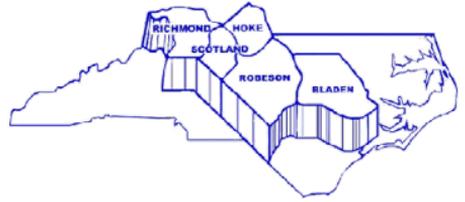


LUMBER RIVER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



2020-2021

AWARD WINNERS



30 CJ Walker Road, COMtech Park
Pembroke, NC 28372
Phone: (910) 618-5533 | Fax: (910) 521-7556

Leon Maynor Award Local Leadership

This award is named in honor of former long-term Lumber River Council of Governments Board member and Lumberton City Councilman, Leon Maynor, who passed away during his service on the LRCOG Board of Directors. Mr. Maynor was a fierce advocate for his community of West Lumberton, and strived to improve the lives of his constituents on a daily basis. This award is given in recognition of the efforts of one of our elected officials, who, like Mr. Maynor, has provided extraordinary leadership within their local community in order to improve and protect the quality of life in their community.



This year's local leader of the year has served his county as a Commissioner since 2014. His constituents say he epitomizes leadership and possesses the qualities that are required to maneuver in these challenging times. The 2021 winner of the Leon Maynor Local Leader of the Year award is Hoke County Commissioner, Harry Southerland.

During his tenure on the Hoke County Board of Commissioners, Mr. Southerland has successfully guided the county in constructing two community buildings and an agricultural building for Hoke County residents. He has also helped facilitate ongoing construction of an aquatic center for the county.

Commissioner Southerland is described as an effective communicator who always helps to resolve issues with respect and confidence. He is self-motivated, proactive, and people-orientated. Over the course of the pandemic, Commissioner Southerland has worked to ensure that his county and its residents have had access to not only essential items such as personal protective equipment, but also access to small business loans and capital to keep the Hoke County economy moving forward.

Commissioner Southerland holds a Juris Doctor from North Carolina Central University and a Bachelors in Business Administration and Management from North Carolina State University.

Congratulations, Commissioner Southerland!

Calvin Haggins Award

Outstanding LRCOG Board Member of the Year

Named in memory of the late Calvin Haggins, this award recognizes a member of the LRCOG Board of Directors who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication to the LRCOG during the past year. Mr. Haggins was a member of the Fairmont Town Council and a devoted member of the LRCOG Board of Directors. The recipient of this award is decided by a vote of the LRCOG Board of Directors.

This year's winner of the Lumber River Council of Governments' Board Member of the Year award can be described as a true supporter and committed advocate to the Lumber River Council of Governments, its work, and our region. Over the years, he has demonstrated exceptional, innovated leadership to his town. This year's Board Member of the Year is Rufus Duckworth, Mayor of Bladenboro.



Mr. Duckworth has served as the chair of the LRCOG Board of Directors since July 2020, helping to guide the work of the Lumber River Council of Governments through the COVID-19 pandemic. He has been a member of the LRCOG Board of Directors since 2014, and currently serves as the Chair of the Lumber River COG Housing Corp and Lumber River Development Corporation.

Mr. Duckworth is also an ardent supporter of his Town of Bladenboro, previously serving on its planning board for 19 years, and currently serving on the Boost the Boro committee, helping to organize their annual Beast Fest and Spring Fling events.

In addition to his work on behalf of the LRCOG and the Town of Bladenboro, Mr. Duckworth is currently the manager for Bladenboro Hardware Company and a licensed electrician. He previously retired from being a supervisor from Alamac. Mr. Duckworth is a member of Bethel Holiness Church in Bladenboro.

*Congratulations, and thank you for leadership and service,
Chairman Duckworth!*

John K. McNeill Jr. Award Region N Manager of the Year

This award, named in honor of Mr. John K. McNeill, Jr. is presented annually to a manager within Region N demonstrating outstanding leadership qualities. Mr. McNeill was serving as Mayor of the City of Raeford and also as a LRCOG Board member at the time of his death in 1990.



This year's manager of the year has amassed more than 50 years of dedication, commitment, and service to the region. He started his career in public service in 1966, serving as an engineer assistant for the City of Lumberton. Since that time, he served the Town of Red Springs as its manager for more than 32 years before moving to his current position as the manager for the City of Lumberton in 2005. This year's manager of the year is Wayne Horne.

Over the course of his career, Wayne has worked tirelessly to improve the economic condition of the local governments that he has served by helping them to grow, innovate, and prosper. Wayne has demonstrated his ability as a successful leader in the midst of Mother Nature's most devastating impacts. He successfully led the Town of Red Springs in recovery from the 1984 tornado, then later led the City of Lumberton in its recovery from both hurricanes Matthew and Florence.

In addition to his work as the City of Lumberton Manager, Wayne has served as a mentor for new managers within our region. He has faithfully given back to the larger community through his service on various local boards including the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, International City Managers Association, North Carolina City & County Managers Association, local chambers of commerce, and his church.

Wayne holds a Master's in Administrative Services from East Carolina, a Bachelor's in Business Administration from Pembroke State University, and an Associates' in Civil and Sanitary Engineering Technology from Fayetteville Technical Institute. Wayne has also completed the UNC School of Government's Municipal Administration Course.

Congratulations, Wayne! Thank you for supporting the City of Lumberton.

Regional Aging Advisory Council Member of the Year

The Regional Aging Advisory Council Advisory (RAAC) Member of the Year award is presented each year to an outstanding RAAC member.



The winner of the Regional Aging Advisory Council Member of the Year is Ms. Terry Mercer. Terry served as the Chairwoman of the Regional Aging Advisory Council from August 2019 to August 2021. She provided strong leadership skills during the initial COVID pandemic to the Area Agency on Aging and the Regional Aging Advisory Council. She guided the transition of the historically in-person quarterly meetings to a virtual platform while still keeping members engaged in service delivery and advocacy opportunities. She supported the development of the new four-year (2021-2024) Regional Aging Services Plan entitled "Building Stronger Communities through Opportunities in Aging".

She is very active within her community serving on numerous boards and civic groups to include Senior Games of Richmond County, Hamlet Senior Center Advisory Board, and Administrative Council at Hamlet First United Methodist Church and Worship Committee at Hamlet First United Methodist Church. In her free time, she enjoys reading, painting, basket weaving, pottery and a variety of water sports.

Ms. Mercer is a lifelong resident of Richmond County. She has a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics Education from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and an Associates of Science from Sandhills Community College. She retired as an educator from Richmond County Schools.

Terry has been married for over forty years to Steve Mercer. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Congratulations, Terry!

Thank you for your dedication to the older adults in our region!

Annie Kohen Award Regional Clerk of the Year

Since 1999, this award has honored those clerks who demonstrate the true spirit of public service exemplified by “Miss Annie”; named in honor of Annie Kohnen, longtime Scotland County Clerk, this award is given in recognition of the relentless work performed by clerks in each of our municipalities and counties.



This year's clerk of the year is described by their board as professional, customer-service oriented, organized, and timely. They have worked to keep their town afloat for over seven years, the majority of which as the town's only employee. This year's Region N clerk of the year is Maggie Bethea from the Town of Hoffman.

Maggie has truly embraced her encore career as Hoffman's Town Clerk, helping the town to grow and to improve its local governance and organization. Since her appointment as town clerk in 2014, Maggie has helped lead the town's efforts in updating their zoning ordinance and personnel manual, increasing their tax collection rate, and properly archiving the town's records. Maggie has also been instrumental in helping the town start the process of providing sewer service to their residents.

*Congratulations, Maggie!
Your contributions and dedication to your
town are greatly appreciated.*

**DEDICATED
TO REGIONAL
EXCELLENCE**

L.E. McLaughlin, Jr. and Bob Gentry Award Regional Leadership

This award honors the leadership of two dedicated former members of the LRCOG Board of Directors, Mr. L.E. McLaughlin, Jr. and Mr. Bob Gentry. While both members served with honor, they also served as friends, putting aside the often strained relationships between jurisdictions. Both men, while dedicated to their respective local governments, realized that successful endeavors often cross geographic boundaries. Their friendship became indicative of relationships made and strengthened at the LRCOG table and still serves as a wonderful example of regional partnerships.

This year's Regional Leadership Award recognizes an individual who has been a strong supporter of regionalism and an advocate for the LRCOG for many years. He truly believes in the work of the LRCOG and the value of its regional solutions that have provided long-term health and economic prosperity for his local community. He is not only an advocate for the LRCOG, but for other organizations working on the regional level as well, striving to ensure that the rural voice is always heard in the halls of Jones Street. This year's winner is Mayor Charles Townsend of Fairmont.



Mr. Townsend started his service on the Lumber River Council of Governments' Board of Directors in 2007, and has tirelessly advocated for the work and programs of the LRCOG throughout his tenure. Mr. Townsend has also served the LRCOG as delegate to the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils' (NCARCOG) Forum. In this role, Mr. Townsend passionately advocated for the work of the LRCOG each year during the NCARCOG's Legislative Advocacy Day, imploring members of the NC General Assembly to better utilize and support the work of the LRCOG and the other councils of government across North Carolina. In addition, Mr. Townsend has successfully kept the LRCOG Board of Directors informed of the work that the NCARCOG is taking to support the LRCOG and our region at the state level.

In addition to his service to the LRCOG, and as the Mayor of Fairmont, Mr. Townsend also gives countless hours each year to support the work of other organizations working to improve the health and welfare of the citizens of the Lumber River region. He serves as a member of the Robeson Health Care Corporation Board of Directors and Helping Hands Ministry, he is a Guardian Ad Litem volunteer, and an active member of his church.

Congratulations, Mayor Townsend!

Rural Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee Member of the Year

The Rural Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee Member of the Year award is presented each year to an outstanding TAC committee member.



The 2021 Lumber River RPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) member of the year is Faline Locklear Dial. Ms. Dial has been an active member of the TAC since 2018 and is currently serving as the chairperson. She is a strong advocate for the RPO goal of involving local public officials and citizens in transportation planning, which gives rural areas a formal voice in the transportation planning process.

In addition to serving on the TAC, Mrs. Dial serves her community in numerous other ways. She was elected to the Robeson County Board of Commissioners in 2018, and is presently serving as its chair. She is past president of the Pembroke Area Chamber of Commerce, a former member of the UNCP Foundation Board and UNC Board of Visitors and is a member of the Kiwanis of Pembroke. She received the Coleman Spirit of Unity Award for leadership in the business community in 2017.

Ms. Dial has been the President of Speech in Progress, Inc. since 2004. She is married to Patrick Dial and they have two daughters, Madison and Laney. She attends Prospect United Methodist Church.

Congratulations, Ms. Dial!

Dr. Stanley Richardson Award Workforce Development Board Member of the Year

This award is named in honor of the late Dr. Stanley Richardson, a devoted board member and a longtime educator from Bladen County. He was an avid advocate for youth and education during his tenure. The Dr. Stanley Richardson award is presented each year to an outstanding Workforce Development Board member.

The winner of the Lumber River Workforce Development Board Member of the Year is Ms. Ophelia Ray.



Ms. Ray has a strong commitment to serving her community, especially in the education and empowerment of youth and families. Ms. Ray previously worked with the City of New York, before retiring to found her own nonprofit, Maggie's Outreach Community Economic Development Center, to enhance professional development opportunities for young adults and families. Ms. Ray also chairs the Youth Evaluation Committee.

In addition to the Lumber River Workforce Development Board and Maggie's Outreach Community Economic Development Center, Ms. Ray's is also very involved with her church and community and enjoys spending time with her family. She is a mother of three, a grandmother and great-grandmother.

Congratulations, Ms. Ophelia!



LRCOG Staff Years of Service

5 Years of Service

Sonya Johnson



Janice Leviner



David Richardson



Ursula Selles



10 Years of Service

Antoinette Bullard



20 Years of Service

Twilla Allen



Patricia Hammonds



*Thank you for all your hard work
and dedication to the individuals
in our region!*

