

VTC

VIRGINIA
TOWN & CITY

VOL. 59

NO. 5

JULY/AUG 2024

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



Remarkable bridges of Virginia

A celebration of spectacular spans.



Inside:

Addressing the increasingly hyper-competitive culture of youth sports

Partner Spotlight on GovDeals





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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

VOL. 59 NO. 5 JULY/AUG 2024

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ABOUT THE COVER

Welcome to the annual "Virginia You Love" issue of *VTC*! Every July/August we feature some aspect of being outdoors in Virginia and for 2024 it's bridges! From the shore to the mountains, Virginia has so many amazing and unique bridges it was hard to pick the ones we wanted to present. But pick them we did, and present them we have (including Richmond's misleadingly named Nickel Bridge photographed for the cover by VML's own Manuel Timbreza). Enjoy!

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



It feels great outside...go enjoy it!

SO FAR, THE SECOND HALF of August has been a welcome break from the humidity in the Commonwealth and it was a joy to see the full moon and even the storms that brought the rain (sometimes too much!) that we so desperately needed. In fact, now that temperatures and the humidity have dropped, I'm starting to anticipate real fall weather and college football. But I'm guessing we will all have a bit more of heat and summer before fall really begins.

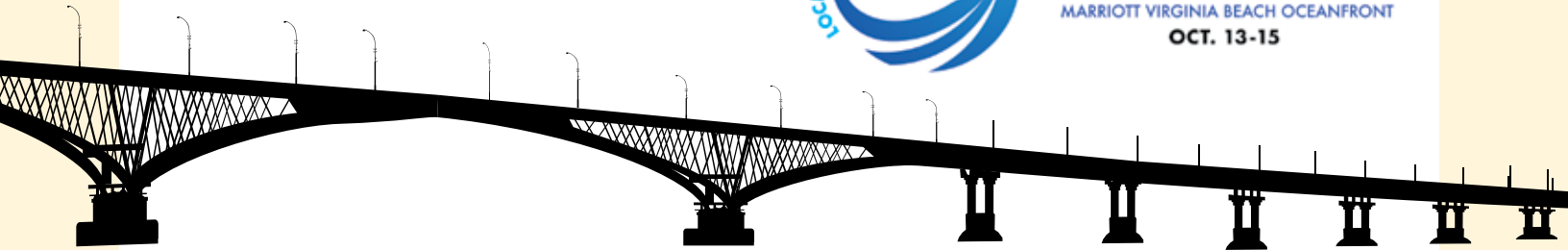
I am always excited for this fun issue of the magazine each year that talks about the outdoors. I think you will enjoy checking out the cool, very Virginia bridges we are featuring – who knew we had some many! I know it was tough to decide which to put in the magazine. It makes me want to tour more parts of the Commonwealth. If you ever want us to shine a light on a bridge, or other cool thing, in your community, let us know!

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to drive to Eastville which required both the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel – I was lucky to get through the first with less than a 10-minute wait, but the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel was experiencing what seemed like an absolute monsoon with high winds and rain. Coming back later that day, the Bay was so beautiful and made me appreciate how unique the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel really is. Such a cool drive to see all the wildlife and appreciate the Eastern Shore. And I have a bridge to thank for it!

Later that week I listened to a presentation by District Engineer Chris Hall on the expansion of the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel. One of the things that he pointed out was that there will be a walkway with manholes next to the tunnel in case there is an incident like the car fire in July of 2016 that forced 80 people to walk all the way through the smoke -filled tunnel to find fresh air. Even with the escape hatches, I'm not sure I want to take a foot tour of the new tunnel, but it was interesting to think about how technology has changed since the original tunnels were constructed.

And of course, many of us will have the opportunity to think about those advances in bridge and tunnel technology when we travel to the VML Annual Conference in Virginia Beach October 13-15! We have lots of fun things planned with hopes that we can get outside and enjoy the ocean air and beautiful Marriott, Embassy Suites, and Historic Cavalier properties! Matt Lehrman will moderate the Mayor's Institute all day Sunday and then will close us out Tuesday morning with an exercise in how our localities will look in the future.

When you come to the conference, don't forget to wear comfortable shoes, be ready for some fun, and bring lots of good ideas! Until then, enjoy the beautiful weather and get outside. It's beautiful out there Virginia!



CALENDAR

Learn more about these events and additional opportunities at www.vml.org

- Sept. 12** Continuing Education for Local Government Staff - Free Webinar hosted by American Public University (see page 19)
- Oct. 13** 2024 Virginia Mayors Institute - Embassy Suites Oceanfront Resort
- Oct. 13-15** 2024 VML Annual Conference - Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort



Chilhowie, Marion, Southwest Virginia town manager Clark retires after 40 years of service



John E. B. Clark, Jr. retired from the Town of Chilhowie on July 24, 2024 capping a career of almost 40 years serving in several Southwest Virginia localities. He retired after serving Chilhowie for the second time for ten years. Before that he served the Town of Boones Mill for six months in an interim capacity, first retired from the Town of Marion after serving twelve years and five months, served the Town of Saltville for four years, served one and a half years at the Town of Independence (as an employee of the Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission), the Town of Tazwell for one year, and nine years and two months with the Town of Chilhowie in his first stint. He began his career as an administrative assistant to the town manager of Marion in 1979.

During Clark's service his towns won many accolades including at least five Virginia Municipal League Achievement Awards, and citations from the American Society of Civil Engineers. He was inducted as a Lifetime member of the Virginia Local Government Management Association in 2013. He served as president of the Kiwanis Clubs in Saltville and Marion and is currently first vice president of the Saltville / Rich Valley Lions Club. He was also appointed by the Smyth County Board of Supervisors as chair of the County Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission.

At the July meeting of the Chilhowie Town Council, Clark was praised for his leadership in the many projects the town has undertaken and successfully completed over the years including completion of the \$1.4 million Downtown Revitalization Project in 2017, two East Lee Pedestrian Projects of about \$1.4 million in 2018 and 2023, a \$3 million upgrade of the town's regional water treatment plant with the Washington County Service Authority in 2017 and 2023, a \$400,000 farmers market in 2021, comple-

tion of a \$450,000 splash pad in 2024 and a dog park. He was also cited for his work in getting funding for a \$6.2 million Seven Mile Ford Water Line Project and system wide meter replacement project that will start in 2025, and a \$3.9 million sewer infiltration and inflow project that will begin in August 2024.

In a press release, Clark said he was proud of all the accomplishments of the past ten years at Chilhowie but said he could not have gotten it done without the help of his excellent staff and other network resources. Clark stated "I was so very fortunate to have found a career that I loved and gained both personal and professional satisfaction in. It was a rare day over the years when I woke up in the morning and didn't look forward to my day".

Clark will remain with the Town of Chilhowie on a part time consulting basis.

Newport News' Woodbury to retire



- Woodbury -

Pat Woodbury, a past president of the Virginia Municipal League (2017-2018) and member of the Newport News City Council, has announced that she will not seek another term after her current term expires at the end of 2024. In a June 24 interview with the *Virginia-Pilot*, Woodbury stated that at 88 years old she feels it's time for a younger person to serve on council.

Woodbury has a long history of public service, first as a teacher, community volunteer, a licensed professional counselor, and a nationally certified school psychologist. In 2002, Dr. Woodbury was elected to the Newport News School Board and was subsequently elected to the Newport News City Council in 2008. Woodbury began as a member of the VML's Board of Directors in 2012, first serving as chair of the Urban section, then as an at-large member and vice president before taking the reins as president in October of 2017.

Among the projects tackled during her time on council, Woodbury cites the mile long walking trail being constructed adjacent to Riverview Farm Park and Menchville Marina and on Hampton Roads Sanitation District's (HRSD) property as one of which she is particularly proud. Funding for the project came from HRSD.

Lifelong learning has been

a theme of Woodbury's life and informs her policy approaches, such as advocating for workforce development programs. Lifelong learning ensures that adults as well as children have educational opportunities. She organized the first yoga class on the Peninsula and taught classes at Adult Education and Riverside Mental Health. She wrote many research papers in her doctoral studies about the connection of body, mind and spirit. She also has been a liturgical dance leader, exploring the relationship of body, mind and spirit.

Interviewed for *Virginia Town & City* upon becoming VML's president in 2017, Woodbury traced the origins of her passion for education in general and lifelong learning specifically. "I was born and raised on a farm during the depression. We did not have a phone until I went to college because the phone lines were not extended that far from town. Several members of my family, including my mother, were teachers and they emphasized the value of education. When I was six years old, I earned ten cents a day for picking cotton. That experience helped me realize I did not want to do that the rest of my life and a good education was the key to my future. I have always loved learning new things, and I make it a point to learn something from every life situation. I still go to seminars and workshops that enrich my life. My greatest joy was teaching others of every age as well as learning from them."

Woodbury holds a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Longwood College; a Master of Education in School Psychology, Educational Specialist Degree, and a Doctor of Education in Counseling/School Psychology from the College of William and Mary.

Irvin is Staunton's new director of public works



- Irvin -

In June, **Dave Irvin** was named the new director of public works for the City of Staunton. Irvin had been serving as the city's interim director since December 2023.

"We are excited to have Dave move into this position permanently. Throughout his nearly 15 years with Staunton Public Works, and especially in the last seven months, he has proven that he is the right person for the job," said City Manager Leslie Beauguard in a press release. "He will be able to seamlessly transition into the role."

Irvin has been revamping the mapping

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.

PEOPLE

of the city's water and sewer infrastructure by utilizing an active and robust GIS, overseeing a water supply source evaluation study, upgrading the metering infrastructure, replacing water plant tanks and machinery, and managing the annual waterline replacement program across the city, among many other projects.

Irvin is a professional engineer with nearly 40 years of experience on a wide variety of municipal projects. Most recently, he was serving as utilities superintendent for Staunton Public Works, responsible for the city's water and sewer infrastructure. In the past, he has also served as the interim superintendent for the other two divisions in Public Works, Transportation and Refuse & Facilities.

South Boston selects Candland as new town manager



On July 1, **Matthew Candland** began as the Town of South Boston's new manager. Candland replaced Tom Raab who retired at the end of June (see article below).

Candland most recently served as the town manager for Upper Moreland Township in Pennsylvania from 2019 to 2024. His other positions include borough manager of the Borough of Carlisle, PA, from 2012-19 and town manager of Sykesville, MD, from 1995 to 2012.

"After a long search, I am pleased to announce we have appointed Matthew Candland as the new town manager for the town of South Boston," South Boston Mayor Ed Owens said in a statement. "Matt brings a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to public service."

Candland has a Master's degree in Business Administration from Frostburg State University in Frostburg, MD. He also has a Master's degree in Public Administration as a graduate of North Carolina State University.

South Boston's Raab receives Main Street Change Maker honor; retires after years of service

The Virginia Main Street (VMS) program's Main Street Change Maker merit award highlights an individual that has shown strong commitment and extensive support for their local Main Street program. The 2024 award went to **Tom Raab**, South Boston's Town Manager. Raab accepted the



South Boston Town Manager Tom Raab (right) accepts 2024 Main Street Change Maker Merit Award from Virginia DHCD Associate Director Rebecca Rowe (left) at the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA) Summer Meeting

award at VEDA's summer meeting held June 3-4 in Danville in time for his retirement at the end of the month.

In bestowing the award, VEDA noted that "Tom Raab is deserving of recognition for his unwavering support of South Boston's local Main Street program, Destination Downtown South Boston (DDSB), and desire to improve the lives of residents and address community needs. Through his expertise and exceptional leadership, Raab has driven positive change and been pivotal in shaping DDSB priorities and strategic initiatives, leading to successful revitalization efforts that have enabled downtown businesses to grow and expand."

A former small business owner and member of South Boston's town council (1998-2005), Raab started working for the town in February of 2015, as the finance director. Six months later, the town lost its town manager and Raab was asked to fill the vacancy as interim town manager. Several months later, he assumed that official role.

Raab has overseen several major, multimillion-dollar projects during his tenure as town manager. One of the first projects Raab managed was the conveyance of a former textile mill (Tultex) to a developer who converted it into 71 market-rate apartments now known as the Imperial Lofts, an 11,000-square-foot research and development center for higher education, 150 storage rental units. The assessed value of that development is \$5.45 million.

Under Raab's leadership, a total of \$66.01 million has been invested into projects in South Boston, \$13.22 million of which were grant funds. Among the grants

are a \$700,000 Department of Housing and Community Development grant for Poplar Creek Homes (a low-to-moderate income housing development), an \$876,000 grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the Greene's Crossing Boat Landing in Riverdale, \$2 million in storm water improvements from Sen. Mark Warner, a \$550,000 COVID grant for small businesses plus an additional \$110,000 increase in the COVID small business grant, a \$1.2 million DHCD infrastructure grant for the purchase of Westside Trailer Park and development of a new subdivision, and a \$1.49 million Virginia Department of Transportation Smart Scale grant for yellow flashing lights, high visibility signal backplates and improved crosswalks at intersections throughout the town. Work on the VDOT project has not yet begun.

Raab holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and Management from Duke University and a Bachelor's degree in Forestry.

Dufek is the new chief of police for Purcellville



On July 1, **Lt. Barry Dufek** of the Town of Purcellville became the new chief of police.

"The town conducted an extensive search with the assistance of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police to identify the individual who would best serve Purcellville and the Police Department," said Purcellville Mayor Stanley J. Milan, Sr. in a press release. "Barry has proven to be a dedicated leader in our community and a solid leader committed to public safety."

Chief Dufek has 24 years of law enforcement experience, the last eight with the Purcellville Police Department. He is a graduate of the 281st session of the FBI National Academy and holds a Master's in Public Safety from the University of Virginia. He is a graduate of the Leadership Loudoun executive development program and has served as the President of the Emerick Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization.

Chief Dufek succeeded former Police Chief Cindy McAllister, who retired on May 1, 2024, after nearly nine years of service to the Town of Purcellville, and with more than 42 years of law enforcement service in northern Virginia.

DiMeo is the new director of economic development for Staunton



Amanda DiMeo began as the City of Staunton’s new director of economic development on July 1. She had been serving as the city’s interim director since June 1.

- DiMeo - DiMeo’s roots in local government began during a high school mentorship with Economic and Community Development in Augusta County. She has worked for the City of Staunton for 20 years, most recently in the Economic Development Department as an economic development specialist. DiMeo helped shape the progress at Staunton Crossing, managed the Business Retention and Expansion Program, and developed marketing plans and materials to attract businesses to the area. Prior to that, she was the general registrar and director of elections for more than 12 years.

“We are excited to have Amanda move into this position permanently. She is an enthusiastic leader with great ideas to help push Staunton and its diverse businesses for-

ward,” said City Manager Leslie Beauregard in a press release. “Her experience in economic development, extensive knowledge of the city, and networking in Staunton make her a great fit for the role.”

DiMeo recently completed the LEAD program through the University of Virginia and is currently participating in the Virginia Women’s Municipal Leadership Institute through Virginia Tech. DiMeo has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Public Administration from Mary Baldwin University.

Hampton’s Mugler elected chair of AGB Board of Directors



- Mugler - On July 1, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) announced that its Board of Directors had elected several new officers, including the City of Hampton’s Commissioner of Revenue **Ross A. Mugler** as the new board chair.

Mugler has served on AGB’s board since 2018, and as vice chair since 2022. He is a five-time gubernatorial appointee to the

Old Dominion University Board of Visitors (BOV) and is the longest-serving BOV member at a single institution in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He currently is chair of the Athletics Committee and previously served as rector of the BOV. In addition, he is a member of the Virginia Peninsula Community College Educational Foundation Board of Directors and has served numerous times as the foundation’s president.

“Ross is a true statesman and a dedicated public servant with long-standing and significant experience in serving on and leading the board of a multifaceted institution. He is well-positioned to provide thought leadership and sound guidance to AGB professional staff and member institutions as he contributes his expertise and insight at the national level,” said Brian O. Hemphill, PhD, president of Old Dominion University in a press release. “I am confident that he will continue to implement and share best practices for our complex and critical work. Old Dominion University and the Commonwealth of Virginia are honored to be represented by Ross in this important role.”

Mugler has been serving as Commissioner of the Revenue for the City of Hampton since 1992. He received his BSBA and

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MPA from Old Dominion University and is a Certified Master Commissioner of the Revenue through the Weldon Cooper Center at UVA and a graduate of the CIVIC Leadership Institute of Hampton Roads.

The AGB Board of Directors comprises higher education board members, governance experts, and thought leaders. In addition to overseeing the association’s strategic priorities, directors regularly contribute their knowledge to programs and content, such as webinars, blog posts, and *Trusteeship* magazine articles.

Learn more about the organization at www.AGB.org.

Ashton to depart Herndon after 27 years of service



- Ashton -

On July 10, Herndon Mayor Sheila Olem accepted the resignation of Town Manager **Bill Ashton** with “regret and sincere best wishes.” Ashton is departing to assume the county administrator position in Stafford, VA.

“Throughout his tenure, Bill has provided thoughtful, professional counsel to Herndon’s elected officials, principled leadership to town staff, and – on a personal note – invaluable advice to me throughout my years on the town council,” said Olem. “His imprint on our operations will be felt long after his departure. We wish him well as he undertakes a new professional challenge in Stafford.”

Ashton joined the Town of Herndon staff in 1997 as the town’s first director of Information Technology and was promoted to the top administrative post in 2017. He has served under two Mayors – Lisa Merkel and Sheila Olem – and has had oversight of town administration and operations during a period of significant growth but also significant challenge, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on town operations and services.

Ashton’s last day as Herndon’s town manager will be September 10, 2024.

Herndon appoints Martino interim town manager; Robinson and Jovanovich assume deputy manager roles

In early August, the Herndon Town Council adopted a resolution to appoint **Christopher Martino**, former county executive for Prince William County, as interim town



- Martino -



- Robinson -



- Jovanovich -

manager to replace departing Town Manager **Bill Ashton** who resigned his position with the town to accept the county executive position in Stafford County (*see article left*).

Martino’s appointment was facilitated by the Bridgewater, VA-based Berkley Group and is in effect from September 3, 2024, until a permanent replacement for Ashton is named, likely in the first quarter of 2025. The town will be working with an executive search firm to conduct a national search for the town’s next manager.

Additional interim management changes include the appointments of two town department heads to acting deputy town manager positions.

Scott Robinson, the town’s director of public works, will have oversight for the Community Development, Golf, Parks & Recreation, Police and Public Works departments. **Kirstyn Jovanovich**, currently serving as town clerk, will have oversight for the Communications, Economic Development, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Town Clerk departments. Robinson and Jovanovich will report to Martino.

Damascus hires Bell as first full-time town manager



- Bell -

The Town of Damascus recently hired its first-ever full-time town manager, **Chris Bell**, as a result of years of continued growth for the town.

The town manager’s role is to serve as the head of administration and finance, function as the appointed zoning and floodplain administrator, handle the development and implementation of policies and plans, and generally advise and assist the mayor and town council in the professional administration of the town.

For the past 20 years, the Town of Damascus has held a contract with the Mount

Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) in Marion to fill the role of town manager in a part-time capacity. Through this contract, Gavin N. Blevins served as the town manager from 2014 to 2024 and Aaron Sizemore from 2005 to 2014 before him.

The Town of Damascus was incorporated in 1904 as a railroad town during the lumber boom of the early 20th century and reinvented itself through outdoor recreation and tourism in the 1990s. Recent projects and associated grant funds have resulted in more than \$3 million in additional investment in community development over the past ten years. Large-scale projects include the development of the Damascus Trail Center, Laurel Creek Park, and Beaverdam Creek Trail, plus projects toward downtown revitalization, the concept of a 15-minute city, community forestry, housing rehabilitation, and more.

Bell has extensive management experience, which largely comes from building an audiovisual engineering firm from the ground up over the course of 26 years. In a press release, Mayor Katie Lamb said, “Chris Bell will be a huge asset to our town. We’ve had a need for a full-time town manager for some time now and I truly feel that Chris will do an amazing job given his experience and leadership skills.”

Roanoke County appoints Webb and Jones as new economic development staff

On July 8, Roanoke County welcomed **Lindsay Webb** as assistant director of business retention and operations, and **Alexander Jones** as assistant director of marketing and business development.



- Webb -

Webb previously worked in Roanoke County’s Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department as the parks planning and development manager. Jones previously served as the principal planner and the long-range planning division manager for the county’s Planning Department.

“We are thrilled to welcome two talented individuals from within our organization to the Economic Development team,” said Economic Development Director Megan Baker in a press release. “Both bring extensive knowledge and a deep commitment to our community, which will be crucial as we continue to promote growth and development within Roanoke County.”

This appointment of new economic development staff aligns with a year of significant achievements in the county. In the past 12 months, the county has secured over \$177 million in investments through various announcements, openings, and ongoing projects, including those from Wells Fargo, Mack Trucks, Carilion Mental Health, Publix, and Galen School of Nursing. This has also led to the creation of over 1,800 new jobs in the county.

Webb brings over 19 years of professional experience in local government specializing in project management, grant administration, and community planning. She currently serves as a Roanoke County representative on the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission and the Roanoke River Blueway Committee.

Webb holds a Bachelor of Science degree from James Madison University with a double major in Public Administration and Political Science. She also holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Virginia Tech. She completed a Graduate Certificate Program in Local Government Management through a partnership with the Virginia Tech Center for Public Administration and Policy and the Virginia Local Government Management Association.



- Jones -

Jones has spent the past seven years leading the division in the development of the Draft Roanoke County 200 Plan and other planning projects. He contributed to the development and implementation of the county's award-winning activity center plans and economic development projects. He also served as the staff representative to Roanoke County's Career and Technical Education Citizen Advisory Committee that led to the preliminary recommendations for the new Roanoke County CTE Center being constructed. Prior to his tenure with Roanoke County, Jones was a landscape architecture designer at the Community Design Assistance Center at Virginia Tech.

Jones holds a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from Virginia Tech. He is an active member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the American Planning Association (APA). His awards and honors include being named to *The Roanoker Magazine's* "40 Under 40" Class of 2023, a graduate of the Roanoke Regional Chamber's Leadership Roanoke Valley Class of 2024, and receiving awards

from the National Association of Counties (NACo), Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), and APA Virginia Chapter.

Strasburg hires Stine as new finance director



- Stine -

On August 26, **Angela Stine** began work as the new finance director for the Town of Strasburg. Stine has more than 23 years of local government experience, the last two and a half years in a leadership role as the Shenandoah County Public Schools' director of finance and prior to that position four years as the Shenandoah County finance director. In those roles she assisted in the development of the annual operating budget, provided supervision to the finance departments, oversaw the annual external audit process and contributed to the overall financial workings of the organizations.

In a press release, Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale noted that "Angie's experience, strong organizational skills and leadership will be a strong asset to the Town of Strasburg."

Stine is a graduate of Shenandoah University with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and is a graduate of the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy. Stine is a member of several professional organizations including the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), the Virginia Government Finance Officers Association (VGFOA), and the Virginia Association of Government Purchasing (VAGP).

The role of finance director is an important role in that it provides a key leadership position to bring together the values and visions of the town and its programs and initiatives. As the finance director, Stine will lead a dedicated and experienced team; and play a pivotal role in planning, managing, and directing the town's financial operations. Additionally, she will take the lead in formulating strategies encompassing budgeting, investment, accounting, and financial reporting.

Emporia's Hawkins promoted to chief of police

On July 9, former **Major Hawkins** of the City of Emporia Sheriff's office assumed his new duties as the chief of police.

A native of Emporia, Chief Hawkins commenced his law enforcement career as a deputy sheriff with the City of Emporia

Sheriff's Office in 2003. Subsequently, he held various positions with the Greensville County Sheriff's Office and Sussex County Sheriff's Office before rejoining the City of Emporia Police Department in 2011 as a patrol officer.



- Hawkins -

"We are thrilled to promote Chief Hawkins as the leader of the Emporia Police Department. His appointment signifies a pivotal moment for the department, as his leadership is poised to uphold the values of integrity, professionalism, and community engagement. Under his guidance, the department will continue its vital mission of safeguarding the well-being and security of Emporia residents," stated City Manager William E. Johnson, III in a press release.

With a distinguished career in law enforcement spanning over two decades, Chief Hawkins brings a wealth of experience and a deep dedication to serving the community. Chief Hawkins' unwavering dedication and exceptional performance have earned him esteemed accolades, including the Chief's MVP for multiple years. He is a distinguished graduate of the Virginia Forensic Science Academy and actively engages with several boards serving the City of Emporia. Over the course of his career, he has supervised numerous departmental employees in various roles and collaborated with local, state, and federal agencies. Chief Hawkins has completed several leadership programs, including the University of Richmond - Professional Executive Leadership School, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police - New Chiefs / Deputy Chiefs Training, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police - Institute for Leadership in Changing Times, and Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police - First Line Supervisor, among others.

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Hampton's newest sister city is Angola's Malanje province

HAMPTON CITY COUNCIL recently voted to authorize the establishment of a sister city relationship with Angola's Malanje province. The Hampton and Malanje bond traces back to August of 1619 with two of the first documented Africans, Antoney and Isabella, arriving at Point Comfort (present day Fort Monroe). Their son, William, was the first child of African ancestry known to have been born in Virginia and descendants of William Tucker continue to reside in the Hampton Roads area. This historic beginning and its waterfront commerce was a natural tie to choosing Malanje Province as Hampton's newest Sister City.

To kick-off the Hampton-Malanje partnership, a delegation comprised of Sister City and City of Hampton officials, includ-

ing Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray and Councilmember Hope Harper, visited Malanje in July. They were warmly welcomed by the Governor of Malanje, Marcos Alexandre Nhunga, the Governor of Luanda, and a number of officials and citizens.

On August 23, 2024, the Tucker 1624 Society commemorated the 405-year link between Malanje and Hampton at the Hampton Convention Center. The Minister of Culture of the Republic of Angola, Filipe Silvino de Pina Zau, the Angola Ambassador to the United States, Agostino Van-Dunem and a large delegation of Angolans attended this notable occasion. This event precedes the official "twinning" of the two cities which will be held in September of this year.



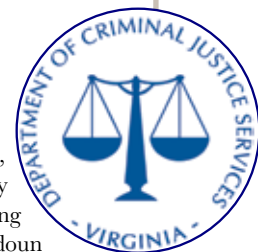
Purcellville Police Department hosts DCJS civilian active attack training classes

IN EARLY AUGUST, the Purcellville Police Department once again hosted classes for civilians as part of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice's (DCJS) Active Attack Program. The program provides free training for Virginia citizens and first responders to enable them to work together when an active attack occurs.

The Civilian Response and Casualty Care (CRCC) course is a four-hour class providing strategies, guidance, and a plan for recognizing, responding to and surviving an active attack event. This class combines the civilian response with the Stop the Bleed Campaign, which empowers civilians to provide life-saving medical aid before first responders ever arrive. Topics include the history and prevalence of active attack events, civilian response options, and medical issues.

The course is designed and built on the Avoid, Deny, Defend/Run, Hide, Fight strategy developed by Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) in 2004. All Town of Purcellville and Loudoun County residents, local businesses and community members were welcome and encouraged to attend, including school employees, students who are 16 years or older, faith-based communities, and civic organizations. Local first responders including law enforcement, Fire/EMS, and dispatchers were also invited to attend.

DCJS will offer the course again on October 5 in Richmond and October 23 in Danville. Learn more at www.dcjs.virginia.gov/training-events/civilian-response-and-casualty-care-crcc.



Local grant supports installation of Automated External Defibrillators in Fredericksburg city parks

MARY WASHINGTON HEALTHCARE was recently pleased to announce the placement of two Automated External Defibrillator (AED) lifesaving devices in the City of Fredericksburg's Memorial Park and W. L. Harris Park after receiving a \$7,500 grant from Mary Washington Hospital Foundation's Joe and Mary Wilson Community Benefit Fund.

The City of Fredericksburg has begun a phased process of installing AED devices in city parks and on city trails. Using donations received, AEDs are now available in Memorial Park, Old Mill Park, W.L. Harris Park, and Alum Spring Park at the Virginia Central Railway Trail.

"We are thankful for Mary Washington Healthcare's support allowing us to purchase these lifesaving devices that anyone can use to assist in a crisis situation," said Todd Brown, director of Fredericksburg's Parks, Recreation and Events in a press release. "Having AED's available in public locations allows the person in need to

receive help prior to rescue arrival. Every second counts."

The AED devices are in climate-controlled security boxes that require users to call 911 to obtain the access code. By dialing 911, first responders are alerted that emergency services are required, and the caller will be on the phone with a dispatcher who can assist them in the use of the AED.

"To assist with the purchase of the AED's and having placed in our city parks and trails is an honor," said Xavier Richardson, MWHC's chief development officer and president of Mary Washington and Stafford Hospital Foundations. "Through Foundation funds, we continue to make a positive impact in a variety of ways, to improve the health of the communities we serve."



Xavier Richardson and Todd Brown with a newly installed AED device



Staunton Library grounds to undergo renovation thanks to estate gift

THE FRIENDS OF THE STAUNTON LIBRARY, as recipients of an estate gift from former board member Julia Kiessling, will conduct a renovation of the library grounds. Kiessling designated the Friends of the Staunton Library as a beneficiary of her estate, leaving over \$500,000 to the organization upon her death in 2022. She served on the Friends of the Staunton Library Board from 2018 – 2019 and was the newsletter editor during her term. “Julia was an enthusiastic supporter of our mission, dedicating her time and effort in support of public library services. We truly miss her and are grateful for her incredible generosity,” said Director of Library Services Sarah Skrobis in a press release.

The Friends will use a portion of Kiessling’s bequest to fund an outdoor renovation project to improve the Staunton Public Library grounds by creating a tiered terrace to serve as visitor seating and as event space for library programs. The project involves the renovation of the yard at the north end of the building to create a patio space, hardscape seating built into the hillside, and a new accessible path to the raised terrace area.

Stone walls and seating will be constructed along with a patio area that will be covered with complementary paving stones. The entire space will be made accessible via a new paved path suitable for visitors using wheelchairs, walkers or strollers. Low voltage LED lighting will be installed for safety and security while being sensi-

tive to the neighboring residences and light pollution. The project includes the installation of a large shade sail to be located over the seating areas. This shade sail will provide relief from direct sunlight in the warm seasons and create a more comfortable environment for visitors.

The patio area will be situated at the front of the terraced seating and will function as a stage for small scale library events such as story times, lectures, intimate musical performances, and other programs for all ages. “The Friends strongly believe this project will enrich the Staunton Public Library and benefit Staunton citizens,” said Friends of the Staunton Library President Howard Kator.

The Friends have received considerable pro bono support from Balzer & Associates and Williams Brothers Tree Services. When completed, all physical components of this project will be donated to the City of Staunton by the Friends.

Learn more at www.ci.staunton.va.us/departments/library/terrace-project.

About The Friends of the Staunton Library

The Friends of the Staunton Library is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides volunteer support and raises funds to enhance the programming, technology, and collections of the Staunton Public Library.

Arlington marks construction of Crystal City Metro Station east entrance

ARLINGTON COUNTY OFFICIALS and project partners celebrated the start of construction of the Crystal City Metro Station east entrance with a groundbreaking ceremony on Fri., July 12, 2024.

The second entrance represents a multi-year collaborative effort between Arlington County, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the US Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA).

“Constructing an additional entrance for the Crystal City Metrorail station is an investment in the future of Crystal City and National Landing,” said Arlington County Board Chair Libby Garvey in a press release. “This project will deliver better transit access, more transit options, and support economic growth for our residents and our region.”

The east entrance project features a new pavilion at the intersection of Crystal Drive and 18th Street South, providing a full service, above-ground station entrance with fare gates, fare vending machines, and a staff kiosk for passengers seeking assistance. A new mezzanine with stairs and elevators will connect to the east end of the platform, making it easier for riders to use all available space while waiting for trains.

The finished entrance will bring Metro and regional and local transportation closer together on Crystal Drive. Riders will have faster access to the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station, the future multimodal connection to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and a future Amtrak station, all to be located within a five-minute walk of the new Metrorail entrance.

Locally, the new Metro entrance will provide easy access to the expanding bus Transitway on Crystal Drive, which is being extended to the Pentagon City Metro Station. The east entrance will also be a short walk from the connection to the Mount Vernon Trail across the street, along with improved sidewalks and bike lanes associated with other projects on Crystal Drive and 18th Street South.



Remarkable bridges of Virginia

A celebration of spectacular spans.



By Robert Bullington

FOR THE JULY/AUGUST “Virginia You Love” issue of our magazine each year we enjoy shining a light on some aspect of the Commonwealth that involves being outdoors. For 2024 we are pleased to feature some of the most outdoor things available in Virginia – bridges! When you can’t get there from here because of a river or a ravine, nothing else will do but a bridge. Indeed, bridges have played an important role throughout much of human history. From the Bering Land Bridge – the strip of land that once connected Asia to Alaska – to the Millau Viaduct which soars 1,125 ft above the Tarn River valley in France – and became the tallest bridge in the world when it opened in 2004 – human beings have a thing for bridges!

We hope you enjoy learning more about the iconic, beautiful (each in its own way), and very Virginia bridges we’ve selected for this issue of *Virginia Town & City*.

Boulevard Bridge (aka Nickel Bridge) – Richmond

Richmond's favorite destination for loose change for almost a century

Built in 1925 at a cost of \$275,000 (close to \$5 million in today's money), the "Nickel Bridge" is a beloved Richmond landmark that spans the James River where Route 161 (Arthur Ashe Boulevard) ends at Byrd Park on the north side to the Westover Hills neighborhood on the south side. In fact, the Boulevard Bridge Corporation built the bridge specifically to provide access to the new homes being built in Westover Hills which came with a badge that could be affixed to a vehicle for free use of the bridge.



Nickel Bridge

Contrary to its name, the original cost to cross the bridge in a vehicle was 10 cents with pedestrians and cyclists charged 5 cents. Richmond City Council turned down several opportunities to purchase the bridge over the years, including the option to purchase it at cost during its first five years of operation. In 1969, the 2,032-foot structure was purchased by the Richmond Metropolitan Authority for \$1.2 million. Renovations in the early 1990s kept the bridge closed for 18 months. Despite the renovations the weight restriction on vehicles is limited to a modest 7,500 lbs. Today the toll to cross the bridge is 50 cents for vehicles but use of the bridge is free to pedestrians and cyclists.

Architecturally, the Nickel Bridge is a hybrid Pratt and Warren design with the most unusual feature being the mini-trusses within each panel of the main spans.

Fun fact: Because the Boulevard Bridge Corporation did not own the land on either side of the bridge, the original toll booth was located in the center of the bridge.

High Bridge – Farmville

Submitted by Mayor Brian Vincent

Taking the rails-to-trails concept to new heights

Originally constructed as a railway bridge before the Civil War, the majestic High Bridge of Prince Edward County near Farmville soars 125 feet above the Appomattox River valley.



High Bridge

When it comes to bridges, the Commonwealth cares!

VIRGINIA HAS MADE improving bridge quality a priority since 2017 and as a result fewer bridges are in poor condition and more bridges are in fair or good condition. For example, in 2012 1,714 (8.2%) of all 20,908 were found to be in poor condition ("structurally deficient" is the term of art used by roadway engineers), while in 2023 only 745 bridges, that's 3.5% of 21,312 total structures, were found to be structurally deficient. This beats trends nationally where 6.9% of all bridges nationwide are rated poor or worse.

Learn more about the bridges (and more) that VDOT cares for at www.vdot.virginia.gov/about/our-system/bridges-tunnels.

When the Southside Railroad was considering a rail bridge to connect Lynchburg and Petersburg in the 1850s, a low grade route between Burkeville and Pamplin was originally proposed. However, the citizens of Farmville urged the company to run the rail line through their town which led to the construction of the original High Bridge. When Robert E. Lee and his troops fled Petersburg in the closing days of the Civil War, they crossed High Bridge and fought a battle with pursuing Union troops there April 6-7, 1865. The Confederate soldiers set the bridge on fire, but it survived, and the Union troops used it to cross the river and catch up to Lee's forces at Appomattox Court House. Ironically, after the war, it was Lee who ordered the bridge repaired and renovated and it was completely rebuilt by its new owners, Norfolk & Western, in 1914.

The bridge's owners eventually ceased using it as a rail line in favor of a low-grade route and in the early 2000s it was donated to the Commonwealth to become part of High Bridge Trail State Park in 2012. The High Bridge Trail is a 31-mile long state park that runs through Downtown Farmville and is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts from around the world. High Bridge is a Virginia Historic Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fun fact: At more than 2,400 feet long, High Bridge is currently the longest recreational bridge in Virginia.

Hampton Roads Bridge & Tunnel – Hampton / Norfolk

Because sitting in traffic is better than waiting for a ferry!

It's the bridge and tunnel that everybody loves to hate but none of us can do without! Almost 3 million vehicles use it each month with more than 100,000 per day during the tourist season. Prior to the first span of the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel (HRBT) opening on November 1, 1957, the only way to travel from Newport News and Hampton to Norfolk was on vehicular ferries operated by the Virginia Department of Highways. After the second span opened in 1976 the HRBT became toll free.

The 3.5-mile-long HRBT is operated and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with two 12-foot-wide lanes each way. The twin tunnels are each 7,479 feet long, and the roadway is 108 feet below sea level at the lowest point. Air quality within the tunnels is constantly monitored and fresh air is circulated via ventilation fans injecting fresh air into the tunnels.

In October 2020, VDOT embarked on the largest transportation project in Virginia's history. This \$3.8 billion endeavor will add a third

lane and a part-time drivable shoulder to I-64 in each direction and a new pair of bored tunnels that will increase capacity from the current four tunnel lanes to eight.

The project's 430-foot-long tunnel boring machine, dubbed Mary, is excavating two new tunnels that will be about 8,000 feet long and up to 150 feet below the water. Most recently, on April 17, 2024, Mary broke through a concrete-lined pit on North Island, finishing the outline of the new westbound tunnel. The project is expected to be completed in 2027.

Fun fact: The HRBT tunnel holds a place as an engineering milestone: It is the world's first underwater tunnel connected to man-made islands.

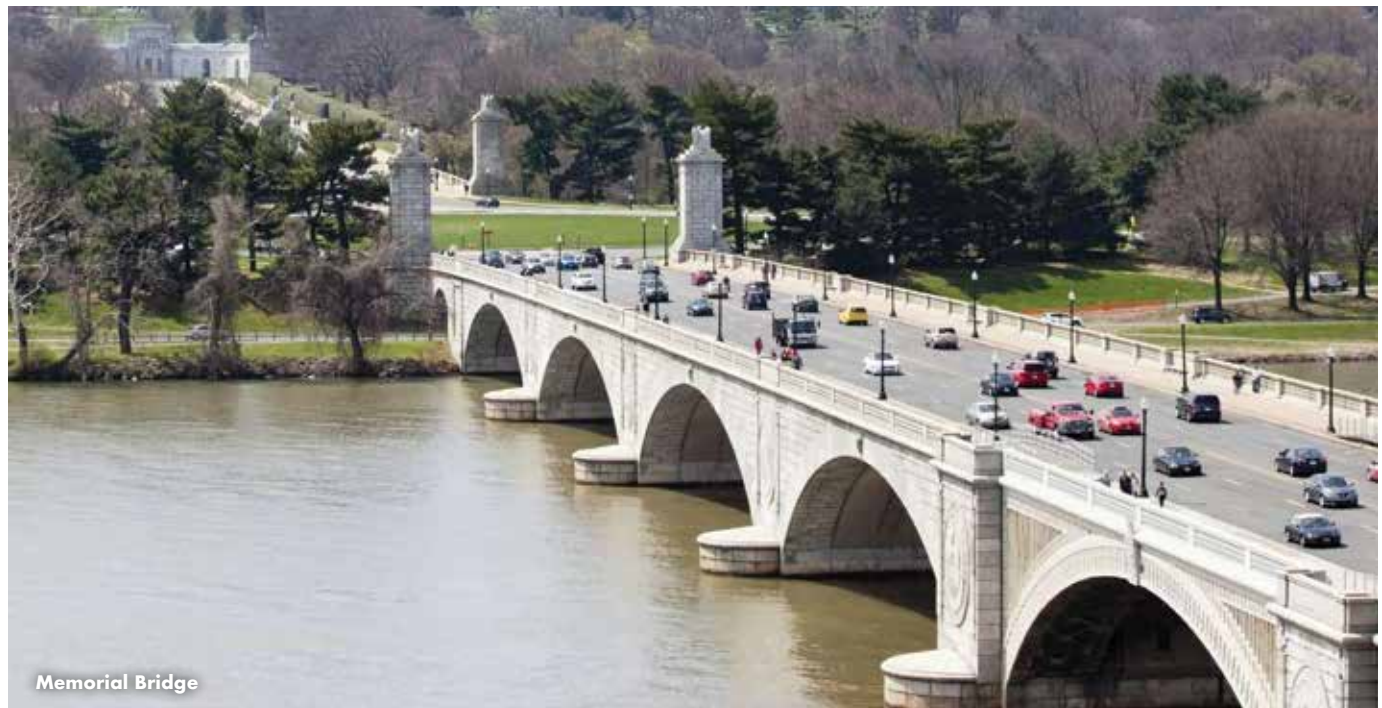
Memorial Bridge – Arlington

When a bridge is more than just a bridge

Arlington Memorial Bridge is more than just a way to get across the Potomac River, it is a monument to the sacrifices and valor of our nation's military personnel and a symbolic link between north and south. This "Avenue of Heroes," is lined with monuments and memorials to such diverse figures as Admiral Byrd, the Seabees, Valor,



VDOT



US PARK SERVICE



VA TOURISM

and Sacrifice. In total, seven memorials have been installed along Memorial Avenue: the first in 1961 and the last in 2001.

The idea of a memorial bridge crossing the Potomac was first proposed in 1886, but politics prevented the project from moving forward despite several designs being proposed and the formation of a “National Memorial Bridge Association” in 1898. It wasn’t until President Warren G. Harding became stuck in a 3-hour traffic jam on Highway Bridge (now the site of the 14th Street Bridge) on the way to the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on November 11, 1921, that Congress allocated the funds to support the work of a bridge commission. Further political machinations delayed the project, but construction of the low 2,163-foot-long neoclassical bridge began in 1926, and it formally opened on January 16, 1932, when President Herbert Hoover led a party of a dozen cars across the bridge to Mt. Vernon to kick-off the 200th birthday celebration of George Washington.

Originally, Arlington Memorial Bridge had a metal bascule (drawbridge) span which at the time it was constructed was the longest, heaviest, and fastest-opening bascule span in the world. Issues with the bascule span over the years, coupled with the construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge upstream (without a drawbridge) made it impractical. The drawbridge was opened for the last time on February 28, 1961, and subsequently sealed. The draw span was replaced as part of major renovations completed in 2020.

Arlington Memorial Bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fun fact: The traffic circle at the southwestern end of the bridge requires that traffic already in the circle yields to traffic entering the circle — this is the opposite of the standard rule for traffic circles.

Meem’s Bottom Bridge – Mount Jackson

You can’t keep a good bridge down

Measuring 204 feet across the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Meem’s Bottom Bridge is the longest covered bridge in Virginia

and one of the last that supports regular traffic. But it hasn’t been an easy road.

Three bridges near the location were lost in the nineteenth century. The first likely succumbed to flames set by Stonewall Jackson’s rebels during the Civil War. The other two were swept away by floods. The next attempt, and what came to be known as the Meem’s Bottom Bridge, was completed in 1893 by Franklin Hiser Wissler so he could have access to his apple orchards at Strathmore Farms on the other side of the river. The arch supports and stone abutments, which extend 10 feet below the riverbed, were quarried nearby. However, in a ghoulish act of Halloween trickery, vandals burned the bridge on October 31, 1976. Thankfully that wasn’t the end of the story. Original timbers were salvaged from the destroyed structure and Meem’s Bottom Bridge rose again in 1979, but this time with steel beams and concrete piers.

Meem’s Bottom Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fun fact: Meem’s Bottom Bridge is of the Burr Truss design, which was patented by Theodore Burr, brother of U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr.

Why cover a bridge?

IN THE EARLY nineteenth century, people started building covered bridges to help them last longer. It was typical for an uncovered bridge to last only about ten years as the wooden decking and supports were exposed to the elements. It was later determined that covering a wooden bridge was in fact a very smart approach as a covered wooden bridge on average lasted 10 times the lifespan of an uncovered one.

As a bonus, covered bridges provided great opportunities for young couples to be comfortably out of sight of their prurient elders. For this reason, they earned the nickname “kissing bridges.”

Humpback Bridge – Covington

Submitted by Susan Scott Crowder

Some bridges are built to last.

Humpback Bridge is the only covered, humpback bridge remaining in the United States. Built in 1857 across a tributary of the Jackson River known as Dunlap Creek, Humpback Bridge was built with a broad axe and put together with hand hewed locust pins. While it is not the only humpback bridge in the world, the supports of Humpback Bridge incorporate a unique curved multiple kingpost-truss system that is not found in any other surviving wooden bridge in the U.S. In fact, it is a unique design not replicated anywhere else in the world! The humped design – it's 4 feet higher in the middle – was used to increase longevity as it would be less likely to suffer deterioration during a flood. This combined with the roof (see sidebar) has helped Humpback Bridge survive to the present day. It was used for traffic until 1929 when a steel truss bridge was built for U.S. 60 nearby. Although the roof and sides have been replaced over the years, the bridge, as it stands today, has most of the original hand-hewn support timbers and decking that were laid down in 1857.

Humpback Bridge, which is believed to be the oldest bridge of its design remaining in the United States, is listed on both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Fun fact: At some point after 1929, when the bridge ceased to be used for traffic, a local farmer began to store his hay bales inside



SUSAN CROWDER

Humpback Bridge. Thanks to funding from the Virginia Highway Department and the Covington Business and Professional Women's Club and the Covington Chamber of Commerce it was reopened as part of a five-acre park in 1954.

The Natural Bridge – Rockbridge County (between Lexington and Roanoke)

Virginia's only 100 percent organic bridge.

Many, many years ago, Cedar Creek in what is today Rockbridge County was part of a river that flowed through a limestone cave. Today, all that remains of that cave is a 215-foot high, 90 feet long arch



VA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Grassy Creek Bridge

1001



that has captured the imagination of generations. The Native American Monacan tribe considered the site sacred as the location of a legendary victory over the Powhatan tribe. Europeans first gazed upon the natural wonder in 1742 when a frontiersman named John Howard led an exploration party down Cedar Creek at the behest of Governor William Gooch to explore as far as the Mississippi River. Thomas Jefferson, ever the savvy real estate investor, purchased 157 acres that included Natural Bridge from King George III for 20 shillings just two years before he conveniently penned a declaration declaring independence from the original owner. Jefferson also built a small cabin nearby to use as a retreat for his guests to visit what he called “the most Sublime of nature’s works”.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, visitors from around the world traveled to view what William Cullen Bryant called one of the two most remarkable features of North America (the other being Niagara Falls). In 1927 the Westinghouse Company created electric illumination for the Natural Bridge that was formally switched on by President Calvin Coolidge.

Since Jefferson’s time, the land around the Natural Bridge has changed ownership several times. Most recently, in 2013, the 1,500-acres were to be sold at auction. However, the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund (VCLF) purchased the bridge, a hotel, and surrounding land for \$9.1 million. The Commonwealth of Virginia turned the area into a Virginia State Park in 2016 when the VCLF was unable to make payments on the loan that had allowed it to purchase the property.

Fun fact: What’s the opposite of a Natural Bridge? How about a Styrofoam replica of Stonehenge called “Foamhenge”? This thoroughly unnatural structure was previously located on the same property as Natural Bridge. It has been relocated to Cox Farms in Fairfax County.

Grassy Creek Bridge – Breaks (about 10 miles north of Haysi)

The inspiration for Virginia’s SmartScale program now actually goes somewhere!

Completed in 2015 the Grassy Creek Bridge consists of two 1,700-foot long spans on US 460 that are part of the Corridor Q 460 Connector in the Appalachian Development Highway System. Upon completion the bridge immediately earned notoriety for two very different reasons. First, at 265 feet, the spans are the tallest bridges in Virginia. Second, at a cost of \$100 million the bridge seemed a bit of an unnecessary expense as it didn’t connect to anything! As no funding had been committed for the construction of the connecting roads the “Bridge to Nowhere” became a very large, and very real symbol of Virginia’s overzealous approach to highway projects. Secretary of Finance Aubrey Lane who inherited the impressive bridge that dead ended into a mountain from his predecessor observed that the project did beg the question: “Why would they start there?” As a result, Virginia developed its point-based scoring system for the funding of road projects called SmartScale.

Five years after they were completed, the two spans opened to traffic on November 16, 2020 although drivers coming into Virginia had to make a hard right turn to get to Route 80, since the rest of Corridor Q to Grundy had not been built.

Foibles aside, it’s worth noting that construction of the cantilevered bridge was incredibly challenging due to the scarcity of local workers and the height of the surrounding mountains. In fact, when *Roads & Bridges* chose it as the #1 bridge project in 2013, the magazine noted: “Height is a relative measure. You might think the tallest bridge in Virginia would tower over its surroundings. Actually, it is just level with the mountains around it.”

Fun fact: To supply the 84 concrete segments for the project a concrete plant was built at the site as it was not feasible to haul prefabricated segments over the steep mountain roads.



How local governments can address the increasingly hyper-competitive culture of youth sports

KIDS' SPORTS MAY be the last remaining activity immune to partisan rancor. Spurred in part by their own memories of playing on a team growing up, and conscious of the abundant health benefits that come with play, most parents of all political stripes are eager to see their children take part in recreational or club sports programs. For these and other reasons, youth sports are the most popular extracurricular activity in the country. According to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, 70.8 million kids played a team sport in 2022.

Despite their widespread popularity, the evolution of youth sports over the last few decades has eroded some of the very qualities that make them most appealing to children. As community recreation programs have withered, competitive travel teams – many starting as early as second or third grade – have emerged to fill the gap. The result is that kids' sports programs, once local and low-key with a focus on fun and teambuilding, have become increasingly highly organized and serious. In response to the higher stakes, the adults in charge feel compelled to focus on skill development and collecting wins more than generating enthusiasm for exercise and team play.

The consequences of these developments have been dire. According to the Aspen Institute Sports and Society program, the majority of children play team sports for no more than three years and quit by age 11. Children in low-income areas are often shut out entirely, as funding for recreational programs has faltered. Whether or not a child plays sports is largely a function of family income: according to a 2020 study by the CDC, 70% of children in households with family earnings of at least \$105,000 play sports, while in households with \$25,000 of income, just 31% of children do.

Complex social and economic shifts explain how kids' athletics changed. Broadly, the influx of money, parents' anxiety about their kids' safety and economic prospects, and pursuit of college athletic scholarships or admissions advantages have altered the nature of youth sports, upping the stakes for some kids and shutting others out. Meanwhile, local governments historically have been reluctant to intervene, leaving the youth sports system unstructured and chaotic.

In the last few years, state and community leaders have begun to look for ways to address these problems. Some are deploying their authority as permit authorizers, facilities managers, program funders, and champions of community well-being to address these problems. Some of the most effective initiatives have occurred in municipalities and counties.

- **Houston, TX:** In the Space City, leaders adopted the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports, a statement of support for all children who play sports. Created by the Aspen Institute and based on language used in a similar effort in Norway—which has both robust recreational and competitive athletics—the Bill of Rights strives to return sports to children by emphasizing health, age-appropriate play, and qualified leadership.
- **Philadelphia, PA:** Troubled by the gaps in sports opportunities for kids in low-income areas, the City of Brotherly Love appropriated more than \$5 million to boost access and promote collaboration among the city's schools, parks, and youth sports

organizations. The city empowered a youth sports collaborative to act as the local intermediary between the city and neighborhood programs.

- **Minneapolis/St. Paul:** The Twin Cities applied a portion of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to eliminate the cost of recreational sports in the city for up to three years. Basketball participation jumped by 38%.

Efforts closer to home

Localities in Virginia and the surrounding region have also been driving change. For example, Fairfax County relies on its Athletic Council to help interested parties coordinate and manage the area's youth sports programs. County leaders established the Fairfax Athletic Council in the 1970s, long before youth sports became crowded and serious, but the formal body remains influential. It “represents the single largest set of organized citizens in Fairfax County,” one member told the Aspen Institute.

Along with three representatives from the Park Authority, School Board, and head of Community Services, the Athletic Council is made up of respected citizens from each district and major sports program, all of them appointed and approved by the county Board of Supervisors. The group imposes some structure and oversight for the county's sports' programs and serves as a troubleshooter when problems emerge.

Officials in Montgomery County, MD formed a similar advisory body in 2022 to address several pressing concerns. Though the county had turned out sports luminaries over the years – like swimming champion Katie Ledecky, and soccer great Freddy Adu – few seemed aware of the athletes' connection to the area. The parks departments and schools were both responsible for providing sports to kids, but acted independently of one another, denying the county a cohesive vehicle through which to address issues including worsening inequities in sports participation made apparent during the pandemic.

The Sports Advisory Committee, Montgomery County's answer to these challenges, is made up of well-respected citizens from across the county, along with representatives from the parks, schools, and revenue authority. They identify gaps in services, recommend fixes, and aim to coordinate the jumble of teams and leagues vying for use of county space. Still comparatively new, the Montgomery County Sports Advisory Committee has begun to identify potential solutions.

With the 2024 Paris Olympics in the rear-view mirror, and the 2028 L.A. games on the horizon, localities have a great opportunity to focus on the foundation of youth sports in their own communities. As area leaders, we all can address the hyper-competitive culture of sports. And the good news is, we have local strategies that others can adopt. For example, the City of Fairfax leveraged American Rescue Plan funding to create the Everybody Plays community grant program targeted at youth engagement. The 10 grants of up to \$10,000 each included scholarship support to offset the cost of putting on events and purchasing equipment. This type of local community investment makes a difference in connecting across communities.



The time to act is now!

Here are three steps that local leaders can follow to promote healthy sports programs in their own communities:

- 1) **Open up the discussion.** Across your community, there are leaders working hard to support youth sports programs. You probably have seen them on the weekends and in the evenings. Take a minute to bring them all together to discuss the state of play in your community. Understanding what their perspective is on the competitive environment, what's working, and what needs to be addressed will create a shared starting point.
- 2) **Adopt the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports.** Driven by the Aspen Institute Project Play, this nationally recognized statement identifies eight key principals to ensure the design of all sport activities for youth take advantage of leading practices and frameworks. In many cases, organizations have already incorporated these practices, and this larger connection will help strengthen your community's focus on the kids (see call out box for the QR code to view/download).
- 3) **Leverage grant funding.** While a few thousand dollars will not fund an entire program, local funding is often a key to unlocking additional support. By simply creating an opportunity for local organizations to apply for funding, community leaders open doors for many conversations on how to support the unique aspects and challenges of your communities.



Resources for elected officials who want to improve youth sports in their community



Improving Youth Sports: Role Of Cities and Counties Opportunities for Governance and Support: A one-sheet created by the Aspen Institute's Sports & Society program with advice to

elected officials who want to make sports available for more kids, and to restore the spirit of fun.



Children's Bill of Rights in Sports. Designed to create a shared cultural understanding that all youth should have the opportunity to develop as people through sports.



Aspen Institute Toolkit. Images, content, and ideas for stakeholders in the United States to recognize the rights of young athletes.

About the authors: *Jon Stehle is a City of Fairfax councilmember, the immediate past president of the Virginia Municipal League, and proud sports dad.*

Linda Flanagan is a freelance journalist, researcher, and former cross-country and track coach. Her writing has been featured in The Atlantic, Runner's World, and on NPR's education site MindShift, where she is a regular contributor. Her most recent book is Take Back the Game: How Money and Mania Are Ruining Kids' Sports – and Why It Matters. Learn more at www.lindaflanaganauthor.com.

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—Thom Harnett, Former State Legislator and Mayor, Gardiner, Maine

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Continuing Education for Local Government Staff Free Webinar – Thursday, September 12 @ 12:00pm

In partnership with the Virginia Municipal League, American Public University presents an informational webinar on continuing education for local government staff. We will discuss the topics of internal succession planning for agency leadership as well as continuing education opportunities for those who wish to advance their careers.

This is also a great opportunity to ask any questions you might have about APUS and VML's partnership or program offerings you may be interested in for you or your staff.



[Use the QR code to register >](#)

SAVE THE DATE!

VIRGINIA LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS CONFERENCE

Learn the rules of the road in Richmond
Wednesday, January 8, 2025.

2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DAY

SAVE THE DATE!

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January 30, 2025

Hilton Richmond Downtown
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Richmond, VA 23219



An online marketplace can transform outdated assets from a burden to an opportunity

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL government agencies are committed to maximizing the total value of the supply chain and promoting zero-waste initiatives. By adopting the principles of reusing, redeploying, reselling, and recycling, it is possible to advance zero-waste goals and prolong the life of excess assets by responsibly engaging in the secondary market, all while maximizing investment recovery.

An “as is, where is” surplus disposition program keeps your entire organization on the same page and supports the circular economy. These five tips will enable you to enhance your surplus sales program without neglecting your environmental responsibilities.

1. Use a comprehensive marketplace to sell virtually anything. By having a comprehensive online marketplace, you can list and sell everything from everyday items like furniture and office equipment to specialized items such as fire service equipment, public works vehicles and equipment, and industrial machinery –even real estate!

- **Technology:** Our society relies upon digital connections, and that means a constant need for computers, parts, and supplies. Whether you need to make space for modern technology – or simply dispose of outdated equipment – GovDeals offers a suite of services including safely destroying the data on your technology before it goes to auction. Our services allow you to keep the lion’s share of the profits for your organization.
- **Real Estate:** Modern government agencies seeking to transition from on-site to online real estate sales can benefit from improved transparency, simplicity, and revenue. Property listing platforms, crowdfunding sites, and virtual tours are all changing how real estate of every type is bought and sold. Do not delay the fulfillment of your obligation to offer real estate to the public by continuing to use outdated resources.

2. An online marketplace means decreased depreciation. With an online auction program, you can list your surplus equipment “as is, where is”. This allows you to minimize the decrease in value over time and maximize the resale value of your rolling stock by selling immediately rather than waiting for a semi-annual auction.

Selling items “as is, where is” also eliminates the need for transportation and long-term warehousing. This reduces storage requirements by addressing all items on a regular or as-needed basis. It also decreases the potential for storage and repair fees.

3. An online marketplace means increased environmental responsibility. Imagine 250 vehicles, each averaging 20 miles per gallon, traveling an average of 50 miles round-trip to attend a live auction. The result? A staggering 12,500 pounds of carbon emissions released into the environment – that is nearly the weight of a full-grown elephant!

Fortunately, there’s a better way! Selling-in-place eliminates the negative environmental impact of bidders shuttling back and forth. Not only that, but it also reduces the financial and environmental strains inherent to traditional auction methods.

4. Add 10 percent to know the true value. Before accepting the trade-in amount for your end-of-use vehicles, consider this strategy: test the value, list them online “as is, where is” at the quoted trade-in amount, plus an additional 10 percent. The results will speak volumes. If a vehicle sells, you’ve achieved the highest return. If not, you’ll have invaluable and transparent evidence to support your remarketing practices.

5. Full control and visibility mean complete transparency and less hassle. With 24/7 access, you decide when and how to list your surplus. You determine auction details – lotting, timing, pictures, descriptions, and opening bid price. All items remain in your possession, removing the risk of misuse by a third party. Upon completion of your auctions, only the successful buyer travels to a physical location (as opposed to the many attending on sale day or for inspections).

Furthermore, using a full suite of compliance services – from data wiping to buyer vetting – will mitigate the legal, financial, health, safety, and environmental risks associated with selling sensitive government surplus. A digital back-office solution eliminates printed paperwork and the storage that goes with it. Use an online payment collection program, sign bills of sale virtually, and store these records digitally to maintain a comprehensive audit trail.

Learn more about what a comprehensive online marketplace can do for your local government asset sales at www.GovDeals.com/content/About-Us.

About GovDeals: *Through its thriving marketplace, GovDeals empowers sellers to manage their surplus, overstock, and outdated assets in a compliant and effective manner while also reducing waste and contributing to the circular economy. The Circular Economy model emphasizes reusing, recycling, and reselling existing materials and products as much as possible.*

Feel good with the Govvies!

Each year, GovDeals proves that they can help you “sell anything” by holding “The Govvies”, a humorous awards competition to crown the most unique/interesting auction of the year! The GovDeals team scours through a plethora of surplus items and handpicked the most bizarre and fascinating ones showcasing the oddest of the odd.

Here are some great examples of past winners and runners up.

2020

First Place	Second Place
	
The 'Best Costume' Award <i>Dinosaur Costume</i> West Columbia, SC View Auction	The 'AhhhhHHhhhHHward' <i>Water Slide</i> Barbourville, KY View Auction

2021

The 'G Money' Award	
Diamond Pendant Chesapeake, VA View Auction	

2022

Internal Winner & Social Media Winner



The 'Someone's In Here!' Award
Used Toilet Costume
Raleigh, NC
[View Auction](#)

Selling Surplus With GovDeals

The leading online marketplace to sell your surplus assets virtually – anytime, anywhere.








If you've found yourself with a backlog of surplus assets, we are here to help with options and solutions for all your needs!

The GovDeals Solution

- "AS IS" auctions from anywhere
- Complete control over auction times
- Fast and straight-forward bidding process
- Comprehensive marketing
- Over 4.8 million qualified buyers
- Personal service to meet your unique needs

The GovDeals' Process

-  Surplus item is declared ready for auction
-  Surplus item is then listed on GovDeals
-  GovDeals markets your items across targeted sites
-  Surplus item is sold on GovDeals
-  Buyer makes payment and picks up item

Call on me today:

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828-527-7705 | classiter@govdeals.com

GovDeals
Online Government Surplus Auctions

The Numbers

Sellers in Virginia have held over **150,000** auctions resulting in over **\$150 million** in sales partnering with GovDeals.

Virginia Assets Sold on GovDeals



\$58,600
in Fairfax



\$104,556
in Portsmouth



\$112,000
in Alexandria



\$43,500
in Roanoke



\$28,500
in Alexandria



\$4,075
in Chesterfield



\$30,477
in Fredericksburg



\$86,500
in Portsmouth



\$22,600
in Yorktown

Testimonial

"GovDeals has proven to be an invaluable service for our Real Estate Tax Sales that we conduct for the City of Portsmouth, VA. In the past 18 months, we have conducted 60 online real estate auctions using this service and have had outstanding results with over \$2.3M in sales." - Jason A. Dunn

Scan For More Information





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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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.



**You've got vision.
We've got resources.
Let's solve this.**

Virginia Housing offers a variety of grant and loan programs to help local governments, nonprofits and developers revitalize neighborhoods and solve workforce housing needs.

To learn more about partnering with us, contact us at Resources@VirginiaHousing.com.

