

Benny Summerlin Award of Excellence in Local Government

The Summerlin Award of Excellence is awarded by the Western Virginia EMS Council Executive Committee to recognize outstanding contributions to local government by current or former EMS providers.

Benny Summerlin dedicated his life to serving citizens in the community where he lived. As a young teenager in 1973, he began serving as a volunteer junior member of Martinsville – Henry County Rescue Squad and he continued serving his community until his passing at age 53.

Some of his major contributions or positions to the community are:

- Henry County Deputy Sheriff – 1981
- Captain - Martinsville – Henry County Rescue
- World Champion EMT – 3 years
- Director of Public Safety – Henry County – 1985
- President and founding member- Axton Life Saving Crew
- Director of Operations – Henry County - 1992
- Deputy County Administrator – Henry County - 1996
- County Administrator – Henry County – 2002

In 2002, Summerlin received a master's degree in public administration and policy from Virginia Tech. He was a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) and American Society of Public Administration (ASPA). Previously, Summerlin had served many positions with the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS), Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA), Western Virginia EMS Council (WVEMS), Virginia EMS Advisory Board, and many other local and State committees.

In 2009, Summerlin received the Fred Herring Award from the Chamber's Partnership for Economic Growth (CPEG). The award recognizes a "person who has given unselfishly to the community through their volunteerism and dedication to the economic growth of Martinsville-Henry County,"

Benny Summerlin's dedication and service to EMS alone is an exemplary standard for one to strive to reach. This award seeks to honor those EMS providers that lead the community in which they live through excellent service in other areas of local government. The recipient of this award must have met the following minimum standards of service.

- 25 years of service to the community (volunteer and/or career).
- Must have been an EMS provider in good standing and served with an EMS agency within the WVEMS region.
- Must have served as a leader in another division (other than EMS) of local government.
- Must set the example of ethical and professional service to a local community.

This award will be considered during the annual awards process for WVEMS Council. The selection of the recipient will be done by the Executive Committee of the WVEMS Board from nominations received.

The purpose of this award of excellence is to recognize achievements and service to communities beyond the field of EMS. This award emphasizes the value EMS provides communities through its development of community leaders. The life of Benny Summerlin is a testament of the role EMS has in preparing the leaders of our communities.