

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

VOL. 52 NO. 5
JUNE / JULY 2017

Let the sunshine in

Making localities solar-friendly



Building Healthy Communities



Inside:

conference information
on page 12

VML Annual Conference
October 1-3, 2017





Schools

VMLIP offers coverages tailored for schools such as School Board Legal Liability, Suspension/Expulsion, Student Accident, and more.

[LEARN MORE](#)

VMLIP for:

[Local Governments](#)

[Schools](#)

[Water & Wastewater](#)

[Authorities](#)

VML Insurance Programs

For more than 35 years, VMLIP has provided auto, property, liability, and workers' compensation coverage to more than 480 local political subdivisions across Virginia.

VMLIP's programs are designed to meet the needs of all Virginia local governments – from the smallest to the largest. In addition to comprehensive coverages, VMLIP provides risk management program support, human resources, communications, and law enforcement expertise and consulting to members who contribute in excess of \$54 million annually to the pool.

The **first and largest** group self-insurance pool in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR COVERAGE & SERVICES](#)

Visit our NEW website!

Want to learn more about the coverages, resources, and services available to members of VML Insurance Programs? Visit our new website at: www.vmlins.org! The new site features detailed information about membership with VMLIP, as well as a summary of services tailored just for local governments, schools, water & wastewater facilities, and other authorities.



On the cover

With the solar industry shining brightly in Virginia, governments can attract jobs and revenue by working with solar companies. VML reports on two Virginia communities' approach to solar, as well as state legislation addressing clean energy.

By Michelle Gowdy Page 15

Departments

Discovering Virginia 2
People..... 3
Calendar..... 5
News & Notes..... 6
Professional Directory..... 28

Features



Construction eyesore = art-portunity

The renovation of Vienna's community center provided an opportunity to collaborate with youth on a project that beautifies the area.

Page 10



2017 Innovation Awards - Call for entries

It's time to stand up and recognize those municipal projects that have made a real difference in the quality of life in your community. The Innovation Awards celebrate all you do to make your city, town or county a great place to call home. Don't delay, deadline has been extended to Aug. 14.

Page 19



Benefits of community development block grants

More than \$4 million in funds have been a catalyst for investments in Marion since 1984. Mayor David Helms shares his community's story with a Congressional sub-

committee in May.

By VML staff

Page 18



What does a body (and an economy) good?

Strategies that promote healthy food and active living also can stimulate the local economy. Learn three ways to stimulate your economy and your citizens' health.

By Susan DeFrancesco

Page 22

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kimberly A. Winn

EDITOR

Kelley Hope

DESIGN EDITOR

Manuel Timbreza

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Leslie Amason

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sherall W. Dementi

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Robert K. Coiner (President), Gordonsville
 Patricia P. Woodbury (President Elect), Newport News
 Anita James Price (Vice President), Roanoke
 Ron Rordam (Past President), Blacksburg

Gene Teague, Martinsville
 Laurie DiRocco, Vienna
 Christina Luman-Bailey, Hopewell
 Ophie Kier, Staunton
 Jill Carson, Pennington Gap
 A.D. "Chuckie" Reid, Farmville
 Willie Green, Galax
 Thomas R. Smigiel, Jr., Norfolk

Virginia Town & City (ISSN0042-6784) is the official magazine of the Virginia Municipal League. Published 10 times a year at 13 E. Franklin St., P.O. Box 12164, Richmond, VA 23241; 804/649-8471. E-mail: e-mail@vml.org. Reproduction or use of contents requires prior approval of the Virginia Municipal League and if granted must be accompanied by credit to *Virginia Town & City* and the Virginia Municipal League. Periodicals Postage paid at Richmond, VA. (USPS 661040) Subscription rates: members - \$8 per year, non-members - \$16 per year. Single copies - \$2 each. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Virginia Town & City*, P.O. Box 12164, Richmond, 23241-0164.

Virginia Town & City is printed on recycled paper.

Visit at www.vml.org



Combining two towns into one beautiful city

IT IS ALWAYS fun when I come across some connection between Virginia and my home state of Kansas. This was true when I visited the City of Emporia for the first time. The towns of Hicksford and Belfield merged and the Town of Emporia was chartered in 1887. The charter was revoked in 1888 and reinstated in 1892. Benjamin Tillar Jr. of the Virginia House of Delegates named the town Emporia after the Kansas town which was the hometown of his friend U.S. Senator Preston Plumb who was also Tillar's associate in the Atlantic and Danville Railroad.

Several VML staff members traveled with me to Emporia for a regional supper. The topic was business incubators and the turn out was great! Prior to the supper, Emporia City Manager Brian Thrower gave us a driving tour of the city. He pointed out historic locations and discussed current projects. One of the most impressive projects involves the downtown/main street area.



The project was really threefold. The first step was to remodel and revitalize the Old Bank Building. It is currently occupied by the charming restaurant, the Bank by Kahill's (www.kahillsrestaurantandpub.com/the_bank.php),

which is where our regional supper was held. This establishment opened in 2014 in the Citizens National Bank building. Built in 1914, this building served as home to the bank until 2002 and is located in the Hicksford-Emporia Historic District which was named to the National Register of Historic Places. The City purchased the property and it was ultimately renovated.

The vault remains behind the bar as a reminder and tribute of the heritage of this building. Upstairs are the offices of F. Woodrow "Woody" Harris, who is a council member in Emporia and a past VML president. Woody is the director of the Department of Juvenile Justice. The city sheriff is also located in the building.

The second aspect of the project involved the streetscape for Main Street. This part of Emporia was once the town of Hicksford and the results are beautiful. Utility relocations, lighting, planters, and benches all make for an inviting downtown.

The final aspect is to connect the other Main Street in Emporia which is where the town of Belfield was located. This area includes the train station and the City is utilizing a Community Development Block Grant to complete this.

"The goal of the project," said Ed Daley, Emporia assistant city manager and a past VML president, "is to tie the two downtown sections together."

It is awesome to see a long-term project like this come together. It takes great commitment on the part of the City to stick to the vision and see the development to fruition.

Another very cool thing about Emporia is the annual Pork Festival. This event, which draws around 15,000 each year, serves as a major fundraiser for local charitable and civic organizations. Each group hosts a booth that provides a different pork product or drink. At the end of the festival, revenues are divided among the various groups.

As an attendee, once you are through the gate everything is free – all the pork you can eat (40,000 pounds of pork are served each year), both non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages, and five stages of entertainment. I was thrilled when we were invited to come down and attend this year's festivities. And, my husband was so impressed, it is already on the calendar for next year! Learn more at www.vaporkfestival.com/. 



Meet the newest additions to VML team

VML WELCOMED TWO NEW FACES to the office in June. Sandy Harrington joined the staff as government relations associate June 1. Kelley Hope is the communications specialist as of June 26.

Sandy Harrington will lobby for localities, specializing in education and public safety issues. She also will serve as the executive director of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association (VBOCA).

Harrington brings to VML more than 30 years' experience working in government. She has held positions with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Arlington County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, and various Fairfax County public safety and economic development departments. She additionally served as adjunct faculty for Northern Virginia Community College.

"I feel this opportunity with VML is the perfect fit combining my experience, education, and passion for local government," Harrington said. "I look forward to advocating on behalf of our members for a better Virginia."

Harrington was recently elected to serve on the Council of the Central Virginia Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration and is an active member of the Virginia Local Government Management Association.

Harrington has a Master of Public Administration from

George Mason University and is a graduate of the University of Virginia-Weldon Cooper LEAD Program. She and her husband Billy have four children and one grandchild. The couple, along with their dachshunds Willie and Waylon, live in Lake Anna, Virginia.

Kelley Hope will edit the League magazine, *Virginia Town & City*, *VML eNews*, and other communications among other duties. She has worked in public relations and communications in Virginia for 17 years, including positions at the Virginia Retirement System and Central Virginia Waste Management Authority. Most recently, she was the communications officer at Virginia529.

"Having been a government employee myself for most of my career, I understand what draws employees to public service and the challenges they face," she shared. "I look forward to helping League members improve life in their communities."

A graduate of the College of William and Mary, Hope is currently pursuing a master's degree in integrated marketing communications from West Virginia University. She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America and the American Marketing Association. Hope lives in Henrico, Virginia with her husband and two children.



- Harrington -



- Hope -

Middlebrook appointed Williamsburg fire marshal

The Williamsburg City Council appointed **Cary Middlebrook** fire marshal at the council's May 11 meeting. Middlebrook will investigate the cause of fires and look for ways to lower the number of emergency calls in the city.

Middlebrook started his career with the city as a volunteer firefighter when he was in high school. After joining the paid staff, he was promoted to senior firefighter and master firefighter.

According to the *Virginia Gazette*, Williamsburg Fire Chief Pat Dent said Middlebrook has a passion for code enforcement: "It's a genuine interest in making the community safer."

Waltz named Front Royal town manager



- Waltz -

Joseph E. Waltz was appointed Front Royal town manager on June 12.

He was hired in December 2005 to lead and manage the town's electric utility in supplying reliable and affordable electric service to the citizens of Front Royal, then served as the director of public utilities from 2006 to 2008.

He has over 26 years of experience in the electric power business and has held many leadership and senior positions, having started his career as a meter reader. Waltz also has served as a past board member for American Municipal Power (AMP) as well as other power agencies.

Manassas Park taps Laszlo Palko as manager

The city of Manassas Park has appointed **Laszlo Palko** as manager, according to *Loudoun Now*. Palko has served as Lovettsville town manager since December 2014.

A veteran of the U.S. Army, Palko served two tours in Afghanistan. He was a captain when he left the military, where he had served as director of the local government administration and economic development department. After military service, he obtained a Master of Public Policy in public administration and financial management from the Harvard School of Government. He is a former intern of Senator John McCain and worked in the city of Revere, Massachusetts on the establishment of a performance management system. He also has worked as a corporate analyst

in the private sector.

Police Chief John Evans has been serving as interim manager in Manassas Park.

Sam Finz will serve as interim manager in Lovettesville. Finz, a former deputy county administrator in Fairfax, has worked with the town in a number of areas, including facilitating a recent council retreat.

Carter named as Richmond fire chief

Melvin D. Carter, Richmond’s newly-appointed fire chief, is no stranger to the city. A native Richmonder, Carter joined the Richmond Department of Fire in 1987 and rose through the ranks, serving as a company lieutenant, captain, deputy fire marshal, and battalion chief. In 2009, he was appointed deputy fire chief. He left city service in 2014 to lead the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

Richmond Mayor Levar M. Stoney announced the appointment on June 1. Carter will be the city’s 21st chief of fire and emergency services.

Carter is a member of Virginia’s National Guard and he conducts educational sessions for local Boy Scout troops in his spare time.

Chief Carter succeeds Interim Richmond Fire Chief David I. Daniels, who joined the department in 2015 as a deputy chief and served as the city’s top firefighter for the last four months.

Warrenton taps Wisemiller as economic development manager

Tom Wisemiller is the town of Warrenton’s new manager of economic development, starting July 5. Wisemiller comes to Warrenton after working 12 years in economic development in the city of Greenville, N.C.

Wisemiller has a master’s degree in regional planning from Cornell University. His previous experience included

working with Dorward Energy Corporation in Dublin, Ohio.

Martinsville appoints Cassady police chief

Martinsville announced the appointment of Deputy Police Chief **G. Edward (Eddie)**



- Cassady -

Cassady to police chief effective June 19, 2017. Deputy Chief Cassady is a long-standing employee of the City’s police department, beginning his career in 1985. He has been deputy chief since 2014.

“The City is fortunate to be able to promote from within for this key position,” noted City Manager Leon Towarnicki.

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 **Sherall Dementi** at sdementi@vml.org.

Cassady will be filling the position vacated by the departure of Police Chief Sean Dunn.

Luray manager retires

Luray Town Manager **Charlie Hoke** retired from his position effective July 31. Hoke had worked for the town for 35 years, including as director of utilities.

In Memoriam



- Taylor -

Saltville town manager dies

Saltville Town Manager **T. Michael “Mike” Taylor** died June 5 after a year-long battle with cancer, SWVA-Today.com reports. Taylor grew up in Smyth County and graduated from Emory & Henry College. He worked for Congressman Rick Boucher and Cargo in Saltville and also was a member of the William King Masonic Lodge and chairman of the Saltville Labor Day Committee.

Taylor had been Saltville’s town manager since January 2010.



- Kidwell -

Leesburg’s longest serving police chief dies

James M. Kidwell, died Monday, June 19. Kidwell, 77, served with the town Police Department for 34 years and was chief for 27 years. As a 20-year-old, he joined the four-man department in 1961. At that time, the agency had one patrol car and no radio system. He was named chief in 1971.

Upon his retirement in 1995, Kidwell was recognized for transforming the department into a modern police agency with 35 staff members and capable of handling increasingly complex challenges that followed the town’s growth. He also was recognized for keeping a small-town approach to law enforcement, which included his near daily foot patrols downtown.

VML connects you with a variety of networking and professional development events. Learn about the opportunities below at vml.org/events.

- Aug 1-2:** Resilient Virginia Conference, Richmond
- Aug 2:** Go Green Virginia seminar, Richmond
- Aug. 18:** VML Legislative Committee meeting, Richmond
- Sept. 18:** Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time 2017 conference, Newport News
- Oct 1-3:** 2017 VML annual conference, Williamsburg
- Oct. 15-17:** Virginia Building and Code Officials Association (VBCOA) school and conference, Virginia Beach

Register now for Leadership Academy budgeting workshop in August

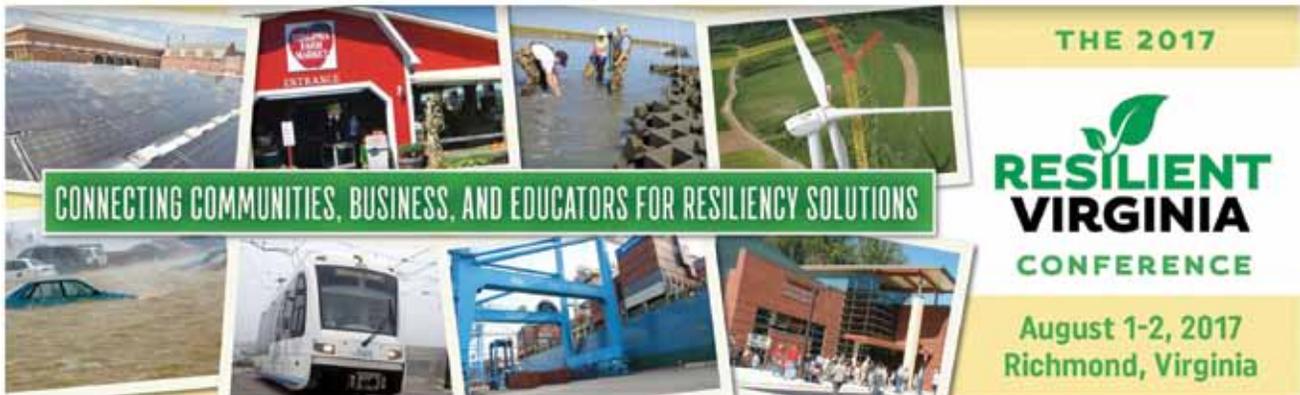
If you understand the money, governing will flow smoother. The next **VML Leadership Academy** workshop will focus on budgeting considerations, techniques and processes. Explore financial monitoring and danger signals with tips for elected leaders who want to stay out of stormy financial seas.

The presenter is Edwin P. Daley, assistant city manager for the City of Emporia. Daley also is a past president of ICMA and VML.

August 2 - Richmond
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

August 3 - Hampton
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Register at www.vml.org/education/leadership-academy



Conference helps communities, businesses plan for changing world

Around Virginia and the nation, local governments are planning ways to be resilient – to resist or recover from adversity or changing conditions. Resiliency planning provides communities with the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of challenges brought on by weather, economics, social changes, community health issues, and security.

Learn how your community can become more resilient at the 2017 Resilient Virginia Conference, taking place August 1 and 2 at the Richmond Convention Center. This year, the conference will address climate disruptions and other risks in case studies from urban, rural, and coastal communities in Virginia and around the country. Participants also will receive free tools to plan, implement, and sustain resiliency initiatives in their communities.

Resilient Virginia provides resources to inform, educate, and activate communities to develop their own resiliency initiatives. Register for the conference and learn more at www.resilientvirginia.org.

Virginia Municipal League is a Resilient Virginia conference partner.



Flicker the Flame recognized for 10 years of accomplishments

MAY 22, 2017, MARKED THE 10TH birthday of Flicker the Flame, Charlottesville's natural gas safety mascot. To celebrate, Charlottesville Gas hosted a birthday party at the Virginia Discovery Museum and invited residents to join in the fun.

Flicker was created in-house 10 years ago as part of a comprehensive gas safety program to educate the public on safe excavation and the signs of gas leaks. Since the program's start, Charlottesville Gas has seen a 105 percent increase in residents recognizing the smell of natural gas and a 75 percent reduction in gas line damage caused by third-party excavators.

Flicker promotes gas safety at events around Charlottesville. The character also visits elementary schools and summer camps throughout Charlottesville and Albemarle County as part of the Flicker @ Your Classroom program.

Charlottesville Gas is a natural gas utility owned and operated by the City of Charlottesville.

More about Flicker at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

(left) Scolher Berry helps Flicker the Flame celebrate his 10th birthday. Scolher's mother, Leslie Beauregard, is an assistant city manager in Charlottesville.

Shenandoah Valley promoted through regional partnership

CITIES, COUNTIES AND TOWNS stretching from Winchester in the north to Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County in the south have joined forces to market tourism efforts through the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership.

The advertising agency that developed the tourism campaign focused on three factors: the variety of communities that make up the Valley; the importance of agriculture with a tie-in to farm-to-table dining; and the mountains and scenic beauty, with opportunities for year-round recreational adventures.

The Virginia Tourism Corporation states that domestic travel in Virginia directly generated more than \$1.7 billion in tax revenue for state and local governments in 2016. Further, domestic travel expenditures directly supported 230,000 jobs in Virginia in 2016.

Additional information on the partnership and the tourism industry statewide is available at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

With the Blue Ridge to the east and the Alleghenies to the west, **Today's Shenandoah Valley** is one of the most popular getaway destinations in Virginia. After just one visit, you'll understand why.

The mountains that form the Shenandoah Valley are not just eye candy. They are an exceptional place to hike, bike, fish, view wildlife or take a scenic drive. Meanwhile, the valley is alive with history, culture, farm tours, wineries and dozens of authentic cities and towns to explore.

Learn more about **Today's Shenandoah Valley** >

Loudoun County, Arlington County receive high credit ratings

ARLINGTON COUNTY and Loudoun County both received good news from three credit ratings in May: an affirmation of their Aaa rating from Moody's, and AAA from Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's. The counties are two of 45 counties in the nation, and nine in Virginia, to receive the highest rating from all three credit rating agencies.

According to press releases, Fitch said the rating reflects Loudoun's "exceptionally strong operating performance, supported by solid revenue growth and expenditure flexibility."

Moody's cited Arlington's "solid financial position with sound reserves and conservative budget management, and moderate debt position with manageable future borrowing needs."

S&P Global highlighted Loudoun's maintenance of "robust trend and forecasting data," and strong financial practices. The rating agency noted that Arlington's general obligation bonds are rated above those of the U.S. government's because "the County can maintain better credit characteristics than the U.S. in a stress situation."

A triple-a bond rating helps governments continue to get the best possible interest rates to finance capital projects, saving millions of dollars. For more information visit www.vml.org/vtc-resources.



Alexandria Fire Department launches integrated health/community paramedic program

THE ALEXANDRIA FIRE DEPARTMENT has established a mobile integrated health/community paramedic (MIH/CP) program. MIH/CP is a model of community-based health care that will focus on improving the lives of patients, lowering health care costs and using EMS providers as resources to solve health-care problems within the community.

Using the existing Fire and EMS systems, the Community Paramedic (CP) will provide scheduled medical care to patients who lack access to primary care, mobility, and/or transportation, or who need help navigating to medical and social services. The CP will work with other parts of the local health care system, including the health department, mental health clinics, hospitals, and social workers.

The first initiative for the MIH/CP program will focus on fall prevention. CPs will schedule appointments with previously-identified residents to provide a home fall risk assessment at no charge.

Future plans are for the MIH/CP program to expand to establish other programs such as high-frequency 911 user intervention, chronic disease management, reduction of hospital readmission after discharge, partnerships with home hospice, and patient transportation.

Additional information is available at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

Poverty to Progress kicks off community effort

LYNCHBURG'S INITIATIVE to assist 50 families a year in the journey out of poverty held its first meeting in May. More than 400 citizens met at a local auditorium to talk about poverty and its effects on the community.

Following remarks by Lynchburg Mayor Joan Foster, Vice Mayor Treney Tweedy, and Assistant City Manager John Hughes, attendees broke into nine discussion groups that focused on barriers that make it difficult for people to progress out of poverty. The discussion groups identified action steps to overcome the barriers. The next steps involve continuing the conversations and better defining the action steps identified at the kick-off event.

The Poverty to Progress Initiative stemmed from the council's retreat held last November when poverty was identified as a focus area. While Foster and Tweedy are leading the effort, they state the initiative requires community involvement and cannot be achieved by government alone.

Additional information on the initiative is posted at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

Public safety agencies conduct human trafficking prevention training in Winchester

AS PART OF A REGIONAL workgroup headed by the FBI, agencies in and around the Shenandoah Valley participated in a training event about human trafficking on May 16.

The training was attended by officers and staff of local agencies from Winchester, Front Royal, Strasburg, Frederick County, Shenandoah County, and Warren County as well as from Hagerstown and Frederick, Maryland and the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, the US Attorney's Office, and the FBI.

Led by the Henrico County Sheriff's Office, the event focused on human trafficking offenses, effects on the community and ways to combat human trafficking including undercover operations.

As a follow-up to the training, the group set up several undercover operations on May 17 in Winchester. The operations were a hands-on training that focused on enforcement of prostitution violations.

Additional information on the training event and on the workgroup is available at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

MEPAV holds annual conference

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC Power Association of Virginia (MEPAV) hosted its annual conference May 24 through 26 in Virginia Beach. Speakers included representatives from the American Public Power Association, Dominion Energy, Appalachian Power, ElectricCities, and Southside Virginia Community College. Conference sessions focused on a variety of topics such as federal initiatives; investments in clean energy such as wind, solar and gas; the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline project; and industrial and residential electric rates. In addition, the conference addressed challenges in recruiting and training employees, as well as communication between multiple generations.



A.K. Briele, MEP AV president and Salem electrical department director, leads a MEP AV business meeting at the conference.

Fiber optic broadband service expanding on the Eastern Shore

THE EASTERN SHORE of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) is expanding its residential fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) pilot program.

The FTTH test project started September 2016 in Harborton, Virginia. More than 10 percent of the homes there have successfully connected through the ESVBA's FTTH project. Based on this early success, the ESVBA is expanding the program to new areas, bringing fiber optic broadband service to an additional 180 homes previously unserved or underserved by terrestrial fiber.

"Fiber to the home offers a number of benefits including more secure and reliable Internet connectivity, increased home values and faster upload and download speeds for residents," Executive Director Nicholas Pascaretti said.

Accomack and Northampton counties provided the

start-up investment for the initial implementation. The authority paid back these funds in full by fall 2015. The expansion will be funded through customer operating fees.

For maps of the new FTTH coverage areas or to learn more about the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority, visit www.esvba.com.



Roanoke receives award for reading program

THE CITY OF ROANOKE is one of fifteen communities across the United States honored recently with the 2017 All-America City Award (AAC) for helping children from low-income families achieve grade-level reading proficiency and early school success.

Roanoke's Star City Reads program involves a coalition of 25 partners, including libraries, schools, health programs, arts organizations, and the police department. The program increased the percentage of third graders reading proficiently in all 14 Roanoke Title I elementary schools from 60.5 percent to 70.6 percent since 2013.

Research has long shown that when children read at proficient levels by third grade they are more likely to complete high school prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship.

The AAC Awards were presented in June at an event hosted by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the National Civic League, which created the program 68 years ago. A panel of judges reviewed progress from 27 communities nominated as finalists to select the 15 award recipients.

Find the program online at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.



Hampton starts program to bond neighbors, community groups

HAMPTON'S DIVISION OF POLICE and the city's Youth Violence Prevention Office are heading up an initiative to foster community engagement called "Community Explosions."

A series of neighborhood gatherings this summer will help residents – including neighborhood groups, service providers and places of worship – share resources and knowledge.

The idea originated with a meeting between the Virginia Attorney General's Office and faith-based representatives from Newport News and Hampton. Six events will be held from June 3 through August 19 at sites across the cities.

Additional information is available at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

Construction eyesore = art-portunity

COLORFUL ART from local students is brightening a construction site in Vienna, thanks to a project coordinated by the Vienna Public Art Commission (VPAC).

The renovation and expansion of Vienna's community center provided the opportunity to collaborate with youth on the project. Students from public and private schools in the area painted more than 15 wood panels currently on display around the community center construction zone.

In addition to sprucing up the construction area, the project also gives a unique voice to the Town's youth, allowing them to share through art what's beautiful to them, what hurts them, how the Town looks to them, and what they want themselves and Vienna to be now and in the future.

VPAC chair Midge Biles proposed the idea after she noticed art beautifying a construction area in a neighboring community.

"We are already underway with a permanent 'Taking Flight' statue at the community center in memory of former Mayor Jane Seeman and in honor of all volunteers," says Biles. "In the meantime, we can temporarily use art to alleviate the current situation until the center's opening."

Completion of the community center renovation is anticipated for fall 2017. 



STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS

SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS is a friendly competition among VML member localities. The program seeks to increase local government's role in early childhood education, which in turn, builds a qualified, well-educated workforce. The competition awards points to localities for specific actions that enhance the early childhood experience. Participants will be recognized during an awards program at VML's Annual Conference October 3 in Williamsburg.

Visit www.vml.org to get started. Application deadline is Aug. 18.



Building Healthy Communities



VML Annual Conference October 1-3, 2017 • Williamsburg Lodge

Register now at
www.vml.org

Save the date for the 2017 VML conference, coming to Williamsburg October 1-3.

Network with hundreds of colleagues from around Virginia while learning about the latest issues facing local governments.





Location and housing

Williamsburg – One of America’s first planned cities, Williamsburg was founded in 1699 as the capital of the Virginia Colony. Williamsburg is known internationally for its preservation and interpretation of American colonial history and as the home of The College of William and Mary.

Williamsburg Lodge – The Williamsburg Lodge, at 310 South England Street, is the host facility for the conference. All conference activities, including general sessions, break outs, and the exhibit hall, will take place at this hotel located steps from the heart of the Revolutionary City.

To reserve rooms at the Williamsburg Lodge, visit vml.org/2017-annual-conference-williamsburg or call toll-free 800-261-9530. **Use block code: VM2**



Registration

Register online and pay conference fees by credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover) at www.vml.org. You also may register online and pay via invoice. The deadline for registration refunds is September 8.

For information about registering for or exhibiting at the conference, contact Leslie Amason, conference and marketing coordinator, at (804) 523-8528 or lamason@vml.org.

Virginia Mayors Institute – September 30 - October 1

The 2017 VML Mayors Institute theme of “Working for Smart Communities” will focus on preparing Virginia localities for the future. From improving current infrastructure to preparing for autonomous vehicles you will hear from leaders who are moving their community forward to meet the demands of a new generation of citizens.

Annual Conference – October 1-3

Registration begins at 10:00 a.m. Sunday, October 1, with the opening general session at 3:30 that afternoon.

Be sure not to miss these conference events:

Go back in time to the Revolutionary War with special activities for **Host City Night**. Gather on the historic Duke of Gloucester Street for a cannon demonstration and musical exhibition by the Colonial Williamsburg Fifes and Drums. Then fall in line with the marching corps as they lead us to a reception at the Capitol Building, home of the House of Burgesses from 1705 to 1779.



Attend a variety of **general sessions** for valuable information from political leaders, nationally-known speakers, and local government experts.

Meet the incoming president at the **annual banquet** and witness the presentation of the Innovation Awards, which recognize excellence in local government programs.

Visit the **exhibit hall** for the latest equipment, technologies, and services.

Hear a dynamic and inspirational speaker at Tuesday’s **closing general session**, followed by the annual business meeting and election of officers. Join VML as we recognize graduates of the Virginia Leadership Academy (VLA) and celebrate winners of the Go Green Challenge, Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Campaign, and Stairway to Success awards.



Let the sunsh



mine in

Making localities solar-friendly

By Michelle Gowdy



IN ONE YEAR, Virginia's total number of solar-industry jobs jumped 65 percent to more than 3,200, according to the Solar Foundation's National Solar Jobs Census 2016. That puts the commonwealth in the top twenty nationwide for solar jobs.

“Revenue in the clean energy sector [has increased] from \$500 million to \$2 billion since 2014,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore.

Twenty-four thousand homes in Virginia receive power from the sun according to a factsheet by the Solar Energy Industries Association. Based on projects announced and permitted, the 2016 update to the Virginia Energy Plan estimates the commonwealth will have facilities comprising 386 megawatts of capacity installed by the end of 2017.

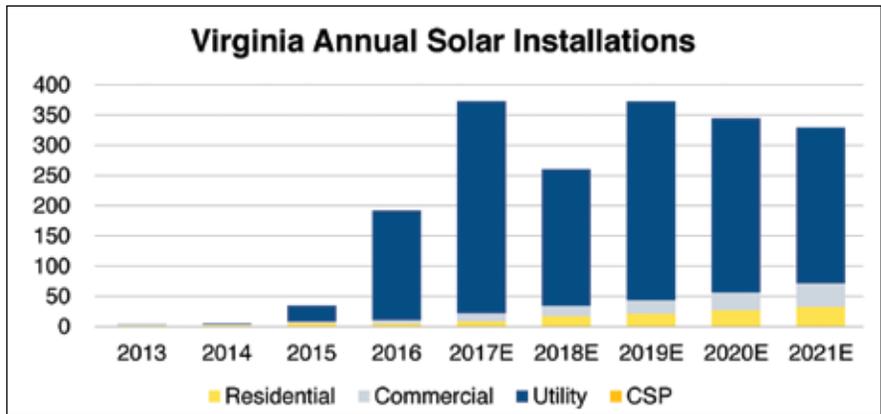
Localities are beginning to consider the impact of this use. This article will provide some ideas on what to consider when a solar company approaches your locality.

Solar

The Town of Mount Jackson amended its ordinances earlier this year to allow solar farms up to two acres. The change was initiated in response to a proposal from Solar I LLC, a subsidiary of Virginia Solar LLC, for a 15.65-megawatt solar farm. The town's planning commission recommended approval of the permit and council members unanimously approved it in May.

"This solar project is just the beginning of the good things coming to our great town," said Mount Jackson Mayor J.G. "Bucky" Miller. "Smart growth, meaning that it is good now and in the future, is what I hope resonates from our decision."

During a public hearing, citizens expressed concerns about security, construction noise and impacts on wildlife, which Virginia Solar addressed by submitting voluntary conditions



The Solar Energy Industries Association predicts growth in Virginia's solar industry of 1,677 megawatts over the next five years.

megawatts of renewable energy at 150 percent of "expected annual energy consumption." The legislation limits projects to 25 percent of "contiguous land owned or controlled by the agricultural business" (VA Code §56-594, §56-594.2).

From November 2014 through June 2017, nine solar projects took advantage of "permit by rule" through DEQ. During that time, there also were more than 50 Notices of Intent to install solar generation in 36 counties and 2 cities.

that included plans for screening, setbacks, and security fencing. According to the Northern Virginia Daily, town council members and the company also discussed including bee-friendly plants around the facility.

The future of solar in Virginia

The 2016 update to the Virginia Energy Plan reports "energy efficiency has the potential to employ 38,000 people in Virginia and contribute almost \$300 million to state domestic product by 2030."

Dominion Energy and Appalachian Power have committed to adding more solar facilities to their portfolios in upcoming

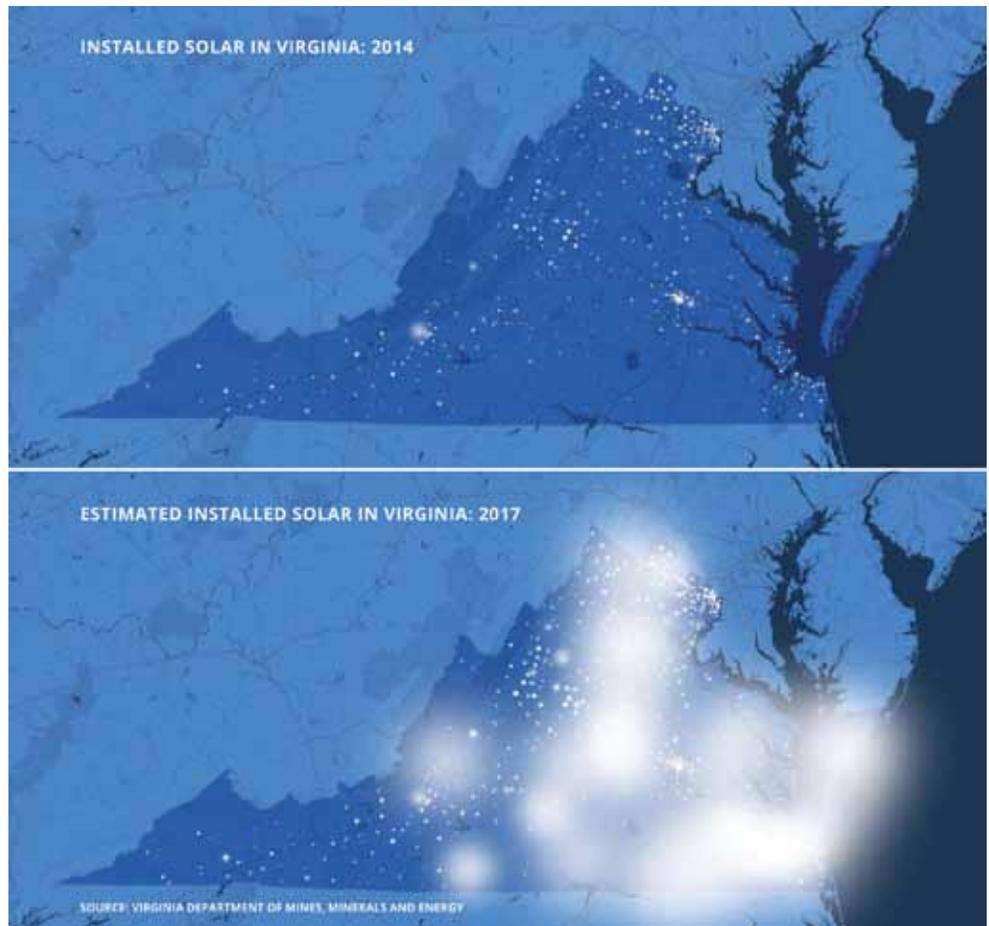
Legislative support for clean energy

The 2017 session of the General Assembly yielded 11 bills promoting renewable energy options such as solar and energy conservation.

One such bill increased the number of solar generation projects that fall under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). In an amendment of legislation originally passed in 2009, the rated capacity of projects under DEQ oversight increased from 100 to 150 megawatts. The State Corporation Commission will regulate projects larger than 150 megawatts. Facilities of all sizes remain subject to state regulation, local zoning, and land use authority.

Regarding taxation of solar projects, the 2017 General Assembly enacted legislation allowing agribusiness to generate up to 1.5

This picture from the 2016 update to the Virginia Energy Plan depicts a dramatic increase in solar installations across the state.



ing years. The shift is due to the declining cost of solar energy production, corporate pledges to secure clean and renewable energy sources, and projected decreases in coal production.

In June, stakeholders including solar advocates, developers, land use attorneys and representatives of VML and VACo met to discuss land use and solar energy in Virginia. In a frank two-hour session participants agreed on the need for localities and permit applicants to work together.

A collaborative approach will allow Virginia communities, businesses, and citizens to benefit from the advancing swell of the clean energy industry. 

About the author: *Michelle Gowdy is VML's general counsel.*

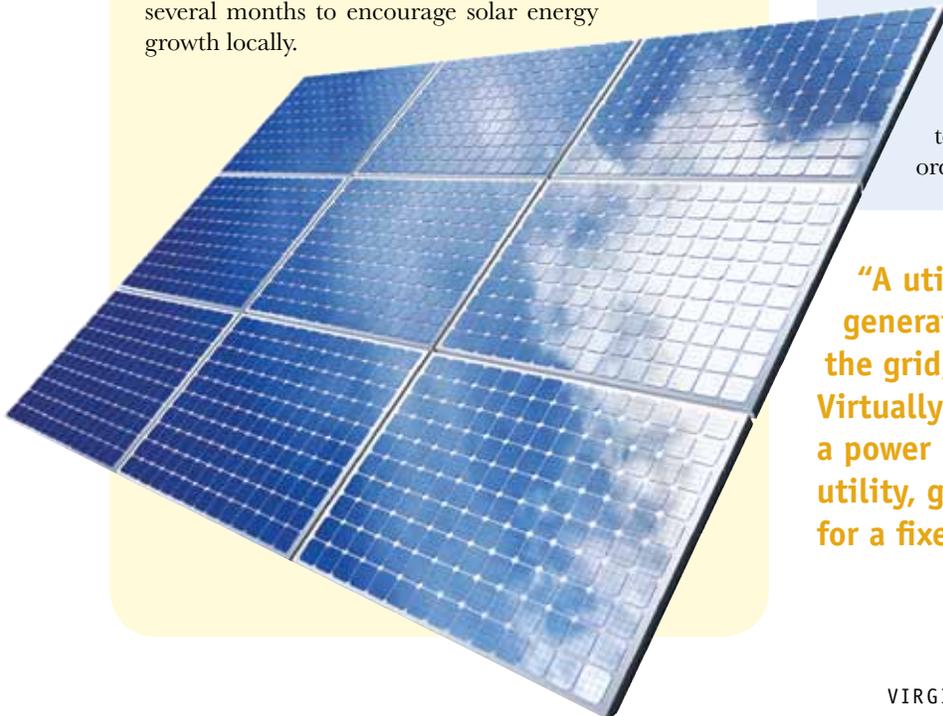
Charlottesville earns solar-friendly designation

CHARLOTTESVILLE HAS BEEN DESIGNATED a SolSmart community, the first in Virginia and one of 50 nationwide to earn this recognition for solar-friendly communities.

A SolSmart designation recognizes local governments for making adoption of solar faster, easier, and cheaper. Achieving the SolSmart designation is a signal that the community is “open for solar business” and wants to attract solar industry investment and generate local jobs.

To achieve its Bronze-level designation, Charlottesville earned credits for installing solar energy systems on several City facilities, helping community members save money on solar installations, and offering financial incentives for property owners that install solar energy systems. The city also recently streamlined the solar permit application process and provided safety training on solar photovoltaic systems to members of the fire department.

Charlottesville, along with Albemarle County, has been working with a no-cost SolSmart advisor for several months to encourage solar energy growth locally.



History of exempting solar energy generation from taxation

1977 – granted localities the authority to fully or partially exempt “certified solar energy equipment” from local taxation.

2014 – authorized an exemption from machinery and tools tax for solar generating equipment rated at 20 megawatts or less (see VA Code §58.1-3508.6).

2016 – created exemptions in VA Code 58.1-3660 for the following:

- Projects equaling 20 megawatts or less for which an initial interconnection required form has been filed on or before December 31, 2018
- 80 percent of the assessed value of projects for which an initial interconnection form was filed after January 1, 2015
- Greater than 20 megawatts if project is first in service on or after January 1, 2017
- Projects equaling 5 megawatts or less for which an initial interconnection form was filed on or after January 1, 2019
- 80 percent of assessed value of all other projects more than 5 megawatts for which an initial interconnection form has been filed on or after January 1, 2019
- The exemption does NOT apply If greater than 20 megawatts and construction does not begin before January 1, 2024

2017 – defined “certified solar energy equipment, facilities, or devices” as any property including real or personal property, equipment, facilities or devices, excluding any portion of such property that is exempt under §58.1-3660, certified by the local certifying authority to be designed and used primarily for the purpose of collecting, generating, transferring or storing thermal or electric energy (see VA Code §58.1-3661(B)).

Keep in mind that §58.1-3661 allows localities to provide further tax incentives through local ordinances.

“A utility-scale solar facility is one which generates solar power and feeds it into the grid, supplying a utility with energy. Virtually every utility-scale solar facility has a power purchase Agreement (PPA) with a utility, guaranteeing a market for its energy for a fixed term of time.”

– Greentech Media

Read more at www.vml.org/vtc-resources.

Helms shares Marion success stories with Congress



MARION MAYOR DAVID HELMS described how Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding contributed to economic development in his community at a roundtable held before a Congressional subcommittee on May 24 in Washington, D.C. Helms was one of eight elected and appointed officials from across the U.S. participating in the panel.

The purpose of the roundtable was to obtain information on the significance of CDBG and Home Investment Partnership programs on housing, infrastructure, economic development, public health resources, and safety.

Helms said that Marion has received just over \$4 million in Community Development Block Grant funds since 1984. The town has invested more than that, but the CDBG was the catalyst for making other investments happen.

Helms' written remarks noted that CDBG funds are "not the 'last dollar in', but the first dollars that get things moving. We're partnered with CDBG to help us plan our future, to build new affordable housing units, to rehabilitate substandard houses and to save historic buildings. But most importantly, we have used CDBG funds to revitalize our community, to leverage private reinvestment, to encourage new jobs and new businesses and new growth and new vibrancy."

Bill Shelton, director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), described how CDBG funds have been used to leverage investments in safe drinking water. Just 15 years ago, only 20 percent of the houses in southwest Virginia were on public drinking water. Today, more than 90 percent of houses in the area have access to safe water, thanks in part to CDBG.

Helms' remarks noted that Marion's first partnerships with

DHCD were for the most basic municipal functions - water and sewer. Marion benefitted by being accepted into the Virginia Main Street program in 1995, which kickstarted downtown revitalization. The town received more CDBG funding in 1998 to provide affordable housing above the downtown stores, starting to breathe life back into the community. The town since has completed several phases of traditional neighborhoods of single family houses, a project that helps rehabilitate substandard houses to provide safe housing for some of the most vulnerable citizens.

One initiative Helms described at the roundtable involved a project that began in reaction to plans to demolish a 1908 school house, the first high school in Smyth County, so that additional parking spaces could be built for the courthouse. Instead, town citizens fought to keep the building from undergoing the wrecking ball. The town used CDBG funds to initiate the project, and instead of a parking lot, the old schoolhouse was transformed into the Wayne C. Henderson School of Appalachian Arts. This center also is a unique partnership between two community colleges, which brings a higher education community back to Marion for the first time since 1967.

Helms told the roundtable that the center has been the focal point for downtown revitalization. And the proof is in the statistics: downtown vacancy rates have dropped from over 17 percent to under 4 percent and the vacancy rate in strip centers is under 3 percent. Since 2013, the town has leveraged nearly \$2 million in private reinvestment through the work in the downtown.

The roundtable was led by the House Committee on Financial Services Ranking Member Rep. Maxine Waters as well as Rep. Dan Kildee and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II. Rep. Morgan Griffin, while not a member of the roundtable, was in the audience. 



Helms and Shelton were among the panelists, pictured above, from across the U.S. who shared information about their communities at the roundtable. (left to right) David Helms, mayor of Marion, Virginia; Renee Price, commissioner of Orange County, North Carolina; Ed Pawlowski, mayor of Allentown, Pennsylvania; Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Indiana; Rep. Maxine Waters; Robin Hughes, president & CEO, Abode Communities, Los Angeles; Bonnie Moore, director of community development, Shreveport, Louisiana; Bill Shelton, director, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; Schroeder Stribling, executive director, N Street Village, Washington, D.C.

2017

VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

INNOVATION AWARDS

Deadline extended to August 14, 2017

Recognizing Excellence
in Virginia Local Government

CALL FOR ENTRIES

2017 VML Innovation Awards

THE 2017 VML INNOVATION AWARDS celebrate your hometown successes and all that you do to make your city, town, or county a great place to live.

The Innovation Awards recognize outstanding achievements in local governments across Virginia. Formerly known as the VML Achievement Awards, the program is 40 years old and is recognized as Virginia's highest honor in local government management.

Don't miss this opportunity to spotlight programs that have made a big difference to your residents – to celebrate innovative solutions that address emerging needs.

The awards are presented at a banquet at VML's Annual Conference in early October.

Criteria

Projects and programs are judged on how well they demonstrate the following:

Innovative problem solving

Improved quality of life

Excellence in management

Making the most of local resources

Increased citizen participation

Commitment to higher levels of service

Long-term value to the community

Adaptability to other communities

Award-winning projects typically demonstrate innovative ways of delivering services, address a community need, or significantly improving an existing service.

Categories

Award categories are based on the field of work with local governments of all size populations competing within these categories. Our panel of judges have years of experience in local governments of all sizes and will judge the scope and impact of the project in relationship and proportion to the community's size, thereby putting localities of all sizes on a **level playing field**.

We recognize that many projects relate to more than one category. When deciding what category best fits your project, consider what the primary goal of the project is and what aspect of it demonstrates the greatest innovation.

Localities may submit in as many categories as they like. The categories are:

Community Health

includes building healthy community environments through active lifestyle programs, nutrition education, and improving access to healthier food choices.

Infrastructure

includes public works, transportation, public utilities, stormwater, customer service enhancements, environmental preservation, sustainability, resiliency planning, structures and facilities, libraries, and other projects.

Economic Development

includes business development, historic preservation, tourism, workforce development, housing, community events, strategic planning and visioning, public-private partnerships, consumer and financial literacy, public art, museums, and similar projects.

Public Safety

includes police, fire, rescue services, emergency planning and coordinated response, building code enforcement, jails, health, and mental health related to public safety.

Working with Youth

includes civics education, pre-k-12 education, summer programs, parks and recreation, library, and literacy programs.

Communications

includes promotional campaigns, branding campaigns, crisis plans, events, customer service programs; media can include online, video, print, social, and other formats.

President's Award for Innovation

One winning project from the category winners will be selected for the top prize – the President's Award – and will receive this top honor in addition to the award in their category. The President's Award can come from any of the categories.

Deadline

All entries must be received via e-mail by 5 p.m., Monday, August 14, 2017.

Rules for entering

- New this year, **all entries must be submitted electronically via email.** Localities must download the entry form at www.vml.org/education/innovation-awards and fill in all of the requested information directly on the form. The completed form must then be e-mailed to mtimbreza@vml.org.
- The competition is open to all VML local government members.
- Entries must cover new projects or programs completed between Jan. 1, 2016 and May 1, 2017, or – for existing projects – entries must cover major enhancements that occurred between Jan. 1, 2016 and May 1, 2017.
- Each entry form must be fully completed and must be signed by the local government's chief administrative or elected official.
- A local government can submit entries in all of the six categories. The President's Award is not a separate category.
- Supporting materials totaling no more than 10 pages, including photos, brochures, charts, or other information, can be included in a separate document. This document must also be e-mailed. If you wish to submit one video as part of your supporting materials, contact mtimbreza@vml.org and we will send you the link to a secure FTP site where you can upload your video. Maximum length of video is five minutes.

Questions?

For more information about completing your entry or other details, contact VML's Manuel Timbreza at mtimbreza@vml.org or call 804-649-8471.

The judging

Entries are screened by VML staff and judged by a panel of three judges chosen for their expertise in local and state government. They generally represent a variety of communities – from small towns to large cities and state agencies.

The winners

Awards will be presented at the VML annual conference in Williamsburg, October 1-3. All winning entries will also be featured in articles in *Virginia Town & City*.

Don't miss this premiere opportunity to spotlight innovative programs that make your town, city, or county a great place for people to call home!



What does a body (and an economy) good?

3 ways to stimulate your economy and your citizens' health

INCREASINGLY, MUNICIPAL LEADERS are implementing healthy eating and active living (HEAL) policies and practices to improve the health and quality of life of the residents of their cities and towns. But while they may recognize the connection to improving the health of their residents, municipal leaders may not be aware that HEAL policies and practices also can help build and sustain the health of the local economy.

Make healthy eating easier and create jobs with grocery stores, community gardens, and urban farms

Strategies that increase access to healthy food and stimulate the local economy include attracting grocery stores to food deserts (areas where people cannot find fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful foods) and supporting farmers markets and urban agriculture such as community gardens and urban farms.

Grocery stores can stimulate economic growth by creating jobs for community members. The Food Trust in cooperation with PolicyLink report that an estimated “24 new jobs are created for every 10,000 square feet of retail grocery space.”



Grocery stores can stimulate economic growth by creating jobs for community members.

Grocery stores also can raise the value of surrounding property and serve as a community “anchor,” attracting additional businesses and increasing pedestrian traffic to a neighborhood.

This increased activity can stimulate the local economy, help revitalize communities, and increase tax revenues for a city or town. In addition, when grocery stores purchase food from local suppliers and farmers, their money stays in the local economy and provides added income for farmers.



Farmers markets provide healthy food retail for city and town residents and, like grocery stores, can create jobs and strengthen local economies.

Local cities and towns can attract grocery stores in underserved areas by creating a package of incentives and assistance for new grocery store development and renovations. For example, a “grocery ambassador” positioned with a city or town’s administrative office can help grocers navigate through the bureaucratic hurdles of opening new stores.

Other assistance includes zoning variances and fast-track permitting for grocery store development; land tax abatement; exemption from sales tax on materials to construct, renovate, or equip facilities; stabilization of building taxes; and the provision of energy efficiency benefits.

On the state level, stakeholders in Virginia are advocating for the creation of the Virginia Grocery Investment Fund to

Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) at farmers markets and local retail outlets. These benefits can have a positive impact on the local economy by increasing the aggregate purchasing power of low-income residents and by boosting retail and farmers market sales.

Urban agriculture such as community gardens and urban farms also can increase access to healthy food for residents and impact a community’s economy. Community gardens can yield between \$500 and \$2,000 worth of produce per family annually which can be particularly helpful for low-income families. Also, it’s a good investment – PolicyLink notes “every \$1 invested in a community garden plot yields around \$6 worth of produce.” In addition, community gardens can increase property values of nearby homes, generating additional property tax revenues for cities and towns.

Urban farms also can create jobs, provide job training (e.g., for people to start their own farm or food businesses) and incubate and attract new businesses. When a city or town creates community gardens and urban farm opportunities in a part of town where there is vacant land or run-down buildings, urban agriculture can serve to revitalize neighborhoods. Also, urban agriculture stimulates the local economy by providing more disposable income for families that eat the food they grow. Disposable income spent locally benefits area businesses.

Some of the ways cities and towns can support urban agriculture are by repurposing public land for agricultural use, adopting supportive zoning laws, maximizing opportunities to incorporate urban agriculture into new development, and encouraging

the use of private land for urban agriculture.

Raise revenue with walkable, bikeable communities

Cities and towns that make it easier for residents to walk or bicycle encourage an active lifestyle but also spur economic growth. Creating compact, mixed-use communities (a mixture of land uses that typically includes residential use combined with civic and commercial uses, including retail, restaurants and offices) that are safe and accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists can increase property values and tax revenues for a city or town.

Studies show that home buyers will pay more for houses that are in more walkable areas or near bike paths. In addition, a nationwide survey found that dense, mixed-use development generates 10 times more tax revenue per acre and saves municipalities an average of 10 percent on police, ambulance, and firefighting services.

Slowing traffic and improving the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists can increase sales in a commercial area due to the increased foot and bicycle traffic. Mixed-used communities that are bike- and pedestrian-friendly, says Smart Growth



Open spaces such as parks and recreation areas can have a positive economic effect on residential property values.

help support local efforts to attract grocery stores to communities in need. The proposed fund is modeled after a public-private partnership in Pennsylvania where a state investment leveraged private capital to provide low-interest loans and grants to encourage the development of healthy food retail.

While the General Assembly did not include funding for the program in their final 2016-2018 budget, advocates are continuing to educate legislators about the Virginia Grocery Investment Fund as a public health, community revitalization, and economic development opportunity.

Farmers markets also provide healthy food retail for city and town residents and, like grocery stores, can create jobs and strengthen local economies. They can foster local entrepreneurs, stimulate the regional farm economy, and preserve agricultural land.

The Farmers Market Coalition estimates that growers who sell locally create 13 full-time jobs per \$1 million revenue earned. Also, for every \$100 spent at a farmers market, an estimated \$62 stays in the local economy. City and town governments can provide cost-free space for farmers markets on city land and aid with branding and advertising.

Cities and towns also can support the use of governmental food benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Healthy economy

America, also can attract new businesses that create more jobs and increase revenues for a city or town.

Making it easier for residents to walk or bicycle or take public transportation can save families money if they do not need to own and operate a car. The money saved can be spent on other things, stimulating the local economy. A decrease in commuting costs also can foster transportation equity among low-income residents.

Open spaces such as parks and recreation areas also can have a positive economic effect on residential property values. Many studies show that people will pay more in rent or when purchasing a home if it is near a safe and a well-maintained park. Parks also can stimulate the local economy by increasing tourism.

Cities and towns can create walkable and bikeable communities by adopting complete streets policies. Complete streets are designed to be safe and accessible to all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete streets principles also can be integrated into a city's or town's comprehensive plan or articulated in bicycle and pedestrian master plans.

Developers can also be required or incentivized to facilitate access to walking and bicycling in their development plans. Cities and towns also can practice transit-oriented development (TOD) – development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood and located within a half-mile of public transportation.

As communities work to become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and create more “high-value” livable communities, there is a risk of displacing longtime residents (e.g., lower-income and older residents) because of the increase in rents and property taxes. Rising housing prices also make these livable communities unattainable for low- and moderate-income families.

Cities and towns can avoid displacement and ensure that residents of all incomes can benefit from a city's or town's economic growth by adopting policies to preserve and create affordable housing and by including an equity framework into comprehensive plans to provide guidance when city and town improvements affect vulnerable populations (e.g., lower-income, people with disabilities, the elderly).

Reduce costs by encouraging wellness at work

Promoting healthy eating and active living in the municipal workplace through programs, policies, and practices can result in a healthier workforce and provide economic benefits for a city or town government. A healthy workforce can reduce health care costs, lessen absenteeism, increase productivity, and reduce turnover.

According to a Health Policy Snapshot by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, employers studied saved an average of \$6 for every \$1 spent on wellness programs. These programs also reduced sick leave and costs associated with health plans, worker compensation, and disability by 25 percent.

The adoption of policies and practices that require that healthy food options be available at workplace meetings, that



A healthy workforce can reduce health care costs, lessen absenteeism, increase productivity, and reduce turnover.

make water free and accessible to employees, and that would require vending companies to offer healthier food options in municipal vending machines are examples of ways in which cities and towns can promote healthy eating in the workplace. Walking meetings, activity breaks during meetings, and educational campaigns that encourage employees to use the stairs are ways to encourage workers to be active during their work day.

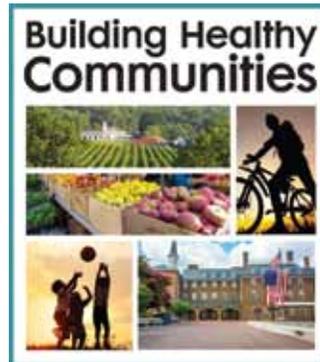
Conclusion

Policies and practices that make healthy eating and active living accessible for residents can boost economic development and growth in cities and towns. Cities and towns, as employers, can also save costs by creating a work environment that provides healthier food options and opportunities to be active.

Efforts to improve the health of a community can also affect the economy by attracting new business. Employers want to locate in livable communities where there is a healthy, productive workforce and where their employees' families can enjoy a good quality of life. Increasingly, they are recognizing the connection between workplace and community wellness efforts and their bottom line. 

About the author: *Susan DeFrancesco manages the HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign. Visit healcitiesmidatlantic.org or contact Susan at 240-252-2016.*

For more information



**VML Annual Conference
October 1-3, 2017**

Learn more about building healthy communities at VML's 2017 annual conference, October 1-3 in Williamsburg. Look for details in the August issue of *Virginia Town & City*.





Thank You, General Assembly!

Many Virginia localities and authorities are taking advantage of the Virginia Investment Pool (VIP) to manage their operating funds. VIP offers two professionally managed portfolios:

- VIP **Liquidity Pool**, structured the same as a stable net asset value money market fund for everyday cash management, and
- VIP **1-3 Year High Quality Bond Fund** for longer-term investments.

The "VIP bill," introduced this year by Senator Steve Newman and Delegate Kathy Byron, recognizes the important role of jointly administered investment pools such as VIP. The bill specifically names jointly administered pools as an allowable investment in the Virginia Code. On final passage, the legislation was approved by both the House and Senate *unanimously*.

Looking for a way to manage local funds that offers both high ratings and interest rates? For information, visit virginiainvestmentpool.org or contact VML/VACo Finance at info@valocalfinance.org or (804) 648-0635.



Standard & Poor's assigns an "AAAm" rating to the VIP Liquidity Pool
"AA1/S1" to the VIP High Quality Bond Fund

INTRODUCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 2105
Offered January 11, 2017
Prefiled January 10, 2017

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-4513.1 to the Code of Virginia; investment of funds in the Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund.
Patron—Byron
Referred to Committee on General Laws

1 17103326D
2
3
4
5

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-4513.1, relating to investment of funds in the Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund.
Patron—Newman
Referred to Committee on Finance

INTRODUCED

SENATE BILL NO. 1416
Offered January 11, 2017

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-4513.1, relating to investment of funds in the Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund.
Patron—Newman
Referred to Committee on Finance

6
7
8
9

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia: That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-4513.1 as follows: "2.2-4513.1. Investment of Funds in the Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund. (a) Any political subdivision may invest any portion of its funds in the Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund, a trust created by the Virginia Local Government Finance Corporation, provided that the investment is made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the trust agreement." (b) This section shall not apply to any political subdivision that is a member of the Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund.

Still comparing apples to oranges?

U.S. Communities delivers cooperative purchasing solutions that can't be matched.



You may think all cooperatives are the same or heard claims that others are just like U.S. Communities. The fact is there are advantages that are unique to U.S. Communities. What sets us apart is our priority to protect the interests of public agencies and our dedication to providing unmatched value through:

- **Commitment by all suppliers** to offer their lowest overall public agency pricing
- Contracts that are **solicited, awarded and updated** by a lead public agency—not the cooperative
- Quarterly performance reviews and annual, independent third-party audits to **ensure contract compliance and performance**

Stop comparing and experience the unmatched value of U.S. Communities.

Register today!

Visit us at www.uscommunities.org



U.S. COMMUNITIES™
GOVERNMENT PURCHASING ALLIANCE





Simple Installation, Sophisticated Performance.

With Spring City's X-Series Conversion Kits, switching to a high efficiency, high performance LED Luminaire has never been simpler. Unlike inferior retrofit products and bulbs, Spring City's Conversion Kit is a controls ready, sealed system where the luminaire is designed around the LED, utilizing the same technology found in our high performance Symphonic X-Series, and with six easy steps, only requires a simple ten-minute installation process.



Learn more about our innovative lighting solutions now by visiting **Spring City Electrical** online at www.springcity.com

MOSELEYARCHITECTS

SERVING VIRGINIA SINCE 1969

www.moseleyarchitects.com



Austin
Brockenbrough

ENGINEERING - CONSULTING

Civil | Mechanical | Electrical | Structural
Surveying | Subsurface Utilities | Architecture

www.brockenbrough.com

GKY
& Associates, Inc.

Stormwater
Engineering and
MS4 Compliance

www.gky.com



1hg.net

VRA VIRGINIA
RESOURCES
AUTHORITY
www.VirginiaResources.org

Want to reach the local government executive market?



Put "Virginia Town & City" to work for you.

Call Leslie Amason at (804) 523-8528 and ask about Professional Directory and display advertising.



Bow Creek Recreation Center, Virginia Beach

Serving Virginia's towns and cities since 1969

MOSELEYARCHITECTS

www.moseleyarchitects.com



Start a *metamorphosis*
of your own.



Join the growing number of Virginia communities using VHDA financing to bring about revitalization and affordable, quality housing. With our flexible new financing options, your plans for building a brighter future can begin to take flight. Contact VHDA's Director of Rental Housing Development, Dale Wittie at 804-343-5876 or Dale.Wittie@vhda.com.

 Follow VHDA's Blog: vhda.com/blog



Virginia Housing Development Authority | vhda.com/SuccessStories

