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## News Release

### For Immediate Release

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### Roanoke County Recognized for Model Programs

**(Roanoke County, VA—August 28, 2019)** The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) has awarded Roanoke County two Achievement Awards, which recognize excellence in local government programs. Of the near 100 submissions from across the state, only 26 were selected. Winning entries focused on addressing high-priority community issues that challenge counties today.

Roanoke County earned Best Large County Achievement for its library program “Meeting You at Your Wonder.” The Library identified a top priority was addressing the changing needs brought about by the technological revolution. Roanoke County’s Public Library became the first in America to recruit Pepper, the humanoid robot, launching the library system into the national spotlight, and establishing them as an industry leader in Artificial Intelligence, robotics, and coding. Library staff formed new partnerships in the community, created more sophisticated tech programming and grew their reach. Approximately 7,000 people in the Roanoke and library communities have been exposed to AI and coding.

Roanoke County also earned an Achievement Award for its Public Schools Planning Workshop program. A collaboration between Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke and Roanoke County Public Schools, the program met the goal of soliciting public input from residents, including students and teachers, under age 50 while simultaneously exposing them to the planning profession. The input received tied into the County’s Oak Grove Center Plan which envisions future development, transportation and public amenities in small group mapping exercises. The collaboration has opened the door for future regional cooperation and planning efforts.

The VACo Achievement Awards is a competitive program open to local government members of the association.

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