

Macomb County programs lead Michigan for 26th year

Macomb County proved again that inventive government programs and services lead to a high quantity of "Achievement Awards" from the National Association of Counties.

Macomb County earned 16 NACo awards in 2007 - best among Michigan's 83 counties for the 26th consecutive year. Macomb tied for fourth nationally, behind only San Diego and Los Angeles counties in California, and Mecklenburg County (Charlotte), North Carolina. Miami Dade County, Florida, and Montgomery County, Maryland, earned the same number of awards as Macomb County.

Macomb County won 542 NACo awards over the 26 years it's led the state.

"Our employees, department heads and elected officials deserve all the credit for identifying new ways to improve services and help people in need," said William Crouchman, chair of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. "It is a truly remarkable achievement for our government to perform at this level for so many years."

The NACo awards are presented to county government programs that demonstrate exemplary management and innovative service delivery at maximum cost efficiency.

Macomb County's 16 awards this year will be entered into a national database that details successful programs for other counties to emulate.

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The county won awards in seven categories: Children and Youth; Civic Education and Public Information; Court Administration and Management; Environmental Protection and Energy; Health; Human Services, and Information Technology.

A formal awards presentation sponsored by the Board of Commissioners will be held in October.

Here is a list of Macomb's award winners:

■ Children and Youth

Michigan State University Extension-Macomb, for "Proud Equestrian," a program matching volunteers with physically challenged horseback riders.

■ Civic Education and Public Information

Clerk/Register of Deeds Office for "Student Election Inspectors Learn and Earn with Optical Scan Voting"; Juvenile Court for "Next Steps Program," a successful rehabilitation program for young sex offenders; Department of Senior Citizen Services for "Senior Crime Victim Liaison," a project providing individual assistance for navigating the judicial system, and referrals for addi-

tional help for coping with the aftermath of a crime; Sheriff's Office for "Volunteer Internet Investigators Assist Law Enforcement Apprehend Online Predator," a program using volunteers to find and prosecute people who troll the Internet for victims.

■ Court Administration and Management

Macomb County Court Administration for "The Collection Improvement Initiative," a concerted effort to more aggressively recoup a variety of court costs from defendants.

■ Environmental Protection and Energy

Public Works Commissioner's Office for "Imagine the Possibilities Recycling Contest," a project promoting reducing, reusing and recycling.

■ Health

Senior Citizen Services for "Discount Dental Program," a plan that provides dental service discounts to people who enroll for \$69 per year; Health Department for "Facility Dye Testing Program," a project that helps keep waterways clean by tracking wastewater discharges and correcting problems; Health Department, with support from the Sheriff's Office and Senior Citizen Services, for "Family Safe and Environmentally

Responsible Medication Disposal," a program that encourages proper disposal of unwanted medications to keep them out of groundwater; Senior Citizen Services for "Medication Assistance Through Prescription Resource Network," which helps eligible seniors obtain needed medications

■ Human Services

Macomb County Community Services Agency for "Creating a Community Connection Day for the Homeless," a county-wide endeavor to provide services and referrals for the homeless, or those in danger of homelessness, on the same day that a census of the homeless population is taken; Senior Citizens Services for "Legal Assistance Program," which provides a comprehensive system of assistance and referrals for vulnerable older people; Community Mental Health Services for "Project Phoenix," a program that provides support and healing to people who lose loved ones to suicide.

■ Information Technology

Clerk/Register of Deeds Office for "Internet Campaign Finance Reports Promote Public Disclosure"; Clerk/Register of Deeds Office for "Birth Certificate Verification Via Internet Reduces Paperwork while Thwarting Terrorism".