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TWO COUNTY INITIATIVES NAMED 'BRILLIANT IDEAS' BY NACo

NEWTON, NC – Two Catawba County initiatives have been selected as two of the 100 Brilliant Ideas at Work from the National Association of Counties (NACo). As part of NACo President Bryan Desloge's presidential initiative, the 100 Brilliant Ideas illustrate the best innovations in county government.

NACo recognized Catawba County Library's Born to Read initiative, a partnership with local hospitals and the Catawba County Partnership for Children to help improve kindergarten readiness and overall educational attainment in Catawba County. The Library presents early literacy training to expectant parents during prenatal classes. Before leaving the birthing center, parents of newborns receive a Born to Read Bag, complete with baby's first book and library card, along with plenty of information resources to give their baby a head start on early literacy with immediate access to thousands of online resources, including children's books, movies and music. The Library continues to support our youngest citizens through special collections, Baby Bounce and Ready to Learn story times, as well as outreach and education that positively reinforce early literacy development.

NACo also recognized Catawba County Geospatial Information Services (GIS) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for the creation of a map-based simulation tool to analyze EMS incident response scenarios and accurately predict necessary EMS resources to meet the County's under-eight-minute ambulance response benchmark. This collaborative tool has helped ensure efficient services to citizens without coverage gaps, minimal overhead cost for evaluating dispatch procedures, and better data analysis for prudent budget and resource allocation.

Both initiatives were also honored with NACo Achievement Awards earlier this year, along with the Library's Homework Helpers program and Social Services' Drug Screening Referral Portal.

"We appreciate NACo's recognition of our employees' efforts to create innovative solutions for local needs," said Catawba County Manager Mick Berry. "These programs are making a difference in people's lives, and we hope that this recognition will enable other communities to benefit from these ideas."

NACo President Bryan Desloge said, "These brilliant ideas can serve as examples for counties across the country. Though no two of America's 3,069 counties are exactly alike, many face similar challenges and can learn from one another's ideas and experiences."

The 100 Brilliant Ideas are showcased in an interactive, online publication on www.naco.org that serves as a resource for counties pursuing similar objective.

Each of the 100 entries were selected from the top [NACo Achievement Awards](#) in 18 different categories that reflect the vast services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice, county administration, information technology, health, civic engagement and many more. Started in 1970, NACo's annual Achievement Award Program is designed to recognize innovative county government programs. Each nominee is judged on its own merits and not against other applications received.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. Learn more at www.naco.org

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