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About the cover

Virginia is poised to power up for the feature following adoption of legislation during the 2018 session of the General Assembly. Learn about the effects of this legislation, as well as approaches local governments are using to benefit from changes in the energy sector. Starts on page 14.

By L. Preston Bryant Jr.

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Why local governments face 'punishing' statewide solutions

EVERY YEAR THE General Assembly gets mad at one locality and pushes a “punishing” statewide solution affecting all localities. Why?

Who knew mulch would take so much time?

My favorite example is what I lovingly refer to as the “mulch bill” -- which we have now fought for three consecutive General Assembly Sessions. Who knew that mulch would be the bane of my existence at the General Assembly building? This all came about when the city of Harrisonburg adopted an ordinance regulating the placement of mulch near vinyl or wood siding buildings. A lot of student housing is constructed with vinyl siding. The scenario goes like this: a student drops a cigarette in the mulch, the vinyl siding catches fire and the fire spreads to the attic before a fire alarm is triggered. This is exceedingly dangerous because no one puts fire or smoke detectors on the outside of buildings.

Interest groups such as the Virginia Apartment Management Association do not want to bear the cost of replacing mulch. (The Harrisonburg ordinance requires an 18-inch separation between the mulch and vinyl siding.) These interest groups have repeatedly asked legislators from the Harrisonburg area to carry bills that take away the authority of all localities to regulate mulch. Losing a suit this year in circuit court to eliminate the ordinance convinced these interest groups to go to the General Assembly for “relief.” Fortunately for local government, Gov. Ralph Northam vetoed the legislation that would have stripped local authority to regulate this highly combustible material.

Or golf courses?

Another example was an attempt this year to force localities to assess privately-owned golf clubs as “open-space,” even if a locality had not passed an ordinance to set up such a tax-break program. Two golf courses in Arlington County were upset that their property assessments were higher than golf courses in neighboring jurisdictions, which do have open-space ordinances.

As in the case of the mulch bill, Gov. Northam vetoed the golf course bill, thereby upholding the constitutional authority of local governments to assess property. (For the curious minded, Arlington and the two golf courses

negotiated a settlement resolving the dispute. The vetoed legislation proved to be both unwise and unnecessary.)

So why does the General Assembly feel the need to impose statewide laws on issues like this? Is it because we are a Dillon rule state – where localities can only do what the General Assembly allows them to do? Is it because they like wielding their power? Or is it because they lose perspective on the impact legislation can have statewide?

Getting angry at a jurisdiction and ignoring public safety issues in Harrisonburg or, in the case of the golf course bill, ignoring constitutional issues does not make sense. Introducing a bill can placate a special interest group, but does such action support good public policy? In both the Harrisonburg and Arlington situations, existing state law provided ample opportunities for the grieved interest groups to advocate their positions through their local council and board of supervisors, administrative appeals and negotiations, and court action.

VML does not want to infringe on any group's right to ask their favorite delegate or senator for help. It may be the easiest route to pursue, but it is difficult to say that it is a best management practice to use a powerful legislative sledgehammer to help a constituent without first thinking through and examining the consequences. And, we would hope that legislators instead would tell their constituents to have those local concerns addressed at the appropriate level – councils and boards of supervisors.

What do you think?

VML maintains that localities are unique and that land use decisions should be made at the local level. The General Assembly seems to continually “buy” into the argument that “big business” needs uniformity and more favorable pricing – i.e. the wireless bills. But, I don't think that the major wireless companies are going to pull out of Vienna or Virginia Beach because of their fees, or because they have reasonable zoning requirements. Neither are they likely to extend services in sparsely settled areas because of a lack of zoning requirements. Those are economic decisions driven in large part by the availability of customers.

As we wait for the targeted bills for next year, it is up to localities to continue to fight for issues that are important to you and to exhibit the qualities that the General Assembly can't ... which is to play in your own sandbox.



Hartgrove appointed as chief deputy tax Commissioner

Charles W. Hartgrove has been appointed chief deputy commissioner of the Virginia Department of Taxation according to a May 11 press release from Governor Ralph Northam. Hartgrove most recently served as the deputy



- Hartgrove -

city manager in Lynchburg. He also previously served as the town manager of Ashland, Middleburg, and Gate City.

Hartgrove has a bachelor's degree in government from the University of Virginia's College at Wise. He also received a master's degree and a post-baccalaureate graduate certificate in public management from Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute and University of Virginia's Senior Executive Institute.

Johnson named Loudoun County fire chief

Keith Johnson on May 9 was named chief of the Loudoun County Combined Fire & Rescue System. Johnson has been serving as acting chief of the system since February 2018, following the retirement of W. Keith Brower.



- Johnson -

Johnson began his service with Loudoun County in 2014 as assistant chief of operations, shortly after the formation of the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System. That system consists of nearly 700 full-time employees and about 900 administrative and operational volunteer personnel. In 2014 Loudoun County reorganized its independent volunteer fire and rescue organizations and its career staff to form one of the largest combined fire and rescue systems in the state. Before coming to Loudoun, Johnson was a long-time member of the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department.

Johnson has an associate degree in fire science administration from Northern Virginia Community College, a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Maryland University College, and a master's degree in security studies, homeland security, and defense from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Vogel recognized as risk manager of the year

Donna Vogel, the risk, benefit and wellness manager for the city of Suffolk, was named the 2018 Virginia Public Risk Manager of the Year by VAPRIMA at its conference in Roanoke this past April.



- Vogel -

Vogel began her tenure as risk, benefit and wellness manager for the City of Suffolk after working for the City of Norfolk for 27 years in various positions, including parks and recreation department manager, city wellness coordinator, and human resources manager. In her current position, she manages the risk management programs for

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the city of Suffolk, including all insurance coverage, absence management programs including occupational and non-occupational, employee benefits, and the city's wellness program.

She has a bachelor's degree in physical education and health from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania, and a master's degree in exercise science from Old Dominion University.

VAPRIMA is dedicated to the practice of risk management in the public sector.

Sisson announces retirement

Bob Sisson announced in May his retirement as Fairfax city manager, effective July 1. Sisson has served as city manager since 1991, and his tenure makes him one of the region's longest-serving local government administrators. Fairfax has consistently been ranked in the top 10 places to live in the country, and recognition for the city's livability, safety and services has grown steadily during his time as city manager.

Fairfax Mayor David Meyer announced that the mayor and city council would immediately begin a process to select a new city manager with the aid of an executive search consultant. A new city manager is expected to be in place during the fall.

McAndrews receives LGA award

Alexandria Assistant City Attorney **George A. McAndrews** has received the A. Robert Cherin Award for Outstanding Deputy or Assistant Local Government Attorney from the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia, Inc. (LGA). The award recognizes distinguished public service that reflects a personal commitment to the highest ethical and professional principles and enhances the image of local government attorneys in the Commonwealth. Alexandria City Attorney James L. Banks



- Sisson -



- McAndrews -

nominated McAndrews for the award and said that "George's professional demeanor and extensive legal preparation have earned him the respect of judges and defense attorneys."

McAndrews has served in the City Attorney's Office for more than 26 years. He represents numerous city departments, including community and human services. He is a graduate of both Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and Law School.

Finz announces retirements

Lovettsville Town Manager **Sam Finz** announced last month that he will retire effective July 6, due to personal and health-related reasons.



- Finz -

While Finz has only served as the manager for five months, he has worked with the town for the past 13 years, having served as the town planner and as a general consultant. He also has been its interim manager three different times. In 2005, Finz helped the town council hire its first town manager. Finz is credited with improving the town's financial standing.

Terry appointed as head of Cooper Center

Larry D. Terry has been appointed executive director of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia effective July 1.



- Terry -

He is currently the founding director of the Urban SERCH Institute, and assistant professor for the Master of Science in Public Leadership program at the University of North Texas in Dallas. Over the last four years, Terry has made it his mission to improve the lives of citizens in the Dallas region and in Texas by creating practical partnerships with elected officials, public servants and community leaders to address poverty and other community issues. Terry also served as the program coordinator for one of the nation's few

Master of Science in Public Leadership programs.

Terry has a doctorate in public affairs from the University of Texas at Dallas, a master's degree in public administration from San Diego State University, and an undergraduate degree in black studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Hampton city attorney retires

Vanessa T. Valdejuli is retiring in June as the Hampton City Attorney.



- Valdejuli -

Valdejuli began her career in private practice in 1987. In 1991, she joined the Virginia Beach City Attorney's Office and remained with that city until 2005, when she left to be a deputy in the Hampton City Attorney's Office. She specialized in economic development and real estate. Valdejuli left to join the Chesapeake City Attorney's office in September 2013 but returned to Hampton when she was appointed city attorney in February 2014. Hampton is currently seeking applicants for the city attorney position.

Haltom Named Prince George director of utilities

Prince George County Administrator Percy Ashcraft has announced the hiring of **Frank Haltom** as Director of Utilities & Engineering, effective May 1.



- Haltom -

Haltom, a certified professional engineer whose career began in 1996, most previously served as director of general services in Isle of Wight County, and director of facilities management for Williamsburg Landing, Inc., an assisted living facility in Williamsburg.

Haltom received his bachelor's degree from Virginia Military Institute.

Henry tapped as assistant county executive

Trevor Henry assumed the role of assistant county executive in Albemarle County last month. Henry will be directing, planning and organizing activities related to leading project and change management across the organization. Specifically, his management portfolio will include facilities and environmental services, parks and recreation, and information technology. Additionally, Henry will oversee the project management office, which will be expanded from an existing focus on implementation and execution of the Board of Supervisors' FY 17 – 19 strategic plan to include operations and technology.



- Henry -

Henry has worked in Albemarle since 2009, most recently serving as the director of the office of facilities and environmental services. He is a former qualified nuclear engineer and US Naval submarine officer. He has a bachelor's degree in physics from Susquehanna University and is a graduate of the Weldon Cooper Center's Leading, Educating, and Developing (LEAD) program.

Farr named director of Richmond's DPU

Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney announced at the end of April the appointment of **Calvin D. Farr Jr.** as the new director of the City of Richmond's Department of Public Utilities (DPU). Farr will assume his new position in late May.



- Farr -

Farr is a professional engineer and senior level project manager. He previously served as the assistant commissioner of the Atlanta, GA department of watershed management. He has an executive master's degree in public administration from the University of Maryland, a master's degree in environmental engineering from Johns Hopkins University, and a bachelor's

degree in civil engineering from Old Dominion University.

In his role as DPU director, Mr. Farr will oversee five utilities that include natural gas, water, wastewater, stormwater and electric street lighting.

Taylor recognized for service

The Blue Ridge Power Agency at the end of April recognized **Tim Taylor**, town manager in Richlands, for his 15 years of service as the president of the governing body of the agency. Taylor has served as a board member since the agency was founded in 1988, and he served as president from 2002 to 2017.

The agency is a non-profit corporation that pursues the most reliable and lowest cost wholesale electric power supplies to its members. Its members include the cities of Danville, Martinsville, Radford and Salem; the towns of Bedford and Richlands; Virginia Tech and the Central Virginia Electric Cooperative.

During Taylor's years as president, he led the agency through the replacement of long-term power supply contracts, created an atmosphere that fostered open and productive networking and discussion, and oversaw collaboration with other consumer-owned utilities and organizations.

Ervin selected as APCo steering committee chair

James Ervin, town manager in Rocky Mount, now serves as chair of the VML/VACO APCo Steering Committee. The committee represents the local government entities (public authorities) in the service area of Appalachian Power Company for the negotiation of contract terms and rates for buildings, street lights, and other facilities. In addition, the committee participates and monitors proceedings in the General Assembly, the State Corporation Commission and the Federal Regulatory Commission.



- Ervin -

The Steering Committee provides a voice for local governments and endeavor

ors to protect their best interests. Without this joint effort, each entity would be required to negotiate with APCo on its own behalf and independently seek the assistance of counsel and knowledgeable consultants.

Petersburg city assessor appointed

Brian E. Gardineer was appointed assessor in the city of Petersburg, effective May 21. Gardineer has more than 24 years of experience in the assessment profession, beginning as an assessor trainee in the city of Richmond and serving as the senior appraiser and land use supervisor in Henrico County. He also served as the deputy director of the division responsible for assessments in James City County. He was the city assessor in Hampton from 2008 until his appointment in Petersburg.



- Gardineer -

Gardineer is a past president of the Virginia Association of Assessing Officers and a past board member of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO). He teaches at the Virginia Department of Taxation's advanced assessments school and is an instructor with IAAO.

Gardineer is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and of the college's Mason School of Business.

Wodicka appointed Lynchburg deputy manager



- Wodicka -

Lynchburg City Manager Bonnie Svrcek announced May 21 that **Reid Wodicka** has been appointed deputy city manager, effective June 13. Wodicka currently is the deputy county administrator in Bedford County, having served in that position since 2016.

In addition to his position with Bedford County, he has served as town manager in Elkton and Woodstock.

Wodicka is a graduate of E. C. Glass High School in Lynchburg. He has a bachelor's and master's degree in public

People

policy and public administration from James Madison University, and a doctorate in public policy from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Lane tapped as state school superintendent

Governor Ralph Northam announced on May 24 that he has appointed **Dr. James Lane** as



Virginia's next State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Lane will assume the position on June 1.

Dr. James Lane has served as a superintendent in three Virginia school divisions: Chesterfield County, Goochland County and Middlesex County. He was an assistant principal, middle school principal and assistant superintendent in Virginia and North Carolina. He started as a band teacher in North Carolina in 2001.

Lane has a doctorate degree in education from the University of Virginia and has two master's degrees, one from North Carolina State University and one from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he also earned his bachelor's degree. While

superintendent in Chesterfield County, he also was an adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, James Madison University and the University of Richmond.

Sullivan appointed as interim Abingdon manager

Abingdon Police Chief **Tony Sullivan** was appointed interim town manager



by the council, effective May 8. Sullivan has over twenty-eight years of law enforcement experience and has served as police chief in Abingdon since 2002.

Sullivan has a bachelor's degree from Old Dominion University, and a graduate certificate in local government management from Virginia Tech.

Sullivan will turn over day-to-day operations of the police department to Lieutenant Jon Holbrook. Lieutenant Holbrook, a graduate of Virginia Tech, has a graduate certificate from Virginia Tech in local government, and has been with the Abingdon Police Department for 14 years.

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 Manuel Timbreza at mtimbreza@vml.org.

Greg Kelly, the previous town manager, resigned the position effective May 7.

In memoriam

John G. Cartwright, who served as city manager in Manassas from 1986 to 1999, passed away in his hometown of Traverse City, MI. When John Cartwright arrived in Manassas in 1986, it was the fastest growing city in the commonwealth. With this growth came new government challenges in which Cartwright accepted and thrived. In 1999, after managing cities for more than 40 years in five states, Cartwright and his wife C.J. retired back to Traverse City, Michigan to their dream house on Long Lake.

Calendar

Save the dates!

Learn about these opportunities and more at www.vml.org/events-list.

June 20-22: 2018 VLGMA Summer Conference

July 19: VML Policy Committees

July 19-20: VML Institute for Local Officials

Sept. 16-18: VBCOA 89th Annual School and Conference

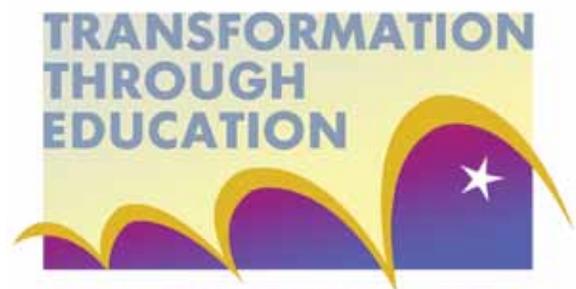
Sept. 29-30: Virginia Mayors Institute

Sept. 30 - Oct. 2: VML Annual Conference



Virginia Mayors Institute

September 29 - 30, 2018 • Hampton



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Charlottesville police officer starts Pedal Power program



DAILY PROGRESS

AFTER NOTICING CHILDREN riding unsafe bicycles, Charlottesville Police Officer Lynn Childers took matters into her own hands. According to an article in the *Daily Progress*, Childers now goes weekly to ride bikes with the children in the neighborhood, thus developing a relationship between community members and the police.

Childers is quoted as saying that “We want these kids to know that cops are also nice people, and not all the bad things they might hear about in the news.”

The program has earned the attention of others, such as the city council and the Charlottesville Policy foundation. Both groups have donated bicycles that will be given to children.

The article can be seen at <https://bit.ly/2rCJ4UQ>

Charlottesville police Officer Lynn Childers (right) fixes a bike during a recent bike festival at Christ Community Church.

Petersburg Works launched in May

THE CITY OF PETERSBURG has launched a workforce development program that has the purpose of connecting residents who are looking for work with area employers. The city’s unemployment rate of 7.1 percent drove the city to work on the development of the program. That unemployment rate is well above the state’s, which is 3.8 percent. Through this program, potential employees attend workshops on the development of skills that make good employees, regardless of the type of employer. Beyond that, however, Petersburg Works participants attend seminars that introduce them to businesses and companies. Finally, the program helps participants identify and learn how to handle and overcome issues such as substance abuse, a lack of child care, a criminal background and a suspended driver’s license.

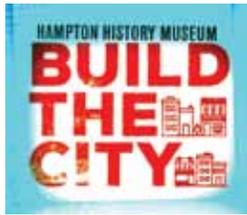


Several area employers, including Goodwill, Pathways and health-related businesses, are participating in the program. Residents who are at least 18 years old are eligible to participate. Dametta Tyrus, deputy city manager for Petersburg, is coordinating it.



'Build the City' day held in Hampton

THE HAMPTON HISTORY Museum held a Build the City day on May 19 in the city's Carousel Park. The event engaged children and adults, inspired by photos of the Hampton buildings, to construct a large-scale model of Hampton, using boxes, other recyclables, construction paper, chalk, and paint. As part of the effort to encourage budding architects and engineers, thousands of LEGOs were on hand to create buildings and other structures.



Roanoke region designated as IMBA Silver-Level Ride Center™

VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE region has been awarded a Silver-Level Ride Center designation by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), elevating the region to a whole new level as a mountain biking destination. IMBA Executive Director David Wiens made a special trip from Colorado to officially announce the Ride Center™ designation.

The IMBA's website notes that "Virginia's Blue Ridge is centered around the 'Star City' of Roanoke, bordered on all sides by forested public lands, scenic parkways, and municipal parks. There seem to be singletrack trails wiggling through every plot of public land, in addition to major attractions like the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway. Mill Mountain features fast, fun trails that crisscross what is considered the big backyard for local mountain bikers. Carvin's Cove, a lake encircled by almost 13,000 acres of forest, offers a network of singletrack that delivers great riding for every ability level. Venture into George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and the trails turn rugged and rocky. Services are abundant, and the locals point out there are 'too many breweries to list.'"

There are only fifteen Silver-Level Ride Centers in the world and the Blue Ridge region is the only Silver-Level Ride Center on the East Coast.

Harrisonburg and Richmond are both Bronze-Level Ride Centers.

More information on IMBA is posted at <https://www.imba.com/>.

How should Arlington grow?

IN JUNE, the Arlington County Board held a series of Big Idea Roundtables that focused on "big picture" conversations about the future of the county, according to a May 11 news release. Participants had the opportunity to learn from one another, identify differences, and find common ground.

The five roundtables were held in conjunction with the county's citizen committees in locations across the county. According to the press release, Arlington Board Chair Katie Cristol said "These roundtables, framed around some critical issues, are open-ended and not limited to any one issue, policy or site proposal. Our goal is to create a space for and spark a conversation among civic leaders and residents of all backgrounds about their hopes for our County's future as we grow and change. We look forward to lively conversations about diversity, density, affordability, traffic and beyond."



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Arlington's park system ranked among nation's best

THE PUBLIC PARK SYSTEM in Arlington County ranks near the top of the nation's 100 largest cities, according to the Trust for Public Land's ParkScore® index. Arlington ranked fourth in the nation, with Washington, D.C. ranking third, and Saint Paul and Minneapolis ranking second and first, respectively.

This year, ParkScore® rankings are based equally on four factors:

- Park Access – 98 percent of Arlington residents can walk to a park in 10 minutes or less compared to national average of 70 percent;
- Park Acreage – 11 percent of Arlington is reserved for parks;
- Park Investment – Arlington spends \$239.74 per resident on parks; and
- Park Amenities – which counts the availability of six park features: basketball hoops, off-leash dog parks, playgrounds, spraygrounds and other water play structures, recreation and senior centers, and restrooms.

Arlington was also recently notified that it is a finalist for in its population category (population 150,001–



400,000) for the National Gold Medal Award. This award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management and innovative approaches to delivering superb park and recreation services with fiscally sound business practices. The award is presented by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association. The grand award winner will be announced this September.

Read more on Arlington's ranking and the ParkScore® at <https://bit.ly/2koUjw4>. Additional information on the National Gold Medal Award is available at <https://www.nrpa.org/goldmedal>.

Woodstock, Shenandoah promote Little Libraries

THE TOWN OF WOODSTOCK and Shenandoah County Public Schools have joined forces to open seven Little Libraries, complete with children's books, according to an article in the *Northern Virginia Daily*. The project was the brainchild of reading specialists from W.W. Robinson School, a Shenandoah County elementary school located in Woodstock.

The Little Libraries are located near apartment complexes. The goal is to keep children reading through the summer months, because research has shown the educational value of reading outside of the school day. The newspaper article said that six libraries were funded by a grant, and that the town donated \$400 to pay for the seventh.

Read the entire article at <https://bit.ly/2J9NjBl>.



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Police patch draws admirers from near and far

A POLICE PATCH DESIGNED by Tony Baker, the police chief in Pound, has attracted comments from elected officials, law enforcement and museums from all over the world. The patch is also worn by the auxiliary police and the youth Explorer Post/Club 704.

The patch is full of symbolism and shows its ties to community, county, state and country.

The top portion of the patch signifies the town of Pound, the oldest town in Wise County, and contains the Commonwealth seal.

The middle shows a mural commissioned by the Historical Society of the Pound located on a railroad trestle off US Route 23 in Pound. Shown on the mural are:

- A train representing the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railroad. From 1948 through the 1950s, the railroad hauled coal from Meade Mine through the Pine Mountain Tunnel into Jenkins KY. The mine was owned by Clinchfield Coal Company.
- Francis Gary Powers: U-2 pilot, shot down over Russia on May 1, 1960. He was found guilty of espionage by the USSR and spent time in a Soviet prison. He was freed Feb. 10, 1962, in exchange for a Soviet spy. Powers was born in Jenkins, which is across the state border, and moved to Pound as a child.

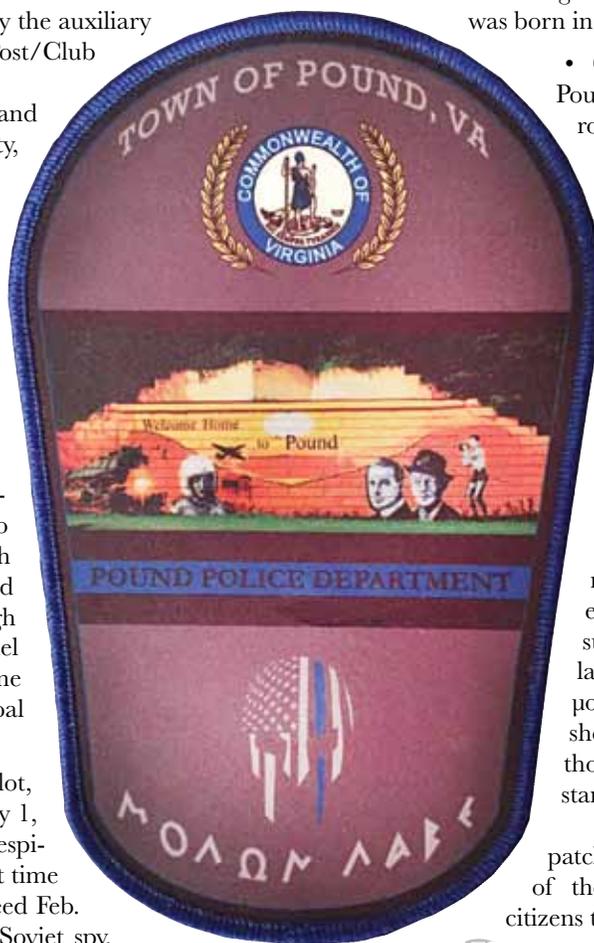
- Napoleon Hill: American author, best known for the book *Think and Grow Rich*. He was one of the earliest producers of the modern genre of personal success literature. He was born in a one-room cabin near Pound.

- Chant Kelly: Founding father of the Pound. He was instrumental in getting roads, electricity and telephone service to his hometown.

- Glenn Roberts: Born in Pound, his high school basketball team won the state championship in 1930 and 1931. He played basketball for Emory & Henry and was among the first players to put the “jump shot” to practical use.

The lower section of the patch shows the Thin Blue Line, a symbol used by law enforcement to commemorate fallen officers and to commemorate the role of law enforcement as protectors against criminal elements, and a helmet, displaying support for the US, the military and law enforcement. The Greek words $\mu\omicron\lambda\omega\upsilon\upsilon\lambda\alpha\beta\acute{\epsilon}$ at the bottom of the patch show that the police officers will not fear those who would harm them but will stand and defend their community.

Finally, the thin blue line around the patch shows the dedication and devotion of the town’s police department to the citizens that it has sworn to serve and protect.



VTC

I was born and raised in Pound and have had the honor to serve as the Chief of Police in my hometown. I wanted to develop a patch that honored those things I was taught to respect and admire in life and to include some of our notable historical heritage. I have had requests for the patch from all over the globe including Australia and a Canadian police museum. I never thought it would be this big and I am very humble that Pound can and has been represented well with this patch design.

Tony Baker, Pound Police Chief

That patch says so much about our Town and our Police Department. I want everyone to know that Tony and the PPD put the same kind of effort and pride into their job of safety and protection of our community as they did in designing that outstanding patch. They wear it proudly and we are just as proud that the men of the PPD have chosen to wear it.

**George Dean, Pound Mayor/
Interim Town Manager**

10 years of Go Green Virginia

Still going strong

JAY FISETTE, WHO WAS THEN the chair of the Arlington County Board, was sworn in as president of VML at the 2007 VML annual conference in James City County. In his remarks as the new president, Fissette challenged local governments to focus on energy conservation and environmental protection. He said that “Through ‘Go Green Virginia’ we [VML] will recognize communities that take innovative steps to reduce energy usage and promote sustainability.”

Just three short months later the Go Green Virginia program was launched.

That first challenge had 11 categories and 30 action items. Localities had to earn 100 points to be certified as a green government, and three top jurisdictions based on population categories would receive special recognition. At the October 2008 conference in Norfolk, 26 localities were certified. The city of Williamsburg received special recognition for localities with populations of 15,000 and under. The city of Charlottesville was recognized for the top jurisdiction in localities with populations between 15,001 and 90,000, and the city of Roanoke and Loudoun County tied for the top jurisdictions in localities with populations above 90,000.

During the next 10 years, the challenge changed and so did the awards. The population categories were dropped, and more action items and categories were added. In addition, localities could be certified or could earn even more points and earn a silver, gold or platinum designation. The Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia School Boards Association joined in the effort as well.

Throughout this time, the end purpose has remained the same: Encourage implementation of specific environmental policies and practical actions that reduce the carbon footprint generated by both the local government and the broader community.

The Go Green Virginia Challenge is guided by an advisory committee which has given invaluable suggestions over the years. We asked the past and current chairs of the advisory committee to discuss the Go Green program. Here’s what they had to say:



Jay Fissette, Creator of Go Green Virginia, VML President from 2007-2008, Former Chair of the Go Green Advisory Committee and Former Member and Chair of the Arlington County Board.

VTC: What inspired you to start Go Green?

Fissette: I believe that a key responsibility of local elected leaders is to make decisions that enhance the long-term sustainability and quality of life of our communities. This is not always easy when faced with short-term politics and costs. Go Green Virginia



was a program that could reach every corner of the Commonwealth to help educate, engage and incentivize local leaders to make good environmental policy choices.

Interested in the Go Green Challenge?
Go to www.gogreenva.org.
Entries are due by **September 3, 2018.**

VTC: What obstacles did you overcome in keeping the program going?

Fissette: The staff and advisory committee were amazing in getting the first Go Green Challenge underway. They worked at breakneck speed to design the challenge, create a logo and materials, and get the website up and running in just 3 months! The VML member reps made a true commitment to the program, and many remained as active advisory committee members for years. The staff remained committed, too. And together they continue to refresh the Go Green Challenge and the recognition and reward component of the program. I was proud that we recognized the different capacities of the various VML member jurisdictions. Nothing made me happier than to see the smaller towns and cities (like Dayton’s Green Team!) take their first steps and be acknowledged for their efforts.

VTC: What is your single biggest accomplishment or biggest benefit of the program during your tenure as chair?

Fissette: The fact that Go Green Virginia continues to be a vibrant program of VML and VACO is incredibly gratifying. I know that several other states developed similar programs modeled on ours. Creating sustainable, healthy communities is not a one-shot exercise. It is incremental and takes a sustained effort and commitment. VML has clearly made this commitment.

VTC: What things you would change?

Fissette: Nothing!



Bob Lazaro, Former Chair of the Go Green Advisory Committee, Former Mayor of Purcellville, Current Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

VTC: What obstacles did you overcome in keeping the program going?

Lazaro: I did not find any obstacles in keeping the program going. Jay Fisetta had done such a great job

launching the program along with the VML staff and other parties that taking the leadership on the project was seamless. There is a great deal of interest in our local governments not only to protect the environment, but to bring value to our residents and businesses at the same time. I believe the Go Green program in many respects was the catalyst to a number of statewide initiatives that has led to a boom in energy efficiency and solar in the Commonwealth.

VTC: What is your single biggest accomplishment or biggest benefit of the program during your tenure as chair?

Lazaro: The biggest benefit of the program has been that it proved to those who may have been skeptical that undertaking “green” activities can also help save money at the same time. Purcellville had at the one time the largest pilot LED street light projects in Virginia. Today we are seeing LED lighting providing significant energy and budgetary savings across the Commonwealth and more to come in the upcoming years. Further, the Go Green program brought a healthy sense of competition to our local governments in meeting the challenge and how even a smaller locality could compete with a larger one.

VTC: What things you would change?

Lazaro: I think the program in its current form works and would not suggest any changes at this time.

VTC: And please add any other comments that you have.

Lazaro: It was an honor for me to be on the ground floor of the launch of this program and to be able to work with Jay, the VML staff and the many other elected leaders around Virginia to have made such a positive contribution to our local governments. It was outstanding to demonstrate to our citizens that no matter the size of their local government we all could make a positive difference in our communities, protect the environment and save money. I applaud VML for its commitment to this program and for a demonstrated ten-year record of success.



Christina Luman-Bailey, Current Chair of the Go Green Advisory Committee, Councilor and Former Mayor of the City of Hopewell, and at-large member of VML’s Executive Committee.

VTC: What observations do you have on the Go Green program?

Luman-Bailey: In a way, it is hard to believe that it has been ten years since we launched the program. As Jay mentioned, the first

few months of planning were intense and full of face-to-face as well as conference call meetings; the longevity and uniqueness of our program prove beyond a doubt that it was time

well spent. Now, after years of faithful support from the Go Green Committee and VML and VACO staff, the Go Green Challenge has adapted and expanded, and we look forward to the next ten years of encouraging and recognizing responsible stewardship of our environment and natural resources among our Virginia localities.

VTC: What obstacles did you overcome in keeping the program going?

Luman-Bailey: Bob and Jay had done a great job paving the way for the Go Green Virginia Advisory Committee. Some of the advisory committee members have been on it since its inception and really know the ropes. They are a knowledgeable and committed group of individuals who are willing to spend a lot of time volunteering to improve the program. In the last three to four years, we have added more community-based items, water items and resiliency-related items -- thereby making the challenge more relevant as well as more applicable to a broader scope of localities.

The biggest obstacle overall, however, has been making sure that all our members, regardless of size or geographic location, know about and participate in the program. The salient part of Go Green Virginia is that you don’t have to be a “greenie” to benefit from the program. Jurisdictions of any size can realize the benefits of saving money as the result of taking energy-efficient steps. Overall, we have to keep the challenge interesting for “experienced” localities while increasing its “doability” and expanding the footprint of participating localities.

VTC: What do you see for the future of Go Green Virginia?

Luman-Bailey: The core mission of Go Green hasn’t changed, and neither has its importance! In fact, it may be more important than ever because local governments are in the position of having to make do for themselves. There are a couple of things that I would hope will be emphasized in the upcoming year. First, we need to figure out how to make sure that our smaller localities are participating and that local governments from every corner of the Commonwealth are participating. So, I hope we will build on our communications efforts. Second, several local governments clearly are “superstars” and especially deserve recognition because of the dedication they have shown to reducing their carbon footprints. We need to figure out some way to highlight those efforts, and make sure that those local governments are properly recognized for their efforts. I also hope that we will continue to emphasize the innovative efforts by localities so that communities can share creative, low- or no-cost practices. 

About the superstars: *Since the start of the program, every year these localities have been certified: Alexandria, Charlottesville, Newport News, Arlington County and James City County. And, others have been certified in all but one year, including the cities of Lynchburg, Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach and the towns of Blacksburg, Purcellville, and Vienna.*

About the advisory committee: *The contributions of the chairs cannot be overstated. But they didn’t do all the work by themselves! An advisory group of experts from local government and the public and non-profit sector have been an integral part of the Go Green Virginia program from the beginning. The members of the 2018 advisory committee worked diligently on this year’s challenge, and VML appreciates all their efforts.*



Powering up for the future

Energy bill creates new investments in the grid, renewables, and energy efficiency. Consumer credits, too.

A series of reports by L. Preston Bryant Jr.

VIRGINIA'S ENERGY GRID will get stronger and more resilient to outages and storms and more secure against cyberattacks. A lot more utility-scale and rooftop solar is on the way. Maybe more wind power, too. And a ton of money will be invested in energy efficiency programs. All of this is to happen over the next decade. And, to boot, electricity consumers are to be returned a lot of money this year and next.

Such provisions are part of the Grid Transformation and Security Act, passed by the 2018 General Assembly. It is perhaps the most

comprehensive energy legislation to be enacted in Virginia in many years. But it wasn't without controversy.

Senate Bill 966, sponsored by Sen. Frank Wagner (R-Virginia Beach), revisited a 2015 law that stopped the State Corporation Commission's biennial review of utility rates and effectively froze for up to five years Dominion Energy Virginia's and Appalachian Power Company's rates. This move allowed the utilities to keep hundreds of millions annually in excessive earnings as the companies prepared for expected high costs from the then-proposed federal Clean Power Plan (CPP), an Obama initiative to reduce by one-third carbon emissions from power plants by imposing significant new restrictions.

But when the Trump administration last year scrapped the CPP, some legislators questioned the need for the utilities to retain the excessive profits that were to help pay for the power plants' hefty new pollution-reduction improvements. Such annual "overearnings" normally would be required by the SCC to be returned to consumers, at least in part. A great debate ensued.

Instead of wholly undoing the 2015 "keep-all-the-profits" law, this year's legislation allows the major utilities to keep some of the overearnings for new infrastructure, security, renewables, and energy efficiency investments; it also requires some consumer credits and rate reductions. The SCC also had some of its utility rate oversight restored. (In the sometimes-contentious debate, some legislators wanted simply to revert to the pre-2015 laws that required biennial rate, earnings, and profit reviews as well as infrastructure investment reviews and approvals by the SCC.)

The bill eventually enacted garnered support from an array of business and environmental interests, including Dominion and Appalachian Power, the Virginia Manufacturers Association, Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Energy Efficiency Council, League of Conservation Voters, and Natural Resources Defense Council.

Energy

Gov. Ralph Northam signed the Grid Transformation and Security Act into law on March 9. It becomes effective on July 1, 2018.

Here's a breakdown of the legislation.

Required investments by Dominion and APCO

- **Grid Modernization** – Major new investments will be required by Dominion and APCO to modernize the electricity distribution grid, making it more resistant to storm outages and cyberattacks and more accommodating to renewable energy. The utilities will propose grid-strengthening, security, and reliability projects, which will be subject to SCC review. Projects may include advanced metering, intelligent grid devices, communications networks for service meters, improved circuits, energy storage systems and microgrids, infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging systems, and LED street light conversions, to name a few.
- **Solar and Wind** – Authorized is 5,000 megawatts (MW) of solar and onshore wind – ten times current law – for utility-owned and -operated generation, including 50 MW of rooftop solar. Also authorized is 16 MW of offshore wind power. All is deemed to be “in the public interest,” a General Assembly declaration (primarily directed at the SCC) that the renewables megawatt targets, as a matter of law, meet cost-effectiveness and other alternatives tests.
- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation** – Dominion is required to invest at least \$870 million and APCO at least \$140 million by 2028 in energy conservation measures.
- **Energy Assistance and Weatherization** – Dominion and APCO must continue investing in energy assistance and weatherization programs for low-income, elderly, and disabled individuals.

Consumer protections and relief

- **State Corporation Commission Oversight** – The SCC will review the utilities' base rates, terms, and conditions every three years. Rate adjustments and credits may be made, if warranted, taking into consideration utilities' costs for other required investments and improvements for grid modernization, renewables, and energy efficiency.
- **Consumer Credits and Rate Relief** – Dominion must give its customers “voluntary bill credits” of \$133 million in 2018 and \$67 million in 2019. Additionally, Dominion must reduce rates by \$125 million and APCO by \$50 million in 2018 to account for savings from recently passed federal tax cuts.

Of special interest to local government

- **New Solar Projects** – Among the biggest impacts to local governments is the 5,000 MW of additional solar and wind that's been declared in the public interest. Utility-scale solar farms, which can take up hundreds of acres of land, will mostly be drawn to rural localities with plentiful open space, though all such mega projects will be subject to local land-use approval processes. Suburban and urban localities will continue seeing growth in rooftop solar.
- **Potential Assistance for Broadband to Underserved Areas** – Dominion and APCO are required to conduct a feasibility study for using its transmission and distribution infrastructure to provide broadband Internet services to underserved areas.
- **Energy Efficiency Investments / Stakeholder Groups** – Dominion and APCO must establish individual energy-efficiency stakeholder groups regarding the approximately \$1 billion to be invested in conservation measures. Local governments should have representation.
- **Reports on Economic Development Assistance to Localities** – Dominion and APCO are required to report to the Governor, General Assembly, and SCC on their respective economic development activities and assistance to localities, including on economic rate incentives, site development, and marketing. 

L. Preston Bryant Jr.



About the author: L. Preston Bryant Jr., is a senior vice president at McGuireWoods Consulting, where he works in the firm's infrastructure and economic development group. His experience lies in water, wastewater, and energy generation projects, and he advises clients on project site selection and regulatory affairs. He served on Lynchburg City Council and represented the city of Lynchburg and Amherst County in the Virginia House of Delegates for 10 years. He also served as Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources from 2006-2010, where he led the state's six environmental, recreational, wildlife, and historic resources agencies. In that role, he also helped write Virginia's first-ever statewide energy plan. Mr. Bryant is a VML consultant on environmental and energy issues.

Quick facts about Virginia energy

Energy use in Virginia

- 34% from petroleum
- 20% from electricity generated outside Virginia
- 18% from natural gas
- 13% from nuclear-based electricity generation
- 9% from coal
- 6% from hydroelectric, biomass, solar, other renewables

Energy generated in Virginia

- 36% from nuclear
- 30% from natural gas
- 29% from coal
- 4.5% from renewables
- 1% from hydroelectric
- 0.2% from petroleum

Transportation sector is the largest user of energy in Virginia; residential and commercial use about equal amounts of energy; industry uses slightly less

Virginia's energy consumption is 2.5 times greater than the state's energy production

Virginia imports from other states about 55% of total energy used

Virginia energy infrastructure

- 115 power plants fueled by coal, nuclear, natural gas, oil, and/or biomass
- 60,000 miles of electric transmission lines; 6,000 substations
- 3,000 miles of natural gas transmission pipelines; 3,200 miles of natural gas gathering pipelines; 20,000 miles of natural gas distribution pipelines

Virginia has more than 60 active coal mines. They produce about 4% of coal east of the Mississippi and about 2% of the nation's total coal.

About 80% of Virginia coal is exported to other states and countries

Sources: Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy; Virginia Energy Plan; U.S. Energy Information Agency; Virginia State Energy Profile.



Solar power is seeing dramatic growth in Virginia

Solar capacity could triple in next five years

VIRGINIA HAS SEEN unprecedented growth in solar capacity over the past few years, and it's not slowing down.

The boom was kicked off in 2015 when Amazon announced plans to use renewable energy for all its infrastructure, especially its power-hungry Northern Virginia data centers. The giant online retailer signed on to buy all energy generated from an 80 megawatt (MW) solar farm in Accomack County. The project was constructed in 2016.

Virginia has 620 MW of installed solar capacity – enough solar energy to power 63,000 homes.

Not to be outdone, Microsoft recently announced plans to purchase 60% of the energy to be produced from a planned 500 MW solar farm in Spotsylvania County. The facility, which has not yet been approved by the county, would be largest solar farm in Virginia.

Currently, Virginia has some 620 MW of installed solar capacity. That's nearly one-fifth of the state's nuclear power production. That's enough solar energy to power 63,000 homes, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).

In 2017, nearly \$440 million was invested to develop 380

MW of new solar capacity, up nearly 200% from the previous year. That ranked Virginia 10th in the nation, according to SEIA. Dominion Energy Virginia alone accounted for more than half of last year's new solar generation.

Virginia also saw in 2017 more than 300 new solar jobs added, a 10% increase from the previous year. The state's solar industry now employs more than 3,500 skilled workers – developers, engineers, installers, electricians, and others.

This year, it's anticipated that nearly 400 MW of additional solar capacity may be installed – and nearly 1,800 MW over the next five years, tripling current capacity. Within the coming decade, Virginia will produce more power from sunlight than from its four nuclear reactors.

The Department of Environmental Quality has been notified by solar developers of more than 75 proposed utility-scale projects across the state, with more than a dozen having already received environmental permits. It is unlikely, however, that all projects on DEQ's notification list will be constructed. 

L. Preston Bryant Jr.

Community energy planning

LOCALITIES ACROSS VIRGINIA are undertaking community-based energy and sustainability plans much the way they prepare transportation, housing, land use, and utility plans. Such planning is often driven as much by necessity, given the growth of the energy line item in local governments' budgets, as by citizens who are increasingly concerned about energy security and sustainability.

Community energy plans are often broad initiatives to package energy efficiency and conservation, more diversified energy production, and better integrated land-use and transportation planning. A plan's nitty-gritty may delve into specific strategies to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, make municipal fleets greener, develop more efficient building codes, increase solar photovoltaic and solar thermal uses, undertake water reuse, and more effectively incorporate public transit and mixed-use planning strategies.

Across the Commonwealth, local governments are implementing energy plans.

The city of Roanoke integrated a five-year climate action plan with its comprehensive plan. The city's goals are simple: reduce energy and carbon emissions in both municipal operations (buildings, lighting, and vehicles) and the community at large (land use, transportation).

The City of Roanoke committed to ICLEI in 2007 and started to plan a path to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the municipal operations. Roanoke had about thirty core buildings; most of them were older and

had antiquated mechanical systems. The budget for retrofit projects was tight and there was a long list of projects. This prompted Roanoke to think outside the box and so the facilities management decided to invest in the staff and created a team of specialists with advanced plumbing, electrical and mechanical skills. This "Energy Team" began with a comprehensive

internal audit of the equipment, the condition, and the repairs that were needed. From that information an Operations & Maintenance Plan was developed for the staff to implement and maintain. In addition, a Capital Improvement Plan was written. It outlined projects by priority and Return On Investment so that energy savings would be calculated into the decision making. This strategy has been hugely successful and it largely responsible for the 25% energy reduction the city has achieved and the millions of dollars the city has saved over the last ten years.

Nell Boyle, Roanoke Sustainability & Outreach Coordinator

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission embarked upon a years-long initiative to assist localities who wanted to create community energy plans. The city of Alexandria and Arlington and Loudoun counties created broad-based plans, each rooted in facilitated community input over many months.

"Eco-City Alexandria" focuses on green buildings, energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy, alternative transportation, and green vehicles.



Alexandria's Environmental Action Plan, a blueprint for creating a thriving, sustainable community, is advancing the city's "Eco-City Alexandria" sustainability strategy. This strategy includes a focus on green buildings, energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy, and alternative transportation. These initiatives seek to achieve an environmentally, economically, and socially healthy Alexandria. Major achievements include declines in per capita water usage and greenhouse gas emissions and 100% of new development committing to green building policy.

Craig T. Fifer, Alexandria Director of Communications & Public Information

Arlington's community energy plan is now an official element of its comprehensive plan and targets greener buildings, more renewable energy sources, and more efficient transportation planning to better achieve economic competitiveness, energy security, and environmental sensitivity.

Fast-growing Loudoun County's 30-year energy strategy recognizes that energy costs will continue rising and seeks to mitigate the costs by pushing for more efficiently built new homes and buildings, relying more on lower-cost natural gas and renewable energy production, and better tying together land-use and transportation planning. Loudoun anticipates meeting its growing population's energy demands with less energy.

The key to successfully developed community energy plans is broad stakeholder engagement. In almost every case, localities assemble community energy task forces, which are often facilitated and whose work usually leads to a consensus-based plan. 

L. Preston Bryant Jr.

Property Assessed Clean Energy

How localities can use Virginia's PACE Law

IN 2015, VIRGINIA JOINED 30 other states in allowing localities to partner with private-sector lenders to assist in financing energy-efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation programs for privately-owned buildings.

The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) law allows localities to establish by ordinance a PACE loan program for energy and water improvement projects. The Virginia law only applies to commercial, non-profit, and certain multi-family properties (5 or more units), not to single-family homes or condos. It's permissive, and there are no state mandates.

PACE may benefit localities by helping commercial property owners with critical capital investments – insulation, solar panels, lighting, windows, roofing, HVAC systems, boilers, and more – which can improve older structures and their property values, thus boosting tax revenue. The improved properties also may help with business and tenant retention.

Loans are through private lenders and can cover up to 100% of project costs, usually with a 20-year repayment. The loans are secured by a “voluntary special assessment” on the property tax bill. The locality will send an assessment, collect the payment, and pay the PACE lender – the same process undertaken for other special assessments.

Localities can hire a third-party PACE administrator to manage the program, including marketing and project generation. Administrator costs can be built into the program so that localities don't incur PACE-related overhead expenses.

In 2017, the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council received a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to establish the Mid-Atlantic PACE Alliance to promote PACE in

Virginia, Maryland, and DC to localities, lenders, and borrowers. The Alliance hopes to generate \$80 million in PACE loans over three years.

Arlington County adopted Virginia's first commercial PACE ordinance in 2017, has established a program, and has hired a third-party administrator. Other localities are studying PACE, including the cities of Alexandria, Fredericksburg, and Richmond and Albemarle, Loudoun, Fairfax, and Stafford counties.

Arlington's Commercial PACE program reflects the economic competitiveness, energy security, and environmental commitment goals shared by the community and county. Eligible property types include office, retail, multifamily, hotel, industrial, non-profit, and healthcare. The program is an attractive option for building owners to finance needed improvements to their property or upgrade existing buildings with new, energy-efficient equipment. For developers constructing new buildings, C-PACE provides a major financial incentive to design buildings above the current energy code, which leads to significant cost savings.

**Rich Dooley, Arlington County
Community Energy Coordinator**

For more information, see the Mid-Atlantic PACE Alliance at PACEalliance.org and PACEnation at PACEnation.us. 

L. Preston Bryant Jr.

ESCOs and EPC: Saving Energy, Saving Money

LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS have benefited for many years from partnering with private-sector energy service companies (ESCOs) to identify and implement energy-saving strategies in buildings and utilities. These partnerships are procured and developed through energy performance contracting (EPC).

Local governments have often engaged in energy performance-based contracting in schools, office buildings, courthouses, and water and wastewater utilities. The state has used ESCOs for energy savings at all Virginia community colleges, many four-year colleges and universities, the Department of Motor Vehicles central office, and even the Patrick Henry Building, which houses the governor's office. Public bodies have saved hundreds of millions in avoided energy and water costs.

At the heart of performance-based contracting is the ESCO identifying – and guaranteeing – certain energy savings in targeted buildings over a period of years. The building owner often will have to make certain equipment or infrastructure improvements. Payment to the ESCO depends on meeting the energy-saving goals.

The key to success is building owners making sure that all-in costs – equipment replacements, energy costs paid during

and after the contract term, and debt service – are met by the energy savings realized. Many ESCOs also are able to provide project financing options.

Local governments are often able to use energy savings to fund the capital equipment needs of the targeted energy-savings projects or to fund other initiatives.

The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy is available to provide technical assistance to localities engaging ESCOs. Since 2001, DMME has assisted state agencies and local governments on more than \$860 million in energy performance contracts.

DMME also maintains a list of nearly 20 ESCOs that have been pre-qualified and procured for state agencies EPC work. Local governments can procure ESCOs from the state contract or on their own. Additionally, Virginia has a specific energy performance-based contracting procurement statute, which is separate from the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

For additional information on how DMME can assist local governments with energy performance-based contracting, contact DMME at (804) 840-1689. 

L. Preston Bryant Jr.

Public power is hometown power



Turning on a light ... turning on the oven ... turning on a computer. They all require electricity. Thanks to the members of the Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia, more than a quarter million residents across the Commonwealth don't have to worry if there will be power to turn on, because it's always there. MEPAV members are your not-for-profit, community-owned

utilities that provide reliable and safe electricity at a reasonable price. Our commitment to the communities that we serve goes beyond keeping the lights on and appliances running. Our success is intertwined with that of each family and local business. MEPAV is part of a vital American tradition that makes communities better places to live and work. It's a tradition that works.



MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC POWER ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA

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Salem
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Wakefield

Conference agenda has something for everyone

Host Night is sure to please all

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS. Exhibit hall. Networking. Social interaction. Mobile workshop. All this and more will be part of the 2018 VML Annual Conference, to be held September 30-October 2 in Hampton. And be sure to notice the conference concludes Tuesday evening with the annual banquet, which is a change in schedule from the last few years.

The conference kicks off Sunday, September 30, with meetings of the policy committees and Legislative Committee, as well as the opening of the Exhibit Hall, where you can see the latest in products and services for local governments. You won't want to miss the reception in the Exhibit Hall and you especially don't want to miss Host City Night! Hampton City Officials and the Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau will welcome you with an outdoor evening reception at historic Fort Mon-

roe. With harbor views, a sampling of Coastal Virginia cuisine, craft beverages from Hampton artisans, and music under the stars, the 2018 VML Annual Conference begins with a bang!

Monday's event's will include general sessions, workshop sessions and the annual meetings of the Urban, City and Town Sections. Look for more general sessions, the ever-popular Local Government Roundtables, and annual business meeting and election of officers on Tuesday. The conference will conclude with the annual banquet, the presentation of the Innovation Awards and a comedian as a concluding keynote speaker.

Also, don't forget about the Virginia Mayors Institute, which will take place September 29-30!

This is an excellent opportunity for mayors, vice mayors and board chairs and vice chairs to focus on issues of special interest to the top local elected officials.



Host City Night will take place at the historic Fort Monroe in Hampton.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

2018 VML Innovation Awards

THE 2018 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. This program – and its successor Achievement Awards – is 40 years old and is recognized as Virginia’s highest honor in local government creativity.

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

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 improve an existing service.

Categories

Award categories are based on broad topics with local governments of all sizes competing within these categories. The panel of judges have years of experience in local governments of varying sizes and will judge the scope and effect of the project in relationship to the community’s size, thereby putting all localities on a level playing field.

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 one entry in each category. The categories are:

Lifelong Learning

Each year one award will recognize the initiative promoted by the current VML President. This year the initiative is lifelong learning. Included in this category are programs aimed at people of any age, from birth to the end of life, that promote continued learning, expansion of boundaries and emphasis on the transforming effects of education.

Community & Economic Development

This includes business development and retention; international competitiveness; infrastructure development and investment; planning, land use and zoning; blight; enterprise zones; housing; transportation; workforce development; and historic preservation.

Environmental Quality

This includes natural resources and the authority of local governments to manage the environment, including water resources and quality, solid and hazardous waste management, air quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

Quality of Life

This includes state-local and inter-local relations, information management and personnel, telecommunications, utilities, law enforcement, jails and courts issues, social services, health, behavioral health and juvenile justice, recreation, rehabilitation and aging.

Communications

This 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 listed on the left.

Deadline

All entries must be received via e-mail by 5 p.m., Monday, Aug. 13, 2018.

Rules for entering

- 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, 2017 and May 1, 2018, or – for existing projects – entries must cover major enhancements that occurred between Jan. 1, 2017 and May 1, 2018.
- 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 only submit one entry in each of the five categories. The President's Award for Innovation 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, send a link to the location of the video to mtimbreza@vml.org. 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 judges chosen for their expertise in local and state government. The judges generally represent a variety of backgrounds, including small and large localities and state agencies.

The winners

Awards will be presented at the VML annual conference in Hampton, September 30 - October 2. All winning entries will also be featured in articles in *Virginia Town & City*.

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Working together: City manager and superintendent forge strong bond

FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, the relationship between the city manager and the school superintendent is paramount. In Lexington we have a strong relationship, and we take the time necessary to create, maintain and improve our communication channels. Fortunately for us, we have had some great role models who set the example for us to follow and build on.

Jon Ellestad, former city manager for Lexington, and Dr. Dan Lyons, former superintendent for Lexington city schools, used to meet and communicate regularly to discuss school budget items, city business, and future plans and issues. When they retired in 2014 and 2015 respectively, we (Noah A. Simon, city manager and Dr. Scott Jefferies, superintendent) made it a goal and a priority to continue that partnership as we transitioned into our new leadership roles to build off their solid foundation of communication and collaboration.

We meet at least once a month for lunch to discuss school and city business, but we also take the time necessary to develop a strong personal relationship. We discuss our families, our lives, and sports. We have developed a close friendship and a strong working partnership. When it comes down to discussing business, we rely on our friendship and communication channels to make this process smooth and efficient. Additionally, we talk by phone, text or email almost on a daily basis. We are constantly checking in with each other to provide updates, communicate

We are constantly checking in with each other to provide updates, communicate news, share ideas and seek advice, or just to see how each other is doing.

news, share ideas and seek advice, or just to see how each other is doing after a long meeting. We have had our bumps in the road. When we have an issue, we both step back, take the time to reflect, listen, improve and move forward.

Our budget relationship is one of our many successes. As soon as the school board determines its budget needs and desires, the superintendent immediately communicates with the city manager to discuss how it could impact not only the school's overall budget, but the city's contribution to the school system's budget.

The city manager communicates budget parameters and overall budget and financial goals to the superintendent. Not only does the city manager understand the school's needs, but the superintendent understands the city's needs as well. We then communicate frequently to ensure all the needs are met – we understand that our success is mutually beneficial from a budget perspective and to the city's children and school staff. We have collaborated on four budgets together without a single issue. In fact, by regularly communicating, planning and anticipating, Lexington City Schools are high-performing and have seen continued and consistent academic success.

Lexington City Schools have had the opportunity to budget

for and implement innovative additions to programs of studies, and increased technology usage to supplement an already impressive educational experience for students. Additionally, the school facilities have seen great improvements, including a new Waddell Elementary School which opened in October 2016.



Beginning in 2015, we collaborated to create a position in the finance department that would be shared between the city staff and school staff. This position has increased the level of communication between the city and the schools and has made the process of checks and balances seamless and smooth. The city and school system also share information technology staff. These changes have brought greater efficiency and reduced expenditures. Some of the school's human resources functions are administered by the city, such as health insurance and other benefits. In addition to the economy of scale, these collaborations require us to communicate and share information which has strengthened our overall relationship.

The relationship between the superintendent and city manager speaks volumes on how the relationship between the school board and city council will transpire. We have found that the relationship between our two boards is collegial, professional, and strong. We communicate, collaborate, and rely on our relationships to accomplish goals.

We understand that the relationship we have with each other and between our two boards is special, and we place a tremendous value on these relationships. In the end, if not for these strong relationships, our schools would not be as successful or as supported as they are today. 

About the author: *Dr. Scott Jefferies is the superintendent of the Lexington City Schools. Noah A. Simon is the city manager of Lexington.*

Risk management efforts recognized at the 2018 VMLIP Annual Meeting

THE TOWN OF Ashland was presented the prestigious Margaret A. Nichols Risk Management Leadership Award at the 2018 VML Insurance Programs (VMLIP) Annual Meeting held Friday, May 11 in Henrico County.

Additionally, VMLIP presented Poquoson City Schools, the Western Tidewater Regional Jail Authority, and the city of Fredericksburg with Risk Management Performance Awards. Ten individuals were presented with individual Risk Management Excellence Awards.



(L-R) Ashland Town Manager Josh Farrar, Assistant to the Town Manager Wanda Cornwell and VMLIP Member Services Account Executive Nora Pierre.



(L-R) Poquoson Schools HR Coordinator Debra Bunting, Executive Director of Finance Tara Woodruff and VMLIP Account Executive Nora Pierre.

Town of Ashland

The Margaret A. Nichols Risk Management Leadership Award is presented each year to recognize and encourage innovation in risk management by members of the pool. The



(L-R) WTRJA Deputy Superintendent Lt. Colonel Ernest Bower and VMLIP Account Executive Nora Pierre.

award is named in honor of Margie Nichols, longtime administrator of VMLIP who passed away in 2002.

“The Town of Ashland is strategically focused on managing their risk,” said VMLIP Director of Member Services, Jeff Cole. “The town has utilized a variety of risk management resources provided by VMLIP including training and grant funding – used to purchase equipment and training to reduce the town’s risk.”

The police department in the town is accredited, and, further, town officials also have completed the YourCISO security health check to review the town’s security processes objectively.

Poquoson City Schools

Poquoson City Schools was awarded for participating in risk management programs such as the Where the Rubber Meets the Road (WTRMTR) defensive driving campaign, as well as simulator training. Further, the school system provides videos and information to assist VMLIP staff with claims handling

Western Tidewater Regional Jail Authority

The Western Tidewater Regional Jail Authority (WTRJA) significantly decreased their workers’ compensation claims by identifying areas for improvement and taking action using VMLIP risk management staff and resources. To reduce injuries from slips, trips, and falls, the authority improved lighting throughout the facility, and used VMLIP grants to add reverse cameras on jail vehicles to reduce property losses.

continues on next page

City of Fredericksburg

The city of Fredericksburg hired a full-time safety program manager as a conscious decision to better manage their risk. The city has created a workplace violence response team, conducted weed eater training, and partnered with the Virginia Department of Transportation to provide snow plow safety training to drivers. They also use VMLIP's partnership with SiteHawk to manage their chemical safety data sheets and help the city comply with state safety regulations.

Individual Risk Management Excellence Award Winners

Additionally, the following individual were recognized for their personal contributions to risk management.

Mike Rae, City of Emporia

Chase Martin, City of Harrisonburg

Don Johnson, City of Salem

Cynthia Burnett, City of Staunton and Staunton City Schools

Debbie Desjardins, City of Lexington

Debra Bunting, Poquoson City Schools

John Spivey, Southeastern Public Service Authority

Holly Gailey, Town of Urbanna

Steve LePock, Virginia Beach Schools

Ioana Kwei-Tagoe, Western Virginia Water Authority



(L-R) Assistant City Manager Mark Whitley and VMLIP Senior Account Executive Harry McMillen.

For more information on VMLIP award winners, visit: <https://www.vmlins.org/blog/>. 

About the author: *Hollie Cammarasana is the Director of Communications for VML Insurance Programs.*

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VEPGA holds annual meeting

ATTENDEES AT THE ANNUAL meeting of the Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association (VEPGA) had a meeting crammed with tours and educational workshops. The meeting was held in Newport News May 2 – 3, 2018. Susan Hafeli, VEPGA chair and chief of the Public Utilities Branch in Fairfax County, kicked off the

for Sustainable Infrastructure can assist localities in translating goals into project actions. Scott Finlinson, with NORESKO, LLC, showed how audits of human behavior could reveal habits that could be changed to increase energy conservation, such as turning off lights and fans when leaving the office. A final session was by VEPGA's legal consultant, Cliona Robb

of Christian & Barton, who gave a legislative update, highlighting the passage of Senate Bill 966, the Grid Modernization and Security Act of 2018, and the complex facets contained in this bill.

VEPGA members enjoyed a tour of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester Point at the mouth of the York River where it meets the Chesapeake Bay. The campus has a rich history including a Jamestown-era settlement, Revolutionary War activity, and the origins of VIMS in the 1950s. VIMS is the graduate school of marine science for the College of William and Mary and conducts coastal zone and estuarine research. Members toured several campus facilities including the Seawater Lab, Watermen's Hall, and the campus' first two LEED green building projects. The tour included the boat basin and teaching marsh area



VIMS Chief Operations Officer Joe Martinez explains the teaching marsh to VEPGA members.

meeting by reinforcing the purpose of VEPGA, which is to take advantage of state law allowing local entities to negotiate for electric service, and the association's objectives, which are to obtain rates based on cost of service, multi-year contracts, terms/conditions more reflective of government needs, and cost-sharing for counsel and consultants.

Information sessions included presentations by Shaina Schaffer, environmental planner with The Berkeley Group, who discussed how the Envision Guidance and Rating System

where VEPGA Board members saw the oyster hatchery and boat fleet, as well as salt- and fresh-water ponds used for educating groups of all ages. The guide pointed out evidence of sea level rise through marsh migration and a living shoreline example of how the shore can be protected from erosion without being entirely hardened by concrete structures, thereby maintaining habitat for estuarine plants and animals.

John Ohanian, electrical services division manager with the Washington Dulles International Airport, was elected to the VEPGA Board of Directors at the meeting. Dulles International Airport is one of two airports operated by VEPGA member Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). Ohanian will represent the MWAA on the VEPGA board.

VEPGA tracks energy developments in Virginia and negotiates electricity contracts on behalf of over 170 local government entity members. VEPGA's joint negotiating power saves local governments and their taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

VEPGA is an affiliate of the Virginia Municipal League; Sandra Harrington, VML governmental relations associate, serves as the secretary/treasurer. For more information, visit www.vepga.org or contact Sandra at sharrington@vml.org or 804-523-8534. 

About the author: Sandra Harrington is VML's Government Relations Associate



VEPGA conference attendees visited a bioretention basin at the College of William and Mary.



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Pictured: Pohick Regional Library, Fairfax County, Virginia



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