



## Gloucester Department of Community Education

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### Gloucester Receives A+ for Open Government.... Again

Gloucester County government's website once again shined brightly in the 2013 Sunny Awards given to state and local governments to recognize efforts in transparency and open government. This is the fourth year in a row the county has received national recognition. The Sunshine Review, a national nonprofit organization that focuses on government transparency, graded websites of states, cities, counties, and school districts using a 10-point transparency checklist.

"The Sunny Awards recognize governments that make transparency a priority," said Michael Barnhart, president of Sunshine Review. "The winners of the Sunny Awards are organizations that proactively share public information that empowers citizens and keeps government accountable to the people."

To determine eligibility for receiving a Sunny Award, the websites were analyzed by Sunshine Review editors on information such as budgets, meetings, and financial audits. Gloucester County took top honors with an A+ grade, the highest grade achievable joining six other Virginia counties, including neighboring Mathews County.

Scott Varner, Director of the Gloucester Department of Information Technology states, "for the past several years the Information Technology Department has made government transparency one of its major goals. Brian Burchett, Applications and Web Developer/Analyst for the county, has spearheaded the department's effort to get all available information into the hands of citizens. He and his dedicated team of department content editors are vigilant in their efforts, not to win an award, but because it is the right thing to do. It's wonderful that they are receiving recognition for their hard work."

Brian Burchett said, "The Sunny A+ website award recognizes the dedicated county staff who diligently updates our website for the benefit of Gloucester residents. I am grateful for the cooperation and effort I receive from the contributing web editors in the offices of Administration, Central Purchasing, Codes Compliance, Commissioner of the Revenue, Community Education, Finance, Information Technology, Planning, Registrar, and Treasurer who directly fulfill the required elements for government transparency. I encourage Gloucester residents to visit the Transparency Initiative web page where you can access all required content (<http://www.gloucesterva.info/transparency>)."

Christi Lewis, Gloucester Community Education Director and the county's designated FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) officer states that, "it's important for citizens to be able to easily access information on the county's website and to request and receive information about local government to inform, involve and engage our community members."

## End of Announcement ##