

VTC

VIRGINIA
TOWN & CITY

VOL. 58 NO. 9 DEC. 2023

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

A man who cares

Meet VML President and
Town of Farmville Vice-Mayor
A.D. "Chuckie" Reid



Inside:

How CALEA
accreditation supports
the mission of the
Manassas City Police
Department

A visit to the Virginia
Smart Community
Testbed



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

VOL. 58 NO. 9 DEC. 2023

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Virginia Town & City (ISSN0042-6784) is the official magazine of the Virginia Municipal League. Published 9 times a year at 13 E. Franklin St., P.O. Box 12164, Richmond, VA 23241; 804/649-8471. E-mail: e-mail@vml.org. Reproduction or use of contents requires prior approval of the Virginia Municipal League and if granted must be accompanied by credit to *Virginia Town & City* and the Virginia Municipal League. Periodicals Postage paid at Richmond, VA. (USPS 661040) Subscription rates: members - \$16 per year, non-members - \$32 per year. Single copies - \$4 each.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Virginia Town & City*, P.O. Box 12164, Richmond, VA 23241-0164.

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BETTER COMMUNITIES THROUGH
SOUND GOVERNMENT



ON THE COVER

VTC sat down for a conversation with our new President in late November and learned a lot about how big events in the small town of Farmville over half a century ago shaped not only his life but the course of the nation. Find out more starting on page 16.

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Visit www.vml.org or scan the QR code to download the VML app.

Farewell 2023. Hello 2024!

THIS IS THE LAST MAGAZINE of the year and the final issue before the General Assembly session comes to town (or “comes to city” to be precise). I hope that everyone got out to vote. Congratulations to everyone who won! We will certainly see a lot of new faces at the General Assembly and the local level this year. Please introduce yourself and get to know your new members; VML has many tools with tips on interacting with new and old members.

One person who is not new to VML is our president A.D. “Chuckie” Reid, vice-mayor of Farmville – Congratulations President Reid! Rob and I recently had the opportunity to sit down with him and Mayor Brian Vincent in their council chambers. It was a great afternoon of learning about President Reid and his love for the Town of Farmville. Mayor Vincent also talked about how helpful President Reid has been when he was a new councilmember and now as the mayor. Thank you, Mayor Vincent, for taking the time to talk with us. Without spoiling the stories, I will just say that our president said he was only going to run for council for “one term” – that was 37 years ago!

After our discussion with Vice-Mayor Reid and Mayor Vincent, we met with the mayor and soon-to-be new town manager of Crewe, Phil Miskovic, to hear about his career change. Congratulations Phil!

President Reid was kind enough to serve the last part of Jill Carson’s term following her passing in early 2023. We were all honored to see through her year of “Respect for Local Governments” which was a wonderful theme. In honor of Vice-Mayor Reid’s nearly 30 years of dedicated and compassionate work as

a mail carrier for the postal service, 2024’s theme will be “Local Governments Deliver Solutions” to continue making sure localities are relevant and remembered!! Matt Lehrman will be back in Virginia in April and in October to help us continue to build on our theme!

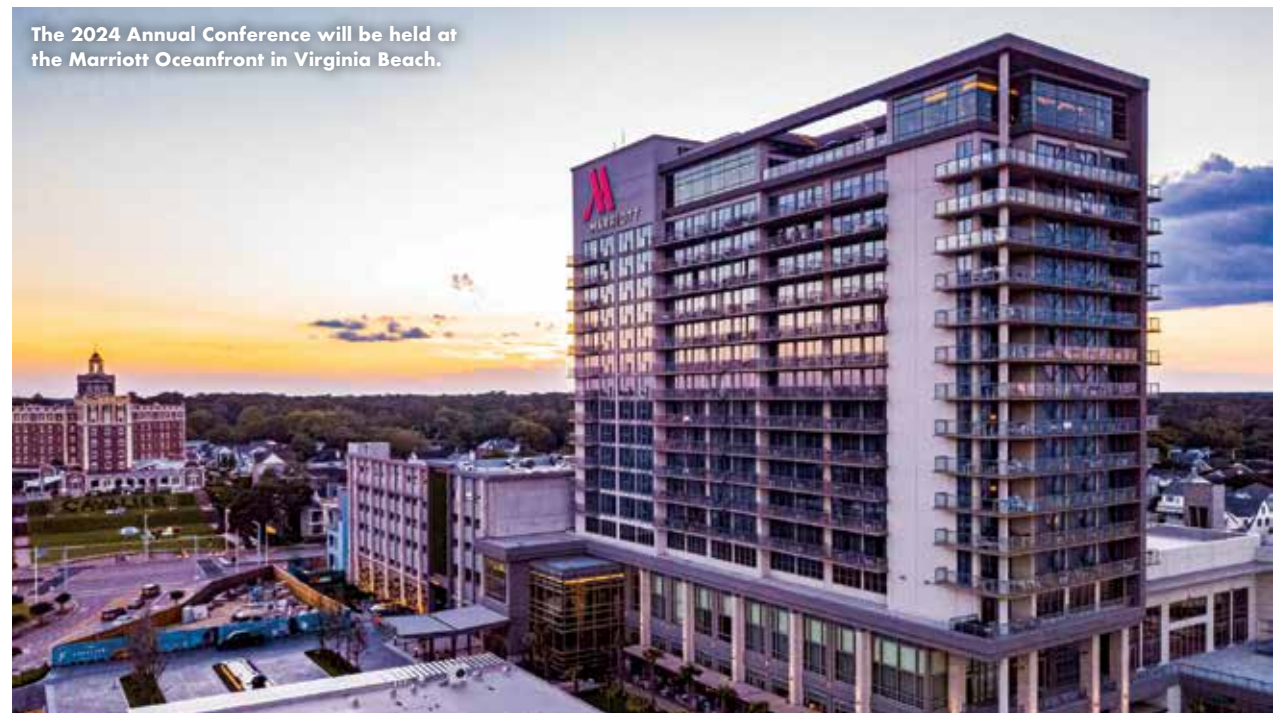
Several upcoming dates to be aware of:

Local Government Day is Thursday, February 1. It will be held at the Richmond Downtown Marriott. Note – this is a change in venue from prior years. Once again it will be in conjunction with the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Planning District Commissions. Please make reservations now to take your delegation to dinner after the reception!

On April 19th Matt Lehrman will be speaking in Charlottesville to both VML members and the Virginia Municipal Clerks Association. The topic will be “A Community of Possibilities: Leading with Generosity.”

Rob and I also just returned from the 2024 Annual Conference venue, the Marriott Oceanfront in Virginia Beach. It’s a fantastic venue and our visit gave us lots of ideas for the 2024 Annual Conference happening October 13-15. Save the dates!

In closing, I hope that everyone has a Happy New Year and safe travels during this busy time of year!



The 2024 Annual Conference will be held at the Marriott Oceanfront in Virginia Beach.



- Feb. 1, 2024** **Local Government Day** - Richmond Downtown Marriott, Richmond, VA
- Apr. 19, 2024** **Va. Municipal Clerk's Assoc. Conference feat. Matt Lehrman** - Registration will be available soon at www.vml.org
- Oct. 13-15, 2024** **VML Annual Conference** - Cavalier Marriott, Virginia Beach, VA

PEOPLE

**In memoriam:
Town of Mount Jackson
Manager Neil Showalter**



- Showalter -

On December 11, the Town of Mount Jackson announced the passing of Town Manager **Neil Showalter**. He was 66. In announcing his passing, the town noted that Showalter, a proud graduate of James Madison University, began his journey with Mount Jackson on November 1, 2009, as its director of finance before being promoted to Town Manager in 2019. As a dedicated public servant, he personified diplomacy, empathy, and adaptability. He was passionate about improving infrastructure and beautification for the town and making life better for his team and for the community. He had a keen eye for numbers and equally valued the relationships he developed during his tenure.

Mayor Donnie Pifer commented: "I am so saddened by the loss of our Town Manager, Neil Showalter. I lost my friend, and the town lost a great town manager. Neil went out of his way to guide me in decision making, always being so kind and helpful. He was the most thorough person I know. He has left a lasting impression on everyone that had the privilege of working with him and knowing him. He will be deeply missed."

A celebration of Showalter's life was held the evening of December 20 at the Mount Jackson Town Office.

City of Manassas selects Burke as new public works director; Smith as new city clerk

On December 11, the City of Manassas announced the selection of **Steve Burke** as the city's new public works director. Burke will take over the role on January 2, 2024 after Scott Horan retires on January 1. Burke previously served as public works director from 2016 – 2018 until he was hired as the manager for the Town of Luray.



- Burke -

Burke comes to the city with more than 20 years of experience in local government. In his role as town manager for Luray, he oversaw the daily operations of the town, including serving as zoning administrator, developing and managing the annual operating budget and capital improvement budget, coordinating community outreach, and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously, Burke served as town manager for the Town of Front Royal. He has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Florida.



- Smith -

Also on December 11, the City of Manassas announced the selection of **Eric Smith** as city clerk. This position provides the professional link between the citizens, the local governing bodies, and agencies of government at all levels. Smith will begin his new role with city on January 2, 2024.

Smith comes to the city from Morrisville, NC where he served as town clerk since 2019. He has a Bachelor of Arts from Regent University, a Master's in Public Affairs from the University of Missouri, a graduate certificate in Public Management and a Master's in Economics, both from the University of Missouri. He is a Certified Municipal Clerk and a Certified Diversity Professional.

Dumfries Mayor Derrick Wood elected first vice president of the National League of Cities National Black Caucus-Local Elected Officials group

Mayor **Derrick Wood** of Town of Dumfries has been elected as the 2024 first vice president of the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO), a



- Wood -

constituency group of the National League of Cities (NLC). NBC-LEO serves as a forum for communication and networking among African-American municipal officials and their colleagues to share ideas and develop leadership experience. Wood was elected in November at NLC's 2023 City Summit conference in Atlanta, GA.

"NBC-LEO plays a crucial role in connecting leaders and also in empowering us to work collaboratively to bring effective change and innovation to our respective communities" said Wood in a press release.

Established in 1970, NBC-LEO provides a platform for municipal leaders to connect, share best practices, and advocate for the needs of their communities. The group also contributes to NLC's leadership development, policy formulation, advocacy, and program activities.

"Constituency groups play a vital role in shaping and influencing NLC's programming by uplifting the voices and priorities of all of our communities," said NLC President Mayor-Elect David Sander of Rancho Cordova, CA. "I am excited to work with Mayor Wood and look forward to supporting his vision this year as a leader of this very important group."

This year's group will be led by President Denise Mitchell, mayor pro tem of College Park, MD, and Nathaniel Booker, mayor of Maywood, IL, serving as second vice president.

Newport News selects Archer as new city manager

Alan K. Archer, acting Newport News city manager and accomplished local government leader, has been elevated to the position of city manager following a nationwide search for the city's next lead executive.

Archer was officially appointed to the position during a special meeting of the



- Archer -

council held December 18. The appointment was the culmination of a multi-month process that included interviews with candidates from across the country, as well as input from community leaders about what they would like to see in their next city manager.

“Alan has proven himself to be a thoughtful leader, showing concern for the community and city staff,” said Mayor Phillip Jones in a press release. “Our shared commitment to the well-being and prosperity of our community remains steadfast. We are confident in Alan’s leadership ability as we continue to build a city that thrives and moves forward.”

Archer, who has served as acting city manager since August, first joined Newport News in 2006 as an assistant city manager. He has also held ever-increasing roles in Hopewell, which included city manager, assistant city manager, and director of human resources. His professional career also encompasses roles in Petersburg where he was the assistant to the city manager, recreation department interim director, and Main Street project manager.

Archer holds a Master of Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from James Madison University.

Richmond Councilmember Addison elected to the National League of Cities Board of Directors

City of Richmond Councilmember **Andreas Addison** was elected to the National League of Cities (NLC) Board of Directors



- Addison -

by NLC’s membership at the organization’s 2023 City Summit in Atlanta, GA. Addison will provide strategic direction and guidance for NLC’s federal advocacy, governance, and membership activities.

NLC is the largest and most representative organization for cities, their elected leaders and municipal staff, and advocates for city priorities in Washington by building strong federal-local partnerships.

As a member of the board, Addison will meet in March, June, and November to guide NLC’s strategic direction. Board members

are selected by a 15-member nominating committee and are confirmed by a vote from NLC’s membership at the organization’s annual business meeting.

“The National League of Cities Board of Directors plays an essential role in guiding our organization’s priorities and programming,” said National League of Cities (NLC) President David Sander, mayor-elect of Rancho Cordova, CA. “I look forward to working closely together with this remarkable group of leaders to elevate the voices and priorities

of cities, towns, and villages across America over this next very important year.”

More than 3,000 mayors, councilmembers, and other delegates from nearly every state and the District of Columbia convened in Atlanta for City Summit. Local leaders are on the frontlines of the nation’s most pressing challenges and are working hard to pioneer innovative solutions that move our cities, towns, and villages forward.

VML VACO FINANCE Celebrating Our **20 Year Milestone**

Thanks to all of our 308 (and counting) Virginia local government participants!

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* Includes loans and Municipal Advisory engagements | valocalfinance.org

Ferrell-Benavides is Martinsville's new city manager



In October, Ms. **Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides** began as the new city manager for the City of Martinsville following the retirement of Leon Towarnicki who retired after 41 total years of

service to the city. Ferrell-Benavides was most recently city manager in Duncanville, TX and has previously served as city manager in Petersburg, VA and Glenn Heights, TX.

"We are glad to welcome Ms. Ferrell-Benavides to our community and look forward to her leadership of the city workforce in the implementation of council's vision for Martinsville," said Martinsville Mayor L.C. Jones in a press release announcing her hiring. "Council was impressed by her development and redevelopment experience, local government knowledge and experience, and her professionalism. We already knew about some of her achievements in Petersburg and are excited that she is coming back to Virginia. We think that Aretha will be an excellent fit for the City of Martinsville," he concluded.

Ferrell-Benavides received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Southern University and an Masters in Public Administration from Howard University. She completed the Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia, Intergovernmental Executive Development Program at Harold Washington College, and the Executive Leadership Institute through the National Forum for Black Public Administrators. Ferrell-Benavides is a member of the International City and County Management Association (ICMA), the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) and a Fellow with the National Academy of Public Administration.

Hanratty accepts deputy town manager position for Blacksburg



On December 1, **Matt Hanratty** took on a new role as deputy town manager for the Town of Blacksburg following the departure of Chris Lawrence in October.

Hanratty is no stranger to the town, having begun work as Blacksburg's housing and neighborhood services (HNS) manager

in 2006. In this role, he was responsible for all aspects of the town's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which assists Blacksburg residents with housing and supportive services, in addition to creating community spaces such as the Blacksburg Farmer's Market. In addition, Hanratty worked with communities across the region to create the New River Valley (NRV) HOME Consortium to provide affordable housing opportunities to households across the NRV. To date, the HOME Consortium has created over 350 affordable homes for NRV residents, many of which are in Blacksburg.

Under his guidance, HNS also oversaw nuisance code enforcement and various relationships with Virginia Tech including the Town Gown Committee, which strives to improve Blacksburg's neighborhoods through the creation of learning opportunities and collaborative problem solving.

In conjunction with his HNS duties, Hanratty began serving as assistant to the town manager in 2015. In this expanded role, he took on the responsibility for the management of Blacksburg's sustainability efforts and led the town's revenue-sharing program, which provides funding for roads, sidewalks, and trails in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Hanratty also managed the town's public parking programs and helped lead several community-wide planning projects including the 2019 Downtown Strategic Plan, and the town's COVID response funding for town businesses and non-profits.

"We are excited to work with Matt in his new role," said Town Manager Marc Verniel in a press release. "His education and 17 years of experience with the town have prepared him to step into the position of deputy town manager. He has a strong understanding of town operations and a love for the Blacksburg community that will continue to serve our citizens well."

In addition to holding a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Policy and Planning, and a Master's degree in Public Administration, Hanratty earned a graduate certificate in Local Government Management from Virginia Tech.

Day is Pulaski's new town manager

In early December, the Town of Pulaski's council officially hired **Todd Day** as the new town manager. Day will start on Feb. 1, 2024. Until then, Darlene Burchum will remain as Pulaski's town manager. Day's hire



- Day -

comes after a nationwide search conducted by the Berkeley Group. Day currently holds the position of town manager of Tazewell.

Previously, Day worked as the Town of Bluefield's town engineer/public works director before assuming the role of town manager of Bluefield, a position he held for several years. In 2009, Day resigned from his position in Bluefield and entered the private sector for a little under three years before taking the position of town manager for Tazewell. He has held that position for 11 years.

"I think our town is in the right place," said Mayor Shannon Collins of the new hire in a press release. "It's been left in the right place, so he'll have an easier time. He's got a much easier start than our last one and I think that we are going to move forward. I'm optimistic that better days are ahead and Pulaski is on the rise and we will be much better. We are ready, primed and ready to go."

Day holds a Master's of Business Administration from King University, a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering Technology from Bluefield State College and an Associate's in Civil Engineering from Central Virginia Community College.

Turner is first person to hold role of deputy city manager for the City of Fairfax

On October 16, **Valmarie H. Turner** began work as the first City of Fairfax deputy



- Turner -

city manager. Turner has nearly 30 years of local government experience, including extensive operational knowledge of affordable housing, community building and planning, economic development, social and

human services, public improvement projects, as well as relationship building and financial management.

Turner comes to the city from Loudoun County, where she has served as assistant county administrator since 2017 and served as acting director of the Finance and Procurement Department since January 2023.

Turner holds a Master's degree in Public Administration with a specialization in public policy and a Bachelor's degree in business economics. She received the Credentialed Manager designation with the International

PEOPLE

City/County Management Association (ICMA-CM), and she is a certified Housing Development Finance Specialist, certified HOME Program Specialist, and a certified Housing Counselor.

She has served in numerous professional associations, including ICMA, Virginia Local Government Management Association, Virginia Women Leading Government, League of Women in Government, National Forum for Black Public Administrators, National Association of County Administrators, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Racial Equity Workgroup.

York County administrator Morgan to retire



Neil A. Morgan, who has served as York County's administrator for the past eight years will retire at the end of the year.

Morgan began his career in local government in 1985 as a budget analyst for the City of Roanoke and began a 27-year career with the City of Newport News in 1986. He rose from a project coordinator in the city's planning department to the department's assistant director. He was promoted to assistant city manager in 1997 and then deputy city manager. Morgan served as Newport News' city manager from 2009-2013 before taking a faculty post at Virginia Tech. He became York County's administrator in 2015.

Of his tenure as administrator, Morgan remarked in a press release "With the board's support, we have accomplished much during the past eight years," including the implementation of a "strong and sustainable" Capital Improvements Program for the county and the school division.

Additionally, Morgan cited focus on the board's strategic priorities through an operating budget that added meaningful growth in staffing for law enforcement and fire and life safety as well as the quality of service enhanced in those two areas.

Morgan also lauded the county's achievements despite the recession in 2015-17 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Throughout all of the rapid changes of the past decade, York County has continued its tradition of being a reliable regional partner in the many Hampton Roads and Peninsula institutions of which we are a part," he said.

Morgan received a Bachelor's degree with minors in Education, Economics, Gov-

ernment, and History from the University of Virginia; a Master's in Public Administration from West Virginia University; and completed post master's course work in public administration and public affairs at Virginia Tech.

NVRC expresses appreciation for departing commissioners Gross and Tarter

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) at its December 2023 meeting said goodbye to Commissioner **Penelope A. Gross** and Commissioner **P. David Tarter** in appreciation of their service to the region as they are leaving the Commission. Neither commissioner sought re-election to their respective public office.

Commissioner Gross served on the Commission for 28 years as vice-chair and chair of the Commission, chair of the Commission's Workforce Committee and chair/co-chair of the Commission's Community/Military Partnership Committee. In addi-

Movers and shakers

Do you know someone who's on the move? Send your announcements about new hires in local government, promotions, retirements, awards and honors to Rob Bullington at rbullington@vml.org.

tion, she served as a member of the Executive Committee and chair of the Nominating Committee. Commissioner Gross has served as a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors since 1995. In honor of Commissioner Gross' service, the Commission's conference rooms have been named the "Penelope A. Gross Conference Center."

City of Falls Church Mayor Tarter served on the Commission for ten years. He has served as vice-chair, chair, and a member of the Executive Committee. During the COVID pandemic he chaired multiple meetings of the mayors and chairs of the region working with our local, state, and federal partners to ensure the region received equitable access to CARES Act funding, ARPA funding and vaccines that were going unused.



Commissioner Gross (6th from left) and Commissioner Tarter (6th from right) with their fellow commissioners at the December meeting.



Each episode explores a different locality or issue but the focus is always on Virginia and the local governments that make the Commonwealth work for everyone.

Contact Rob Bullington, rbullington@vml.org to suggest topics, ask questions, or inquire about sponsorship opportunities.

Listen to all episodes at www.vml.org

Northern Virginia Regional Commission creates bike/pedestrian trails data warehouse

IN OCTOBER, THE 2023 Recreational Trails Summit meeting's Mapping and Data Needs session included a demonstration of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission's (NVRC) new

Geographic Information System data warehouse mapping application. The summit was hosted by NVRC. Identified as a regional priority at the 2022 Recreational Trails Summit, and developed in



2023, the data warehouse serves as a trail mapping application and data resource for Northern Virginia bike and pedestrian trails maintained by the region's local governments, non-profit agencies, and NVRC. Overall, the warehouse provides key resources for regional planning and informs the public of trails in the community that can be used for recreation, leisure activity, and transportation.

As a note, trails data schemas and spatial accuracies differ among entities as this is a data warehouse and not intended to be a standardized data set. The data warehouse can be accessed at www.novaregion.org/1579/Maps.

City of Norfolk Economic Development Authority receives over \$39 million in federal funding

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT of Transportation's Marine Administration announced \$39,265,000 in federal funding for the City of Norfolk Economic Development Authority (Norfolk EDA) to assist in transforming the marine terminal at Fairwinds Landing into an offshore wind logistics facility. The funding was awarded through the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) in response to a joint application submitted by the Norfolk EDA and Fairwinds Landing, LLC.

The PIDP funding will assist in financing the renovation of aging waterfront infrastructure at Fairwinds Landing. The renovation project has three major components designed to enhance

port capabilities for offshore wind operations and maintenance activities, heavy lift operations, and cable loading operations. The PIDP funding will be a catalyst for generating hundreds of new jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in future capital investments at Fairwinds Landing.

"Norfolk's steadfast commitment to sustainability is strengthened through strategic funding and partnerships," said Norfolk Mayor Kenneth Cooper Alexander in a press release. "The \$39.2 million Port Infrastructure Development Program grant propels our Lambert's Point revitalization efforts, reinforces our collaboration with Fairwinds Landing, and sparks new, eco-conscious innovative projects, ensuring a cleaner and greener future for our region and the Commonwealth."

innovative projects, ensuring a cleaner and greener future for our region and the Commonwealth."

About Fairwinds Landing, LLC.

Fairwinds Landing, LLC is a new Virginia limited liability company established to develop and operate Lambert's Point Docks. A Hampton Roads-based company, Fairwinds Landing will leverage the resources and experience of local affiliated companies such as The Miller Group, Balicore Construction, and Fairlead.



Town of Wise celebrates opening of new Fitness Court®

ON OCTOBER 28TH, the Town of Wise unveiled its new outdoor Fitness Court® at the Town of Wise Sports Complex, improving and enhancing the quality of life for town residents. This capital project was a featured part of the 2023 initiative launched by National Fitness Campaign (NFC), a nationwide wellness consulting firm that partners with municipalities and schools to plan, build and fund Healthy Communities. NFC's award-winning initiative is now planning its 500th Healthy Community in America and is poised to deliver vital outdoor wellness programs helping to fight the obesity epidemic across the country.

This year, the Town of Wise and dozens of other select recipients from around the country were awarded a \$30,000 grant from

NFC to help support the program. In addition to grant funding, local funding and sponsorships from the Rapha Foundation and the Town of Wise contributed to make the project possible.

In a press release, Town Manager Laura Roberts observed that the Fitness Court® “is just the beginning of many examples of the Town of Wise Council’s dedication to providing multiple types of outdoor recreation and fitness opportunities for the citizens of the Town of Wise and surrounding communities.”

The Fitness Court® allows users to leverage their own body weight to get a complete workout using seven stations. Created for individuals aged 14 and older, the Fitness Court® is adaptable for all fitness levels. Users can also download the free Fitness Court

App – a coach-in-your-pocket style platform – that transforms the outdoor gym into a digitally supported wellness experience.

Also in National Fitness Court® news – \$350,000 in grant funding for Virginia Wellness Campaign

Health and wellness opportunities in Virginia just became more accessible thanks to a new sponsorship between National Fitness Campaign (NFC) and Aetna®. The sponsorship provides \$350,000 in grant funding to communities and schools across the state for 2024.

If your community is ready to learn more about the Aetna® wellness campaign in Virginia and how to qualify, please fill out the short contact form at www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com/virginia.



City of Winchester awarded \$550,000 to plant and maintain trees

THE UNITED STATES Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently awarded the City of Winchester \$550,000 to plant and maintain trees in specified areas of the city. The project, part of the USDA's \$1 billion Urban and Community Forestry Grant Initiative, will improve the city's tree canopy, help combat extreme heat and climate change, and provide equitable access to nature in urban neighborhoods. The grant builds upon Mayor Smith's October 7, 2023 Proclamation designating Winchester as a Tree City USA community for the 42nd consecutive year and Winchester's enduring commitment to protecting its trees and woodlands.

Specifically, the project involves planting approximately 800 new trees, primarily in the northeast part of the city, over the next three to five years. City staff look forward to working closely with the community to plan and implement this project.



City of Danville marks completion of airport renovations

MAYOR ALONZO JONES joined state and local officials on November 15 at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally mark the completion of major renovations to the Danville Regional Airport's terminal building.

The comprehensive overhaul, initiated in March 2022, has transformed the aviation hub, significantly enhancing both its aesthetic appeal and functional capabilities that allow the airport to support larger passenger groups and provide increased amenities for customers and pilots.

"The airport serves as a gateway to our city for many businesses and individuals visiting this region," Jones said in a press release. "The terminal building renovation project was over 60 years in the making and has positioned the airport for future growth and improved the airport's ability to provide first class customer service."

He added that a well-equipped and modern airport is a catalyst for economic growth.

"It attracts businesses, encourages tourism, and facilitates the movement of people and goods," Jones said. "By investing in our airport, we are investing in the economic prosperity of our community."

The terminal building, a fixture since its construction in 1961, underwent major interior and exterior improvements as part of the renovation. The project, made possible through state aviation funding provided by the Virginia Department of Aviation, addressed areas that had not been updated since the original construction.

Greg Campbell, director of the Virginia Department of Aviation, said general aviation airports such as the Danville Regional Airport are the front doors to their community for facilitating economic growth.

"The Danville Regional Airport benefits everyone in the area, and not just those that use the airport regularly," Campbell said. "Even those who never set foot in the airport are among



those who share the tangible and intangible assets that exist solely because of this airport. Economic opportunity flows through the doors of the airport and into the surrounding community. Companies looking to expand use the airport to visit potential sites for corporate growth, which brings good paying jobs and quality investments."

The catalyst for initiating this transformative project was a focus group convened two and a half years ago, comprising representatives from various sectors of the aviation industry, including commercial airline service, international cargo operations and charter service. Also, the focus group included airport staff, members of the Airport Commission, Averett University's flight school, and the fixed based operations staff.

Key aesthetic elements of the renovation project include a unique canopy at the entrance, brick pavers adjacent to the new airside canopy, and framed images showcasing regional tourist venues located throughout the terminal building. Notably, a large aerial image of Danville's River District now graces a wall in the passenger waiting area, adding a distinctive local touch.

A reorganized passenger waiting area provides improved customer service for individual customers and large groups. For pilots, the terminal building features a new quiet area and a new pilot's shower.

Security enhancements were integral to the renovation, featuring a wider automatic gate for bus access to the terminal ramp and sliding glass doors. A state-of-the-art card access system was installed to restrict access to the building and terminal ramp area.

These improvements collectively aim to elevate the overall experience for passengers, pilots, and aviation personnel, reflecting the commitment of Danville's terminal building to modernization, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.



City of Virginia Beach recognized for work with campaign for grade-level reading

THE CAMPAIGN FOR Grade-Level Reading (CGLR) has recognized Virginia Beach with Pacesetter Honors for its 2022–23 work, recognizing initiatives including Virginia Beach Talks, Libraries in Laundromats, and StoryWalks®.

Virginia Beach Talks: As a result of a pandemic-related decline in kindergarten students’ school readiness, Virginia Beach GrowSmart launched Virginia Beach Talks, an innovative initiative which focuses on strengthening early learning support for families and early educators interacting with young children.

Libraries in Laundromats: Virginia Beach Public Libraries partnered with the Laundry Cares Foundation to expand library and literacy services into the community by meeting residents “where they are” through the Libraries in Laundromats program.

StoryWalks®: Virginia Beach Public Libraries also created 15 different StoryWalks® to display throughout the city at libraries, schools, parks, shopping malls, festivals, and community events. StoryWalks® encourage reading and movement as they share a picture book through a series of engaging signs along a path.

In Virginia Beach, the local grade-level reading campaign is led by Virginia Beach GrowSmart along with Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Public Libraries, Department of Health, Parks and Recreation and multiple collaborative partners across the community. The focus of Virginia Beach READS is to ensure all children have access to quality early learning opportunities from birth and begin kindergarten ready to learn. This sets a strong foundation for their future education and life success. Virginia Beach GrowSmart is dedicated to early care and education with significant support from Virginia Beach GrowSmart Foundation, Hampton Roads Community Foundation, and Women United.



About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort of financial support, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. To learn more, visit www.gradelevelreading.net.

About GrowSmart

GrowSmart is operated through the Virginia Beach Department of Economic Development. GrowSmart exists to promote and improve the healthy development, school readiness and reading proficiency of young children ages 0-8. In addition to providing resources for parents and families, GrowSmart also offers programming to ensure the availability of high-quality, early education. Visit www.vbgrowsmart.com for more information.

Town of Tappahannock breaks ground on Central Park

IN AN EXCITING MILESTONE for the community, the Town of Tappahannock held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new park project in October. This marks a significant step towards enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Central Park is an upcoming 2-acre park located at 234 Virginia Street will consist of expansive green spaces, state-of-the-art playground and splashpad equipment, walking and biking paths, dedicated spaces for community events and gatherings and much more.

This project has been made possible through collaborative efforts between the Town of Tappahannock, AES Consulting & Engineering and Whiting Turner Contracting. The groundbreaking ceremony marks the beginning of construction, with the park’s completion expected in March of 2024.

Town Manager, Eric S. Pollitt stated, “The Town of Tappahannock would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this exciting initiative. I cannot thank you staff enough for their help and support to make this happen. We look forward to celebrating the park’s completion with our community.”



A special event not to be missed!



Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024

Richmond Downtown Marriott, 500 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
For additional details and to register scan the QR or visit www.vml.org.

The Virginia Municipal League invites its members to the VML/VACo/
VAPDC Local Government Day. This is the day when all cities, towns
and counties come together and advocate on behalf of our communities.
Join us for Local Government Day!

Agenda

- 11:00 a.m. Registration
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch
- Noon Local Government Day
- Afternoon Visit the Capitol to speak with legislators
- 5:30 p.m. Reception



Scan for additional
details and to register.



CITY OF MANASSAS

By Mason Riggs

How CALEA accreditation supports the mission of the Manassas City Police Department



TO APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE of professional accreditation for a police department, it's helpful to start with something more familiar. Most people know that NFL stands for "National Football League". Football fans can expect that a match between two NFL teams will adhere to specific standards that both figuratively (and literally) create a level playing field for all the players involved. From the composition of the synthetic grass to the mechanism used to fasten the players' helmets, everything must adhere to NFL standards for the teams to maintain their league accreditation. For all these reasons, fans know that an NFL game represents the highest level of fairness and skill (...unless it is a Washington Commanders' game. Sorry, but this year we all know it's true!).

Similarly, an accredited police department attracts and retains the most skilled officers. The accrediting organization for law enforcement is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). While CALEA may not have the same brand

recognition as the NFL, the role it plays in the lives of law enforcement personnel and anyone interested in fair, responsible, and skilled policing carries the same weight as NFL accreditation does for football games. CALEA accreditation lets the world know that the police department takes professionalism and improvement seriously.



Why seek CALEA accreditation?

Unlike hospitals and schools – which are required to maintain accreditation from their respective credentialing organizations – accreditation is a “challenge by choice” for law enforcement agencies in Virginia. For example, hospitals that operate without proper accreditation are barred from certain federal funds. No such limitation



is placed upon police departments. Similarly, state law requires that public schools be accredited; no law stipulates the same for local law enforcement.

So why seek accreditation at all? Well, transparency, legitimacy, and a constant catalyst for re-evaluation and improvement start the laundry list of positives law enforcement agencies receive from accreditation. In fact, while CALEA serves as the arbiter of good and professional policing, engages in research, and offers guidance on what policies a law enforcement agency should have, it does not write the policy for the agency. This gives each agency autonomy over how it implements CALEA's policy recommendations.

An agency striving for CALEA professionalism and excellence must also track the implementation and overall effectiveness of its policies. Through a series of web-based reviews and concluding with an on-site review over the course of four years, CALEA evaluates the agency's interpretation of each policy recommendation and how it has been put into practice, ensuring it is not merely perfunctorily checking boxes off the list.

CALEA & the Manassas City Police Department

The Manassas City Police Department (MCPD) complies with over 460 standards set forth by CALEA. These standards drive department policies from mental health response to use of force; from evidence handling to volunteering; from uniforms to towing.

The MCPD earned its first CALEA accreditation award in 2001. For over two decades, our department has subscribed to the "CALEA-way" of doing business. In 2013, MCPD earned its first Excellence Award in Accreditation and has held that honor since. To give additional context, 243 law enforcement agencies around the world received accreditation in 2022 but only eight received the Excellence Award. This Excellence Award designation fosters an

engrained sense of pride for MCPD and our community.

Agencies pursuing the Excellence Award designation must meet eleven mandatory criteria. In a nutshell, to achieve the Excellence Award, a police department must demonstrate 100 percent compliance with the accreditation process, both in literal policy and the spirit of their application. This is above and beyond the 80 percent threshold level of compliance required for standard accreditation.

One way accreditation pushes MCPD toward meaningful policy action is by compelling the department to engage in data collection and analysis. This data is then used for creating reports – which in some cases are released on the MCPD website for community feedback – that are then used to find potential points for improvement and shape decision-making on training needs. Ultimately, the success of these endeavors yields an additional benefit: evidence-based support for a continuation of the practice.

Learn more

Accreditation by CALEA ensures that a police department's policies and behaviors are fair, safe, and effective for its employees and residents. While a variety of factors might cause a police department to opt out of seeking CALEA accreditation, the benefits pay dividends beyond the resources needed to establish accreditation.

Visit www.calea.org to learn more.

About the author: *Mason Riggs is the accreditation manager for the Manassas City Police Department.*

Look for an episode of the *VML Voice* podcast coming in January featuring a discussion with Interim City Manager (and longtime Chief of Police) Douglas Keen about the MCPD accreditation process.





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At the VML 2023 Local Government Day in Richmond.

“A man who cares”

Meet VML President and Town of Farmville Vice-Mayor A.D. “Chuckie” Reid

By VTC Editor Rob Bullington

TO PROPERLY BECOME ACQUAINTED with VML President and Town of Farmville Vice-Mayor A.D. “Chuckie” Reid, it’s helpful to start with a short history lesson...

Local history matters because it defines the character of a people and place. It is also where national and world history begin. But whether history stays local or becomes part of a larger narrative, it always begins with people dealing with the circumstances of their place and time. Even when undeniably big historic events are taking place, people experience them locally.

So, in 1951 when sixteen-year-old Barbara Rose Johns decided she could no longer accept the terrible conditions of the Prince Edward County high school for African American students, she did not intend to become part of a national movement to end segregation. Rather, the goal was just to make the county provide a better school for its African American students. As Johns later noted, “I was unhappy with the school facility and its inadequacies...it wasn’t fair that we had such a poor facility.”

And it was certainly a “poor” facility. The Robert Russa Moton High School (named for the native Virginia educator) had no science laboratories, no gymnasium, no cafeteria, and no athletic field. In 1949, the student body numbered close to 400 when the county added several plywood and tar paper buildings that lacked plumbing and were heated by woodstoves.

Johns rallied her fellow students to protest the conditions at Moton High School on April 23, 1951. The protest drew the attention of the NAACP which had recently shifted its focus from simply improv-

ing conditions for African Americans to striking down the concept of “separate but equal.”

At this point, local history and national history became entwined.

At a meeting with parents and students on April 26, 1951, Virginia NAACP Executive Secretary Lester Banks explained that the group intended to start a legal case to end segregation. Then, on May 3, L. Francis Griffin, minister of the First Baptist Church in Farmville, led a meeting to support the students. On May 23, NAACP attorneys Oliver W. Hill and Spotswood Robinson III of Virginia filed *Davis, et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* to end segregation in county schools. The Davis case was wrapped into several others to become *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* which led the United States Supreme Court to rule on May 17, 1954, that segregation in public schools violated the 14th Amendment.

For the African American students of Farmville and Prince Edward County, however, the immediate payoff of all this attention was a better school built in 1953 with better facilities.

Of course, the *Brown* decision did not explain how or when desegregation would happen. In a subsequent ruling, the Supreme Court failed to set a timeline for desegregation and punted to the lower federal courts to manage the process “with all deliberate speed” – an ambiguous phrase big enough to drive years of delay and avoidance through. In Virginia, this delay and avoidance became enshrined under the banner of “Massive Resistance.”

History returned to Farmville and Prince Edward County in 1959 when the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals set September 1 as the deadline for public school integration and Prince Edward County chose to cut off revenues to its schools rather than integrate them. They remained closed for five years.

This aggressive, flagrantly racist, and unabashedly desperate act was not repeated in any other place in the United States. During the five years that the Prince Edward County public schools were closed, they increasingly became the subject of national attention and, for many, a source of national shame.

“The only places on earth not to provide free public education are Communist China, North Vietnam, Sarawak, Singapore, British Honduras – and Prince Edward County, Virginia.”

- Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy (March 18, 1963) at a centennial celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation.

During this time Farmville and Prince Edward County’s white students were educated at a newly established academy with state tuition support. **However, the roughly 1,500 African American students, including an eight-year-old Farmville resident named A.D. “Chuckie” Reid, were left to fend for themselves.** The students affected by the Prince Edward County school closures became known as the “Lost Generation.”



A downtown sidewalk marker.

A member of the "Lost Generation" finds his way

In the late 1950s and early 1960s big things were stirring for Civil Rights on the national stage, but young Chuckie Reid felt them locally. When the schools closed in 1959, he remembers "We didn't think they would be closed that long. You just say, 'Oh school's closed.'"

Reid and his friends went to local churches where adults would put together improvised schooling for the kids. He remembers that some days they would either go to the Masonic Temple or to First Baptist for but other days he was left free roam around Farmville. Reid's older brothers were sent to Pennsylvania for school and his parents had separated when he was very young ("Though they were always close to me," he recalls). During this time, the whole neighborhood worked together to make sure the kids were looked after and didn't stray too far from the path of education. An important person to all of them was Reid's grandmother, Lucille Reid, who was very involved with First Baptist Church in downtown Farmville and a prominent figure in the federal CRASH program to provide the kids with summer school lessons. "Everyone called her 'Grandma Cille,'" Reid remembers.

First Baptist Church, which Reid still attends, became a focal point in his young life. Its activist minister, Reverend L. Francis Griffin, became an early mentor. In 1963, when Farmville citizens and students held demonstrations to protest discrimination in local businesses and the continued school closure, First Baptist was a gathering place where Rev. Griffin educated the protestors on nonviolent

resistance. It was also the place where the participants made signs for the demonstrations. "I was the one in the office making the signs and running errands," recalls Reid.

The schools reopened in 1964 and Reid remained close to Rev. Griffin and his family. "He was somebody you could talk to," says Reid, "and I always ended up talking to him."

The lessons that Rev. Griffin imparted to Reid made a lasting impression. In 1969, when Reid was a Junior in High School, he had become known as someone other students could come to with their problems. He was part of a group that started a one-page weekly called *The Voice* that featured items that the regular paper, *The Farmville Herald*, omitted, especially those related to civil rights. He was the Circulation Manager for the 500 issues that went out each week. When a beloved teacher, Thomas Burwell Robinson, was summarily fired by the school board, Reid and his fellow "Lost Generation" students knew what to do, "just like fighters," he recalls. "We all banded together and said, 'This is not going to happen.'"

Along with half the school's students, Reid was part of a strike on April 21, 1969, in the school auditorium. The next day they walked three miles to the County Courthouse. "This strike was to get the word out," he notes. It also took place during a period of controversy for the all-white school board which had not reappointed its superintendent and subsequently received notices from the members of its new advisory committee that they would not serve. Among those slated for the advisory committee was the Rev. Griffin who, according to an April 23, 1969, article in the *Farmville Herald* said he would not serve "unless elected to do so by the people who suffer the injustices."





Members of the VML Board of Directors toured the Robert Russa Moton Museum in early December.

The "longest one-term ever" on council

Reid finished high school. However, "College wasn't something I thought I could do, you know," he says. Although he was a talented musician and could have attended St. Augustine University in Raleigh, NC with financial aid he turned it down. Many years without formal schooling had left him, and many of his fellow "Lost Generation" students, feeling too far behind on education to catch up. Instead, he joined the Air Force. "I was part of the Vietnam War era," he notes, "but I was not sent to Vietnam because my brother was already in the military, and they didn't send two out of the same family."

Reid spent four years in the Air Force (1972-1976) and wrapped up his enlistment stationed in New Jersey. He returned to Farmville and attended Southside Community College where he studied human services. Reid then got a job with the Department of Corrections working as a guard in Powhatan. "That was OK, but it wasn't really my thing," he observes. While he was working for the Department of Corrections, leaders in the Farmville community urged him to run for town council. "They thought I would be a good candidate because of my Air Force experience," he says.

When asked how that first campaign for council felt, Reid's one-word response: "Scary." He is quick to note, however, that "When I was in the basement of the church working with Reverend Griffin on civil rights, he said I was good with people, and I liked working with people. I had all kinds of crazy jobs. I delivered newspapers, I sold *Jet* magazine. I was always at somebody's door trying to get a quarter or whatever it was. That experience helped when I had to campaign."

It turns out his supporters were correct. Reid was elected to council in 1986 and has served ever since. "They wanted me to run for one term," he recalls. "Turned out to be the longest one-term ever!"

Thirty-seven years (and counting) later he is still on council. Since 2008 he has served as Vice-Mayor, the first African American person in Farmville's history to hold that position.

"When I first got on council I thought 'Do I really want to do this?'" he remembers. "There were times where I felt like I was unwelcome, but I survived it and kept on going....and here I am now!"

Delivering more than just the mail

With a growing family, Reid was happy to stop commuting to Powhatan when he left the Department of Corrections to begin working full time at Longwood University (then Longwood College) as an Assistant Recreation Supervisor; a job he really loved. "Working at Longwood was different because there were a lot of students and that showed me different things," he notes.

In 1991, when an opportunity to work for the postal service part-time came up, Reid jumped on it. "There was a fellow I met in the Air Force who had told me the post office was a good place to work. The position was 20 hours a week so I could keep working at Longwood. I applied but never heard from them. I went down to the post office to see if my name was on the roster and it was, but they had never called me. I knew someone who worked in the postal service, and they said they would find out what was going on and then the post office called me the next week. Never did find out what happened, but I got the job!"

Reid eventually went to school to train to be a Postmaster. For a time, he was the acting Postmaster in Buckingham during the day and would come back to Farmville to work at Longwood in the evenings. "Then the opening came up for a full-time letter carrier and I thought I'd try it, and I got it, and that was it!"

Reid worked for the Post Office for 29 ½ years. "I really loved being a letter carrier," he says. "I met a lot of people. I had grown up in Farmville but there were certain parts of town, you know that side of town, I'd never really been – the 'Avenues and the Greens' we called them. I met different people and got to know their dog's names, their grandchildren's names, it was fun!"

Over the years he became close to his customers, and they looked out for each other. "There were a lot of elderly folks who would give me cakes around Christmastime; they would give me gifts and this and that. Some older ladies would be out there waiting for the mail truck just to have someone to talk to each day. So, then I got in the habit that, if I didn't see them, I'd knock on the door just to check on them."

"When they expanded the council wards a lot of people that I used to deliver mail to were in my ward and it was like a reunion," he relates. "I really learned what they needed."

60 Seconds with Vice-Mayor Reid

Why the nickname? When I was a kid, there was a little store I'd go to all the time. My favorite candy was Chuckles, so the owner started calling me "Chuckie" and it just stuck.

Hobbies: Reading and music. I play keyboards with the Royal Supremes gospel group. We just celebrated our 46th anniversary. I've met a lot of wonderful people doing this.

Food: I do like steak. I don't like to cook. Don't care for seafood.

Role Models: Rev. L. Francis Griffin, the Rev. J. Samuel Williams, and W.A. Reid, Sr.

What made you want to run for council in the first place? When I was eight years old and the schools closed, days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months, months turned into five years. When I grew up, that whole experience made want to meet people and to help them. When some people in the community asked me to run, I saw that it would be a good way to do those things.

How does your family feel about you having served so long on council? My family has strongly supported me over the years. My wife Frances says she doesn't want to get involved with politics but she's always supported me. She travels with me and has made lots of good friends.

Did serving on council and working for the post office ever create a problem? Not really. I had one incident where somebody sent a picture of me to the post office where they said I was in uniform at a political event of some sort. I had on a blue shirt and jeans; I had to go to hearing and prove it wasn't my uniform. I had to be careful of that kind of stuff. That's why I never campaigned for anybody.

Why have you never run for Mayor? Being Vice Mayor gives me voting power. That's what kept me where I am now. I want to have the power to vote.

How do you stay connected with your constituents? Another councilmember and I started having ward meetings. People from our ward will come to those meetings and express themselves; they feel more comfortable there than at council meetings. We will have as many town representatives as we can – Chief of Police, Public Works and so on – attend so the questions get answered by the right people. We were doing them every other month before COVID hit. We need to get back to doing those.

How did you get involved in VML? In 2012 I was on the Human Development Policy Committee. I studied those topics when I went to Southside Community College, so it interested me. I met City of Galax Mayor Willie Greene at those meetings, and he got me involved on the Board. I joined the Board in 2016. I didn't know much about VML before then, but I've come to have a lot of respect for it. It continues to go forward and be good.

Any theme or message for your upcoming year as VML's president? "Local Governments Deliver Solutions." I have always thought of myself as "a man who cares." The experiences of my youth made me that way. So, all those years I was working for the post office, I made sure to do more than just deliver the mail. I looked out for my customers. And all the time I've been on council, I've done more than just listen to complaints or pass resolutions. So, I'd like to make sure that people remember that local governments, when they work well, do more than just have meetings. We deliver solutions. A



great example that Brian [Farmville Mayor Brian Vincent] and I point to is the new recreation area and splash pad that will open next year. During the last campaign we heard from a lot of folks that there isn't enough for the young people in Farmville to do. It may seem like a small thing, but small things that kids experience can make a big difference as they grow up.

Personal Recognitions & Achievements

- Citizen of the Year award (AKA) 1997
- Community Leadership Award (Alpha Phi Alpha) 2005
- NAACP L. Francis Griffin Award 2021 Chair of the Moton Museum Board of Directors
- Robert R. Moton Alumni Association Chair
- Member of the Mary Branch Heritage Center
- Member of the Prince Edward County NAACP
- Past President of the Prince Edward HS Eagle Athletic Booster Club

Thoughts on Vice-Mayor Reid from Mayor Brian Vincent

I'm not from Farmville. When I was first running for council, he was the mail carrier for my house. So, I knew him. I talked to him about what was going on in the town. From the time I first got on council, the person who has mentored me the most has been Mr. Reid. He often gives me documentation on the history of Farmville so I can catch up.

Serving with Mr. Reid has been a great honor. One – he has a wealth of institutional knowledge. Two – he has historical knowledge, having lived through one of the most monumental periods for the town during the Civil Rights movement. I feel so grateful that get to sort of glean a little bit of that understanding from him...how that's informed his life and the town. I feel very blessed that I have this intergenerational relationship with Mr. Reid. When things happen, one of the first phone calls I make is to Mr. Reid to get his perspective.

We recently went to the National League of Cities summit in Atlanta together. I don't typically like to travel with other people, but I jumped at the chance to accompany Mr. Reid. My wife kidded me: "Does he know how much you like him!"



Good things happening in the Town of Farmville

- Renamed the library after Barbara Johns (who led the school strike in 1951)
- Renamed a street to "Williams Way" after Rev. Williams, one of the icons of the Civil Rights movement who just turned 90 years old.
- Just completed a big playground at the Lion's Club and redid the toddler playground by the library near the lake. We are putting in a splashpad park there and are planning to expand the skate park and build a pump track as well. So, it's going to be a real recreational hub and a great place for young people (and old people) to spend time.

Recent town council accomplishments

- Adopted the Comprehensive Plan in 2020.
- Adopted new zoning and subdivision ordinance in 2020.
- Adopted Financial Policies and Procedures and a Procurement Policy.
- Increased employee wages each year.
- Continue to invest budget funds in new equipment.
- Continue to reduce overall debt service.
- Implemented a new town website.

- Significant updates to the Town Charter.
- Adopted a new mission statement, vision statement, and values statement.
- Created council rules of procedure.
- Invested ARPA funds in water and sewer infrastructure, a new fire apparatus, and a new splash pad.
- Implemented Phase 1 of a wayfinding signage project.
- Working closer with Prince Edward County on joint initiatives – looking at forming a joint emergency communications center and sharing a building official.
- Continue to invest close to \$1 million per year in street maintenance and sidewalk repairs.
- Received TAP funding for Phase 1 of a Riverwalk Trail (construction to begin in 2026).
- Received VDOT funding for a roundabout project (begins in 2025) and a Green T intersection (begins in 2026).
- Joined the Virginia Retirement System.
- Initiated a tree planning program.

Editor's note: Sources for this article include an interview with Vice-Mayor Reid conducted November 29, 2023 as well as *Their Voices, Our History*, "The People's Person" by Will Barton, Spring 2016, Vol.2 and *Encyclopedia Virginia*, "Moton School Strike and Prince Edward County School Closings" by Ronald L. Heinemann.





THE VIRGINIA INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP CORPORATION (VIPIC)

A visit to the Virginia Smart Community Testbed



What is the Testbed?

The VA Smart Community Testbed is a unique public-private collaboration among VML member organization the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC), Stafford County and the private sector (OST Inc. and Verizon). The mission of the testbed is to serve as the hub for a network of living laboratories throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, to test technologies* that enhance public safety, broadband connectivity, cybersecurity, and many other areas that address current and future needs for our citizens. The guiding principles for the Testbed are three-fold:

1. To serve as a *Commonwealth asset*, with a “point of presence” in Stafford that supports a set of “living laboratory” capabilities across the Commonwealth, piloted by VIPIC.
2. To serve as the *proving ground* for smart community innovation technologies, democratizing innovation by lowering the barrier of entry to access and deploy innovation for *local governments* in the Commonwealth, functioning as their community innovation testbed.
3. To serve as an *attractor of U.S. and international entrepreneurs* wanting to grow their presence in the U.S. market, using the Testbed piloting model to provide a soft introduction to potential customers in the government sector, as well as larger system integrators in the private sector.

*See the “Technologies tested at the Testbed” section beginning on page 23 for examples.

Where is the Testbed?

The Testbed is situated about halfway between the City of Fredericksburg and the Town of Quantico in Stafford County. It was inaugurated in May of 2021 as a joint vision of VIPIC, Stafford County Government and OST Inc., with support from Verizon, when they were exploring ways to address a State initiative on smart cities. When the County offered the use of a recently acquired, vacated 7-11 building, the Commonwealth Community Testbed was born! The Testbed is located right next to the Stafford County Government building along the busy Route 1 corridor. This simple-looking ex-convenience store has quite a few tricks up its sleeve. For example, the two lights shown in the picture below have a high-speed broadband connection between them, smart LED lighting, and the ability to install other sensors on the smart pole. This is the first installation of its kind in North America!

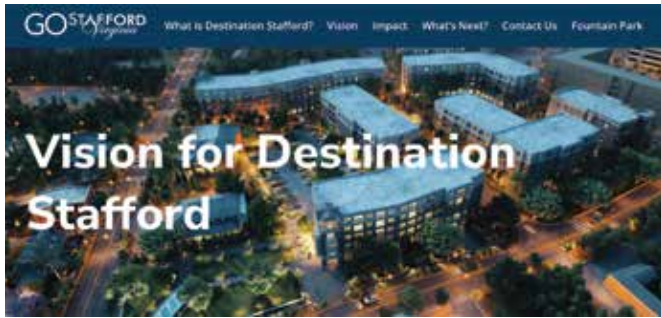


The interior has been put to good use as well. Gone are the Slurpee machines, aisles of snacks, and hot dog rollers. An open floor plan provides a functional space for cutting edge technology spread across tables for testing and 360-degree view Owl cameras for large virtual meetings. The walls previously festooned with posters advertising snacks and soft drinks now hold large display monitors, indoor air quality sensors, and a 5G indoor node from Verizon. The areas behind glass doors that used to hold cold beverages are now home to servers and gear storage for Testbed vendors. Even the utility room has been repurposed as a second conference room for Testbed meetings with an Owl camera.

It’s important to note that the Testbed model goes against the grain of traditional innovation hubs with their large brick and mortar buildings and significant investments. This Testbed did not require a huge investment to set up. It is a small operation that serves as a launching point for pilots throughout the Commonwealth.

The Testbed has an ever-increasing list of participating innovators from the US and abroad, eager to install and pilot their innovative products in partnership





with localities and create awareness for their technologies. The area being used for testing has grown to encompass the whole county as part of its “Destination Stafford” multi-generational community development project.

How does the Testbed work?

The Testbed building, as well as the nearby county government building serve as one of many locations in Stafford to install and experiment with innovative technology. Technologies are also piloted at local parks and the Stafford Regional airport. Technology innovators from around the world bring their products to the Testbed where Director Uma Marques, VIPIC CTO David Ihrle, and Stafford County staff install and evaluate the new technology to determine the value to the community. Innovative technology is tested using *limited duration pilot projects*, in locations across the Commonwealth. Such pilots are typically done at reduced, to no-cost to the localities. The goal of these pilots is purely to introduce innovation, and evaluate its usefulness for future procurement plans. Seeing innovative technologies in action enables localities to fully comprehend the people, process, policy, budget and other requirements to buy and sustain the innovation in the future. Such pilots are especially useful to procurement and technology teams, to inform future solicitations. For example, the Testbed distributed over 120 flood sensors provided by the Department of Homeland Security throughout Virginia as a two-year pilot, in partnership with local governments, educational institutions and other non-profit organizations. At the end of this pilot, some localities opted to retain the sensors for future use while others retained a smaller number and returned the rest. The Testbed is in the process of installing and testing sensors that detect wild fires, measure air quality, monitor highly localized weather conditions, measure drinking water quality, detect rodent movements and many more.



One of the many sensors at the Testbed.

How does the Testbed Partnership work?

Stafford County has made the investment with the building, staff hours to maintain the building, and test technologies in Stafford Government buildings, lessons from which can be useful for all localities. Stafford also serves as the thought leader to share the lessons learned from such pilots with other local governments and also help vendors understand the intricacies of introducing innovation to governments. Aspects such as permitting, security policies, other regulations, and the dos and don'ts of procurement are all valuable lessons to innovators looking to establish and expand their markets.

VIPIC brings the voice of the State as well as the relationship with DHS, and through them, to international governments and product vendors. OST brings the System Integrator's mindset to review solutions for their ability to scale and integrate into larger solutions.



Technologies tested at the Testbed

A large number of technologies are tested through the Testbed model in Stafford and throughout the Commonwealth. Some of these technologies include drones for healthcare and public safety, advanced air mobility for national security and a whole suite of sensors supporting community needs. The Testbed is also working on cutting-edge zero trust security solutions, IoT device security solutions and quantum computing. Much of the technology being used at the Testbed is attractive to localities seeking to address known problems like flooding in low lying or coastal areas. However, with climate change shifting weather patterns, many areas that may not have considered themselves at risk for events such as wildfires are finding that technologies such as next generation fire sensors may be of value.

The Testbed will not endorse any specific vendor's products. Some of the vendor products are provided here only as representations of such technologies in the market and to show the localities how a specific technology works in the field. The Testbed will test multiple products with the same capability just for this reason, to demonstrate its neutrality. With every installation, the Testbed and its partners (vendors and local governments alike) learn a lot, including 1) skill sets needed to install and maintain technology 2) Departmental responsibilities and time commitments 3) Budgets needed for procurement and long-term maintenance 4) Potential community concerns including privacy, data security, etc. 5) Pros and cons of a specific technology and its value to the community.

Digital Transformation of Infrastructure



Some technologies in detail:

Smart rodent traps – It snaps if a rodent steps in (some tech doesn't need improving). But this "better mousetrap" model also sends a message when triggered and captures data. How is this useful? 1. Ecological – Tells operators where to target spray rodenticide, cutting down on unnecessary usage. 2. Supply Chain Resilience – It tracks where in a food manufacturing/assembly area the incident occurred and prevents the entire chain from being compromised. 3. Workforce Development – Staff only needs to be deployed on an as needed basis.

Concrete/Asphalt Embedded Fiber – Instead of trenching to install fiber optic cable, this technology allows facilities to etch a small trough in asphalt or concrete for the cable. This is particularly useful for running fiber across parking lots, bridges etc. Because of the ease of the process, hundreds of meters of fiber can be installed per day. Military bases and college campuses have been identified as likely beneficiaries of this tech.

5G Friendly Glass – Most commercial glass used in office buildings blocks 5G signals. The Testbed is working with a vendor whose glass allows full Wi-Fi transmission through their innovative glass.

Virtual Reality Applications –The Testbed is helping to explore the potential of virtual reality. These include:

- The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, where it is used to prepare for challenging situations like crises intervention.
- Virtual museum exhibits, for museums to display unique artifacts in private collections.
- STEM education, like the group of high school students who worked at the Testbed to create a virtual cornhole game that simulates conditions on Earth, Jupiter, the moon, and more! When Governor Youngkin visited the location, he enjoyed a game. Other groups have explored virtual tourism for localities to use as part of promoting their community. The Testbed is also currently active in STEM programs in seven middle schools.

Smart Field Turf – Among the new projects Testbed Director Uma Marques and Stafford County Economic Development Director Kyle Allwine are excited about is an opportunity to deploy a new artificial turf. While the new turf has a higher barrier of entry, it could result in savings over time as sensors will indicate which portions are



Stafford County Economic Development Director Kyle Allwine

being used most and experiencing the most wear. This will reduce the materials needed to maintain the field. Stafford County has several sports fields to use for the trial including one adjacent to a school across the street from the Testbed.

Commonwealth Data Trust – The Commonwealth of Virginia has created this unique data governance model, that makes sharing information among Virginia’s localities easier and safer, but it also makes it possible for localities across the state to reap the benefits and evaluate the effectiveness of new technology being deployed. The Testbed is working with its vendors to test the sharing of data using this governance model.

City of Winchester – As an example of other locality participation as a Testbed “node”, the “Apple Capital” has been a leader in helping the Testbed build advanced air mobility using drones for public safety and light aircraft that one day could make smaller airports more readily fit into the larger transportation network.

How does the Testbed enable economic development for the Commonwealth?

Economic Development departments in local governments are big players in standing up the innovative technologies being used at the Testbed. Why? Becoming part of a pilot project means not only the opportunity to road test new technology to see if it makes sense for a locality, but it also means the opportunity to engage with innovative vendors from around the state, nation, and world. As Stafford County has shown, these companies are often looking to establish themselves in Virginia and building those connections can be a real benefit to local economic growth.

The staff at the Testbed believe that innovative technology is something everyone should have the opportunity to learn about and use. The essence of the Testbed is a chance for all parties – the vendors, VIPC, the localities – to explore the technology as it will be used in the real world. Local government staff and officials are



Testbed Director Uma Marques

encouraged to visit the Testbed to learn more about becoming part of a pilot program. **If interested, send an email to the testbed@staffordcountyva.gov and request a visit.**

Testbed vendor partners

The list of partners continues to grow and will be available in full on the Testbed website soon!

Clean Air, Water & Energy

Datakwip
 Aura Air
 Breeze Technologies
 Secure Process Intelligence
 Henry Company
 Rivere

Public Safety

Cocoflo
 Databuoy
 Intellisense Systems
 FloodMapp
 N5 Sensors
 Perry Weather
 Envu
 Express-Tek

Smart Tourism

True Omni
 AccessVR
 AKULAR
 OST, Inc.

Equity Through Connectivity

Signify
 Helicore
 Verizon
 Cradlepoint
 Networking For Future

Security - Device, Network, Data

Onclave
 Device Authority
 Planet Defense, LLC

Traffic Management

Visioncraft
 ATA Technologies

Other

Arrive (Mailbox-as-a-Service)
 Visionable (Connected Health)
 Ioterra (Ecosystem Development)

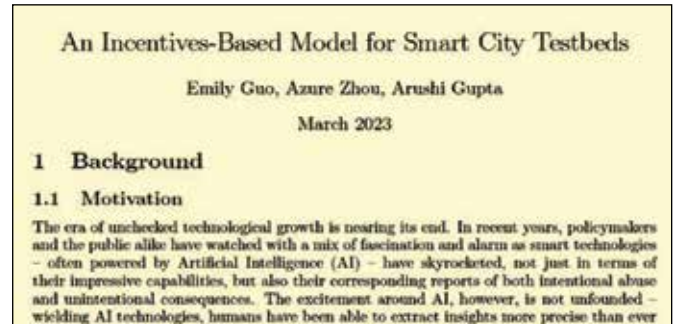
Word is getting out

The community model of streamlining the connection between innovative vendors, testers, and localities developed at the award-winning Testbed has attracted state, national and international attention.



In addition to hosting leaders from Virginia and Arkansas (in that state) and local governments, the Testbed has hosted government delegations from the UK, Australia and the Netherlands to understand the model. The World Economic Forum and Stanford University have published case studies on this community-based innovation model. Companies from Canada and the Czech Republic are looking at Stafford County as a possible location for a U.S. presence because of the Testbed.

We invite you to engage with this globally unique Smart Community Testbed to support innovation-driven economic development. The Testbed is here to help your community test and adopt the types of technologies that will help move your community forward.



Introduction from the Stanford University case study.



The Testbed also exhibited at the recently concluded VML Annual Conference in Norfolk.



Join VML

Set your organization apart in the local government marketplace of product, services, and ideas by joining the VML Community Business Membership (CBM) program. For more information contact Rob Bullington at rbullington@vml.org or check under the "Corporate Engagement" tab at www.vml.org.



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www.vammha.org



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About the VML Community Business Membership (CBM) Program

As a CBM organization you hold a sustaining membership in VML and keep your firm or organization connected with the issues that are important to municipalities around you. Being a CBM places your organization at the forefront in the minds of VML members, ensuring you the visibility, access, and awareness that will help move your organization forward.

Please note that each level of membership includes both year-round benefits as well as benefits specific to VML's Annual Conference held in the fall.



Turn something old into something new.

Learn how federal Housing Credits can help you create new, affordable workforce housing and enhance or revitalize a neighborhood — while lowering development costs. Contact Virginia Housing's Director of Housing Credit Programs, J.D. Bondurant:
JD.Bondurant@VirginiaHousing.com | 804-343-5725



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