



Hanover County Establishes Inaugural Business Industry Awards

The Heart of Hanover Awards, the inaugural Hanover County Business Awards program, is set to recognize and celebrate outstanding local businesses in the County. This inaugural event is made possible through dedicated collaboration of Hanover County Economic Development, Hanover Education Foundation, Hanover Chamber of Commerce, and Richmond Times Dispatch, as well as the generous support of our sponsors. Leading the way is Hanover County Economic Development Authority, joined by our Heartbeat sponsor, Luck Companies, and Pulse sponsor, Accent Professional Recruiting.

“Businesses are the heart and soul of the Hanover economy, offering so much to our local community every day” states John Budesky, Hanover County Administrator. “This is a small way which County government and, especially residents of the community, can say ‘thank you’ and provide recognition to our vibrant business community.”

With **seven public-voted awards** and three committee-determined awards, this program aims to spotlight exceptional contributions to the community and economic development in Hanover County. Committee-determined categories historically awarded such as the Legacy Business Awards (business in continual operation in Hanover for 50+ years) and Marc S. Weiss Award (given to the top business of the year who has shined bright in areas such as investment, community involvement, workforce development, and/or other outstanding ways), will be honored along with a newly designated Design and Building Improvement Award.

The public will determine the Heart of Hanover Awards in the following **categories: Destination Business of the Year, Health and Wellness Business of the Year, Manufacturer of Coolest Thing Made in Hanover, Nonprofit of the Year, Retail Business of the Year, Restaurant of the Year, and Service Business of the Year.**

Nominations for the seven public-decided awards will open for a 3-week period starting on Monday, April 14, 2025. Business nominations can be self-nominated or submitted by the public. All business nominations will be verified to ensure they operate within Hanover County and meet the other award guidelines. The more nominations received, the more chances a business will make to the Top 10 for the public voting awards.

Public voting for the Top 10 is scheduled to start on Monday, May 5, 2025, and will close at midnight on May 16. The business with the most votes in each category will be declared the winner and announced at the Business Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, June 11, 2025.

Important Dates:

Nomination Dates:

Nomination opens: 6 am on Monday, April 14, 2025

Nomination closes: Midnight on Thursday, May 1, 2025

Top 10 Public Voting:

Public Voting opens: 6 am on Monday, May 5, 2025

Public Voting closes: Midnight on Friday, May 16, 2025

Winners Announcement:

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at the Business Awards Luncheon Program at Richmond Times Dispatch.

Business Eligibility Criteria:

All nominated businesses will be vetted from the criteria below and must meet the eligibility requirements to move forward to the Top 10 public voting.

- Any business with a physical location in Hanover County is eligible.
- The Hanover Business must be current on all Hanover taxes.
- The Hanover Business must be registered with Hanover County.
- Local franchisee owners are eligible if they meet the above criteria.

Business Awards Categories

Destination Business of the Year

This award recognizes a Hanover business that provides an entertainment, recreational, cultural, or historical experiences for the tourists and residents. Some examples include farms focusing on agritourism, historic sites, breweries, wineries, B & Bs, farmers markets, hotels, resorts, and amusement parks and theaters.

Health & Wellness Business of the Year

This award recognizes a Hanover County business that provides services and/or products in the health and wellness industry. Some examples include hair and nail salons, spas, beauty clinics, massages, gyms, wellness centers, doctors, dentists, etc.

Manufacturer of the Coolest Thing Made in Hanover County

Nominate your favorite Hanover-based manufacturer of goods and products.

Nonprofit Organization of the Year

This award recognizes any nonprofit organization with a 501c tax id residing in Hanover County that delivers programs and/or services to Hanover residents.

Retail Business of the Year

This award recognizes a retailer in Hanover County that is locally owned. Some examples include bakeries and coffee shops, clothing boutiques, hardware, thrift, gifts, décor, jewelry, and pet supplies.

Restaurant of the Year

This award recognizes a restaurant where a meal is served on or from the premises located in Hanover County or mobile truck with a Hanover business registration.

Service Business of the Year

This award recognizes a Hanover business that has a Hanover location that serves the residents of Hanover County. Examples include accounting, banking, financial planning, engineering, law, technology, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, contractors, handyman, cleaning, pet grooming and boarding, roofing, etc.

Rules of Engagement

- You can self-nominate or be nominated by the public.
- You can nominate and vote once a day during the two phases.
- Encourage staff, family, friends, customers and clients to support your business through the nominations and the Top 10 voting.
- The more votes, the more chances to win!
- The Top 3 at the end of the Top 10 public voting will be invited to the luncheon on June 11 for the winner's announcements.

There will be a page on HanoverVirginia.com for businesses to access sample social media posts, award guidelines, and the blog.

The direct link to the contest is <https://go.richmond.com/heartofhanover>.

A link to the campaign rules can be found at the bottom of ballot.

For more information about the Hanover County Business Award,
please visit HanoverVirginia.com or contact
Ann Glave, Existing Business and Project Manager, agglave@hanovervirginia.com
804-365-6459.



Heart of Hanover Business Awards – Promotion Guidelines

Promoting your business desire to be nominated on social media can be a great way to engage your audience and build excitement. Here are some strategies to consider:

1. **Create Engaging Content:** Share the story behind your nomination, why this is important to you, and tell your story. Use visuals like photos and videos to complement your narrative.
2. **Utilize Hashtags and Tag Relevant Accounts:** Use relevant hashtags related to your Name nomination to increase the visibility of your posts. Tag #HeartofHanover and other relevant accounts to tap into existing conversations.
3. **Email Newsletters:** Send a dedicated email to your subscribers announcing the nomination. This ensures that your current and previous clients, leads, and partners are informed.
4. **Press Release:** Write a compelling press release about making it to the Top 10 and distribute it through online PR and media platforms.
5. **Employee Involvement:** Encourage your employees to share the news on their personal social media accounts. This can help spread the word and boost your count in nominations and votes in the Top 10 within your organization.
6. **Display the Heart of Hanover Logo:** Display the logo on your website, home page, your newsletter and social media platforms. This can boost your SEO and expand your digital footprint.
7. **Celebrate with a Video:** Share your exciting news with a video. Make your prospects, customers, influencers, and followers part of your special moment.

By leveraging these strategies, you can create a buzz around your nomination and Top 10 and encourage others to support your journey. Good luck with your nominations!

Our media sponsor has come in strong with this new program. The Richmond Times Dispatch has put together a discounted package for you to advertise your business for more coverage for more votes. Reach out to Brooke Clarke at brooke.clarke@lee.net or call 804-910-7178. Let her know that it is for the Heart of Hanover Names Program.



Heart of Hanover Business Awards – Social Media Examples- NOMINATIONS

Here are some examples of social media messaging for business nominations:

1. **Announcement Post:**

- Nominate [Your Company Name] for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! This recognition is a testament to our team's hard work and dedication. 🏆 Time's ticking! Cast your nomination daily until May 1. Let's make it count! [Nominate Link] #NameNomination #ProudMoment #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

2. **Nominate Now:**

- Nominate [Your Company Name] for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! Keep nominating every day until May 1 to help [Your Company Name]! secure a spot and get one step closer to the Top 10! [Nominate Link] #TeamWork #NameNomination #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

3. **Employee Spotlight:**

- Meet [Employee Name], one of our incredible team members. Their dedication and passion have been instrumental in our success. Nominate [Your Company Name] for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Don't forget, nominations end May 1—let's make it count! [Nominate Link] #EmployeeSpotlight #NameNomination #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

4. **Customer Appreciation:**

- We can achieve this only with our amazing customers! Thank you for your daily nomination! Nominate us for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. ⏰ The countdown is on—May 1 is the deadline! Remember, you can nominate once every day for [Your Company Name]! [Nominate Link] #CustomerAppreciation #NameNomination #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

5. **Visual Content:**

- Check out this video highlighting us the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name] nomination. We're proud of what we've accomplished and excited for what's to come. 🎥 One nomination per day keeps the deadline at bay! Submit your nomination by May 1! [Nominate Link] #NameNomination #OurJourney #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

6. Mark Your Calendar:

- Save the date! Let's aim for the Top 10 together—keep nominating daily until May 1 and help us shine! Nominate [Your Company Name] for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! [Nominate Link] #PublicVotingStartsSoon #VoteOneADay #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

7. Keep Voting Daily:

- Your daily nomination matters! Only the Top 10 businesses will move on to the next phase of public voting. Keep nominating every day until May 1 to help [Your Company Name]! secure a spot and get one step closer to being in the Top 10! [Nominate Link] #VoteDaily #NameNomination #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

8. What's Next?

- Exciting news ahead! Nominated [Your Company Name] for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! Public voting for the Heart of Hanover begins on May 5. Once the Top 10 are announced, everyone will have a chance to vote for their favorite. Let's make sure we're part of the Top10 —nominate daily until May 1 to keep us in the running! [Nominate Link] #Top10Countdown #NameNomination #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal


The nomination link: <https://go.richmond.com/heartofhanover>.

These examples can help you craft engaging and effective social media posts to encourage nominations. The more your business is nominated the more chances you will make it to the Top 10! Good luck!


Social Media Examples - TOP 10 PUBLIC VOTING

You made it to the Top 10! Congratulations! Encouraging people to vote for your business can be both exciting and engaging. Here are some examples of social media messages you can use:

1. General Call to Action:

 We need your vote! [Your Company Name] is honored to be in the Heart of Hanover's Top 10 nominated for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Help us win by casting your vote here: [Voting Link]. Thank you for your support! #VoteForUs #NameNomination #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

2. Reminder Post:

-  Only a few days left to vote! Show your support for [Your Company Name] by voting for us in the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Every vote counts! [Voting Link] #CountdownToVictory #VoteNow #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

3. Employee Involvement:

- Our team works hard to serve you every day. If you believe in us, please take a moment to vote for [Your Company Name] in the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. We appreciate your support! [Voting Link] #TeamEffort #VoteForUs #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

4. Customer Appreciation:

- We couldn't have done it without you! Thank you for being part of our journey. Please vote for [Your Company Name] in the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name] and help us achieve this incredible milestone. [Voting Link] #CustomerAppreciation #VoteForUs #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

5. Milestone Celebration:

- We're thrilled to be in the running for the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! Help us cross the finish line by casting your vote for [Your Company Name]. Let's make this a win together! [Voting Link] #AchievementUnlocked #VoteForUs #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

6. Visual Content:

- Check out this video of our journey to the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. We're so proud we made it to the Top 10. We need your vote to make it to #1! [Voting Link] #OurStory #VoteForUs #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

7. Thank You Message:

- A huge thank you to everyone who has voted for us so far! If you haven't had the chance, there's still time. Vote for [Your Company Name] in the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name] here: [Voting Link]. We appreciate your support! #Gratitude #VoteForUs #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

The Voting Link: <https://go.richmond.com/heartofhanover>.

Social Media Examples – ANNOUNCE AS NAME WINNER

Winning a Heart of Hanover Award is a fantastic achievement and a great opportunity to celebrate with your supporters. Here are some examples of social media messages to announce your win:

1. Celebratory Announcement:

- 🎉 We did it! We're thrilled to announce that [Your Business Name] has won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Thank you to everyone who voted and supported us. This Award belongs to our amazing community! #NameWinners #ThankYou #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

2. **Team Appreciation:**

- 🙌 We're honored to have won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! A big thank you to our incredible team and loyal customers. We couldn't have done it without you! #TeamEffort #NameWinners #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

3. **Customer Gratitude:**

- 🙏 We're beyond grateful to have won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Thank you to all our wonderful customers for your votes and support. This Name is for you! #CustomerAppreciation #NameWinners #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

4. **Highlighting the Journey:**

- ✨ What an incredible journey! We're proud to announce that [Your Business Name] has won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Thank you for being part of our story. #NameWinners #OurJourney #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

5. **Visual Content:**

- 🎥 We did it! [Your Business Name] has been named the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. Check out our celebration video and thank you for your support! [Link to Video] #NameWinners #Celebration #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

6. **Community Engagement:**

- 🤝 We couldn't be prouder to have won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]! Thank you to our amazing community for making this possible. Let's continue to support and uplift each other. #CommunityPride #NameWinners #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

7. **Employee Spotlight:**

- 🏆 Shout out to our fantastic team for making this happen! [Your Business Name] has won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name], and we couldn't be more grateful. #TeamRecognition #NameWinners #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal

8. **Future Plans:**

- 🏆 We're excited to announce that we've won the Heart of Hanover's [Category Name]. This is just the beginning! Stay tuned for more exciting things to come. Thank you for your support! #NameWinners #FuturePlans #HeartofHanover #HanoverVA #HereinHanoverVA #Shoplocal #Supportlocal