

Update

The newsletter of the Virginia Municipal League

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Go Green Virginia kicks off 2nd year

Forums set for May in Richmond, Roanoke; Green Government Challenge under way

Throughout 2009 the Virginia Municipal League will once again provide its member local governments with helpful information and practical strategies to promote environmental responsibility. The second year of VML's "Go Green Virginia" initiative recognizes that communities – now more than ever – need to take innovative steps to reduce energy usage, promote sustainability and save money.

The response to the program in 2008 was tremendous. More than 200 people attended the Go Green Virginia regional forums and 41 VML member local governments participated in the cornerstone of

the program – The Green Government Challenge. Of those 41 cities, towns and counties that submitted the Challenge for evaluation, 26 received the minimum

score necessary to be certified as a "Green Government."

"Go Green Virginia" has several components that will unfold throughout 2009, including two educational forums that will be held this spring.

The forums – designed for local elected officials and professional staff – will provide practical help for local governments to begin or to advance their energy saving and sustainability efforts. The forums also will

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Unemployment up; sales tax collections sink

The December 2007 revenue forecast called for the state economy to add 14,400 new jobs in 2008. That prediction did not materialize. Instead, the Virginia economy shed 3,900 jobs last year, according to the Virginia Employment Commission. The last quarter of 2008 reflected the worsening state of affairs when employment levels sank at an accelerating rate.

VEC released its January employment figures on March 13, showing a rise in the unemployment rate to 6.4 percent on a seasonally unadjusted basis. The December unemployment rate was 5.1 percent. Non-farm employment losses totaled 72,500

jobs between December and January. The January unadjusted unemployment rate was the highest since June 1992.

All 10 Virginia metropolitan areas showed higher unemployment rates from December to January. The Danville area shot up from 11.1 percent in December to 14 percent in January, and is the only region with a double-digit unemployment rate.

The number of Virginians drawing unemployment benefits in January was 89,000, up sharply from 57,000 in December. All major industries experienced employment losses for the December-to-January time period.

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AT THE LEAGUE**Go Green Virginia continued ...**

discuss many of the policies and actions described in the Green Government Challenge that can lead to becoming a certified "Green Government." In addition, those attending will hear the latest on the availability of federal stimulus money for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG). The forums will be held May 7 in Richmond and May 8 in Roanoke. A copy of the registration form appears on page 5. It also is available at www.GoGreenVa.org. A detailed agenda will be posted on the Web site shortly.

Most importantly, member local governments once again are urged to participate in a friendly competition known as the Green Government Challenge. User-friendly changes to the online Challenge include:

- a streamlined registration process;
- password protection that allows people to start filling out the Challenge, save it, and then return at a later date to pick-up where they left off;
- an interactive copy of the Chal-

lenge for anyone to access and view all of the background material (without a password). You can even fill-in questions and watch the point totals change.

The 2009 Challenge is designed to encourage implementation of specific environmental policies and practical actions that reduce the carbon emissions generated by both the local government and the broader community. Once registered, challenge participants will have until Sept. 30 to assess their current programs and policies and implement new actions towards meeting certification.

Not only can your local government become a certified "Green Government," it could win a plaque and cash award sponsored by Moseley Architects as one of the top scorers in three population categories. VACo is partnering with VML this year on the Green Government Challenge. It will administer its own awards program.

Local governments – including all of those that participated in the Challenge last year – need to register to

participate in 2009 on-line at www.GoGreenVa.org. Once registered, start completing the Challenge and over the next six months implement new actions and adopt new policies that will increase your total score. The Web site provides detailed instructions, technical assistance and samples of actions and policies already established by other jurisdictions. It has been improved this year to make it even easier to complete and submit the Challenge on-line. Local governments will have until Sept. 30 to complete the Challenge.

All VML-member local governments should have received a mailing informing them about the forums and the Green Government Challenge around March 10. If your city, town or county did not, please contact VML. And remember to register as soon as possible for one of the two Go Green Virginia forums in May.

Contact: Joe Lerch at jlerch@vml.org or 804/523-8527. ❖

FROM THE CAPITOL**Unemployment continued ...**

State legislators and Gov. Tim Kaine incorrectly assumed a year ago that the economy would continue to grow in calendar year 2008, albeit at a slower pace.

All but 10 cities had unemployment rates greater than the statewide average. For every city in the state, except for Galax, the jump in the unemployment rate from December to January exceeded 10 percent. In fact, the unemployment rates of 35 cities leapt at least 20 percent during this time period.

As for the January local sales tax, Virginia cities received some \$25.8 million as compared to the December distribution of \$37.2 million. Every city except for one experienced a drop in collections from December to January. Only 12 cities collected more sales tax revenue in January 2009 than a year earlier, according to the Virginia Department of Taxation.

The Federal Reserve Bank is hopeful that the national economy will begin to recover late in 2009, but a turnaround in the financial and housing sectors will be critical. By the end of 2008, more than 33,000 homeowners in Hampton Roads owed more on their mortgages than their homes were worth. That's roughly equivalent to 13 percent of all

the mortgages in the Tidewater market. According to First American CoreLogic, a private company that tracks mortgages across the country, an additional 10,000 mortgages in the Hampton Roads region will be "underwater" if home prices decline another 5 percent from current market pricing. Home prices in 2008 slid almost 14 percent in Hampton Roads.

Foreclosures in Hampton Roads declined more than 7 percent in February as compared to January. This is good news, but the number of foreclosures in February 2009 was up 231 percent from a year ago, according to RealtyTrac, an online foreclosure-monitoring service. The slowdown in the foreclosure rate may be related to efforts by the federal government to help homeowners stay in their houses. Continued job losses, however, will only exacerbate the housing sector's ill health.

The outcome of the federal efforts to stimulate the national and local economies may rest with the U.S. Treasury Department's success or failure to sell

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FROM THE CAPITOL

Unemployment continued ...

the debt to finance the spending and federal tax cuts. Capital markets received a shock when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao expressed concern about the safety of U.S. bonds. China is the largest holder of U.S. debt, and has been increasingly vocal in recent times about how the U.S. government is dealing with its economy and budget deficits. The premier called on the United States to “maintain its credibility, honor its commitments and

guarantee the security of Chinese assets.”

If it was not apparent earlier, it should be now that the long-term financial health of Virginia’s local governments depends not only on the recovery of local economies but on decisions made and actions taken in Richmond, Washington, D.C., and in cities around the world. ♦

Localities cope with reduced revenues; await stimulus relief



Here is the latest in VML’s series of snapshots from across the state on the budget challenges facing local governments.

- In Portsmouth, school officials hope to receive nearly \$6 million in federal stimulus money to cover millions of dollars in state reductions anticipated in next school year’s budget. The infusion of federal money could lessen the reduction in the school system’s proposed budget to \$546,000. Because of the federal dollars, school capital projects previously on-hold may go forward. But, the school budget proposal still includes cutting four assistant principal positions as well as 19 teaching positions.

- In Winchester, city officials have asked the school system to reduce its budget proposal by another \$1.5 million. The school system’s FY10 proposal already includes a \$1 million reduction of city funds. The schools are hoping that more than \$1 million in federal stimulus money will help the financial situation. The city itself is working to eliminate a projected \$4 million deficit in FY10. The city is considering a furlough program as well as a reduction in employee health benefits.

- In Radford, the school board would eliminate three part-time positions, cut back hours for others and eliminate summer school to help save \$572,423 of the expected \$650,000 budget shortfall in FY10. The figures include the federal stimulus money.

- In Martinsville, the school board approved a proposal for FY10 of \$24.5 million that reflects more than \$1 million of federal stimulus dollars. In February, the school board was considering a \$23.5 million proposal that reflected the loss of 26.5 jobs and \$1.2 million of state funds. The stimulus money reduced the shortfall to less than \$200,000, but the

school proposal still includes the loss of three administrative and support jobs along with 4.5 teaching positions. Also, the new school proposal still assumes that the city will continue this year’s \$6.7 million commitment of local funds through FY10.

- In Scottsville, the town council will consider imposing a cigarette tax next month to increase revenue. Town officials project that a local tax of 10 cents per pack could bring in about \$11,000 in the first year.

- In Falls Church, for the first time in almost 60 years, the budget for the upcoming year will not only be less than the year before -- down by 5.7 percent -- but it will involve the elimination of jobs, a wage freeze for all city employees, and possibly the termination of a local bus system. In addition, an increase in the residential real estate tax is also under consideration -- adding from four to six cents to the current rate of \$1.03 per \$100 of assessed value. (A hike of 4 cents would cost the average city homeowner an extra \$76 in the annual tax bill.) The city hopes that federal stimulus money targeted to public safety will allow the city to fill a vacant police officer slot and an emergency management position.

- In the City of Roanoke, city council is working on closing a \$7.4 million shortfall in next year’s budget. The city is leaning toward closing two city pools, reducing Valley Metro bus service, eliminating loose leaf collection, eliminating six Fire-EMS positions, closing branch libraries one day a week, eliminating the police department’s mounted patrol, eliminating funding for the arts festival, and suspending the library bookmobile. The city is also considering a 1 percent increase in the meals tax and possibly

Continued on page 4

FROM THE CAPITOL**Reduced revenues; stimulus relief continued ...**

an increase in the lodging tax.

- In the Shenandoah Valley, the ever-deepening economic crisis continues to take a toll on manufacturing jobs. Unemployment in Waynesboro has more than doubled in the last five months, reaching a 16-year high of 9.2 percent in January. In Staunton, the jobless rate rose from 6.1 percent in December to 7.3 percent in January. These new rates exceed the statewide January rate of 6.4 percent.

- In Williamsburg, the FY10 budget is shaping up to be some \$2 million or almost 6 percent less than the FY09 operating spending plan. The city's capital program is also being trimmed by \$1.9 million. This has not happened in at least 18 years. City revenues are falling well short of projections – 15.7 percent less for the lodging tax, 6.8 % for the meals tax, and \$100,000 from cuts in state aid to localities. Property taxes have held, but the city is expecting to cut back on street resurfacing (\$300,000), garbage collection

(\$200,000) and tourism marketing (\$150,000). The city will level fund its contribution of \$7 million to the Williamsburg-James City school system. Williamsburg also hopes to collect stimulus money for transportation, police, public housing, utilities, and schools.

- In Alexandria, city council authorized the advertisement of an increase in the real estate tax rate of up to six cents, from 84.5 cents to up to 90.5 cents per \$100 assessed value. The average residential tax bill could increase by up to \$85 when compared to the 2008 tax. However, a projected decline in average vehicle values in 2009 will reduce the average householder's vehicle personal property tax bill by \$66 as compared to last year. City council will be wrestling a general fund operating budget that is 3.3 percent less than the current spending plan. The operating budget and capital improvement program are scheduled for adoption on April 27. ❖

ETCETERA**Federal energy stimulus money is focus of conference**

Two leading environmental organizations will conduct a three-day conference in Washington May 18-20 for local government leaders to learn how new federal economic recovery resources can help communities create jobs, improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Under the American Recovery &

Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Virginia's local governments are eligible grant funds for:

- Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants (EECBG);
- weatherization for homes for low-income families;
- the purchase of electric vehicles;
- alternative fuel vehicle and infra-

structure grants; and

- to reduce emissions from public vehicles and launch idle reduction strategies.

For more information on the conference, sponsored by Climate Communities and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA, visit: www.localclimateleadershipsummit.org/index.html. ❖

One-time juvenile justice block grants now available

Local governments have the opportunity to apply for up to \$15,000 (\$10,000 for equipment) in one-time federal grant funding through the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) program. A 10 percent cash match of the total federal award is required. Funds must be requested no later than Oct. 19.

Funds from this special federal funding initiative may be used to purchase such things as electronic monitoring/GPS equipment, testing supplies for drug/alcohol programs, software to enhance a direct service program,

computers or equipment (if properly justified), assessment or evaluation services, consultant fees, and training or certification for staff related to service delivery. For purposes of this initiative, juvenile offenders are defined as youth 17 years of age and younger that have been adjudicated delinquent. JABG funds may not be used for prevention activities, or for youth who have solely been designated as Children in Need of Services (CHINS), Children in Need of Supervisions (CHINSup), or status offenders.

Local and state agencies are eligible to apply for this initiative. Not-for-profit groups and agencies may apply only if they are under contract with a unit of government. Multi-jurisdictional applications will be considered as well. Only one application may be submitted by a local government or state agency.

Application information may be found on the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services website at <http://www.ojdp.ncjrs.gov/jabg/purpose.html>. ❖



2009 Regional Forums

Fill out and mail back to VML with payment.

... Local governments creating a sustainable future

Name: _____

Title: _____

Locality: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

All forums will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. I will attend the following forum:

Thursday, May 7 **Hilton Garden Inn** **\$45**
501 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
Registration deadline: April 27

Friday, May 8 **Roanoke Plaza Hotel** **\$45**
2801 Hershberger Road
Roanoke, VA 24017
Registration deadline: April 28

Enclosed is my check. \$ _____

Please make checks payable to VML and mail to: VML
Attn: Joni Terry
P.O. Box 12164
Richmond VA 23241



GoGreenVA is a
Virginia Municipal League
initiative



www.GoGreenVA.org

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.

Accountant II / III, Virginia Beach

SALARY: \$41,442-\$75,741 (+) benefits. Conduct difficult and complex research, analysis and summarization of financial info for audit purposes and for senior management as member of Comptroller's Office. Reqs. any comb. of educ. (above H.S.) and/or exper. equiv. to at least 7 yrs. in fields such as professional accounting and in such positions as senior accountant in governmental accounting, auditing and financial reporting. Visit www.vb.gov. com/careers for detailed job info and to apply on-line. No faxes, e-mails or paper applications accepted. # 2802. Deadline: March 26. EOE.

Business Applications Specialist, Virginia Beach

SALARY: \$39,446-\$59,169 (+) benefits. Coordinate processing of citywide payroll twice monthly for appx. 7,000 employees utilizing payroll module of ERP and the input / verification of employee data in payroll system; conduct data file transmissions; transmit direct deposit and positive pay files and transmit payroll data file to third party administrator. Reqs. any comb. of educ. (above H.S.), training, and/or relevant exper. equiv. to 6 yrs. providing functional support for automated business (payroll) operations in a network or server environment. Visit www.vb.gov. com/careers for detailed job info and to apply. No faxes, e-mails or paper applications accepted. #2806 Deadline: March 30. EOE.

Grants Coordinator, Powhatan County

SALARY: \$36,783-\$47,082 (+) benefits. Research federal, state and other grant opportunities; process and coordinate grant applications; monitor grant accounts; conduct program evaluations. Reqs. bachelor's degree, 3 yrs. of grants administration ex-

per. in governmental setting; demonstrated ability to research and analyze information; demonstrated ability to communicate effectively. Obtain applications and a full job description at the Powhatan County Finance / Human Resources office -- 3834 Old Buckingham Road, or at www.powhatanva.gov. Deadline: March 27. EOE.

Assistant Director of Public Works (Management), Blacksburg

SALARY: \$50,000-\$62,500 start range (+) benefits. Provide professional, administrative and technical support for management of dept. Duties include: monitoring dept. labor, equipment and material resource distribution for performance measurement; providing technical and administrative assistance to departmental division managers; providing director with budget info., problem areas, citizen requests and short/long range planning needs. Reqs. general understanding of the principals and practices of civil engineering, as well as utility, road and building construction. Also reqs. any comb. of educ. and exper. equiv. to bachelor's degree in engineering and 5 yrs. progressively responsible exper. in practical engineering field and/or public works dept. administration. Req'd. town application available at Human Resources Office, 300 S. Main St., Blacksburg, VA 24060 or download at www.blacksburg.gov. Deadline: April 3. EOE.

Assistant City Attorney, Petersburg

SALARY: \$47,648-\$78,122 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Responsibilities include litigation, acquisition of real property and general business matters. Gives advice regarding interpretation of contracts, codes, statutes, regulations and ordinances. Prosecutes and enforces matters of interest to the city, including employment disciplinary hearings, proceedings pertaining to regulatory violations and proceedings concerning violations of city ordinances. Reqs. law degree from accredited law school, license to practice law in Va. and good standing with Virginia State Bar; min. 4 yrs. exper. and considerable knowledge of municipal law. Submit application and/or resume and requests for accommodations to: City of Petersburg, Human Resources Department, 103 W. Tabb Street, Petersburg, VA 23803. Visit www.petersburg-va.org. Deadline: April 3. EOE.

Environmental Laboratory Manager, Fairfax County

SALARY: \$58,800-\$98,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Responsible for planning, coordination and operation of a state-of-the-art advanced wastewater laboratory that conducts analyses on a variety of environmental samples. Serve as technical director under the Virginia Proposed Laboratory Certification Program. Reqs. any comb. of educ. and exper. equiv. to graduation from accredited college or university with degree in chemistry, biology or sanitary engineering with at least 4 yrs. of diverse, professional exper. in a full-service pollution control laboratory. Prefer min. 3 yrs. progressively responsible supervisory exper. in an environmental laboratory; exper. with wastewater, VELAP / NELAP and advanced instrumentation, automation and information mngmnt systems. Apply at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/jobs. Job #09-0176. Deadline: March 20. EOE.

Director of Parks and Recreation, Fluvanna County

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Plan, organize and direct Department of Parks and Recreation operations, as well as develop and improve parks and public recreation facilities. Must have strong project management and grant management skills. Reqs. min. of relevant bachelor's degree and 5 yrs. supervisory exper. Detailed list of qualifications and application available at: www.co.fluvanna.va.us. Submit resume and county application with cover letter stating salary expectations to: Fluvanna County Human Resources, P.O. Box 540, Palmyra, Va. 22963. Deadline: March 23. EOE.

Director of Finance, Orange

SALARY: \$68,000 max. to start DOQ (+) benefits. (Pop. 4,500) Prefer exper. working in growth-oriented community or company with wide range of duties in financial operations and management. Prior exper. should include development of annual bdgts, customer service programs, automated accounting systems, financial forecasting, producing various financial reports, capital improvements and financial policies. Utility accounting exper. is a plus. CPA preferred, but not req'd. Submit cover letter and resume to: Cole Hendrix, Town Manager, Town of Orange, 119 Belleview Ave., Orange, VA 22960. For inquiries, e-mail the Town Manager's Office at townmanager@townoforangeva.org or call 540/672-5005. Open until filled. EOE.

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POSITIONS

Emergency Communications Manager, Surry County

SALARY: \$38,750 to start. Manages and directs the E911 Communications Center for the Sheriff's Office. Supervises min. of 8 employees doing routine work. Reqs. comb. of educ. and exper. equiv. to graduation from accredited college within a major in public safety administration, or a related field; 3 yrs. mngmnt. level exper. in an emergency communications services field and 5 yrs. exper. with advanced telecommunications system. Prefer 10 yrs. communications exper. and emergency medical dispatch certification. Applications available at County Administrator's Office, Surry County Government Center, 45 School St., Surry, VA 23883. Submit completed county application to: Tyrone W. Franklin, County Administrator, P.O. Box 65, Surry, VA 23883. Deadline: April 10. EOE.

Director of Parks and Recreation, Fluvanna County

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Plan, organize and direct Department of Parks and Recreation operations, as well as develop and improve parks and public recreation facilities. Must have strong project management and grant management skills. Reqs. min of bachelor's degree with major course

work in recreation and leisure services or a related field and 5 yrs. supervisory exper. in recreation field. Detailed list of qualifications and application available at: www.co.fluvanna.va.us. Submit resume and county application with cover letter stating salary expectations to: Fluvanna County Human Resources, P.O. Box 540, Palmyra, Va. 22963. Deadline: March 23. EOE.

Other positions

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

Purchasing Manager, Gloucester County

SALARY: \$53,788 or higher DOQ. Deadline: March 27.

Chief Administrative Officer, City of Richmond

SALARY: \$124,500-\$210,091 negotiable DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Open until filled.

Chief of Police, Altavista

SALARY: \$48,000-\$71,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Open until filled.

Finance Director / Treasurer, Christiansburg

SALARY: \$66,656-\$92,882 (+) benefits. Deadline: April 1.

Town Manager, Exmore

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

Senior Assistant County Attorney, Bedford

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

Fire Chief, Fauquier County

SALARY: \$86,153-\$112,008 start range (+) benefits. Open until filled.

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 27. 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

Ecosystem Based Management: The Chesapeake and Other Systems Conference, Baltimore, March 22-25

More information at www.chesapeake-meetings.com/EBM/.

20th Annual Environment Virginia Symposium on Sustainability, Lexington, March 31-April 2

Conference topics include reuse of municipal wastewater and storm water, managing fly ash and nuclear waste, innovations for sustainability in wastewater engineering, coastal and off-shore wind: environmental issues and energy potential, innovations in wastewater transportation and community development and more. More information at www.vmi.edu/show.aspx?tid=27299&id=29445.

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/>.

VSPE Ethics and APELSCIDLA Regulations Seminar, Richmond, April 17

More information at www.vspe.org.

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

At Springhill Suites Marriott. Registration information, special hotel rates at www.vmcga.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.

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Virginia Municipal League

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