practices throughout the City. Following this initiative, SWS incorporated alternative-fueled refuse vehicles into the fleet in October 2010 by acquiring two compressed natural gas (CNG) automated refuse vehicles.

Currently, there are ten CNG refuse trucks in service. Five additional units are on order and will be in service by the first quarter of FY15. Plans are to have 20 by the end of the FY15.

As a next step, SWS has plans to install, by the end of FY15, time-fill fueling where their fleet is parked overnight so that trucks are fueled and ready to go each morning, avoiding costs of time and fuel to travel to an offsite fueling location. Fuel savings are currently over \$150,000 annually and the trucks displaced approximately 86,000 gasoline gallon equivalents of fuel and 160 tons of greenhouse gases in 2013 alone.



City of Charlotte’s Solid Waste Services has ten compressed natural gas (CNG) automated refuse vehicles in service.

Thank you to all our Excellence Award judges!

George Arena

Mr. Arena served on the Lincoln County Planning Board from 2006-2008, and was elected and served as a commissioner in Lincoln County from 2008-2012. During that time, he was also a CCOG Board Delegate and served as its Treasurer in 2011 and 2012. He continues to serve on the Centralina Economic Development Council as Vice Chairman and as a private member. During his business career, George was a division manager for a large north-eastern U.S. Architecture/Engineering firm, and he was a cofounder and CEO of Microwave Data Systems, a high tech manufacturer of data telemetry microwave radios for electric utilities, oil and gas companies and other public infrastructure. MDS now operates as a division of General Electric.

Bill Duston

Mr. Duston served as CCOG’s Planning Director for 27 years before retiring in 2012. He is currently doing private consulting work and is the Chief Planner with N-Focus Planning and Design. He is a past president of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (NCAPA) and previously served as Vice-President for Professional Development for NCAPA for two terms. When not engaged in planning work, Mr. Duston is an avid bird-er and has traveled across the country to further this endeavor.

Clean Cities

A separate committee reviewed and selected the winner of the Clean Cities Award. This committee included: Bryan Steiner, CCFC Stakeholder (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools), Robert Taylor, CCFC Co-Chair (City of Charlotte) [Recused], and Laurie Walker, CCFC Stakeholder (CPCC). The Clean Fuels Coalition appreciates the work of this committee and thanks them for their time and participation in the awards program.

Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)

CCOG is the state-designated lead regional organization for our nine county region and is one of 16 regional councils in the state. The organization represents 60+ county and municipal governments and encompasses a population of close to 2 million people.

Serving Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union Counties and the municipalities throughout the region.



**9TH ANNUAL
REGION OF
EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

MAY 14, 2014

BACKGROUND

Centralina COG celebrates the work of local governments in our region 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 local governments were encouraged to nominate innovative projects implemented by their jurisdictions that contribute to significant and positive advancements in the community.

A panel of impartial judges reviewed each submittal and selected award winning projects based on the following award criteria:

- Innovation and creativity
- Commitment to goals
- Contributions to regionalism
- Program successes and sustainable benefits
- Engagement of community members
- Interaction with public/private partners

Our judges this year included: George Arena, former Lincoln County Commissioner and Bill Duston, former CCOG Planning Director. A separate committee reviewed and selected the winner of the Clean Cities Award. Please read page 4 of this brochure for more details on our judges.

EXCELLENCE AWARD CATEGORIES

“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.

“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.

“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.

“Clean Cities”

The recipient of this award best recognizes the environmental and economic benefits of reducing consumption of fossil fuels. This recipient has lowered the use of traditional transportation fuels by: purchasing alternative fuel and/or fuel efficient vehicles, using alternative fuels in their fleet, implementing idle reduction policies and/or has partnered with fuel providers to expand alternative fuel availability.

**2014
EXCELLENCE
AWARD
WINNERS**

**Controlling the Cost
of Government**

Cabarrus County
*Collaborative
Technology Services
Initiative With Local
Education Agencies*

**Growing the
Economy**

Town of Davidson
“PiES” Project

**Improving
Quality of Life**

Town of Huntersville
“S.O.U.L.S.” Program

**Improving
Quality of Life**

Town of Matthews
*Sewer Pipe Art
Initiative*

Clean Cities

City of Charlotte
Solid Waste Services
*Natural Gas Use in
Fleet Refuse Trucks*

**“Controlling the Cost of Government”
Cabarrus County
Collaborative Technology Services Initiative**



Kannapolis City Schools’ technology technician John Allen inspects a server with Todd Shanley, IT Manager for Cabarrus County.

Cabarrus County Government has engaged in a strategic partnership with the Cabarrus County Schools and Kannapolis City School System for collaborative technology services (CTS). The partnership started as a way of maximizing limited technology resources. The collaboration was needed because state technology funding for school districts had been virtually eliminated. However, it was essential for the schools to keep providing digital resources to students and staff.

The partnership has resulted in the implementation of an Inter local agreement between both school systems and the County. Also, a CTS team has been formed with financial and technology representatives from the three agencies to ensure that funds for technology are directed toward enterprise priorities. The CTS team works to implement IT strategies and resource allocations that support the strategic vision and goals of each agency.

The initiative was recently recognized by the National School Boards Association with a first place prize in the nationwide Magna Award competition.

**“Improving Quality of Life”
Town of Huntersville
“S.O.U.L.S.” Program**

Through the years, the Town of Huntersville has built numerous parks and recreation facilities to meet growing demands and needs. However, while the parks and recreation department offers numerous opportunities in senior programs, one area of the town’s recreation portfolio that lacked specific offerings for seniors was at the Huntersville Family Fitness & Aquatics (HFFA).

The S.O.U.L.S. (Seniors: Older, United & Living Stronger) program through HFFA supports seniors through special programming that connects them with local resources, assists them in navigating within the medical and local community, increases health awareness and encourages positive healthy behaviors.

The program provides three key areas of service: Fitness, Education/Screenings and Social Activities. These three areas of service contribute to the Town’s ability to create lifelong communities and helps to foster a high quality of life, regardless of age or disability.

The S.O.U.L.S. program is expected to continue to grow and the program’s strategic planning team is currently working with local medical professionals to help expand service offerings.



S.O.U.L.S. participant receiving specialized training to help improve health and physical functioning.

**“Growing the Economy”
Town of Davidson
“PiES” Project**

The Project for Innovation, Energy and Sustainability (PiES) is a small-business incubator in the Town of Davidson that targets companies in the green energy and sustainability industries and provides office space and business guidance and services from business counselors and academic advisors.

PiES provides a structure for start-up and early stage *green businesses* to assist them through the various phases of business development. The PiES incubator helps innovators and entrepreneurs create jobs in the new economy with emphasis on recycling, energy efficiency, renewable energy, green buildings, sustainable food and other qualified green businesses.

The Project’s mission includes three key elements: Incubation, Education & Networking.

The Project is a public-private partnership between the Town of Davidson, Lake Norman Economic Development Corporation and Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce.



**“Improving Quality of Life”
Town of Matthews
Sewer Pipe Art Initiative**

Upon the opening of the Town of Matthew’s Four Mile Creek Greenway, Town officials were looking for ways to improve the greenway’s aesthetics. However, due to the recession, there were very little funds for “extras” on the trail. The sewer pipes along the Greenway provided the perfect opportunity for the Town’s Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department to collaborate with local artists to enhance the space.

As with many greenways, much of the path travels along a sewer easement. Thus, there are methane pipes and manhole covers along much of the greenway. These pipes were an eyesore and stuck out when compared to the new, beautiful greenway.

Utilizing the talents of local artists, the Town worked to beautify the appearance of the pipes. The Town started the project with roughly 25 paintable locations and had 12-15 local artists transform the pipes and manholes into whimsical art pieces.

The project is recognized as an all-around win-win for the community—the artists are proud to have their work on “display” in the Town, citizens have a much more aesthetically pleasing experience while traveling the greenway and the Town was able to expand its public art initiative.



"The Upside Down Flower" by Diane Ramirez-Harrison



One of a Pair of Giraffes from Vicky Kaseorg