

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

VOL. 53

NO. 7

SEPTEMBER 2018

Innovation is the key

Hampton's rich history
and vibrant future is on display



Inside:
The year in review

ATTENTION
VML Members



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On the cover

Vibrant Hampton is located on the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. It is graced with miles of shoreline and breathtaking water views and is literally in the heart of the Hampton Roads region and the center of the East Coast. This seaside city includes exciting attractions and heritage sites that lure visitors with its family-friendly offerings.

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Features

Hampton VA: Innovation in Government

Never content to rest on its laurels, the city of Hampton looks to the future by implementing innovative programs in education, workforce development, civic engagement, programs for youth, use of social media and resiliency.

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Hampton: Experience 400 years of history

Experience Hampton, the nation’s oldest continuous English-speaking settlement and the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America in 1619. Then rocket ahead to explore the NASA legacy of space exploration at the Virginia Air & Space Center. And yes, don’t leave out the carousel, Buckroe Beach, the Casemate Museum and more.

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Virginia Municipal League: The year in review

A review of the League’s advocacy, research, and education activities in 2017-2018.

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Greetings!

On behalf of my City Council colleagues, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Hampton for the Virginia Municipal League annual conference.

Hampton has been documented as an exceptionally hospitable city. Capt. John Smith and a hungry 40-man crew spent English America's first recorded Christmas in Hampton in 1608. At that time, a one-day trade mission turned into a six-day celebratory feast with "good oysters, fish, flesh, wild foule, and good bread" provided in the village of Kecoughtan.

You'll find similar hospitality in Hampton today: Expedia rated us one of 15 "under the radar cities you need to visit." We offer exceptional restaurants with a variety of fare, including two drawing fans from national television exposure, Mango Mangeaux bistro and Johnny Graham's famous crab cakes. Hampton is home to the region's oldest craft brewery, which has been joined by four others (one with an accompanying distillery) and a cidery.

Those early settlers wrote more about the village that is now Hampton than any other place in early Virginia, and those documents describe the waterfront town as a great place to live. In more modern times, we're seeing many of our homes featured on episodes of HGTV and the city was named one of the most affordable beach towns in the nation by the website "Smart Assets."

Primarily, we're all here to share best practices on governing and providing services to our residents and businesses. I'm proud to note that Hampton's government has been nationally recognized many times for our innovations, use of technology and citizen engagement. Recently, the Washington Post suggested that Hampton's "battle against sea-level rise could offer lessons" for other localities.

Increased flooding – not just in coastal areas – is just one of the many challenges we face as we gather to discuss our roles as public servants and leaders. These discussions and workshops allow us to collaboratively develop solutions we can take back to our respective localities. I hope you will plan to extend those networking sessions beyond the seminar room – into a restaurant or brewery, a walk along the waterfront, a Segway tour of historic Fort Monroe, a visit to one of our five museums, or a harbor tour.

It's just not possible to do everything in a brief visit, as Capt. John Smith found out. I invite you to extend your stay or return to celebrate with us any time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donnie R. Tuck".

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

"OLDEST CONTINUOUS ENGLISH-SPEAKING SETTLEMENT IN AMERICAN - 1610"

DTUCK@HAMPTON.GOV

HAMPTON

INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

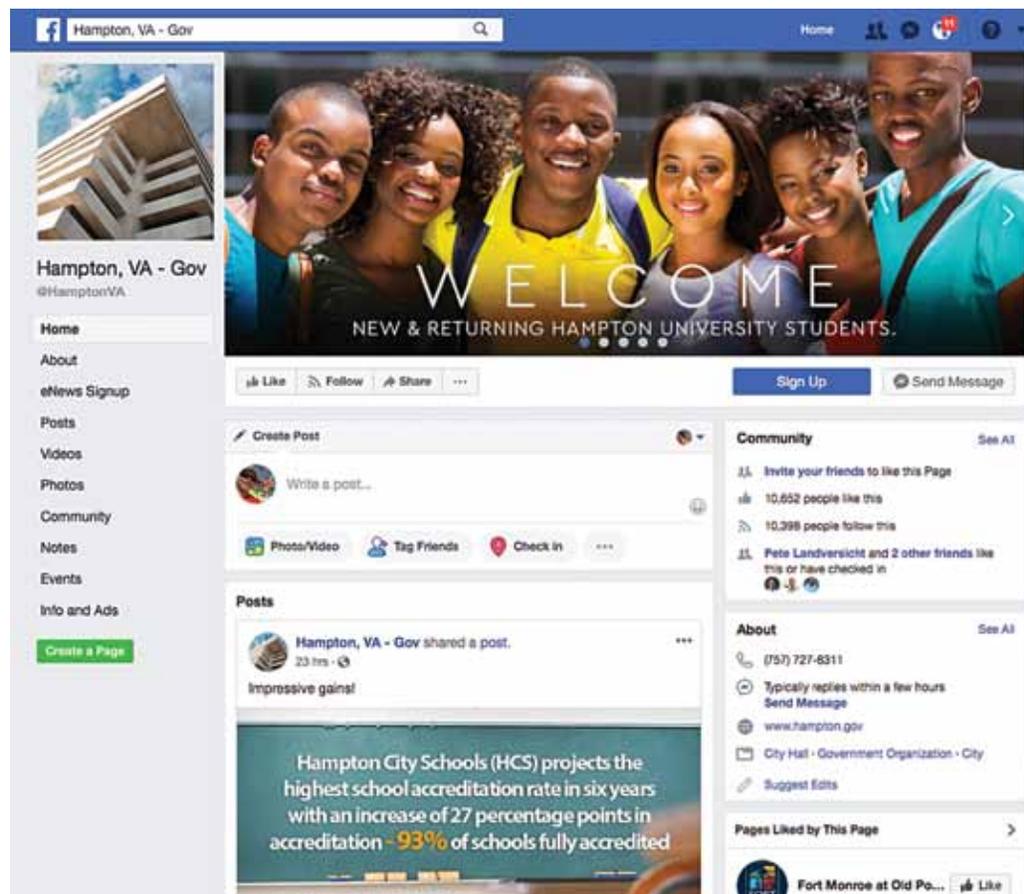
WHILE HAMPTON CAN PROUDLY trace its history back to the first settlers in North America, the city also has its sights firmly set on the future – from partnering with the community on creative new ways to reach young people to working with state and national organizations on innovative workforce programs that help employers, the unemployed and the underemployed. Hampton is one of a handful of cities chosen by Facebook to take part in the new Community Boost program. City schools are expanding the exciting Academies program, which offer a host of specialized classes for high school students. And we continue to grow our presence on social media using tried and true platforms such as Twitter and Facebook while exploring new arenas such as Nextdoor. Here are just some of the innovative things happening in the city today.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In March, Hampton was one of eight new cities chosen to be a Facebook Community Boost site, part of an effort by the social media giant to teach digital and social media skills to both businesses and job-seekers. In June, Facebook held a series of free classes, or Community Boost workshops, that helped business Facebookers and Instagrammers expand their reach online. The program will eventually reach 30 U.S. cities.

Why did they pick Hampton? The city has been an early adopter of social media as a way to interact with residents.

When Hurricane Irene caused severe flooding in 2011, the city's social media following spiked. We shared information and photos about flooded streets, traffic lights without power, and



how to get assistance. Residents shared concerns and information from many more spots in the city than our staff could be at one time. They shared information with each other – neighbors who had evacuated, military members abroad concerned

ONVA

about family at home, parents who had just dropped off their freshman at Hampton University.

Our Facebook page, Hampton, VA – Gov, became an online resource for the storm.

Local governments offer many services and amenities and providing information and assistance in an emergency is one of the most crucial. But there's also a place for fun: Earlier this year, the city's police and fire departments jumped in on the national lip sync challenge. With more than 6 million views and a shout-out from actor and Boy Band rapper "Marky Mark" Wahlberg, social media showcased the "human side" of governing.

Although Hampton has been named a top 10 Digital City for 16 years, what we've learned is that we can't just post the same thing on all social media; we have to adapt the message for each medium and audience. Long videos that work on the city's cable channel need to be cut to highlights for Facebook and Instagram. Nextdoor audiences want crime and safety or road closures; they don't want social or events information. Instagram, which reaches younger and more diverse audiences, wants personality, which maybe isn't government's strongest skill. Twitter is brief and reaches news media faster than any press release. What matters isn't the total number of "likes,"

but the quality and the ability to remain in people's feeds and provide timely and consistent interaction with our citizens.

EDUCATION

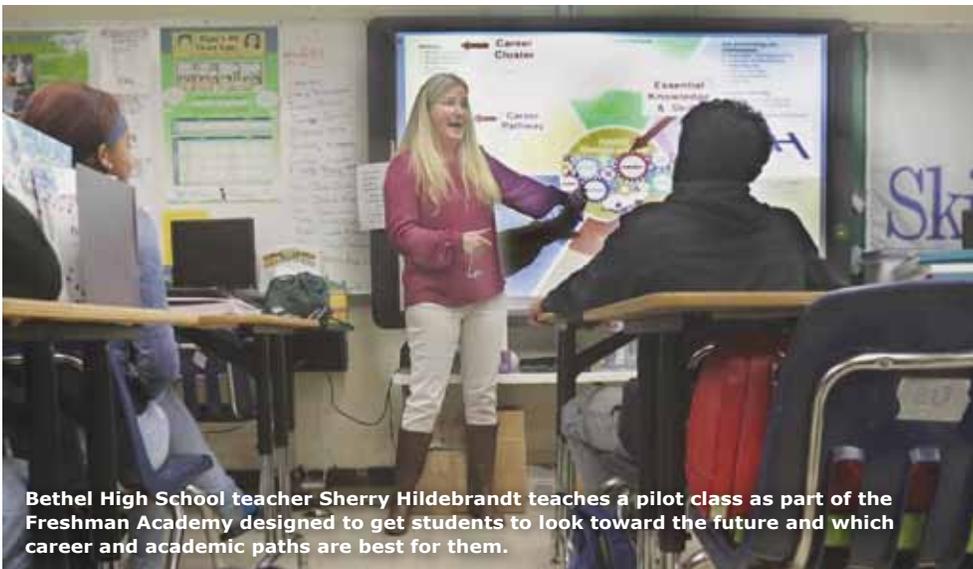
Hampton City Schools was the first school system in the state to adopt the Ford Next Generation Learning model. The Academies of Hampton are quickly transforming the traditional high school experience. The common interest area



offers tiered instruction that can lead to a variety of options after graduation. The Governor's Health Science Academy, one of the system's earliest academies, is a path to becoming an emergency medical technician/paramedic or certified nursing assistant after graduation, or preparation for post-secondary education at nursing or medical school. Partnerships with local hospitals and colleges extend learning in a way that brings in real-world challenges and maintains student interest. Many courses are dual-enrollment, or prepare students for industry certification exams.

Last year, every ninth-grader began this journey in the Freshman Academy, where teams that included core teachers, success coaches, a counselor and an administrator worked with groups of students on adjusting to high school, creating effective study techniques, developing leadership skills, working with teams and determining career goals and interests (as well as the standard curriculum). Every high school sophomore is now a part of a learning center geared toward his or her career interest. Students learn in small, personalized environments with other students who share their interests. Academy

JUDITH LOWERY/DAILY PRESS



Bethel High School teacher Sherry Hildebrandt teaches a pilot class as part of the Freshman Academy designed to get students to look toward the future and which career and academic paths are best for them.

Hampton, VA

options include architecture and engineering, law and public safety, entrepreneurship and information design, and transportation, analytics and information. Many of these require special lab equipment and new instructional materials; the school system has obtained grants, and the city has helped pay these one-time costs.

While the Ford model is based on nationally proven techniques, Hampton's approach is decidedly local. We aim to keep – or lure back after college – many of today's high school students. The law and public safety academy is expected to help create exceptionally qualified candidates for upcoming openings for police and 911 dispatchers. A maritime academy focuses on the uniquely local need for shipbuilding and repair. Cybersecurity and robotics programs partner with NASA and local aerospace research companies. School officials also noted the high costs of recruiting teachers – then created an academy to foster and grow interests in child development and education.

While all this is happening, the city's dual enrollment program provides a unique opportunity for high school students to take college-level courses. In 2018, the first two dual enrollment graduates in Hampton earned diplomas from Kecoughtan High School and associate of science degrees from Thomas Nelson Community College.

WORKFORCE

Having a trained workforce is one of the primary considerations for businesses looking to expand into new locations. The Academies of Hampton are just one part of a long-term plan to build the skills of local workers. There are multiple educational institutions and non-profits working to build skills, but city officials noticed there was no overall entity working to stitch together information about training programs, soft skills and job fairs. The Economic Development Department has recognized this need and repurposed one employee to become the “umbrella” for these efforts, bringing together existing resources and helping them connect with job-seekers and employers. Among the accomplishments:

- Hampton is set to be the first ACT Certified Work Ready community in Virginia. The initiative focuses on using standardized tests to measure and certify work readiness skills. Much in the same way colleges consider standardized scores from ACT or SAT as part of determining admissions, companies can use the work-readiness exam as a screening tool, streamlining the hiring process and saving money. The initiative also gives Hampton access to a large database of occupational

profiles and identifies skills and skill levels needed for hiring and training in Hampton.

- The website aggregates training programs and existing services – such as placement services – for targeted populations such as people transitioning from the military.
- The city's library system provides SHARE Network Access Points (SNAPs) that offer help for job-seekers who need a computer to fill out applications and complete a resume.
- Partnering for job fairs creates a larger pool of both job-seekers and employers. The combined partnership job fairs in 2017 and 2018 drew more than 2,000 job-seekers each year. In 2018, companies extended interviews to nearly 450 of those job-seekers.



I VALUE AND THE BUDGET

Created in 2010 as a way to involve the community in the budgeting process, I Value is now a proven method for getting feedback from residents – whether they attend meetings in person, talk to us on social media, answer a telephone survey or go online to tell us what they think should or shouldn't be a priority in the upcoming budget.

In most cities, developing a city budget is an internal process, and residents can't weigh in until formal public hearings are held by city council. In Hampton, I Value gives residents an early voice in the process. The effort has varied through different budget years, but it always involves residents setting specific priorities and choices, with real-world consequences. While some third-party software allows residents to look at budgets in broad categories to express preferences, Hampton develops specific questions around that year's budget choices. One year, residents might help set the solid-waste fee by weighing options for less-frequent pickup. Another year, they may rank capital projects to meet city goals.

Using online and in-room polling has changed who participates. Everyone gets to weigh in on every issue. Instead of just hearing from intense supporters of one city service in a public hearing, those voices are heard along with many more citizens.

City Councilwoman Chris Snead, who experienced I Value as budget director before retiring and being elected to Council, noted: “The technology is what allows this to work. If those 5,000 people had each spoken 3 minutes at a public hearing, we’d have been stuck in Council Chambers night and day for nearly 10 days. I Value is a paradigm shift in the way we do business. It resonates through everything we do now,

whether it’s the consideration of a major capital improvement or considering allowing backyard chickens.”

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Earlier this year, Hampton hosted its third “Urgency of Now” conference. This meeting brought together elected officials, city staff, school administrators, pastors, young people and others from across the region to talk about the urgent need to stop the culture of violence that exists not just across the nation but here in Hampton Roads.

In 2019, Hampton will host a national convening of Cities United, a national organization dedicated to the problem of youth violence. Organizers use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – along with more conventional efforts – to publicize the Urgency of Now. Hampton’s Office of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities, which develops the Urgency of Now each year, also partners with others in the city for a successful summer youth employment program; a summer basketball camp called Hampton Hoops; a Fire Division program for at-risk boys called Camp Prospect; and a program that provides “mini-grants” to community organizations that address youth violence. Together, these and other programs help us serve an important, at-risk community.





THE WEB

Hampton’s website – www.hampton.gov – continues to be a valuable source for news and information about the city, whether you want to know what happened at last week’s City Council meeting, how you can pay your taxes, rent a shelter at a city park, or how much the city will spend on schools this year. The website can also answer important questions about policy and programs.

Why do you have to have your dog on a leash in Hampton? What is the city doing about all the mosquitoes? Can Hampton really make residents cut their grass? Those are just a few of the topics from “For The Record,” a page at www.hampton.gov that asks – and answers – some of the more frequent questions about city services and ordinances.

Speaking of asked and answered, the website will soon have a new feature that allows users to exchange messages with the city’s 311 Customer Contact Center by simply clicking on a pop-up link. It’s convenient, it’s personal, and it’s quick.

RESILIENCE

While still controversial in the political arena, climate change and sea-level rise have begun to affect this city and many others. Data shows that we are seeing more intense storms more frequently. While the city’s list of high-water events used to read like a long history of hurricanes dating back to 1933, the list of top 15 tidal flooding events is now concentrated to modern times. Sixty percent of the top flooding events occurred in the past 20 years, and more than half are from smaller Nor’easter storms – not hurricanes. Hampton Roads has long been considered to be at an elevated risk for sea level change – and the second largest population center at risk after New Orleans. Worldwide, the Hampton Roads MSA ranks 10th when considering the value of assets exposed to increased

flooding from relative sea level rise, according to an analysis by the catastrophe modeling company RMS.

Our residents see the effects: Increases in flood insurance rates, repetitive loss from flooding, and a lack of safe routes to employment and critical services due to flooding and large storms. But the effects aren’t just felt in coastal communities. Across the state, severe weather has caused more frequent flooding in Lynchburg, Richmond, Pulaski and other areas.

In June 2015, the City of Norfolk, the City of Hampton, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, and various other partners brought the Dutch Dialogues approach to Hampton Roads. It’s named for the flooding experts who helped New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Hampton and Norfolk were chosen as “pilot” cities around which the workshop was focused. One potential recommendation for flooding of Newmarket Creek, which meanders through backyards across the city, was to reorient neighborhoods that are redeveloped, with homes facing the creek but at a distance that allows for buffer zones and a shared access to the water. City Council adopted a





resilience plan that will use data to drive decision-making and create some short-term solutions and some long-term land use recommendations.

We don't have answers, but we're gathering data to help suggest solutions long-term. As a Washington Post article recently highlighted, Hampton is a small city taking big steps: Requiring the first floors of new homes to be higher; using FEMA money to elevate existing homes; creating breakwaters and living shorelines; improving and expanding retention

and detention ponds; and evaluating land-use strategies. We remember that the water has always been a major part of Hampton's identity: food, recreation, commerce, tourism and quality of life. We can't seek solutions that just try to wall off the water. The solutions must be those that work with the water, create safe and attractive places to live, maintain access for commerce and recreation, boost the tax base and enhance the environment. 

An architectural rendering of a modern town hall building. The building features a prominent gable roof with a large, white, slatted section. It has a covered walkway with white columns and large windows. A white car is parked in front of the building. The scene is set against a blue sky with white clouds. In the foreground, there is a paved area with a brick pattern.

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NEW TOWN HALL FOR ASHLAND
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VIBRANT HAMPTON, A SEASIDE CITY with exciting attractions and heritage sites, lures visitors with its family-friendly offerings. Whether it's Civil War landmarks and historic fortresses like Fort Monroe National Monument, African American heritage sites or the NASA legacy of space exploration at the Virginia Air & Space Center, the destination appeals to visitors of all ages and interests.

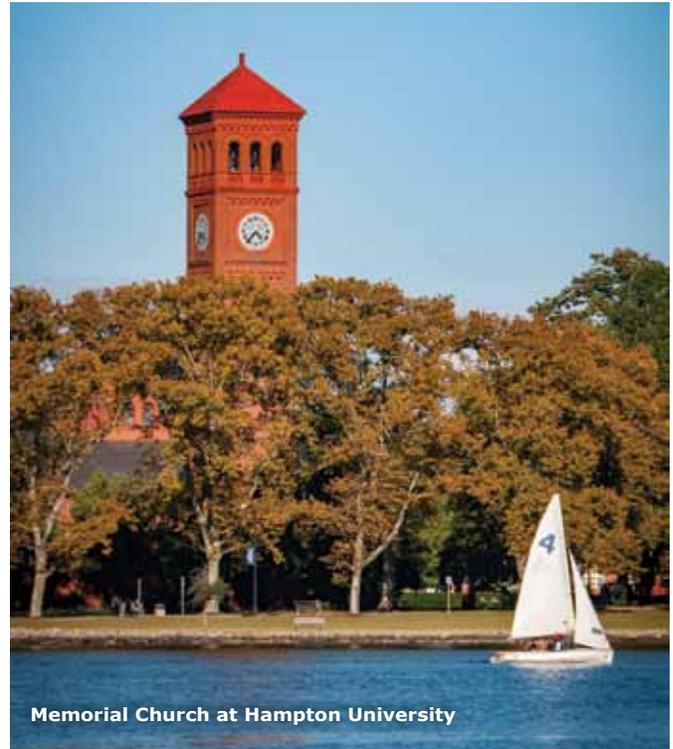
An ideal way to explore Hampton is to purchase a Sea to Stars Ticket, which includes admission to Virginia Air & Space Center's exhibits and 3-D Digital IMAX®, Hampton History Museum, the Hampton Carousel and a fascinating three-hour tour aboard the Miss Hampton II. Tickets, \$39 for adults and \$25 for youth ages 4-11, are available at the Hampton Visitor Center.

On November 1, 2011, President Barack Obama proclaimed Fort Monroe a national monument after nearly 180 years of a federal military presence at the moat-encircled stone fortification. In 2019, Hampton is partnering with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the National Park Service and Fort Monroe Authority to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first arrival of Africans in English North America in 1619. The arrival took place at Point Comfort, the modern-day site of Fort Monroe.

The Casemate Museum chronicles the history of the fort. Each casemate showcases 19th and 20th century artifacts including artist renderings, uniforms and more. The museum also houses the cell where Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned.

Guests can easily explore downtown Hampton on foot. Discover St. John's Church, the historic Hampton Carousel (built by European artisans in 1920), harbor tours, charter fishing vessels and the Virginia Air & Space Center. The center offers displays of suspended aircraft, flight simulators and IMAX® films.

The Hampton History Museum showcases Hampton's remarkable heritage as the nation's oldest continuous English-speaking settlement. Explorer Captain John Smith, Blackbeard the pirate, Booker T. Washington and America's first astronauts, the Mercury Seven, have all played integral parts in



Memorial Church at Hampton University

creating a distinctive Hampton timeline to be displayed in 10 permanent galleries.

The tour aboard the Miss Hampton II winds visitors down the Hampton River past Hampton University and Fort Monroe to Fort Wool, where the vessel docks and passengers explore the island garrison located in the middle of Hampton Roads Harbor. The tour continues to Naval Station Norfolk, concluding with a history of the Battle of the Ironclads.

Hampton University Museum, the oldest African-American museum in the U.S., is a short walk or drive from downtown. The museum contains more than 9,000 works of African, Native-American and African-American fine and contemporary art and artifacts. The museum and University celebrate their 150th anniversary this year.



Buckroe Beach



Miss Hampton II harbor cruise tour

years of history



Virginia Air & Space Center

Hampton's location on the Chesapeake Bay makes it the perfect place to take advantage of a day at the beach. Paradise Ocean Club offers private cabana rentals, a swimming pool and a private beach. Hampton Watersports, at Buckroe Beach and other waterfront locations, offers a wide range of watercraft rentals in the summer, including jet skis and more.

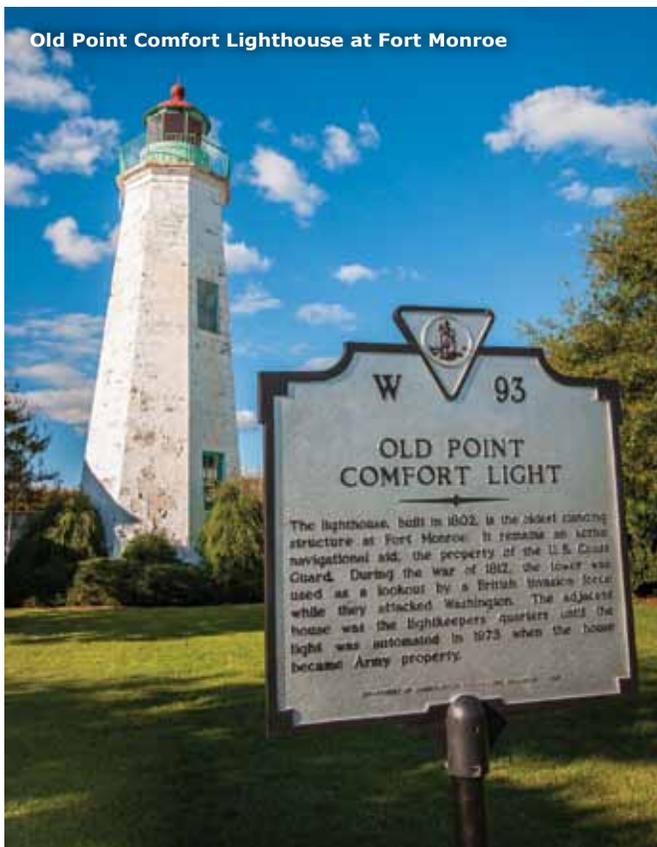
Hampton's craft scene is booming with the additions of Capstan Bar Brewing Company, Sly Clyde Cider, and the

Vanguard Brewpub & Distillery joining Bull Island Brewing Company, Oozlefinch Craft Brewery, and St. George Brewing Company to give Hampton six different locations to experience a diverse lineup of libations.

Hampton's decadent dining and eclectic retail round out the visitor experience. Hip, locally-owned establishments have mass appeal. Trendy eateries are complemented by specialty boutiques and national favorites presented at Peninsula Town Center.

At VisitHampton.com you'll find great destination information that unlocks the treasures of this maritime trove. For a free Hampton visitor guide, call 800-800-2202. [VTC](#)

Old Point Comfort Lighthouse at Fort Monroe



Transformation through education

Institute for Local Officials helps newcomers and old hands



(L-R) Gordonsville Mayor Bob Coiner, Roanoke Council Member Anita James Price, Attorney Roger Wiley, Galax Council Member Willie Greene and VML President Patricia P. Woodbury at the “ABCs of Governing” session.

MORE THAN 100 ELECTED and appointed officials met in Richmond July 19-20 for the Institute for Local Officials, which included sessions designed to help newly-elected officials hit the road running and to give a refresher course on local government basics to incumbents and staff.

Conference attendees learned the basics of governing, budgeting, FOIA, COIA, investments and financial management and council-manager relations. The sessions were fast-paced and by the end of the event people were equipped with information designed to help them be successful in their roles on a local governing body.

Here are just some of the tips given by the speakers:

- Show up. Showing up can be half of winning.
- Commit to positivity and optimism.
- Listen to people at public hearings but don't respond.
- Don't be afraid to say you will have to get back to someone about a request.
- A budget translates priorities into resources.
- Budgeting is not about choosing between good ideas and bad ideas; it's about finding the right balance among many good ideas.
- The city manager is at the nexus of what is politically acceptable and administratively feasible.

- Keep personal communications separate from communications regarding the transaction of public business.
- The failure to plan is not an emergency (understanding emergency meetings).
- Make use of VML's guide to FOIA, COIA and the Public Records Act.
- Local governments have various investment options, including the Local Government Investment Pool and the Virginia Investment Pool operated by VML/VACo Finance.
- It's good financial management to have a significant fund balance that you maintain from year to year.

Another Institute will be held in January 2019 – look out for the announcement and plan to attend!



Portsmouth Mayor John Rowe addresses council-manager relations.



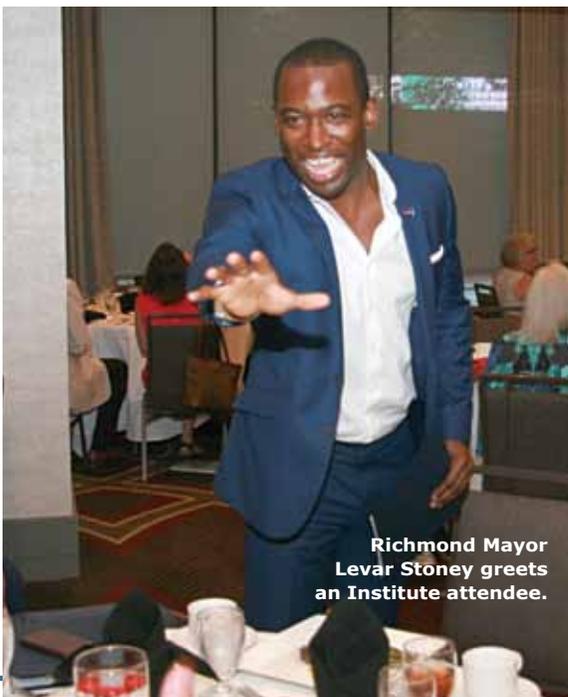
Smithfield town manager Brian Thrower and VML President Patricia P. Woodbury at the reception.



VML Executive Director Michelle Gowdy speaks at the conference.



(L-R) Dumfries Council Member Monae Nickerson, Ashland Council Member Daniel McGraw and Onancock Council Member Maphis Oswald were among the participants.



Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney greets an Institute attendee.



Newport News Council Member David Jenkins, Bonnie Boyce, Appomattox Council Member James Boyce and Warrenton Council Member Renard Carlos at the Institute.



**INSTITUTE
FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS**
KEY TRAINING FOR NEW & VETERAN OFFICIALS ALIKE

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EDUCATION



VML ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 2, 2018 • HAMPTON



Most conference activities, including general sessions, break-outs, and the exhibit hall, will take place at the Hampton Roads Convention Center located at 1610 Coliseum Drive, Hampton, VA 23666.

Visit www.vml.org to register and to view the preliminary agenda.

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

Conference highlights

Sunday, September 30

Exhibit Hall opens, Legislative Committee meets, Opening Reception in Exhibit Hall.

Monday, October 1

Opening session

Ralph S. Northam, Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia and Senatorial candidates Tim Kaine and Corey Stewart will discuss their priorities and visions for Virginia's future.

City, Town & Urban Section elections and workshops and concurrent workshops will be held in the afternoon.

The Awards Reception will be held in the Exhibit Hall.

Dinner is on your own.



Ralph S. Northam



Tim Kaine



Corey Stewart

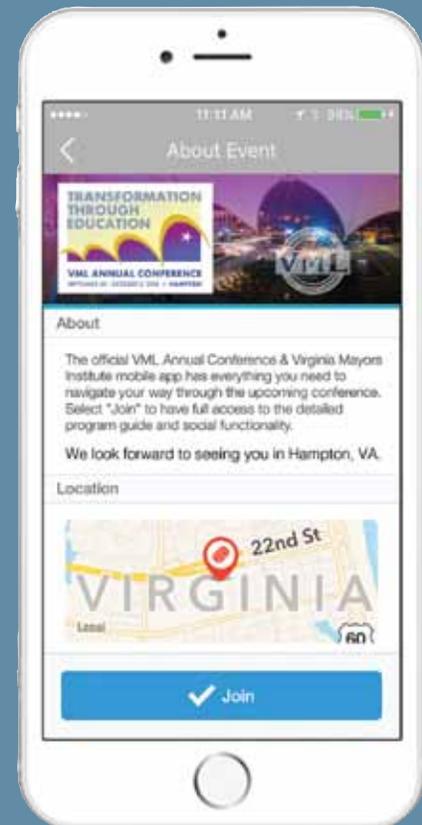
Tuesday, October 2

Exhibit Hall closes after lunch. Concurrent workshops will be held in the morning, followed in the afternoon by a general session on creating safe workplaces and the annual business meeting. The annual banquet will take place Tuesday evening, and you won't want to miss the concluding musical entertainment, SLAPNATION.

STAY CONNECTED! Get instant updates!

Find session descriptions, speaker bios, exhibitor info, schedules, and maps. Available in your device's app store.

Search: **Virginia Municipal League**



Value-Added Services

VMLIP offers more than just coverage. In addition to our specialists in risk management, human resources, communications, law enforcement and claims, VMLIP offers the following services:

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- Governing officials training on topics such as enterprise risk management, crisis communications, HR liability, and more;
- Property appraisals;
- Risk Management Guidelines;
- Risk Management Grants;
- SiteHawk partnership to provide members with preferred pricing for safety data sheet management;
- STOPit partnership to offer school systems access to an application designed to deter inappropriate behaviors at school;
- Tenant User Liability Program;
- Training resources in-person and online through webinars and the [VMLIP Online University](#) and the [VMLIP Law Enforcement Academy](#);
- YourCISO providing high-quality information security resources and consulting; and much more.



Premiums are only a portion of your entity's total cost of risk. To effectively mitigate losses, a comprehensive risk management strategy is essential. VMLIP can help.

For more than 35 years, VML Insurance Programs has been Virginia's leader in group self-insurance. We are your partner in risk management.

A message from VML President Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury

IT HAS BEEN AN honor and privilege to serve as your President this past year. I have been both grateful and amazed at the support you have shown the Executive Board, the VML staff and me during this challenging year of transition. It is truly uplifting to work with so many dedicated local officials from every part of the Commonwealth and experience “first hand” the wonderful things they accomplish!

The Virginia Municipal League, like other similar organizations, is only as strong as our members. It is impressive what we have achieved with your help and support. VML has had a great year! Despite an uphill battle, we were successful, for the most part, in our primary mission of legislative advocacy. Through your efforts and the hard work of our legislative team, we managed to protect our local authority to deal with issues, problems and opportunities at the local level. It has been a very good year to be a member of the League and we remain committed to advancing the interests and concerns of our cities, towns and counties.

We had an outstanding Legislative Day, with presentations by our new Governor as well as the Secretary of Finance and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security. The attendance was impressive and we thank you for making the commitment to attend and participate in this important event.

But, it's not just attendance at VML Legislative Day. Local officials – each of us – are the key to VML's success in working with the General Assembly, the State administration as well as Congress and the national administration. Your willingness to write letters, adopt resolutions, make telephone calls, contribute information and attend meetings is impressive and appreciated. It is most important that we all accept the challenge of letting legislators in Richmond and Washington know the “real life” consequences of bills introduced in the General Assembly and Congress! **YOU DID JUST THAT!**

In July, I was privileged to preside at the 2018 Institute of Local Officials. Many of the attendees were people who were elected this past May and took office in July. I can assure you that our localities are in good hands, based on the dedication, interest and sense of public service that the conference attendees demonstrated. The presenters and speakers shared

pertinent and essential information to help the participants make better decisions in their new roles. The Institute was a very gratifying experience and one that I hope many of you will take advantage of in future years. Continuing education is so important in this fast-paced world, and we all can take advantage of the transformation that educational opportunities offer us.

Looking forward to the future – and I am the kind of person who is always looking forward – we will be tackling many issues next year that are important to our members such as school safety, mental health, tax reform, education, housing, zoning and workforce development. I'm sure that you can think of others to add to this list. We are confident the solutions will be found and implemented at the local level. We will look to all the communities in our wonderful State for the development of approaches to problems that will result in the improved lives of our constituents.

The two most important words in any speech or article are, “In closing”! So, in closing, I feel confident that over this next year **YOU**, our members, the Executive Committee and

staff will continue to move this organization forward. This can only happen if we are **ALL** committed to that **GOAL**. Each of you is important to VML's future, and each of you has something to contribute! I know it dates me, but I say to you what Bogart said in the movie, *Casablanca*: “Here's looking at you” my fellow VML members! Together, the sky's the limit.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.



Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury

Dr. Patricia Woodbury

Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury

Council Member, City of Newport News
President, Virginia Municipal League
Transformation Through Education

VML Executive Committee



Anita James Price
President-Elect
Council Member, City of Roanoke



Thomas R. Smigiel Jr.
Vice President
Council Member, City of Norfolk



Jill Carson
At-large member
*Council Member,
Town of Pennington Gap*



Laurie DiRocco
At-large member
Mayor, Town of Vienna



Ophie Kier
At-large member
Vice Mayor, City of Staunton



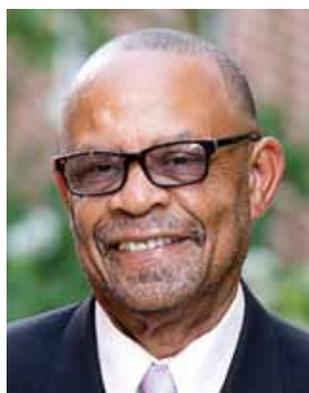
Bridge Littleton
At-large member
Mayor, Town of Middleburg



Christina Luman-Bailey
At-large member
Council Member, City of Hopewell



Robert K. Coiner
Immediate Past President
Mayor, Town of Gordonsville



A.D. "Chuckie" Reid
Town Section Chair
Vice Mayor, Town of Farmville



Willie Green
City Section Chair
Vice Mayor, City of Galax



Shannon Kane
Urban Section Chair
*Council Member,
City of Virginia Beach*

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPO

VML CONTINUES TO SERVE its mission of advocating for local governments in the state legislature, offering quality educational programs on topics of interest to local officials and conducting research intended to improve local government. Here is our report for the last year.

Lobbying and advocacy

A primary mission of VML is to advocate for local governments in the General Assembly and before state agencies and boards. Our legislative priorities and policy statements are a vital component of our lobbying effort and we are grateful to our policy and legislative committee members for their time and commitment to local government. We also are grateful to all the local officials who respond to our requests to let legislators and the Governor know how legislation affects “the folks back home.”

We again were successful in fending off legislative efforts that would have increased the cost of local administration, such as bills that would have required the waiver of stormwater fees for airports, changed the local grievance process, required the posting of a checkbook registry in a particular format, expanded benefits available under the Line of Duty Act and changed the process for assessment appeals. And, once again, we were successful in defeating the “party ID” bill. We were grateful to Governor Ralph Northam for vetoing legislation that would have limited the ability of local governments to place restrictions on the placement of mulch and required the assessment of golf courses as open space. And, although late, the General Assembly adopted a budget for the next biennium.

VML Vision

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.

VML Legislative Day

VML’s Legislative Day on January 30 included an address by Governor Ralph Northam, Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran. As in past years, Legislative Day included a reception for the members of the General Assembly and the administration that allowed local officials to network and exchange information with each other and with state officials. The renovation of the General Assembly Building and the temporary use of the Pocahontas Building for legislative offices and meetings gave an added complexity to logistics but local officials persevered and made the most of their trip to the Capitol!

Policy Committees and Legislative Committee

The backbone of VML’s advocacy lies in the work of the six policy committees and the Legislative Committee. This year the six committees met July 19 in Richmond for a robust series of meetings that included presentations ranging from plastic bags to state finances. The Legislative Committee will hold its final meeting for the year on September 30, the opening day of VML’s annual conference.

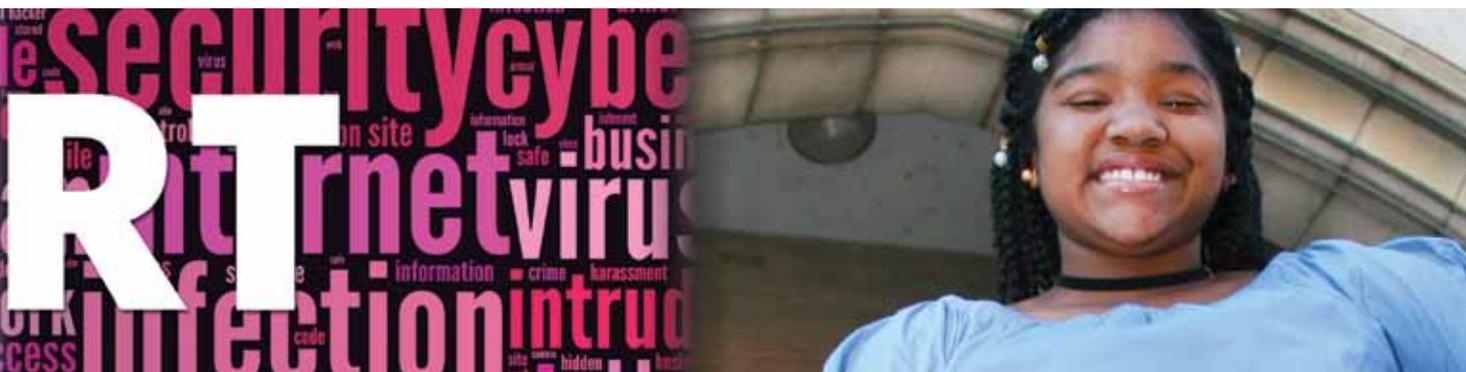
Education and training

Annual Conference and Virginia Mayors Institute

The 2017 VML annual conference in Williamsburg offered a full array of timely workshops and roundtables as well as opportunities for conference delegates to network at breaks and social events. The conference included sessions on issues that can require some difficult decisions including prayer at public meetings and managing discussions and activities relating to controversial topics as well as pressing issues such as opioids, economic development and cyber security. The Mayors Institute focused on leadership and included sessions on FOIA, COIA, good governance and more!

Finance Forum

The 2018 Finance Forum was held January 3 and included sessions on fiscal stewardship, the state budget, the Virginia Retirement System, an analysis of the November elections



and local fiscal conditions. Once again, the session, which is sponsored jointly with the Virginia Association of Counties, imparted a wealth of needed information in time for the beginning of the General Assembly.

Virginia Leadership Academy

This past year, VML held a seminar on the Freedom of Information Act and the Conflict of Interests Act under the Virginia Leadership Academy.

Institute for Local Officials

VML held two Institute for Local Officials in the past year, one in January and one in July. While the Institutes provide a “hit-the-ground” running for newly-elected officials, they also provide a valuable update for incumbents and staff alike. Both Institutes covered the basics of what local officials need to know: How to govern, council-manager relations, the Freedom of Information Act, the Conflict of Interests Act and budgeting basics. These Institutes continue to be a popular form of continuing education.

Communications

VML is continuously evaluating its communications strategy to respond to changes in technologies and readers’ preferences. *Virginia Town & City* is published 10 times per year and highlights people, programs, and organizations who are making positive changes across Virginia. VML also publishes an email newsletter every other week when the legislature is not in session and even more frequently when it is. Further, VML publishes annually a guide to the Freedom of Information Act, Conflict of Interests Act and Public Records Act that is a valuable resource for local officials charged with reading and understanding those laws.

Looking forward, VML is updating its database, a long overdue project that is nearing completion. The goal is to improve VML’s ability to target its communications and to improve the constant updating of information that is a requirement of today’s world.

Awards and acknowledgement

The annual VML Innovation Awards celebrate hometown successes and all that localities do to make their city, town or county a great place to live.

In 2017, Lynchburg won the Community Health Award and the President’s Award for Live Healthy Lynchburg, a collaborative approach to improving citizen well-being. Danville took the Communications Award for reimagining ways to communicate using Facebook Live. The city also won the Working with Youth Award for production of the children’s book *Dan River Twins*. In economic development Roanoke County won the award for its Explore Park Adventure Plan and the town of St. Paul won the Infrastructure Award for its regional wastewater plant expansion project. Finally, the town of Ashland won the Public Safety Award for addressing issues surrounding long-term residency in area motels.



The HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Cities & Towns Campaign provides free technical assistance to municipal leaders to adopt policies and practices that create healthy, prosperous communities. In 2017, Charlottesville, Warrenton, and Williamsburg earned a platinum designation. Crewe, Hopewell, Lovettsville and Prince George County earned a gold designation. Gordonsville, Lawrenceville, Leesburg, and Richmond received a silver designation and Bluefield, Haymarket, Middleburg, Staunton, and Wytheville earned the bronze designation.

The Green Government Challenge is a friendly competition designed to encourage implementation of specific environmental policies and practical actions that reduce carbon emissions. This year Go Green is celebrating its 10th anniversary with an expanded challenge. 2017 recipients included Fairfax and Vienna at the silver level; Prince George County at the gold level; and Arlington County, Alexandria, Ashland, Blacksburg, Charlottesville, Herndon, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Newport News, Purcellville, Radford, Richmond, and Williamsburg at the platinum level.

The Stairway to Success program is aimed at local government’s role in early childhood education. The cities of Fairfax, Suffolk and Manassas and the towns of Narrows, Ashland, Leesburg and Orange were recognized for their work in enhancing the early childhood experience in 2017.

2018 awardees will be recognized during the 2018 annual conference, and information on the participants will be published in the October issue of *Virginia Town & City*.



If I were a Mayor

VML has invited seventh graders in Virginia's public and private schools to describe what they would do as mayor to make their communities better places in which to live. This year VML followed a different format for recognizing the winners of the contest. VML staff presented the awards at local council or school board meetings or mayor's offices this past spring. The winners were:

Statewide winner: Jalia Hardy of Binford Middle School in Richmond (also Region 7 winner)

Region 1: Bryleigh Middleton of Pennington Middle School in Pennington Gap

Region 2: Kaydence Addison of Dalton Intermediate School in Radford

Region 3: Will Schwantes of Daniel Morgan Middle School in Winchester

Region 4: Catherine Selfridge of Buckingham Middle School in Buckingham

Region 5: Gideon DeMarco of Lanier Middle School in Fairfax

Region 6: Maeve Myers of Louisa County Middle School in Mineral

Region 8: Tina Li of the Academy for Discovery at Lakewood in Norfolk

A sad loss

The VML community was saddened this past year by the death of Howard W. Dobbins, who served VML as general counsel from 1968 until 2012 – a span of 44 years. Dobbins was instrumental in the league's transformation from a statewide association providing traditional service programs to one offering more entrepreneurial ventures such as group insurance. He was indeed a giant of a man and a transformational figure in VML's history.

Executive mansion ornaments

In the past three years, localities contributed creative ornaments that celebrate local communities for placement on a holiday tree at the Executive Mansion. Visitors from across the country toured the mansion and viewed the ornaments, learning about the diverse heritage of Virginia's cities, towns, and counties. And, Governor Ralph Northam is continuing the tradition for the 2018 holiday season.

Staff changes

Michelle Gowdy was appointed executive director of VML last December. Jessica Ackerman came on board as a policy and advisory relations manager and Robert Bullington just recently joined our team as director of communications. 

Home for the Holidays

Local ornaments for Governor's mansion are back by popular demand.

In the past three years, nearly 200 communities created stunning handmade ornaments that adorned the holiday tree at the Governor's Mansion. Thousands of visitors from across the world toured the mansion and viewed the ornaments, learning about the diverse heritage of the Commonwealth's cities, towns, and counties.

The tree was so popular that the Governor's Mansion has asked VML to once again collect local heritage ornaments from its members to hang on the 2018 holiday tree.

Visit www.vml.org for complete guidelines for submitting your 2018 local heritage ornament.

2018 Wallerstein recipients named

THE WALLERSTEIN SCHOLARSHIP is administered jointly by University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and the Virginia Municipal League. It was established in 1973 at UVA by a gift from Ruth C. and Morton L. Wallerstein to foster interest and research in Virginia local government. Morton Wallerstein, a Richmond native, was a graduate of the University of Virginia and Harvard Law School. He served for 20 years as the first paid executive secretary of the Virginia Municipal League and for 19 years as general counsel. Several previous scholarship recipients hold policy-making and management positions in state and local government in Virginia.



This year, recipients of the Wallerstein Program include: **Wes Gobar**, a 2018 graduate of the University of Virginia, was awarded a \$2,500 Wallerstein Scholarship in conjunction with his work during the summer of 2018 as a Governor's Fellow.

Gobar, a Fredericksburg native, majored in Government and History. At the University of Virginia, he served as president of the Black Student Alliance, was a peer advisor for incoming African-American students, a member of the Cavalier Marching Band, and a member of the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society. He will be serving as a Governor's Fellow in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs this summer.

April Corwin and **Amber Arnold** each received a \$2,500 Wallerstein Scholarship under the summer internship program. This program provides financial and academic support for students attending the University of Virginia or the College at

Wise to intern in local government.

Arnold served as an intern in the environmental branch of the Albemarle County public schools. The purpose of the internship was to develop programs to increase sustainability within the county schools.

Arnold is scheduled to graduate in May 2020 with a double major from the Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy and in Global Studies with a focus on environment and sustainability. She is an active volunteer in organizations in Charlottesville. She assists weekly in preparing and serving breakfast to 60-plus low-income and homeless individuals and volunteers with residents in the city's public housing units to design and build personal gardens.

Corwin served as an intern with the Teens Give program with the city of Charlottesville. Teens Give engages at-risk youth in the city through service learning to develop healthier behaviors.

Corwin is scheduled to graduate in May 2020 with a degree in Global Development Studies and Spanish. She has served as a change leader with Oxfam America and as an English as a Second Language Assistant with the University's VISAS Program, which helps international scholars with their language needs. She also is a volunteer with Students Helping Honduras and has tutored refugee and immigrant students to prepare them for General Education Development exams. 

The \$2,500 Wallerstein Scholarships were awarded to (top center) Wes Gobar, (lower L-R) April Corwin and Amber Arnold.





**Chair: Susan Hafeli, Utility Analyst,
Fairfax County**

**Secretary/Treasurer: Sandra Harrington,
VML Government Relations Associate**

THE VIRGINIA ENERGY PURCHASING Governmental Association (VEPGA) is a joint powers association created in 2002 pursuant to authority provided in the Virginia Code. VEPGA negotiates multi-year electricity contracts with Dominion Energy on behalf of its members. VEPGA also informs its members of energy developments in Virginia and offers opportunities for members across the Dominion Energy service area to collectively promote their interests and learn from each other.

VEPGA's membership includes 170 cities, towns, counties, school boards, and other public entities. Through membership in VEPGA, local governments in Virginia can negotiate their electricity rates directly with Dominion Energy.

VEPGA is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors that is elected by membership and meets quarterly. While VEPGA's purpose is to negotiate electrical rates for its membership, VEPGA also has established several committees to advance its members' interests.

VEPGA's Joint Action Committee meets quarterly with Dominion to identify and resolve operational issues, including those involving construction and streetlighting. Meetings of VEPGA's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Committee include presentations on topics including best practices and emerging technologies, while VEPGA's Innovative Supply Side Initiatives Committee explores alternative energy

options of interest to VEPGA members.

VEPGA's annual spring meeting offers sessions that address educational, technical, and policy topics, as well as opportunities to meet and network with energy professionals from across the Dominion Energy service area.

The current VEPGA contract with Dominion Energy was executed in 2014 and expires June 30, 2019. For the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 period, electric rates negotiated by VEPGA are estimated to save members at least \$36.5 million on an annual basis, or about an eight percent overall reduction as compared to what VEPGA members would pay if their rates were set by the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Annual savings include \$6.2 million in base rates achieved as a result of 2014 contract negotiations; \$7.4 million in fuel savings due to a monthly, rather than annual, calculation; and \$22.9 million attributable to Dominion Energy riders and rate adjustment clauses.

The VEPGA contract includes rate schedules designed to offer electrical service options for facilities that range from a small, house-sized office building to large school campuses. Schedules address small, medium, and large accounts according to energy usage, all-electric buildings, pumping stations, and traffic control, street, and roadway lighting. The contract also provides a low-cost option for the purchase of renewable energy credits.

Learn more at www.vepga.org.



**President Gregg Fields, Director of Code
Administration, City of Alexandria**

**Executive Director: Sandra Harrington,
VML Government Relations Associate**



- Fields -

THE VIRGINIA BUILDING and Code Officials Association (VBCOA) is a statewide network of more than 1,000 building safety professionals dedicated to the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of all persons who live, work, or visit the Commonwealth of Virginia. Since 1929, VBCOA has worked to foster relationships with groups dedicated to promoting safety and the uniform interpretation and enforcement of regulations.

For this past year, VBCOA members have been working feverishly in anticipation of the 2018 International Code Council (ICC) Annual Conference, to be held October 21-31 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. VBCOA has worked with other state ICC chapters and sister organizations to make sure that the 2,000 people attending the conference have the information they need and the opportunity to enjoy their stay in Virginia. This is ICC's first meeting in Richmond, and it is indeed a big deal! ICC is the leading organization in building code development used throughout the United States and in many countries around the world.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our membership, VBCOA was awarded the 2018 Chapter of the Year by the International Code Council!

The award recognizes extraordinary performance by a chapter in promoting the goals and mission of the ICC and is the highest honor an ICC chapter can receive.

VBCOA members have continued to push student and public outreach programs such as the High School Technical Training Program. This training program brings ICC code certification to high school students in building trades, architectural drafting, and vocational training programs throughout Virginia. Virginia continues to lead the nation in this program with 17 participating schools and additional schools pending.

Training and education remains a core function of VBCOA, which holds two conferences a year focusing on technical issues such as complying with the energy code as well as sessions on issues such as learning to think like a politician.

For more information about VBCOA, visit www.vbcoa.org.

**President: Joseph Casey, Ph.D.,
Chesterfield County Administrator**

**Executive Secretary: Janet Areson,
VML Director of Policy Development**



MANAGERS LEARNING FROM one another, and alongside one another, help them all to build the skills, knowledge, and resiliency necessary to better serve their governing bodies and members of their communities. The Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) offers city, town, and county managers and administrators, and local government professional staff, a variety of learning opportunities and ways to connect with one another to build the skills necessary to help build greater communities through ethical, inclusive, and innovative leadership. More than 380 local government professionals representing cities, towns, and counties as well as regional authorities and commissions are members of the Association.

Managers face the tough job of ensuring the delivery of local government services to a citizenry that is increasingly jaded and distrustful of authority. They occupy a central role in maintaining a workforce that delivers professional services in an even-handed, just and impartial manner that reflects the political will of the elected governing bodies. At a time of heightened public scrutiny VLGMA promotes responsive public service in an ever-changing environment by offering members both practical training sessions as well as presentations and discussions that address the social and moral issues challenging communities and their leaders.

Creating greater understanding of the role of local government in our democracy and promoting interest and involve-

ment in it has been the focus of the association's Civic Engagement Committee.

The committee offers members information about best practices in engaging residents and tools to increase understanding and participation in local government, including materials for school-age children as well as for teens and adults.

VLGMA strongly believes in the development of the next generation of local government managers, and helped develop the Local Government Certificate Program in partnership with Virginia Tech. The program has enabled numerous local government employees to build their knowledge and skills and has given public administration students at Virginia Tech the opportunity to learn about local government directly from local management professionals.

The Association also allows members to apply for scholarship assistance to the University of Virginia's Senior Executive Institute (SEI). This summer, Orange County Finance Director Glenda Bradley and Botetourt Deputy County Administrator David Moorman will be attending SEI with the help of a VLGMA scholarship.

VLGMA is Virginia's state affiliate of the International City-County Association (ICMA).



**President: A. K. Briele, Electric Department
Director, City of Salem**

**Secretary/Treasurer: Sandra Harrington,
VML Government Relations Associate**



THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC Power Association of Virginia (MEPAV), founded in 1954, is made up of 16 localities that operate their own electric systems across the Commonwealth. As an association, MEPAV equips its members with the information and support needed to provide reliable and low-cost energy to their customers.

One of its main purposes is to foster a continuing spirit of cooperation among Virginia municipalities operating their own electric utilities. All utilities within the membership benefit from the knowledge and experiences of others, whether the subject matter is technical or non-technical in nature.

In addition to regular quarterly business meetings, MEPAV also hosts engineering and operations workshops for members to learn and share information. The annual business meeting, held in Virginia Beach, focuses on trends within the industry on a broader scale as well as offers a great opportunity for networking among the attendees.

Additionally, MEPAV lobbies on behalf of member localities on legislative and regulatory issues that affect them and their abilities to achieve these goals. Legislative consultant

Thomas Dick has lobbied on several issues that had the potential to impact these municipalities. Those issues have included matters relating to renewable energy such as net energy metering, utility pole attachment agreements, use of public rights-of-way and the continued self-governance of municipal utilities.

MEPAV members include Bedford, Blackstone, Bristol, Culpeper, Danville, Elkton, Franklin, Front Royal, Harrisonburg, Manassas, Martinsville, Radford, Richlands, Salem, Virginia Tech, and Wakefield. MEPAV and its members are all affiliates of the American Public Power Association (APPA) which advocates for over 2000 municipal utilities from across the United States.

MEPAV is also supported by its associate membership that consists of persons, firms, or corporations engaged in or closely allied with the generation, transmission or distribution of electric energy; manufacturers and suppliers of utility equipment; or members of municipalities not engaged in operating electric systems.

Learn more at www.mepav.org.

Virginia Municipal League staff

Michelle Gowdy
*Executive Director/General
Counsel*

Leslie Amason
*Conference and Marketing
Coordinator*

Jessica Ackerman
*Policy and Advisory Relations
Manager*

Janet Areson
Director of Policy Development

Robert Bullington
Director of Communications

Patrick Ford
Press Operator/Clerk

Sandra Harrington
Government Relations Associate

Joni Terry
Office Coordinator

Manuel Timbreza
*Director of Digital
Communications*



2018 Nominating Committee

Chair: Robert K. Coiner, Mayor, Town of Gordonsville
Jennifer K. Baker, Vice Mayor, Town of Herndon

Michael Barber, Mayor, Town of Christiansburg

Ted Byrd, Council Member, City of Harrisonburg

Jamie Clancey, Council Member, Town of Culpeper

Katie Cristol, Board Chair, County of Arlington

Mary Katherine Greenlaw, Mayor, City of Fredericksburg

Donald R. Harris, Mayor, Town of Bluefield

F. Woodrow Harris, Council Member, City of Emporia

David P. Helms, Mayor, Town of Marion

William H. Kerbin, Town Manager, Town of Onancock

Jon Stehle, Council Member, City of Fairfax

Gene Teague, Mayor, City of Martinsville

Tina L. Vick, Vice Mayor, City of Newport News

Rosemary Wilson, Council Member, City of Virginia Beach

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VML Member Local Governments

Cities

Alexandria
Bristol
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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
Boones Mill
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
Clintwood
Coeburn
Colonial Beach
Courtland
Craigsville
Crewe
Culpeper
Damascus
Dayton
Dillwyn
Drakes Branch
Dublin
Duffield
Dumfries
Eastville
Edinburg
Elkton
Exmore
Farmville
Fincastle
Floyd
Fries
Front Royal
Gate City
Glade Spring
Glasgow
Gordonsville
Gretna
Grottoes
Grundy
Halifax
Hamilton

Haymarket
Haysi
Herndon
Hillsboro
Hillsville
Hurt
Independence
Iron Gate
Irvington
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Jarratt
Jonesville
Kenbridge
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Lovettsville
Luray
Madison
Marion
McKenney
Middleburg
Middletown
Mineral
Monterey
Montross
Mount Crawford
Mount Jackson
Narrows
Nassawadox
New Market
Newsoms
Occoquan

Onancock
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Orange
Painter
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Pearisburg
Pembroke
Pennington Gap
Phenix
Port Royal
Pound
Pulaski
Purcellville
Quantico
Remington
Rich Creek
Richlands
Ridgeway
Rocky Mount
Round Hill
Rural Retreat
Saint Paul
Saltville
Scottsville
Shenandoah
Smithfield
South Boston
South Hill
Stanardsville
Stanley
Stephens City
Stony Creek
Strasburg
Stuart
Tappahannock
Tazewell

The Plains
Timberville
Toms Brook
Troutville
Urbanna
Victoria
Vienna
Vinton
Wachapreague
Wakefield
Warrenton
Warsaw
Washington
Waverly
Weber City
West Point
White Stone
Winisor
Wise
Woodstock
Wytheville

Counties

Albemarle
Alleghany
Arlington
James City
Loudoun
Prince George
Roanoke

Municipal Business Associates

These companies and organizations support the League as Municipal Business Associates. Through their membership, they stay connected with the issues that are important to Virginia local governments.



Signature Members

PMA Architecture
Spring City Electrical
Virginia Resources Authority
Virginia Tourism Corporation



Basic Members

Avantus Strategies
AquaLaw PLC
BCWH
Bowman Consulting
Cunningham Recreation
Comcast
Virginia Department of General Services
Downey & Scott, LLC
English Construction Company
Ernst & Young

Greehan, Taves, Pandak & Stoner, PLLC
HBA Architecture & Interior Design
Johnson Controls
Moseley Architects
Municode/Municipal Code Corporation
New River Valley Regional Commission
Playground Specialists
Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission

RRMM Architects
Springsted Incorporated
St. Peter's Group LLC
Suez Water Technology Solutions
SunTrust Bank
Timmons Group
Virginia Rural Water Association
Waste Industries
Wiley|Wilson

VML Legislative and Policy Committees

Twenty-four local officials from diverse localities are appointed each year by the VML president to serve on VML's legislative committee. Committee members develop positions on legislation and urge the enactment, amendment, or opposition to a variety of legislative initiatives. Another 147 local officials work on the VML policy committees. They help to shape the broader policies and make specific legislative recommendations to the Legislative Committee.

All localities are encouraged to participate on policy committees. Nomination forms are sent to each locality in the spring. Let a VML staff member know of your interest or send an email to e-mail@vml.org and we will follow up with you.

Legislative Committee

Chair: Donald R. Harris, Mayor, Town of Bluefield

Vice Chair: Roger W. Fawcett, Council Member, City of Suffolk

City Section

Andrea Oakes, Council Member, City of Staunton
Mary Person, Mayor, City of Emporia
Dan X. Sze, Council Member, City of Falls Church
Gene Teague, Mayor, City of Martinsville
William "Billy" Withers, Council Member, City of Fredericksburg
Benming "Benny" Zhang, Council Member, City of Williamsburg

Town Section

D. Michael Barber, Mayor, Town of Christiansburg
James Bradley, Council Member, Town of Gordonsville
Donald R. Harris, Mayor, Town of Bluefield
Jonathan "Bucky" Miller, Mayor, Town of Mount Jackson
Phil Miskovic, Council Member, Town of Crewe
W.T. "Bill" Rush III, Town Manager, Town of Marion

Urban Section

Ted Byrd, Council Member, City of Harrisonburg
Katie Cristol, Board Chair, County of Arlington
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FOCUS ON OUR MEMBERS

Local officials are a fascinating bunch of people who have careers all over the board and a range of backgrounds and interests. Over the next several months VML will include a brief focus on various members so that we can all gain an appreciation of what a diverse group occupies the seats in council and board chambers.

Transformation through education: VML President Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury – Council member from Newport News

By Manuel Timbreza

GROWING UP ON A FARM in Southampton County during the depression taught Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury a lesson that she has never forgotten: The value of education. Picking cotton at an early age taught her that she wanted a different future for herself and that a good education was the key to that future.



Few people have learned that lesson as well or have put it into practice as have Dr. Woodbury, who is the current president of the Virginia Municipal League. Just look at her resume, particularly the part that outlines her several degrees. The first was in music education, from Longwood College in 1957. But that was just a start. Showing her evolving professional interests, Dr. Woodbury next earned a master's degree in education-school psychology in 1982 from the College of William and Mary, the first of three degrees she earned from that university. She became certified as a licensed professional counselor in 1989 and earned her education specialist degree in counseling/school psychology that same year. She capped it all off with earning a doctor of education degree in counseling/school psychology in 1996.

And in addition to the formal education, she raised a family, taught at a university, worked in public schools, organized a Yoga class, led a liturgical dance group, been an active member of her church, served on the school board, been elected to city council, and served as a member of numerous boards and civic associations. She has served on the board and as president of not just the Virginia Municipal League but the Virginia Transit Association as well.

A unifying thread that has run through her life is an eagerness and a willingness to learn. She makes it a point to learn from every life situation and knows that teachers can not only impart knowledge to their students but learn from them as well.

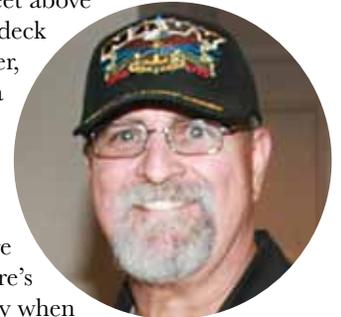
But another unifying thread also came from growing up on a farm: the value of hard work and the importance of honesty, integrity and doing your best. Those are life lessons that are learned at an early age and carry through an entire life.

VML appreciates her many contributions to the league and thanks her for her outstanding service as president and as a member of the Executive Committee.

Hard work: James Boyce – Council member from Appomattox

By Max Halbruner

THE TUGBOAT OF AN ARTICULATED Tugboat Barge (ATB) looks, (to someone like me with no knowledge of boats or how they work), like a ship that God forgot. Its deck is low to the water, the crew walking feet above the waves. The lion's share of that deck is taken up by a monolithic tower, stretching high into the air, with a mass that makes you wonder how the whole thing doesn't sink to the bottom. The barge looks similarly strange. It's a cargo ship, huge and longer than it is wide, but where there should be an engine and a cabin, there's just a wedge cut into the aft. It's only when they fit together that things take shape. The tugboat slides neatly into the wedge and pushes the massive barge along, its high tower giving the crew a view of their cargo and the horizon beyond. The closest thing I can compare this dynamic with is Superman flying through the air holding a plane in one hand. Here, however, there are no superpowers, just the hard work of the crew and the vessel.



Council member James Boyce knows all about hard work. Two years in the Navy taught him that the harder he pushed, the more it paid off. Twelve years as a sailor fine-tuned his persistence. That meant that when the Kirby Corporation needed someone to drive their barges across the Atlantic, James Boyce was the man they chose to captain six different ATBs on voyages everywhere from the Caribbean to Algeria. That work ethic extends to Bonnie, his wife, who raised six children while he was at sea.

Now, James Boyce is navigating something far more difficult than the waters of the Strait of Gibraltar: local politics. Elected through a write-in campaign, Councilman Boyce now sits on the town council in Appomattox. Instead of pushing cargo across the oceans, he will now be pushing his town towards a better life. There he will be doing the hard work of understanding and addressing the concerns of his constituents, and most importantly, solving their problems. 

About the authors: Manuel Timbreza is the director of digital communications for VML. Max Halbruner is a second-year classman at the University of Virginia. He was an intern at VML during the summer of 2018.



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