

Gary D. Blevins
Chairman of the Board

468 New Market Blvd.
Boone, NC 28607

Brenda Lyerly
Vice-Chairman

www.regiond.org



Johnny Riddle
Secretary

Voice: 800-735-8262

Valerie Jaynes
Treasurer

Phone: 828-265-5434
Fax: 828-265-5439

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 8, 2015

For More Information:
Tanna Greathouse, Clerk to the Board
Phone: 828-265-5434 ext.101
Email: tgreathouse@regiond.org

PRESS RELEASE

High Country Council of Governments Present Awards at Annual Banquet

The 41st Annual Banquet was a time to celebrate service, dedication, consensus, relationships, and cooperation among local governments and stakeholders. During the event, local elected officials, government employees, and board members were recognized for exemplary leadership and service.

(Boone, NC) – On September 4, 2015, High Country Council of Governments (Region D) held its annual awards banquet to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions by elected officials, local government employees, and advisory committee members.

High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) is a planning and development agency serving local governments in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties.

Award winners were selected by elected and appointed officials from the seven-county region.

HCCOG Executive Director, Dr. Mickey Duvall, presented the first four of the awards.

Alleghany County Manager Don Adams was recognized by the region's managers and administrators as this year's Outstanding Local Government Manager in the High Country region.

The award acknowledges the contributions a manager has made to local government through his/her professionalism, leadership, and accomplishments as manager or chief administrator.

Adams has served Alleghany County as its manager for 18 years, and was nominated for his fair and forward-thinking judgement. He serves on numerous boards and commissions to further advance the needs of Alleghany County citizens, and accomplishes great things by always looking for ways to do things better for less cost

without harming citizens or employees. Nominators describe Adams as a pleasure to work with, extremely knowledgeable, and has excellent visioning skills.

Watauga County resident, Dr. Ed Rosenberg, was recognized as this year's Outstanding Senior Tar Heel Legislature / Advisory Committee on Aging member. Dr. Rosenberg has served as the alternate for Watauga County since 2010. He was the first chair of the NC Gerontology Consortium which was the first group to organize and make available online gerontology courses across the state. Dr. Rosenberg has published in numerous gerontology journals and reference works, and currently serves on the Watauga County Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee.

The NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature consists of two representatives from each county who advocate for the needs of older adults to the North Carolina General Assembly. The High Country delegation also serves as the Advisory Committee on Aging for the region.

Wilkesboro Mayor Mike Inscore was recognized as this year's Outstanding Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Member by his fellow board members. This award recognizes an individual's contribution to the region as a whole and their knowledge of the region's transportation needs.

Mayor Inscore has served on the RTAC for 4 years with superb attendance. He's a very active and engaging member of the committee and represents it well. As a member of his county's Comprehensive Transportation Plan Steering Committee, he has provided, and continues to provide, valuable input from a local perspective.

Ashe County resident Rhonda Herman received the Outstanding Workforce Development Board Member award from her peers on the board. The High Country Workforce Development Board is a volunteer group of business and community leaders charged with developing regional workforce policy. Members support and encourage the local economy by working together to build a stronger workforce.

Herman has been a board member since July 2012, and led efforts to create a region-wide comprehensive labor market report that was released in 2013. In the same year, she helped develop and implement a regional strategic plan for workforce development.

Herman has advocated for the High Country Workforce Development Board during multiple trips to Washington, DC and served as the board's chair for the 2014-2015 program year.

Executive Board Chairman and Wilkes County Commissioner, Gary D. Blevins, presented the next two awards, and applauded all local government officials, local

committee members, and citizen volunteers for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

West Jefferson Mayor Dale Baldwin was recognized by elected officials as the Outstanding Local Government Elected Official in the High Country region. The award honors outstanding leadership and service to the community and region by a town or county elected official.

Mayor Baldwin began his career in local government in 1968 as Alderman for the Town of West Jefferson, and he served in that role for 15 years.

His service continued as Mayor of West Jefferson for a total of 14 years – and he happens to be the 2nd longest term mayor in West Jefferson during its 100-year history. As a public servant, he has passionately advocated for his town and the surrounding High Country. In 2008 he received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine from the Governor.

The High Country Council of Governments' Executive Board chose Yancey County Commissioner Johnny Riddle as their Outstanding Executive Board Member. This award honors service and effort in promoting cooperation among local governments in the region and the state.

Riddle has served on the Executive Board for 5 years, and currently serves as Secretary. He has served his county for 7 years as a Commissioner – with 5 of those as Chair.

Commissioner Riddle is described by his nominators as having the ability to listen to different perspectives and come up with solutions all parties can agree to. He's a problem-solver, coalition builder, and genuinely cares about what's best for people in his county and the region.

HCCOG would like to congratulate all award recipients and thank them for their dedicated service to High Country citizens.

###

