

2019 NASPEs AWARD

Eva N. Santos Communication Awards

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated leaders and programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

Additionally, please provide the project initiative in one of the following formats:

- Web link: [May 2019 HR Connect](#) [State of VT HR Connect Archives](#) (Best to view in Chrome)
- Snapshot
- PDF

NOMINATION INFORMATION

Title of Nomination: HR Connect: A Monthly Newsletter from the Vermont Department of Human Resources

State: VT

Contact Person: Maura O'Brien

Contact's Title: Wellness Program Coordinator

Agency: Agency of Administration-Department of Human Resources

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ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

Meet all eligibility requirements. • Meet deadline requirements stated on the NASPE website. • Be entered in the correct category and be correctly identified. • Include a complete nomination packet. • Conform to all copyright laws.

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NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nominator: M. Beth Fastiggi Title: Commissioner of Human Resources

State: VT Agency: Agency of Administration-Department of Human Resources

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E-mail: Beth.Fastiggi@vermont.gov

DETAILS

1. Please provide a brief description of the submission.

The HR Connect is the official monthly e-newsletter of the Department of Human Resources. It goes out to all VT State employees (about 8500) within the Executive Branch of state government. It is also emailed to HR Personnel within the Legislative and Judicial branches to be forwarded to their employees. The newsletter includes submissions from a variety of departments with information they want to communicate to the general State employee population. Many departments now include information on a monthly basis while some submit more intermittently, depending on the subject matter.

2. How long has the submission been in existence?

The Department of Human Resources has put out newsletters in a variety of formats for over 20 years. These go back to paper versions folded and included in paychecks. It then went to an email version sent out to just HR Personnel who would disseminate it among their staff. The current e-newsletter format has been in existence since 2016 and goes out on a monthly basis.

3. Why was this submission created?

In addition to an HR newsletter, the Wellness Division also had a monthly e-newsletter which went out to its contacts, including HR Personnel. It was decided in 2016 to join forces and to establish a department-wide newsletter that covered a variety of subjects deemed important to the general population. By combining newsletters, the department would now establish a clear and consistent form of communication for all state employees.

A work group was created with representatives from departments who consistently submitted articles. They were tasked with identifying key persons in each department/agency throughout the State to contact for ongoing submissions. IT was brought in to assist with choosing an online platform as well as developing a process whereby an updated employee email list could be queried monthly. As Wellness

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had done their own newsletter, they took point on this combined effort and continue to put it out on a monthly basis.

4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

The Governor of VT, Phil Scott, believes strongly in transparency and open communication in State government and the Department of Human Resources supports these values through the HR Connect.

The goal of HR Connect is to provide State employees with information that is both informative and useful in a format that is easy to read and navigate. The Wellness Division takes point on production and distribution and makes every effort to be sure that each edition has pertinent submissions from a variety of departments and agencies. Some divisions regularly submit articles; others post cyclically (open enrollment, flu season, tax season, tick season, etc.) and the staff of Wellness ensures that these important messages get out to the population in a timely manner.

5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

We currently use Mailchimp as a platform and they offer a very robust reporting system where you can specifically monitor the overall traffic as to how many people received it and how many opened it. You can then drill down to each specific link and see the number and percentage of people who clicked on that link. The other piece of information it gives is a 24-hour performance graph where you can analyze when your newsletter gets the most traffic.

The HR Connect open rate varies between 35-40% of the targeted population. Effectiveness can truly only be measured when an employee acts on the information provided. One example would be the Employee Engagement Survey, which Human Resources puts out on an annual basis. This year, over 55% of the state population completed it. Another example is the Wellness Division's Incentive Program, which has over 3000 employees participate. Over 2500 employees take advantage of its annual flu program. These are three initiatives that are primarily communicated through the HR Connect and are just a sampling of the effectiveness of this tool as part of an overall marketing strategy.

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