

News Release

Four Board programs honored with 2021 NACo Achievement Awards

Initiatives include school hotline, senior lifeline program and environmental efforts

June 1, 2021, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – Four Oakland County Board of Commissioners (BOC) programs have been honored with 2021 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The Safe for School Hotline, Oakland Together Lifeline Program, Native Plant Initiative, and the Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose Pilot Program will all be recognized during NACo’s 2021 Annual Conference and Exposition in July. The awards highlight innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

“It is wonderful to receive national recognition for programs the Board launched in the midst of a pandemic,” Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak) said. “I am proud that these programs stand as examples to counties around the country, whether they’re looking to support children and educators, keep seniors connected, or improve upon their sustainability efforts. These awards are a testament to our commissioners and staff.”

The BOC launched the **Safe for School Hotline** in the fall of 2020, in partnership with Beaumont Health, to assist parents and guardians by pre-screening and identifying potential illness in students prior to entering a school. Over the course of two months, healthcare professionals answered questions about COVID-19 symptoms, the need for testing and high-risk circumstances when sending a child into a school facility. The hotline also referred some callers to the county’s Health Division or other healthcare providers for additional follow-up.

The **Oakland Together Lifeline Program** has been piloted at select senior living residences across Oakland County to reduce isolation among seniors during the pandemic. Through the program, residents are given Amazon Echo Show devices and trained on how to use them for basic tasks. Participants use the devices to speak with and see family members who may be unable to visit, ask Alexa for information and more.

“Commissioners have worked hard throughout the pandemic to establish programs that support residents during this challenging time,” Commissioner **Kristen Nelson** (D-Waterford Twp.) said. “It’s

really exciting to be part of an ambitious Board that's making such a visible impact and giving people the tools to create change within their communities.”

The **Native Plant Initiative** was established in the summer of 2020 to educate residents on the benefits of native plant species and provide them with tools to take action in their own gardens. The program encourages Oakland County residents to sign an environmental stewardship pledge and then provides them with native flora and information on how to care for them. Residents learn about flora that is indigenous to Michigan so they can plant them in their own gardens to restore damage caused by invasive and non-native species while promoting the benefits of native gardens.

The BOC's **Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose (CD3) Pilot Program**, which was established in the summer of 2020, uses mobile boat cleaning stations to empower Oakland County water enthusiasts to do their part in protecting local waterways. The stations help users clean, drain and dry their watercraft, plus dispose of any living organisms (plant or animal) that may be clinging to the crafts. For the 2021 season, one station is placed at Dodge Park #4 (Cass Lake) and the second will be moved around based on community request and need.

“Over the past year, county officials and frontline employees have demonstrated bold, inspirational leadership,” NACo President Gary Moore said. “This year's Achievement Award winning programs illustrate the innovative ways counties build healthy, safe and vibrant communities across America.”

Started in 1970, NACo's annual Achievement Awards program is designed to recognize county government innovations. Each nominee is judged on its own merits and not against other applications received. In total, Oakland County received 12 NACo Achievement Awards in 2021.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

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