

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

The magazine of the
Virginia Municipal League

VOL. 49 NO. 8
OCTOBER 2014



ROANOKE

A bright future beckons



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About the cover

Roanoke continues to be recognized for its innovation and outstanding quality of life. In addition to being selected as an "All-America City" six times, the city has been honored as a Leading Digital City 12 times. Most recently, Roanoke was selected as a recipient of a 2014 City Livability Award for Outstanding Achievement by the U.S. Conference of Mayors for its Parks and Arts Program.

Features

Welcome to Roanoke Bright future beckons for revitalized Roanoke

It's been more than five years since the Virginia Municipal League held its annual conference in Roanoke. Since that time, the city has experienced remarkable development and growth, especially in its downtown. How sunny is the Star City's future? So brilliant that that the theme for this year's Host Night event is "Roanoke's Future is So Bright, You Gotta Wear Shades."

By Melinda Mayo and Timothy Martin



Oct. 5-7, Hotel Roanoke
& Conference Center

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"... As you step into the City Market, you won't believe your eyes. You'll experience a beautifully renovated pedestrian-friendly market square with local farmers and craftsman from the region. Our streets are lined with a number of historic buildings which have been renovated into lofts, apartments and commercial space."

... Roanoke Mayor, David A. Bowers

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Virginia Municipal League Annual Report

After a very busy and very productive year of representing the interests of local government, the Virginia Municipal League pauses to reflect on its many accomplishments. From the state capitol in Richmond to the halls of Congress in Washington, VML and its member local governments continue to be an essential voice in the debates surrounding some of the most important public policy issues of the times.



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Port of call: Ahoy Newport News

MY FAMILY AND I recently motored east down Interstate 64 to visit the City of Newport News at the invitation of VML Executive Committee Member Pat Woodbury, who has served on City Council there since 2008. Thanks to her gracious hospitality, we were treated to tours of two museums located in the heart of the sprawling city of 180,000 along the James River.

The Mariners' Museum

The world-class Mariners' Museum and its 32,000 artifacts – designated America's National Maritime Museum by Congress – was up first. This visit had been near the



Anchor from the ironclad Monitor – recovered in 1983 – on display at the Mariners' Museum.

top of our “to do” list since we arrived in Virginia back in December. My husband, Deric, had been talking about the museum's USS Monitor exhibit for some time. And, our 8-year-old son, Christopher, had just finished reading *Iron Thunder*, a book of historical fiction about the Civil War battle between the ironclads Monitor and Merrimac.

The Monitor, commissioned by the Union Navy, battled the USS Virginia (built on the hull of the former USS Merrimack) to a standoff during the famous four-hour Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862. This first-ever clash between two armored warships marked a turning point in naval warfare. After supporting Union war efforts for the remainder of the year, the Monitor sank during a storm off Cape Hatteras. The wreck was discovered in 1973 and many of the artifacts, including the famous revolving turret, are on display at the Mariners' Museum.

In addition to the actual Monitor pieces, the museum also boasts an impressive collection of naval artifacts and historical exhibits. I also found the maritime artwork to be amazing. If you have never visited the Mariners' Museum,

you are truly missing one of the best treasures that Virginia has to offer. For more, go to www.marinersmuseum.org.

Virginia Living Museum

Our next stop was the nearby Virginia Living Museum. Here, Virginia's natural history is on display in an interactive and fun way. This special museum is home to 250 different species of animals that are native to Virginia. During our tour, we learned what it takes to maintain the distinct habitats for each animal.

A unique feature of the museum is an elevated outdoor boardwalk. This three-quarter mile trail winds through woods and wetlands and provides an outstanding opportunity to see animals in their natural habitat. I had to drag our two sons away from watching a very charismatic otter that had captured their attention!

The museum also features a number of exhibits that change throughout the year, as well as a number of special events. Check out their website at <http://thevlm.org/> for the latest information.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Newport News. In fact, the kids keep asking when we can go back. The city is an exciting destination with many attractions to visit and sights to see. I'm sure that we'll visit there again soon.

For more information about Newport News, go to <http://www.newport-news.org>. 



Students enjoy the 30,000-gallon Chesapeake Bay deep water aquarium at the Virginia Living Museum.



David A. Bowers
Mayor



DAVID A. BOWERS
Mayor

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Greetings to the attendees of the Virginia Municipal League Annual Conference!

As Mayor of the City of Roanoke, it is my pleasure to welcome you to “The Star City.” Hosting the 2014 VML Annual Conference is a great opportunity for us to showcase all the exciting things happening in our six-time All-America City.

While you are here, take time to venture out and explore our downtown. Get ready, because as you step into the City Market, you won’t believe your eyes. You’ll experience a beautifully renovated pedestrian-friendly market square with local farmers and craftsman from the region. Our streets are lined with a number of historic buildings which have been renovated into lofts, apartments, and commercial space. Another “must see” is Center in the Square with its redesigned museums, new aquariums, and a butterfly garden on the roof.

At the end of Market Street, next to Old Fire Station 1 on Church Avenue, you can’t help but notice the construction work being done for a new 127-room Hampton Inn & Suites Hotel. If you keep walking and cross Franklin Road you will be in Elmwood Park, Roanoke’s latest and greatest makeover project featuring interactive fountains and a fabulous new outdoor amphitheater.

Roanoke is a beautiful October setting for outdoor fun. Our greenways and bike paths are easily accessible from the Hotel Roanoke. Lick Run Greenway is on the other side of Wells Avenue (which runs parallel to Hotel Roanoke), and Mill Mountain Greenway begins in Elmwood Park off Jefferson Street (behind the Main Library). Once again, I’ve scheduled a Mayor’s Walk to “The Star” for Sunday, Oct. 5, at 2 p.m. so come join me just prior to the opening reception for a brief hike.

On a national scale, Roanoke continues to be recognized for its innovation and outstanding quality of life. In addition to being selected by the National Civic League as an “All-America City” six times, Roanoke has been honored as a Leading Digital City by the Center for Digital Government 12 times and, most recently, the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ recognized our Parks and Arts Program as an Outstanding Achievement, for the 2014 City Livability Awards.

We hope you will enjoy your time with us, and urge you to discover for yourself the many things that make Roanoke so special.

Welcome to Roanoke!

Sincerely,

David A. Bowers
Mayor

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www.roanokeva.gov

Bright future beckons for revitalized Roanoke

IT'S BEEN MORE THAN five years since the Virginia Municipal League held its annual conference in Roanoke. Since that time, the city has seen remarkable development and growth, especially in its downtown. "Roanoke's Future is So Bright, You Gotta Wear Shades," the theme for the city's Host Night Event, says it all. To learn more about Roanoke's success story, just continue reading.

Downtown

Roanoke's downtown beams with a remarkable increase in residential living. Private investors have renovated historic structures like the Shenandoah Building (now Parkway 301) and the Crystal Tower (now the Ponce De Leon) to add upscale apartments and lofts. What was once home to a dozen people a decade ago has soared to more than 1,500 residents. In addition, Downtown Drug, S&W Market and Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op have opened downtown locations to ac-

commodate these residents.

Other changes that have brightened the future include the privately-funded \$20 million renovation of the former Patrick Henry Hotel, which brought back to life a historic downtown landmark. The building now houses 132 apartments, a ballroom, and commercial space. And Center in the Square received \$30 million in donations to renovate its building. Changes include improved spaces for museums, an atrium that showcases colorful sea life aquariums, and a rooftop space for special events, where this year's Annual Conference Host Night reception will be held.

City projects

Over the last four years, the City of Roanoke has invested in capital improvement projects to help the downtown district shine. After a \$7.9 million restoration, the historic Roanoke



After a \$7.9 million restoration, the historic Roanoke City Market Building re-opened to the public in 2011.



Center in the Square received \$30 million in donations for renovations that included an atrium that showcases colorful sea life aquariums.

City Market Building re-opened to the public in 2011. While the exterior of building retained the same charm as when it first opened in 1922, interior features now create more open space filled with natural light. Vendor stalls are located at both ends of the building with retail and dining options for patrons. The top floor of the three-story building was renovated as Charter Hall, a community gathering space suitable for everything from business meetings to wedding receptions.

In the fall of 2013 Elmwood Park, the city's premier festival venue, re-opened after a \$7.1 million renovation. Enhancements include a new state-of-the-art amphitheater, concessions plaza, art walk and interactive fountains. The amphitheater easily accommodates more than 4,000 spectators. There's also a "green" aspect to the park. Look underground and you'll find a 15,000-gallon cistern. Water from this cistern is used to water the park grass and some of the 25,000 plants and trees. Also, rain water is collected through the use of porous brick pavement and roof piping, and many of the park's lighting fixtures are equipped with LED lights.

To celebrate the park's renovation, in July 2014 the city host-

ed a "Welcome to Elmwood Park" concert featuring Sheryl Crow. The event sold out within hours of tickets going on sale. Vendors offered food and beverages to a crowd of 4,500 people as they enjoyed an evening of music in this new outdoor space.

Market Square is another area with shiny new look and feel, thanks to a \$1.1 million renovation completed in April. The square now features trees, improved lighting and a paver system. Farmers' Market stalls were also rearranged, making the storefronts to many businesses more visible. And the open space provides outdoor dining areas for nearby restaurants. Come downtown, look around, and you'll find a pedestrian-friendly area that acts as a gateway from Roanoke City Market Building to Elmwood Park.

The most recent change is at Roanoke's Main Library. As part of its Library Master Plan, the city is spending roughly \$3.2 million to give the inside of the building a more modern look. Features include the first dedicated early literacy center, teen areas, an expanded collection of books, new technology, and interactive learning spaces for young people and adults. There's also a reading porch outside that overlooks Elmwood Park. Renovation of all library branches throughout the city is included in the Master Plan; the Raleigh Court Branch renovation is next on the list.

Education

Speaking of libraries, Roanoke's future is illuminated by programs such as "Star City Reads," an early childhood literacy campaign designed to ensure more Roanoke children read at grade level by the end of third grade. Roanoke Public Libraries partnered with Roanoke City Public Schools, United Way of Roanoke Valley, Smart Beginnings of Greater Roanoke, Total Action for Progress, Blue Ridge Literacy, and Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey from the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute to develop a Community Solutions Action Plan. The "Star City Reads" campaign, which addresses the initiatives of the plan, won the 2012 All-America City Award from the National Civic League. A workshop on this topic will be offered during the 2014 VML Annual Conference.

Roanoke City Public Schools continue to excel with the on-time graduation rate at 82 percent, up from 59 percent five years ago. Third grade level reading scores on the PALS assessment, which measures literacy fundamentals, is up more than 8 percent in four years.



Architect's rendering depicts modern touches that are part of a \$3.2 million renovation to the Main Library, which includes an Early Literacy Center shown here.



Country music duo Montgomery Gentry played at Elmwood Park May 24 as part of Festival in the Park.

Neighborhoods

The vitality of neighborhoods is an essential component for a luminous city. Roanoke’s HUD policy focuses funds received by the city into one area at a time to help spur private sector investments, as well as city investment for neighborhoods that need the most improvement. In 2011, Roanoke identified the West End area as the next target for the use of these funds. Work was underway as of July 1, 2012 and will continue for at least three years. West End (portions of the Old Southwest, Hurt Park, and Mountain View) joins the list of city areas to see HUD funds used for projects that have enhanced the livability of its neighborhoods since 2002.



The Parks and Arts program improved access to the arts for residents.

Arts and culture

Roanoke radiates with lively performing organizations, museums, galleries and public art. This is not by chance but by design. Appointed by City Council, the Roanoke Arts Commission (RAC) advises and assists council on matters relating to the advancement of the arts and humanities within the city. The city’s Public Art Plan was adopted in 2006 and since then almost 30 works have been added to the collection.

Roanoke adopted its first Arts and Cultural Plan in 2011 as part of the city’s Comprehensive Plan. The plan was recognized as “Outstanding Plan, Comprehensive Plan Element”

“Trojan Dog” by Ann Glover on display at Fire Station No. 7 on Memorial Avenue.



by the American Planning Association, Virginia Chapter that same year.

Roanoke's Parks and Arts program, which grew out of the plan, is designed to build audiences for the arts, highlight city neighborhoods and parks, and bring the arts into citizens' backyards. This program recently won a Livability Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Safety

The community's glow also reflects effective public safety initiatives. Roanoke Police implemented a new approach to address drug markets and the violence associated with drug crimes. Drug Market Intervention offers intervention for suspected nonviolent drug dealers by giving them a second chance. Police and community agencies engage nonviolent drug dealers and their families, create clear predictable sanctions, offer help, and mobilize the community to communicate standards about right and wrong. The project was first implemented in the Hurt Park neighborhood in 2011; last year part of the Melrose-Rugby neighborhood became the site of the second implementation. As a result of its success, DMI is now being considered by other localities in Virginia.

Additionally, the police have established an Intelligence, Statistics, Technology, Analysis and Research Center (iStar Center), which consists of a team of four crime analysts and a senior analyst/supervisor who work closely with the Community Response Team, Criminal Investigations Bureau, Narcotics and Organized Crime Unit, and Patrol Division. The team uses technology and data to find series, trends and patterns that include interdepartmental, jurisdictional and intelligence information. This information has been very helpful in assisting officers to target key offenders and problem-generating locations.

These initiatives have reduced the violent crime rate in the city, which is down by 50.24 percent since 2005, as well as the property crime rate, which is down 28.09 percent since 2005, equating to a 46-year low for total crime in Roanoke.

Proactive fire prevention activities resulted in the lowest number of working fires and dollar loss for fires in Roanoke's reported history. For Fiscal Year 2013-2014 there was a 22.5 percent reduction in working fires, and a 30 percent reduction in fire loss.

In addition, accreditations of the city's Police Department, Fire-EMS Department, Sheriff's Office, and E-911 Center demonstrate that all of these agencies follow best practices determined by independent organizations.

Good government

Roanoke's brightness is directly related to the efficiencies identified in the management of its local government. A good

example of this is the city's use of "Lean" training to create projects that support best practices. In collaboration with staff from Virginia Tech, Roanoke has evaluated many of its processes and found ways to streamline procedures to save time and money, including a new assembly permit system for the Transportation Division; a paperless permitting application for the Building Inspections Division; a more effective intake process for the Social Services Department; and improvements to the pre-employment system for Human Resources.

Environment

Roanoke has shone a light on the importance of stormwater quality by creating a Stormwater Utility. A stormwater fee was enacted on July 1 this year to provide a dedicated source of revenue needed to address a backlog of drainage improvement projects, improvement of water quality, and increased maintenance of drainage infrastructure. To learn more, visit www.roanokeva.gov/stormwater.

Regionalism

Efforts to address issues that are important to all localities in the Roanoke Valley are another reason for Roanoke's sunny future. City leaders have taken a leading role in reaching out to collaborate on solutions, and have seen an unprecedented level of regional cooperation.

One example is the recent formation of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority. In 2011, members of the local business community approached the local governments of the Roanoke Valley requesting that the public sector assist in enhancing access to broadband service in the region. In response, a public-private task force was formed and recommended the creation of a broadband authority to address the region's fiber optic network deficit.

The cities of Roanoke and Salem, and the counties of Roanoke and Botetourt approved the formation of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority in December 2013 to ensure that the region will remain competitive in 21st Century economic development.

To strengthen tourism, localities signed a regional tourism agreement to increase funding levels for the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau (RVCVB) and provide a predictable revenue source. As of Jan. 1, 2013, the transient occupancy tax increased in the cities of Roanoke and Salem from 7 percent to 8 percent and in Roanoke County from 5 percent to 7 percent. The local governments now dedicate 3 percentage points of the tax to the RVCVB, adding more than \$1 million to marketing the area as Virginia's Blue Ridge.

The Roanoke Valley Greenway System is one of the most popular amenities with area residents. The cities of Roanoke and Salem, along with the counties of Roanoke and Botetourt, have committed to connect all sections of the greenway through the urban portion of the Valley. As of May 2012, funding was



Roanoke

secured for all segments except the gap that lies between Roanoke and Salem. As a result, the “Bridge the Gap” campaign was launched to raise the \$7 million needed for this project. Roanoke anticipates construction will begin on the first mile of this connection in fall 2014; an additional 1.8 miles will be constructed in late 2015. Connecting these trails will make the greenway system one of the longest urban greenways in the eastern United States.

With these achievements in mind, it’s hard to deny Roanoke has a very bright future. And there’s more to come, as city leaders strive to make sound decisions based on the impact they will have not only this year or next, but for future generations. Let’s just say, Roanoke is stocking up on sunglasses! 



Local governments signed a regional tourism agreement to increase funding for the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau and to provide a predictable revenue source.

About the authors

Melinda Mayo is public information officer and Timothy Martin is public information specialist for the City of Roanoke.



Discover Our Treasures

Nestled in the heart of DC’s wine country lies the charming town of Purcellville, Virginia. The town is surrounded by award-winning wineries, home to local craft breweries and Loudoun County’s first distillery since Prohibition, a great selection of eclectic boutiques, a wide array of restaurants, regular weekend entertainment, and annual events.

Purcellville’s rich history is preserved with the W&OD Bike Trail, Fireman’s Field ballpark, the Train Depot, and Bush Tabernacle – each a unique amenity where you can take a leisurely bike ride, enjoy a Babe Ruth baseball game, strap on some roller skates, or browse the offerings at the farmers market.

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VML Strategic Vision

“The Virginia Municipal League is a statewide, nonprofit, non-partisan association of city, town and county governments established in 1905 to improve and assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education and other services. The membership includes 38 cities, 160 towns and eight counties.”

Vision Statement

VML Shall:

- **Work to build strong relationships among local, state, and federal officials;**
- **Serve as a communications hub for local governments;**
- **Facilitate the engagement of our members with the organization and facilitate the engagement of citizens with their local governments; and**
- **Maintain a financially stable organization that is staffed to serve the needs of the membership.**

Strategic Goals

Building Relationships

Relationships are the critical foundation upon which successful organizations must be built. VML is committed to forming and maintaining relationships in order to provide excellent service to the membership and to promote the principles of good government.

- VML will develop and maintain strong working relationships with members of the General Assembly, the State Administration, and the Federal Delegation.
- VML will facilitate networking among the membership and between VML and local government officials.
- VML will build and maintain partnerships with peer associations, the business community, and other groups with mutual interests.
- The VML Executive Committee will promote and implement principles of ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization.

Communications

Timely and substantive communication is critical to the overall mission of VML. As such we are committed to establishing both print and electronic communications to achieve the research, training, and advocacy goals of the organization.

- VML will develop a comprehensive communications strategy in order to tell the local government story and

to establish VML as the primary information hub for local government officials.

- VML will explore and maximize ways to use communications in order to promote the legislative agenda of the organization.
- VML will develop a comprehensive marketing strategy in order to build stronger relationships with the business community and to provide appropriate avenues for businesses to offer their services to the VML membership.
- VML will work to educate and assist the membership in learning to tell their story in a manner that effectively demonstrates the community building accomplished by local governments.

Engagement

Developing and maintaining an engaged membership is vital to both the short and long term success of VML. We will actively seek ways to engage our membership and to support citizen engagement in our local governments.

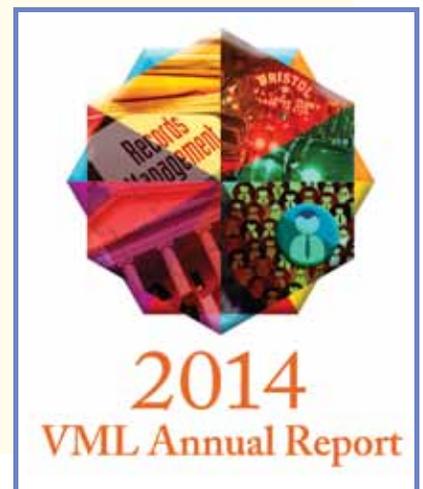
- VML will evaluate new ways to demonstrate the value of membership in VML along with the value of being an active participant in the association and our conferences.
- VML will work to identify ways to improve citizen engagement, including ways to enhance the civics knowledge of Virginia’s students.
- VML will identify and implement programs to encourage the membership to play a more active role in advocacy at both the state and federal level.

Finance

In order to evaluate existing programs and plan for the future of the organization, VML must maintain a strong financial position. VML is committed to maintaining and modernizing accurate and appropriate financial systems.

- VML will evaluate existing programs, seek efficiencies, and make recommendations for staffing changes in order to accomplish the strategic goals of the organization.
- VML will seek strategic partnerships, where possible, in order to enhance our ability to provide top quality programming and services for the membership.
- VML will enhance financial reporting and modernize financial systems where appropriate.

Adopted by the VML Executive Committee Feb. 6, 2014.



2014 was year of transition for VML

THE PAST YEAR HAS been a significant one in the history of the Virginia Municipal League.

Our new Executive Director, Kim Winn, officially took over the reins on Jan. 1 becoming only the sixth director in our organization's 109-year history. As most of you know, Kim took over upon the retirement of Mike Amyx, who served the organization for more than 33 years. Mike left the league in a strong position with a proud tradition.

Now, the Executive Committee is working with the new director to continue to move the ball downfield. We have worked

Also, look for an outstanding new event – VML Day at the Capitol – which will be held Jan. 28 at the Library of Virginia in Richmond during the 2015 session of the General Assembly. Held exclusively for VML members, the event is an outstanding new opportunity for local government officials to interact with legislators. It will feature staff briefings and a high-quality reception that the Executive Committee believes will facilitate dialogue between local elected officials, delegates and senators. More information is posted on the league's website.

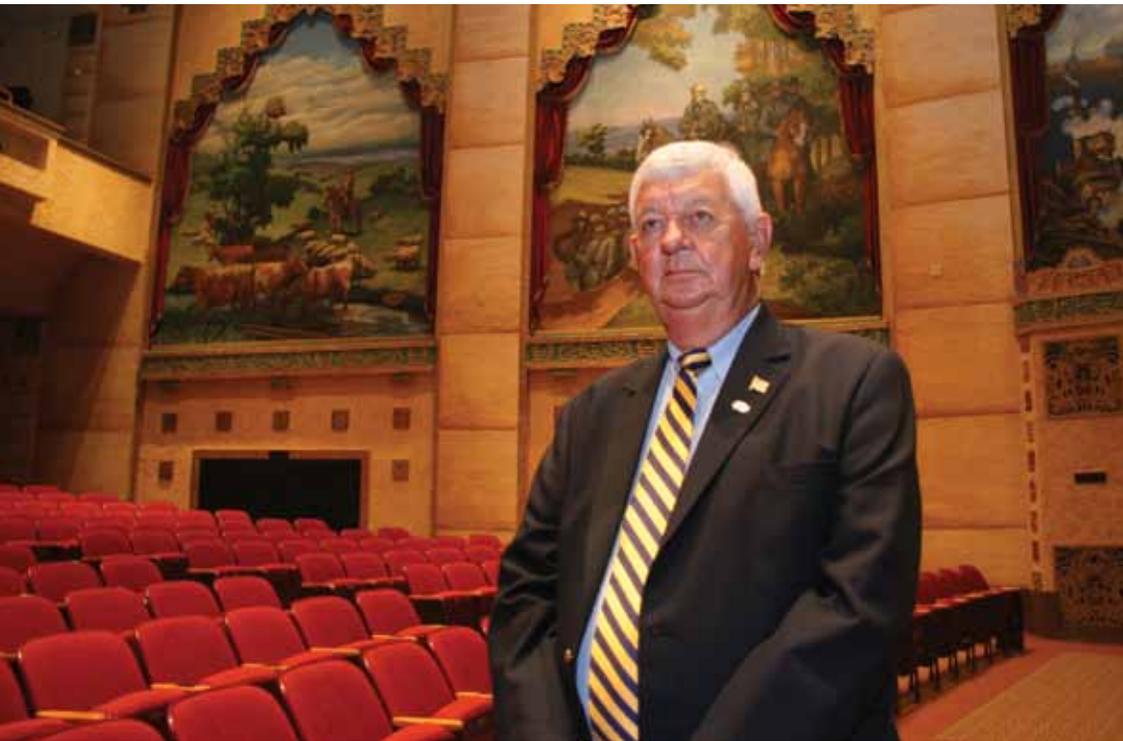
The operation of a successful association is not the result

of one person's efforts. It is a truly collaborative process and I would be remiss if I failed to thank those that have played a crucial role in the success of VML. First, I would like to thank my wife, Sue. She has traveled with me to meetings and conferences around the state and around the country. We have enjoyed the experience of representing VML and we have made many friends in the process.

Next, I would like to thank the VML Executive Committee for its hard work and dedication to this organization. The Executive Committee serves without compensation. Yet, it is quite clear that there is a strong vision for the future of VML that is being led by the goals set forth by this group. Thank-you for your commitment and thank-you for your friendship.

VML has a tremendous staff that works hard on our behalf each day. VML is home to the recognized experts in local government and I want to thank all of the staff members for their dedication to the excellence of this organization.

Finally, as I conclude my year as VML President, I want to thank the members of this fine organization. As a statewide association, it is the members who are our strength. VML exists to serve those of you who serve your communities each and every day. I am concluding this year with a great deal of optimism for the future of VML and the future of the Commonwealth. 



David P. Helms, mayor of the Town of Marion, is completing his one-year term as president of the Virginia Municipal League.

together to develop a new strategic vision for VML (*see facing page*). We identified four key areas of focus: Building relationships, enhancing communications, member engagement, and maintaining a financially stable organization. The VML staff then developed action steps to implement the goals in these four areas.

You may have already noticed some of the changes that are beginning to take place. This past summer, Kim and some of the VML staff took to the road and participated in six regional suppers. The purpose of these meetings was twofold. First, we wanted to introduce Kim to the city and town officials all around Virginia. Next, we wanted to engage our members with regard to specific topics of interest on a regional basis. Look for another round of these regional meetings later in the fall where we will be discussing the upcoming legislative session.

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St. Paul Christmas Bazaar & Santa Train
Clinch River Mandolin Festival
Hiking, Biking and ATV Trails
Kayaking and Tubing on the Clinch River

For more information on things to do in St. Paul or along the Clinch River, go to www.StPaulVa.com



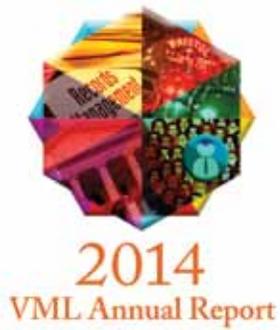
DOWNTOWN LEESBURG. DISCOVER OUR TAKE ON THE ARTS.

Downtown Leesburg is filled with fun and exciting things for all ages. Sample the exquisite wines of our local vineyards at any one of our nearby wine festivals, shop at unique stores and enjoy our art galleries, dine in delightful restaurants and play in our expansive parks. Practice the art of living well, right here in Leesburg, Virginia.

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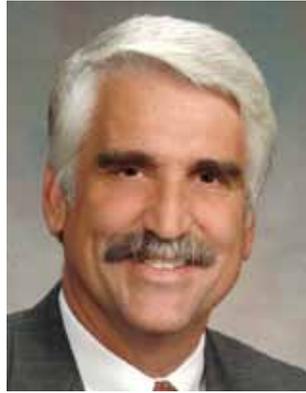




VML Executive Committee



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Virginia Retirement System
Virginia Rural Water Association
Waste Industries
Waste Management of Virginia, Inc.
Wendel Companies
Wiley|Wilson
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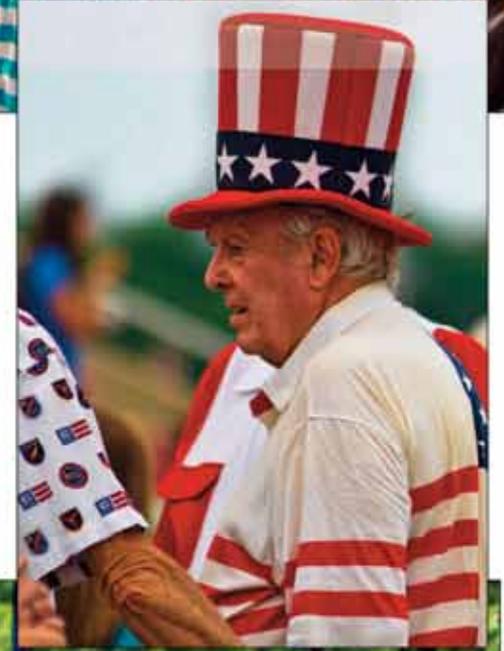


2014
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BETTER EVERY DAY



Better Every Day isn't just a slogan; it's a way of life. We're committed to the hometown values our residents know and love, while welcoming new families to our neighborhoods, new industries and businesses to our commercial zones, & new opportunities as they arise. We're committed to doing the things that improve quality of life, build bonds between neighbors, and nurture a community spirit which honors our heritage while embracing our bright future.



For more about Rocky Mount, visit our website at www.rockymountva.org or call our Community Development Office at 540-483-0907. We look forward to your stay and hope you'll be our partners as we work hard to grow and become Better Every Day.



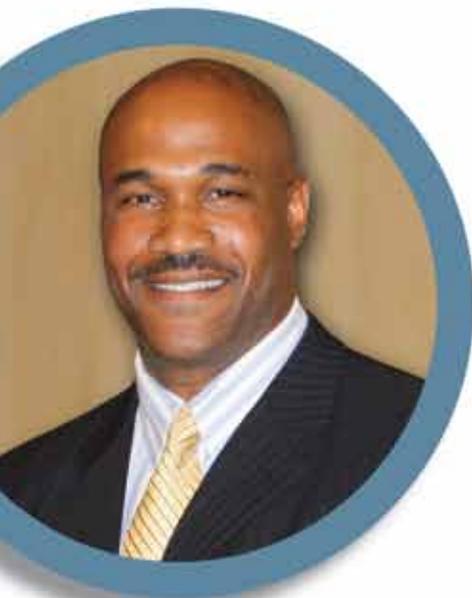
The staff at VML Insurance Programs are committed to providing top-notch risk management services and consultation. From our safety, human resources, communications and law enforcement specialists, as well as workers' compensation and liability staff, VML Insurance Programs' risk management experts can provide assistance on a wide range of topics. Read below for several member testimonials.



Tina Stevens, Director of Human Resources Services

"VMLIP's human resources services provide exceptional resources, whether you're seeking the viewpoint of a licensed attorney regarding an employment issue, in need of ideas to revise a current HR policy, or just want to keep abreast of current HR issues and trends. VMLIP's human resources director Tina Stevens not only delivers webinars packed with useful information for both new and seasoned supervisors but is incredibly responsive when a respected perspective is solicited."

- Darla J. Hicks, IPMA-CP, Human Resources Manager, City of Manassas



Thomas Bullock, Law Enforcement Specialist

"VMLIP's law enforcement specialist, Thomas Bullock, has provided valuable assistance to the Fredericksburg Police Department in a number of ways, from offering training to supervisors in critical incident management to tangible support through the funding of a pilot program involving speed monitoring devices in patrol vehicles. VML Insurance Programs is committed to the safety of my employees as we strive to accomplish our mission in the community."

- Chief David Nye, Fredericksburg Police Department

It's about our people!

Pete Strickler, Senior Safety Consultant

"The resources available to us through VMLIP's safety services and our safety consultant, Pete Strickler, are invaluable. Pete has helped us with on-site training, providing materials and resources as well as performing an evaluation of our entire safety program to help ensure OSHA compliance and safety of our employees. Because of these resources, I believe we now have a strong, effective safety program in the Town of Smithfield."

- *Sonja Eubank, Department of Public Works, Town of Smithfield*



Hollie Cammarasana, Director of Communications

"The Town of Lawrenceville requested communications assistance through VMLIP as the town became the focus of media attention for being selected to house unattended refugee minors. VMLIP's communications director, Hollie Cammarasana, came to help council members prepare a public statement regarding their concerns on the issue. As we became flooded with press requests, her advice and experience in dealing with situations like ours was extremely valuable. I encourage others to utilize this service should you find yourselves faced with a public relations crisis."

- *CJ Dean, Town Manager, Town of Lawrenceville*



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Virginia Municipal League staff

VML

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Executive Director

Mark Flynn
General Counsel

Joni Terry
Office Coordinator

Paulette Alexander
Accounting Assistant II

Mary Jo Fields
Director of Research

Janet Areson
Director of Policy Development

Patrick Ford
Press Operator/Clerk

David Parsons
Director of Communications

Kimberly Pollard
Director of Information Management

Manuel Timbreza
Assistant Director of Communications

Neal Menkes
Director of Fiscal Policy

Sherall Dementi
Executive Assistant

Joe Lerch
Director of Environmental Policy

Anita Yearwood
Conference and Marketing Coordinator

VML Insurance Programs

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Jeff Nicky
Deputy Managing Director

Steven Bergman
Director of IT

Hollie Cammarasana
Director of Communications

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Director of Workers' Compensation Claims

Charles Finley
Director of Liability Claims

Cathie Moreland Hasty
Director of Underwriting

Beth Rosenthal
Director of Safety Services

Christine Stevens
Director of Human Resources Services

Joanne Allen
Patient Advocate

Jackie Baytop
PLC Fast Track Claims Representative

Deborah Briggs
WC Supervisor

Cheryl Brown
WC Med Only Claims Representative

Thomas Bullock III
Law Enforcement Specialist

Jannie Butler
Receptionist & First Report Processor

Sheila Caudill
WC TPA Claims Adjuster

Ann Chandler
Underwriter

Tracy Christian
WC Med Only Claims Representative

Tiffany Clouse
PLC Claims Representative

Fonda Craig
Senior Safety Consultant

Dana Cullen
PLC Senior Claims Representative

Catherine Cunningham
WC Supervisor

Lisa Davis
Accounting Supervisor

Tracey Dunlap
PLC Senior Claims Representative

Kathryn Foulk
Patient Advocate

Crystal Griffin
Underwriter

Peggy Griffin
WC Senior Indemnity Claims Representative

Judy Huang
Software Engineer

Nicole Jennings
WC Med Only Claims Representative

Connie Jones
WC Senior Indemnity Claims Representative

Marian Levy
WC Med Only Claims Representative

Mary Kay Marchetti
Senior Business Systems Analyst

J. Scott Martin
PLC Senior Claims Specialist

Rosemary Mayo
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Harry McMillen
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Jennifer Moore
WC Indemnity Claims Representative

Kathy Nester
WC Claims Technician

Karen Nuckols
Senior Underwriter

Pamela Pitts
Recovery Specialist

Matthew Reid
Senior Safety Consultant

Wendy Rice
WC Indemnity Claims Representative

Lora Robinson
Mail Processor

Lisa Schenk
Account Executive

Anne Schwartz
Accounting Assistant

Ruth Slayton
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Charmaine Spain
WC Claims Technician

Jackie Stauffer
Administrative Specialist

Charles Strickler
Senior Safety Consultant

Karen Wall
Senior Administrative Assistant

Tina Wetsch
WC Indemnity Claims Representative

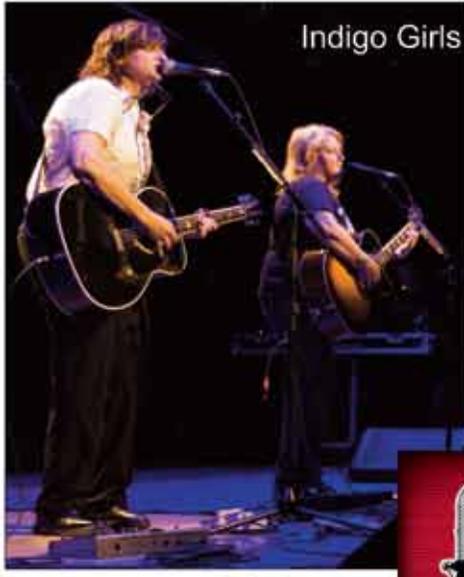
Robin Wiley
Administrative Assistant

Elizabeth Willoughby
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VML Insurance Programs: Specialists help lower the cost of risk

MANAGING THE COST of risk isn't just about purchasing insurance. It's about implementing programs and policies that prevent unexpected costs – financial and non-financial.

Consider:

- The cost of injuring a member of the public from a preventable “at fault” accident;
- The loss of use and time when assets such as hard to replace equipment, buildings, etc., are damaged in a preventable incident;
- The cost of staff involvement in a preventable lawsuit;
- The cost of reputation for the inability to respond adequately to natural disaster;
- The cost of hiring outside expertise to provide risk management training and consultation.

Members of the Virginia Municipal League Insurance Programs benefit from local government specialists on a variety of fields including safety, human resources, law enforcement, communications, claims, and more. These services add up to a lot more than can be seen on the bottom line.

For example, over the last year VMLIP Director of Human Resources Services Tina Stevens provided seven free webinars to members on topics including Ethical Considerations in the Public Sector, Managing Employee Attendance Issues and HR Complaint Investigations. This is in addition to more than 300 available sample materials, policies and procedures.

Stevens also provides personalized training for members on topics including the Family Medical Leave Act, preventing harassment, recruitment, terminations, pay policies, job descriptions and personnel policy manual reviews.

“VMLIP’s human resources services provide exceptional resources, whether you’re seeking the viewpoint of a licensed attorney regarding an employment issue, are in need of ideas to revise a current HR policy, or just want to keep abreast of current HR issues and trends,” said Human Resources Manager Darla Hicks, IPMA-CP, with the City of Manassas. “Tina not only delivers webinars packed with useful information for both new and seasoned supervisors but is incredibly responsive when a respected perspective is solicited.”

Similarly, members focused on physical safety benefited from 15 free webinars provided by safety staff last year. VMLIP’s safety webinars cover topics designed to address the unique exposures of Virginia’s local governmental entities. Webinar topics included: Roadway Operations and Worker Safety, Global Harmonized System (GHS) Alignment, Water/Wastewater Self-Inspections, and more.



Managing Director Steve Craig

Additionally, the safety staff continued its focus on defensive driving through the Where the Rubber Meets the Road defensive driving campaign, bolstered this year through the addition of GPS telematics device monitoring. The campaign has resulted in the training of more than 22,000 government drivers and a reduction in loss ratios of 50 percent among the first members who participated in the program.

Safety staff also are providing personalized training and consultation to members throughout the year on subjects such as hazard communication, ladder safety, confined space entry, personal protective equipment, OSHA compliance, and more.

“The resources available to us through VMLIP and our safety consultant, Pete Strickler, are invaluable,” said Sonja Eubank, office and accreditation manager for the Department of Public Works with the

Town of Smithfield. “Pete has helped us with on-site training, providing materials and resources, as well as performing an evaluation of our entire safety program to help ensure OSHA compliance and safety of our employees.”

Over the years, safety staff members have compiled nearly 150 safety bulletins on a range of topics, available free to members, as well as stockpiled the VMLIP Multimedia Library with more than 434 safety, human resources, and law enforcement-related videos and modules. Additionally, nearly 100 courses are available for members to take for free via the VMLIP Online University.

VMLIP’s Law Enforcement Specialist Thomas Bullock, as well as Director of Communications Hollie Cammarasana, have also provided personalized training and consultation to members throughout the past year. Topics have included Emergency Vehicle Operator Liability, Response to Critical Incidents, Law Enforcement and Social Media, Crisis Communications, Prepping a Spokesperson and Engaging Citizens in the Era of Social Media.

“The Town of Lawrenceville requested communications assistance as the town became the focus of media attention for being selected to house unattended refugee minors. Hollie assisted in preparing a public statement regarding council’s concerns on the issue,” said Town Manager C.J. Dean. “As we became flooded with press requests, her advice and experience in dealing with situations like ours was extremely valuable.”

VMLIP provides more than just coverage. VMLIP’s local government specialists are skilled in providing timely training and services to solve problems and find the appropriate balance between protection and exposure that is often required to solve the complex insurance and risk management dilemmas faced by members.

“We will continue to stay ahead of the curve on the changing needs of Virginia’s local governments,” said VMLIP Managing Director Steve Craig. “Our goal is to remain the premier source for insurance and risk management services in the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

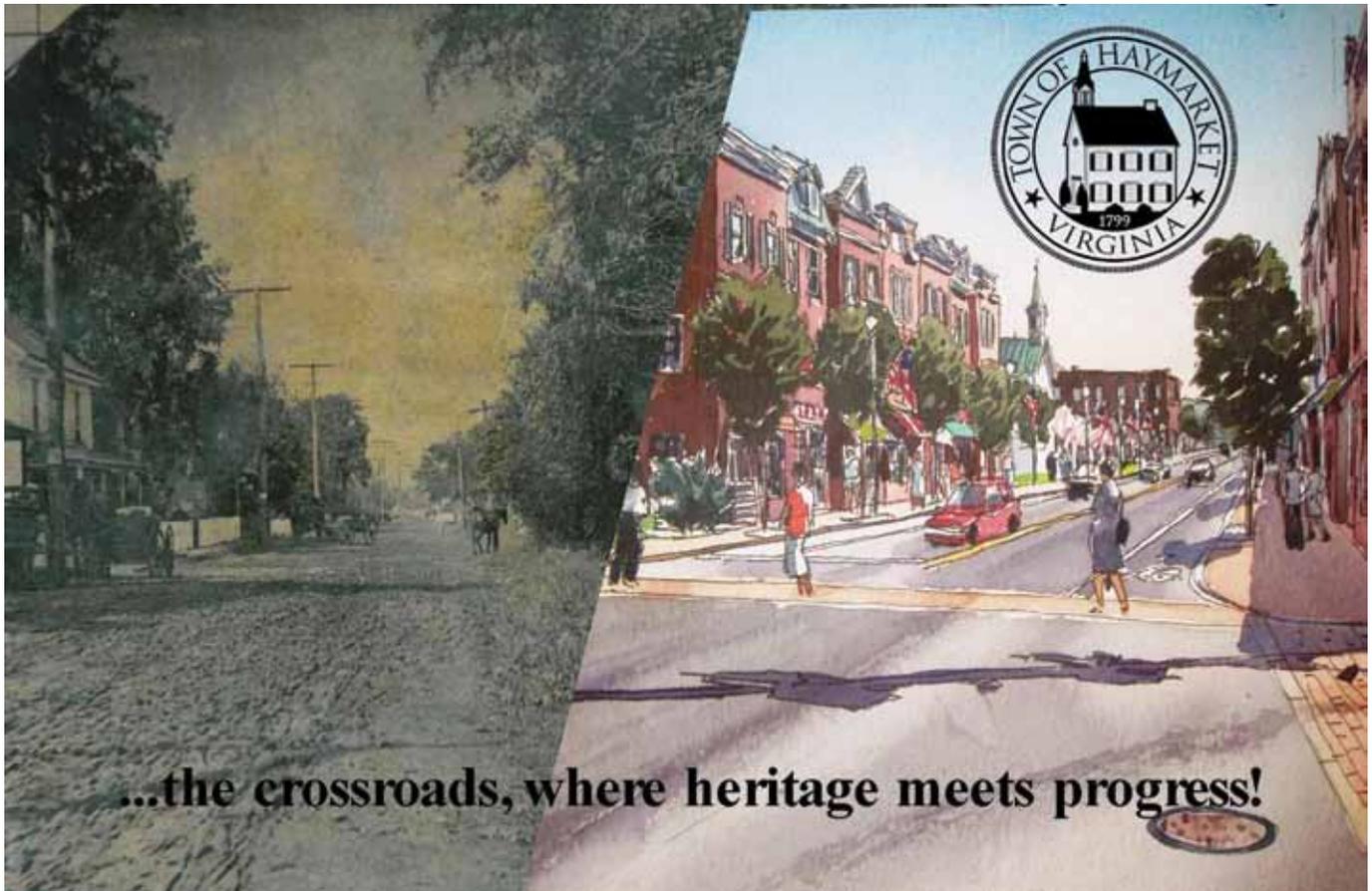
For more information on VMLIP, visit www.vmlins.org or follow VMLIP on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/vmlip.

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VLGMA stresses outreach and support

WHEN GLOUCESTER COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR Brenda Garton began her year as president of the 395-member Virginia Local Government Management Association on June 20 in Virginia Beach, she urged members to reach out to a fellow manager or to mentor a colleague as a way to support small communities and help build membership in the association. In short, she asked: “Do One Thing.”

“Do One Thing” was initiated by Lynchburg Assistant City Manager Bonnie Svrcek during her term as president of the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) in 2012. The one thing can include welcoming a

as feedback on the association’s programs.

In many regions, managers get together regularly. One of Garton’s visits was to an area with many small communities without full-time managers or regular get-togethers. The lack of a professional network and the interest expressed by these communities in engaging with experienced managers sparked her interest in finding ways that the association could help.

These visits also gave VLGMA leaders useful feedback on ways to improve its training programs, conferences and networking. As a result, the Professional Development Committee ensured that the two yearly conferences included more sessions on current topics like VRS and the Affordable Care Act, as well as sessions targeted at managers at different stages of their careers.

In the past year, the association continued its efforts to support the development of the “next generation” of local government managers. After successfully teaming with Virginia Tech in 2008 to create and sustain a Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management program, the association now supports a scholarship fund that helps defray tuition costs for local government employees enrolled in the program. Eleven satellite classrooms around Virginia and “live” classrooms in Blacksburg and Fairfax allow for broad participation. VLGMA members teach the series of four practice-based, semester-long classes. More than 150 students have earned certificates, and enrollment continues to expand.

VLGMA also supported two scholarships for the Young Professionals Leadership Institute in Williamsburg in March. The institute was held in conjunction with ICMA’s Southeast Regional Conference.

Along with Garton, VLGMA’s leaders this year are Goochland County Administrator Becky Dickson, president-elect; Abingdon Town Manager Greg Kelly, first vice president; Charlottesville City Manager Maurice Jones, second vice president; Henrico Deputy Manager Joe Casey, third vice president; Williamsburg Assistant City Manager Jodi Miller, secretary; and Poquoson City Manager Randy Wheeler, immediate past president.

VLGMA is an affiliate organization of the International City-County Management Association. Janet Areson of VML serves as the association’s executive secretary. 



Gloucester County Administrator Brenda Garton serves as VLGMA president.

new colleague in a nearby community, inviting a manager from a neighboring community to lunch, encouraging the professional development of a staff member by bringing them to a conference, or reaching out to a member in transition. Supporting colleagues and staff promotes the association’s goals of strengthening the quality of local government management and aiding in the improvement and proficiency of local administrators.

Finding ways to support colleagues in small communities came from Garton’s experience with a VLGMA initiative last year. In June 2013, VLGMA President Randy Wheeler, Poquoson city manager, set a goal to visit with managers in their communities across Virginia. VLGMA officers and executive committee members participated in this initiative. Wheeler believed visiting managers would give the association a better idea of the interests, concerns and needs of managers, as well

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VBCOA continues to push building safety initiatives

EACH YEAR THE AFTERMATH of natural and man-made disasters vividly illustrates the importance of strong and up-to-date building codes. Buildings that are well constructed and meet modern building standards withstand the force of gale-force winds and the dislocations of earthquakes. The Virginia Building and Code Officials Association takes its mission of improving public safety through building code enforcement very seriously. It fulfills its mission through its strong support for continuing education and building code development and enforcement.

This year VBCOA members participated in the updating of national building code standards that took effect this past July. VBCOA also reaffirmed its commitment to education by focusing on training opportunities offered in the association's

materials that can be offered anywhere in the state, and have been made available to the chairs of the eight regions.

May was building safety month and VBCOA members across the state sponsored events throughout Virginia focusing on fire safety, disaster mitigation, back yard safety and green energy.

VBCOA members actively promote building safety and improved code enforcement on the international, national and state levels, as well as in their home communities. Fairfax County Code Specialist Guy Tomberlin is the vice president of the International Code Council, which is the association that develops the building codes used in most of the United States and in many countries around the world. Lynn Underwood, Norfolk building official, is a member of the board of directors for ICC.

The association also has a long history of promoting the development of strong building codes to help ensure building safety even in the event of natural or man-made disasters. Numerous Virginia officials serve on the ICC committees that develop codes and ensure professional standards for building safety professionals. This year VBCOA also sponsored scholarship programs that enabled members to participate in code development hearings and educational training sessions at the national and state level.

During this past year, VBCOA members promoted building safety at the state level through membership on the Board of Housing and Community Development, the Board for Contractors, the Manufactured Housing Board, and the State Technical Advisory Review Board. Many members also serve as instructors in the Jack A. Proctor Virginia Building Code Academy, which offers training classes required for certification of building officials and inspectors.

VBCOA's officers for 2012-13 are President Cathy Cook, Blacksburg; First Vice President Sean Farrell, Prince William County; Second Vice President John Walsh, Fredericksburg; Sergeant At Arms David Beahm, Warren County; and Immediate Past President Kris Bridges, Martinsville.

VBCOA's website at www.vbcoa.org has links to educational and promotional materials on VBCOA. VML Director of Research Mary Jo Fields serves as executive director of VBCOA. 



Blacksburg Building Official Cathy Cook serves as VBCOA president.

eight regions, thus helping to offset training costs in difficult budget times. The association also participated in a conference in Henrico County this past April that was held in conjunction with two other building safety associations, thus allowing for cross-training on codes ranging from energy efficiency to plumbing and mechanical.

The association celebrated its 85th anniversary at its annual conference held in Blacksburg. In addition to offering training on the updated codes that took effect this past July, the conference featured training on public records and on participating in web-based national code development. Finally, the association's education committee developed videos and training ma-

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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.



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Wakefield

Energy legislation kept MEPAV busy

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSIDERED more than 50 significant energy and environmental-related measures of interest to the members of the Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia in 2014. While certain revisions were made to the major electric utility regulation statutes, none of the changes adversely affected the municipal electric utilities.

The legislature considered a measure to allow the State

energy portfolio standard (RPS). Virginia's municipally-owned electric utilities recognize the importance of renewable energy but do not see a need for a mandatory RPS.

The association and its legislative consultant, Thomas Dick, monitored the work of the General Assembly's legislative committees and subcommittees throughout the year as they reviewed proposed legislation.

In addition to General Assembly work, MEPAV held its annual conference in Virginia Beach May 21-23 with presentations by speakers on a number of topics.

Sue Kelly, CEO/president of the American Public Power Association (APPA), along with APPA General Counsel Delia Patterson, updated attendees on federal regulatory and legislative initiatives. Ron Kuckro a reporter from *Energy Wire*, spoke about disruptive challenges posed by the transforming of the electric utility business.

Ninety-three MEPAV members and guests attended the conference. In addition, 24 businesses and 11 utilities were represented.

In addition to the conference, members and vendors also met at the fall Engineering & Operations Workshop held in Harrisonburg. There were 49 attendees, 28 utility members and 21 vendors. Some topics and activities included: poll attachment issues and strategies,

safety leadership and a tour of special fleet test and repair facilities. There was also a spring meeting in Radford in March. Topics included dam safety, data centers and right of way issues; Battery 101/ Maintenance and Operations; smart grid challenges and opportunities; safety awareness and a roundtable discussion. There were 50 attendees including 32 utility members and 18 vendors.

In its 60th year, MEPAV has 45 individual members who work for the 16 municipal electric utilities in the state. The membership also includes 16 honorary members and 27 companies with interest in the operation of municipal electric utilities.

Municipal electric utilities in Virginia have effectively served their customer-owners since the late 1800's. MEPAV's mission remains focused on meeting the needs of its members by providing information and support to those 16 localities that operate electric utilities. 



Ken Ashworth, division director of Danville Power & Light, serves as MEPAV president.

Corporation Commission (SCC) to exercise authority over local government utilities when agreements over utility line crossings could not be reached under the state's Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA). The legislation was revised before final passage to allow the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), instead of the SCC, to resolve any impasse on utility line relocations in the limited situations when road projects are being developed under the PPTA. The rates and operations of municipal electric utilities continue to be regulated by their local governing bodies.

The General Assembly approved legislation providing an exemption from local taxation for solar energy equipment and facilities owned or operated by a business. The exemption is limited to projects equaling 20 megawatts or less and becomes effective for tax years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2015. The legislature also enacted legislation limiting certain restrictions on solar energy by community associations.

The legislature considered and rejected legislation that would have directed the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation to study the establishment of a mandatory renewable

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VEPGA negotiates new 4-year contract with Dominion

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT ARE members of the association that negotiates electricity rates with Dominion Virginia Power will see no increase in their base rates through June 30, 2018.

Under a new four-year agreement between Dominion and the Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association (VEPGA) that took effect Aug. 1, there will be no increase in overall rates in the first fiscal year, which began July 1. In subsequent years, rates will be adjusted each July 1 to reflect a number of the utility's fluctuating costs associated with generating electricity, such as fuel, transmission and construction. The association will be informed of the annual rate adjustment by Jan. 25 each year.

The new contract also expands some of the options available to VEPGA members, including:

- **New rate design for large users.** Four of VEPGA's largest users of electricity are eligible for a new, lower rate.
- **New rate design for LED streetlights.** In an effort to lower the monthly rates for LED streetlights, Dominion will allow VEPGA members the option of installing them on existing poles. The option, which will take effect Jan. 1, is designed to lower the cost of switching to more energy efficient LED lights.
- **Customer construction pilot.** A pilot program will allow VEPGA members to use outside contractors – instead of Dominion – to construct certain electricity infrastructure that serves their facilities.
- **New renewable energy options.** VEPGA members may participate in established pilot programs – currently available to regular Dominion customers – that will allow them to generate renewable energy on site.
- **More cost savings for reducing electricity use on high demand days.** A new rate schedule will offer even lower rates than are currently available for users who can reduce or eliminate usage on certain high priced days.

Additionally, the new contract addresses the following customer service issues:

- **Streetlight repair assessment.** In response to VEPGA concerns that streetlights are not repaired in a timely fashion, Dominion will audit streetlight repairs during the first three months of the contract.
- **Traffic signals.** Dominion will reduce the operating cost for certain traffic signals that are not used constantly.

- **Line extensions.** Dominion will make available to VEPGA customers a new policy that should reduce costs for the extension of underground lines.

VEPGA was formed in 2002 in response to legislation that deregulated the electricity industry in 1999. For more than two decades prior to that, the Virginia Municipal League and the Virginia Association of Counties jointly sponsored a “steering committee” to negotiate rates and service with Dominion.



Steve Sinclair, chief of the Public Utilities Branch for Fairfax County, serves as chairman of VEPGA.

VEPGA is a joint powers association with its authority spelled out in the state code.

Through membership in VEPGA, local governments negotiate their electricity rates directly with the utility. VEPGA employs counsel and consultants with expertise in energy matters to take advantage of Virginia law allowing localities to negotiate rates, terms and conditions rather than have them set by the State Corporation Commission (SCC). By not being charged rates set by the SCC, VEPGA members have realized annual savings of about \$16 million since 2011. This translates into a 4.3 percent savings.

Steve Sinclair, chief of the Public Utilities Branch for Fairfax County, is chairman of VEPGA, a VML affiliate organization. VML Director of Environmental Policy Joe Lerch serves as executive secretary. VEPGA's membership includes 170 cities, towns, counties and other political subdivisions. Learn more at www.vepga.org. 

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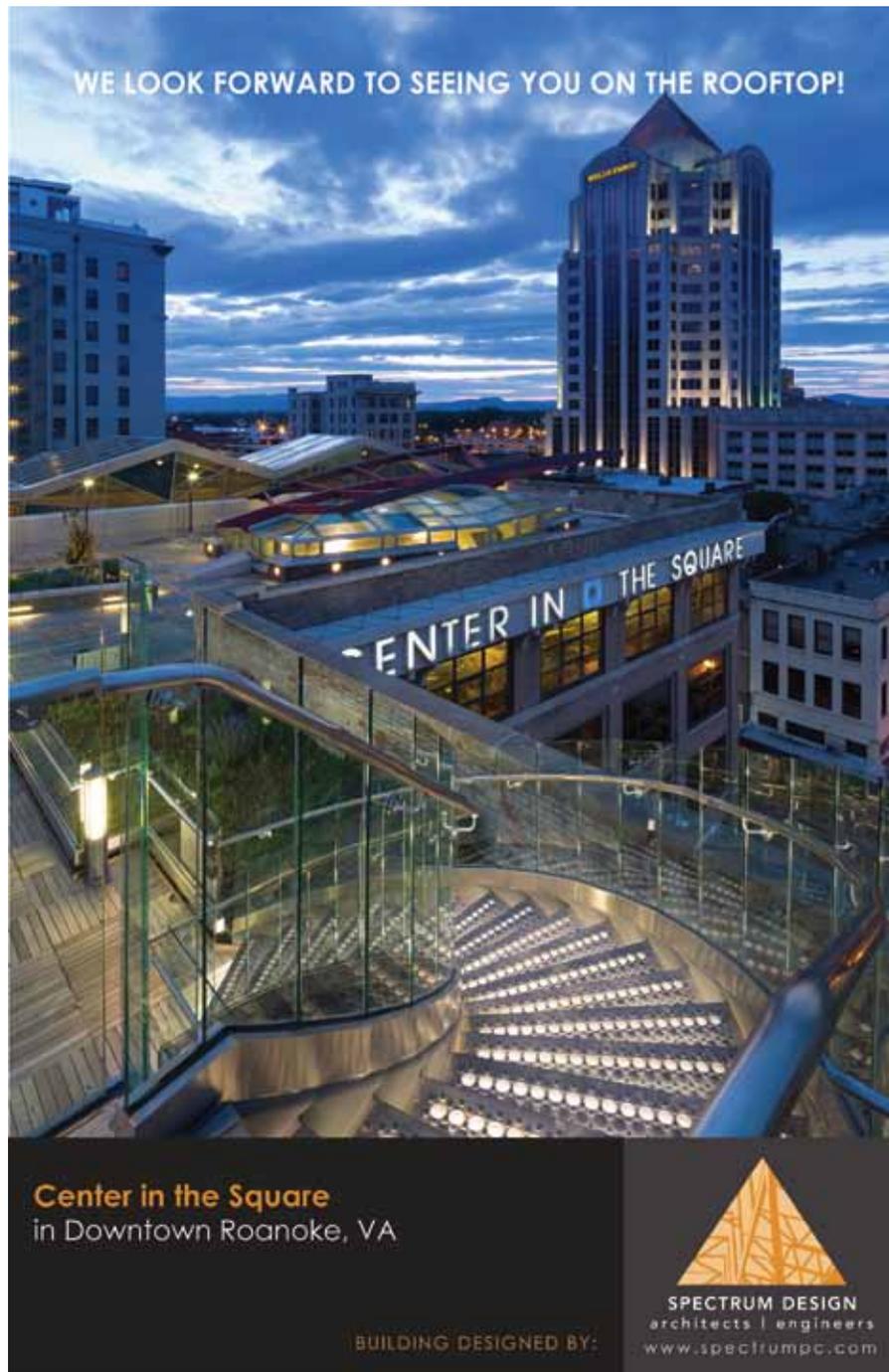
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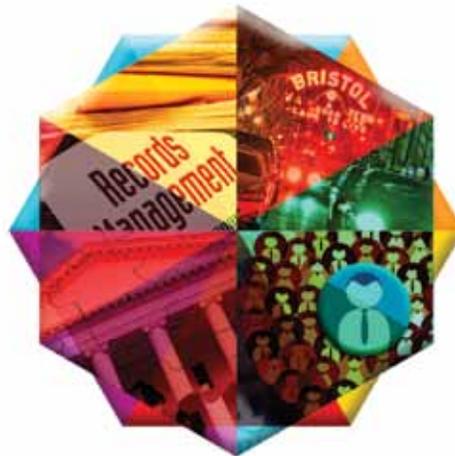
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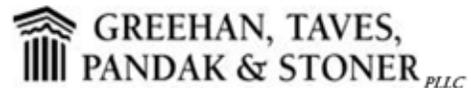
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