



VEMA 2022 Awards

[Opening Remarks: Provide any opening comments you would like to make.

Consider touching on being able to present awards in person and recognize EM professionals in front of their peers.]

Adam Ward
Public
Information
Excellence
Award –
Winners

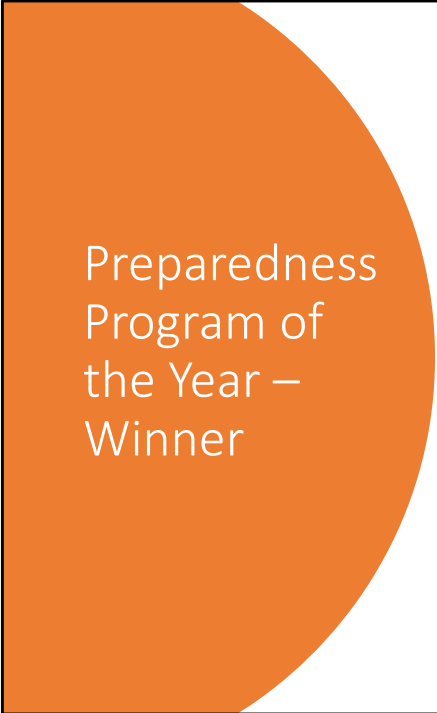
Hannah Winant

Chesterfield County
Communications and
Media Team

All three nominations were extremely close this year, resulting in a tie between winners Hannah Winant and the Chesterfield County Communications and Media team.

Hannah Winant is the Public Affairs Manager for the Arlington County Department of Public Safety, Communications, and Emergency Management. Her nomination recognized the extensive work she had done in supporting public health and emergency communications through inclusive methods, social media, TV, radio, virtual town halls, and the exceptional reach and positive impact her efforts had on the community. She is a valuable resource to all departments in her County.

The Chesterfield County Communications and Media team share a long, collaborative partnership in the County that evolved with the pandemic through trust and confidence in one another. They worked together to share important messages, identify and correct misinformation, and providing residents with actionable information that reduced confusion and frustration. They completed many impactful pandemic activities while sharing preparedness and emergency-related information.



Preparedness
Program of
the Year –
Winner

Emergency Management Alliance of
Central Virginia &
Richmond Flying Squirrels



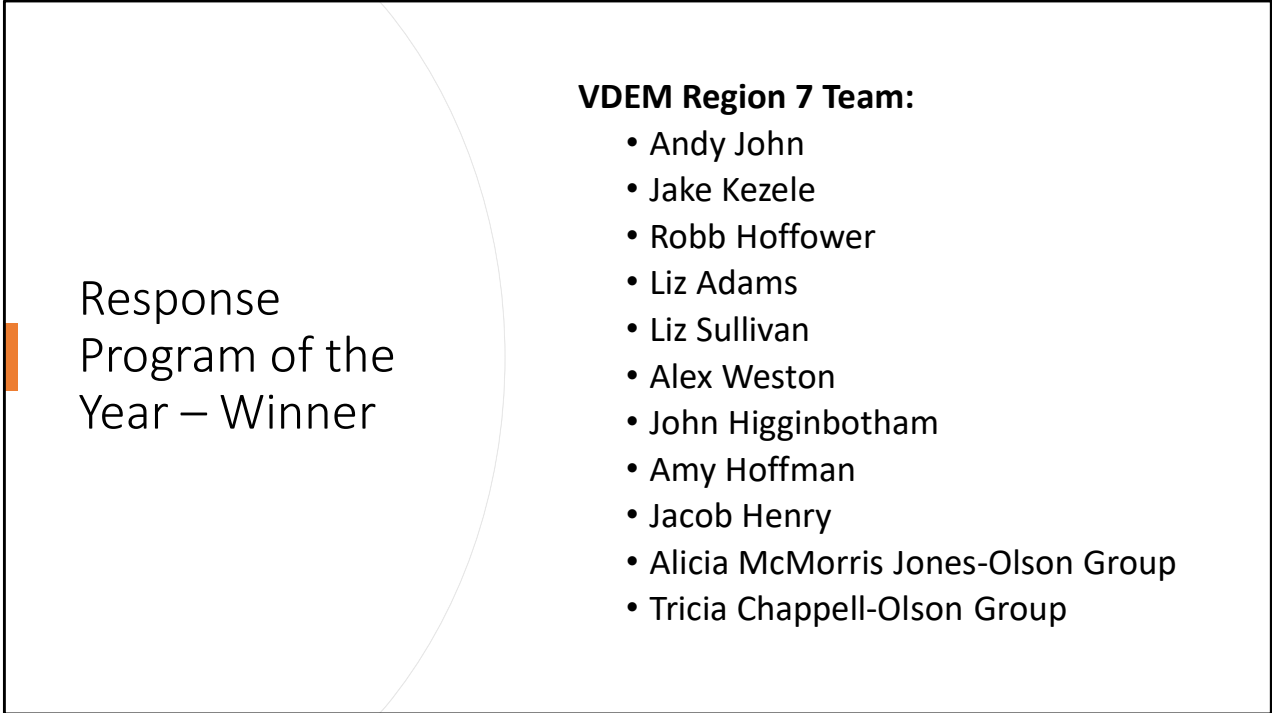
This year's award recipient is the Emergency Management Alliance of Central Virginia and the Richmond Flying squirrels, who worked together to promote community preparedness throughout the season. They held preparedness themed months for pet preparedness, fireworks safety, and severe weather preparedness. Throughout the season, the Flying Squirrels featured tips, infographics, and trivia during games that engaged the public in learning more about preparedness in Central Virginia and had their mascot build their own kit as part of this whole community outreach campaign. They created videos and outreach materials to continue to engage folks in preparedness to extend beyond game attendees and exemplify the success of a highly effective preparedness program and its impact on the community.



This year's award winner is the Health Equity Leadership Task Force.

Although this category can be difficult to nominate for in an ongoing pandemic response, the awards committee is extremely pleased to present this award to the Health Equity Leadership Task Force.

Led by Curtis Brown, the COVID-19 Health Equity Leadership Taskforce and led efforts to equitably distribute more than one million cloth masks and more than 830,000 bottles of hand sanitizer to vulnerable populations. They also delivered personal protective equipment (PPE) through the Health Equity Pilot Project, developed hyperlocal vaccine outreach program in marginalized communities, and implemented equity training for Unified Command and local government partners. This allowed underserved communities a chance to start their recovery process before the next outbreak and directly contributed to the ongoing recovery from COVID-19 in communities across Virginia.



Response
Program of the
Year – Winner

VDEM Region 7 Team:

- Andy John
- Jake Kezele
- Robb Hoffower
- Liz Adams
- Liz Sullivan
- Alex Weston
- John Higginbotham
- Amy Hoffman
- Jacob Henry
- Alicia McMorris Jones-Olson Group
- Tricia Chappell-Olson Group

This year's award is given to the VDEM Region 7 Team, which consists of:

Andy John
Jake Kezele
Robb Hoffower
Liz Adams
Liz Sullivan
Alex Weston
John Higginbotham
Amy Hoffman
Jacob Henry
Alicia McMorris Jones-Olson Group
Tricia Chappell-Olson Group

This award is given in recognition of the team's work in responding to rapidly developing situation in the country of Afghanistan as evacuees entered the country through the US Embassy in Afghanistan. The Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Repatriation Plan was activated and the Region 7 team responded with the support of VDEM headquarters, VDEM regional staff, federal agencies, other regional partners from VDH, VDSS, the American Red Cross, MWAA, Fairfax County DEMS, and Loudoun County OEM. These

partners began working 24 hours a day/7 days a week in the Emergency Repatriation Center (ERC) to help not only American citizens but the citizens of Afghanistan reach safety on US soil.

During the entire operation, and especially the first several days, VDEM Region VII helped coordinate almost every aspect of the response, bringing in key partners to fill operational gaps. From command and control, to planning and logistics, the Region VII team met the challenge, even making the decision to request opening a State Transfer Point at NoVA Community College to address the massive influx of evacuees that needed support. Overall, the mission brought in approximately 53,000 persons, 44 dogs, of which many utilized ERC services. The incredible teamwork displayed by the VDEM Region VII team exemplified what emergency management is all about: coordination and compassion.

Mitigation
Program of
the Year –
Winner

Danielle Spach

This year's award is presented to Danielle Spach.

Danielle serves as the Mitigation Program Manager in the Virginia Beach Office of Emergency Management. In 2021, she hit the ground running with continuing efforts to maintain Virginia Beach OEM's mitigation program which includes grants and project management of four Flood Mitigation Assistance grants through VDEM/FEMA totaling over 25 elevation or acquisition projects across the city. Danielle also serves as the City's project manager and lead coordinator on the Hampton Roads Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan development and led numerous City stakeholder meetings to ensure our mitigation priorities and resiliency efforts are appropriately reflected in the plan. She is also overseeing the development and implementation of a City-sponsored program to assist citizens and homeowners with flood protection measures for their homes.

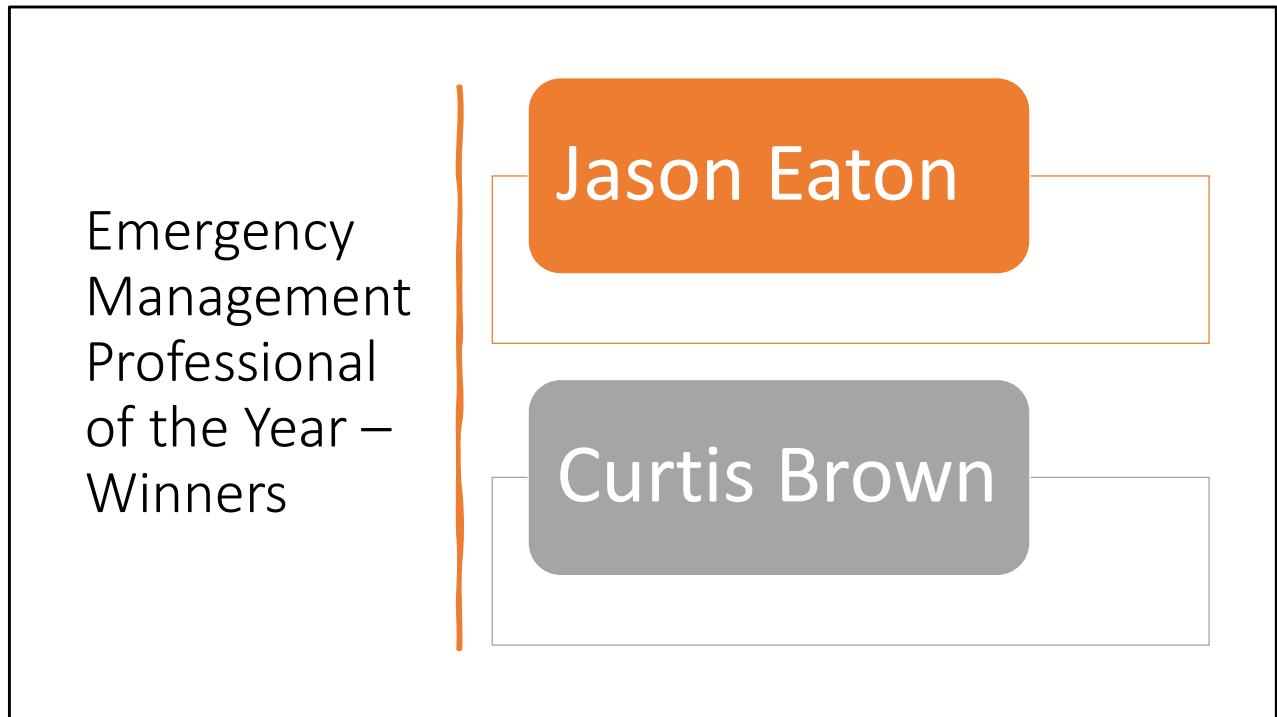
Volunteer of the Year – Winner

**Michael
Powers**

This year's Volunteer of the Year is Michael Powers.

Michael worked diligently in 2021 on an ongoing project gaining grants and donations to establish a top of the line, Fire Prevention/ Emergency Preparedness Mobile Class Room. The design and implementation was accomplished, managed, and designed solely by Mr. Powers as a member of the James City Bruton Volunteer Fire Department.

This is the first vehicle of its kind in the immediate area and possibly the only one in the State. The project has made an incredible impact in the community and is outfitted with essential response equipment to serve as a mobile command post. He continues to work towards making this vehicle a FEMA Type 2 Mobile Communication and Command Unit and is an asset in the County and for surrounding jurisdictions.



This year’s winners include a tie, recognizing Jason Eaton and Curtis Brown for their extraordinary work over the last year.

Their nominations are extensive, so we’ll try to focus on the highlights.

Jason Eaton distinguished himself and his agency during the preparation and execution of disaster logistics in support of COVID-19 response. He was the center of gravity in converting executive policy to life saving action. He overcame unprecedented supply and distribution challenges through collaboration, innovation, and extreme adaptability. Shrewdly navigating treacherous global markets, improvising effective supply chains and accounting systems, and executing on time delivery to every corner of the state, Mr. Eaton bridged impossible gaps to save lives. His tireless dedication and bold actions are heroic. He is exceptionally well deserving of this award. As the Branch Chief for Disaster Logistics at VDEM, he ensured timely delivery of personnel, facilities, services, and materials to the Commonwealth in an unprecedented time of need. Throughout his work, he established important tracking and dissemination methods, giving due attention to material acquisition and distribution to those in urgent need.

Curtis Brown is national thought leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion in emergency management, Brown has been at the forefront of using data-driven metrics to drive

equitable support to under-resourced and disproportionately impacted communities and individuals. He established the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within VDEM, a first in the nation, to drive the diversity, equity, and inclusion plan. Curtis hosted the first ever Tribal Summit in coordination with FEMA Region 3, opened dialogue between federally recognized tribes, and initiated a tribal inclusion project.

As VDEM state coordinator, Curtis significantly impacted the agency and the Commonwealth by increasing regional staffing to enhance support for local governments, spearheading efforts to fund and update the IFLOWS project, successfully provided oversight of more than \$600 million in funding – the largest infusion of disaster funding in the agency’s history, while ensuring clean audits and fiscal responsibility. And, as we know, led the agency through the ongoing pandemic response in addition to numerous other responses.

Outstanding New Emergency Management Professional

**Matt
Leicester**

This year's Outstanding New Emergency Management Professional is awarded to Matt Leicester.

His nomination states that in 2021, Matt was able to conduct a FEMA Hospital Emergency Response Team (HERT) training course that brought partners together from CHKD, Sentara, Riverside, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, and others. He was also able to sponsor and conduct the first ever armed intruder tabletop exercise for the hospital that included participation from fire, police, EMS, and other City partners. Matt conducted a Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) course for new leaders at Chesapeake Regional Healthcare and has been able to transition the hospital to a new mass notification system with an integrated virtual command center platform, allowing them to maintain social distancing during an activation. While completing all of these things, Matt continues to hold a 4.0 GPA while carrying a full-time graduate student course load at VCU, where he will graduate in May 2022 with a master's degree in Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness. In July 2021, Matt was able to receive his National Healthcare Disaster Preparedness certification and will be completing the FEMA Basic Emergency Management Academy in March 2022. He also maintains his current VEMA Associate Emergency Manager certification.

Stanley Everett Crigger Humanitarian Award – Winner

Mike Guzo

This year's Stan Crigger Humanitarian Award is presented to Mike Guzo.

Mike is a deeply respected, compassionate, and responsive leader and emergency manager. As the Region 6 Chief Regional Coordinator for VDEM, he has worked numerous responses and public health outbreaks, collaborated with other regions to support their needs, supported his staff in EMAC responses, and strengthened partnerships with public and private stakeholders. Mike goes beyond planning, response, and recovery to connect with people. When emergency managers in his region deal with loss or grief, Mike is there. When people feel disconnected or concerned, Mike is a listening ear ready to share resources and ensure his colleagues and partners can become engaged. Mike is a friend throughout the emergency management community who, on more than one occasion, has deeply moved his VDEM colleagues in the passionate way he discusses his care and concern for his region. Mike is a quiet, humble leader who has earned recognition. He has dedicated his life to public service and exemplifies the characteristics of the Stanley E. Crigger Humanitarian Award consistently and completely.