

The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

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VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY



Gateway

Virginia Beach project
transforming oceanfront



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TOWN & CITY

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About the cover

Chris Wojtowicz, charged with overseeing the Laskin Gateway redevelopment project for the City of Virginia Beach, has been consumed with coordinating numerous infrastructure improvements, including burying utility lines and installing storm sewers, drainage and road improvements. Photo by Craig D. McClure / City of Virginia Beach.

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By Drew Lankford



VML Annual Conference

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2012 VML Annual Conference: Make plans to come to Williamsburg

Make plans now to attend the 2012 VML Annual Conference to be held Sept. 23-25, at the Williamsburg Lodge in the Historic Area of Colonial Williamsburg. Local government officials will find the two-and-a-half days of workshops, general sessions and roundtables invaluable as they chart the futures of their communities.

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ICMA to recognize Stripling, Bunting

THE CITY OF HAMPTON and its city manager, **Mary Bunting**, as well as retired Staunton City Manager **Bob Stripling**, will be

honored for outstanding professional achievements at the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) annual conference in Phoenix on Oct. 10.

ICMA's Academic Award in Memory of Stephen B. Sweeney will be presented to Stripling, who retired as city manager of Staunton in 2007, and who teaches at Virginia Tech. Stripling led the partnership effort between the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) and the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech to create the state's first graduate level certificate program that focuses specifically on local government management.

Using Virginia Tech's regional campuses, certificate program classes are beamed across the state each week so that early- and mid-career local government employees enrolled in the program, as well as full-time Master's of Public Administration students at the university's Blacksburg campus, can attend classes together.

Classes focus on critical areas of local management, and all instructors, including Stripling, are VLGMA/ICMA members. More

than 128 people have completed the certificate program since the first class was offered in 2008. In addition, a growing number of

Virginia universities now accept the certificate program's credits toward their own graduate degrees.

ICMA's "Strategic Leadership and Governance" award for communities with populations of 50,000 and greater will be awarded to the City of Hampton and Bunting for the city's I VALUE Campaign.

I VALUE, an innovative civic engagement initiative, was created in response to the city's projected \$19 million budget shortfall in 2010-11. Instead of focusing inward to decide on budget reductions and program restructuring, the city administration reached out to its citizenry. Using a

blend of some of the best traditional citizen-outreach practices, such as face-to-face community discussions, along with an array of Internet-based engagement tools, including live online chats and electronic polling, Hampton effectively captured residents' priorities regarding city services. This allowed the city to address its budget situation in a way that truly reflected the community's values, as well as the city manager and her staff's professional recommendations.



- Stripling -



- Bunting -

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Morrill elected GFOA president



Roanoke City Manager **Christopher P. Morrill** became the Government Finance Officers Association's new president at the association's annual business meeting in

Chicago on June 12.

Morrill served the organization last year as president-elect. He succeeded Linda C. Davidson, director of financial services in Boca Raton, Fla.

- Morrill -

Petersburg names zoning administrator



Michelle B. Peters was named zoning administrator in Petersburg.

A former senior planner with the City of Richmond's Department of Planning and

- Peters -

Development Review, she has 14 years experience in zoning administration as a planner, small business coordinator and development coordinator.

Staunton's Halasz accepts Halifax post

Staunton Deputy City Manager **Jim Halasz** was named the county administrator in Halifax recently.

Halasz, who came to Staunton in 2000 as assistant city manager, was promoted to deputy city manager in 2007. He played important roles in bringing a trolley system to the city and in establishing the region's Coordinated Area Transportation System bus service.

Mineral names Polen new town manager

Douglas Polen took over as town manager of Mineral in Louisa County effective July 2.

A former city planner, including a stint in Newman, Georgia, Polen worked most recently in the private

sector for five years managing construction and proprietary education firms. He holds an MPA from the University of Georgia and an MBA from the University of Virginia.

Leesburg names Carlson IT manager



- Carlson -

Annie Carlson was promoted to information technology manager for Leesburg recently. She had been serving for the past eight years as a senior management and systems analyst in the Finance Department.

In her new role, Carlson will be responsible for implementing IT-related projects in the current budget and for developing a long-term strategic plan for the town's information technology needs. Prior to joining the town staff, Carlson served as IT manager for Amnesty International.

Charlottesville names communications chief



- Dickler -

Miriam Dickler has been hired as director of communications for Charlottesville effective Aug. 7.

Dickler worked most recently as the public information officer for Harrisonburg, a position she held for seven years. Prior to her tenure with Harrisonburg, Dickler was a reporter and anchor for WSVB radio in Harrisonburg.

Va. managers tapped for NFBPA board

Several city managers and administrative officers from Virginia were appointed or reappointed to the Board of Directors of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators recently.

They include: Alexandria City Manager **Rashad M. Young**, Richmond Chief Administrative Officer **Byron C. Marshall**, Petersburg City

Manager **William E. Johnson III** and Richmond Deputy Chief Administrative Officer **Sharon Judkins**.

Leesburg fills projects post



- LaFollette -

Renee LaFollette was promoted to director of capital projects for Leesburg. She had been serving as acting director of capital projects since October and

as deputy director of capital projects before that.

LaFollette, who started work for the town in 2000 as a senior engineer, will be responsible for the design and construction management of all capital improvement projects.

4 department heads retire in Hampton

Four department directors in Hampton city government retired in June: Library Director **Robin Carpenter**, Citizens' Unity Commission Director **John Johnson**, Economic Development Director **James Eason** and Arts Commission Director **Michael Curry**.

Carpenter worked for the city 25 years, serving as library director for the past five years. Johnson served in the Citizens' Unity Commission post for 11 years. Eason, Hampton's mayor from 1982-1998, served as economic development director for the past eight years. Curry, who served as the Arts Commission director for 24 years, will remain as artistic director on a consultant basis for the non-profit Hampton Arts Foundation.

Have news about personnel in your city, town or county government? Send information to David Parsons at dparsons@vml.org

Albemarle to build library in Crozet

ALBEMARLE GOVERNMENT officials joined representatives from the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library (JMRL) and residents of the Crozet area of the county at a groundbreaking ceremony



Architect's rendering of new Crozet Library.

for a new library on June 26. The 23,000 square-foot, \$5.8 million Crozet Library is scheduled to be completed in about a year.

The 2004 Crozet Master Plan established a new

and expanded library in downtown Crozet as a critical community priority. Based on community input and preferences, the library was planned for the heart of downtown Crozet to provide a focal point for community activity and expand opportunities for economic vitality for existing and new downtown businesses.

The library planning and design team worked with community representatives to preserve and enhance the existing character of downtown Crozet and to incorporate features and elements into the library project that are in keeping with the community's heritage.

The library will include a teen area with computers, study and lounge; community meeting/multi-purpose room seating 70; public computers for research and job seekers; children's area with computers and furniture to scale; meditative reading area with mountain views; service desk with four self-check out units and adult area with a 50 percent increase in collection size.

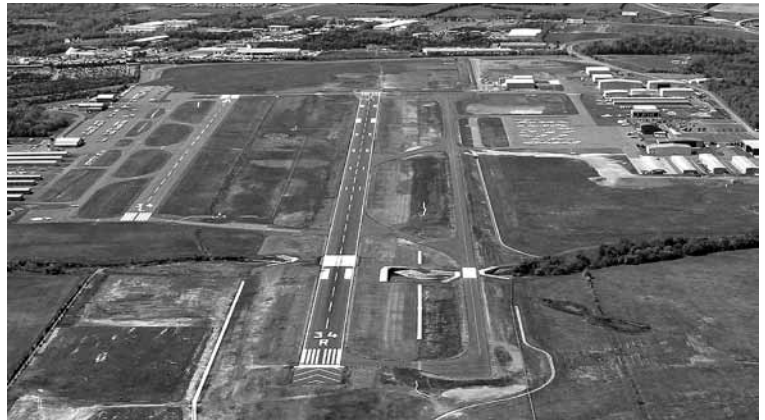
Construction of the library is the latest in a series of projects envisioned by the Master Plan and implemented by Albemarle County to reinvigorate downtown Crozet.

Manassas airport extending runway

MANASSAS REGIONAL AIRPORT will begin construction of a 500-foot extension to its longest runway soon.

The airport received a \$3.97 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration and a \$353,309 grant from the Virginia Department of Aviation to lengthen the runway to 6,200 feet. The extra distance will assist pilots, especially when landing in inclement weather. It also will allow aircraft to take more fuel for coast-to-coast flights and reduce noise levels north of the airport.

Airport's longest runway will be extended by 500 feet.



Herndon Festival named 'best of best'

Family magazine's Best for Families Readers' Choice 2012 survey named the Herndon Festival as the "Best of the Best" in the category of 'Best Festival or Celebration for Families' again this year.

More than 16,000 nominations in all categories were submitted. This

is the second consecutive year the Herndon Festival was selected as the best festival in this category. The four-day outdoor Herndon Festival, which attracts about 80,000 people downtown, is produced by the Herndon Parks and Recreation Department.

ELSEWHERE ...

Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service have reaffirmed **Alexandria's** bond ratings of AAA and Aaa, respectively. The city has maintained these top grades from both major bond rating agencies since 1992. ... **Hampton** celebrated the opening of the new Little England Cultural Center on July 10. The

facility houses a variety of programs, including after-school tutoring assistance and computer classes for seniors.

Alexandria has adopted an ordinance that excludes electronic collars and similar electronic devices as legal methods to physically restrain dogs in public. At its June 16 public hearing, Alexandria City Council voted unanimously in favor of the ordinance, which goes into effect on Sept. 1. ... **Vienna** received a 1.71 percent

interest rate on the sale of \$6.45 million Series 2012 Public Improvement Bonds June 26. The interest rate is almost a third less than the previous lowest rate of 2.49 percent for a 2010 bond issue. In preparation for the sale, the Town's AAA and Aaa bond ratings were re-affirmed by Standard & Poor's and Moody's, respectively.

Purcellville held its first ever Wine and Food Festival recently to showcase the wines and foods from purveyors in and around the Loudoun

County town. ... **Arlington County** issued \$108 million in 2012 General Obligation Public Improvement Bonds in early June with an average interest rate of 2.77 percent, one of the lowest overall rates Arlington has ever seen. The bonds were sold through competitive bid to J.P. Morgan Securities.

Have news about your city, town or county government? Send information to David Parsons via e-mail at dparsons@vml.org



DAVID CRIGGER / BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Abingdon calling ...

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL held what may be the first ever meeting between a local governing body sitting in Virginia and a Sister City/Twin Town governing body sitting simultaneously in another country. Several citizens and town staff members, in addition to one member of Town Council, visited Abingdon-on-Thames in England June 4 for its Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. An electronic meeting was held that day during the regular Abingdon Town Council meeting back in Virginia in

order to read a proclamation from the General Assembly in honor of the celebration and historic event. Civic gifts were exchanged at the same time in Abingdon-on-Thames. The two boards were able to see and hear each other thanks to video conferencing technology. Town Councilman Rick Humphreys, Town Manager Greg Kelly and Town Clerk Cecile Rosenbaum were among the Virginia visitors. Rosenbaum may be the first Virginia town clerk to ever have officially called the roll of the council from another country. **VTC**

Parking deck opens in Marion

A NEW PARKING DECK in downtown Marion – a partnership between the town and Smyth County – opened in late June. Construction of the 98-space facility, designed by Thompson & Litton and built by South End Construction, was responsible for saving a 1908 schoolhouse that was slated for demolition to provide parking for a renovated and expanded county courthouse. Instead, the town and county were able to work out a plan to find an alternate site for the needed parking. Not only was the school spared as a result, but it will be renovated starting next year and transformed into a music and cultural arts center. In addition to providing parking for the courthouse during the day, the new deck will add much-needed offstreet parking to support the growing tourism business in the historic downtown. The adjacent General Francis Marion Hotel and the nearby Lincoln Theatre, where the nationally-televised “Song of the Mountains” bluegrass music television program is recorded, have already benefited from



the new parking. “This is great!” said hotel General Manager Robert Lincoln. “It gives our employees and guests convenient parking, and opens up street parking for other downtown customers.” The cost of the parking deck was about \$1.5 million. **VTC**



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World set sail, then anchored in Norfolk

THE CITY OF Norfolk rolled out the welcome mat June 8 when 55 tall ships from around the world sailed into Hampton Roads, their masts adorned with colorful flags as they navigated down the Elizabeth River to the delight of thousands of people along the city's waterfront.

The pageantry and splendor kicked off Harborfest/OpSail 2012 and the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and the writing of the Star Spangled Banner. The many months of planning by U.S. Navy and Coast Guard officials, local, state and federal agency representatives, and citizens culminated in a weekend full of special events that proceeded seamlessly.

Along with the tall ships, Navy and military warships from around the world opened to the public for tours. There were concerts, festivals, educational events, and 1812 re-enactments along more than three miles of Norfolk waterfront.

How did Norfolk successfully connect people to various points in the city? A temporary bus system, dubbed the Free Way, circulated to hotels and attractions across the city. The transit experiment was partially

funded by the new Norfolk Arts Consortium, an organization of arts and cultural agencies in the city. Virginia's first light rail system, The Tide, also provided a convenient option to navigate the festivities downtown. 



CITY OF NORFOLK

Tall ships were open for tours along the crowded waterfront.



Three of the 55 tall ships that sailed into Hampton Roads pass by a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier. Photo (above and facing page) by Joe Fudge / Daily Press of Newport News



Roanoke wins All-America City honor for 6th time



Roanoke is the only city ever to earn the All-America City honor six times.

ROANOKE HAS BECOME the only community ever to win All-America City status six times. The National Civic League (NCL) recognized Roanoke on July 2 in Denver for its collaboration with local organizations on a Community Solutions Action Plan to ensure more Roanoke children read at grade level by the end of third grade. Other years the city has won include 1952, 1979, 1982, 1988 and 1996.

Roanoke City Public Schools, United Way of Roanoke Valley, Smart Beginnings of Greater Roanoke, Total Action Against Poverty, Roanoke Public Libraries, Blue Ridge Literacy, and Dr. Craig Ramey and Dr. Sharon Ramey from the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute all contributed

By MELINDA MAYO

to the Community Solutions Action Plan. The city's "Star City Reads" campaign, the component that addresses the initiatives of the plan, was highlighted for the competition.

Applicants that entered the 2012 All-America City Awards are charter members in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Community Network, a national movement of local leaders, nonprofits and foundations putting a stake in the ground on third-grade reading. As a charter member, Roanoke will have access to a Promising Practices Clearinghouse, an online help desk, peer-learning opportunities, meetings with national experts and policymakers, and a foundation registry designed to expand and replicate successful programs.

"It is an honor for Roanoke to be selected as an All-America City Award winner for its 'Star City Reads' campaign," said Roanoke Mayor David Bowers. "Reading is everybody's business. This is because reading lets our children become 'STARS' in their own right – capable lifelong learners with open minds and hearts, and the skills to succeed in school and life."

Roanoke was selected through a peer review process as one of 32 finalists for the prestigious award recognizing communities for their grade-level reading mobilization plan. Out of these finalists, a national review team recognized 13 other communities with the All-America City Award for 2012: Baltimore, Dubuque (Iowa), Providence (Rhode Island), Louisville, Marshalltown (Iowa), Pittsfield (Mas-



A Roanoke mother and her children were among the participants in the 2011 Summer Reading Program at Roanoke Public Libraries, an important component of the city's winning All-America City entry.


sachusetts), Quad Cities (Iowa and Illinois), San Antonio, San Francisco, Seattle and South King County cities (Washington), Southern Pines (North

Carolina), Springfield (Massachusetts) and Tahoe/Truckee (California).

Each of the recognized communities submitted a Community Solutions

Action Plan that included a broad cross-section of local partners, including schools, foundations, community service organizations, businesses and faith groups detailing how they would address school readiness, attendance and summer learning.

The National Civic League is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

For more information about Roanoke's entry, contact Sheila Umberger, director of Roanoke Public Libraries, at 853-2476 or sheila.umberger@roanokeva.gov. To learn more about the awards competition and the other communities recognized, visit www.allamericacityaward.com. 

About the author

Melinda Mayo is the Public Information Officer for the City of Roanoke.



On hand in Denver to support the city's All-America City entry were (l-r) Mayor David Bowers, Roanoke Public Libraries Youth Services Coordinator Amber Yopp, Roanoke Public Libraries Director Sheila Umberger and City Manager Chris Morrill.

Laskin Road's terminus at the oceanfront, shown here prior to the start of construction, has always been an unofficial gateway to the resort area of Virginia Beach.

**Photos by Craig D. McClure /
City of Virginia Beach.**



Laskin Gateway Project

Virginia Beach uses new approach to redevelop old, familiar site

COMING ONTO THE “main drag” of the Virginia Beach oceanfront in the 50’s and 60’s meant feasting your eyes on the Surf-and-Sand Motel, the Yard Arm Restaurant, Hofheimer’s shoe store, Rose’s Five-and-Dime, the A&P grocery store, and – for a short time in the 60’s – “Frontier City,” the amusement park where you could ride the stagecoach and shoot it out with the sheriff and all those shady outlaws who hung around Birdneck Road causing trouble.

Regardless of the time or era, riding east on Laskin Road into the oceanfront area has always been considered an unofficial gateway into the resort area. It has grown and evolved since that time with more upscale shops and office buildings. But unlike in earlier years, this unofficial gateway is about to be transformed from a vision into a gateway reality.

Ask almost anyone in Virginia

Beach, and they will tell you: the oceanfront is the crown jewel of the city, and has been a popular East Coast vacation spot for more than 100 years.

Steeped in history since the days of the old Princess Anne Hotel, vacationers used to pour into town to stay at the Cavalier or any of the old stately hotels or cottages that made up “The Beach.” Over the years, the resort area and related businesses have taken on greater importance. After the Navy, it is the biggest economic engine driving the city’s economy, and it is the very definition of Virginia Beach’s public image. Ask visitors what they remember best about their visit, and it is the beach, the Boardwalk and the resort area.

Still, with changing economic times and lifestyles, city leaders knew they had to develop changes at the oceanfront in a number of ways.

First and foremost, there was aging infrastructure that had to be addressed.

“The existing water and sanitary sewer pipes were 30 to 40 years old, some older, and were very close – if not past – the end of their useful lives,” says Chris Wojtowicz, project manager for the Laskin Gateway project. “As we looked into the work that needed to be done, we saw a project that was going to have to address several needs. There were old overhead utility lines that needed to be buried along with storm sewer, drainage, electrical and other utility work that we needed to tackle all at once. Our thought was to address all of them at once while we were knee deep into the work, rather than dig up streets and roads later to do the work.”

At the same time that Public Works and Public Utilities were plan-

By **DREW LANKFORD**



The city will invest nearly \$40 million in the project, which will transform the cityscape where Laskin Road ends at the oceanfront.

ning their work, City Council and the Planning Department were developing ideas of their own.

The district was studied and detailed in the *Resort Area Strategic Action Plan*. The plan envisioned a corridor with a coordinated transportation and retail strategy that gets people out of their cars and on foot in a village-like setting. Development is sensitively scaled to the needs of adjacent neighborhoods. It mixes new residential opportunities with active street level retail uses that front on widened sidewalks to accommodate pedestrian traffic and outdoor dining. New development is reinforced by an open space system that combines streetscape improvements with strategically located green space, including a planned “circle” marking the arrival of the Laskin Gateway corridor to the beach.

In December 2008, the city adopted the *Resort Area Strategic Action Plan* (<http://bit.ly/NtfrbG>), which provides a vision for the Oceanfront Resort Area and a detailed strategy for achieving this vision. The plan was unique in that it turned away from the normal “Euclidian” form of zoning and worked toward a “Form-Based Code” of development, a factor that was a big step in helping pull this plan together.

How’s that?

“Euclidian” zoning codes, which are quite common throughout the country, focus on the separation of land uses based on the physical form of development. “Since we have a hotel here, we can only have other hotels and restaurants here. Residential or other businesses have to locate elsewhere,” is an oversimplified way to describe “Euclidian.”

With “Form-Based Code,” there is a different approach that – instead of focusing on the separation of land uses – focuses on an integration of needs. It addresses the relationship with buildings and public space and works toward developing a pattern that integrates the different needs of an area.

This, in essence, amended the zoning ordinance that would allow the mixed-use goals planners had envisioned. Working together, the city’s



Architect’s renderings capture the feel of the completed project from two perspectives.

Planning Department, Public Works Department and city staff, began to develop a plan around the Form Based Code, and took the first step in making a huge change in the look and makeup of this important area of the city.

When you speak with Deputy City Manager Steve Herbert and Strategic Growth Area department head Barry Frankenfield, both men will tell you that not only is the Laskin Gateway project the fulfillment of a process that is new to the city, but that it’s a first step in achieving a huge change in the look and the makeup of the city.

“This is unique in several ways,” says Herbert. “First, it changes the way we do business by integrating

business, residential, public and environmental needs. The City Council took the long view and said: ‘Let’s do the needed work for the infrastructure, but let’s also improve the corridor to the oceanfront.’ And they did it with a plan that enhances the area for everyone.”

The Laskin Gateway project is a two-pronged approach that targets this area of the oceanfront in several ways.

Funded for \$39.9 million, the project is scheduled in four separate but related phases that include road, streetscape, landscaping and utility improvements. Phase 1, which included replacing aging water and sanitary sewer pipes, installing large-diameter storm sewer pipes, and

Laskin Gateway by the numbers

Estimated total cost to city

- \$39.9 million

Total scope of project

- 6 blocks of roadway reconstruction
- 3.8 lane miles of reconstructed urban streets
- New 0.6 acre Gateway Park
- 1,100 linear feet of new multi-use path and sidewalk
- New 200-foot long bridge over Little Neck Creek
- 3,100 linear feet of sanitary sewer gravity mains
- 1,800 linear feet of water mains
- 18,100 linear feet of underground electric and communications duct bank
- 2,800 linear feet of large 36-inch through 60-inch storm drain
- 650 linear feet of sanitary sewer force main
- 11,700 square feet of new brick paver intersections
- 13,500 square feet of new brick paver sidewalks

Benefits to citizens from public investment

- Upgrade of water and sanitary sewer facilities
- Improving the capacity of the existing storm water sewer system
- Removal of overhead power lines
- Street and traffic improvements
- Improved appearance and pedestrian amenities
- Improved traffic flow at the 30th Street / Laskin Road intersection

Benefits to citizens from private investment

- An immediate return of \$72 million from private investment for Beach Centre, a mixed-use lifestyle center consisting of 178 resort lifestyle apartments in The Summer House; boutique retail and restaurants in The Shops at 31Ocean; and the 70,000 square-foot Class A/Sidney Kellam office building.
- Five new blocks now “ready” for additional development
- Total new development potential of 1.4 million square feet, creating the potential of an additional \$286 million of private investment in this strategic corridor.
- New jobs and services created by private development
- Significant tax revenues that support services for residents

burying electrical and telecommunication lines, started in September 2009 and was completed in May 2011.

The entire project, including Phase 2 (Interim Traffic Improvements), Phase 3 (Laskin Road Improvements) and Phase 4 (32nd Street improvements), is scheduled to be completed by September 2012.

The improved infrastructure allows more growth and supports more than \$80 million in new private development in one block alone that features multi-use development to foster a live-and-work environment.

“With these major improvements in traffic flow, appearance and sustainability, we had the tools we needed to lead to our next phase – attracting private business investment,” says Herbert.

Stepping up to do just that was Bruce Thompson, chief executive officer of Gold Key/Professional Hospitality Resources, a local business developer who has worked with the city on numerous projects before and was interested in the changes that were taking place on Laskin Road.

Gold Key/PHR is investing \$72 million in Beach Centre located between 31st Street, Pacific Avenue, 32nd Street and Arctic Avenue in the 31Ocean (Laskin Gateway) corridor. This mixed-use lifestyle center consists of 178 resort lifestyle apartments in The Summer House, boutique retail and restaurants in The Shops at 31Ocean and the 70,000 square-foot Class A / Sidney Kellam office building.

“It’s really about creating some synergy,” Thompson says about 31Ocean. “The project reflects what is already happening in that corridor.”

Unlike many developments in the past, the Laskin-Gateway plan had a major commitment to being more environmentally friendly. Improvement of the infrastructure meant better water quality and more efficient utilities, and the greening of the surroundings make it a corridor that appeals to many without simply having more concrete buildings and paved streets.

“This was an instance of fulfilling the plan by changing the process to fit the environment,” says Frankenfield,



Frankenfield (l) and Herbert believe the project will spur even more private development in the area.

the Strategic Growth Area director. “Our vision was to develop this into a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area, and we did it in a new and unique way. Instead of just coming in and tearing down and building again, we had a plan based on a vision for the next 50 years that made sense. It incorporated new businesses, residential, resort and environmentally-friendly goals along with less vehicular traffic and far more pedestrian traffic and bicycle traffic with both shoppers and residents.”

“I believe these SGAs in general are critical to our city, particularly when we have areas that are fully developed yet still have needs to be met,” says City Council member John Uhrin. “The Oceanfront SGA does exactly that. It identifies both the needs and the potential reality and helps us combine them so everyone’s needs are met in the best way possible.”

Uhrin, who has served on council since 2006, was one of the early supporters and promoters of SGAs in general, and the Oceanfront SGA in particular.

“The Oceanfront SGA has served as a template in a number of ways, not the least which is in the way we have worked with the public,” he says. “Up until this process, the public was never asked for their input to any great degree on what they would like to see.



Uhrin was an enthusiastic supporter of the oceanfront Strategic Growth Area from the beginning.

The SGAs are oriented to allowing everyone to be a stakeholder in our planning and decisions, which means we end up with something that everyone has some degree of ownership.”

Frankenfield, Herbert and other city leaders are hopeful that the city’s efforts and infrastructure improvements will draw many more private projects to the area.

“This is the first SGA plan for the city,” Frankenfield says. “The significance of the plan is both the city’s fulfillment of this plan, which shows its commitment, and how it leads to a joint venture: ‘Can a city attract private development?’ Yes it can, and in this case, \$80 million by a private developer which we hope is only the first step.”

This is a unique relationship

between the City Council and private businesses.

“It’s not just the city or the private developers who are stakeholders in this,” says Herbert. “By working so closely within the community, the private businesses along the corridor – many of them there for almost 50 years – and residents in the nearby North End of the city become stakeholders in this venture. That was why we had a number of public meetings, as well as an advisory group consisting of local business owners and residents to advise and discuss our plans as we moved along with each phase.”

City leaders believe that the

Laskin Gateway project is not just the culmination of planning and building – it’s more of a launch, one that will attract other investments in the resort area. Those investments in turn will help attract new businesses that will keep the resort business community growing and thriving.

“Through these basic public-private partnerships, we enable the private sector to create higher levels of investment,” says Uhrin. “When that happens, the public reaps the benefits of that effort through increased tax revenues and improved quality of life. That’s a huge win for everyone.” **VTC**

About the author

Drew Lankford is the media and communications coordinator for the Virginia Beach Department of Public Works.

Community policing an integral part of Norfolk neighborhood initiative



EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is the last in a series of articles tracking the success of the City of Norfolk's new Neighbors Building Neighborhoods program.

AS THE NEIGHBORS Building Neighbors (NBN) initiative in Norfolk approaches its first anniversary, an important component sitting on the sidelines has moved front and center. NBN, a neighborhood revitalization program, is founded on principals of resident ownership and participation where all members of the community work together. As the program has progressed, it has become clear that it will take more than the residents or one or two city department to be successful. In particular, an important partner needed is the Norfolk Police Department's community resource officers.

"Although we can't turn back time to the days of Mayberry, the idea of the neighborhood police officer that stops and chats with residents, knows the names of the kids and checks in on a neighbor in need epitomizes the NBN experience," says Bob Batcher, the city's director of communications.

Norfolk's new police chief has placed an increased emphasis on community policing. Like residents and other city staff, the officers needed to not only buy into the NBN philosophy but to embrace it. Although many have had a difficult time seeing NBN as anything new, training everyone in understanding the NBN philosophy and using the same language is making a difference.

"One thing is for certain – if we keep doing things the same as always, we will keep getting the same results – or lack of results," says Richard James, a neighborhood development specialist and former community resource officer.

The training has provided a forum for open communication, and

although conversations get a little heated, staff and police have a lot to say and are passionate about these topics. Relationships internally are being formed.

Information is being shared. Creative problem solving is taking place.

"We have different views and ideas, but we are like pieces of a puzzle," says Community Resource Officer Courtney Smith. "Through NBN we have built partnerships that are guiding the way we work."

By Kristen Helgeson

as investments. By taking a market approach, community resource officers and neighborhood development specialists are bringing tenants and landlords, residents and stakeholders to the table to talk about creative solutions to increasing those investments.

Within the same hot spot, the officers were not content to keep writing the owners of rental properties notices for trash and code violations week after week. After some outreach to landlords by the officers, it became ap-

parent that many of them were dealing with bad tenant issues, and some were even providing supportive housing to homeless and disabled residents. Neighborhood development specialists were brought in and the Bureau of Neighborhood Quality (codes) and the Community Service Board gathered to look at options in providing a positive neighborhood response.

The Norview neighborhood's profile showed that its NBN area had a homeownership rate 22 percent higher than the citywide rate, and that in general, homes spent less time on the market than in other neighborhoods.

However, the neighborhood was still perceived unfavorably because of several apartment complexes that populate the east side of the community. Residents identified the apartments as the largest impediment to improving their community because of the crime and code issues surrounding them. Partnering with a local developer, community resource officers and neighborhood development specialists set up a meeting with landlords, again focusing on the NBN concept of viewing neighborhoods as markets and investments instead of what landlords were doing wrong. What became clear is that many of the landlords were trying to maintain the properties, but struggling because of the bad behavior of some tenants. As these meetings have continued, best



Police Lt. Timothy Evans interacts with neighborhood children, an important part of outreach to communities.

Positive examples of the NBN experience are cropping up. For example, two officers decided to take a proactive approach to a neighborhood hot spot. Sensing the police report statistics didn't match the true crime in the neighborhood, they began getting out of the car more and engaging residents. Their hunch was correct. Many in the neighborhood were too scared to report crime for fear of being exposed. With this perspective, the officers are continuing their outreach in an effort to build trust.

With a high rental rate, Norfolk deals with many landlord and tenant issues. Several neighborhoods that have had poor rental conditions and crime are being targeted – not as problem properties that need more policing and code enforcement, but


practices and creative solutions have been identified, and although work has just begun in dealing with this area of the community, it is the first time stakeholders have come together to work on a plan of action.

There have been other successes. The owner of one rental property plagued by code violations and calls to police is turning her property around unit-by-unit. Even though the city had closed down her rental property because of the code violations, the landlord cooperated with authorities. The community resource officer contacted the development specialist to help the landlord look at important topics such as leases and tenant screening. Three of the apartments have now been cleared to be re-rented. The landlord has updated her application process and put new standards into place. Although it took a couple more months than usual for her to find qualified tenants, she has



Norfolk Police Department community resource officers join residents of Fairmount Park for a neighborhood event.

three, and is working to rent two more units that have been inspected.

Community resource officers still must be enforcers of the law. It is by working side-by-side with residents, neighborhood development specialists and bringing in other staff and agencies to address problems that all stakeholders – pieces of the puzzle – come together making the puzzle complete. 

About the author

Kristen Helgeson is a public information specialist for the City of Norfolk. More information on the goals and other NBN topics can be found at: www.norfolk.gov/NBN.

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Williamsburg

VML Annual Conference
Sept. 23-25, 2012



Conference Registration Form

September 23-25, 2012

Colonial Williamsburg

310 South England St., Williamsburg, VA 23187

VML Annual Conference

Name _____ Nickname for Badge _____

Title _____ Locality/Agency/Firm _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Name of Spouse (If attending) _____

(Spouse/guests must be registered to attend receptions and host locality night)

Basic Registration Fee (includes activities on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, except for ticketed events listed below; partial registration fees are not available).

Please check appropriate registration fee:

Member
 \$340

Non-Member
 \$450

Spouse
 \$130

Ticketed Events (please check the events you wish to attend and note additional charges for each event):

- Patriot Pass (3 day admission to most Colonial Williamsburg buildings, exhibits and day time events - \$18)
- VML Golf Tournament. Sunday 9 a.m. shotgun start - Green Course at the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club. (registration form will be mailed upon receipt of \$60 tournament fee). **Must register by Sept. 15.**

<p>Optional Spouse Activity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tour and lunch at DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum. Price includes Patriot Pass. (Monday - \$35)</p>
--

Name of golfer: _____

- National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials luncheon. (Monday - \$30)
- Virginia Local Government Managers Association Luncheon. (Monday - \$30)
- Prayer Breakfast. (Tuesday - \$25)
- Women in Local Government Luncheon. (Tuesday - \$30)

Total Registration Fees Due

\$ _____

Check enclosed (**check must be received within 30 days of registration**) OR

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We do not bill for registration fees. Please return completed form and purchase order or check payable to Virginia Municipal League, P.O. Box 12164, Richmond VA 23241. If this form is faxed, please do not mail. You may register on-site at the conference. For additional information call VML at 804/649-8471, Fax: 804/343-3758.

Deadline for registration refunds is Aug. 23, 2012. Refunds will not be given after this date. Please give notification of cancellations by fax or letter.



Room Reservation Form

September 23-25, 2012

Colonial Williamsburg

VML Annual Conference

310 South England St., Williamsburg, VA 23187

General Instructions

This form must be used to secure your housing accommodations for the 2012 VML Annual Conference or the Mayor's Institute in Williamsburg, VA. All requests must be received in writing on this room reservation form. Each person requesting housing must submit a separate form. You may use a photocopy of this form if necessary. Please follow the instructions listed below to reserve your housing.

- Hotel rooms at the special VML rate are **only available to people registered** for the VML Annual Conference or the Mayors Institute (Sept. 22-23).
- A **minimum 2 night stay is required** at the Williamsburg Lodge. Hotel reservations will not be made until VML has verified that your conference registration fee has been paid.
- Use a **separate form** for each housing reservation required. Photocopy this form, if necessary, to request housing for multiple registrants. Couples need to only submit one form.
- Reservations must be guaranteed by a major credit card. **No checks will be accepted to guarantee room reservations.** The credit card will not be charged unless you fail to show up for your reserved room.
- Your housing confirmation will show the exact cost amount, including tax, of your reserved room. You may bring a check in this amount to the hotel with you to pay for your room if you do not wish to pay by credit card.
- Deadline for reservations is **August 13, 2012**. Requests received after that date will be handled on a space available basis with no guarantee that the special VML rate will be available.
- Deadline for cancellations of housing reservations without penalty is 72 hours prior to your scheduled arrival.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY
AND ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS BELOW

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Title: _____ Locality or Business: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Email CC to: _____

Indicate your order of preference (circle 1 or 2). **Room reservations cannot be confirmed until VML Conference registration is paid.** All reservations must be made through the VML housing bureau to get the conference rate. **The hotels will not take reservations directly.**

Hotel & Address	Pref. #	No. of beds in room	No. of people in room	Daily Rates Incl. Tax
Williamsburg Lodge 310 South England St., Williamsburg, VA 23187	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	\$220.90
Woodlands Hotel & Suites 105 Visitors Center Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23187	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	\$172.50

Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____ Check if attending the Mayors Institute, Sept. 22-23.

Please note any special disability accommodations needed _____

Guarantee my hotel reservation by: Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

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Fax: (540) 675-3176
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Confirmations will be emailed to the address(es) provided on your reservation form.

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.

Assistant Administrator, Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority

SALARY: Negotiable DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Position involves responsibilities involving the overall operation of the BRRJA with an emphasis on security-related matters. Must have strong financial background; prefer exper. in bldgt. preparation and demonstrated proficiency in local govt. funding and operation. Prefer public safety supervisory exper. Must maintain Va. DCJS Jail Officer certification. Reqs. H.S. diploma or GED. Prefer relevant bachelor's degree. Reqs. valid Va. driver's license. Must submit BRRJA application and resume that includes complete work history, education, qualifications, current salary and references. Submit to: Administrator, Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority, 510 Ninth St., Lynchburg, VA 24504. Applications available at BRRJA office and at www.brrja.state.va.us. Deadline: Aug. 15.

Bus Driver, Winchester

SALARY: \$25,334-\$40,518 (+) benefits. Operates city bus on assigned route and schedule. Reqs. exper. in operation of buses or similar equipment, ability to operate wheelchair lift, valid CDL with Passenger Endorsement and good driving record; great customer service. Apply at www.winchesterva.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Planner I or II, Gloucester County

SALARY: Seeking highly motivated and skilled planner to be part of a small but industrious team to assist with projects associated with all aspects of long-range planning and current land use development, including review of subdivision plats, development plans and commercial site plans; code amendments and ordinance updates; transportation planning and other local and regional planning initiatives. Local government and GIS exper. a plus. Visit www.gloucesterva.jobs for additional info. Deadline: Aug. 12. EOE.

Plant Mechanic (Public Services Department), Winchester

SALARY: \$29,328-\$46,904 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Responsible for inspecting,

troubleshooting, repairing, overhauling and performing routine and preventive maintenance on equipment associated with the operation of the water treatment facility. Reqs. H.S. diploma or GED; knowledge of the electrical, hydraulic and mechanical repair of minor and major equipment systems, including engines, pumps, motors, generators and pressure regulatory devices. To learn more or apply, visit winchester.va.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Assistant Director for Permit Issuance (Department of Building and Development), Loudoun County

SALARY: \$62,380-\$89,852 hiring range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Senior management position supervises staff of 29. Reqs. master's degree in business or public admin. or related field, and min. 4 yrs. related exper., including considerable management and supervisory exper., and the use of automated systems. Must have valid driver's license. Subject to call 24-7 and be available to attend meetings after business hours. Must have ability to diffuse potentially volatile customers and recognize that errors in work could lead to extraordinary costs and problems. Visit online employment center www.loudoun.gov for more information and to apply. Job #13-A210-014. Apply immediately. EOE.

Information Technology Director, Montgomery County

SALARY: \$72,873-\$87,447 hiring range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Oversee operation of county's information systems. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree and 8 yrs. exper. in IT mngmnt, of which at least 5 yrs. should be in local and/or state govt. Reqs. detailed knowledge of the delivery of network services, data center server infrastructure, and development of multi-user applications; detailed network infrastructure knowledge; detailed knowledge of multi-tier distributed application architecture; exper. with telecommunications and radio technologies. For more info contact Human Resources at 540-394-2007; TTY/Voice (1-800-828-1120 or 1-800-828-1140); County Job Line: 540-394-2010. Visit <http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/e-services> to apply. Open until filled. EOE.

Social Worker I (probationary), Winchester

SALARY: \$39,291-\$62,857 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Work under close supervision while being trained in program areas such as Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, Foster Care/Adoption, Child Care and Employment Services with primary job duties in Child Protective Services. Reqs. bachelor's degree in a human services field or min. of a bach-

elor's degree in any field and min. 2 yrs. appropriate and related exper. in a human services area. Possession of a BSW or MSW degree and Va. social worker license desirable. Apply at www.winchesterva.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Water Treatment Plant Operator, Winchester

SALARY: \$26,603-\$42,556 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Responsible for a variety of skilled and technical work in operating, maintaining and recording plant operations on an assigned shift. Work includes covering a large working area, which contains several operating units of the treatment facility during an assigned shift. Employees normally work under direct supervision. Reqs. H.S. diploma/GED, valid driver's license, mechanical and computer skills. Only licensed applicants need apply. Apply at www.winchesterva.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Customer Service Assistant (utility billing), Winchester

SALARY: \$25,334-\$40,518 (+) benefits. Prepare and maintain records related to customer and/or commercial accounts for water/sewer services. Handles calls regarding water/sewer service; greets and assists walk-in customers with inquiries; receives payments. Reqs. exper. with data entry and accounts receivable processing while handling multiple tasks. Reqs. H.S. graduation or equiv. supplemented with computer exper. Apply: www.winchesterva.gov/employment. Open until filled. EOE.

Planning Manager / Zoning Administrator, Botetourt County

SALARY: To mid-\$50,000s DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. County has transitioned from an agricultural / bedroom community to a regional manufacturing and outdoor activity center experiencing significant commercial growth. Immediate and near-term issues include I-81 interchange development and redevelopment, coordinated transportation-land use planning and access management, and innovative mixed-use planning and development. Must be proven team leader with strong land-use planning exper. (min. 5 yrs. preferred) in a diverse development environment. For application and details go to www.botetourt.org. Priority given to applications received by July 27. Open until filled. EOE.

Database Administrator, Suffolk

SALARY: \$51,166-\$79,307 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Administer, manage, design, document and evaluate a variety of database management systems. Reqs. bachelor's degree in computer science, information technology, management information systems or a closely-related

area and 5 yrs. database administration or closely related exper. Reqs. knowledge of JavaScript, Web development, SQL and Oracle. Microsoft Database Administrator certification (MCDBA) preferred. Complete an application online at www.suffolkva.us or call 757-514-4110 for additional info. Open until filled. EOE.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Lead Operator, Winchester

SALARY: \$39,291-\$62,857 (+) benefits. Supervise 3-11 p.m. shift at Opequon Water Reclamation Facility. Supervises continuous operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plant under general supervision. Supervises subordinate personnel. Maintains PC-based database; makes operational checks on equipment and performs tasks to correct problems. Collect samples; make process changes; requests chemical supplies; determines chemical adjustment necessary for efficient and economical treatment; assists with/ performs equipment maintenance. Reqs. min. Class II Wastewater Operator's License. To learn more or apply, visit www.winchesterva.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Town Manager, Sykesville, Md.

SALARY: \$75,000-\$90,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. (pop. 4,400) Manage day-to-day operations; help mayor and town council develop and implement their vision for the future. The town has a historic Main Street, beautiful parks and neighborhoods, and an excellent school system. Reqs. bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public admin. or related field and 3 yrs. of local govt. supervisory and/or mngmnt. exper. Preferred exper. with redevelopment, grants, project management, and a historic Main Street. Profile at <http://bit.ly/NfbbhF>. Submit cover letter, resume, salary history and references to Catherine Tuck Parrish at The Novak Consulting Group at: apply@thenovakconsulting-group.com. Deadline: Aug. 17. EOE.

Director of Management & Financial Services (CFO), Loudoun County

SALARY: \$91,554-\$172,192 hiring range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. any comb. of educ. and exper. equiv. to a master's degree in public admin., business admin., finance or accounting and 10 yrs. directly related exper. Prefer progressively responsible mngmnt. exper. in public sector finance, budget or accounting and exper. leading and managing a dept. or division of 25 staff or more. Apply with letter of interest and resume to: ATTN: Jeanette D. Green, Human Resources Officer, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000; or MFSDirectorRecruitment@loudoun.gov; or Fax 703-771-5525. First round of quali-

fication reviews begins Aug. 15. To view and download the recruitment brochure, go to: <http://bit.ly/OKBLD0>. Recruitment #12-E330-316. Visit www.loudoun.gov to get more detailed job info and info on how to apply. Open until filled. EOE.

Transit Supervisor (Public Services Department), Winchester

SALARY: \$35,630-\$57,012 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Performs paraprofessional / administrative work in operation of the Transit Division of Public Works. Supervises medium group of employees. Develops and submits purchase requisitions, including pertinent documentation for routine purchases and bids for operating expenditures and tracks to completion. Maintains complex system records and data; produces computer generated data and word processing documents and reports on transit ridership and operating expenditures. Supervises and schedules transit drivers and processes payroll. To learn more, visit www.winchesterva.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Administrative Services Coordinator for the County Administrator, James City County

SALARY: \$29,785-\$37,231 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Provide administrative assistance to county administrator, assistant county administrator and communications director. Conduct research, compile data and prepare reports and presentations; read and analyze incoming memos, e-mails, reports and phone calls to determine their significance and to address personally through drafting responses, or to distribute to county administrator or other appropriate individuals for action; track citizen requests. Reqs. H.S. diploma or equiv., including or supplemented by related college or business school courses; and considerable exper. in administrative support work; or any equiv. comb. of acceptable educ. and exper. Complete job description at: <http://bit.ly/KE3aF3>. To apply, submit a James City County Employment Application available at www.jamescitycountyva.gov. Job # 605. Open until filled. EOE.

Human Resource Analyst (Testing and Assessment), Virginia Beach

SALARY: \$47,358-\$71,037 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Facilitate and conduct job analysis in association with the development and administration of job related assessments; coordinate and oversee the procurement of testing/assessment related services; and advise/oversee consultants during the exam and assessment development process. Reqs. 8 yrs. of any comb. of educ. and exper. related to assessment development / administration /.valida-

tion. For more info and to apply online go to www.vbcareers4gov.com Job # 4456. Deadline: Aug. 5. EOE.

Accounts Payable Clerk, Sussex County

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. general knowledge of finance/billing systems/administration; general knowledge of bookkeeping terminology and methods; general knowledge of accounting theory and its application to accounting transactions; knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, AS400; H.S. graduate and min. 3 yrs. exper. in finance, account receivables, billing or any combination. Exper. in local govt. finance preferred. Submit Va. state Application Form DHRM 10-012, cover letter and resume to: Thomas E. Harris, County Administrator, P.O. Box 1397, 20135 Princeton Road, Sussex VA 23884, or via e-mail to teharris@sussexcountyva.com. Visit www.sussexcountyva.gov. No phone calls. Open until filled. EOE.

Part-time Permit Center Technician (Code Administration), Alexandria


SALARY: \$16.04-\$27.78 per hour. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Performs technical and skilled paraprofessional engineering work helping Permit Center staff members. Reqs. H.S. diploma or GED; 1 yr. exper. in paraprofessional engineering work; or any equiv. comb. of exper. and training that provides the req'd knowledge, skills and abilities; sound knowledge of paraprofessional engineering practices and procedures, appropriate Uniform Statewide Building Codes, and basic drafting techniques; ability to perform mathematical computations; prepare accurate drawings from field notes and plats of record; read plats, plans specifications and blueprints; communicate clearly and effectively; ICC Permit Technician certification. Apply at <http://bit.ly/MKD9Qj>. Job # 2012-00163. Deadline: Aug. 8. EOE.

Submit ads via e-mail to David Parsons at dparsons@vml.org. 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.



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Can local democracy save us?

JANE ADDAMS, WINSTON Churchill and Al Smith are all reported to have quipped that the best remedy for the ills of democracy is more democracy. It's a good quip, but they are all wrong. The remedy is better democracy.

The United States has earned a Homeric catalog of democratic and political ills: extreme partisanship, gridlock in the Congress, incivility ("you lie!"), physical violence, rigged re-districting, out-sized influence of money, efforts to suppress voting and [insert here your favorite outrage].

We frequently hear complaints about "too much politics" in our public affairs. These maunderings are wrong-headed. Charles Krauthammer, a conservative columnist, joins a long line of observers going back to Aristotle by reminding us that politics "is sovereign in human affairs.... If we don't get politics right, everything else risks extinction."

Politics is the way we live together. We cannot do it perfectly, but we are not fated to do it as badly as we do now. Asked to describe the 1787 Constitution, Benjamin Franklin warned, "It's a republic, if you can keep it."

Although we obsess on campaigns and elections and voting, other elements also comprise what we call "democracy." It's crucial, for example, that we have formal and informal spaces – physical places, online or TV-radio, social, wherever – that facilitate people publicly expressing and discussing their values, interests and ideas. Democracy is "a conversation," and good conversation requires supportive and conducive "structures and processes," says Carolyn Lukensmeyer, the executive director of the National Institute of Civil Discourse (NICD).

Our conversation about politics, argues E.J. Dionne in *Our Divided Political Heart*, has gone substantively and substantially awry. It is lacking

the "balance" and tension between "two core values" that have defined American history – "our love of individualism and our reverence for community." Each individual and each political community embraces both values, and works out its own sense of how the two values relate.

Dionne thinks there is a dangerous effort to reduce American history and government to an expression of individual liberty to the exclusion of community. He doesn't suggest that we revert to the balance achieved in the 20th century's "Long Consensus" based on Populism, Progressivism and the New Deal. Instead, there is an urgent need to develop a balance that will enable American politics again to be a deliberative effort to address problems.

Dionne is a self-described liberal. Thirty years ago, William Schambra made a similar argument, using different terminology, in the neo-conservative journal, *The Public Interest*. The New Deal "public philosophy" was "dead or dying" in 1982, he wrote. Any replacement, he warned, must embrace "the two American political traditions, for they both express immutable yearnings in the American soul."


Balance changes over time and so does tone. New scholarly studies, published in a journal of the American Political Science Association, remind us that gross incivility is not always with us; it follows patterns over time. There are long periods of "relative calm punctuated by historical spasms of incivility that roughly correspond to partisan realignments." Lukensmeyer's NICD was created at the University of Arizona following the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in 2011 to add a new voice to those promoting respectful and constructive public discourse.

The thousands of American governments and the communities that

comprise them each do democracy differently. In general, locals are more firmly grounded in problem-solving that involves engaged conversation among the people actually affected. Federal and state governments – both of which tend more toward abstraction and ideology – have some things to learn from their local brethren.

Norman Ornstein, political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, searched for a "ray of hope" amidst the gloom of federal gridlock, and declared that that "we need role models at the state and local levels." He called for a "revolution from the bottom up" that could re-shape governance.

Now, political scientist Benjamin Barber is exploring what it would be like "If Mayors Ruled the World" (the title of his book scheduled for publication in 2013). In a recent interview at TheAtlanticCities.com, he says that national and international problem-solving is thwarted because "political sovereignty has passed to the economic sector," but that much could be accomplished by a "bottom up approach to cities collaborating globally." The basis for such collaboration is a shared practicality: cities have common challenges, functions and purposes.

A more civil discourse, a better sense of historical balance in people's ideas about public affairs, and an invigorated pragmatism in governments: these are political goals. You might say that accomplishing them will require hard-nosed, aggressive political action. You would be correct. But, hey – as the wise political pundit, Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley used to say: "politics ain't beanbag." 

About the author

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