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TOWN & CITY

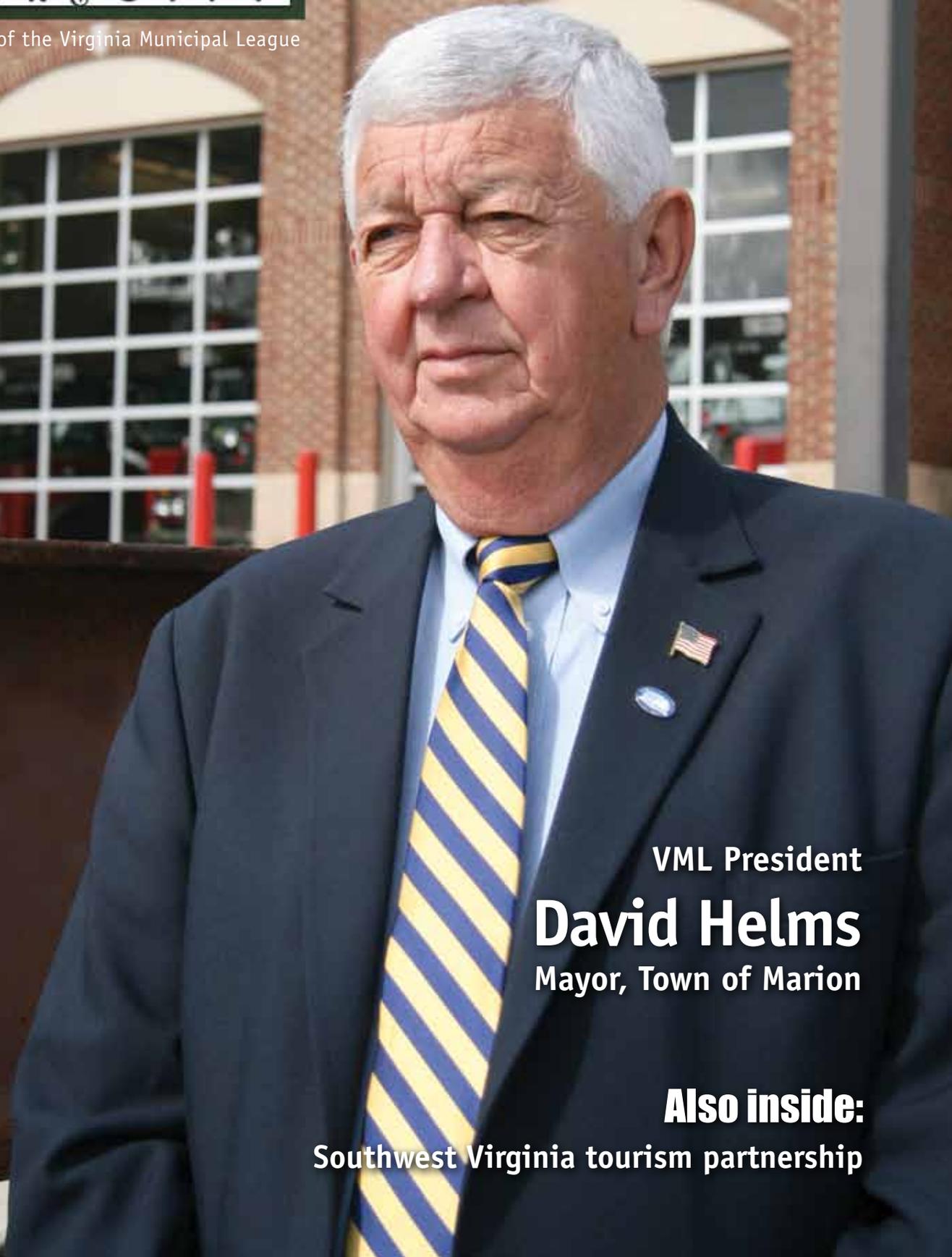
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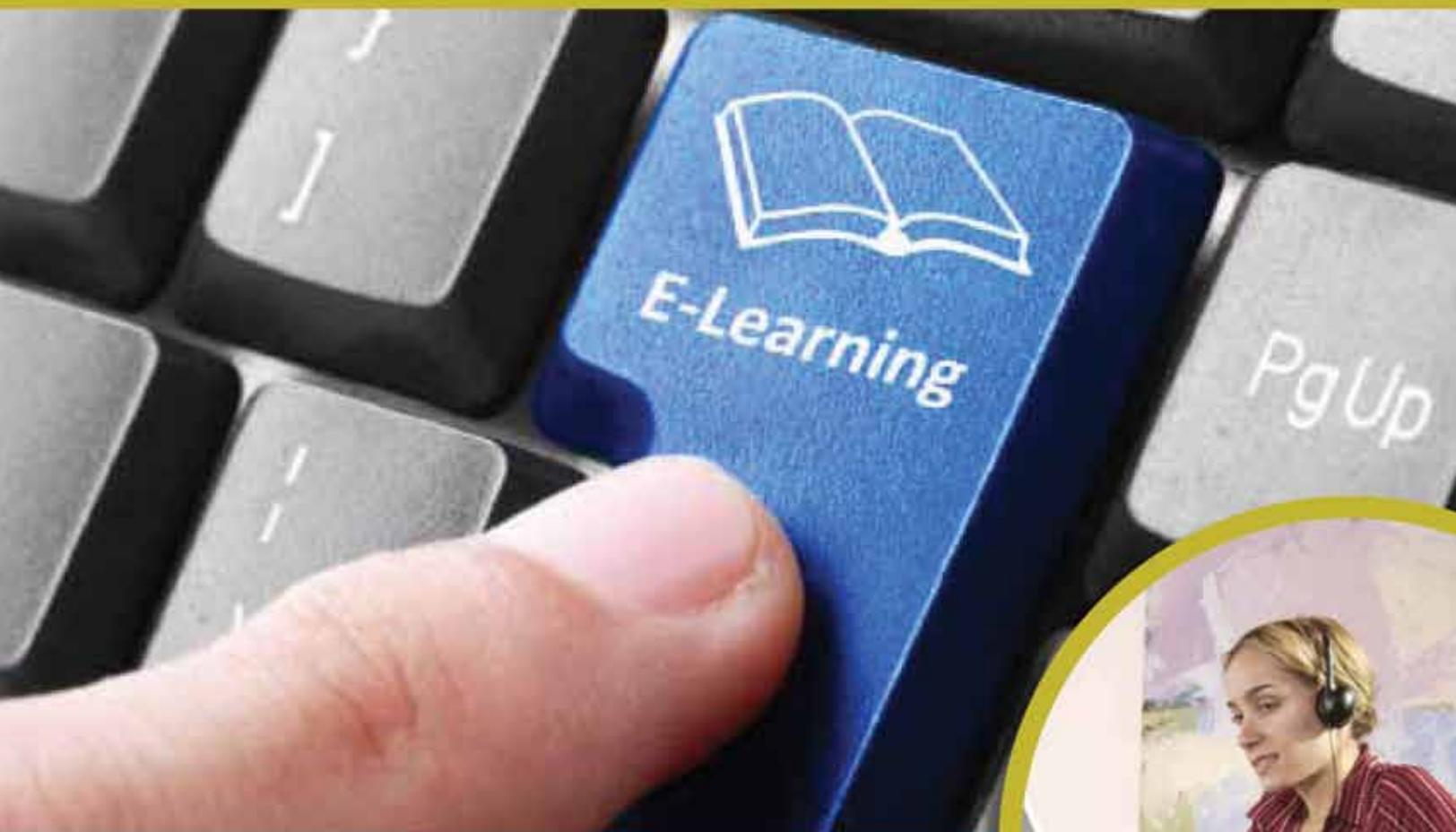
VML President

David Helms

Mayor, Town of Marion

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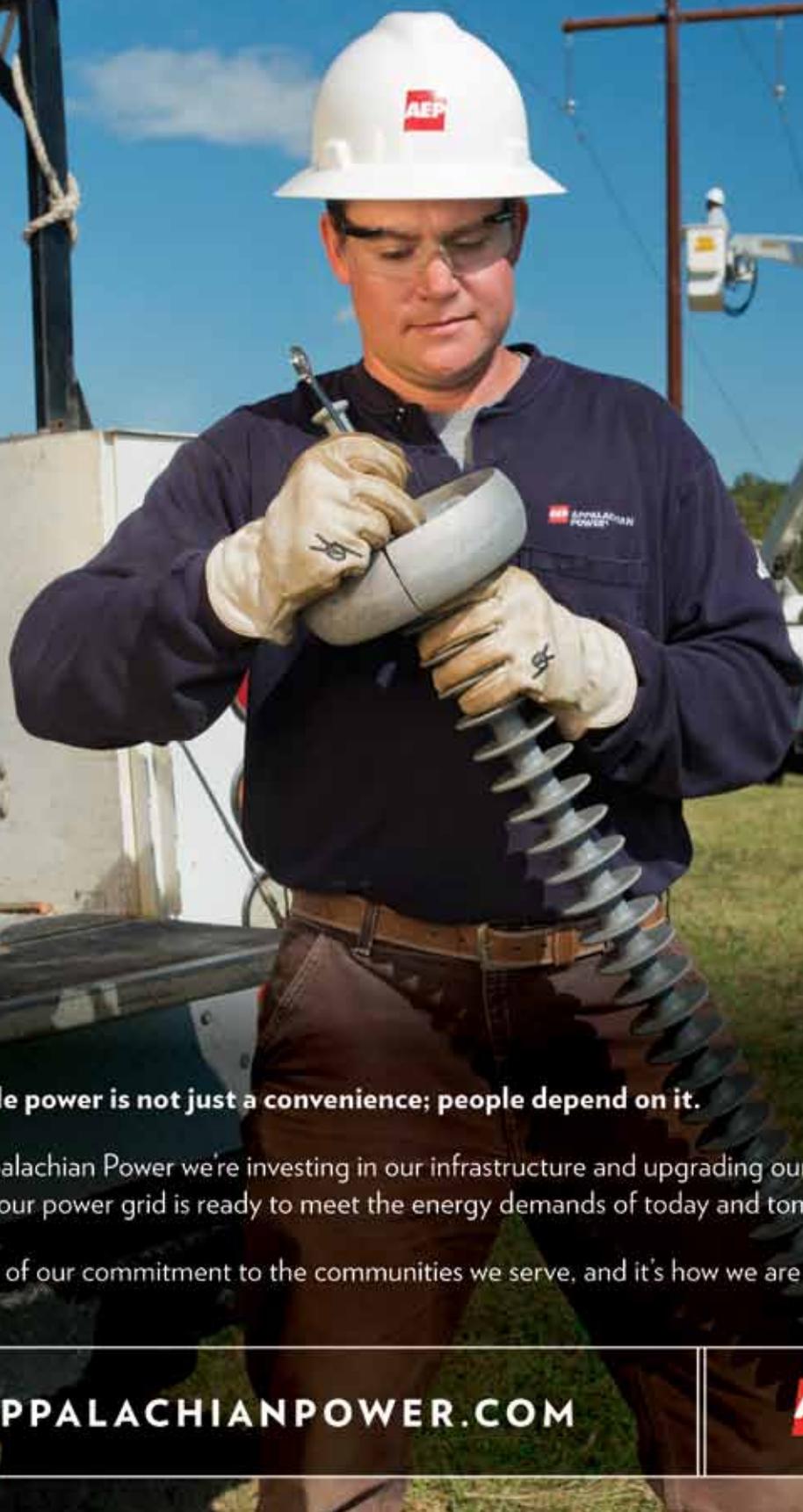
Southwest Virginia tourism partnership



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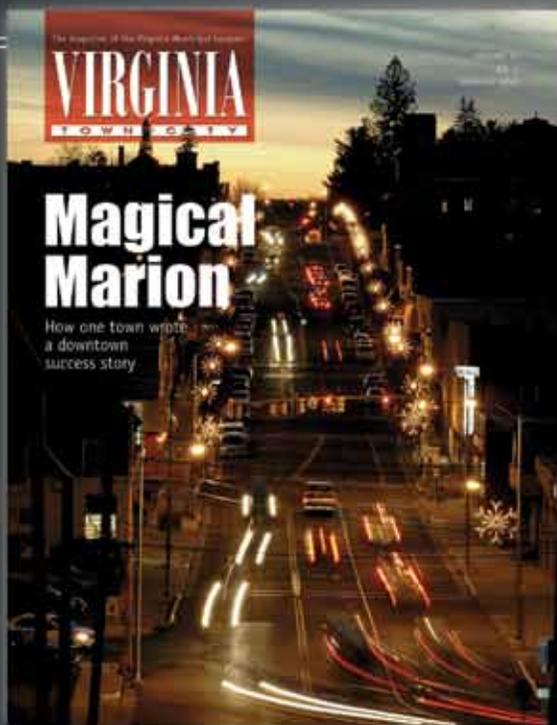
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The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League



About the cover

Marion Mayor David Helms, pictured here in front of the Marion Volunteer Fire Department, was elected the 95th president of the Virginia Municipal League at the VML Annual Conference held in Arlington in October. Photograph by David Parsons.

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David Helms, a retired primary school principal who has served as mayor of Marion in Smyth County since 2000, is a hands-on leader with an abiding affection for the vibrant town of 5,900 that he leads.

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Vroom: Regional partnership boosts tourism in Southwest Virginia

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A message from VML's new executive director

Greetings!

I am humbled and honored to have been selected to serve as the next Executive Director for the Virginia Municipal League (VML). This organization has a proud 108-year history and I look forward to being a part of its great tradition.

I want to thank the Executive Committee and the staff of VML for welcoming me into the VML family. I have served the last 18 years at the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM). John G. Stutz, the long-serving Executive Secretary at LKM was a mentor to Morton L. Wallerstein, the first paid Executive Secretary for VML. Together, they were part of the group of state leagues that founded the American Municipal Association, the forerunner to the National League of Cities. It is my sincere hope to continue the tradition of excellence established by these forward thinking leaders.

The Executive Committee has already begun the process of setting goals and priorities for the future of the organization. There will be numerous opportunities, including regional meetings and surveys, for local officials to weigh in and have your voices heard during the planning process. I want to personally encourage each of you to participate and help to develop the future of this organization. In addition, please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any suggestions or concerns.

My family and I can't wait to travel throughout the state and visit the communities of Virginia. The rich history of the Commonwealth is second to none and I look forward to meeting with local officials during my travels.

The cities, towns and counties of the Commonwealth of Virginia are the lifeblood of this great state. VML serves the elected and appointed officials who serve these communities. Please join me in working together to define the future of your association so that we can build upon the legacy of those leaders that have come before us.

Sincerely,

Kimberly A. Winn
Executive Director

Norfolk selected for Resilient Cities Network

NORFOLK WAS SELECTED by the Rockefeller Foundation recently to join the 100 Resilient Cities Network. The Tidewater city was chosen from a pool of nearly 400 cities around the world to participate in the program, which addresses the ability of cities to withstand a crisis or disaster and bounce back and move on. This includes coping with the effects of climate change and extreme weather events.

As a selected city, Norfolk will receive:

- Support to hire or fund a chief resilience officer (CRO). The creation of this role will help ensure resilience building and coordination is the specific responsibility of one person in a city government. The CRO will also oversee the development of a resilience plan for the city and be part of a learning network of other CROs as representatives to the 100 Resilient Cities Network.

- Support to create a resilience plan that addresses Norfolk's needs.

- Membership in the new 100 Resilient Cities Network, which will provide support to member cities and share new knowledge and resilience best practices and foster new connections and partnerships.

- An innovative platform to provide tools and resources for implementation of the plan focused on four areas: innovative finance, innovative technology, infrastructure and land use, and community and social resilience from partners such as Swiss Re, Palantir, American Institute of Architects, Architecture for Humanity, and the World Bank.

The announcement regarding Norfolk was made Dec. 3 at the Rockefeller Foundation's third annual Innovation Forum titled, "Building Resilient Cities," which was held in partnership with the *Financial Times* in New York City.

Through the 100 Resilient Cities Centennial Chal-

lenge, cities from around the world were invited to apply for the new 100 Resilient Cities Network. Upon the recommendations of a panel of distinguished leaders from around the world, the first group of 33 cities was named to the network. Leaders made their recommendations based on how a city planned to approach and build greater resilience; how a city would incorporate a range of constituents (e.g., civil society, local businesses, and academia) in its resilience planning and implementation; and how the needs of the poor or vulnerable would be addressed.

"Norfolk is honored to join this prestigious, global initiative," said Mayor Paul D. Fraim. "We see the opportunity to extend our innovative approach to sea level rise to critical issues of urban resiliency through this cutting-edge program. Norfolk also seeks the opportunity to learn from the global community how to better address the shocks and stresses of the 21st century."

For nearly a decade, The Rockefeller Foundation has been a leader in the growing field of resilience in both urban and rural contexts, building urban climate change resilience in Asia through its Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network, through investments in building rural climate change resilience in Africa, by funding comprehensive planning work in post-Katrina New Orleans, and most recently, by leading New York Governor Cuomo's post-Sandy Commission, which set forth a bold plan for building long-term resilience in New York. Building on these investments, and in order to enable cities around the world to prepare for the challenges of the 21st century, it launched the 100 Resilient Cities Centennial Challenge in May. Additional cities will be named to join the 100 Resilient Cities Network in subsequent years. 

Newport News library youth program honored at White House

The youth program operated by the Pearl Bailey Library in Newport News was recognized recently by First Lady Michelle Obama as a winner of the 2013 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. This is the highest honor for out-of-school arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people, particularly those from underserved communities.

Demetria Tucker, senior family and youth services librarian at Pearl Bailey Library, and Nasir Curry, presi-

dent of the Teen Advisory Committee for the library, attended a White House ceremony Nov. 22 to receive the award from the First Lady.

Pearl Bailey's youth program was one of 12 such programs from across the country that was selected to receive the award from a pool of more than 350 nominations and 50 finalists. In addition to recognition at the White House, the Pearl Bailey Library Youth Program will receive \$10,000 and a year of communications and capacity-building support from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

ELSEWHERE ...

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recognized the **Newport News CERT Program** at the annual regional Citizen Corps Council meeting in Williamsburg on Nov. 6 for its successes in recruiting, training and deploying citizen volunteers. ... In partnership with Dominion Virginia Power, **Newport News** is planting 231 trees to replace oversized, unsightly trees beneath utility lines in a portion of the city.

Have news about your city, town or county government? Send information to David Parsons via e-mail at dparsons@vml.org

David Helms

New VML president values public service

WHEN MAYOR DAVID Helms leaves his office in Marion Town Hall to grab a bite of lunch down the street, it's never an uninterrupted walk. The occupants of a pick-up truck pull over to deliver for his keeping a small framed photograph of the mayor at an event in town. A merchant hands Helms some homemade baked goods prepared with him in mind. And a businessman reminds the 73-year-old retired elementary school principal about a bit of town business they've been discussing. Such is the life of the mayor in the town of 5,900 in southwest Virginia's scenic Smyth County.

A member of Town Council from 1990-2000 and mayor for the past 13 years, VML's president for 2013-2014 is all about public service and devotion to community.

"I'm a firm believer that you have to give back to the community," Helms said.

Born and raised in the town of Glade Spring in neighboring Washington County, Helms graduated from nearby Emory & Henry College in 1963 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education. Later that year he began his career in public education as a fifth grade teacher in Washington County. In 1970, Helms accepted a teaching position at Marion Intermediate School. He soon split time as an assistant principal there and at Marion Primary School. He became the principal of the primary school at the start of the 1973-1974 school year, a position he held until he retired in 2000.

"An elementary school in my opinion is the ideal place to be," Helms said. "You don't have the athletic programs to supervise and all ... and we had a very active Parent Teacher Association and a great staff. We all worked together."

By David Parsons

Working together is a trademark of Helms' leadership.

"I'm a communications kind of person. I think that if you have a problem and can get those people

the mayor and all five other council members in 1970 after voting to increase a tax to pay for the paving of a road. The experience, however, did anything but deter Helms. The urge to help lead a community, in fact, just might be in his blood.

"I guess part of it is our family," Helms said. "My dad was on council in Glade Spring. My brother was town manager here in Marion for about 10 years beginning in the early 1960s. Then he ran for the



Helms stands inside of the restored Lincoln Theatre in downtown Marion.

(involved) around the table I think that you can come up with a solution," Helms said. "It may not always be the solution that you want, but at least you can get input from citizens and the community."

Helms' first brush with local politics was in Glade Spring, where he served on Town Council two years before being turned out of office with

Marion Town Council and served on it and served on the county board of supervisors."

After his election to Marion Town Council in 1990, Helms decided in the middle of his third term to run for mayor in 2000 against the incumbent and another challenger. He's been mayor ever since and run unopposed in the past three elections.

"It's not as much fun," Helms said of running unopposed, "but it's more comfortable."

Since becoming mayor, Helms has had his fingers on the pulse of just about every aspect of life in the town.

"I like to get involved in things. I think that a personal contact makes a lot of difference," Helms said.

And this is one mayor who walks the talk.

"If I'm in town, I'm in the office every day – not all day by any means – but I go by in the mornings and see what's going on and check on things," Helms said. "I'm always available if someone wants to come by and talk to me. I'm real proud of the fact that I've returned every phone call that I've received since I became mayor unless I was instructed not to by the attorney."

"I try to attend as many events and programs as possible," he said. "If there's an activity downtown, I try to be present. My wife (Susie) understands that's part of my obligation and dedication, and that I want to attend these things."

"I walk down the street several times a week and stop in the stores and offices and speak to people. To

me it's just really important to be available."

In addition to his everyday tasks associated with being mayor, Helms has devoted additional time to his work with the local VFW, re-energizing what had become a stale Memorial Day observance and trying to instill an improved awareness of patriotism in the town.

"We've always had a Memorial Day program here in town of some type. About eight years ago we had our usual meeting at the courthouse on Memorial Day and there were about 20 people there," he said. "We were all getting white hair and had to help each other up out of chairs and all. We decided then that it was time that we changed that program and get more young people involved and it's really turned around. We now have a Memorial weekend – not just a Memorial Day – with outstanding speakers, entertainment, food and a great parade."

Looking ahead, Helms is excited about the town's new relationship with Emory & Henry College, which is in the process of establishing a new health-science campus in Marion on the grounds of the old Smyth County

Community Hospital.

"They'll start out with a physical therapy program and move into occupational therapy and maybe even add a physician's assistant program. They plan to start their first class in June or July," Helms said.

"The plan is to take over the whole (hospital) campus," he added. "They've already remodeled two of the buildings on the property. That's where the first classrooms are going to be. The question now is going to be what to do with the four-story main hospital building. They're doing a study to determine how they want to use that – whether it will be turned into apartments for students – that's probably what will happen – but we're not absolutely sure until they finish the study."

"I think that's going to be a real shot in the arm," Helms said. "Eventually, if this thing gets to moving, we could have as many as 250 to 300 students in town going to school and living here. That could help lots of things." 

About the author

David Parsons is director of communications for VML.

David Helms: What other people say ...

"He was what a manager wants – up front and honest. You always knew where you stood with him. Any criticism was only constructive; there were no hidden agendas. We had, I think, a very good relationship, a very productive one. I enjoyed working with him."

... John Clark, former town manager

"He's got a great sense of humor. He's a lot of fun to work with, although he likes to get our work done. ... He's very patriotic. He helps with the VFW here putting up flags on the different holidays. And he's very compassionate. He's very caring about his employees and about the citizens of the town."

**... Linda Pennington,
executive secretary in Town Hall**

"He's been super (as mayor). He's very supportive of our decisions and he'll let you know if he disagrees. That's what I expect. Just because he's that way

though doesn't mean that I agree with everything he says, but at least he's straightforward and up front."

... Jim Owens, Marion Town Council member

"I'd have to say without reservation that of all of the mayors of Marion I know I'd rate him right up there at the top. He's there every day. Every time he's needed, he's around. He's at every public event and ribbon cutting that goes on in town. He's really a good leader for Marion – a real dedicated person."

... Gene Hendrick, longtime former Town Council member and vice mayor

"He's been great to work with. He attends our committee meetings and is very active in everything that is going on in town. He's knowledgeable about everything. He's just extremely involved and always very available and open to talk with. I don't think we could ask for a better mayor."

... James McNeil, business owner and president of Marion Downtown

Regional partnership boosts tourism in Southwest Virginia

SOMETIMES geographical boundaries can be a hindrance to a project. The dividing lines between one governmental body and another can impede progress. But, when it comes to travel and tourism, visitors do not care about local jurisdictions. More communities are learning that reaching across borders and forming partnerships can prove to be very profitable. A great example of that in recent years has paired two small communities in a project that is literally taking visitors for a ride.

It's no secret that Interstates 77 and 81 have been profitable for the communities they touch in Southwest Virginia. Being located at the crossroads of the two major north-south arteries has proven to be very advantageous for Wytheville and the surrounding communities. Tourism is a key component in the town's economic development. Most tourism marketing programs focus on luring visitors who travel on four wheels. The creation of a marketing effort that targets those who enjoy traveling on two wheels has been an eye-opening experience with a surprising success story. It all started with a grant application.

In 2009, the Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) submitted an application for funding to the Virginia Tourism Corporation's Marketing Leverage Program. The catchy theme of the initiative was "Motorcycles, Zebras, and Wine." The premise was to show the diversity of what the area had to offer: from beautiful mountain drives to an animal park to handcrafted wine. A component of the application included marketing to attract more motorcycle riders to take advantage of the scenic back road drives surrounding Wytheville. It centered on a creative social media campaign that had Wytheville Mayor Trent Crewe tweeting, blogging and posting on Facebook as he made a cross-country motorcycle journey with the POW-MIA awareness group, Run For The Wall. The campaign would

be followed up with a new regional motorcycle trail that had Wytheville as its hub.

So the Wytheville CVB (a department of the Town of Wytheville) joined forces with the Smyth County Tourism Association (representing the Towns of Marion, Chilhowie, Saltville and Smyth County) and developed "The Claw of The Dragon." The two localities mapped out some of their best drives including the well-known "Back of the Dragon" that follows VA Route 16 in Smyth and

usually stay in area lodging facilities for multiple days as well as dining in local restaurants, shopping and utilizing other businesses.

By Rosa Lee Jude

"Tourism has always been a cornerstone in Wytheville's economy," said Crewe, who also happens to be an avid motorcycle rider. "Over two decades ago, we began to see the benefit of reinvesting some of our meals and lodging tax revenue back into marketing. Year after year, we continue to reap the benefits of that decision. Part of the reason is



The scenic back roads surrounding Wytheville in Southwest Virginia proved to be a popular tourism attraction for motorcycle riders.

Tazewell counties. The trail features loops touted as "Rides on the Wild Side" ranging from 62 to 224 miles long with names such as "Possum Run," "The Woolly Mammoth," "Turkey Strut" and the "Horn of the Cow." While primarily focusing on Wythe, Bland and Smyth counties, these routes also briefly go through neighboring Pulaski, Carroll, Grayson and Tazewell counties, making it a truly regional adventure. The brochure not only features the drives, but also the attractions that riders can visit along the way. These visitors

because our tourism office creates new marketing initiatives, such as our motorcycle trail, to give travelers more reasons to visit our area."

While Wytheville has been actively involved in tourism for several decades, Marion is relatively new to tapping into this segment of economic development. But, their officials are learning the power of partnering with neighbors.

"I wholeheartedly agree with the regional approach," said Marion Mayor David Helms. "Regionalism is definitely the way to go. We pool

our resources, share the expenses, and work together to get grant opportunities.”

Mayor Helms knew the motorcycle trail was working when he couldn't find a place to park at his favorite breakfast location. “I would drive up and the parking lot would be full of

motorcycles. It was a great thing to see,” he said.

Both tourism offices are fielding inquiries from motorcycle riders from all throughout the east coast. It isn't just individuals or couples who are planning trips to “slay the dragon.” Groups of 10, 20, or more riders are

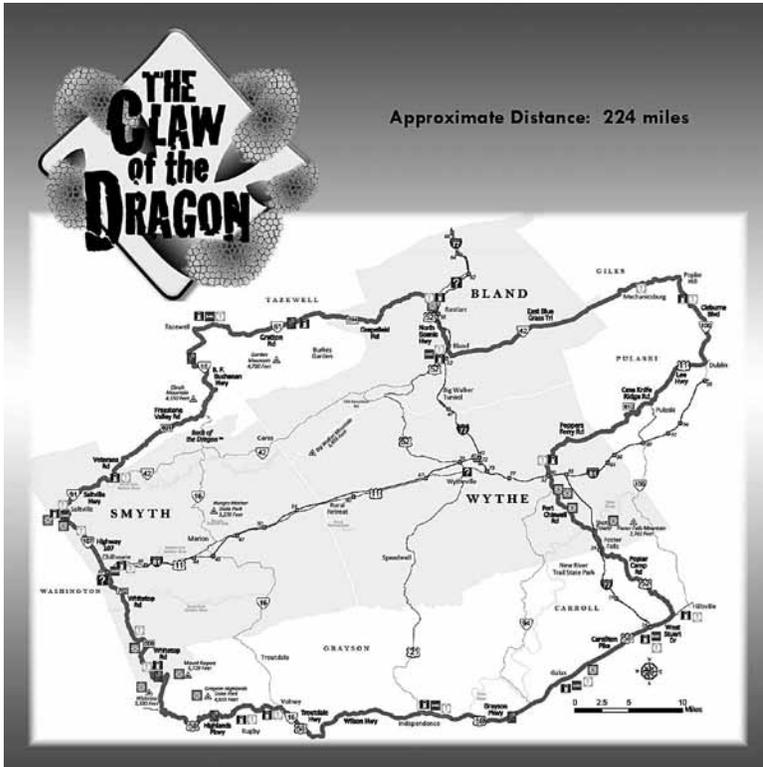
making Southwest Virginia a destination for multi-day motorcycle trips. Partnerships have continued between the two marketing groups to attend travel tradeshows geared toward riding enthusiasts in major

metropolitan areas in the East, as well as advertising in national publications such as Roadrunner and BMW Owners. So many inquiries have come in that the Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau and Smyth County Tourism Association have made plans to produce a new expanded version of the original brochure in 2014.

For more information about this trail, visit the Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau's website at www.VisitWytheville.com, or the Smyth County Tourism Association's website at www.VisitVirginiaMountains.com. An online version of the current Claw of the Dragon brochure is available at www.ClawoftheDragon.com. 

About the author

Rosa Lee Jude is director of the Wytheville Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Groups of 20 or more riders are making Southwest Virginia a destination for multi-day motorcycle trips.

One for the books

City-state partnership created a new model for lifelong learning

DURING A CHANCE conversation in 2004, Virginia Beach City Manager Jim Spore and then Tidewater Community College President Deborah DiCroce discovered that their organizations were planning to build libraries across the street from each other. The two leaders discussed a vision of a truly integrated library, where any customer, whether a student, faculty member, or citizen of any age would encounter seamless, quality library services. The challenge was to integrate the “behind the scenes” processes, technologies, staffing, budget strategies, collections, cataloging systems and cultures so that the vision of each customer’s experience could be realized.

The city manager and college president appointed a planning committee to study the possibilities of partnering to build a “joint-use” library. Made up of city and college

personnel, the committee formally recommended entering into an agreement to undertake the venture.

Anderson Brulé Architects (ABA) of San Jose, Calif., specialists in joint-

use libraries, were contracted to assist with a formal feasibility study. They conducted a series of focus groups with a variety of stakeholders from the community and the college. A plan began to emerge.

RRMM Architects of Norfolk teamed with ABA and another California firm, Carrier Johnson of San Diego, nationally known for library designs, to create the 125,000 square-foot building. The cost for the project was \$43 million, with 83 percent provided by TCC and 17 percent from the City of Virginia Beach. Construction began in spring 2011.

While the building was under

construction, the staff for the new library was being assembled, too. Library employees from TCC and

Virginia Beach Public Library were challenged to come together as

one team to provide seamless service. The goal was for customers, whether community members or college students, to visit the library and check out materials without using special or separate library cards, or worrying about whether staff and resources were from the public or academic library.

As you’d expect, public and academic libraries have different ways of doing things. Different missions, customer bases, collections, cataloging and technology systems. Different payroll and personnel processes and different cultures. Merging these differences into “seamless” service was

By Christine M. Brantley
and Neva White



The new \$43 million, 125,000-square-foot joint-use library serves the needs of both Virginia Beach and Tidewater Community College.



City and college officials were on hand for the official opening of the library this summer.

challenging, but trust and teamwork on all sides made it happen.

After nearly a decade of planning and construction, the TCC/City of Virginia Beach Joint-Use Library opened this summer with a big community celebration. The library's collection includes popular and academic materials of all kinds, plus hundreds of computers, collaborative work spaces, a dynamic children's area, public meeting rooms, a café and more.

The story of this partnership doesn't end with the successful opening of the building. In fact, the library opening started a whole new chapter.

The new TCC academic year began with a bustling TCC/ City Joint-Use Library, filled with students and members of the community. Since then, the library has hosted groups ranging from civic leaders to a quilting guild that created quilts for wounded warriors. Preschoolers learn basic computer skills in class, "Little Clickers Academy," while TCC students attend formal classes in computer labs. The library was host for a town hall meeting led by Virginia's chancellor of community colleges, who discussed the future of community colleges. Attendees included representatives from the business community, NASA, community colleges and the City of Virginia Beach. Just down the hall from this 200-person meeting of the minds, two college students were simultaneously studying for a chemistry exam and playing the

card game, Magic the Gathering.

VBPL staff partnered with the TCC campus and League of Women's Voters to promote voter registration before November elections. They've also partnered with TCC's Women's Center to create a display for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. And they regularly provide program information to TCC's Student Activities coordinator to share with college students. Working with TCC librarians, VBPL's staff developed a partnership with the college's Intercultural Affairs office, which has led to the addition of new children's materials in VBPL's international language collection.

VBPL's youth services staff regularly interacts with TCC's early childhood education students, as well as with the campus daycare.

This spring, the TCC/City Joint-Use Library will be the host of a "How-to Fest," where as many as 50 mini-classes will be offered to the community in a day-long event. Topics range from ballroom dancing and martial arts to how to apply and pay for college. The idea behind the event is to highlight learning for all ages, as public libraries do, and to energize community members to extend their quest for knowledge to the formal learning opportunities available at TCC, too.

The partnership between Virginia Beach and Tidewater Community College has created a bigger, better library than either organization could have provided separately. It's delivering on the promise of providing seamless service to campus and community alike. Anticipation is building in Virginia Beach as the city and college collaborate on writing the next chapter. 

About the authors

Christine M. Brantley is community relations and development coordinator for Virginia Beach Public Library. Neva White serves as community services manager at the Tidewater Community College / Virginia Beach Joint-Use Library.



The opening of the library this summer included a well-attended community celebration.

Refurbished Vienna Town Hall was more than just a facelift

IN NOVEMBER, THE Town of Vienna completed its almost 10-month, \$2 million Town Hall renovation project, which included the replacement of the building's 40 year-old HVAC system.

In addition to the new, more efficient heating and cooling system, the inside of the building received a makeover that included new flooring, ceilings, windows, doors, lighting and fresh paint.

The most visible change has been the redesign of the Town Council Chambers, which included the replacement of the wood paneled walls with sheet rock and a more modern color pallet, a resurfaced dais and new carpeting. As renovation work was nearing completion in the chambers, the town's Information Technology Department and Public Information Office began working with Human Circuit, a technology company based in Gaithersburg, Md., to upgrade the chambers with new audio visual equipment in order to begin live broadcasting Town Council meetings.

The technology upgrade included broadcast control equipment, six monitors mounted strategically throughout the room, a new podium and smart table, new sound system and four wall-mounted cameras.

The A/V equipment can be used to show presentations, maps, plats and other documents during live broadcasts, as well as be used during non-broadcasted staff and community meetings, trainings and other activities and events that occur in the chambers. The town began quietly testing the new live broadcast system in November and officially began broadcasting with the Dec. 16 Town Council meeting.

Among the many "green" design features that will increase efficiencies and encourage decreased energy usage in the building are:

- Motion sensor lighting in public areas and private offices.
- Lighting design using low wattage

By Kirstyn Barr

- New, triple-pane, argon gas filled windows for high thermal energy efficiency.
- Low/zero VOC paints, coatings and sealants for improved indoor air quality.
- Specified wall, flooring and ceiling materials with recycled content.



Vienna Town Hall's renovation took about 10 months to complete.

- Indoor air quality is improved by positively pressurizing the building envelope to reduce infiltration of outside air contaminants.

While not as visible as the renovated council chambers, employees and visitors to Town Hall are certain to notice the new HVAC system, too.

The old two-pipe, hot and cold system had the major disadvantage of forcing the entire building to switch from hot to cold (and vice versa) at once, allowing for limited flexibility in temperature control. While this changeover would not generally be an issue under normal circumstances, it became problematic during bouts of unseasonably warm or cold weather when the system was set for the season. For example, during periods of warm weather in the cooler months, the temperature would rise in the building

because the heat would be on. During bouts of cooler weather in warmer months, the building's temperature would be difficult to increase because the air conditioning was in operation.

The new system allows for both heating and cooling to occur at the same time. The system works to bring the temperature to the desired level in areas of the building based on the current temperature in the area, the orientation to the sun, personal

T5 lamp technology with high efficiency luminaires in both public areas and private offices.

- Low wattage mercury-free LED spot lights installed above the Town Council dais.
- Stairwells utilizing integral occupancy sensor controlled lights to reduce lighting levels and energy consumption during periods of occupant inactivity.



The most visible change to the building was the redesign of the Town Council Chambers.

preferences and other factors. In the old system, the temperature was managed by adjusting each radiator. The new system is equipped with digital thermostats throughout the building that can be adjusted up or down by five degrees from the system's average setting of 70 degrees.

In the past, the building also

suffered from extremely high humidity because there was no new air introduced into it as part of the HVAC system. The new system includes several fresh air intakes that mix outside air with building air, effectively reducing humidity and its negative effect on the building's physical condition.

Another energy-saving feature

allows the building to be monitored and controlled from one location, which maximizes the HVAC system's efficiency at all times, including when the building is unoccupied.

The newly-renovated Town Hall also includes a reorganized layout that streamlines customer service by providing easier access to regularly utilized services and shared customer counters. In addition, the building has been outfitted with a new security system that replaces the need for physical keys with swipe cards assigned to each individual employee. The system ensures the building's security while not limiting public access during normal operating hours and public meetings.

More changes, but not as disruptive to the building, will be seen in Town Hall in the coming year. The next phase will include the replacement of flooring in the public areas, new interior signage and other small design and aesthetic improvements. 

About the author

Kirstyn Barr is public information officer for the Town of Vienna.



Access was improved to regularly-utilized shared customer counters.

Richmond's multimodal transportation vision heralds livable, walkable city

THE CITY OF Richmond's recently completed Strategic Multimodal Transportation Plan, known as *Richmond Connects*, is an impressive 20-year plan to create a multimodal, sustainable and livable city.

"It's truly a framework for interactive, seamless transportation possibilities," says Viktoria W. Badger, project manager for Transportation Strategies in Richmond's Department of Economic & Community Development. "The plan differs considerably from past transportation plans in that we wanted clear transportation connections."

The plan emphasizes multimodal linkages that connect neighborhoods and communities throughout the city through a balanced system of multimodal, bikeable, walkable, transit-friendly transportation connections.

"We needed the plan to push beyond traffic engineering, to incorporate planning, land use policies and parking to meet our vision of a livable, walkable city," Badger says. "We looked to our planning consultant to offer creative ideas that they had applied around the U.S. and the world to our community."

The plan was developed through a collaborative process by Michael Baker Jr., Inc. (Baker), with members of the Department of Economic & Community Development, the Department of Public Works and other internal city personnel, as well as an advisory committee and the public.

To craft its transformative transportation vision, the city and Baker took the proposed ideas and concepts from the conference room to the street through a series of visioning events. These events included a Vision Night at the historic Byrd Theater where citizens and other stakeholders presented alternative visions for transportation in Richmond.

"In some cases, we applied visualizations at the meetings," says



Main Street Station is a component of Richmond's recently completed Strategic Multimodal Transportation Plan, known as *Richmond Connects*. Photograph by SMBW Architects.

F.E. Scudder Wagg, AICP, project manager for Baker, "so the participants could see trade-offs that must be made if, for example, they want a one-way street with a bike lane, bus stops and parking. The interactive, visual forum really helped the community understand the process and helped us prioritize systems to meet their needs."

Two key components of the plan emerged from visioning sessions – the need for multimodal investments to enhance transit connections and a concept dubbed "Complete Streets."

The Complete Streets approach emphasizes the need for a balanced roadway network that enables safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets makes it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.

Besides Complete Streets and multimodal investments, the plan also outlines needs for transit investments, safety improvements, system maintenance and preservation, context sensitive solutions, and access and mobility enhancements to achieve connected goals. Overall, the *Richmond Connects*

plan includes about 300 prioritized projects along with cost estimates and the agencies that would need to be involved in the implementation.

Components of the *Richmond Connects* plan will be included in the next update of the city's Master Plan.

"We're very pleased with the comprehensive nature of the plan," says Badger. "It sets the table for city planners to move forward. I'm excited to see how we turn concepts into reality in ways that transform and connect our community." 

Contacts:

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Michael Baker Jr., Inc. is a professional engineering and consulting firm with more than 3,200 employees in the U.S. and abroad, including five offices in Virginia. www.mbakercorp.com



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Chief of Financial Management, Albemarle County

SALARY: \$72,958-\$119,090 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Plans, organizes and directs the financial activities of the county. Oversees the accounting, payroll, purchasing, financial reporting, treasury management, as well as fixed assets systems. Reqs. any comb. of educ. and exper. equiv. to graduation from an accredited 4-yr. college with bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business admin. or related field and 5-7 yrs. exper. in public finance administration, including min. of 3 yrs. local govt. mngmnt. exper. CPA, MBA or MPA preferred; 3-5 yrs. exper. working with a major ERP system in a medium to large organization desirable. More info at www.albemarle.org/hr. Open until filled. EOE.

Recreation Specialist, Staunton

SALARY: \$32,063-\$33,666s hiring range (+) benefits. Responsible for programming for a variety of recreation and athletic populations, interests and needs. Will assess community needs, plan programs, publicize programs, supervise operations and evaluate for changes. Reqs. educ. and/or exper. equiv. to a bachelor's degree in recreation or related field; exper. in innovative program development. Apply online at www.staunton.va.us. Deadline: Jan. 5. EOE

Director of Finance, Albemarle County Service Authority

SALARY: Up to \$100,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Leads and manages the finance operations for a regional water and sewer system in Charlottesville that serves nearly 18,000 customers. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree or an equiv. comb. of exper. and educ. with govt. accounting; min. 10 yrs. supervisory and public finance related exper. CPA preferred. Detailed position brochure and recent budget and comprehensive financial reports at www.serviceauthority.org. Send resume and cover letter to: Director of Finance Recruitment, ACSA, 168 Spotnap Road, Charlottesville, VA 22911; 434-977-4511. Deadline: Jan. 30. EOE.

Executive Associate I (Planning and Zoning), Leesburg

SALARY: \$44,655-\$75,317 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. associate's degree (bachelor's preferred) and 8 yrs. exper. and/or training that includes the administrative processes of an office/dept.. Prefer municipal govt. exper. and bilingual in English/Spanish. Must possess excellent writing, information technology

and customer service skills; must be available to work at evening meetings twice a month. Apply online at www.leesburgva.gov/jobs. Resumes may be submitted as supplemental only. Open until filled. EOE.

Financial Systems Administrator (Dept. of Management and Financial Services), Loudoun County

SALARY: \$57,028-\$95,000 hiring range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Administer county's complex integrated systems component comprised of general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, fixed assets, procurement and budget; serve as backup to the senior financial systems administrator. Reqs. bachelor's degree in information systems management or related field and 4 yrs. of directly related exper. maintaining financial systems to include accounting, fixed assets, payroll, benefits, budget and purchasing. Strongly prefer exper. in a govt. organization, Oracle e-Business Suite ver. 12.1, reporting tools such as OBIEE and BI Publisher, Hyperion, and CPA. More info and apply immediately online at www.loudoun.gov. Job #14-S455B-545. Open until filled. EOE.

Construction Plans Examiner (Community Development Department), Manassas

SALARY: \$52,873-\$87,235 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Process and review building and site plans to ensure compliance with local, state and federal codes and ordinances, including the Uniform Statewide Building Code. Reqs. VDHCD certification in plan review for all trades. If not fully qualified, partially certified in plan review may be considered with ability to become fully certified within 18 mos. To apply, complete

city application at www.manassascity.org/jobs. Open until filled. EOE.

Property Codes Supervisor (Community Development Department), Manassas

SALARY: \$49,795-\$82,160 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Supervises and performs property inspections and enforces property maintenance provisions of the building code, zoning ordinance and City Code related to the condition of buildings and sites. Reqs. H.S. diploma or GED and 2-3 yrs. of progressively responsible related exper., including supervisory exper. Must possess or have ability to obtain and maintain Certified Maintenance Code Official and Certified Zoning Official (CZO) within 18 mos. Prefer Spanish bilingual ability. To apply, complete city application at www.manassascity.org/jobs. Open until filled. EOE.

Public Safety Communication Officer, Albemarle County

SALARY: \$33,641-\$40,369 hiring range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Receives emergency request for service by radio and telephone and determines appropriate response; receives non-emergency requests for service and provides information to callers when response in person by police, fire, or rescue agency is inappropriate. Apply online at: www.albemarle.org/jobs. Deadline: Jan. 15. EOE.

Assistant County Administrator, Shenandoah

SALARY: \$71,356-\$80,733 start range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits, including VRS. Assists with a broad range of general administrative and management functions. Reqs. knowledge of state law related to

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public procurement; working knowledge of federal and state agencies governing landfills and facilities. Must be able to communicate effectively in highly interactive team-oriented work environment. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree, preferably supplemented by considerable exper. in local govt. operations. For an application and complete job description, contact: Office of the County Administrator, 600 N. Main St., Woodstock, VA 22664; 540-459-6165; or visit "Jobs" at www.shenandoahcountyva.us. Deadline: Jan. 10. EOE.

Engineering Technician II, Manassas

SALARY: \$52,873-\$68,744 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Provides direction and technical expertise to field surveying and operations crews. Prepares plans, plats, maps and other graphic presentation materials using Autodesk LDD. Complete city job application at www.manassacity.org/jobs. Open until filled. EOE.

Water & Gas Chief Engineer (Utilities Department), Danville

SALARY: \$63,262-\$99,000 start range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Plans, designs and performs engineering for rehabilitation and/or extensions to the water and gas distribution systems; administers construction projects, contracts, governmental regulations.

Directs engineering staff and contract firms; supervises GIS, corrosion control and other programs. Reqs. comprehensive knowledge of water and gas distribution engineering and of the construction, operation and maintenance of water and gas distribution systems. Also reqs. bachelors' degree in engineering (mechanical or civil preferred) and extensive exper. as an engineer in the water and gas distribution field. More info and apply online at www.danville-va.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Senior Accountant (Retirement Team), Roanoke

SALARY: \$41,184-\$51,795 start range. In the Department of Finance, maintain financial records, primarily in the area of financial reporting. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree from 4-yr. college and 3-5 yrs. related exper. and/or training in accounting and/or auditing, preferably in a public accounting firm or through specialization in the govt. sector; or equiv. comb. of educ. and exper. CPA preferred. More info and download application at www.roanokeva.gov. Applications may be mailed to: Human Resources, City of Roanoke, 215 Church Ave., Roanoke, VA 24011. Open until filled. EOE.

Accounting Supervisor, Franklin

SALARY: \$41,496-\$51,869 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. bachelor's degree in accounting or related field and 3-5 yrs. of govt. accounting exper.; knowledge of governmental accounting, auditing, federal, state and city laws and policies concerning city fiscal operations. For full job description, contact: HR Department, 207 W. 2nd Ave., Franklin, VA 23851 or 757-562-8508. Submit complete resume w/ references and cover letter of interest to: Carolyn S. Joyner, 207 W. 2nd Ave., Franklin, VA 23851. Open until filled. EOE.

Community Development Director, Front Royal

SALARY: Negotiable DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Direct the town's marketing and economic development programs and initiatives. Reports directly to the mayor and Town Council. Direct questions about position to the town manager at 540-635-8007. Submit letter of interest, resume and the names and contact information for five references who can attest to your abilities to: Town Manager, Town of Front Royal, P.O. Box 1560, Front Royal VA 22630. First review of applications is Jan. 2. Open until filled. EOE.



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Preserving 'the Virginia way'

COMMENTARY

IT HAS BEEN my privilege to represent the people of Virginia in state and local government for the past 22 years. During that time, I have worked with Republicans and Democrats to solve problems and get things done. Together, we have accomplished a great deal.

I love Virginia and I believe Virginia is a special place. We have one of the strongest economies in the nation, and we have been recognized as the most pro-business state in America. We have also done an effective job managing our state's fiscal affairs, and we have been recognized as the best managed state in America.

We have one of our country's best public education systems. Our K-12 schools have consistently been ranked near the top in national rankings, and no state has a better system of public and private colleges and universities than we have in Virginia.

In these and so many other areas, we can be proud of the accomplishments we have achieved over the years.

These accomplishments have been possible because we have had leaders who cared more about policy than politics – leaders who focused more on the next generation than the next election. Leaders who refused to dwell on the things that divide us, but instead emphasized the things that unite us. We call this "The Virginia Way."

Unfortunately, in today's political world, where rigid ideologies have replaced pragmatic problem solving, it's getting harder and harder to forge the consensus that is necessary to solve big problems. Over the years, it seems that our political system has produced too many "leaders" who are more interested in making a point and picking a fight than solving a problem and getting things done.

This is *not* "The Virginia Way."

Yes, Virginia is a great place. But just because Virginia is a great place today doesn't mean it will always be a great place. That's up to us and those we choose to lead us. The question is – "is today's political leadership capable of working together to move Virginia forward?"

We have seen in Washington what a lack of political leadership can do. Because of political gridlock, Washington is incapable of solving any problem. Government spending and debt is out of control. Implementation of Obamacare was a colossal failure. A misguided sequestration threatens our economic recovery, and the recent government shut down vividly demonstrated Washington's paralysis.

What has caused this dismal state of affairs in Washington? In short, it has been caused by a lack of political leadership.

Too many people in Washington are more focused on partisan politics and securing political advantage than they are in solving problems and securing the future of the nation. Rigid ideologies and confrontational politics have replaced the willingness to compromise and work together for the good of the country. This has become "The Washington Way."

I'm often asked, "What is the biggest challenge facing Virginia today?" Like most states, we face many. We continue to face economic and budgetary challenges. And we continue to face challenges in education, transportation, health care and more.

But I have come to believe that the biggest challenge facing our state is what I often refer to as the "Washingtonization of Richmond." That's my way of saying that "The Washington Way" is quickly replacing

"The Virginia Way." For the good of our Commonwealth, we cannot allow that to happen.

As I near the end of my service in elected political office, I am more concerned about the future of our state than I have ever been. In many ways, we stand at a crossroads. Will we continue traveling down a road that leads to "The Washington Way," or will we commit ourselves to return to a road that preserves and reasserts "The Virginia Way?"

The answer is of course up to those who lead us. It is my sincere hope that each elected official in our state will recommit themselves to focusing on the big issues facing Virginia, working together to find the consensus that is necessary to solve problems and get things done, and always do what is in the best interest of the Commonwealth, even if it jeopardizes their own personal popularity or political position.

To preserve the greatness of Virginia, we need elected leaders who are more focused on the big issues facing our state, more tolerant of differing viewpoints, more willing to compromise, more civil in our political discourse and more committed to finding solutions and achieving results. This is the challenge of our time.

I am keenly aware that many such elected officials will read these words that I write. I hope they will prove to be a challenge and inspiration to you. The current direction of our political process and discourse must change. Let that change begin with you. 



About the author
Bill Bolling is lieutenant governor of Virginia.



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