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Downtown Norfolk Council Receives Two Awards of Excellence From The International Downtown Association

Downtown Achievement Awards Recognize Excellence in Urban Place Management

NORFOLK, Va. – (October 2020) – Downtown Norfolk Council is pleased to announce that the International Downtown Association (IDA) awarded the organization with two Downtown Achievement Awards of Excellence for its work and initiatives in Public Space Management and Operations and Leadership Development.

Downtown Norfolk Council was among 29 qualified entries in the category of Public Space Management and Operations, which IDA identifies as one of the seven professional urban place management practice areas. This category features unique organizational approaches and projects in the areas of clean, safe and hospitality, placemaking and activation and facilities management.

“Downtown Norfolk Council continues to lead with innovative ideas and outstanding execution,” said Mary Miller, president and CEO. “We are so proud to be recognized for these initiatives by our international peers, and we are happy to share these successful programs with other downtowns across the globe.”

Downtown Norfolk Council was recognized for the 2019 Holiday Placemaking Initiative. With increasing competition in the region, DNC knew it needed to create even more compelling holiday experiences to engage the community, cut through the clutter and remain the region’s top holiday destination. Major activities included

- **Impulse**, a free interactive first-to-market art installation through a partnership with MacArthur Center
- **Whimsical Holiday Directional Signage** – Instagram-worthy directional signage featuring holiday attractions at key locations throughout Downtown
- **Holiday Experience Map and Positioning** – custom-illustrated map with icons of featured holiday events and attractions
- **Peppermint Alley** – enhanced a major connectivity street with peppermint-themed lighting and giant candy sidewalk art

The Holiday Placemaking Initiative had an extremely positive impact throughout the season. DNC measured success through anecdotal feedback from the community and:

- Social media: 53,231 engaged users and 22,450 likes during the holiday season
- Website: traffic was up 28% over 2018 and 33% over 2017
- Media value: \$594,494

- Holiday experience map had to be reprinted due to demand
- Embraced by the community: Norfolk offered DNC a free branding opportunity on gateway flags positioned at major entry points to Downtown, and MacArthur Center offered free banner placement on the exterior of its ice rink
- Ice Rink Attendance: saw a double-digit increase for the first time in three years in due to the art installation

The LiveNFK program received an Award of Excellence for Leadership Development. As part of an ongoing effort to attract and retain talented young professionals to Norfolk and the region, Downtown Norfolk Council and the Greater Norfolk Corporation developed the LiveNFK program that connects college students with the local business community. LiveNFK brings corporate interns and summer associates together to network, experience Norfolk and develop professionally. The program started in 2014 with 50 participants and five events. It has grown to more than 100 participants and 14 events during the seven-week summer program. The managing organization solicits participants from local companies that hire summer interns and associates. Companies in Downtown Norfolk now incorporate the LiveNFK program into their recruitment efforts, and it has become an integral part of their pitch to prospective interns.

Norfolk does not have a lot of large companies for internship opportunities. The vast majority of companies in Norfolk are small to medium that can accommodate one or two interns. LiveNFK was developed to meet those needs. More than 480 corporate interns and summer associates have participated in the LiveNFK program over the past six years, representing more than 20 different companies and groups in retail, restaurants, the arts and developers.

“Downtown Norfolk Council has shown expert application of professional urban place management principles,” said IDA President and CEO David Downey. “Both programs that were recognized by these Excellence Awards should serve as a model example to all member communities within IDA.”

The International Downtown Association is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Its members are city builders and downtown champions who bring urban centers to life, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors. IDA represents an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world. Founded in 1954, IDA is a resource center for ideas and innovative best practices in urban place management. For more information, visit downtown.org.

Downtown Norfolk Council is a private, not-for-profit membership organization comprised of businesses and individuals working toward a dynamic, attractive and prosperous Downtown. DNC also manages the Downtown Norfolk Improvement District, a 50-block special services district with enhanced services that keep Downtown friendly, safe and spotless. Connect with Downtown Norfolk on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) or visit DowntownNorfolk.org.

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