



NEWS RELEASE | CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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Two City of Danville employees recognized as emerging leaders



The City of Danville announced today that Hannah Toufas, marketing and communications specialist with the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism, and Erika Saunders, business and data analyst II with the Information Technology Department, have graduated from the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP).

Hosted by the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia, the ELP is a prestigious program for early-career professionals dedicated to strengthening their communities through leadership, public policy, and civic engagement. Participants take part in expert-led sessions on topics such as housing, education, federal budgeting, and strategic communications, along with peer workshops and a capstone project.

"I am proud that Hannah and Erika were able to participate and graduate from this amazing program," City Manager Ken Larking said. "Their dedication to their work for the City of Danville, in addition to the volunteer work they do in various capacities within the

community, exemplifies what it means to be servant leaders. I look forward to seeing how this experience helps them to amplify the contributions they make for our region."

Both Toufas and Saunders were among 24 young professionals selected for this year's cohort, representing a diverse group of emerging leaders from across the Commonwealth. To learn more about the ELP, visit <https://www.coopercenter.org/sorensen/elp>.

For more than two years, Toufas has served as marketing and communications specialist with the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism. In this role, she manages media relations, prepares news releases and economic reports, develops digital content to promote regional growth, and oversees the department's inventory of industrial and commercial properties.

"Hannah's graduation from the Emerging Leaders Program is a reflection of the drive, creativity, and strategic thinking she brings to our team every day," said Corrie Bobe, director of the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism. "Her ability to craft compelling narratives and embrace innovation has elevated our communications efforts and strengthened our outreach to audiences well beyond the Danville region. I'm excited to see how she continues to grow as a leader and help shape the future of economic development and tourism in Danville."

As business and data analyst II, Saunders serves as a liaison between the Information Technology Department and other departments to ensure effective implementation of technology updates, software rollouts, and process improvements. She provides user support and training materials, manages IT financials, and prepares dashboard reports to assist with budgeting. Saunders has worked for the City of Danville for five years, including the past two with the Information Technology Department.

Inez Rodenburg, chief information officer for the City of Danville, said, "Erika's recognition as an emerging leader is a testament to her dedication to leveraging technology to improve city operations. Her forward-thinking mindset and commitment to continuous improvement in public service exemplify the next generation of public sector leadership."

For more information about the City of Danville, visit danvilleva.gov.

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