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PRESS RELEASE

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Land of Sky Regional Council Leadership Awards December 3, 2025 Board of Delegates Meeting

Land of Sky Regional Council's Annual Awards were conferred during the December Board of Delegates Meeting on December 3, 2025. The Barbara G. Volk Leadership Award, The Robert C. Parrish, Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Award, The Charles H. Campbell Regional Leadership Award and The Robert E. Shepherd Excellence in Local Government Award were presented by the Council. In addition, there were three Extraordinary Public Service Awards, seventeen Hurricane Helene Recovery Champion Awards, and seven Hurricane Helene Recovery Partnership Awards conferred this year. The Awards Ceremony was presented by UNC Asheville and supported generously by Gold Sponsor UNC Asheville; Silver Sponsors: AB Tech, Biltmore, MB Haynes Corporation, Pridestaff, and Vannoy Construction; Bronze Sponsors: McGill and Western Carolina University; Patron Sponsors: Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Bolton & Menk, Civic Federal Credit Union, Fox Management Consulting Enterprises LLC, Riverbird Research and WithersRavenel.

The Barbara G. Volk Leadership Award is dedicated in 2025 to annually honor an outstanding contributor to the betterment of Western North Carolina and the Land of Sky Region. This year the award was presented to Mayor **Barbara Volk** for her dedication and leadership on behalf of the City of Hendersonville, Land of Sky Regional Council and Western North Carolina. Mayor Volk has served the City of Hendersonville and Land of Sky Regional Council with distinction, and she represents the best of public service. Her distinguished record of public service has left a positive impact on our region. Mayor Volk has served as Chair of the Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates and is a long-time member of the Executive Committee. She was the first female Hendersonville City Council member when elected in 1989 and she is the first female Mayor in City of Hendersonville history. Mayor Volk is the longest serving local government leader in our region having served 36 years on the City of Hendersonville Council.

The Charles H. Campbell Regional Leadership Award was named for four-time Council Chairman and long-time Brevard Mayor who himself received a national award for regional leadership in 1977. The award was dedicated in 1983 to annually honor an outstanding contributor to the betterment of Western North Carolina and the Land of Sky Region. The Council's Executive Committee awards it to another Council Member who has made a major long-term contribution to the Council and its governance. This year the award was presented to Mayor **Patrick Fitzsimmons** for his dedication and leadership on behalf of the Town of Weaverville and Land of Sky Regional Council. Mayor Fitzsimmons has served the region with distinction. His distinguished record of public service has left a positive impact on our region. Mayor Fitzsimmons is past Chair of the Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates.

The Robert E. Shepherd Excellence in Local Government Award is presented at the Council's discretion to a local government professional who has shown great leadership in improving governance and service delivery, especially in the areas of regional cooperation and collaboration. Dedicated in 2016, this award honors Land of Sky Regional Council's first Executive Director of 30 years. This year's award was presented to **Jessica Trotman** for her dedication in serving as the Assistant Manager for the Town of Black Mountain. Ms. Trotman is a dedicated and faithful local government professional. Her leadership and work ethic serve as a shining example for all that choose to serve the public. In this past year she has overseen over \$50 million in Helene recovery projects for the Town of Black Mountain in addition to her regular duties.

The Robert C. Parrish, Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Award is given in honor of the late Council Chairman and first Mayor of Fletcher. It is presented at the discretion of the Council's Executive Committee to an elected or appointed official who has made significant contributions to improving intergovernmental relations. This year the award was presented to Henderson County Manager **John Mitchell**, for his contributions to Henderson County and Land of Sky Regional Council. Mr. Mitchell has served as County Manager with distinction and professionalism. His leadership and dedicated service on behalf of Henderson County, the Council and the region are a reminder of what public service is all about. Mr. Mitchell has served previously on the Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates and served on the Council's Executive Committee.

Extraordinary Public Service Award

This year, the Council bestowed this award to three local officials. Colonel **Rob Honeycutt** has served as County Manager for Madison County since 2022 after 36 years of service in the US Army. Colonel Honeycutt has led the Helene response and recovery efforts in Madison County with a high degree of professionalism and service excellence. Colonel Honeycutt is a native of Western North Carolina.

Town of Marshall Mayor **Aaron Haynie** has served our region as Mayor of the Town of Marshall since 2024. Mayor Haynie has led the Town's Helene response and recovery efforts. As one of the hardest hit communities in Western North Carolina, Marshall faced devastating flooding which destroyed the Town Hall and much of the Town's infrastructure. Mayor Haynie has been a regional leader in Helene recovery efforts, and he has served the community with the highest levels of professionalism and distinction.

Brevard Council Member **Mac Morrow** has decided to end his service on City Council after 33 years. Council Member Morrow served in the US Marine Corps for 30 years retiring as a Colonel. He was named by City Council as City Historian due to his extensive knowledge of the community. He represents the very best of public service as a Marine and City Council Member.

Hurricane Helene Recovery Champion Award

This year, the Board of Delegates presents this award to seventeen leaders in our region for their devotion, commitment and exemplary service to our region in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Western North Carolina was devastated by Helene, and the leadership and hard work of each of these individuals helped support our recovery. The award was presented to **Governor Josh Stein, U.S. Senator Ted Budd, U.S. Senator Thom Tillis, Congressman Chuck Edwards, Senator Kevin Corbin, Senator Warren Daniel, Senator Ralph Hise, Senator Julie Mayfield, Senator Tim Moffitt, Congressman Chuck Edwards, Representative Eric Ager, Representative Jennifer Balkom, Representative Mike Clampitt, Representative Jake Johnson, Representative Mark Pless, Representative Lindsey Prather, Representative Brian Turner, and Honorable Chuck McGrady.**

Hurricane Helene Recovery Partner Award

This award recognizes organizations for their contributions to recovery efforts following the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene last September. The award is in appreciation for your devotion, commitment, and exemplary service supporting local governments in Western North Carolina this past year. Every organization receiving this award has been an outstanding partner to Land of Sky Regional Council and we will continue to work together. The Board of Delegates presents this award to seven organizations in the region: **North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, North Carolina League of Municipalities, UNC School of Government, High Country Council of Governments, Western Piedmont Council of Governments, Foothills Regional Commission, and Southwestern Commission.**

Photos from yesterday's award ceremony are available at the following link: [2025 LOSRC Awards Ceremony Photos](#)