



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact
Karen Acar Thayer, APR
703-255-6330 | Office
571-263-4035 | Cell

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Town of Vienna Receives Top Award for Excellence

At its annual conference in Leesburg this week, the Virginia Municipal Association (VML) announced the Town of Vienna as the winner of this year's President's Award, the organization's highest honor for innovative solutions by a local government. This honor is in addition to Town Manager Mercury Payton's selection as the VML Local Champion Award winner for initiating Liberty Amendments Month, which was announced in September.

"This is such a great honor for the Town of Vienna and a testament to our collective efforts to work collaboratively with our organizations and residents to find meaningful ways to enhance the quality of life in our community," said Vienna Mayor Linda Colbert. "That community spirit is the reason the Town of Vienna is so special, and it's a proud day for our hometown."

Town Manager Mercury Payton received the inaugural VML Local Champion Innovation Award for his idea to have a community celebration of the Constitutional Amendments that give all citizens a say in how they are governed, regardless of their culture, gender or station in life. The Liberty Amendments Month concept quickly caught on as non-profit groups, businesses and individuals throughout the community organized related activities. By the end of the observance from Juneteenth to July 19, 2021, more than 21,000 people attended 65 educational and commemorative events in the 4.4-square-mile Town of Vienna.

"I was troubled by the racial strife our nation experienced in the summer of 2020, and I came up with the idea after Juneteenth was declared a state holiday," Payton said. "I saw it as an opportunity to bring our Town together for a teachable moment, and I am humbled by VML's recognition of the idea and the community effort it took to bring it to fruition."

VML is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of city, town and county governments established in 1905 to assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education and other services. The membership includes 213 Virginia cities, towns and counties. The organization received nearly 70 award nominations and selected just one winner in each of eight categories.

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