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Baldwin County earns national achievement awards for Blight Reduction Program and Animal Adoption and Rescue Program

WASHINGTON – Baldwin County, Georgia has been recognized with two Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

NACo recognized Baldwin County for its Animal Adoption and Rescue Program in the category of Civic Education and Public Information. NACo also recognized Baldwin County for its Blight Reduction Program in the category of Community and Economic Development.

“Both of these awards are a result of passionate citizens working with their county government to improve our community. The Baldwin County Government is proud to receive recognition for working with our passionate citizens to provide the best possible services. Baldwin County has much to be proud of, and our progress will continue,” shared Chairman Henry Craig.

Vice Chairman Tommy French said, “I appreciate the work that the Board of Commissioners, staff, and the citizens of Baldwin County did to improve our community. This is an honor for all the citizens of Baldwin County.”

The Animal Adoption and Rescue Program was created to elevate awareness of Baldwin County Animal Services to county residents. The program publicized the needs of the county animal shelter and encouraged residents to get involved in animal adoption. As a result of the program, Baldwin County now has a thriving adoption/rescue program with a strong volunteer presence. In 2019, the transfer/adoption/reclaim rate for dogs was 98% and 93% for cats. Due to this increase in community support, the animal shelter moved to a larger and more updated facility in December 2019 to care for more animals in need.

Commissioner Sammy Hall shared, “It is an honor for Baldwin County and our team to be recognized nationally.”

Baldwin County activated the Blight Reduction Program to reduce the number of blighted properties throughout the county. The county had on record over 300 properties that were dilapidated, abandoned,

and unsafe for living. These blighted properties were lowering property values and contributing to an increase of crime within the county. County officials worked with a taskforce to develop effective procedures to launch the program and inform community members that their properties were condemned. As a result of this program and a commitment to affect real change, Baldwin County has eliminated blight by 33%, with a goal to continue to rehabilitate more neighborhoods in the future.

“It is wonderful that we have these types of employees who can accomplish these great things. We put the ordinances in place, but the employees enforced them. I want to thank everyone who played a part in this. It is a great honor to be recognized twice in one calendar year,” noted Commissioner Emily Davis.

Commissioner Westmoreland stated, “Both of these awards are community awards. We are thankful that the citizens with unsafe houses complied with the ordinance and it did not cost the county taxpayers a cent. We thank the donors and volunteers who helped some of our underprivileged individuals in the community to come into compliance. For the Animal Adoption and Rescue Program award, we thank all of the staff, Georgia College Shelter Buddies and all of the rescue organizations that go above and beyond to place animals in forever homes.”

NACo President Mary Ann Borgeson said, “We are seeing firsthand now more than ever that counties work tirelessly to support our residents. This year’s Achievement Award-winning programs showcase how counties build healthy, safe and vibrant communities across America.”

Nationally, awards are given in 18 different categories that reflect the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, county administration, information technology, health, civic engagement and many more.

Started in 1970, NACo’s annual Achievement Awards program is designed to recognize county government innovations. Each nominee is judged on its own merits and not against other applications received.

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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