

# VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

VOL. 49 NO. 5  
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The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

# Redistricting

In search of a better solution

**Also inside:**

Harrisonburg embraces  
safe routes to school



## Grants - Now two seasons to apply!

The first cycle of the 2014 - 2015 grant cycle begins July 1!

Each year members of VML Insurance Programs (VMLIP) take advantage of \$250,000 in risk management grant funding to purchase vital equipment and training to strengthen risk management efforts. Funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and members are encouraged to apply early.

This year grant funding will be distributed equally in two cycles - the first running July 1 - December 31. The second runs January 1 - June 30, 2015.

To learn more about VMLIP Risk Management Grants, visit: [www.vmlins.org](http://www.vmlins.org) or call (800) 963-6800.





## About the cover

*Redistricting – the drawing of political maps – is arguably the most important factor in determining the political make-up of our state and country. A new bipartisan grassroots effort launched this year in Virginia is attempting to take the process out of the proverbial smoke-filled rooms where super-partisanship governs the redrawing of legislative districts.*

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### Harrisonburg paves way for safer routes to school



Many local government projects start big but are scaled down because of limited resources, associated long-term maintenance costs or changing priorities. The City of Harrisonburg’s Safe Routes to School projects, however, have done exactly the opposite.

By Mary-Hope Vass

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### Culpeper adds LED streetlights



Culpeper’s downtown historic district has taken on a brighter hue. Light and Power crews are replacing old high pressure sodium bulbs that emit an orange glow with more energy efficient LED bulbs that shine whiter and brighter.

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### Redistricting: In search of a better solution

The aisles separating Democrats and Republicans in the legislature will continue growing wider and more hazardous for members to cross unless Virginia adopts a non-partisan redistricting process, according to a new bipartisan group pushing for reform.

By Bob Gibson and Matt Scoble

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### Falls Church employed creative development strategies to keep much-needed child development center



Faced with losing a much-needed child development center, the City of Falls Church employed a combination of fast-thinking, altruism, innovative design and collaboration to keep the public-private social services program in its borders.

By Loren Bruce and Todd Ray

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Visit at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org)

# Next stop: I-81 south to Marion

LAST MONTH, THE VML Executive Committee met in Marion, home of the league’s president, Mayor David Helms. It was my first chance to drive through the mountains of Virginia since arriving from Kansas, so I was very excited as Mary Jo Fields (VML’s director of research) and I took off. To say that the drive was beautiful would be a serious understatement. The tree-covered mountains and valleys dotted with lovely farms took my breath away. I am truly blessed to be living in such a gorgeous state!

## The General Francis Marion Hotel



We stayed at the historic General Francis Marion Hotel on Main Street. This is a lovely boutique hotel that was restored and reopened in 2006. The food service at the Black Rooster Restaurant was outstanding and the staff was top notch. And, perhaps best of all, the Francis

Marion is located in the heart of Marion amid antique shops, book stores, and much more. For more information about the hotel, go to <http://gfmhotel.com>.

## The Lincoln Theatre

After a terrific meal at the hotel, we were treated to an evening at The Lincoln Theatre. This is one of three existing Art Deco Mayan Revival theaters in the United States and it is a Virginia Historic Landmark. The 1929 facility



boasts a performance history that includes classic movies and Nashville celebrities. The theatre was celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the restoration and reopening on the night that we were there.

We were treated to the delightful sounds of Robin and Linda Williams (<http://robinandlinda.com>) The Lincoln Theatre is a splendid gem in Southwest Virginia that should not be missed. For more information on the theatre and upcoming performances, visit their website at <http://www.thelincoln.org/>

## Veteran’s Memorial

Finally, as we headed out of Marion, we passed the Smyth County Courthouse where the lawn had been covered with nearly 800 American Flags and crosses that bear the names of deceased veterans. This annual community



project is erected each year in advance of Memorial Day to honor the men and women who served our nation so honorably. It was part of a five-day observance of Memorial Day in the town, which included a parade and ceremony at the Veterans Memorial at VFW Post 4667.

This moving tribute was evidence of the patriotism that is so tightly woven into the fabric of the communities in southwest Virginia.

# Introducing A New Investment Option For Virginia Local Governments



VML/VACo's **Virginia Investment Pool** offers Virginia local governments an effective, new way to put their idle fund balances to work. Developed by Virginia Treasurers and Investment Officers, VIP is a short-term investment pool, professionally managed and governed by participants.

Leading members of VML from across the Commonwealth — including **Arlington, Alexandria, Chesapeake, Christiansburg, Roanoke and Virginia Beach** — are now participating in VIP. We invite you to join us.

VIP is rated "AAf/S1" by Standard & Poor's.  
Contact VML/VACo Finance for more information at [valocalfinance.org](http://valocalfinance.org).



**Tuttle to receive ICMA career honor**



- Tuttle -

Williamsburg City Manager **Jackson C. Tuttle II** has been selected by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to receive the 2014 Award for Career Excellence in Memory of Mark E. Keane.

ICMA will recognize Tuttle in September during its 100th annual conference in Charlotte, N.C. The award recognizes an “outstanding chief local government administrator who has fostered representative democracy by enhancing the effectiveness of local elected officials and by consistently initiating creative and successful programs.”

To be considered, the nominee must have a minimum of 10 years of executive/senior level service to the profession and endorsement of a past or present elected official. An independent awards evaluation panel of 17 U.S. and international ICMA members selects each year’s award recipients.

Tuttle’s nomination included the creation of the city’s Goals, Initiatives and Outcomes (GIOs) strategic planning process, development of the city’s performance management system and public dashboards, embracing and encouraging the use of technology for better service delivery, his efforts in town/gown relations, his passion for effective and efficient transportation systems, and his service as an instructor in the Virginia Tech Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management program.

**Arlington’s Tejada earns smart growth honor**



- Tejada -

The Coalition for Smarter Growth honored Arlington County Board Member **J. Walter Tejada** recently for his efforts to advance the community’s vision for transforming Columbia Pike into a more transit-oriented

corridor while preserving its diversity and affordable housing stock.

Tejada was awarded the Livable Communities Leadership Award for his work in 2013 as chairman of the Arlington County Board. During his tenure, Tejada hosted a Streetcar Town Hall that drew hundreds of residents to a discussion of the county’s planned Columbia Pike streetcar.

As chairman, Tejada led the board to adopt a set of innovative financial tools for preserving affordable housing along the Pike, including the creation of a Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Fund and a Tax Increment Financing area for defined revitalization districts.

The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the Washington D.C. region’s leading organization dedicated to making the case for smart growth.

**South Boston names Wilson town manager**



- Wilson -

**Timothy L. Wilson** was selected as town manager of South Boston effective June 16.

Wilson served most recently for three years as the director of community development for Bedford County. He has served in several other local government management positions, including director of planning and development for Nags Head, N.C., director of planning and community development for Middlesex County, director of planning for Brunswick County and as an economic development planner with the Southside Planning District Commission in South Hill. Wilson replaced **Ted Daniel**, who retired.

**Bristol promotes Austin to chief of police**



- Austin -

**John Austin**, a major with more than two decades of service with the City of Bristol’s Police Department, was promoted to chief of police.

A native of Bristol, Virginia, Austin joined the depart-

ment in 1989 as a patrol officer and rose through the ranks. He will command a municipal police department consisting of 53 sworn and 24 non-sworn personnel, as well as develop and administer policies and procedures.

**Manassas taps Small for development post**



- Small -

**Patrick J. Small** was hired as economic development director for the City of Manassas effective Aug. 11.

Small worked most recently as director of economic development for the City of Portsmouth. While there he created a business retention program and was responsible for the sale and redevelopment of waterfront property vacant for more than 25 years.

Small also has served as director of economic development in Isle of Wight and Lancaster counties, and Taylor County in Florida.

**Lucas to lead Region 2000 Alliance**



- Lucas -

Virginia’s Region 2000 Business and Economic Development Alliance named **Megan Lucas** as chief executive officer for the organization. Lucas worked most recently as the economic development director for the Town of Altavista.

The Region 2000 Business and Economic Development Alliance is the result of a reorganized Region 2000 Economic Development Council. The reorganization has led to an increased emphasis on economic development marketing of the region and a greater role of technology stakeholders on the alliance board. The alliance serves the Towns of Altavista, Amherst, Appomattox and Bedford, and the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell and Bedford, and the City of Lynchburg.

### Harrisonburg's Dang honored by state



- Dang -

The Department of Motor Vehicles and Virginia Highway Safety Office awarded the 2014 Governor's Transportation Safety Award recently to Harrisonburg's **Thanh Dang**.

Dang, a planner in the Public Works Department since 2006, was honored for her accomplishments in the area of pedestrian and bike safety. She has played an essential role in improving and creating pedestrian and bicycle infrastructures throughout the city, along with safety programs.

## News & notes

### Blacksburg Transit launches mobile app

Blacksburg Transit recently launched the *BT4U* mobile app for Android and iPhone users. The app is the latest in a fleet of customer service tools to help riders navigate the sometimes complicated transit schedules.

Existing *BT4U* tools allow users to access upcoming departure information for individual stops. The *BT4U* Mobile app takes this to the next level, combining departure information with Google maps to make a comprehensive, user-friendly trip planning app, eliminating the need to use a bus schedule.

Features of the app include real-time bus departure information; the ability to plan trips now or at a future date/time; save favorite trips; review detailed trip information such as directions from your current location to the closest bus stop; total time for your trip; maps of the trip; an alarm to alert you when you need to begin your trip; and a handy "Go Home" button that automatically plans your trip home from any location in Blacksburg.

The *BT4U* app was developed as part of \$1.85 million Transit Investment for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction grant BT received to intelligently assign buses to better serve the public while decreasing operating costs and environmental effects. Ultimately, the app will help the customer know when and where to catch the bus while helping BT efficiently assign buses to better meet customer demand.

### Williamsburg unveils improved mobile app

The City of Williamsburg has launched a new smartphone app – *Williamsburg Wayfinder* – that transforms the way residents, businesses and visitors interact with city government, local attractions and businesses. The new app builds on the city's *City 411* app introduced in 2011, which allows residents to submit and track non-emergency service requests, photos and text messages.

*Williamsburg Wayfinder* replaces the old app and adds many new functions seamlessly, from mobile Property Information Service (PIS) and Economic Development resources, to the restaurants



and shops closest to a user. By capturing, routing and managing service requests, it creates a convenient form of communication among departments, resulting in faster response times.

In addition, there is much less distinction now between who the user is – resident, visitor, business owner – and what kinds of functions are most accessible. The new app provides links to the city's online Shop & Dine map (connecting to restaurants and retail shops,) the Williamsburg Regional Library, Williamsburg Farmers Market, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and WAD-MC's *VisitWilliamsburg* website. *Williamsburg Wayfinder* is also geo-location based, allowing the user to customize the experience whenever and wherever it's convenient. It can be downloaded for free from both the Apple App Store and the Android Market. The cost to the city for developing the app was \$6,000.



**Manassas wins EMS award in Northern Va.**

The City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Department has received the Outstanding EMS Agency Award by the Northern Virginia EMS Council. Recipients of these awards were selected based on their excellence in Emergency Medical Services in the Northern Virginia region. Regional EMS Award recipients are also entered into the Virginia Governor’s EMS Awards program to be announced in November.

The Northern Virginia EMS Council assists and supports EMS providers in the Northern Virginia region, which includes the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park; and the Metro Washington Airports Authority (Reagan National and Washington-Dulles International Airports).

**Newport News wins APWA awards**

The City of Newport News won seven awards at the American Public Works Association’s Annual Awards Ceremony held during the Mid-Atlantic Chapter Conference in early May.

Six Public Works employees received individual chapter awards for outstanding local government service. In addition, the Citywide Sustainability Program won the Sustainability Practices Award at both the chapter and national level. The award recognizes programs that best address environmental issues in the categories of economy, community and environment. The city will receive the national award at the APWA International Congress & Exposition later this summer.

**ELSEWHERE ...**

**Front Royal** has developed a public service video explaining the programs and services that the town’s Finance Department provides citizens and customers. Check it out at [www.frontroyalva.com/finance-101.html](http://www.frontroyalva.com/finance-101.html). The town also has put online a public service video explaining the zoning permit process. Check it out at [www.frontroyalva.com/zoning-permit-101.html](http://www.frontroyalva.com/zoning-permit-101.html). ... In advance of the issuance of \$56.3 million bonds

for construction of a new city hall, energy efficiency upgrades to several facilities and the restoration of an athletic complex, the **City of Harrisonburg** recently received a AA rating from Standard & Poors and an Aa2 rating from Moody’s. Series 2014A Bonds, in the amount of \$13.6 million, sold at a true interest cost of 2.96 percent; Series 2014B Bonds, in the amount of \$42.7 million, sold at a true interest cost of 2.83 percent and were issued to refinance several older bonds. This refinancing resulted in a debt service savings to the city of more than \$3.8 million. ... In an effort to beautify neighborhoods with uniform containers for waste and recycling, the **City of Manassas** recently distributed new trash carts for disposal of household trash. Single-family homeowners received a 96-gallon cart; townhome owners received 65-gallon carts.

The **Newport News Solid Waste Division** recently received the Hampton Roads Sanitation District’s Platinum Award for Pollution Prevention. The award reflects perfect compliance for more than five consecutive years. The city was one of only 33 Platinum Award winners in the Hampton Roads region. ... The **City of Manassas** received the Award of Excellence from the Virginia Downtown Development Association for its Main Street Streetscapes project completed this past October. This project widened narrow sidewalks on Main Street to allow for outdoor dining and improved pedestrian access. Brick crosswalks were added to intersections and 19 trees were planted to enhance the beauty of the street. ... The **City of Roanoke** enacted a stormwater utility fee to comply with new Virginia stormwater management regulations and increasing federal Clean Water Act stormwater permit requirements. The fees took effect July 1 for homeowners, as well as for commercial, industrial, institutional and multifamily residential properties. ... Standards and Poor (S&P) Rating Services has affirmed **James City County’s** AAA and AA+ bond rating for its general obligation and appropriation-backed obligations for the next two years. The rating also includes the county’s Economic Development Authority and, according to

S&P, reflects the county’s strong general credit characteristics, commitment to repay appropriation-backed obligations and strong contractual provisions that include an absolute and unconditional payment provision upon annual appropriation.

**Loudoun County** government has been recognized as a “Fit-Friendly Worksite” by the American Heart Association for the seventh consecutive year. The county received the group’s Platinum Award – the highest level of achievement – which recognizes employers who champion the health of their employees by promoting a culture of wellness, implementing physical activity and nutrition programs, and demonstrating measurable outcomes related to workplace wellness through behavior change and cost savings. ... Responding to citizen concerns about the town’s deteriorating tree canopy, **Vienna Town Council** recently approved new town code provisions to adopt minimum tree canopy coverage requirements for single-lot development and redevelopment. Single-lot development and redevelopment will be subject to the same requirements as new subdivisions. Specifically, both will be required to have 20 percent lot coverage within 20 years. ... **Staunton Public Library’s** puppet show series, *Sunshine Stories*, was honored with the Virginia Public Library Directors Association’s 2014 award for Outstanding Children’s Programming recently. Written, staged, and performed by Staunton Public Library children’s programmers, *Sunshine Stories* presents classic fairy tales, folk tales and fables with a humorous and contemporary twist. ... Standard and Poor’s Ratings Services has raised its rating on **Fauquier County’s** general obligation bonds from “AA” to “AA+.” According to the rating agency, the change “reflects Fauquier County’s strong liquidity, strong management practices and strong debt profile, supported by a very strong regional economy.” ... **Manassas City Utilities** received the Century Award recently from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for its 100-year anniversary.




# Loudoun recognized for historic preservation

**T**HE LOUDOUN COUNTY Historic District Review Committee has been selected as a recipient of a Commission Excellence Award by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). The NAPC Commis-

sion Excellence Awards recognize and honor the outstanding efforts and achievements of local preservation, historic district, and landmark commissions, and boards of architectural review.

In 2008, the Loudoun County Historic District Review Committee collaborated with its counterparts in Leesburg, Middleburg and Purcellville to create the Joint Architectural Review Board (JARB) and an annual awards program, which has expanded to include the Community Blue Ribbon Award, honoring a project nominated by the general public.

The award will be presented as part of a ceremony at NAPC's biennial FORUM conference in Philadelphia on July 19. More information about the NAPC is online at <http://napc.uga.edu>.

More information about the Joint Architectural Review Board and its award program is available online at [www.loudoun.gov/jarb](http://www.loudoun.gov/jarb). 



sion Excellence Awards recognize and honor the outstanding efforts and achievements of local preservation, historic district, and landmark commissions, and boards of architectural review.

The Loudoun County Historic District Review Committee was honored in the category of "Best Practices: Public Outreach" for its work in honoring the many outstanding preservation projects within Loudoun County and its incorporated towns through the Joint Architectural Review Boards (JARB) Awards Program. By partnering with the Loudoun Preservation Society to carry out the awards ceremony, the county has helped solidify the relationship between the local governments, private

**One of the JARB's 2014 Community Blue Ribbon Awards went to the Bridges' Schoolhouse Restoration at Claude Moore Park. The building, dating back to 1870, is pictured before and after the restoration.**

# World-class artists brighten Montross with mural

**T**WO ARTISTS ACCLAIMED for their painting of public spaces transformed the sides of three walls in the business district in the Town of Montross recently.

Artists Melanie Stimmell and Anat Ronen painted the three large-scale murals in early June, part of a long-planned revitalization of the business district. To celebrate the completion of the murals, the Greater Montross Partnership for Revitalization, in conjunction with the Montross Revitalization Management Team, organized “An Evening of Mural Art” to coincide with the First Friday Art Walk of the 2014 season. With booths from a local restaurant and a winery, plus live music, the event drew a big crowd to the small town.

In keeping with the revitalization theme of “return to the village,” the murals were painted on the sides of

two existing businesses and the old Wakefield Furniture building, which is undergoing renovation by the Westmoreland County Museum. The artists also were hired to touch up a mural on the Montross Coca-Cola plant.




**The two artists transformed a portion of downtown Montross.**

More than three years into its revitalization efforts, Montross is enjoying a small surge in art and antique shops opening and hopes to attract even more business through

its revitalization efforts. A number of facade improvement projects are underway and over the next year the village will enjoy new lighting treatment, park benches, crosswalks and tree plantings.

Stimmell is one of the most sought after street painters in the world. She has painted for clients and events all over the globe and has been awarded the title of “Maestra Madonnara” (Master Street Painter) in both Italy and Germany. In addition to her street art credentials, Stimmell also spent eight years working on the iconic Comedy Central TV series *South Park*, where she oversaw the transition of characters from infamous paper cutouts to flawless digital animations. She was the lead technical director on the feature film, *South Park: Bigger, Longer, & Uncut*.

Ronen is a Houston-based artist, born and raised in Israel. Her first large scale project was four murals on the Galveston Causeway, each 90 feet long. Since then, she has completed more than 400 larger- and smaller-scale murals on highways, commercial spots, schools, churches and in private homes. 



**The colorful murals are part of a business district revitalization.**

# Purcellville could land wine education center

**T**HE VIRGINIA TECH Office of Economic Development has been awarded a contract to conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a Viticulture and Enology Education Center in the Town of Purcellville. The Purcellville Town Council approved the contract at its regular meeting on May 13.


The goal of launching the center is to strengthen the county's robust wine industry, which contributes more than \$5 million to the Loudoun economy each year.

With 41 wineries and more on the way, Loudoun is recognized as "D.C.'s Wine and Country" and has more wineries than any other county in Virginia. Growing this important industry will require creating a stronger workforce pipeline of qualified employees educated in all aspects of winemaking, from grape growing and harvesting, to fermenting, bottling and labeling.

"We surveyed winery owners last fall, and the numbers were telling," said Loudoun Economic Development Director Buddy Rizer. "Most respondents said it's difficult to find employees with training and experience. Because of projected growth in the Loudoun winery industry over the next few years, 85 percent of respondents say they'll need to hire skilled employees. Eighty-eight percent would pay a higher wage for employees with viticulture and enology certifications or degrees."

Virginia Tech will develop a feasibility study and business plan that will detail all the steps necessary to plan, fund, construct and operate the center. The plan will be presented to town and county officials in December. The \$26,000 cost of the work will be paid for by a \$17,500 Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund grant and through matching grants from Loudoun County and the Town of Purcellville.

"We want the VEEC to be a science-based, practical workforce training center for regional wineries, as well as for the local grape, beer and cider industries," said Bob Lazaro, who was Purcellville's mayor at the time of the announcement. "This facility will enhance and promote the regional tourism industry, through focus on teaching and research."

Assisting Virginia Tech will be a working group of staff from the town, county and the Northern Virginia Community College; members from the Loudoun Wine Growers Association, the Loudoun County Rural Economic Development Council, the Loudoun Winery Association, and the Purcellville business community, along with an enology extension specialist and an additional Loudoun County winery owner. 



**Bluement Vineyard, established in 2007, is a small country winery in Loudoun County.**



**Hillsborough Winery in Purcellville is just one of 41 wineries located in Loudoun County.**



**(Clockwise from top) A Harrisonburg police officer prepares to lead a pack of children along a trail ride as part of the annual Bike Rodeo; Keister Elementary School children head home on foot following class; walking to school in Harrisonburg was made easier with the awarding of grants that were used to build additional sidewalks; parents gather to walk and bike their kids to Waterman Elementary School every Wednesday.**

# Harrisonburg paves the way for safer routes to school

**M**ANY LOCAL government projects start big but are scaled down because of limited resources, associated long-term maintenance costs or changing priorities. The City of Harrisonburg's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects, however, have done exactly the opposite.

In 2006, the City of Harrisonburg was approached by community members to partner on a SRTS grant that was available through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). This followed City Council's endorsement of the city's first Pedestrian Plan in 2005, which aimed to capitalize on every opportunity to educate the community, enhance safety and increase the amount of walking and biking paths through the community. And so began the start of a long, successful partnership between the city, residents and local organizations to improve pedestrian routes around city schools.

VDOT awarded the city its first SRTS grant in 2008, which was also the first grant of its kind to be received in the region. This was a partnership between Keister Elementary School, the SRTS Task Force (including school officials, teachers, parents and students), Safe Kids of the Central Shenandoah Valley, Rockingham Memorial Hospital Community Health, and other community members. The intention of the grant was to improve safety in neighborhoods immediately surrounding the school, primarily through new sidewalks and pedestrian signals.

The City of Harrisonburg is home to one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools. The SRTS grant requires that the money be invested in new walking and biking infrastructure that would benefit schools serving grades kindergarten through eight. Keister Elementary was selected as the first project because it is located in the geographic center of the city. This project also helped connect two large neighborhoods that feed students to the

school – Pleasant Hill Acres and Sunset Heights. Sunset Heights is also bisected by a major thoroughfare, creating a significant impediment for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to the elementary school. The Sunset Heights neighborhood adjoins two city parks: Westover Park and Hillandale Park. To the west



**Harrisonburg uses "sharrows," shared roadway markings approved in 2009 by the Federal Highway Administration to improve the position of bicyclists on roads without bike lanes.**

of Westover Park sits one of the city's middle schools. Implementing the plan also laid the groundwork for creating future safe routes to the middle school.

"Our team was forward-thinking in developing all plans to accommodate future safe routes," said Director of Public Works Jim Baker. "We wanted to develop easily accessible connections for future projects to increase the available opportunities to walk and bike to school throughout the city."

VDOT awarded \$455,330 toward right of way and construction of new sidewalks leading to and from Keister Elementary School, where none previously existed. The grant also provided funding for new pedestrian signals and

other intersection improvements near the school. While a match of funding was not a requirement of this grant, the city contributed staff time for engineering design of the sidewalks and pedestrian signals and also added bicycle lanes in conjunction with the new sidewalks.

"It is far easier to incorporate additional features to the Safe Routes to School projects, when the bulk of the funding is covered through grants," said Harrisonburg Mayor Ted Byrd.

Thanks to two \$25,000 grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, students were also provided with a fresh fruit or vegetable as a snack every Friday at Keister Elementary School, which coincided with the school's "Walk to School Day." This grant provided a healthy snack to students throughout two school years and encouraged students to associate exercise with healthful snacks. Teachers also provided nutritional education to the students about the fruit or vegetable they were eating.

In June 2011, the city invited the community to a dedication ceremony to celebrate the completion of the first SRTS project. More than 1.25 miles of new sidewalks were constructed, two intersections were upgraded with pedestrian signals, and more than 1.25 miles of bike lanes were integrated into existing roadway.

Before the first SRTS project had been completed, staff members applied for more grant money to begin the next SRTS project. There was no need to let the energy and momentum associated with these projects slow down.

A second SRTS grant was awarded to Harrisonburg from VDOT in 2010. Waterman Elementary School was selected to receive \$500,000 for new sidewalks, pedestrian signals and bike lanes. Council also appropriated \$115,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding toward this project. Construction started in November 2012

and was finished by December 2013.

Another significant step was reached in December 2012. The city, in partnership with Stone Spring Elementary School, applied for a third Safe Routes to School grant through VDOT. The exercise in completing a grant application is a learning lesson for all partners. Before applying for the grant, a lengthy School Travel Plan is developed and submitted to VDOT. The plan identifies partners and plans to meet the five E's – Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation. Partners evaluate the environment in ways that some of them have never considered.

Harrisonburg was notified in the summer of 2013 that the grant was awarded in the amount of \$292,244. Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2015 and be completed by the fall of 2015.

So much has been accomplished for the citywide SRTS program. Contributions from the City of Harrisonburg, VDOT grants and community organizations have contributed to a lifetime investment that will make the commute to school safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. New sidewalks have been constructed, numerous bike lanes and sharrows were installed, and more than a dozen organizations have partnered with the city. Aside from the new infrastructure, the trend of becoming a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly city is spreading and the community is embracing, supporting and owning this movement.

In 2012, the city was awarded a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation by the League of American Bicyclists. That same year, the city partnered with neighboring Rockingham County, James Madison University and the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition to host the first annual Harrisonburg and Rockingham Bike-Walk Summit. The summit brings together local government staff, school officials, advocates and others to examine funding possibilities, exchange ideas and coordinate future priorities for the development of walking and biking infrastructure in the Harrisonburg-Rockingham region.

Every school in Harrisonburg has built upon the financial investment in the new infrastructure. Parents, faculty and


staff at the schools, community leaders, and students have partnered citywide to create a safer and healthier environment for the youth in the community. Following are several other examples:

- Students at Keister Elementary School celebrate “Walking Wednesdays” and “Walking Fridays” by either walking to school or walking the track before school starts. School buses stop at the track and students have the opportunity to walk before starting their academic day. Free bike helmets are also provided by the school to any student who is in need of one.
- Safe Kids Central Shenandoah Valley has partnered with the city and each school to sponsor a variety of activities. Every year in October, this organization sponsors “Walk to School Day” events throughout the elementary and middle schools, which involve more than 4,000 students.
- In April 2013, despite rainy weather, approximately 50 students at Thomas Harrison Middle School rode their bicycles as part of “Bike to School Day.” A \$1,000 VDOT grant was obtained by Rockingham Memorial Hospital Community Health. This money was considered a mini SRTS grant and covered the cost of hosting the event. Safe Kids Central Shenandoah Valley received \$100, 16 bike helmets and three Bike to School Day banners toward this same event.
- Students at Thomas Harrison Middle School (THMS) have continued these efforts and now bike and walk to school on the first Friday of the month. A record 83 bikes have been counted at THMS, with a daily average of 33 bicyclists. Just a few years ago, only one bike was regularly appearing at the school’s bike rack. Three new bike racks were purchased through a mini grant to keep up with the need. They also have a monthly walking school bus that helps get them to school.
- \$1,000 SRTS mini grants were awarded to both middle schools to purchase a fleet of bicycles for the physical education departments. An additional \$1,000 grant was also awarded to each middle school for bike lights and bike

maintenance supplies.

- The Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) offered a matching grant to the middle schools that received a fleet of bicycles. This means that if schools were able to purchase nine bikes, then SVBC purchased the tenth bicycle for them. Both middle schools participated in this opportunity.
- Students will likely never be late for a bus that recently began traveling in a neighborhood near Waterman Elementary School. A new tradition started last year and has continued since early spring: Parents at Waterman organized a “Walking School Bus.” Every Wednesday, parents gather to walk and bike their kids to school.
- Harrisonburg City Public Schools recently hired a SRTS coordinator to serve as a liaison for these projects and provide additional education on getting more kids to utilize these safe paths to their schools. This position had been funded through a grant up for renewal in June. An application to renew these funds has been submitted.

The results of the SRTS program are measured annually. At Waterman Elementary, there was a 50 percent increase in students who walk home from school in the afternoons and a 29 percent increase for the morning walkers. Afternoon walking is up at Keister Elementary school by 67 percent and morning walking is up 42 percent.

The city and all of its partners are not stopping here. Faculty, staff members and parent associations have already contacted city staff members to implement a Safe Routes to School Plan at other schools. There is interest that when the next new school is constructed (within the next two to three years), it will incorporate plans at the onset for Safe Routes to School. While this project started out at one school with only one grant, the community continues to support the movement of a more bike and pedestrian friendly city. 

### About the author

*Mary-Hope Vass is the public information officer for the City of Harrisonburg.*

# Culpeper adds LED streetlights

**C**ULPEPER'S DOWNTOWN HISTORIC district has taken on a brighter hue. Light and Power crews are replacing the older high pressure sodium bulbs that emit an orange glow with the more energy efficient LED (light emitting diode) bulbs that shine whiter and brighter. There are 72 decorative light fixtures in the downtown area.

Instead of replacing the entire head and bulb combination, which is expensive, new technology allowed the town to purchase LED screw-in bulbs that allow the continued use of the current "acorn" globes. The bulbs cost significantly less than replacing the entire head and bulb.

The old style sodium phosphorous bulbs use about 150 watts of electricity and last two to three years. The new LEDs use 40 watts or almost one-quarter less electricity, plus they last for about 20 years.

"We will see savings in energy costs and manpower required replacing bulbs every few years," said Light and Power Director Mike Stover. "I think it is going to make a big difference." Last year, the town replaced 46 old style "cobra head" fixtures on the 30-foot aluminum poles along Main Street and in Highview Court with the new energy efficient LED fixtures. In future years, the town would like to replace all of the remaining 96 mercury vapor fixtures

currently in the system.

"We want to get rid of all the mercury vapor lights for environmental reasons," said Stover.


The town also wants to replace 851 high pressure sodium fixtures with LEDs, but that takes time and the cost needs to be spread out over several years.

The town plans to test different wattage LEDs – 20, 30 or 40 watts – in various locations to determine which works best for a particular area.

The cost of LED bulbs is dropping as manufacturing and demand increase.

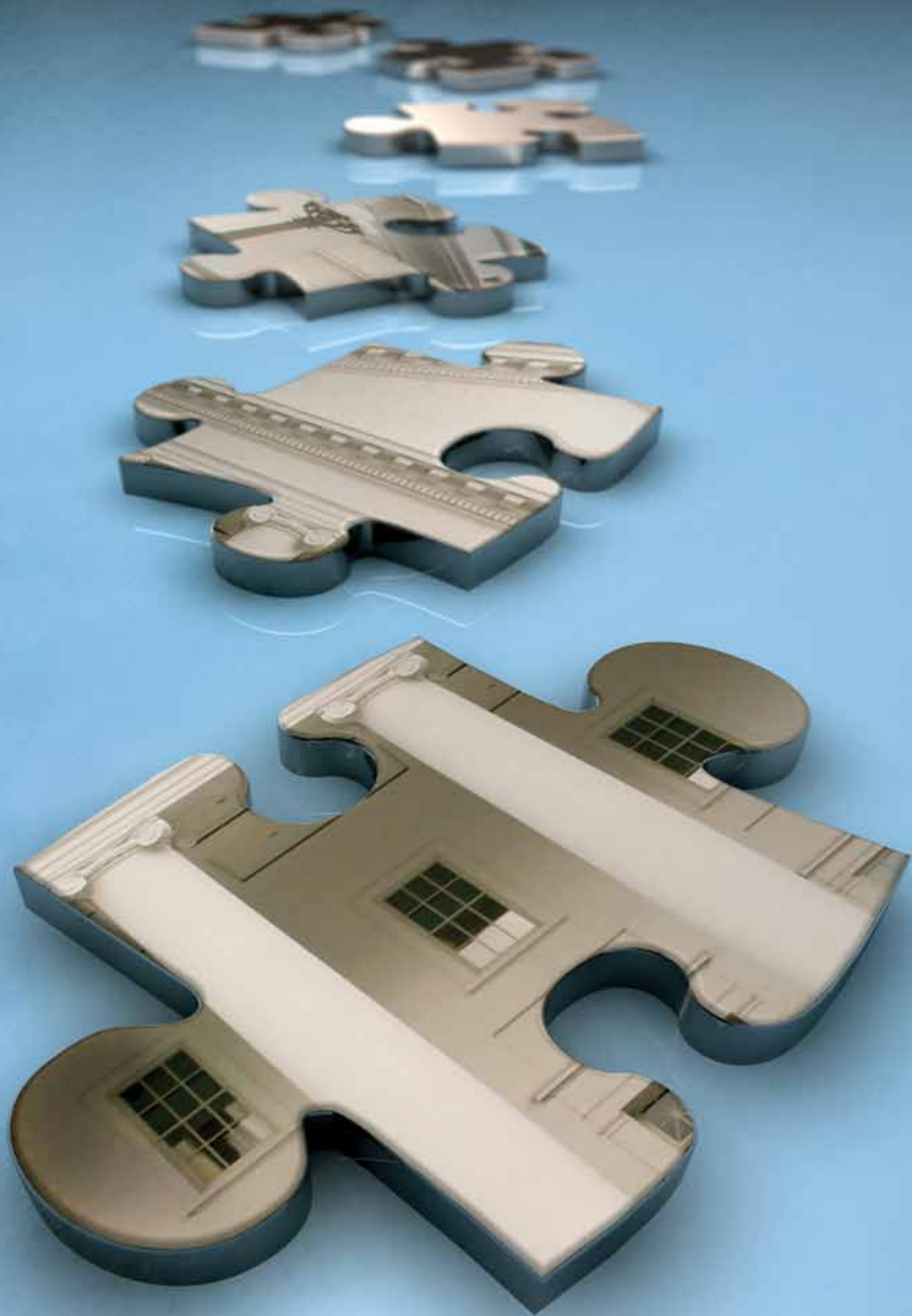
Several years ago, the town converted all its signal lights to LEDs, which are cheaper to operate and appear much brighter. They also have the capability to operate longer on battery power should there be an electrical outage.

Stover noted that not all street lights in town are town-owned. Many lights are owned by Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and Dominion Virginia Power, which also provide electric service to some town residents.

"LED lighting is the wave of the future due to lower operating cost and increased brightness," said Stover. "You certainly can tell the difference in both categories." 



**The two bright white LED street lights stand in contrast to the high pressure sodium lights along North Main Street on a snowy morning this past winter.**





# Redistricting

## In search of a better solution

**G**ERRYMANDERING IS A form of political hardball as old as the Republic in states such as Virginia, where it is still used effectively. This redistricting tool allows majority-party legislators to draw enough uncompetitive districts and pick enough of their own voters to keep lopsided partisan majorities.

Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry may get the credit for being the first to use political maps as a tool to influence elections, but “gerrymandering,” as the method has been coined, is believed to have originated in our Commonwealth much earlier. Scholars point to Patrick Henry as the first example of political redistricting in the United States. In the 1780s as governor of Virginia, he attempted to fix an election by creating a district to force Federalist James Madison to face anti-federalist James Monroe; the election results were not what Henry had planned. The practice of gerrymandering has not changed much over the past 228 years of our country’s history. What has changed is the technology used to draw the lines more ruthlessly and effectively and the large amounts of money behind this subtle practice.

Redistricting has evolved from Patrick Henry and political vendettas to incorporate vast amounts of personal data and computers that give majority parties the ability to draw maps down to an individual house. The drawing of political maps is arguably the most important factor in determining the political make-up of our state and country.

Political parties, corporations and special interests allocate vast amounts of resources into gaining the legislative majority for the next census and the power to fix the lines. The major parties of Virginia are equally at fault over the

past four decades with Democrats drawing in their favor in the years of their majorities and the Republicans in their years of majority control. Incumbents sitting in majority numbers are willing to trade away constitutional rights and our representative democracy in order to secure their seats and personal agendas for at least a few years.

Virginia is ranked as one of the most gerrymandered states in the country both on the congressional and state levels based on lack of compactness and contiguity of its districts. Throughout the Commonwealth, counties and cities

*The aisles separating Democrats and Republicans in the legislature are growing wider and more hazardous for members to cross. Areas where compromise and cooperation could be reached are harder to find.*

are being broken in half or into multiple pieces to create heavily favored partisan districts, with 46 localities split in the Virginia Senate district maps and 59 localities divided in the House of Delegates’ maps. In 2013, 56 candidates in the House of Delegates faced no real competition in the general election, with 22 Democrats and 34 Republicans facing no major-party challenger. Of the remaining 44 races, only 19 were considered competitive to some degree. With no real ability of the electorate to choose otherwise in safe districts, politicians are free to pursue their own personal ideologies and ignore the voters who cannot hold them accountable in a competitive race.

Future demographic trends project that after the 2020 census, Virginia will

gain a 12th congressional seat due to population growth in Northern Virginia. If current patterns hold, it will be easy to draw the lines so that the vast majority of congressional districts will remain uncompetitive in November elections. Redistricting reform is not an issue we can set aside and bring up when convenient. Without action before the 2020 census the next chance we have for reform is 2031. To be fair to voters, Virginia needs change within six years.

The American Bar Association says that American citizens’ right to vote can be diminished by politically drawn legislative districts that threaten to predetermine an election’s outcome. The ABA this year went on record to urge governments to assign the redistricting process for legislative districts to independent commissions with full citizen participation. The ABA is one of a large number of groups expressing growing concern about gerrymandering across the nation and around Virginia.

Politics in Virginia is changing, and it is changing more rapidly than at any time in recent decades. One of the reasons for this is the fast changing media. Perhaps a bigger reason is the rapidly changing demographics of Virginia. The trend toward more and more highly partisan-leaning districts and fewer competitive elections in November is leading to legislative gridlock and an inability or unwillingness to engage in bipartisan compromise.

Thanks to the rapid demographic changes, including in-migration of people so that more than half of all Virginians were born outside the Commonwealth and more than one in 10 born in another country, the former one-party state of Virginia most closely mirrors the nation’s partisan political divide. We are the most purple state, a political consultant’s dream state.

## Redistricting

Some of the unhealthiest changes in politics during the past three decades are related to the super-partisan redistricting that follows each federal census. The aisles separating Democrats and Republicans in the legislature are growing wider and more hazardous for members to cross. Areas where compromise and cooperation could be reached are harder to find. Many a legislator today may be more worried about a June party nominating primary with its narrow party base than a November general election. Legislators are given more incentives to play to the base and not to a more moderate general electorate. Spring primaries, with their low turnouts, now offer the best chance to defeat incumbents in super-partisan districts.

Here are nine good reasons to support reform of redistricting in Virginia:

- Reform will result in fewer “safe” seats and encourage candidates to appeal to all voters, not just their partisan “base” voters.
- Reform will reduce the number of localities split among multiple congressional, House of Delegates and state Senate districts.
- Reform will make legislators more responsive to all of their constituents.
- Reform will encourage legislators to seek real solutions, not just talking points for the next campaign.
- Reform will increase the number of competitive districts and thus give voters more of a choice than they have today.
- Reform will diminish the clout of partisan special interests.
- Reform will make the redistricting process transparent.
- Reform will empower all Virginians to have a voice in the redistricting process.
- Reform will put Virginia on the map as a model of good government and encourage other states to follow our lead.

Until partisan line-drawing is reformed, Virginia will have screwy-looking districts that often make no sense to voters, many of whom do not know which districts they live in or who represents them. With reduced levels

of competition, voter participation also plummets.

A new bipartisan grassroots effort was launched this year in Virginia to take redistricting out of the proverbial smoke-filled rooms where super-partisanship governs the redrawing of legislative districts.

The group calls itself OneVirginia2021: Virginians for Fair Redistricting. It made its public debut Feb. 18 and heard Charlottesville’s Leigh Middleitch, Lynchburg’s Shannon Valentine and Richmond’s Jim Ukrop as they outlined the group’s goal. The tall task is convincing the General Assembly and a majority of Virginians to adopt a constitutional amendment to create compact districts with more competition. At the launching of the group, Sen. Bryce Reeves, R-Spotsylvania, read a statement of support from fellow Republican and former Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling.

“Unfortunately, Virginia legislative districts have too often been drawn for the express purpose of reducing competition,” Bolling noted. “This tends to empower the most extreme voices in both political parties, and that is not good for the legislative process.” He added his hope that the General Assembly “will pass meaningful redistricting reform and ensure that future legislative districts are drawn to promote neutral principles such as compactness, contiguity and common interests without regard to political advantage.”

The group has a simple mission guided by the principle that “Virginia’s state and congressional districts belong to its citizens and not to any legislator, interest group or political party. Districts should be drawn with citizens’ interests in mind, encouraging healthy debate and public participation in the process.” It advocates non-partisan redistricting, which a few places such as Iowa have done but which some people say is impossible. Removing partisanship as the primary driver of redistricting is hard, but not impossible. The effort will be worth it to restore trust, compromise and fair competition to politics.

Anyone interested in eliminating the divisiveness of gerrymandering can visit the new group’s website at [OneVirginia2021.org](http://OneVirginia2021.org). The effort to reform redistricting may take four to six years

to change Virginia’s Constitution, but it may be as healthy to politics as banning smoking in restaurants has been for people’s lungs. Already the small town of Glade Spring in Southwest Virginia has demonstrated that localities can join the movement for reform.

Led by Mayor Lee Coburn, the town passed a resolution urging Virginians to join and support the effort to reform redistricting. On March 12, the town council unanimously adopted the following resolution, which reads in part:


WHEREAS the organization OneVirginia2021 supports the belief that Virginia’s historical practice of redistricting by the majority party in each legislative chamber is an outdated practice that stifles political competition, discourages compromise and ensures continued control by the party in power; and,

WHEREAS OneVirginia2021 believes that Virginia’s state and congressional districts belong to its citizens and not to any legislator, interest group or political party; and,

WHEREAS OneVirginia2021 believes the redistricting process should not be a tool used by those in power to protect and bolster their power, but should be designed with the best interest of Virginia’s democracy and its citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the need is critical to restore trust, compromise and fair competition to Virginia politics;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of Glade Spring, Virginia, fully supports the goals of OneVirginia2021: Virginians for Fair Redistricting to depoliticize the redrawing of legislative district lines with an approach that advocates for fairness, transparency and accountability and keeps the citizens’ interests in mind, encourages healthy debate and participation by the public in the process.

Anyone can join the effort. 

### About the authors

*Bob Gibson is executive director of the Sorenson Institute at the University of Virginia. Matt Scoble is executive director of OneVirginia2021.*

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# Falls Church employed creative development strategies to keep much-needed Child Development Center

THE CITY OF Falls Church had a problem. It was renting surplus space to the Easter Seals Child Development Center of Northern Virginia, a much loved and much needed public/private social services program, but its growing public school system was in need of the space.

Ending Easter Seals' lease would mean losing an important community service. As municipalities throughout Northern Virginia have become larger and more prosperous, non-profits like Easter Seals are going further afield to find affordable space. But the City of Falls Church was determined to keep Easter Seals in its borders. A combination of fast-thinking, altruism, innovative design and collaboration allowed Easter Seals to not only stay in the City of Falls Church, but to own a beautiful new facility all its own.

Easter Seals Serving DC | MD | VA is the independently incorporated 501(c)(3) that provides services in the region as an affiliate of the nationwide Easter Seals organization that supports more than one million children and adults living with a variety of conditions, from autism to Alzheimer's Disease. The organization has a network of hundreds of sites throughout the United States. The Easter Seals Child Development Center of Northern Virginia (CDC) in Falls Church delivers programs and activities that maximize the physical, cognitive, social and emotional

development of children and ensures they succeed in school when they reach kindergarten age and beyond. In the Falls Church area, it is the only child development center that will accept children under the age of 2 within

an old building to relocate his headquarters," Snyder explained, "but due to the turn in the economy the project was never realized." Snyder knew the contractor, John Bellingham of Monarc Construction. He thought Bellingham



The warehouse was transformed into a handsome, energy efficient building.

five miles, and the only facility serving children below the age of 5, who have special needs such as disabilities, medical frailties (e.g., cancer, heart disease, feeding tubes), within 10 miles.

James Snyder, director of planning and development services for Falls Church, knew that keeping the Easter Seals Child Development Center in the city was imperative. During a brainstorming session an idea was hatched.

"A contractor had purchased a property with

might be willing to part with the property, if it was for a worthwhile cause.

Bringing Bellingham on board proved to be the easiest part of the process. Not only was he willing to sell the property at a price Easter Seals could afford, he also offered to renovate the building on an expedited basis to meet the project's very aggressive timeline. The obstacles to realizing this opportunity lay in the property itself.

The structure was a nearly windowless, one-story, industrial warehouse built in 1973 to store auto parts. The site was a quilt of different jurisdictions and zoning overlays. While the area around it was ripe for development, the property itself languished, in part because of competing zoning prerogatives. Straddling the border of the city and the county, the property was subject to the regulations of four different zoning districts, both commercial and residential.

## Zoning quandary

THE PROPERTY STRADDLES the border of the city and the county, and is located within four different zoning districts. Within the City of Falls Church the property is located in the R1-A, Low Density Residential District, and the B-3, General Business District. In Fairfax County the property is located in the R-4 Residential District and the C-3 Office District. A special exception was required to allow this land use.



"Easter Seals is about making our community a better place," said Phil Panzarella, the immediate past chair of the Board of Easter Seals Serving DC|MD|VA, at the new center's grand opening ceremony. "This Child Development Center is the only one that will serve children under the age of 2 within five miles and the only one serving children with disabilities and special needs such as autism or medical conditions like cancer or heart issues within 10 miles."

## Child Development Center

This created a problem: in three of the four zoning districts, the Child Development Center would be allowed by-right; however, the fourth district would require a special exception to allow this land use.

Thus it was fortuitous that Bellingham, the owner of the site, was a general contractor who had also made previous overtures to the local authorities to develop the property. When he first purchased the warehouse, Bellingham engaged Studio Twenty Seven Architecture to turn the building into a net-zero, sustainably designed, headquarters for Monarc Construction. While this earlier effort was eventually shelved, it helped establish the relationships needed to expedite turning the property over to Easter Seals and permitting the new land use.

While the local Economic Development Authority created a \$3 million bond package to assist Easter Seals in obtaining financing for the project, John Bellingham re-engaged Studio Twenty Seven Architecture to create a new design for the warehouse. The development team needed to establish the financing, and achieve multiple special exceptions, variances, and approvals, all while creating and executing a design for a highly regulated facility. And, due to the sun-setting municipal lease in the old site, the new 14,000 square foot Child Development Center had to be completed in seven months.

To expedite the development, the two municipalities whose border cut

## It took a village ...

HERE'S A LIST of the many participants who assisted in pulling off the ambitious project

### Public sector

**City of Falls Church** – City Manager, City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Public Works, Planning Division, Economic Development Authority and Building Inspectors

**Fairfax County** – Supervisor Linda Smyth, Fairfax Department of Planning & Zoning, Fairfax County Park Authority

**Private Sector** – Owner: Easter Seals of Northern Virginia; Owner Representative: Tenant Consulting, LLC; Owner Construction Manager: Karchem Properties; Land Use Attorney: Holland & Knight; Finance: TD Bank; Contractor: Monarc Construction Inc.; Architect: Studio Twenty Seven Architecture; Civil Engineer: Walter Phillips Engineering; Structural Engineer: Consulting Engineers, Corp.; MEP Engineers: AJ Engineers, Inc.

through the property had to act as one. Remarkably, both the city and the county agreed to a singular building permit review, inspection and enforcement. The county agreed that since the largest portion of the site would be within the city boundaries, the city should be the primary authorizing agency. The city agreed to keep the county fully engaged and informed as the project proceeded. A shared realization that Easter Seals was a critical community asset helped foster a unified vision.

The obstacles to development continued. Zoning rules dictated that the property, due to its proposed use, had an intensive parking requirement. If stringently applied, almost 100 percent of the site would need to be paved with parking. In order to make room for play areas, gardens, and on-site storm water management strategies, parking needed to be limited. Again, a multi-jurisdictional solution was found. Adjacent to the site the city and the county jointly maintained a parking lot. The city and county agreed to allow Easter Seals staff



The site is pinched between an enclave of thriftily built 1950's shingle homes to the North, spotty strip development along Hillwood Avenue to the East, and a fizzled industrial investment of the 1960's and 70's along the southeast boundary, which its residual had left this abandon and dilapidated auto parts warehouse.



**The facility was built within the shell of the existing warehouse, allowing the development to receive tax incentives for adaptive reuse and waste reduction.**

and visitors to use this parking area, and granted a variance. The site could be developed as envisioned.

That vision included many environmentally sustainable strategies. “The land development aspect of the Easter Seals development fit the definition of LID, Low Impact Development,” explained Karen White, the civil engineer on the project. The facility was built within the shell of the existing warehouse, allowing the development to receive tax incentives for adaptive reuse and waste reduction. An innovative storm water management system retains and filters all storm water onsite without straining city facilities and potentially increasing pollution in area waterways.

Other sustainable strategies include pervious play areas, a migratory butterfly way-station, and an expeditionary learning garden that the children help maintain. This promotes therapeutic outdoor activities, learning and environmental stewardship. Chair of the Board of Easter Seals Serving DC|MD|VA, Janis Schiff, shared that the staff are energized “to maximize our new facility” and are “developing a ‘Save the planet curriculum, to learn about the world through interaction with this sustainable building.’”

The new facility also generates much of its own energy. An extensive photovoltaic (PV) array consisting of 168 PV panels capable of generating 45,000kwh per year is installed on the roof. Bellingham had purchased the system for the earlier, planned renovation for the building, but it was never employed. In the process of turning over the building to Easter Seals, reselling this system proved to be out of the budget. Bellingham came up with a creative alternative, proposing a Power Purchase Agreement to operate the solar panels for Easter Seals and sell the energy back to the non-profit at a discount. Easter Seals benefits from the solar panels. The electrical power generated is sold to Dominion Virginia Power through a special “Solar Purchase Program.” Bellingham will then donate

## Parking solution


THE SITE PROPOSED for development had an intensive parking requirement. If stringently applied, almost 100 percent of the site would need to be paved. The city and the county jointly maintain a park and parking lot with near adjacency to the Easter Seals CDC facility and established a joint parking agreement.



the full system to Easter Seals once the initial period is concluded. Now Easter Seals is using less energy while also reducing its overall operating cost.

Finally, the new facility also includes a geothermal field, which will eventually have the capacity to heat and cool the entire building. That is some way down the road. The wells were placed during construction, but the required systems and connections proved to be too costly for the initial budget.

The Easter Seals development began giving back to the community even before it was completed, providing an impetus for the city to make much needed public improvements. As part of the agreement to keep Easter Seals in Falls Church, the city allocated \$50,000 to provide sidewalks, street and safety lighting where there had been none, as well as repaving the road leading to the facility.

The Easter Seals development is an example of how creative urban redevelopment, shared public and private vision, collaborative municipal efforts and sustainable design may coalesce to support critical community programs. Like many projects, it could not have been possible through the efforts of an individual; it takes a collection of key players doing what they do best to realize the vision of this project. The city and Easter Seals were grateful to both the public and the private partnerships that made this re-development a success. 

### About the authors

*Loren Bruce is the lead city planner for Falls Church. Todd Ray, FALA, is a principal with the firm Studio Twenty Seven Architecture.*



An abundance of natural light fills the center's interior rooms.



Children's art project adorn the center's hallways.



# Who pays for those elections?

**E**LECTION ADMINISTRATION is one of the most tightly regulated services that cities and counties perform for the state. Councils and boards of supervisors have little control over election administration, except that if they are divided into districts or wards, to set the boundaries of those districts every 10 years.

And, unlike many services that the state requires cities and counties to offer, a good argument can be made for the statewide regulation of this important function. After all, a voter in Hillsville should have the same ability to vote as one in Herndon or Harrisonburg.

It would just make sense that the state would recognize the degree of state control – and the importance of the function – by providing the lion’s share of the costs.

Unfortunately, that is not the case.

In FY12, local election administration cost \$43.4 million; cities, counties and towns funded 80 percent (\$35.3 million) of those costs with local dollars. The state put up a paltry 18 percent, or about \$7.8 million, with the remainder of the funding coming from federal pass-through funds and charges for services.

Except for the salary of the general registrar, cities and counties pay all the personnel costs in the registrars’ offices, as well as overhead costs such as utilities, furniture, office supplies, etc. And they pay for voting equipment, storage and security of voting equipment, printing of ballots and cost of election officers.

Primaries? Localities pay for those, too, as well as the cost of conducting recounts.

Once the Great Recession took hold in Virginia, the state started nickel-and-diming state funding of election administration. Here’s some examples:

- 2012 session: Eliminated funding for printing and mailing absentee and voter registration applications to localities (\$77,290 each year).
- 2011 session: Reduced state funding for the salaries of general registrars and electoral board members by 4 percent in FY12 (a reduction of \$233,428). The salaries for these constitutional positions are included in the Appropriation Act and cannot be cut below the specified levels *even if state funding is reduced*.
- 2010 session: For FY11-12, reduced compensation funding for general registrars and local electoral boards by \$1.6 million in each year.
- For FY10: Reduced state salary reimbursements for the equivalent of a one-day furlough for all state-supported local employees, including general registrars and members of electoral boards;
- 2009 session: Required that municipalities holding elections in May pay all expenses of those elections, including those incurred by the State Board of Elections.

Local governments bear far too large of a share of the cost of election administration, a function that is largely driven by state rules and regulations. [VTC](#)

#### About the author

Mary Jo Fields is director of research for VML.



### **VML Newly Elected Officials Conference, July 10-12, Richmond**

Attendees will get acquainted at a dinner on Thursday evening and hear from experts on a number of topics during the day on Friday and Saturday morning. Topics to be discussed will address the fundamentals of serving as a council member, including information on making the most of meetings, budgeting, the Freedom of Information Act, the Conflicts of Interest Act, planning and public officials liability. Preliminary Program | Registration and information.

### **VML Policy Committees (Day 1), July 23, Henrico County**

Three of VML's six policy committees will meet from 10 a.m. until approximately 2 p.m. at VHDA's Virginia Housing Center, 4224 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060. This is in the Innsbrook office park. The three policy committees meeting this day are: Finance, General Laws and Human Development & Education. Contact: Janet Areson at [jareson@vml.org](mailto:jareson@vml.org) or (804) 523-8522.

### **VML Policy Committees (Day 2), July 24, Henrico County**

Three of VML's six policy committees will meet from 10 a.m. until approximately 2 p.m. at VHDA's Virginia Housing Center, 4224 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060. This is in the Innsbrook office park. The three policy committees meeting this day are: Transportation, Environmental and Community & Economic Development. Contact: Janet Areson at [jareson@vml.org](mailto:jareson@vml.org) or (804) 523-8522.

### **VAPDC 2014 Summer Conference, July 24-26, Williamsburg**

This year's conference at the Williamsburg Lodge will explore "Efficiencies Through Regionalism" state, regional and local leaders address technology, environmental and economic development issues. More info and register online at <http://bit.ly/1nosKeg>.

### **ICMA Annual Conference, Sept. 14-17, Charlotte / Mecklenburg County, N.C.**

ICMA's 100th Annual Conference will

continue the tradition of offering an abundance of educational, information-sharing, and networking tools to help city management professionals oversee communities in today's complex environment. More information.

### **VML Mayors Institute, wOct. 4-5, Roanoke**

This two-day workshop instructs council and board leaders on the essential skills necessary to succeed in leading their elected body. Held prior to the start of the VML Annual Conference at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center. Contact: Mary Jo Fields at [mfields@vml.org](mailto:mfields@vml.org) or (804) 523-8524.

### **VML Annual Conference, Oct. 5-7, Roanoke**

The 2014 VML Annual Conference will be held at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center. Contact: Joni Terry at [jterry@vml.org](mailto:jterry@vml.org) or (804) 523-8529.

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### **Director of Economic Development, Portsmouth**

**SALARY:** \$103,270-\$117,500 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. ability to effect change and provide direction in program planning, development and implementation of economic development program; bachelor's degree in business admin., economics, public admin. or a closely-related field; master's degree and CECD certificate from IEDC preferred; extensive exper. in economic development, preferably in municipal setting. Position and community profile at [www.portsmouthvaed.com](http://www.portsmouthvaed.com). Submit city application, available at [www.portsmouthva.gov](http://www.portsmouthva.gov), and resume to: City of Portsmouth, Department of Human Resource Management, 801 Crawford St., Portsmouth, VA 23704. First review of applications: July 18. Open until filled. EOE.

### **Planning and Building Services Technician, Brunswick County**

**SALARY:** \$27,058-\$39,408 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reports to the director of planning. Reviews and processes zoning/building permit applications, zoning violations, subdivision plats, site development plans and land use proposals. Complete job description available at the Office of the County Administrator. Submit application to: Office of the County Administrator, 228 N. Main St., P.O. Box 399, Lawrenceville, VA 23868. Deadline: 2 p.m. July 8. EOE.

### **Director of Utilities, Gloucester County**

**SALARY:** \$74,804-\$119,686 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. The county's public utilities system, supported by a staff of 26, includes a 4 MGD combination surface water and deep well reverse osmosis plant, and a central sewage collection system. Work involves financial activities, program development, strategic planning, DEQ consent order compliance, staffing and community relations. Reqs. bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related field (master's preferred) and 6-9 yrs. progressively responsible relevant management exper., or any equiv. comb. of training and exper. that provides the req'd knowledge, skills and abilities. Reqs. registration as a P.E. in Va. Full job description and apply at <http://bit.ly/1IQKgGA>. Deadline: Aug. 10. EOE.

### **Assistant Director of Economic Development, Danville**

**SALARY:** \$63,262-\$75,914 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Supports and encourages economic development activities by working closely with business prospects, particularly in evaluating technology, maintaining a strong relationship with the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), and maintaining close relationships with elected officials, funding agencies, and community leaders. Other duties include managing various projects. Detailed job description at <http://bit.ly/1prOj21>. Deadline: July 18. EOE.

### **Marketing and Research Manager, Danville**

**SALARY:** \$51,345-\$61,614 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Provides external and internal marketing services for the Department of Economic Development. Provides necessary research and demographics for clients; designs ads; sends out economic indicators; completes Requests for Information (RFI); updates state profiles for communities; maintains department's website and social media sites. Detailed job description at <http://bit.ly/1IQZwU3>. Deadline: July 18. EOE.

### **County Administrator, Campbell County**

**SALARY:** DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. (Pop. 56,000; appx 340 FTEs; \$145 million FY15 GF and School Fund operating bdtg.) Work with citizens, seven-member Board of Supervisors, leadership team and staff to implement the vision, mission and operational goals of the county. Ideal candidate is a proven leader with highly developed interpersonal relationship management skills, strong financial and budgeting skills, the highest level of integrity, strategic planning exper., solid analytical skill and ability to negotiate complex issues. Strong emphasis on local and regional collaboration to fulfill the county's reputation as being well managed, fiscally conservative and value-driven. Reqs. bachelor's degree with min. 5 yrs. exper. (relevant master's degree preferred); prior executive-level or county/city management exper., with significant knowledge of local govt. More info at <http://bit.ly/UUzQkv>. Deadline: Sept. 1. EOE.

### **Town Manager, Buchanan**

**SALARY:** Up to \$50,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. (Pop. 1,200; bdtg. appx. \$1.15 million). Town established in 1811 hiring its first town manager. Responsible

for the general daily management and operation of the town, including public works, water/wastewater, planning and zoning. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree; exper. in economic and/or tourism development desired. Full job description and application at [www.townofbuchanan.com](http://www.townofbuchanan.com). Submit cover letter, resume and application to: Town Manager Position, Town of Buchanan, P.O. Box 205, Buchanan, Va. 24066 or e-mail to: [lhall@buchanan-va.gov](mailto:lhall@buchanan-va.gov). Open until filled. EOE.

### **Emergency Management Administrator, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission**

**SALARY:** \$73,500-\$92,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Professional planning position responsible for all aspects of the Emergency Management program at the HRPDC. Serves as an advocate of emergency management, homeland security and hazard mitigation initiatives. Reqs. min. of a master's degree in emergency management, public administration, and/or homeland security with extensive exper. or any equiv. comb. of educ. and exper. that provides the equiv. knowledge, skills and abilities. Previous grants mngmnt. exper., designation as a CEM, and/or security clearance preferable. Full job description at <http://hrpdcva.gov/page/employment>. Open until filled. EOE.

### **Principal Transportation Engineer / Planner, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission**

**SALARY:** \$73,500-\$100,500 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Lead a team developing a multi-modal long-range transportation plan for the region, subject to federal requirements of metropolitan planning. Must exhibit a thorough understanding of transportation engineering / planning concepts and principles. Exper. in travel demand forecasting/modeling using Citi-labs software a must. Master's degree in civil engineering or urban planning with a focus on transportation and 10-plus yrs. progressively responsible exper. P.E. or Certified Planner (AICP) a plus. Full job description at [www.hrtpo.org/page/employment](http://www.hrtpo.org/page/employment). Send resumes to: Kelli Peterson, Human Resources Administrator, HRPDC, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, VA 23320 or by e-mail to [kpeterson@hrpdcva.gov](mailto:kpeterson@hrpdcva.gov). Open until filled. EOE.

### **City Bridge / Asset Manager (Engineer IV), Richmond**

**SALARY:** \$68,696-\$123,971 DOQ/

DOE (+) benefits. Lead a team of engineers and technicians/specialists on engineering assignments, applying engineering techniques and analysis on bridge, concrete pavement and other structural projects. Supports major infrastructure engineering efforts such as bridges, culverts, retaining wall, guard rails, concrete pavement etc. Reqs. bachelor's degree in engineering, 6 yrs. exper. and P.E. license. Full job description at <http://bit.ly/1ysGU71>. Open until filled. EOE.

### Chief Civil Engineer (Engineering and Resource Protection Division), James City County

SALARY: \$72,568 or higher DOQ/  
DOE (+) benefits. Responsible for the

engineering and plan of development review functions associated with the county's Bay Act, BMP certification, erosion and sediment control, drainage standards, stormwater management VSMP, floodplain, dam safety and private street programs. Primary duties: Supervise and manage division engineers and plan reviewers and coordinate with division compliance inspection staff; advanced plan of development case management; engineering review and assistance for subdivision and zoning ordinance programs; serves as certified floodplain administrator CFM for floodplain program team. More info and apply at <https://jobs.jamescitycountyva.gov>. Open until filled. EOE.

### Public Works Director / Town Engineer, Tazewell

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. visionary with knowledge of street, water and sewer administration, as well as management skills. Must be able to plan, organize and direct the department's 30-plus employees that include the Sewer and Water Divisions, Street Division, and Parks and Recreation Division. Prefer bachelor's degree in civil engineering, public works administration or related field. An associate's degree in civil engineering may be considered. Applications available at [www.townoftazewell.org](http://www.townoftazewell.org). Open until filled. EOE.

## State launches web portal to track road projects

**T**HE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT of Transportation (VDOT) has launched a new interactive portal, [www.Virginiaroads.org](http://www.Virginiaroads.org), that provides a one-stop information source to VDOT data and projects. Gov. Terry McAuliffe made the announcement recently while speaking at the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Brookings Institution's Eco-Engineering Forum 2014: The New Eco-System of Information on Harnessing the Potential of Big Data.

An important feature of this new portal are interactive maps showing current and planned road construction projects included in the Six-Year Improvement Program, as well as pavement conditions and resurfacing projects. Some of the data made available through this app are in response to requests by Virginia broadband providers to have greater visibility and earlier notice regarding road construction and repair projects. Providing access to this data will facilitate coordination between VDOT and broadband providers seeking to build new infrastructure.

"Virginiaroads.org is a prime example of the type of project I envisioned when we launched our Data.Virginia initiative aimed at using data to make government more transparent," McAuliffe said. "It's as simple as clicking on the link, selecting a location and seeing in a glance the status of current and future transportation projects. The information is easily accessible and open for to the public to see how their taxpayer dollars are being invested to improve Virginia's road system."

Virginiaroads.org features a series of interactive maps in a central online location. One of the maps displays current construction projects, projects in the design phase, projects scheduled to go to construction and future projects. Projects can be searched via project stage, location, route or street name and the project identification number as it is listed in

the Six-Year Improvement Program.


Another map shows pavement conditions, with colors identifying whether a section of pavement is in excellent, good, fair or poor condition. You can click on a section of pavement to find out more details on resurfacing projects.

"You can easily see what is going on where you live or work by zooming in on a county or city, click on the projects for more detail or view the latest pavement conditions and repaving projects," said VDOT Commissioner Charlie Kilpatrick. "This tool combines layers of data in one application that the public can use to learn more about transportation projects in their localities."

Virginiaroads.org has other maps, some of which are interactive, including:

- 511 real-time traffic information
- Park and ride lots
- Snow plowing status
- Virginia toll facilities
- Major road construction
- Highway safety corridors
- Truck routes
- Scenic roads
- Bicycling maps
- Capital trail
- State map
- City maps



Future updates to the portal will include bridge locations and conditions, and accident and cash information. 

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