

Press Release



The United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award Program for Virginia

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29th Annual Virginia Forum for Excellence Set for September 7-8, 2011 Award Winners and the "12 to Watch" Businesses to be Recognized *Speakers and Workshops Focus on Performance Excellence*

The United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award program for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) will host the 29th annual Virginia Forum for Excellence and Awards Ceremony on September 7-8, 2011 in Richmond, Virginia. Designed for performance improvement leaders and professionals in Virginia and the District of Columbia to learn and network, the event uniquely focuses on the Nation's Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence assessment standard applicable to business, non-profits, education, healthcare and government.

This year's theme is "Creating a Culture of Engagement: Leadership, Workforce, Customers, and Communities." Keynote speakers include: Jim Asplund from the Gallup organization and co-author of "Human Sigma," Ken Schiller, Co-Founder of K&N Management, a 2010 Baldrige recipient for small business, and Virginia's Lt. Governor Bill Bolling among others.

In addition to Pre-Conference sessions, the event features workshops focused on the Nation's Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology within the US Department of Commerce. These criteria are the Nation's only recognized common standard to measure performance excellence for any type of organization.

The Baldrige program also results in national Awards. Virginia SPQA, one of 38 state related efforts also recognizes organizations consistent with the national standard but at the state level. Organizations awarded at the national or state level are deemed some of the best and highly suited to go on to produce great results.

For 2011, the **National Cemetery Administration** of the Department of Veterans Affairs will receive Virginia SPQA's Plaque for Progress in Performance Excellence. The **Albemarle County Department of Social Services** will receive the Certificate of Commitment to Performance Excellence. In addition to the Award recipients, organizations participating in the **Discovery Program** and its **12 to Watch** selected Small Businesses will also be recognized.

In its inaugural year, the **12 to Watch** program is a partnership led by Virginia SPQA and includes the

Virginia Department of Business Assistance, the Small Business Administration, the National Federation of Independent Business and the Office of the Lt. Governor of Virginia in its role as Virginia's Chief Job's Officer.

According to Jo Rohr, Virginia SPQA's Board Chair, "small businesses are the engine of job creation – for those small businesses which are ready, Virginia SPQA has created a special effort intended to assist a selected few to prepare for the challenges of growth within the context of the Nation's standard for performance excellence. " Based on sustainable growth predicting factors developed by Virginia SPQA, 12 small businesses have been selected to participate. The 12 receive Criteria for Performance Excellence training, mentoring and scholarship participation in Virginia SPQA's Discovery Program and other events. Rohr went on to say "those businesses on the cusp of major growth which are able to address the broader issues associated with the Nation's performance excellence standards have a higher probability of success."

For 2011, the **12 to Watch** include: **American Technology Services, Aromas Specialty Coffee & Gourmet Bakery, The Chief Information Group, GRC Enterprises, Harmonia Holdings Group, JACER Corp, MicroAutomation, New Horizon Security Services, ScienceLogic, Specialty's Our Name, SteelMaster Buildings, and the Veris Group.**

Virginia SPQA is a non-profit all volunteer organization and one of 38 state based award programs administering the use of Nation's performance criteria standard.

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