

Update

The newsletter of the Virginia Municipal League

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Disconcerting data reflect depths of economic trouble

During the last quarter of 2008, the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) fell at the fastest pace in 27 years. The 6.2 percent plunge was marked by sharp declines in consumer spending, investment and exports, according to federal government statistics.

The drop in GDP was substantially higher than the initial estimate – 3.8 percent – made by the U.S. Department of Commerce. As one private sector economist described the situation: "... Economic developments in recent months have been consistently worse than the worst-case scenarios."

Current economic projections have the first-quarter GDP in 2009 falling at a 4.8 percent annual rate. Since 1947, GDP has never fallen by more than 4 percent for two quarters in a row.

Economic activity in the fourth quarter of 2008 was record setting in terms of bad news:

- Consumer spending fell at 4.3 percent, the worst since 1980.
- Sales of durable goods crashed by 22.1 percent; the worst since 1987.
- Business investment dropped 21.1 percent, the worst since the 1975 recession.
- Exports fell 23.6 percent, the biggest decline since 1971.



Orders for autos, appliances and other durable goods have declined for six months in a row. Nationwide, inventories fell by 0.8 percent in January for the first time in 16 months, but sales still fell faster than inventory levels. And, the number of first-time claims for unemployment benefits shot up unexpectedly last week to 667,000. As of mid-February,

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Local revenue shortfalls proliferating

Here is the latest in VML's series of snapshots on the budget challenges facing local governments.

• In Roanoke County, the Board of Supervisors learned they may have to slice \$4.5 million from the general government budget by June 30. This would be on top of the \$3 million already cut. A dramatically reduced projection for personal property taxes is driving down revenue along with declines in lodging tax collections and interest income. The county expects to cover the revenue shortfall this year by deferring expenditures, dipping into cash reserves, and spending cuts. Preliminary indications are that the FY10 budget will

require another \$8 million reduction. The county is looking into salary reductions or mandatory furloughs to meet next year's challenge.

• In Harrisonburg, the city faces a shortfall of about \$4.2 million in the next fiscal year, and city schools could face a \$4 million shortfall under a worst-case scenario. School board members hope that federal economic stimulus dollars will help make up some of the loss.

• Suffolk initiated a hiring freeze for non-critical positions and eliminated overtime for many employees to ensure the FY09 budget remains balanced. As

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FROM THE CAPITOL**Economic trouble continued ...**

some 5.1 million people were collecting unemployment, and the unemployment rate nationwide was 7.6 percent.

As for the housing industry, although builders are cutting prices to lure buyers and housing is becoming more affordable, tight credit and lack of consumer confidence have combined to push sales downward. It would take more than 13 months to sell off the existing inventory of new homes, which is another bad news record.

The recession's effects are being felt throughout the Commonwealth. The December state unemployment rate was 5.2 percent. Every city's December 2008 unemployment rate exceeded the rate from the previous December, and 12 Virginia cities unemployment rates

exceeded the national rate. Local sales tax collections from Christmas sales dropped \$1.8 million to \$37.2 million compared to last year's collections. Only eight cities saw an increase in local sales tax revenues.

The recession's impacts, however, are measured not just in budget shortfalls. Dominion Virginia Power shut off service to nearly 94,000 customers in 2008 – a 15 percent jump from a year earlier. Regulators say thousands more could lose service after April 1, when a winter restriction on shut-offs ends. Food stamp demand is also on the rise. The number of recipients in Virginia climbed 14 percent in 2008 to 608,122. Demand in Fredericksburg and Stafford increased by 18 percent and 20 percent,

respectively.

Not all of the recent economic news has been glum. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said that he was confident the economy would rebound modestly later this year and into 2010, *if* the government's efforts to stabilize the banking system prove successful. Also, prices fell at the fastest pace on record last quarter – an annualized 5 percent rate. Real disposable incomes increased at a 3.4 percent clip.

The questions local governments may be asking now are (1) how much longer will the recession last and (2) how can services be maintained until a more "normal" revenue growth returns? ❖

Local revenue shortfalls continued ...

part of the budget development process for FY10, the city is examining several options, including across the board pay reductions, furloughs and layoffs. The city projects a revenue shortfall of \$3.9 million this year and as much as \$7 million in FY10.

- In Hampton Roads, real estate and personal property assessments are in the news. For the first time in at least 26 years, residential property assessments in Virginia Beach decreased -- roughly

4 percent. Three out of four properties in the resort city will have lower assessments than last year. Virginia Beach expects to collect \$10 million less than what it budgeted in real estate taxes this fiscal year. Real estate taxes make up almost 30 percent of the city's total budget. The city faces a \$103 million shortfall in FY10. The revenue situation is further complicated by the decline in value of motor vehicles, specifically SUVs. The city predicts a \$15

million shortfall in personal property tax revenue in FY09 and \$23 million in the next fiscal year.

In Portsmouth, residential and commercial property declined by an average of 0.36 percent, and in Chesapeake, real estate assessments dropped by an average of 1.8 percent. Regarding personal property taxes, Chesapeake projects a revenue decline of \$3.8 million this year. ❖

VDOT drafts manual on locally administered programs, projects

The Virginia Department of Transportation is soliciting comments through April 1 on a manual to identify requirements necessary for federal-aid projects. The manual also will identify exceptions or modified requirements for projects receiving state aid or receiving funding through special funding programs and those projects administered by local governments, local authorities and transportation districts having programmatic agreements to administer their entire construction program.

Many of the legal requirements that local governments must meet for

transportation projects funded through VDOT programs are no different than requirements the local governments would need to meet for any other capital outlay project.

Under agreements signed with VDOT, local governments are fully responsible for the administration of their projects and are required to provide a full-time local government employee to be in responsible charge of the project. Localities must also provide a professional engineer, licensed in Virginia, who may be contracted, in the position of the Responsible Charge Engineer (RCE) during design and construc-

tion of the project. Unless otherwise established in the project administration agreement, the locality is also responsible for providing adequate construction inspection to ensure that the project is constructed in reasonable compliance with the contract documents and specifications.

The manual is available on the VDOT Web site at www.virginiadot.org/business/draft_manual_for_locally_administered_projects.asp.

Send responses by April 1 to: Penny Forest at: penny.forest@VDOT.virginia.gov. ❖

AT THE LEAGUE**Deck safety focus of VBCOA mid-year meeting**

Learning the latest information on deck safety will be the focus of the 2009 Virginia Building & Code Officials mid-year meeting to be held April 27 in Charlottesville.

Building inspectors will learn how to offer voluntary deck inspections as part of the educational session. For additional information, view conference information at www.vbcoa.org. ❖

**ETCETERA****Energy forum set March 24 in Danville**

A one-day Energy Forum for Local Government Officials will be held March 24 in Danville at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research.

Sessions will include information on recent state legislative actions related to energy, the latest on how federal stimulus money can be used for energy efficiency-related projects, and presentations on alternative energy sources being devel-

oped by Virginia businesses and local governments.

The event is being put on by the Virginia Association of Counties, which is handling registration. VML and the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission are lending their support. Cost is \$25. Deadline for registering is March 17. A registration form is attached. ❖

Civil War sesquicentennial events get underway

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission will be the host of the nation's first major event commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Civil War at the University of Richmond on April 29.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers, president of the University of Richmond and noted Civil War historian, is chairing the conference, entitled "America on the Eve of the Civil War." Following a format

that is more akin to Meet the Press than a typical conference, the innovative program promises to set a tone of inclusion and innovation in the country's upcoming conversations about the Civil War.

The conference will feature an outstanding array of panelists who will participate in four unscripted conversations that view events from the perspective of 1859, as they were occurring: Taking Stock of the Nation in 1859, The

Future of Virginia and the South, Making Sense of John Brown's Raid, and Predictions for the Election of 1860.

More than 1,400 people have registered to attend from every corner of Virginia and from across the United States. Registrations are still being accepted. To register, visit the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission's Web site: www.virginiacivilwar.org or call 804/786-3591. ❖

Rural health summit and EMS roundtable scheduled

The Virginia Department of Health will be the host of the second annual Rural Health Summit March 10-13 in Abingdon. A special rural EMS roundtable will be held as a part of the summit on March 11 from noon to 5:30 p.m.

The health summit will continue the work of the state rural health plan, a three- to five-year strategic plan designed to strengthen the health care infrastructure in Virginia's rural areas.

The summit will kick off officially on March 12, with progress reports from the four councils established last year (access, data and rural definitions, workforce and quality). A special post-summit expert panel on March 12 and 13 will discuss integrating primary care and mental / behavioral health and integration.

The rural EMS roundtable on March 11 will take up the unique issues and challenges facing rural EMS agencies

in Virginia. This interactive roundtable discussion will help identify strategies and develop solutions to address the role of EMS, responsibility for EMS in rural communities, and recommendations to strengthen existing EMS structures in rural Virginia.

There is no cost to attend the summit or roundtable, but registration is required. To register and read more information, go to: www.va-srhp.org/2009-rural-health-summit.htm. ❖

ETCETERA**U.Va newsletter goes digital with issue on gerrymandering**

The history of gerrymandering in Virginia is the topic of the first all-electronic edition of the University of Virginia News Letter. Author Ken Stroupe recommends that Virginia, with a history of gerrymandering going back to the earliest days of the nation, should begin a reform process immediately to prepare for the redistricting that the 2010

census will require.

Stroupe is chief of staff for U.Va's Center for Politics. The Virginia News Letters is published monthly by the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia.

See: <http://www.coopercenter.org/publications/VANEWSLETTER/>. ❖

Travel subsidies available for regional environmental conference

A regional ecosystem based management (EBM) conference, Ecosystem Based Management: The Chesapeake and Other Systems, will be held March 22-25 at the Baltimore Marriott Hotel and Conference Center.

The conference will identify EBM systems in place across the basin and opportunities for expanded EBM in the future. There are 29 sessions scheduled and more importantly, participation

by local-state/federal officials, NGO representatives, K-12 educators, advocacy staffs, and policymakers is being sought, with subsidized travel and accommodation.

Check the following Web site for conference details, call for abstracts, registration, and travel subsidy information: <http://www.chesapeakemeetings.com/EBM>. ❖

POSITIONS**Longer version of job ads posted at www.vml.org**

Because of the number of requests it receives to publish job advertisements, VML reduces the length of the position descriptions in Update. A full version of the entire job listings published here for the past two months appears on VML's Web site at www.vml.org. Visit the VML site and click on "Marketplace" to read the complete descriptions.

Purchasing Manager, Gloucester County

SALARY: \$53,788 or higher DOQ. Lead team of two buyers and an administrative assistant in procurement of goods and services for county government and school system. Reqs. 6-9 yrs. progressively responsible exper. in govt. purchasing; (CPPB, CPPO) certification or ability to obtain within 3 yrs. Detailed list of qualifications and job description at: www.gloucesterva.jobs. Submit cover letter and resume with Gloucester County application to: Human Resource Department: 6467 Main St., Gloucester, Va. 23061; Phone: 804/693-5690. Deadline: March 27. EOE.

Chief Administrative Officer, City of Richmond

SALARY: \$124,500-\$210,091 negotiable DOQ/DOE (+) benefits and reasonable relocation expenses. (Pop. 200,123). Reqs. min. MS/MA degree in public / business administration or related field plus min. 10 yrs. exper. at director / deputy director level. Strong mayor form of govt. Brochure at www.mercergroupinc.com. Send confidential cover letter, resume, references and salary reqs. immediately to: James Mercer, The Mercer Group Inc., 551 W. Cordova Road #726, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Voice: 505/466-9500; Fax: 505/466-1274. Web site: www.mercergroupinc.com. Candidate information may also be e-mailed to: jmercer@mercergroupinc.com. Open until filled. EOE.

Director of Finance, Brunswick County

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Plan, organize and direct operations of human resources, budget and financial mngmnt. Plan and direct bdgt. development process. Serve as liaison for fiscal agencies, working with state and local authorities to ensure fiscal responsibility. Reqs. degree in accounting, budget or finance field (CPA preferred); 5 yrs. exper. in budgeting and finance, preferably in local govt. and some at supervisor level. Complete job description at: Office of the County Administrator or at www.brunswickco.com. Submit resume

to: Office of the County Administrator, P.O. Box 399, Lawrenceville, VA 23868. Contact: 434/848-3107 or 1-800-848-3199. Deadline: 1 p.m. March 20. EOE.

Chief of Police, Altavista

SALARY: \$48,000-\$71,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. (pop. 3,425). Direct all operations of Police Department with 11-member staff. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree and 7 yrs. exper. in municipal law enforcement, including 2 yrs. of major command responsibility; or any equiv. comb. of training and exper. that provides the req'd. knowledge, skills and abilities. Must obtain DCJS Police Officer Certification. Residency req'd. Submit resume and town application to: Town of Altavista, P.O. Box 420, Altavista, VA 24517 Attn: Town Manager. For more info, contact: Waverly Coggsdale at 434/369-5001 or visit www.ci.altavista.va.us to view detailed job profile and obtain an application. Open until filled. EOE.

Finance Director / Treasurer, Christiansburg

SALARY: \$66,656-\$92,882 (+) benefits, including VRS. Appointed by Town Council; reports to town manager. Handle \$34 million annual bdgt. with assistance of 9 FT and 1 PT direct reports. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree and min. 6 yrs.

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POSITIONS

municipal accounting exper. CPA and public finance officer certifications highly desirable. Complete and return town application, cover letter and resume to: Town of Christiansburg, Attn: Clay McCoy, SPHR/Director of Human Resources, 100 E. Main St., Christiansburg, VA 24073. Application forms, complete job ad and job description available at www.christiansburg.org. Deadline: April 1. EOE.

Director of Finance, Galax

SALARY: \$56,055-\$64,093 hiring range DOQ/DOE. Plan, organize, supervise and participate in the disbursement and accounting of revenues and expenditures; monitor and administer the budget, accounting, purchasing, fixed assets, data systems and related fiscal operations; perform related work as apparent or assigned. Reqs. bachelor's degree with coursework in accounting, or related field and extensive exper. in public finance administration, or equiv. comb. of educ. and exper. CPA preferred. Submit city employment application and release forms, along with resume and cover letter, to: Keith Holland, City Manager, 111 E. Grayson Street, Galax VA 24333. Deadline: March 9. EOE.

Town Manager, Exmore

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Responsible for overall administration, including developing and motivating large organization to meet town's Vision and Comprehensive Plan. Prefer 4-plus yrs. exper. as a manager or executive in a comparable organization managing multiple and diverse depts. Reqs. relevant bachelors degree or an equiv. comb. of educ. and exper., as well as demonstrated skills in leadership, administration, budgeting, managing people and working effectively with the public and media. Send letter of interest, resume and town application to: Town Clerk, P.O. Box 647, Exmore, Va. 23350, or by e-mail at exmoreclerk1@yahoo.com. Deadline: March 20. EOE.

Treasurer, Cape Charles

SALARY: \$39,605-\$54,505 DOQ (+) benefits. Directs comprehensive financial mgmt. program, including: tax collection, licenses, utilities and other fee-for-service revenues, payroll and vendor payments, accounting and financial reporting, internal control, budget preparation and execution, audit management, etc. Reports to town manager and manages 3-person staff. Serves at will of Town Council. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree (master's preferred).

Prefer practical exper. in managing similar functions in either the public or private sectors. Submit application (available at www.capecharles.org) and resume to: Town Clerk, 2 Plum St., Cape Charles, VA 23310. Deadline: March 13.

Senior Assistant County Attorney, Bedford

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Perform legal services for Department of Social Services (DSS). Also will represent county's nursing home, group home, the Department of Youth and Family Services and assist county attorney in all phases of legal work, including litigation. Reqs. graduation from accredited law school and 5 yrs. legal exper., preferably including local govt. and DSS representation; or any equiv. comb. of training and exper. that provides the req'd knowledge, skills and abilities. Applications available at www.co.bedford.va.us. Deadline: March 20. EOE.

Fire Chief, Fauquier County

SALARY: \$86,153-\$112,008 start range (+) benefits. (pop. 66,328) Career Operations Division consists of 26 personnel operating out of 5 of the 11 volunteer fire and rescue stations. Administration consists of the chief, assistant chief and 3 administration support specialists. \$4.3 million annual bdtg. Each staff member is cross-trained as a Firefighter/EMT and 18 staff members are also advanced life support providers. Reqs. any comb. of educ. and exper. equiv. to possession of relevant bachelor's degree and extensive progressively responsible exper. in fire services, including considerable supervisory exper.; comprehensive knowledge of fire administration. Must possess Advanced Life Support, Fire, HazMat, Fire Code Official and Fire Marshall Certifications. Apply and see complete job description at www.fauquiercounty.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Other positions

NOTICE: The following positions also are listed on VML's Web site at www.vml.org.

Director of Economic Development, Roanoke

SALARY: Negotiable DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Open until filled.

Utility Operations Manager, Norfolk (Department of Utilities)

SALARY: \$60,947-\$107,266 full range (+) benefits. Open until filled.

Economic Development Coordinator, West Point

SALARY: Negotiable DOQ/DOE. Deadline: March 6.

Systems Engineer I/II, Virginia Beach

SALARY: \$55,736-\$83,604 (+) benefits. Deadline: March 13.

City Manager, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Deadline: March 20.

General Manager, Petersburg Area Transit

SALARY: \$39,590-\$64,655 (+) benefits. Open until filled.

Senior Water Resources Engineer, Northern Virginia Regional Commission

SALARY: Mid \$70,000s - mid \$80,000s DOQ (+) benefits. Deadline: March 15.

County Administrator, Montgomery

SALARY: \$125,000-\$150,000 DOQ (+) benefits. Deadline: March 16.

Town Manager, Kilmarnock

SALARY: Negotiable DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Deadline: March 31.

DEADLINE: *The deadline for placing a job advertisement in the next issue of Update is Friday, March 13. Submit ads via e-mail to David Parsons at dparsons@vml.org. You may also submit via FAX at: 804/343-3758. VML publishes job advertisements at no cost to its local government members. Non-members are charged a flat rate of \$25 per ad per issue, which includes posting on VML's Web site and publication in Virginia Town & City (deadlines permitting). VML edits position descriptions in printed publications because of space limitations.*

CALENDAR**Virginia Economic Developers Association Spring Conference, Williamsburg, March 12-13**

More information at www.goveda.org.

National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference, Washington, March 14-18

More information at www.nlc.org.

Virginia Association of Governmental Purchasing Spring Conference, Staunton, March 18-20

More information at www.vagp.org/events/spring.html.

Virginia Association for Parks Annual Conference, Westmoreland County, March 19-21

More information at www.virginiaparks.org.

Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association Green Communities Conference, Williamsburg, March 25-27

More information at www.apavirginia.org/events/2009/2009-annual-apa-virginia-conference/view.

Virginia Emergency Management Association Annual Conference, Hampton, March 31-April 3

More information at www.vemaweb.com.

Virginia Plumbing and Mechanical Inspectors Association 2009 VPMIA Annual School of Instruction, Winchester, April 1-3

More information at www.vpmia.org.

Local Government Attorneys of Virginia 2009 Spring Conference, Charlottesville, April 2-4

More information at www.coopercenter.org/lga.

Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning Spring Conference, Charlottesville, April 17

More information at <http://vamap.org/>.

Virginia Municipal Clerks Association Annual Conference, Chesapeake, April 22-24

At Springhill Suites Marriott. Registration information, special hotel rates at www.vanca.com/forms/UpcomingConferences.htm.

ICMA-SEI Leadership Institute, Charlottesville, April 25 – May 1.

More information at www.vlgma.org or contact Felicia Logan, flogan@icma.org.

VBCOA Mid-Year Meeting, Charlottesville, April 27

VBCOA business meeting and educational sessions on code enforcement. To be held at the Doubletree Charlottesville. To register or for more information, visit www.vbcoa.org, or contact Sherall Dementi (sdementi@vml.org).

Virginia Association of Community Service Boards 2009 Professional Development Conference, Richmond, May 5-6

More information at www.vacsb.org/.

The Virginia Section of the American Water Works Association Annual Seminar, Spotsylvania County, May 11-13

More information at www.vaawwa.org/conferences-seminars.html.

Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia Annual Conference, Virginia Beach, May 20-22

At the Courtyard by Marriott North. To register or for more information, contact Kimberly Pollard at 804/523-8528 or kpollard@vml.org.

Virginia Government Finance Officers' Association Spring Conference, Virginia Beach, June 3-5

More information online at www.vgfoa.org/calendar.html

Virginia Transit Association Annual Conference, Fredericksburg, June 8-9

More information at www.vatransit.com.

Virginia Association of Assessing Officers Spring Educational Seminar, Charlottesville, July 14-16

More information at www.vaaao.org.

VLGMA Summer Conference, Virginia Beach, June 17-19

More information at www.vlgma.org, or e-mail Molly Harlow at mjh3a@virginia.edu or Janet Areson at jareson@vml.org.

National Association of Counties Annual Conference & Exposition, Nashville, July 24-28

More information at www.naco.org.

Senior Executive Institute (SEI), Charlottesville, July 19-31.

The alumni program is on July 29. For more information, visit www.vlgma.org, or e-mail Molly Harlow at mjh3a@virginia.edu.

Virginia Public Health Association Annual Conference, Richmond, Sept. 10-11

Advancing Health Equity from Theory to Practice. More information at <http://vapha.org/events>.

2009 ICMA Conference, Montreal, Sept. 13-16

More information at www.icma.org.

Virginia Economic Developers Association Fall Conference, Roanoke, Sept. 16-18

More information at www.goveda.org.

VBCOA Annual Meeting, Norfolk, Sept. 27-29

VBCOA business meeting, election of officers and educational sessions on code enforcement. To be held at the Norfolk Marriott Waterside. To register or for more information, visit www.vbcoa.org, or contact Sherall Dementi (sdementi@vml.org).

Registration

(Please print and fax or mail to VACo)

To register for this workshop fill out the following information:

Name: _____

Title: _____

County/City/Town: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

FAX: _____

E-mail address: _____

Registration fee: \$25. Requested in advance of the workshop.
Make check payable to the Virginia Association of Counties.

Charge options: Check one

American Express Master Card Visa

Expiration date: _____

Cardholder's name: _____

Card number: _____

Authorized signature: _____

Check to pay registration fee enclosed with registration form.

Registration submitted by FAX, registration fee to be mailed.

Deadline: By March 17, please submit registration form (with registration fee) to: Virginia Association of Counties, 1001 E. Broad Street, Suite LL-20, Richmond, VA 23219 or by FAX to (804)788-0083.

Any questions or special needs requirements may be directed to VACo's Larry Land: 804-343-2504 or Lland@vaco.org.

For refund information, contact VACo's Vicky Steinruck at 804-343-2501 or vsteinruck@vaco.org.

A One-Day Energy Forum for Local Government Officials

March 24, 2009

Institute for Advanced
Learning and Research
Danville

SOBERING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, fluctuating fuel prices, economic stimulus funds, concerns about climate change, and the imperative to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy demand creative actions in the public and private sectors.

The chief objectives of this workshop are to:

- Raise awareness of broad issues that should be considered by local officials as they develop new energy strategies;
- Provide information about legislative actions relating to energy improvements and new energy sources; and
- Provide information about innovations by businesses and communities to address new energy challenges.

This Energy Forum is made possible through financial support provided by the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission.

Contact VACo's Larry Land if you have any questions at 804-343-2504. Also visit www.vaco.org/sitefiles/pdfs/frontpage/larrybrochure.pdf.

Presented by

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Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and
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Virginia Municipal League

Update

The newsletter of the
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LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
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