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TOWN & CITY

RICHMOND

The people,
the history,
the issues that
shape a city



2015 THE FUTURE OF VIRGINIA 324 PLACES OCTOBER 4-6 VML ANNUAL CONFERENCE • RICHMOND

Inside:
2015 Achievement
Award Winners

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VIRGINIA TOWN & CITY



About the cover

The city and the river aren't worlds apart in Richmond, but woven together. Offices, shops and restaurants overlook the river where kayakers and paddleboarders glide along the banks of downtown Richmond.

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Features

Welcome to Richmond

The host city for this year's annual conference is a community that is learning to embrace its past and confront current social and economic challenges head on. Richmond is fast becoming a mecca for the arts, cuisine, outdoor adventure, sporting events and more. The population is on the rise and entrepreneurs are finding a warm welcome.

Pages 5-11

Virginia Municipal League 2015 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.

Pages 20-34



Announcing the winners of the 2015 VML Achievement Awards

From Halifax to Marion to Virginia Beach, our winners represent cities and town of all sizes across the state. Here are the inspiring stories behind the seven award-winning projects – the who, why and how they came to fruition.

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Virginia is our home now

TWO YEARS AGO, MY family agreed to pack up and move across the country for me to pursue this amazing opportunity. I am so blessed to have a job that I love and my family is blessed to be living in this state. There are so many beautiful places to see and wonderful places to visit. The history of the Commonwealth is unparalleled and we have done our best to experience as much as we can since our arrival here.

Earlier this year, you heard from my children expressing their favorite things in Virginia. Now, it's my husband's turn. I will never be able to thank Deric enough for all he has done to help with our move from Kansas and transition into life in Virginia. So, I wanted to give him an opportunity to share his thoughts with you....

Reflections from Deric

You never know what the good Lord has planned for you next – that is a lesson he really drove home for me in 2013. My wife Kim and I had agreed that she should apply for the executive directorship of the Virginia Municipal League. She really wanted this opportunity and was sitting on pins and needles wondering whether she would be selected. God gave me the sight to see what she could not. I was *so certain* when she came back from her interview that we would soon be relocating.

“So, what’s in Virginia?” I wondered. History, that’s what. So much of what America is today was born here in Virginia.

I’ve been something of a history geek for most of my life, but it had never really occurred to me that much of the core history of America happened in this one state. The colonies were founded about an hour from our house (depending on traffic). So many presidents have lived here that I wouldn’t be surprised if one is mowing the lawn next door as I write this. Yorktown, Hampton Roads, Appomattox Court House, and countless other places, where the greatest country in the world was

given its shape are within reach everywhere you go. Whew!

The Winn family most recently got its history fix at the American Armored Foundation Tank Museum in Danville. One of the first things you’re greeted by as you walk in the door of the main display floor is a German PaK 40 Anti-Tank Gun. These fearsome weapons took a substantial total on our forces as they bravely advanced through Western Europe after D-day.

As you continue, you find many other legendary weapons and vehicles of WWII such as the Soviet T-34-85, a late model Panzer IV of the Wehrmacht, and of course the M-4 Sherman, the backbone of the Western Allied armored forces. Post war/ Cold war vehicles are also much in evidence, like the M-103, the only U.S. heavy tank to ever see active service. There are also other foreign rarities, such as a Swedish Stridsvagn 74, one of only seven of these tanks still in existence.

I’m a Kansan born and bred. I will always love the Flint Hills, beautiful thunder storms as they look nowhere else on earth, and Kansas Jayhawks basketball. However, Virginia is my family’s home now, and blessed be, I’m finding it really easy to fall in love with this place, in spite of the traffic.





City of Richmond



DWIGHT C. JONES
MAYOR

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



As Mayor of the City of Richmond, it is my pleasure to welcome you to RVA. Hosting the 2015 VML Annual Conference is a great opportunity for us to showcase all that is happening in Virginia's capital city.

By the time you arrive, we will have just bid farewell to thousands of cycling athletes and visitors from over 70 countries who were in Richmond for the UCI Road World Championships (Worlds). Richmond is only the second U.S. city to host the Worlds in the event's 82-year history. The event was also viewed by hundreds of millions around the world, presenting tremendous tourism and economic development opportunity for the region, and an opportunity

to tell Richmond's story like never before.

Richmond is a vibrant, modern destination continually ranked among the best cities for business, health, and outdoor adventure. We are a city of history, creativity, culture and entertainment. Whether you are a history buff, a sports enthusiast, an arts lover, or a foodie, Richmond is a year-round destination with something for everyone.

Our culinary and cultural offerings have been recognized nationally. There are museums, landmarks, universities, theaters and many places of significance to visit and explore. We boast trendy boutiques and restaurants, craft beers, numerous sports attractions and outdoor pursuits including one of the United States' largest river park systems.

Richmond is also a place that celebrates its cultural diversity, which shines in such events as our annual Juneteenth Freedom Celebration, the Capital City Kwanzaa Festival, the Richmond Jazz Festival, and the Que Pasa Hispanic Cultural Festival, to name a few.

To get the full Richmond experience, be sure to get out of your car and explore. Ride a bike on the more than 23 miles of bike lanes that we have developed in response to our Bike Master Plan. We are building a robust network of bikeways across and throughout the City and the 52-mile Virginia Capital Trail begins right in our downtown.

We know you will enjoy Richmond's incredible beauty and diverse attractions, and that your experience here will be memorable. We urge you to come back to visit us again and again.

Sincerely,

Dwight C. Jones
Mayor

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Richmond's Public Art Master Plan

THE CITY OF RICHMOND is growing in recognition as a creative capital. Dubbed the “center of creativity” as part of its grassroots RVA branding campaign, the city is upping the ante with respect to its public art scene.

Currently all public art projects in the city of Richmond receive funding through a 1% allocation for art, earmarked from the City's Capital Budget for all new or renovation construction projects having budgets over \$250,000. The purpose of the program is to enrich the social and physical environment of public facilities throughout the city. Following the city's recent construction of four new schools and a new justice center as well as other capital construction and improvements, the public arts budget presently stands at over \$3 million.

With the level of available resources increasing, Richmond's Department of Planning Development and Review and the Public Art Commission have kicked off the city's first-ever Public Art Master Plan. Following a request for proposals and interviews, the city selected nationally-recognized public art consultant team Gail M. Goldman Associates, in partnership with Gretchen Freeman & Company, to lead the master planning process.

The consultant team is now researching and meeting with arts groups and stakeholders. They will identify best practices for the Public Art Commission and create a customized public art master plan for Richmond that will elevate the arts programs, stimulate tourism and economic opportunity, provide

community collaborations and showcase the unique character of Richmond's already thriving art scene.

The City of Richmond sees this roadmap as a way to ensure that the public art program in Richmond is reflective of the diverse communities in Richmond and will ensure equal opportunities for local and regional artists. It will also strengthen collaboration between neighborhood groups, local arts agencies and city departments.

Richmond's Public Art Master Plan will be developed with the input of the community, key stakeholders and other arts groups, so that it truly reflects Richmond's vision for public art. The City also hired a full-time Public Art Coordinator that will support the Public Art Master Plan team as it embarks on a series of public meetings and focus groups for the public to give input and feedback on the types of public art projects funded by the city.

The plan will elevate the arts programs, stimulate tourism and showcase the unique character of Richmond's already thriving art scene.

About the authors

Ellyn Parker is the Public Art Coordinator for the City of Richmond and Tammy Hawley is Press Secretary to the Mayor of Richmond.



The “ArtWhino” mural by artist James Bullough is located at Broad and Lombardy Streets. Photo courtesy of Office of the Press Secretary.

Stand beneath our famous mountaintop star and you can see the future wherever you look.

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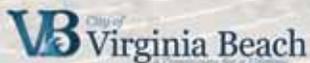
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Golden Opportunity in Community Policing

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP TAKES time, trust and, at its heart, two groups that are passionate about achieving a single goal. In Richmond, that golden ring is a safer community.

“These are not the best times for law enforcement agencies,” said Richmond Police Chief Alfred Durham. “Every time you turn on the television, there seems to be a negative interaction between law enforcement and a citizen. But we’re not seeing that in Richmond.”

Since 2005, the Richmond Police Department has been reaching out to city residents through community policing and engagement efforts. Crime is trending downward in the city with the incidence of homicide, aggravated assault and burglary all dropping by nearly 20 percent. High officer visibility, regular interaction with citizens, and a number of strong community programs are credited with the significant reduction in crime.

Five focus areas laid out in the 100 Day Plan following Chief Durham’s arrival serve as a guide for the Richmond Police Department and its officers. They are:

- customer care
- police department morale
- safeguarding the community
- youth engagement
- and technology

The Richmond Police Department is making its presence known throughout the community with foot patrols, merchant checks and community walks – all of which offer opportunities for citizens and law enforcement officers to talk face-to-face. Monthly walks through city neighborhoods are a grassroots opportunity for RPD officers to speak to citizens about their concerns and hear recommendations on how to make the community a safer place.

Crime is trending downward in the city with the incidence of homicide, aggravated assault and burglary all dropping by nearly 20 percent.

Police are the Young Adult Police Commissioners, the Police Athletic League (PAL) and the Coalition for Hotel and Motel Properties (CHAMPS). One of the police department’s newest

initiatives, called Peeps & Police, is an effort to bring people of all ages and all walks of life together for an open dialogue.

Citizens are also given a window into the Richmond Police Department through the Citizens Police Academy and the



Police Chief Alfred Durham during a community walkthrough in Creighton Court. Photo by James Mercante.

Multiple Integrated Learning Objectives training (MILO), which allows participants to see the split second decision-making process officers use when responding to incidents. Faith leaders, members of the media, youth and others have experienced MILO, and Durham said they’ve all left with a new perspective on policing.

These ongoing efforts have made Richmond Police Department a model for other agencies whose detectives visit to learn more about its methods and operation. Earlier this year, C-SPAN sat down with Chief Durham and Mayor Dwight Jones to discuss how Richmond Police are getting in front of problems and creating bonds with the community during a time of turbulent interactions with law enforcement across the nation.

For Durham, the key to success lies in eliminating the divide between police and citizens and banding together to truly become one community. “Shared responsibility and trust are the foundation of a community partnership,” said Durham. “We can’t do it alone.”

About the author

Susan Rowland works for the Richmond Police Department.

The Low Line – where three paths meet

THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL STRETCH of road along Richmond's Dock Street where the Kanawha Canal runs beside the Virginia Capital Trail and an old CSX train trestle runs overhead. This spot where the foot path, waterway and train track run together makes the perfect venue for a 5.5 acre environmental and beautification project now underway.

It's called the Low Line and it takes its creative inspiration from the High Line, an elevated un-used CSX railway viaduct running through Manhattan that was transformed into a beautiful urban garden.

“The Low Line is the uncommon event where the necessary elements of timing, circumstance, will, and ability come together to recast a place of great historic, environmental, cultural and economic interest.”

– Jeanette McKittrick, Chair of Capital Trees Board of Trustees

“Rarely does an opportunity to do something so transformative present itself,” said Jeanette McKittrick, chairman of Capital Trees’ board of trustees. “The Low Line is the uncommon event where the necessary elements of timing, circumstance, will, and ability come together to recast a place of great historic, environmental, cultural and economic interest. It is Capital Trees’ vision to help Richmond live up to its stunningly beautiful natural gifts, to work harder to protect the James River, and to work harder, think harder, about landscapes and streetscapes. We’re very grateful that CSX and the City of Richmond have the vision to see the importance of this project and have joined in as true collaborators.”

Project plans for the Low Line include enhancing the area between the Capital Trail and CSX’s rail trestles along the James

River and Kanawha Canal, creating an attractive landscape with primarily native trees, shrubs and perennials, along with storm water mitigation, educational signage and space for interpretive public art.

Mayor Dwight C. Jones expressed his enthusiasm for the project, saying, “This partnership will enhance the beauty of the city’s riverfront as well as the Virginia Capital Trail. Creative partnerships among the city, corporate partners like CSX, and volunteer non-profits like Capital Trees are taking the Richmond resurgence to the next level.”

The Low Line concept is the creation of Capital Trees, which is responsible for the project’s design, funding and execution. In addition to the CSX and City of Richmond donations, the project has attracted significant support from the Cabell Foundation, the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, and the Roller Bottimore Foundation.

“CSX aims to be a positive influence on the communities where we live and work, especially in the areas of environmental sustainability and preservation,” said Bryan Rhode, regional vice president for state government affairs in Virginia for CSX. “Richmond is a key part of our company’s history and our business today – including the nexus of three transportation networks, important rail and transfer facilities, and critical access to the Port of Virginia – so we’re proud to be able to support the exciting Low Line initiative.”

About the author

Tammy Hawley is Press Secretary to the Mayor of Richmond.



Landscapers plant hundreds of flowering plants and trees along the Low Line, a beautiful stretch of Dock Street where a foot path, the waterway and the train track run alongside each other. Photo courtesy of Office of the Press Secretary.

Tackling poverty

The right agenda for Richmond's future



Mayor Jones (r) visits a Workforce Development Program at Strickland Machine Shop. Photo courtesy of Office of the Press Secretary.

IN MANY RESPECTS, the city of Richmond has turned the corner in the past six years.

The city's arts and culture scene is thriving. Its universities continue to be an engine for growth and there are terrific local sports teams at the high school, college and professional levels.

Richmond has a growing reputation as a cool place to be, and people are moving to Richmond at a steady pace. The city has gained about 10,000 residents in the past five years and is now at its highest population level in a generation.

The City Administration sees Richmond's future as bright and its potential unlimited. But the Administration is also quick to note that many of its residents remain excluded from meaningful economic opportunity and too many of its children are growing up in socially isolated, dense pockets of concentrated disadvantage.

Currently, 26 percent of residents in the city of Richmond live below the poverty line. About 46 percent of residents live below double (200 percent) the poverty line and hence lack real economic security. Thirty-nine percent of the city's children

are below the poverty line, and many of these are in households with income below one-half of the poverty line – a measure of extreme economic need.

Mayor Dwight Jones has noted that the burdens of poverty obviously fall hardest on those who are living in or near it. But poverty's impact touches the whole city, and influences almost everything that a city government does. Poverty places a strain on the tax base, raises demands for services and makes the vital work of public education more challenging.

The Anti-Poverty Commission

To tackle this reality, the city administration is making a concerted effort not just to better cope with the consequences of poverty, but to implement a holistic strategy aimed at reducing poverty long-term. In his first term, Mayor Jones established the Mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission, which not only documented the impact and face of poverty in Richmond, but also identified five concrete policy strategies which, taken together, have the potential to finally move the needle.

Five strategies to fight poverty

These strategies include expanded workforce development, targeted economic development, and development of a regional public transit system. Jones' plan also calls for redevelopment of aging public housing communities with a commitment to no involuntary displacement of residents. Finally, the Mayor's Commission calls for innovative educational approaches with the potential to bolster dramatically the success of the school system. The City's efforts even caught the attention of the New York Times, which called the Mayor's plan ambitious and bold.

The Office of Community Wealth Building

An important step is the establishment of the Mayor's Office of Community Wealth Building, part of an initial investment of \$3.4 million in a coordinated poverty reduction strategy aimed at moving the ball forward in all five priority areas. The Office of Community Wealth Building is charged with coordinating implementation of the program, planning its continued development, establishing mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and tracking of its success, being a catalyst for new partnerships and initiatives, and being a focal point for accountability to the public.

To date, the City has made great progress. Richmond is proceeding with the Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit project, bringing a new approach to public transit – a project with potential regional significance. Richmond has also expanded

the capacity of its core workforce development program, the Center for Workforce Innovation, to be able to serve more residents. They have also launched a Good Neighbor Initiative to promote positive resident engagement in our public housing communities.

On the educational front, the city has provided significant financial support to the Middle School Renaissance 2020 program, which is bringing high-quality, out-of-school-time programming to our middle school children, beginning with the "Next Up" program at Henderson Middle School. The Office of Community Wealth Building has also been working with Richmond Public Schools and a variety of community stakeholders to develop new strategies to improve early childhood education and connect many more of our high school graduates to post-secondary opportunities. Jones' budget for FY 2016 included a \$425,000 investment toward the creation of a Promise Scholarship-type program for Richmond, with the aim of ensuring that all Richmond Public School graduates have both the financial means and non-financial support to go on to college or a technical education program. Richmond City Council ratified creation of the Maggie L. Walker Initiative Citizens Advisory Board, which will ensure a strong citizen voice in this ongoing work.

About the author

Thad Williamson works in the Mayor's Office of Community Wealth Building

Priorities against poverty

- expanded workforce development
- targeted economic development
- regional public transit
- improvements in public housing for the aging
- innovation in education

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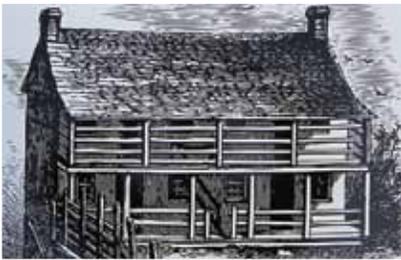
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Slavery History becomes a Heritage Asset

IN 2006, THE RICHMOND SLAVE Trail Commission launched an archaeological assessment of the Lumpkin's Jail site in Shockoe Bottom. The location of Lumpkin's Jail, also known as the Devil's Half Acre, was the holding site for slaves before they were taken to auction houses and sold. During Robert Lumpkin's ownership, the site was known for being a particularly cruel place. Those who tried to escape were publicly beaten and tortured.

In 2008, an archaeological excavation backfilled the site to protect it until it can be safely revealed. What exists there today is a commemorative landscape and interpretation of the original site.

The Richmond Slave Trail Commission, established in 1998, been tasked with not only preserving the history of slavery in the city of Richmond, but helping tell the story that has been overlooked for far too long. Because of the hard work of this group, Richmond has tangible memorials and increasing opportunities to tell a fuller picture of Richmond's and America's history.



Mayor Dwight C. Jones and the city administration recently secured \$11 million from the Commonwealth of Virginia to

begin to develop a heritage site at the site of Lumpkin's Jail and the burial ground. Working with Richmond City Council, the city has committed another \$8 million to this project, for a total of \$19 million – providing this historical site a level of financial support that the project has not had before.

With this funding in hand, and a tangible development within reach, the city of Richmond has embarked on a public engagement journey called “Richmond Speaks.”

Lumpkin's Jail, also known as the Devil's Half Acre, was the holding site for slaves before they were taken to auction houses and sold.

Richmond Speaks is essentially a citywide conversation about progress at the Lumpkin's Jail Site that will inform the future of this important heritage site. After completing the public engagement process and the design, the project team anticipates a groundbreaking on the new heritage site by mid-2016. The new heritage site will provide an opportunity for locals and visitors to discover more of the history of Richmond, Virginia and the country.

About the author

Tammy Hawley is the press secretary to the mayor of Richmond.



At the Lumpkin's Jail excavation site, Senior Researcher Matt Laird of the James River Institute for archeology shares findings with the group. Inset: a drawing of the Lumpkin's Jail as it looked in the 1850s.



Announcing the winners of the 2015 VML Achievement Awards

MORE THAN 50 REMARKABLE PROJECTS were entered into this year's competition for the VML Achievement Awards. The VML awards have a distinguished history as the most prestigious local government awards in the state. The statewide competition recognizes innovative problem-solving, excellence in management, increased citizen participation and improved services to citizens.

There are seven awards – five in population categories, one for communications, and the President's award. This year's winners are:

President's Award

The Town of Halifax for the Banister River Gateway Project

Population under 5,000

The Town of Shenandoah for its Community Computer Center

Population 5,000 – 10,000

The Town of Marion for Pop Up Marion – a downtown economic revitalization program

Population 10,001 – 35,000

The City of Fredericksburg for its Gun Give-Back Program

Population 35,001 – 90,000

The Town of Leesburg for Department of Utilities customer service enhancements

Population 90,000 +

The City of Portsmouth for an Area Report Card

The Communications Award

The City of Virginia Beach for rebranding of the Virginia Beach Landfill and Resource Recovery Center

The stories behind these inspiring programs – the who, why and how they came to fruition – are told in the pages that follow. Each story offers something that other localities can learn from or even replicate.

Judges for this year's competition were: Anne Wescott, retired Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications at the Virginia Department of Education; Bill Ernst, retired manager of the Policy Office of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; Maria "Keech" leGrand, founder of consulting firm leGrand, Inc., former deputy cabinet member for both Governors Robb and Baliles and former advance staff to President Carter; and Rosemary Wilson, Council member for the City of Virginia Beach. Wilson recused herself from judging in the communications category in which the City of Virginia Beach won.

The awards are presented at a banquet at the VML Annual Conference, October 6 in Richmond.



Past VML Achievement Award winners

2014

- St. Paul – under 5,000
- Pulaski – 5,000-10,000
- Falls Church – 10,001-35,000
- Danville – 35,001-90,000
- Norfolk – over 90,000
- Poquoson – Communications
- Rocky Mount – President's Award

2013

- Clifton Forge – under 5,000
- Strasburg – 5,000-10,000
- Martinsville – 10,001-35,000
- Leesburg – 35,001-90,000
- Arlington – over 90,000
- City of Fairfax – Communications
- Virginia Beach – President's Award

2012

- Wise – under 5,000
- Marion – 5,000-10,000
- Falls Church – 10,001-35,000
- Danville – 35,001-90,000
- Portsmouth – over 90,000
- Fredericksburg – Communications
- Abingdon – President's Award

2011

- Blackstone – under 5,000
- Abingdon – 5,000-10,000
- Winchester – 10,001-35,000
- Leesburg – 35,001-90,000
- Richmond – over 90,000
- Blacksburg – Communications
- Manassas – President's Award

2010

- Elkton – under 5,000
- Purcellville – 5,000-10,000
- Herndon – 10,001-35,000
- Blacksburg – 35,001-90,000
- Alexandria – over 90,000
- Hampton – Communications
- Galax – President's Award



A gateway to the past; a window of tranquility

DRIVING DOWN VIRGINIA SCENIC Byway 360, travelers will see landmarks welcoming them to Halifax and a place to pull over for a view of the Banister River.

These inviting signs are part of the Banister River Gateway. Opened in 2014, the Gateway includes a scenic wayside overlooking the river, complete with pervious parking, landscaping, decorative lighting, stone walkways, and a kayak/canoe launch. It is the culmination of nearly a decade of beautification on this historic site.

The gateway project was designed in concert with the replacement of the dilapidated

Banister Bridge by VDOT in 2012 and the designation of the Banister River as part of the Virginia State Scenic River System in 2013.

The wayside includes a central plaza featuring a stone kiosk that will house interpretive panels telling the story of generations of Americans on this river. Near this spot, in 1871, American General Nathanael Greene won his successful race against Lord Cornwallis and resupplied his troops at Camp Halifax Courthouse north of the Banister River.

Other panels will detail the natural history of the river and show how Native Americans gained sustenance from the river. Along the water, kayakers can see some of Virginia's best preserved batteau sluices where colonial vessels launched into the waters of what was then a busy commerce mainline.

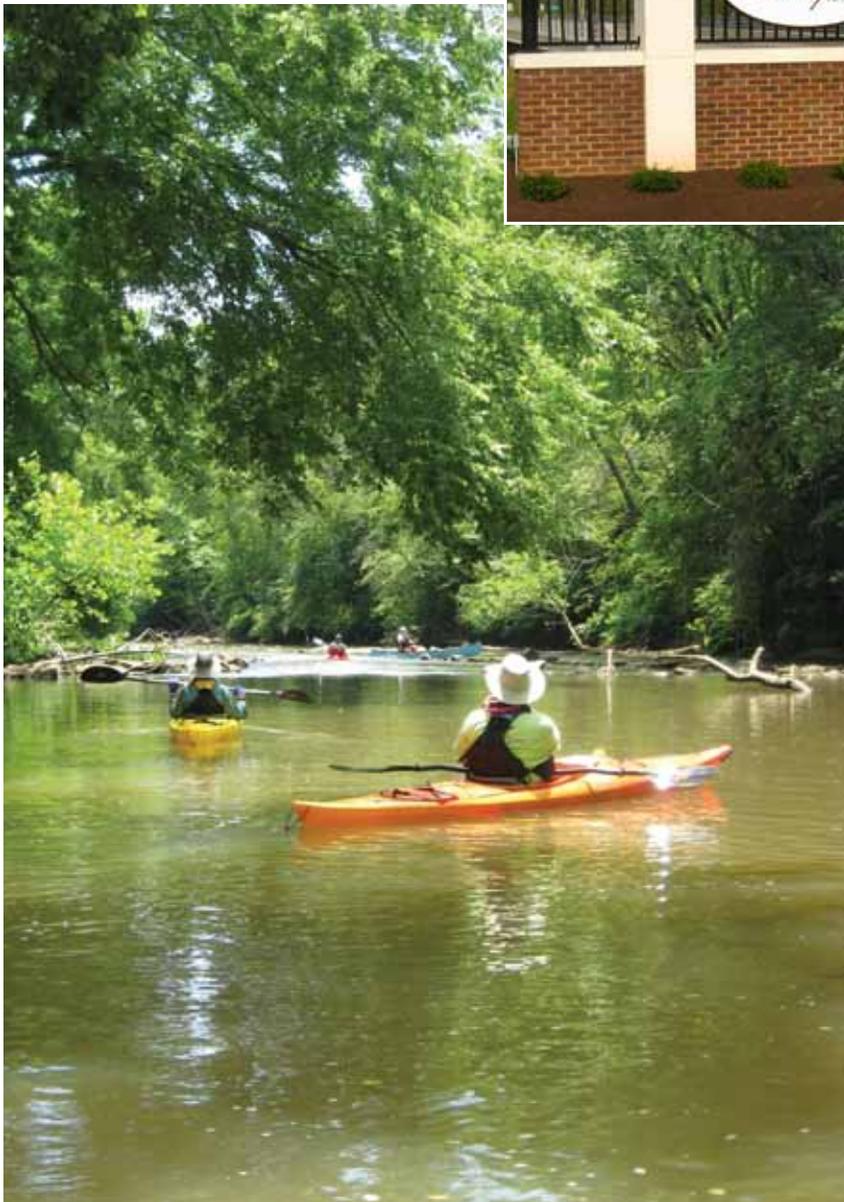
The vision for the Banister River Gateway has inspired many people to contribute, including Councilman Jack Dunavant, who donated a portion of his family's land for the location of the scenic wayside pullover. The new span with decorative lights was named the James Stone Easley Memorial Bridge in honor of Dunavant's grandfather, a former Delegate and State Senator.

The kayak and canoe launch was designed and installed by the Roanoke River Basin Association to develop a regional river trail system, which is now marketed as the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway.

"This wonderful stretch of tranquil wilderness and undisturbed river will attract visitors as a destination," says Town Manager Carl Espy, noting its proximity for kayak and canoeing enthusiasts from both Richmond and Raleigh.

Already the river access has brought new business to the town in the form of an outfitting company that will provide kayak rentals and shuttles to and from the river.

Through the creation of the Banister River Gateway, the Town of Halifax provides its residents and visitors a warm welcome to the pristine beauty and remarkable history of the Banister River.



The Banister River Gateway provides a beautiful entrance into Halifax, a scenic wayside, and a kayak/canoe launch that is attracting river enthusiasts from across the region.



Town of Shenandoah

Population under 5,000 Winner

Shenandoah computer center brings broadband access home

MANY OF US TAKE INTERNET access for granted. The people of Shenandoah do not. It wasn't until ten years ago that their town got high speed Internet access thanks to a USDA Broadband grant that funded a community computer center.

Today, the Shenandoah Community Computer Center is a buzzing hub for business owners, students and seniors alike. With 25 computers, director Joyce Fluharty and one dedicated volunteer, Bruce Arnold, teach dozens of classes – from introduction to computers to Microsoft Office to genealogy workshops. The center teaches something for residents at every age and stage in life.

On a typical day in the computer center, students are researching homework assignments, adults are applying for jobs and taking online college courses, and seniors are delving into genealogy research. Residents can use the computers and internet for just \$1 per month.

The center has enabled residents to launch online businesses while also providing printing services – like flyers, business cards,

brochures and booklets – for local storefront businesses. The printing center, launched in 2007, generates more than \$5,000 annually. While some people in the area have a home computer, they often do not have a printer, so the printing center enables them to print family photos, calendars and important documents.

In 2013, the center provided special classes to assist the workers displaced by the closing of the Genie plant. The center was the place they went to apply for jobs, to file for unemployment benefits and to learn the computer skills that ultimately helped them to get better jobs.

In a town with a population under 5,000, the Shenandoah Community Computer Center serves more than 3,000 people annually. Not all live in Shenandoah. Fluharty says people come from 30 miles away to use the computers. Some travel from as far away as Charlottesville to attend her genealogy workshop.



The Shenandoah Community Computer Center is co-located with the Police Department.

Town of Marion

Population: 5,001 - 10,000 Winner

Pop Up Marion brings Main Street back to life

MARION'S MAIN STREET was relatively healthy in the early 2000s. But after 2008, storefronts began closing one by one, and the town was left with more "For Rent" signs than "Open for Business" signs. In the wake of the Great Recession, a once-vibrant downtown was shuttering its doors.

"It's a tough thing to see more than a decade of hard work by a lot of good folks disappear almost overnight," said Ken Heath, Marion's Director of Community and Economic Development.

So Heath and a local team put their heads together to come up with a way to turn the tide. They applied for an economic restructuring grant from

the Virginia Main Street program. Their proposal was a new take on an unusual project in New York City that filled storefronts for a short time with pop-up businesses.

Marion took the New York idea further by creating a full service business development program. The Marion team brought

in the Chamber of Commerce and other groups to help launch a Small Business Boot Camp, an eight-week crash course in owning and operating a business.

The class filled quickly. Qualifying graduates competed for one of three \$5,000 start-up grants.

The first boot camp resulted in a total of four new business and 10 new jobs. Two graduates received grants: Rufflections pet grooming and the Herb House Trading Company, a multi-use retail and community space in a historic building.

Since that initial boot camp, eight more courses have been offered. In total, 173 aspiring entrepreneurs have attended.

The program has drawn additional support from Virginia Main Street and Wells Fargo, who have invested \$85,000 in the program to date.

The program is now being used as a model for other Virginia Main Street Communities. "I am honored and humbled," said Heath, "that something we put together here can be used in any town, large or small, to train people so they can follow their dreams."

Pop Up Marion by the numbers

59 graduates

19 new businesses filling storefronts

87 new jobs

Downtown vacancy drops from 17% to 5%

Over \$1.6 million in private re-investment



A new way to get guns off the street

WHEN CHUCK FRYE, JR. was just nine years old, he witnessed a gun murder in his neighborhood. Since then, he has lost more than one childhood friend to shootings.

These incidents left a deep impression and inspired Frye to take a more active role in his community by running for City Council. His first initiative as a freshman Council Member was to advocate for a gun buy-back program to remove some guns from the street. City Manager Bev Cameron sent the project idea to Police Chief David Nye, who responded enthusiastically.

But legislation enacted by the General Assembly places certain regulations on gun buy-back programs – such as the requirement that the guns be offered back for sale to licensed dealers.

So the staff of the police department came up with an



Lt. H. D. Jones (left) and Lt. Barry Taylor catalog the weapons surrendered during the gun give-back. The guns are then stored for later destruction. Photo by Robert A. Martin.

alternative. With Frye's support, a gun *give-back* program was approved. Instead of being paid for their guns, citizens would be asked to voluntarily surrender their guns to support the safety of the community.

The city also engaged the help of local philanthropist Doris Buffett who agreed to give \$100 per surrendered firearm to local charities.

In December 2014, a steady stream of gun owners – some travelling from as far as 50 miles away – came to the Police Department to drop off firearms. Officers

catalogued and stored the firearms for later destruction. Sixty firearms were collected, including handguns and long guns. The program also raised \$6,700 for local charities.

Several donors expressed their thanks and relief for the chance to remove a gun from their homes without the worry of the weapon making its way back into the community.

E-Alert: Did you leave the garden hose running?

HAVE YOU EVER OPENED a water bill to find you owe \$3,000 or more? That's usually how people first discover a leak in their underground plumbing system, an irrigation system malfunction or other unknown source.

While these instances happen rarely in Leesburg, they are a major burden for the roughly 60 customers per year who open a \$3,000-plus water bill. The Leesburg Department of Utilities wanted to help customers avoid shocks like these.

In 2013, the Utilities, Finance and Information Technology Departments launched a customer self-service portal that allowed residents to pay their bills online. The Utilities Department took that opportunity to develop portal software that allows customers to view their daily water usage.

In 2014, the Utilities Department went a step further to develop software that would send e-mails alerts to customers when their daily water usage exceeds a set amount. Customers sign up for the alerts and set the thresholds that



Utilities Technician Andy Shadwick gives a leak check packet to a resident after checking her water meter.

trigger notifications.

But this still requires residents to take the initiative to monitor their water usage. "We recognize that, for most customers, water service is not something they think about until something goes wrong, like getting an unexpectedly high bill," said Amy Wyks, Director of Utilities. "We know most people don't have the time to monitor their daily usage, so we use the same reporting tools to look for anomalies in usage that could signal a leak and then we proactively reach out to the customer."

Based on system alerts, the utilities staff now performs an average of 500 leak checks per quarter. This practice saves their customers thousands of dollars, not to mention the grief and aggravation that can come with a huge bill.

By combining high-tech tools with proactive outreach to customers, the Town of Leesburg Department of Utilities has set a new standard for customer service.



Portsmouth targets hot spots to help neighborhoods in need

THE MENTION OF DATA analysis may elicit a big yawn, but don't dismiss this award-winning project. The City of Portsmouth found a way to make data light up and scream, "This neighborhood block needs help!"



Heat maps show city blocks that have many violations and calls for city services.

The Area Report Cards, created by the city's Department of Neighborhood Advancement, examine calls for service across many city departments – including police, fire, and EMS – and plots them on a map to create "hot spots" that signal micro areas needing the city's attention. New data drills down to the block level, enabling the city to more narrowly target problems. The areas also receive a data-driven report card grade, which further helps the city to act on qualitative data, not just anecdotal belief.

"By engaging several departments, the city is able to determine if there are correlations between various types of calls for service," said Fred Brusso, Director of Neighborhood Advancement. For example, in areas where police are receiving calls for burglaries, drugs or prostitution, the city looks to see if there are vacant buildings that need fixing up or tearing down to eliminate those hiding spots. Neighborhood Impact Officers are also going

door-to-door to tell residents what they can do to deter crime on their property.

In areas where the city receives a lot of property maintenance and nuisance calls, officials are educating residents about what looks bad – broken blinds, toys in the yard – and what improves the look of their homes. As an incentive to clean up, some neighborhoods have launched programs not just for yard of the month, but also most improved yard of the month.

In areas where EMS receives a large number of calls, the city examines the types of calls. If, for example, many of the calls are from elderly needing simple assistance, not emergency assistance, the city will look to engage churches, Meals on Wheels, or other non-profit organizations to help these residents.

Going forward, the yearly data analysis and report cards will be able to show city departments how effective their efforts in hot spots have been. Are they still hot spots a year later, or have residents seen an improvement in places they live? That's the ultimate goal.



City staff explain an Area Report Card to a local resident.

City of Virginia Beach

Landfilling is the end of the road

THE LANDFILL IS THE LAST stop. That's the most important message the Virginia Beach Landfill and Resource Recovery Center wants to deliver. Through this rebranding initiative, the Center not only improved its name and its look, but also expanded its recyclable materials, and created a one-way driving loop through the facility, making the landfill the last option.

Today, cars and trucks are greeted and directed through a series of stops, starting with donation boxes provided by Goodwill. Next is a series of recycling stops that include areas for household hazardous wastes, electronics, oyster shells (used to reseed oyster beds), concrete, plastic bags (a marine hazard), yard debris (used to make mulch), and many other materials. In 2014, the landfill disposed of 120,000 pounds of household hazardous waste and 230 tons electronics.

In addition to the tremendous environmental impact, these expanded recycling and donation options save the city money and, in some cases, even create revenue. Last year, the

Center's recycling programs produced nearly \$200,000 in total revenue.

The Landfill and Resource Recovery Center has received a warm welcome by residents. More than 100,000 residents visit the Center every year. "A lot of people do recycling well, but want the opportunity to do more," says John Barnes, Waste Management Administrator for the city. Thanks to the Center's re-branding, expansion and re-design, now they can.

The Center engaged local media to get the word out to residents. Newschannel 3 provided extensive coverage through a week of pre-promotions leading up to a major feature story. Facebook, twitter and a web video furthered the message. Staff worked community events throughout the year to spread the word about the Center's expansion.

The Landfill and Resource Recovery Center received national attention for its re-branding when it won the MarCom Branding Refresh Award from the Association of Marketing and Communications professionals this year. The Virginia Recycling Association also awarded its 2015 Outstanding Municipal Program to the City of Virginia Beach.



VML Insurance Programs celebrate 35 years of protecting local governments

THIS YEAR, VML INSURANCE Programs (VMLIP) celebrate 35 years of service to Virginia's local governments. A lot has changed since 1980 when the pool was formed. Back then, commercial insurance rates rose from year to year while coverage availability lessened. Local governments were left with two choices – to pay significantly higher premiums, or self-insure. That's when VMLIP was formed.

Then known as the Virginia Municipal Group Self Insurance Association, the pool began offering workers' compensation coverage with 10 charter members and \$730,000 in annual premiums. Today, VMLIP has more than 480 members who contribute in excess of \$54 million in premiums annually.

"As the pool has grown, we have focused on partnerships with members to reduce risk," said VMLIP Managing Director Steve Craig. "We provide them with services and resources they can use to mitigate their risks, lowering losses and creating greater financial strength."

Dedicated safety consultants for each member provide safety recommendations and inspections, as well as training and personalized one-on-one interactions with members. Over the years, consulting has expanded to human resources, law enforcement, and communications to mitigate exposures in their respective areas.

"Many times, it's because of our strong member relationships that we are able to quickly identify member needs and move forward to develop a coverage to address them," said Craig. "For example, we offer coverages including cyber liability, earthquake, flood, Line of Duty Act and our short- and long-term disability offerings."

The pool has continually expanded from the workers' compensation coverage initially offered. Over the years, VMLIP has added a full array of property and liability coverages.

"As a pool, our members share risk. That's why risk management is key and it's why we provide resources and services to mitigate those risks, such as business continuity services," said Craig.

"When we identified that two-thirds of our members didn't have a business continuity plan in place, we contracted with Agility Recovery to provide things like power, technology, and office space in the event of a disaster – but more importantly to offer assistance to members in developing a plan."

The pool has also expanded the number of resources made available to members, such as the Nurse-Triage 24 (NT24) program, providing 24/7/365 access to a registered nurse for injured workers via a toll-free hotline. Additional resources include the First-Fill Prescription program, contract review, and property appraisals.

One of those campaigns – Where the Rubber Meets the Road (WTRMTR) – was recently presented the 2015 Award for Excellence from the Association of Governmental Risk Insurance Pools.

The innovative defensive driving instruction campaign was designed to lessen automobile losses – the number one source

of occupational fatalities and of losses to the pool. Since the campaign began, more than 33,000 local government drivers have been trained on defensive driving techniques.

"Through WTRMTR, we've seen automobile loss ratios among many participants drop dramatically," said Craig. "The campaign has been a success and will continue to innovate in the future with driving simulators and a focus on GPS telematics monitoring."



In 2011, VMLIP paid an \$11.3 million claim to rebuild Page County Middle School after it was destroyed by a tornado.

Innovation isn't new to VMLIP. In 2011, when body cameras were considered to be on the forefront of policing, VMLIP provided more than 1,400 of them to 115 member police departments.

"There are many things members can do to manage risk," said Craig. "Accessing our consultants, utilizing our training materials such as the VMLIP Online University or free monthly webinars, participating in our programs and campaigns or applying for grant funding."

For more than 15 years, VMLIP has provided risk management grant funding to members for the purchase of safety program materials, equipment, and training. This year, the pool is offering \$500,000 in grant funds – much of it designated toward expanding GPS telematics fleet safety initiatives.

As VMLIP looks forward to another 35 years, the focus will continue to be on partnership, performance, and service. Initiatives moving forward include a focus on data and predictive analytics to provide targeted risk management collaborations.

With assets greater than \$269 million and more than \$98 million in members' equity, VMLIP has the financial strength to handle large claims. This was evidenced by the \$11.3 million claim paid when an F3 tornado destroyed the Page County Middle School in 2011.

"We've been the right choice – the strongest choice – for local governments for 35 years," said Craig. "Our rates have remain stable, our services have continued to grow, and we continue to be the best partners in risk management for Virginia's local governments."

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



Strength when disaster strikes

On Saturday, April 16, 2011, Page Middle School in Gloucester County was destroyed by an F3 tornado. This September, Gloucester opened the doors to a new Page Middle School constructed in part with **\$11.3 million** provided by VML Insurance Programs (VMLIP) - the largest claim in VMLIP's 35-year history.

Does your insurer have the financial strength to cover your losses when disaster strikes? To learn more, visit: www.vmlins.org.



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By William D. Euille, Mayor of the City of Alexandria

A message from the president

IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR and a privilege to serve as President of VML for the past 12 months. From advocacy successes at the General Assembly to new educational and networking opportunities for local government professionals, it was a very good year to be a member of the League.

In the 2015 General Assembly session, VML placed the highest priority on ending the “Local Aid to the Commonwealth” reversion. Localities prevailed and the legislators overturned the requirement that cities and counties return \$30 million of state funds to the Commonwealth. That’s \$30 million that stayed in local budgets and is being used to advance local projects.

One of the highlights of the past year was VML Day at the Capitol. With Governor McAuliffe providing a rousing keynote, this newly formed event brought 250 local officials to Richmond to advocate on behalf of local governments. A high quality reception brought those local officials together with members of the General Assembly and the Administration.

Whether you attended VML Day or responded to staff requests for assistance, it is contacts made by local officials that make all of the difference in our ability to stave off efforts to: place new requirements on grievance procedures and procurement practices; gut the business license tax; and weaken the integrity of stormwater utility fees. These wins were critical to our towns, cities and counties.

The League’s leadership determined that we needed to have a forward focus for our 110th Anniversary. At last year’s conference, I announced the launch of “324 Places” – an initiative named for the 38 cities, 191 towns and 38 counties that together make up our great Commonwealth.

Through 324 Places, we identified eight of the most pressing issues for Virginia localities: transportation (mobility), workforce development, community image and reputation,

education, public engagement/purpose, economic development, aging infrastructure, and sustainability/resiliency.

For each topic, we created a full-circle study that included articles, webinars and now sessions within the Annual Conference. We identified important trends and provided action steps for decision makers to consider. The 324 Places webinars have proven to be especially valuable to localities all across the state.

Civics education took center stage for the League this year as we launched our first “If I were Mayor” essay contest. The program was a huge success with nearly 1,000 essays submitted from seventh grade students across the Commonwealth. These young people are the future leaders of our communities. It’s essential to engage their interest in government and, most of all, to hear what they have to say.

The great strides of the past year are the result of many localities – and people – working together. I want to thank the 12 other members of the League’s Executive Committee for their tireless work to promote the interests of local government. I also want to recognize the work

of the VML staff. Each of our 14 staff members is dedicated to serving our mission. Each staff member contributes to the excellence of this organization.

As I conclude my year as President, I’d like to leave you with a challenge. I encourage each of you to reach beyond your own localities to share successes with one another and to contribute to the advancement of local government beyond your doors.



William D. Euille

VML Executive Committee



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President-Elect
Mayor, Blacksburg



Robert K. Coiner
Vice President
Mayor, Gordonsville



Mary H. Hynes
At-large member
Board Chair, Arlington County



Edythe Kelleher
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Vice Mayor, Vienna



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Katie Sheldon Hammler
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Patricia P. Woodbury
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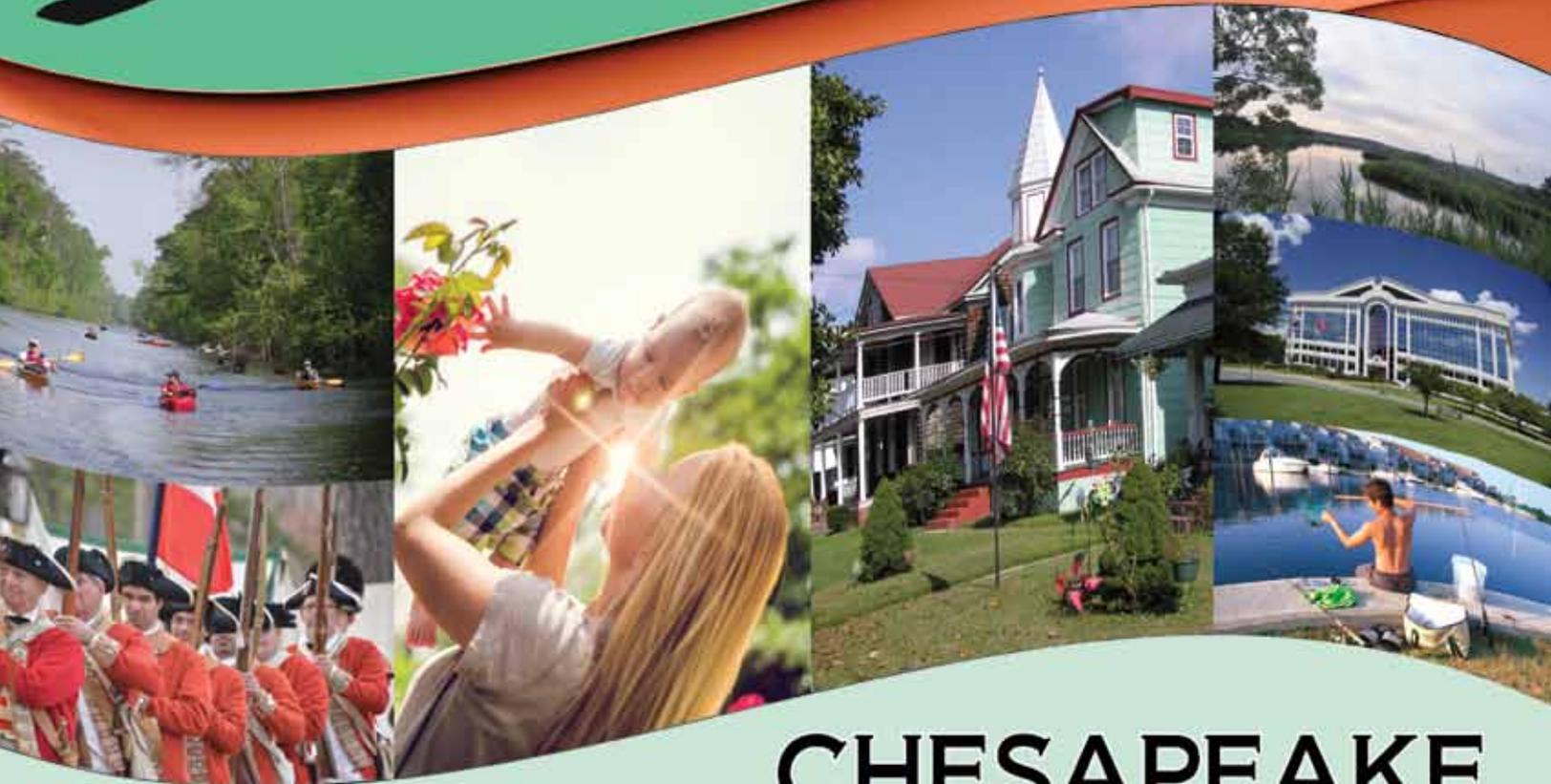


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2014 – 2015 Executive Director's Report

THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE (VML) is a dynamic organization committed to our mission:

“The Virginia Municipal League is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of city, town and county governments established in 1905 to improve and assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education and other services.”

I am honored to work with a visionary Executive Committee that established specific goals for our organization. I am equally honored to work with an experienced and accomplished staff to develop implementation strategies to achieve the highest level of service to our member cities, towns, and counties.

As we celebrated our 110th anniversary, we turned our attention to the future of the association. The following is a summary of VML's strategic goals along with specific key accomplishments of the last year.

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 Day at the Capitol.** This year, we changed the format of VML Day to provide a high quality reception for local officials, members of the General Assembly, and members of the Administration. This was an awesome opportunity for the 300 attendees to mingle and discuss key issues for localities. The feedback following the event was overwhelmingly positive and plans are underway for next year's event which will be on January 27, 2016.
- **General Assembly Success.** Advocating on behalf of our member localities is a core function of VML and the 2015 session was a positive one for us. With regard to “Local Aid to the Commonwealth,” localities prevailed and the requirement that cities and counties return \$30 million to the State was overturned. Among other successes, the League staved off efforts to: place new requirements on grievance procedures and procurement practices; gut the business license tax; and weaken the integrity of stormwater utility fees.
- **Peer Groups.** VML continues to have strong relationships with our peer groups (e.g., the Virginia Association of Counties). In addition, we have begun work to build and enhance alliances with the Virginia Association of School Boards, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, and others.
- **Finance Forum.** For several years now, VML has sponsored a Finance Forum to bring together representatives from localities to have in-depth discussions regarding the state budget and its impact on locals. This year, 94 peo-

ple attended this informative training. For 2016, we are partnering with VACo to expand the scope of attendees to include cities, towns, and county representatives. The event will be held January 6, 2016.

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.

- **Staff Change.** In March, long-time VML Director of Communications, David Parsons, retired. We have filled this position and are working to build a strong and effective Communications Team that will be putting together a comprehensive communications plan for us.
- **Technology.** We continue to expand the use of technology to enhance programming and communications for our members. Our website has been converted to a new platform that will enable us to provide additional features and services.
- **Corporate Engagement.** With the addition of a Conference/Marketing Coordinator, we developed a “Municipal Business Associate” program. This initiative provides support for VML events and programming while giving business associates the opportunity to make their brands known to the local government community.
- **Webinars.** As part of the 324 Places project, we ran an article each month in Virginia Town & City dealing with one of the study topics. For those that wanted to dig a bit deeper, we then offered a webinar later in the month on the same topic. These webinars were quite successful and we plan to incorporate this technology in our future offerings.

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.

- **Essay Contest.** In its first year, the “If I Were Mayor” essay contest was a terrific success. Nearly 1,000 students throughout the Commonwealth spent time thinking about their local government, and more importantly, what it would be like for their voice to be heard. We cannot underestimate the impact of a program like this. We celebrated the success of this program when the Governor presented the regional and statewide awards to the students at VML Day.
- **Regional Suppers.** We continued to offer regional meetings around the state. In the fall we held six suppers to discuss legislative issues. Then, in the spring we held seven suppers where we discussed various topics of interest to the region. These suppers have been a terrific way

for staff to get on the road and meet with local officials. It has also provided an opportunity for local officials to get together with one another on a regional basis.

- **324 Places.** This new initiative focuses on what local services would look like in 10 years. After surveying the membership, we decided to study the following issues: Transportation (mobility), Workforce Development, Community Image and Reputation, Education, Public Engagement/Purpose, Economic Development, Aging Infrastructure, and Sustainability/Resiliency. Trend analysis was conducted in each of these study areas. Each month featured a different topic with articles and webinars. The project culminates in this year's Annual Conference where we will be discussing the future of the Commonwealth.
- **Conference Enhancements.** During the 2015 VML Annual Conference, attendees will notice a number of changes to enhance the conference experience for local officials. General sessions are shorter, breaks are longer, and social events have been designed to expand networking opportunities. In order to address concerns about the length of the conference, the conference schedule is changing. Beginning in 2016, the conference will conclude by Tuesday at noon.

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 modern-

izing accurate and appropriate financial systems.

- **Stable Membership.** VML has a strong membership with 38 cities, 166 towns, and seven counties as full members of the association.
- **Building Improvements.** This year, the VML Executive Committee approved a project to make improvements to the VML-owned building at 13 E. Franklin in Richmond. The building is an important asset and these improvements will enhance the workspace for staff while increasing the overall quality of the building.
- **Strong Financial Position.** VML is a fiscally stable organization with adequate and appropriate reserves. We have modernized and enhanced our accounting processes over the past year. This has allowed for improved financial reporting and more consistent tracking of revenues and expenses.

The strength of the Virginia Municipal League lies in the participation of our localities and their leaders. Thank you for your dedication and support. It is indeed our honor to serve the men and women who serve their communities in order to make Virginia a great place to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,



Kim Winn
Executive Director





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Building officials celebrate a year of progress and growth

THANKS TO THE DILIGENCE of building safety professionals across the state, the Virginia Building and Code Association made great strides in reaching this year's ambitious and far-reaching objectives.

First, VBCOA promoted interest in the building safety profession by expanding its partnership with high schools and developing a curriculum to offer education on building codes.

Second, training offered through VBCOA now counts toward national and state certification requirements for building safety personnel, making VBCOA's educational sessions even more essential.

Third, Building Safety Month, held each year in May, is one of VBCOA's most extensive public outreach efforts. This year, Building Safety Month commemorations were held in Alexandria, Front Royal and Norfolk. In addition, individual building officials developed their own outreach initiatives in their communities, such as offering free deck inspections.

Fourth, VBCOA developed a model code update training program for educating contractors, homebuilders, architects and other professionals in the private sector. This training serves the dual purpose of educating VBCOA's primary pri-

private sector partners and generating revenues for the association.

Fifth, VBCOA enhanced its website to become the association's primary communication means. Information from VBCOA's eight regions and committees is posted on the website, which also offers a forum for members to discuss timely issues.

Fairfax County Building Code Services Manager Guy Tomberlin is the current president of the International Code Council (ICC), which develops the codes used in most states as well as in other countries. ICC has selected Richmond as the site of its 2018 annual conference, which will offer a great opportunity to showcase the region and the state.

VBCOA's officers are President Sean P. Farrell, Prince William County; First Vice President John Walsh, Richmond; Second Vice President David Beahm, Warren County; Sergeant At Arms Gregg Fields, Alexandria; and Immediate Past President Cathy Cook, Blacksburg. VML Director of Research Mary Jo Fields serves as executive director.



Rebecca T. Dickson, Goochland County Administrator, serves as VLGMA President

Virginia's Local Government Managers focus on education and outreach

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and outreach were top priorities for the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) last year.

VLGMA's professional development training conferences this past year focused on economic development, community and professional resilience, and sustainability.

Increasing understanding of local government among school-age Virginians continued as the focus of the Association's Civic Engagement Committee. In 2012, the General Assembly approved a VLGMA-backed resolution proclaiming the first week of April as Local Government Education Week in Virginia, in honor of the formation of the Council-Manager form of government in Staunton in April of 1908.

The Committee has since compiled resources for members to use in classroom settings. It hopes this outreach will increase understanding of local government, and possibly spark students' interest in pursuing local government as a career. Information, including a model proclamation to honor Local Government Education Week is on the Association's website www.icma.org/en/va.

VLGMA continued its active support of the Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management Program, which

it created with Virginia Tech's Center for Public Administration and Policy. More than 175 students have earned a Certificate since the program's inception.

In June, the Association elected Goochland County Administrator Rebecca T. Dickson as president for 2015-2016. Dickson's focus for the coming year includes building on member engagement and furthering the use of the Association's strategic plan.

Serving with Dickson are Abingdon Town Manager Greg Kelly, president-elect; Charlottesville City Manager Maurice Jones, first vice president; Henrico Deputy County Manager Joe Casey, second vice president; Williamsburg Assistant City Manager Jodi Miller, third vice president; Rocky Mount Town Manager James Ervin, secretary; and Frederick County Administrator Brenda Garton, immediate past president. Janet Areson of VML serves as the Association's executive secretary.

VLGMA is a state affiliate of the International City-County Management Association (ICMA).



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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Bristol
Culpeper

Danville
Elkton

Franklin
Front Royal

Harrisonburg
Manassas
Martinsville
Radford

Richlands
Salem
VPI & SU
Wakefield

MEPAV wrestles with state regulation and renewable energy

NOW IN ITS 61ST YEAR, the Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia (MEPAV) represents the 16 municipal electric utilities in the state. MEPAV's commitment to the communities that it serves goes beyond keeping the lights on.

At MEPAV's annual conference in Virginia Beach in May, the American Public Power Association (APPA) provided federal regulatory and legislative updates to the group. Dominion and APCO outlined regulatory issues they are facing and explained their integrated resource plans for the upcoming years. Ken Rosenfeld of the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council, talked about energy efficiency and, finally, Leilani Todd of the Virginia Energy Workforce Consortium, discussed resources to power your workforce.

In addition to the annual conference, members and vendors also met at two engineering and operations workshops this year. At the fall meeting in Danville, members examined distribution automation, pole top rigging, substation automation strategies, and finally, utility fencing and security.

At the summer meeting in Salem, members learned more about wireless fault indication and reporting, safer solutions to switchgear, and Miss Utility regulations and updates.

Coordinating legislative efforts with municipalities and other utilities is critical to MEPAV's success. With the guidance of legislative consultant Tom Dick, MEPAV monitored more than 70 significant energy and environmental-related measures that

were considered during the 2015 General Assembly.

The legislature considered and rejected proposed measures to encourage the sale of a municipally-owned electric utility. The Senate Local Government Committee rejected a similar bill and sent the proposal to the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation (CEUR) for study.

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 associate members.

Municipal electric utilities in Virginia have effectively served their customer-owners since the late 1800s. MEPAV's mission remains focused on meeting the needs of its members by providing information and support and fostering a spirit of cooperation among Virginia's municipal electric systems.

The municipal electric systems continue to be self-regulated by their local governments, providing them with the flexibility to address energy related issues based on local needs.



Jerry Walker, Energy Manager for Henrico, serves as chairman of VEPGA

Cost of electricity rises 2.5 percent for VEPGA members

MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA ENERGY Purchasing Governmental Association (VEPGA) will experience an overall rate increase of 2.5 percent for the fiscal year that began July 1, 2015. Advanced notice of the increase was given in February of this year to allow ample time to factor in energy costs when preparing annual budgets.

The actual percentage increase for a particular VEPGA account varies depending on that account's unique billing rate. Even with the increase, VEPGA rates remain on average 3.6 percent lower than rates set by the State Corporation Commission (SCC). The result is an estimated savings of more than \$14 million per year for VEPGA members.

Why the increase?

The short answer is to pay for actual costs of service to VEPGA members for the generation and transmission of electricity. To determine "cost of service," you start with base rates for generating electricity and then add what are known as "riders." Typical riders include costs for fuel, transmission, and the construction of new power plants. For VEPGA members, the base rates will not change over the length of the current contract which expires June

30, 2018. The rates for riders, however, change yearly and are based on fluctuating costs for fuel, transmission and construction. For FY 2016, the transmission and construction riders for VEPGA members saw increases of 80 and 12.5 percent respectively. Thankfully, this increase was partially offset by a nearly 10 percent decrease in the fuel rider.

Jerry Walker, Energy Manager for Henrico, is chairman of VEPGA, a VML affiliate organization. VML Director of Environmental Policy, Joe Lerch serves as its executive secretary.

VEPGA's membership includes more than 170 cities, towns and counties. Through membership in VEPGA, local governments in Virginia can negotiate their electricity rates directly with Dominion Virginia Power. Learn more at www.vepga.org.



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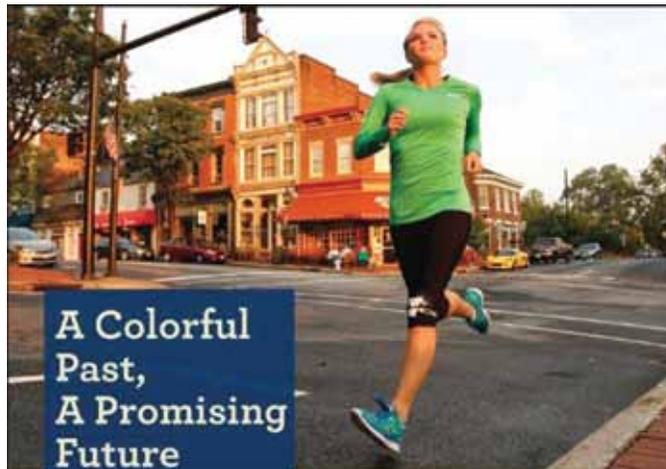
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Bristol
Buena Vista
Charlottesville
Chesapeake
Colonial Heights
Covington
Danville
Emporia
Fairfax
Falls Church
Franklin
Fredericksburg
Galax
Hampton
Harrisonburg
Hopewell
Lexington
Lynchburg
Manassas
Manassas Park
Martinsville
Newport News
Norfolk
Norton
Petersburg
Poquoson
Portsmouth
Radford
Richmond
Roanoke
Salem
Staunton

Suffolk
Virginia Beach
Waynesboro
Williamsburg
Winchester

Towns

Abingdon
Accomac
Alberta
Altavista
Amherst
Appomattox
Ashland
Bedford
Berryville
Big Stone Gap
Blacksburg
Blackstone
Bluefield
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Bowling Green
Boydton
Boykins
Branchville
Bridgewater
Broadway
Brookneal
Buchanan
Burkeville
Cape Charles
Capron
Cedar Bluff
Charlotte Court
House

Chase City
Chatham
Cheriton
Chilhowie
Chincoteague
Christiansburg
Claremont
Clarksville
Clifton
Clifton Forge
Clinchco
Clintwood
Coburn
Colonial Beach
Courtland
Craigs ville
Crewe
Culpeper
Damascus
Dayton
Dillwyn
Drakes Branch
Dublin
Duffield
Dumfries
Eastville
Edinburg
Elkton
Exmore
Farmville
Fincastle
Floyd
Fries
Front Royal
Gate City

Glade Spring
Gordonsville
Gretna
Grottoes
Grundy
Halifax
Hallwood
Hamilton
Haymarket
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Hillsville
Hurt
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Troutville
Urbanna
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Wakefield
Warrenton
Warsaw
Washington
Waverly
Weber City
West Point
White Stone
Windsor
Wise
Woodstock
Wytheville

Counties

Albemarle
Alleghany
Arlington
James City
Loudoun
Prince George
Roanoke
York

Municipal Business Associates

Advance Planning Associates, LC
Advantus Strategies
AIS Network
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Anderson & Associates Inc.
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Community Planning Partners, Inc.
Dewberry
DJG, Inc.
Dominion Resources
Downey & Scott, LLC
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English Construction

GKY & Associates Inc.
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HBA Architecture & Interior Design
Howard Shockey & Sons, Inc.
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ICMA Retirement Corp.
Johnson Controls
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Municipal Code Corp.
Municode
Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing Authority
OSPM - Office of Surplus Property Management (Va. Dept. of General Services)

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PMA Architecture
Region 2000 Local Government Council
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Haymarket is the midway point along the Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG). Stop by our Civil War Trail marker, visit our Museum, climb aboard our Caboose, observe the variety of post-Civil War architecture, indulge in our dining - all accompanied by a grand view of Bull Run Mountain, gateway to the Blue Ridge.

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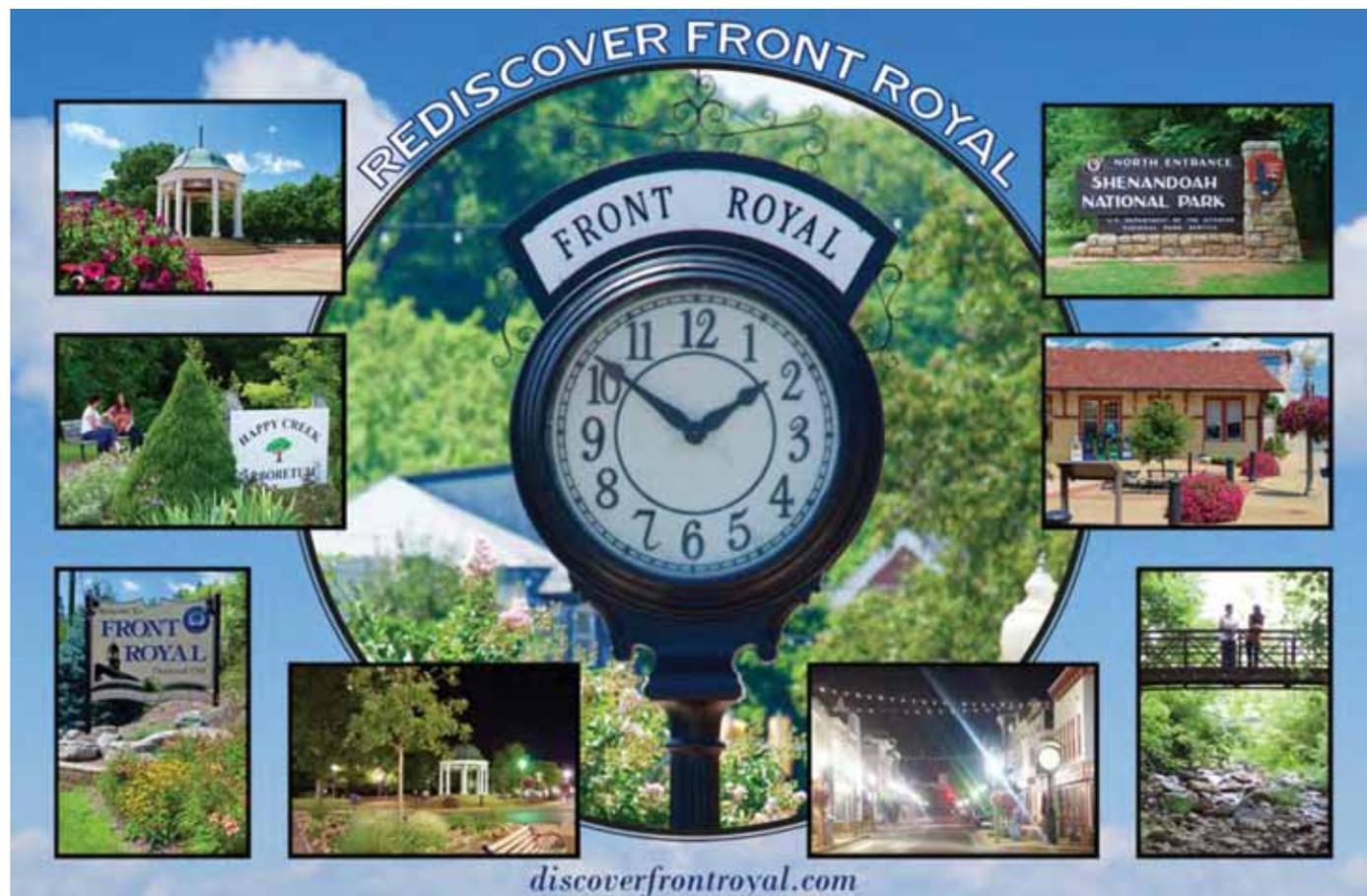
Transportation Policy Committee

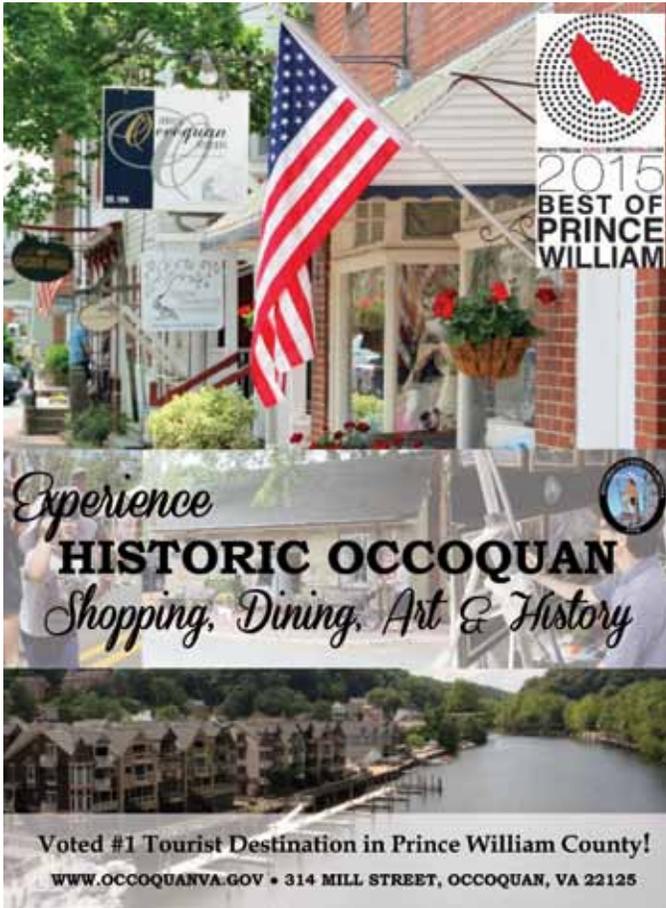
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Calendar

Local Government Attorneys of Virginia Fall Conference October 15-17, Roanoke

The LGA Fall 2015 Conference will be held at Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center. The conference keeps members up-to-date on issues of local government law, trial and appellate practice, and related fields. Visit www.lgava.org for more information.

VML Fall Regional Suppers

VML will conduct seven regional suppers around the state this fall to provide local government officials with timely information. Each of the dinner meetings will include a preview of local government issues likely to surface during the 2016 General Assembly. Visit the VML website for a complete listing of dates and locations.

324 Places Webinar - Transportation & Mobility Coming in November

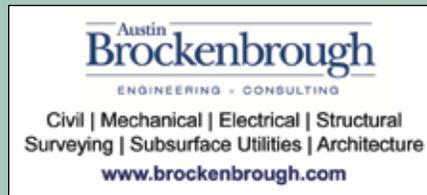
Autonomous cars from Google, ridesharing from Uber, and changing preferences of young Millennials and older Boomers are redefining mobility. The challenge ahead is not in building more roads to move cars, but in developing enticing ways to move people. Join this VML-sponsored webinar to find out what you should be doing today to get ready for the "car lite" lifestyles of the future.

National League of Cities Congress of Cities & Exposition November 4-7, Nashville

The 2015 Congress of Cities and Exposition will give you plenty of opportunities to learn with NLC University seminars, mobile workshops and conference workshops while building connections through constituency groups and networking events. Visit www.nlccongressofcities.org for more information.

VML Finance Forum January 6, Richmond

This popular forum keeps locally elected officials and staff up-to-date on fiscal issues. Topics typically include an up-to-the-moment examination of the state budget and revenue outlook; a Virginia economic forecast and its possible effect on local budgets; a look at pending federal legislation that could affect local government finances; and emerging trends in the world of local government finance. The VML Finance Forum will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn Downtown.



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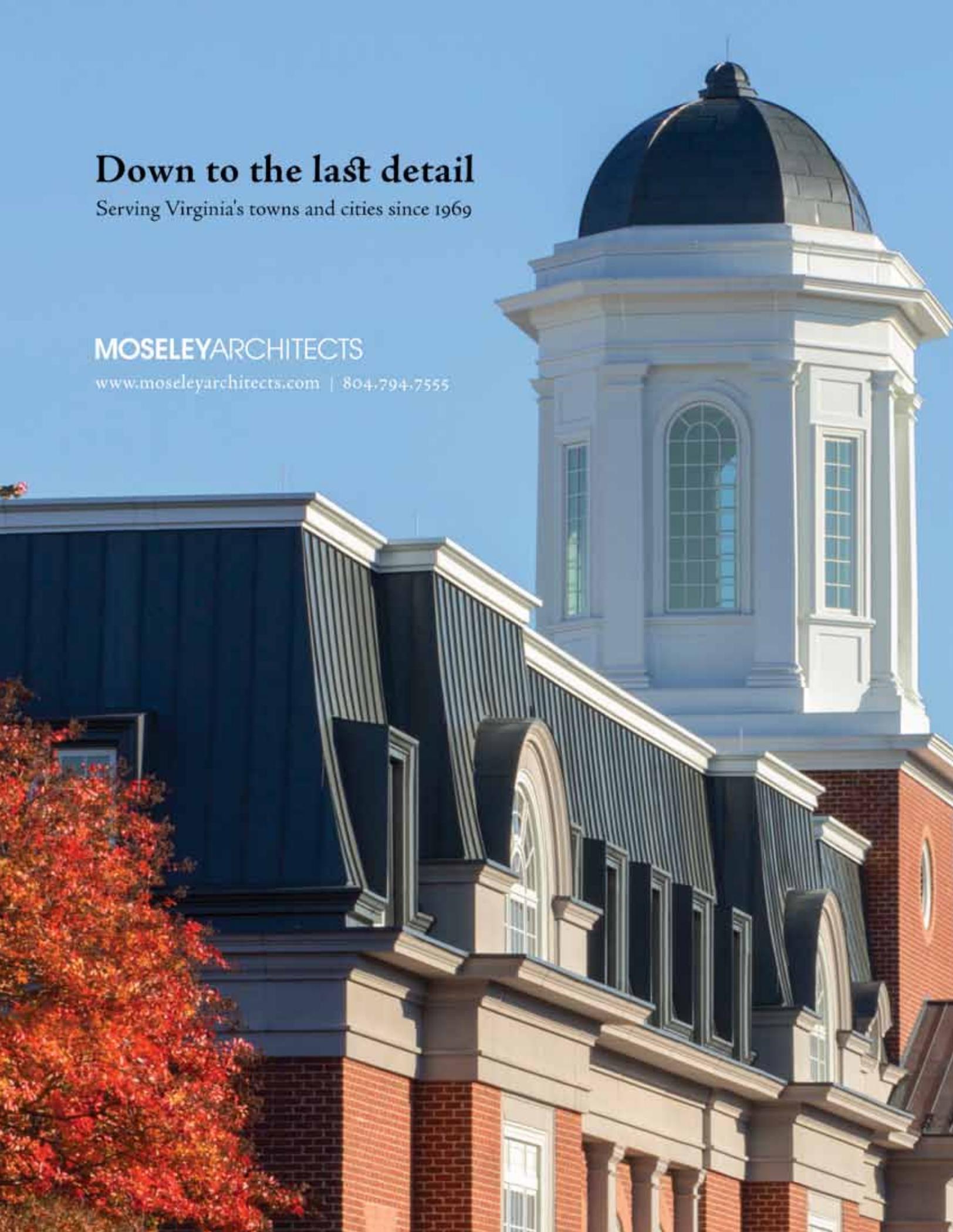
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