



NEWS RELEASE

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Economic Development Director Named Exceptional Leader

Town of Vienna Economic Development Director Natalie Monkou is among those named today as one of Northern Virginia's 40 Under 40 honorees. The annual recognition is presented by the Leadership Center for Excellence and Leadership Fairfax, and it recognizes young professionals who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in their profession. All will be recognized at a virtual event on Friday, March 24, and at an in-person reception later that evening for honorees only.

"The Northern Virginia 40 Under 40 event serves as both a celebration and an annual reminder of the need for leaders who work daily to effect change, collaborate with others, and create a positive impact within their community," said Lisa Fikes, President and CEO of the Leadership Center for Excellence.

Monkou is being recognized for her eight years of leadership to improve the quality of life, experiences and services for residents, visitors and business owners within Northern Virginia, especially the Town of Vienna (Fairfax County), where she has served for the past three years, and in Arlington County, where she served as business development manager before moving to Vienna.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Monkou facilitated the distribution of \$1 million to assist Vienna businesses struggling as a result of the health crisis. Through her work and with direction from the Town Council, Vienna was able to leverage this amount through a partnership with Fairfax County, which provided \$2.76 million in emergency relief to 254 Vienna businesses and nonprofit organizations through the county's RISE Grant program.

"Vienna's quality of life is directly connected to the health of its business community, and Natalie Monkou was masterful in her approach to supporting businesses through the pandemic," said Town Manager Mercury Payton. "Because of her leadership, many businesses were able to weather the storm, and this is just one of many examples why she is most worthy of being named to the 40 under 40 list of exceptional leaders."

Monkou's Town leadership also contributed to successful partnerships between the Vienna Business Association, Patrick Henry Library and the Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives. Over the last three years, these organizations have worked together to provide small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs expertise in a variety of topics including finance, HR support, marketing, and website creation through their Ignite educational series.

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