



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LOUISA COUNTY RECEIVES HONORS IN VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
2021 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PROGRAM**

LOUISA, VIRGINIA – The County of Louisa is pleased to announce that the Louisa County Public Schools’ Wireless on Wheels (W.O.W.) initiative is a Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) 2021 achievement awards program winner. This latest recognition marks the fifth time Louisa has received a VACo achievement award in the past six years.

The award-winning W.O.W. program has provided internet accessibility for online learning opportunities since 2020, when the pandemic intensified the need for remote instruction. W.O.W. is comprised of solar-powered Wi-Fi hotspots capable of supporting multiple devices simultaneously within a 200ft radius. The hotspots offer free service 24/7 and are positioned so that no resident has more than a 20-minute drive from a location. Google mapping is used to communicate hotspot locations.

“I commend our schools for their rapid and innovative response to a significant need in the community,” said County Administrator Christian Goodwin. “As has been the case so many times in the past, a challenge was viewed as an opportunity for Louisa to lead once again.”

The program was created thanks to a collaborative partnership between the school’s Technology department and Career & Technical Education department. Both departments worked together to design and build an inaugural fleet of 12 W.O.W. units. With the successful deployment and implementation of the initial hotspots, Louisa County High School Career & Technical Education students are now building additional W.O.W. units.

“I am so proud of our team for stepping up to the plate and finding a unique and innovative way to address a need that many in our community have,” said Doug Straley, superintendent for Louisa County Public Schools. “We are a community that always comes together to make the magic happen. And now, to see our students actually building these units themselves, it’s an incredible experience and it’s a testament to the type of positive mindset we have here in Louisa County.”

Building the W.O.W. units in the classroom not only strengthens student engineering skills, but provides a valuable service to the community until high-speed Internet is more widely available through another County initiative. Louisa announced earlier this year it is actively working with Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) and Dominion Energy and their partner Firefly Fiber BroadbandSM to lay fiber based on existing electric facilities. The entire fiber build is slated for completion in Louisa County by the end of 2025.

To learn more about Louisa County's W.O.W. program, visit <https://W.O.W..lcps.k12.va.us/>. To see the VACo winners from across the state of Virginia, visit <https://www.vaco.org/county-profiles/achievement-awards/>.

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