



SMALL TOWNS CONFERENCE

2026

The Chincoteague Center
6155 Community Drive, Chincoteague, VA 23336

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Wednesday, May 13

- 12:30 - 1:00 PM **Registration**
- Welcome**
Denise Bowden - Mayor, Town of Chincoteague
*Break snacks courtesy **The Island Creamery** (voted #1 in the country!)*
- 1:00 - 4:30 PM **Tools & Materials for Building Communities**
Matthew Ebinger – Senior Planner, Timmons Group
Joe Moore - Assistant Director of Infrastructure (NC), Timmons Group
Thomas Ruff - Senior Project Manager: Transportation Planning, Analysis, & Design, Timmons Group
An interactive workshop on the many components of community building, such as zoning & land use, working with stakeholders, historic preservation, community resiliency, and economic development.
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM **VML Reception - Steamers Restaurant**

Thursday, May 14

- 8:30 - 9:00 AM **Registration / Continental Breakfast**
- Welcome**
Dwayne Tuggle, VML President, Mayor, Town of Amherst
Denise Bowden - Mayor, Town of Chincoteague
- 9:00 - 9:45 AM **What Your Attorney Want You to Know**
Jan Proctor - County Attorney, Accomac County
- 9:45 - 10:15 AM **Local Government Finance**
Bob Lauterberg, Partner & Member of the Commission on Local Government, VML/VACo Finance
- 10:15 - 10:30 AM **Break**
*Break snacks courtesy **Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce & Town of Chincoteague***
- 10:30 - 11:15 AM **New Marijuana Laws and the Workplace**
Marcus Hensel, Managing Director, Virginia Risk Sharing Association
- 11:15 AM - Noon **The Federal Reserve & Rural Virginia**
Jason Smith - Senior Community Development Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- Noon - 12:45 PM **Lunch**

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- 12:45 - 2:00 PM **Behind the Curtain**
Will Pace, Vice Mayor/Legislative Assistant, Town of Chatham/Delegate Otto Wachsmann
Laura Jane Cohen, Delegate/Town Administrator, Virginia House of Delegates/Town of Clifton
Ron Jordan, Managing Director, Advantus Strategies
- 2:00 - 2:30 PM **General Assembly Updates**
VML Staff
- 2:30 - 2:45 PM **Remarks by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**
Tom Leigh, Local Government Specialist
- 2:45 - 3:00 PM **Break**
- 3:00 - 4:00 PM **Council/Manager Relations**
Dwayne Tuggle, VML President, Mayor, Town of Amherst
Sarah McGuffin, Town Manager, Town of Amherst
- 4:00 - 4:30 PM **Host Town Discussion**
Michael Tolbert, Town Manager, Town of Chincoteague
Bryan Rush, Director of Emergency Services Emergency Management, Town of Chincoteague
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM **Virginia American Water Reception - Ropewalk Restaurant**

Friday, May 15

- 8:30 - 9:00 AM **Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 - 10:00 AM **Downtown Revitalization**
Heather Lyne, Director of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, 1717 Innovation Center
- 10:00 - 11:00 AM **Social Media for Towns**
C. Holland Perdue, Mayor, Town of Rocky Mount

Event Sponsors



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