

## Maintenance & Operations

# Credit Where It Is Due

Facility Masters Award program is back. **BY FRAN FOSTER**

**I**n 2003, a document was created that identified the best practices of a high performing maintenance organization. This document, “Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities,” was conceptualized and developed by the School Facilities Maintenance Task Force of the National Forum on Education Statistics. Roger Young headed the committee comprised of over 80 professionals that deal directly or indirectly with the responsibilities of maintaining school facilities. The project was developed through the National Cooperative Education Statistics System and funded by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education.

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announced that ASBO would no longer be able to support the effort. This was the most prestigious award available for K-12 maintenance organizations, and when it disappeared, there was no national recognition program out there that could replace it.


The program sat dormant for three years, but in 2011, it once again became a reality. A decision was made in 2009 that there were tremendous benefits to continuing this program, so the board of the Virginia School Plant Managers Association (VSPMA) decided to spearhead an effort to offer the award using the main criteria as identified in the original award established in the

Mr. Young also chaired the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International Facilities Masters Award Advisory Committee that was responsible for recognizing districts that met the standards identified in the planning guide. In 2005, ASBO and SchoolDude.com worked together in this endeavor and the Facilities Masters Award became a reality, and many school districts were recognized. In 2008, it was

planning guide. With guidance and input from Roger Young and SchoolDude personnel, the VSPMA board worked to create the updated version of the award. Slight variations from the original award were made that added new criteria, but for all practical purposes, the efforts that went into the creation of the guide and used to make the award are intact in this award. SchoolDude remains the owner of the Facility Masters program and the award, but the responsibility of administering the award program now resides with individual state maintenance organizations should they decide to participate in the program.

The revised award program was presented at the VSPMA conference in 2010. Two school divisions decided to pursue the award and submitted their applications prior to the June 30 deadline. The two school divisions were Newport News City Public Schools and Virginia Beach City Public Schools. After reviewing their submissions, the committee determined that they both reached the platinum level award and they received their awards at the VSPMA conference in October of 2011.

The cost to submit an application with the original program was \$750, but the VSPMA board decided that it would not require a fee if a school division decided to participate. The VSPMA board established a committee that would provide guidance and would be responsible for the review of all applications and determining if the criteria had been met. A major change in the new structure was to provide three levels for the award — platinum, gold and silver. The previous program had just one award, and if the maintenance organization did not meet the criteria, it would have to reapply again the next year. The new award recognizes an organization’s achievements and allows for the application to meet the criteria for any one of the three levels. One other requirement is that the application must be submitted in an electronic format. This eliminated the need to copy many documents and made it much easier for an application to be created using many documents that already existed in an electronic format. Even though this is going to be a state function, the NSPMA has fully endorsed the program and will recognize all maintenance organizations that attain the platinum level award at their annual conference.

Information for the new award can be found on the NSPMA ([nspma.org](http://nspma.org)) and VSPMA ([vspma.org](http://vspma.org)) websites. Individual questions can be addressed to Fran Foster at [franfoster1121@gmail.com](mailto:franfoster1121@gmail.com). 

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