

VTC

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

Inside:

Innovation Awards winners

Conference highlights

... and more!

Growing a successful community garden program

Town of Blacksburg takes top honors





VRSA

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ABOUT THE COVER

Vegetables, flowers, social events, educational outreach, and equity initiatives...all these things and more are popping up in the Town of Blacksburg's dynamic (and award winning) community gardens program. Learn more on page 13.

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If your memories of VML's big event have already started to fade, don't worry! We've got plenty of photographs 20-25

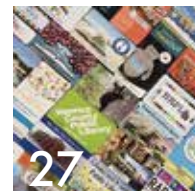
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This Pakistani immigrant couldn't be prouder to be a U.S. citizen and a member of council for the Town of Herndon 29



Giving thanks and gearing up for 2024!

WANT TO THANK all of you who attended the VML Annual Conference and the Mayors Institute! It was wonderful to see everyone and to hear about all the great things going on in local government. Congratulations to all the Innovation Award winners and applicants, especially to the Town of Blacksburg for taking home the President's Award for its community garden project!

I also want to mention that during the Awards Banquet we were pleased to honor Susan Dewey, Virginia Housing's CEO who will be retiring at the end of the year. She has been a wonderful partner to VML over the years and has really worked to help ensure Virginia's residents have security in their housing.

Also, let's not forget Roger Wiley who we paid tribute to during the banquet for having attended 50 (!) VML conferences. While I know we can't all be as consistent as Roger, it does lead me to ask all of you – How long have you attended VML conferences? Please let us know.



VML Chief of Staff Sue Mellen with 50 year conference veteran Roger Wiley.

As we enter Thanksgiving week, I am thankful that the elections are over! VML has been planning regional meetings to introduce ourselves to the new General Assembly members so please be on the lookout for invitations to those meetings. Also, please introduce yourself to the new members and talk with them about the important work done by local governments and what you need from the state to continue doing that good work. VML has a guide on how to effectively communicate with your

legislators as well as our *2024 Legislative Program* which outlines VML's priorities for the year. The priorities include, but are not limited to, funding of community services board and behavioral health authorities, maintaining local land use control, and support for public education. Please share our legislative program with your delegation and if you need hard copies just ask!

Communicating with Legislators

www.vml.org/Resources/Communicating-with-Legislators



2024 Legislative Program

www.vml.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Program



If you receive *eNews* you know that many committees will be meeting in the upcoming weeks to vote on proposed legislation for the 2024 General Assembly session. These proposals include a mixed bag of legislation affecting local governments such as an update to the public notice laws, freedom of information act open meeting rules (as well as a new definition of a "meeting"), and affordable dwelling units and other housing proposals. All of these can be found in the agenda portions of their respective websites. **(Note** – the public notice legislation is on the Virginia Code Commission site).



- Virginia Code Commission – www.codecommission.dls.virginia.gov
- FOIA Council – www.foiacouncil.dls.virginia.gov/foiacouncil.htm
- Housing Commission – www.vhc.virginia.gov

Finally, we want to keep you informed during the 2024 session. If you are a staff member or elected official from a VML member locality and do not currently receive *eNews*, please contact our Director of Communications Rob Bullington at rbullington@vml.org and he will add you to the distribution list.

Congratulations to all the new and returning officials who won their elections and Happy Thanksgiving!



- Jan. 5, 2024** **Virginia Local Elected Officials Conference** - Richmond, VA
- Feb. 1, 2024** **Local Government Day** - Richmond, VA
- Apr. 19, 2024** **Va. Municipal Clerk's Assoc. Conference feat. Matt Lehrman** - Information at www.vmlca.com
- Oct. 13-15, 2024** **VML Annual Conference** - Virginia Beach, VA

PEOPLE

Town of Crewe council appoints Miskovic as its next town manager



- Miskovic -

On a roll call vote held at the regular meeting of the Crewe Town Council on November 13, council unanimously appointed current mayor **Phil Miskovic** to serve as the next town manager. Miskovic will resign from his current elected office prior to assuming his new position. The Town of Crewe has been without a permanent town manager since May 2022.

Miskovic previously served four terms as councilman for the town, winning his first election in 2012. He was first elected mayor in 2020 and won re-election in 2022. As both mayor and councilman, he worked closely with his colleagues on council to modernize local government in Crewe. He also assisted staff by writing successful grant applications for over \$200,000 in state and federal funding; conducted research and analysis for town initiatives, including logistics and impacts of establishing a new cigarette tax, new zoning, and blight reduction options; and wrote several strategic plans.

Miskovic has a graduate certificate in local government management from Virginia Tech, where he also teaches an undergraduate course on state and local government. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Administration and Public Affairs, focusing his research on local government and rural economic development. He holds two master's degrees – a Master of Public Health from Virginia Tech with concentrations in infectious disease and community health education and a master's degree in homeland security and emergency preparedness from VCU – and received a bachelor's in religion from Hampden-Sydney College in 2008. He is also a Certified Health Education Specialist.

Miskovic is very active in the Nottoway community, having held leadership positions in several community organizations, including the Nottoway Historical Association, the Crewe-Burkeville Chamber of Commerce, and the Crewe-Burkeville Lions Club. He also represented Crewe as a member of the Governor McDonnell's Rural Jobs Taskforce in 2013, and currently serves on the Virginia Municipal League's (VML) Board of Directors and is VML's Town Section Chair. He is currently a member of Virginia Tech's University Athletics Committee.

Miskovic is currently employed as the emergency planner for Virginia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), a position he began in late 2014. Prior to his work with DBHDS, he was a policy analyst for Virginia's Secretary of Public Safety in the administration of then-Governor Bob McDonnell.

Manassas names Keen as interim city manager



- Keen -

The Manassas City Council chose Police Chief and Assistant City Manager **Douglas Keen** to act as the interim city manager. Keen replaces former City Manager Patrick Pate who resigned on Nov. 3 to be city manager in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"Chief Keen has my full support in this dual role," Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger said in a press release. "He will not only keep the city running smoothly, but keep us on track with our current and future projects, setting the next city manager up for success."

Keen is going to select an interim chief of police he can assign tasks to. The City Manager's office will receive support from Assistant City Managers Diane Bergeron and Matt Arcieri.

Keen started working for Manassas in

1987. Since then, he has held various roles, including police officer, lieutenant, captain, and assistant chief of police. In 2010, Keen became the chief of police. He was named assistant city manager two years ago.

Keen received his Bachelor's in Administration of Justice through George Mason University and earned a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma.

Harrison promoted to director of community development and code compliance for Prince George County



- Harrison -

In late September, Prince George County was pleased to announce the promotion of **Charles Harrison, III** to the position of director of community development and code compliance.

With an impressive track record and a wealth of experience in various roles within the county, Harrison is well-equipped to lead the department and contribute to the continued success of the community.

Harrison's journey began at Petersburg High School. He furthered his education by obtaining an Associate Degree in Computer Networking Systems from ITT Technical Institute. He later attended Benedict College, where he pursued studies in the Environmental Health Science program.

With a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence, Harrison gained invaluable experience in the construction field, specializing in framing, for over a decade. In 2006, he joined Prince George County as a communications officer, where he showcased his dedication to serving the community. Harrison was then appointed as a permit technician in the Community Development Department in 2013 and promoted to senior building inspector in 2017. His dedication to professional growth and development is reflected

PEOPLE

in his numerous certifications obtained from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). These certifications include Combination Residential Inspector, Residential Building, Permit Technician, Residential Plumbing, Residential Electrical, Residential Mechanical, Certified Building Official, and Property Maintenance Official. He was subsequently appointed as the interim building official, and, later, as the deputy director and building official in 2021.

In his new role as director of community development and code compliance, Harrison will oversee and manage the department's daily operations, ensuring the effective implementation of policies and coordinating the release of information and services offered. As the lead spokesperson for community development activities in the county, Harrison will work closely with the Board of Supervisors, local and regional jurisdictions, community groups, contractors, consultants, and the public.

"I am honored to be entrusted with this important role," said Harrison in a press release. "I am excited to lead the Community Development Department and work collaboratively with the team to create a welcoming community and prosperous future for our residents."

Prince George County commended Charles Harrison, III on his well-deserved promotion and the positive impact he will make as director. His extensive knowledge, experience, and commitment to excellence will undoubtedly contribute to the continued success and prosperity of the county.

Snider selected as Harrisonburg deputy city manager



Harrisonburg City Manager Ande Banks has selected **Amy Snider** to serve as the organization's new deputy city manager, effective immediately.

- Snider - Snider, who joined the city in 2019 as the assistant to the city manager, has held the role of acting deputy city manager since November 2022. In her time as a member of the City Manager's Office, Snider has served as the lead on a number of vital projects, including the city's ongoing initiative to design, construct and operate the future homeless services center. She also has played an instrumental role in the city's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) \$23.8 million fund-

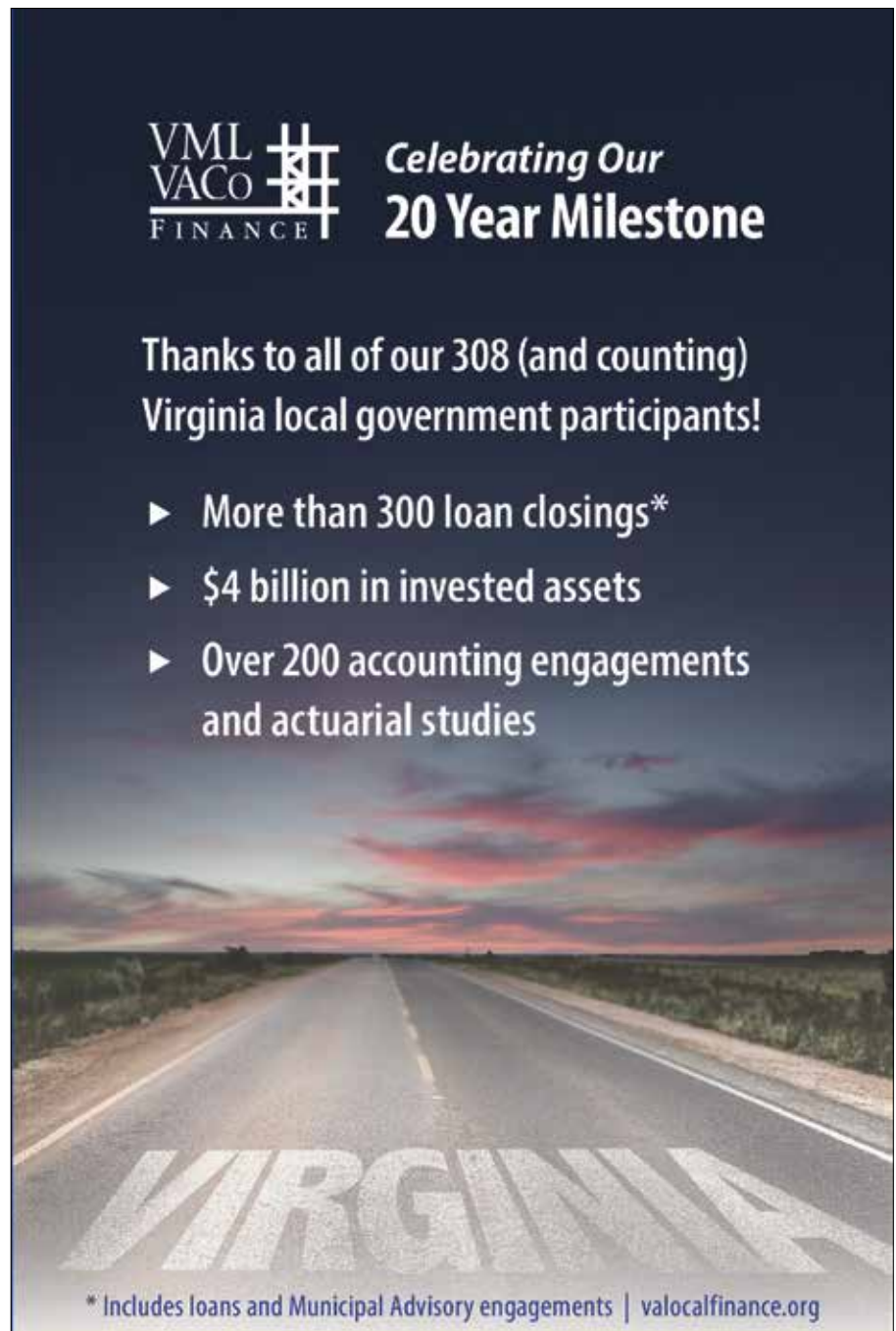
ing plan, working with key staff members to address community needs through the creation of a Housing Development Fund, Mental Health Fund and Childcare Fund, among other projects.

Additionally, Snider previously administered the Civic and Community Organization Grant, which provides opportunity for qualified nonprofits that deliver services to Harrisonburg community members to receive funding from the city. She also guides the organization's Welcoming initiatives, including serving as the city's representative on the Welcoming Harrisonburg Council and creat-

ing an interpretation services program for City Council and Planning Commission meetings.

For City Manager Banks, the selection of Snider for the important administrative position is a testament to what she has already accomplished in nearly five years of serving Harrisonburg.

"Ms. Snider represents the very best combination of professionalism, educational background and technical expertise as well as a passionate commitment to her adopted home of Harrisonburg," Banks said. "She has led the city's efforts on a number of important programs and projects including



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* Includes loans and Municipal Advisory engagements | valocalfinance.org

leadership development, communication and support with our nonprofit community, and important projects such as the COVID relief funding of CARES. Most importantly, she has earned the respect of our community members, her colleagues and our elected officials throughout the Valley.”

The deputy city manager serves as the chief advisor to the city manager and assists with city operations, preparation of the budget and with the performance appraisal process for department directors; supports city council meetings; represents the city manager in the latter’s absence; represents the city on various boards and commissions; serves as liaison between the city manager and department heads and various boards, committees and agencies; provides leadership to directors; supervises multiple directors as assigned by the city manager; and serves as deputy director of emergency services.

Snider is eager to move forward in the deputy city manager position, helping lead the organization as it seeks to accomplish the goals set forth in Harrisonburg City Council’s Vision Plan.

“I am deeply honored to assume the role of deputy city manager,” Snider said. “I look forward to continuing to work with our dedicated employees and community partners to deliver high quality, accessible services to all who reside in Harrisonburg.”

Prior to joining the City of Harrisonburg, Snider served as a policy analyst for the DeKalb County, Georgia, Board of Commissioners, and was an International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Local Government Management Fellow with the City of Smyrna, GA. She obtained a Master of Public Administration from Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. She is a member of ICMA and the Virginia Local Government Management Association.

Lanford appointed as new chief executive officer of the Roanoke Valley Resource Authority

On October 25, the Board of Directors of the Roanoke Valley Resource Authority



- Lanford -

(RVRA) was pleased to announce the appointment of **Jonathan Adam Lanford** as its new chief executive officer. Lanford has over twenty years of local government management experience and is cur-

rently an assistant county administrator in Botetourt County. In that role he supervises the Departments of Parks and Recreation and Facilities and Maintenance and serves as a project manager for various capital projects, including utility extensions, locally administered VDOT projects and the replacement of the Botetourt County Circuit Courthouse in Fincastle. Lanford succeeds Dan Miles, who is retiring after 16½ years in the RVRA CEO position.

The RVRA is the regional solid waste management organization serving residents and businesses of the Cities of Roanoke and Salem, Roanoke County, and the Town of Vinton. It operates the Tinker Creek Transfer Station in the City of Roanoke, the Salem Transfer Station in the City of Salem, and the Smith Gap Landfill, processing approximately 250,000 tons of regional solid waste annually. The CEO is responsible for directing the staff and operations of the Authority and reports to a nine-member Board of Directors made up of representatives of the four member localities.

Lanford received a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Ferrum College. In the early years of his career, he served in the Botetourt County Department of Public Works and had various technical roles with the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. He served as the county engineer and then concurrently as the director of public works in Alleghany County for five years. In 2008, Lanford was appointed as the assistant county administrator of Alleghany County, a position that he held for eight years. He then served as Alleghany County’s administrator from 2016 to 2021 when he took his current position in Botetourt County.

VML/VACo Pooled OPEB Trust announces new board members

At the Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Meeting of Participants, the VML/VACo Pooled OPEB Trust elected four finance officers to the Board of Trustees, including two first-time members. Joining the Board of Trustees for the first time are Steven Owen and Sharon Willoughby. They join incumbent members Sheila Minor and Jeffery Weiler who was also reelected as chairman.

Congratulations to the following newly elected members of the Board of Trustees:

Sheila Minor, CPA, has served as the director of finance for Henrico County since December 2020. Her 24-year local government career includes serving as the director

of finance for the City of Colonial Heights and Prince George County. Minor worked with numerous localities and school divisions as an independent local government financial consultant from 2011-2017. She holds a B.S. degree in Business Management and an M.P.A. from Virginia Tech.

Steven Owen, CPA, joined Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority in February 2023. He previously served as the director of finance for the Capital Region Airport Commission for 24 years. Owen oversees all planning, organizing, and directing of finance related activities. He earned a B.S. degree in Criminal Justice from Elmira College and an A.A.S degree in Accounting from Middlesex County College.

Jeffery Weiler is the executive director of Fairfax County Retirement Systems and oversees three local pension funds: the Employees, Police, and Uniformed Retirement Systems. These systems have a combined \$7.4 billion in assets in service to and support of 18,000 active employees and 9,500 retirees. Weiler has served as the chairman for the VML/VACo Pooled OPEB Trust since 2017.

Sharon Willoughby has spent 25 years in local government. She has worked for Loudoun County Public Schools since 2015 and became chief financial officer in 2018. She holds an MBA from Webster University and a Bachelor’s degree from Northern Arizona University.

About the VML/VACo Pooled OPEB Trust

VML/VACo Finance is the financial services arm of the Virginia Municipal League and Virginia Association of Counties. The VML/VACo Pooled OPEB Trust manages assets invested by political subdivisions to fund retiree health insurance and other post-employment benefits. Local governments that invest in the Pooled OPEB Trust have reduced the long-term cost of providing benefits by as much as 47 percent, the portion of the current market value of the Trust generated by investment returns. Established in 2008, the Trust manages \$1.7 billion in assets as of June 30, 2023.

Kartel joins VIP Board of Trustees; de la Pava, Longnaker, and Powers re-elected

At its Annual Meeting in September, the VML/VACo Virginia Investment Pool (VIP) elected Howard A. Kartel to its Board of Trustees and returned incumbent members

Carla de la Pava, Rebecca Longnaker, and Evelyn Powers with new three-year terms.

Howard A. Kartel, CPA, MBA, is director of finance and treasurer, Town of Culpeper. Howard graduated from Bentley University with a degree in accounting and earned an MBA from Dowling College. Kartel is a TAV member, achieving the MGT designation in 2019. He oversees a portfolio of \$50 million and has implemented a long-term financial plan that includes a Strategic Reserves Policy. Previously, Kartel was the Accounting Manager for PWC Service Authority, a position he held for ten years.

Carla de la Pava is treasurer of Arlington County. First elected to office in November 2014, she serves the County's 250,000 residents. The County of Arlington's tax delinquency rate stands at an all-time low of 0.157%, recognized as the best in Virginia. She was the president of the Treasurers' Association of Virginia (TAV) for 2019 and 2020 and is a member of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Virginia GFOA. She has served on the VIP Board of Trustees since 2015.

Rebecca Longnaker, CPA, is treasurer of Chesterfield County. Serving as treasurer since 2020, Longnaker is responsible for handling the banking and investments for the County and School Division and, in a fiscal agent capacity, for the Greater Richmond Convention Center (GRCCA) and Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CTVA). In addition to utilizing VIP for managing a major portion of County funds, Longnaker has created VIP portfolios for GRCCA and CVTA, providing an increasing revenue stream to the agencies.

Evelyn Powers is treasurer for the City of Roanoke. Powers was the driving force to get her office to meet accreditation standards for the first time in 2008. She has served in many board positions and is a past president of the Treasurers' Association of Virginia. She was a founding member of the VML/VACo Virginia Investment Pool Trust Fund and currently serves as vice-chairman, a position she has held since 2013.

VIP manages assets of participants in two funds, the Stable NAV Liquidity Pool and the 1-3 Year High Quality Bond Fund. Founded in 2013, the Trust holds \$2.65 Billion in assets as of June 30, 2023. The Board of Trustees, comprised of officials who are elected by participating political subdivisions, establishes policies and oversees the VIP governmental trust.

VML/VACo Finance is the financial services arm of the Virginia Municipal League and Virginia Association of Counties.

Crawford becomes Charlotte Court House's first town manager; tourism promotion comes into focus

The Town of Charlotte Court House is trying something different! When their long-time clerk decided to retire after more than 20 years, the council didn't fill the position. They changed it instead, creating an opening for a town manager.

"Things are a bit more complex than they used to be," Charlotte Court House Mayor David Watkins said in a press release. "Over the last few years especially, we have been finding out there are so many other duties involved with running a town than what a clerk handles. Since our clerk was looking to retire, the council decided now was a good time to hire a town manager."



- Crawford -

On Thursday, Sept. 7, **Sara Crawford** officially took over as the town's first manager, moving over from the county treasurer's office, where she had spent the past seven years as the chief deputy of daily operations.

"I grew up in Charlotte County, I've been here my whole life," Crawford said. "Being a local person, I think that helps because you already know the background, who's who and what's going on." It makes the adjustment easier, Crawford said, as she and the council figure out what her focus is going to be. That starts with developing a long-term plan.

"Because the position is very new to the town, we're just trying to identify what is the priority of needs for Charlotte Court House," Crawford said. "It may even just be a desire, detailing what projects the council wants to work on. Then I create a plan, putting priorities first and then make them happen. The town just wants to go to the next level and that means being involved more and seeing what opportunities are out there."

Part of that plan involves looking towards the town's future. Mayor Watkins said it's time for Charlotte Court House to let people know what it has to offer. While he acknowledges that the town is a bit full and may not bring in many more long-term residents, Watkins says the council sees plenty of potential for tourism.

"We're just putting it out there, what a neat little town it is," Watkins said. "Then there's also the historical aspect. That might promote more tourism. We're just coming up

Movers and shakers

Do you know someone who's on the move?

Send your announcements about new hires in local government, promotions, retirements, awards and honors to Rob Bullington at rbullington@vml.org.

with some ideas to celebrate who we are and where we are." Watkins added that the idea of promotion is a bit new for Charlotte Court House, but much needed. He added that the council is looking forward to seeing how all of this goes.

"I've been on council 38 years. We've had various mayors, various town clerks. We really haven't reached out very much into promoting our town," Watkins said.

Watkins and Crawford both say it's too early to know exactly what that looks like, as in what type of promotion the town will focus on or what projects in general. That will come together as Crawford works on a long-term plan. But the new manager says she's excited for the opportunity to help people.

"It's a small town, yes, but small towns can do big things," Crawford observed.

Watson selected as director of social services for James City County



- Watson -

Effective December 16, **Barbara Watson** will be the director of social services for James City County. Watson has served in a leadership capacity in James City County since 2001 when she began working as director of Neighborhood Connections. Since 2006, she has served as the assistant director of Social Services.

"We are very fortunate to have someone with her experience, reputation and commitment to this community ready to step into this role," said County Administrator Scott Stevens in a press release. "Ms. Watson has been an integral part of the department's past success and I look forward to working more closely with her to meet the needs of all our residents."

Watson has a Master's degree in public administration from Strayer University and a Bachelor's degree in Governmental Administration from Christopher Newport University. She has served on numerous boards and committees for community organizations, lending her expertise on strategic planning and building collaborative relationships.

Correction – The September issue of VTC incorrectly listed the title for Town of Dumfries Mayor Derrick Wood. VTC regrets the error.

NVRC report analyzes effects of foreign investment in Northern Virginia

THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA Regional Commission (NVRC), with support from the “Go Virginia Region 7 Council” and Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, Arlington County Economic Development, City of Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, Loudoun County Economic Development and Prince William County Economic Development, have completed a precedent-setting analysis about the effects of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) within the boundaries of the City of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties. The study, which was conducted by S&P Global under a contract with NVRC, is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the second in the United States after Los Angeles County.

The study assessed all sectors except retail. The findings of the study highlight that:

- Approximately 1,252 foreign establishments in Northern Virginia employ approximately 50,879 people.
- Approximately \$6.8 Billion in wages are annually paid into Northern Virginia’s economy from FDI.
- FDI in Northern Virginia accounts for approximately 4.6% of all job creation.
- Average of 40.6 employees per foreign establishment compared to 13.9 across all types of companies.
- Professional, scientific, and technical services account for approximately 50% of employment from FDI in Northern Virginia.

The top five foreign investors in the region are (ranked by job creation):

- United Kingdom (11,980 jobs, 247 establishments)
- Germany (5,976 jobs, 101 establishments)
- Canada (4,590 jobs, 144 establishments)
- Ireland (3,986 jobs, 39 establishments)
- France (3,651 jobs, 100 establishments)

“NVRC has been pleased to work with our partners at the various economic development agencies in the region to undertake this groundbreaking study. One thing is clear, Foreign Direct Investment is an important element to the region’s economy and the report provides a clear roadmap for future economic growth and purposeful global engagement.”

- Honorable John T. Chapman
(chairman of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and member of the Alexandria City Council)

According to NVRC, international business is vital to the economy of Northern Virginia and this report will help strengthen understanding of this vital dynamic. This report will be used to inform the development of more strategic searches and applications of foreign investments and innovations from overseas that can support Northern Virginia’s economic growth – especially in

those job and industry sectors on which the region’s competitive advantages rest.

The NVRC looks forward to working with its local governmental partners to periodically refine this study and improve understanding about global activities in Northern Virginia. Additionally, NVRC looks forward to exploring ways that global engagement can be applied to benefit the region’s economy, environment and communities.

The full report can be downloaded at www.novaregiondashboard.com/reports.



Tappahannock celebrates 1710 Tavern restoration

AFTER MONTHS OF METICULOUS restoration and anticipation, the 1710 Tavern, a cherished historical landmark, opened its doors on September 1, 2023. This momentous event marks a return to a bygone era, where patrons can savor the ambiance of centuries past while enjoying modern comforts. Nestled in the heart of downtown Tappahannock, the 1710 Tavern has stood as a testament to history since the early 1700s. Its rich legacy and historic colonial architectural charm have made it an iconic destination for both locals and tourists.

The 1710 Tavern, in partnership with the Town of Tappahannock, was a recipient of a \$250,000 grant award from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, 2022 Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) Awarded Projects. These funds were used to support the restoration of the 1710 Tavern. In a press release, Town Manager Eric S. Pollitt spoke about the importance of the grant for this project, “The IRF funds helped to bring the vision of this landmark structure to life and contributed significantly to the Tavern’s redevelopment. We are very appreciative of receiving these funds and look forward to further revitalizing our downtown area.”

The extensive restoration efforts have breathed new life into this cherished establishment. Every detail, from hand-carved wooden beams to vintage décor, has been restored to transport visitors to a time when tales were spun over tankards of ale. Patrons can expect a menu that pays homage to traditional fare

while offering an array of contemporary culinary delights. From hearty stews and roasted game to artisanal cocktails and Virginia craft brews, the 1710 Tavern promises a dining experience of history combined with modern comforts.

To celebrate this historic reopening, the Town of Tappahannock in partnership with the Essex County Chambers of Commerce, hosted a grand opening event. Town of Tappahannock and Essex County officials, members of the Essex County Chamber of Commerce, members of Historic Downtown Tappahannock, DHCD Director, Bryan Horn, and DHCD Program Manager, Terry McGowan, were all present. Remarks were provided during the grand opening ceremony by representatives from DHCD, Essex County Chamber of Commerce, Town of Tappahannock, Historic Downtown Tappahannock. 1710 Tavern owner Greg Huff provided a tour to all participants following the ribbon cutting ceremony.

To learn more about the 1710 Tavern please visit www.1710tavern.com.



Fredericksburg’s Civil Rights Trail receives “Shining Example Partnership” award

THE CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG’S new Civil Rights Trail was recognized as “The Shining Example Partnership” for effective partnerships within the tourism industry by the Southeast Tourism Society on October 3 in Jackson, MS.

The Fredericksburg Civil Rights Trail, named “Freedom, a Work in Progress,” was created in partnership by the City of Fredericksburg and the University of Mary Washington, with significant input by Fredericksburg residents. Professors, staff, students, local historians, and the Black community worked for two and a half years to draw together the stories of Fredericksburg-area people and places that helped shape Fredericksburg’s Civil Rights narrative. “The unique partnership between our local government, the University, and the Fredericksburg residents is what brought these historic sites to life, and it truly is created by the community for the community,” said Fredericksburg Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw.

Unveiled to the public in February 2023, the three-mile walking trail winds through parts of historic downtown and UMW campus as it guides participants through post-Civil War history. It features Virginia historical markers – one at the first stop on the 1961 Freedom Rides journey that challenged segregation of interstate travel. It chronicles court rulings and protests from the Jim Crow era to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Each year leaders in tourism are chosen by a selection committee to receive these prestigious awards for their accomplishments in tourism marketing, revenue growth and individual contributions to the industry. Thirteen awards were presented in 12 categories, including the Chairman’s Award and the Dorothy Hardman “Spirit of STS” Award.

The first of its kind locally, the Fredericksburg Civil Rights Trail has already begun to draw visitors from across the nation. It brings to public consciousness the struggle for everyday freedoms, justice and equality that are inherent with being a Black American. The trail is free and open to the public 365 days a year. Visitors will find information and trail maps at www.fxbg.com/civil-rights-trail.



Victoria Matthews, Tourism Sales Manager, attended the Conference in Jackson and accepted the award on behalf of Fredericksburg. She is pictured here (left) with Monica Smith (right), CMP, CASE, CDME President & CEO of Southeast Tourism Society.



Historical marker in Hampton is first in statewide Green Book program

ON OCTOBER 12, Gov. Glenn Youngkin helped to unveil a historical marker at Buckroe Beach in Hampton that is the first

in a statewide program to commemorate the sites of businesses that were listed in the Green Book for black travelers during the middle part of the 20th century.

The signage marks the site of the Bayshore resort, which thrived as a beach destination for African Americans during a period when they were not allowed at other public beaches. Bayshore was one of more than 300 businesses in Virginia listed in the Green Book, published from 1936-67 as a guide directing black motorists to shops, hotels, restaurants, and gas stations that would serve them in the Deep South.

A historical marker located near the James T. Wilson Fishing Pier had already noted the site of the Bayshore resort. Thursday's ceremony added a second sign marking the resort as a Green Book location. It is the first commemorative Green Book signage in the state, launching a program that aims to identify as many of those sites as possible.

The legislation launching the program was promoted by Del. Mike Mullin, who said he was inspired by the words of Del. Jeion Ward when she told the General Assembly about traveling as a child with her family and using the Green Book as a guide. Both Mullin and Ward attended Thursday's ceremony.

Bayshore was established in the late 19th century by black businessmen from Hampton as a welcoming resort for black travelers who were not allowed at Buckroe Beach. Bayshore had an amusement park, a restaurant and a famed dance hall that hosted legendary performers such as Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald.

The hotel played host to business conventions, bridge tournaments and other gatherings of African Americans. It was a popular destination for black residents along the East Coast and throughout the South.

"The resort that stood here for almost a century did something amazing and noteworthy," Mayor Donnie Tuck said. "It provided a lot of wonderful memories for so many people, out of a very difficult and troubled time in our region's history. People who were told that they weren't welcome elsewhere found a home away from home here."

Danville police launch latest public safety initiative using community cameras

RECENTLY, THE DANVILLE POLICE Department recently announced the official launch of its latest public safety initiative – a Real Time Crime Center in the Cloud platform designed to provide critical and actionable information that speeds up investigations and emergency response and keeps residents and businesses safer.

Powered by Fusus, the new platform includes a camera registry – an online portal for citizens to register their security cameras to help solve crimes in the community. The Danville Police Department is hoping that citizens will register their cameras and help create a community-wide public safety ecosystem.

By setting up a voluntary camera registration process, investigators will know almost immediately if any video evidence might be available near a crime scene, and who to contact to retrieve it. Registering a camera with the Danville Police Department is quickly and easily done through the self-service portal at www.onecommunityconnectdanville.org.

Both residential and commercial property owners and businesses are invited to register their security cameras. Registrant information and any video files provided will be kept confidential and only used in the event of a criminal investigation or emergency incident.

Camera registration does not give live video access to the Danville Police Department. It only gives them camera location information for use when an incident occurs. Investigators will contact

camera owners only if they need assistance collecting camera footage.

In addition to the camera registry, the Danville Police Department is offering residents the option to upgrade their video security systems to include live video feeds to the department. By installing a small CORE device on their network, residents and businesses can share live video feeds with the department in emergencies to improve employee safety and police response. To preserve privacy, live video can optionally be shared only on alert, using a smartphone app or manual trigger button, at the camera owner's discretion. This upgrade can be requested following the camera registration process online.

The new platform unifies public and private video feeds and combines them with a host of new functionalities designed to streamline and enhance the Danville Police Department's law enforcement capabilities. This includes 911 and Computer-Aided-Dispatch (CAD) integration, officer geolocation, and the ability to pull multiple types of data ranging from floor plans to cell phone video to gunfire detection sensors to body camera footage all into a single map-based interface.



Fairfax City tests high-tech Throne restrooms in two parks

FAIRFAX CITY PARKS AND RECREATION has launched a seven-month pilot program with Throne Labs, a local startup that utilizes technology to provide safe, clean restrooms that can be placed quickly without utility hookups. Throne units have been used successfully on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and units are now available at Van Dyck Park and Old Town Square. The city has worked closely with The Lamb Center to provide restroom access to persons experiencing homelessness. At the time of the press release, it was anticipated that a third unit would be placed in the Fairfax Circle area to provide restroom facilities when the Lamb Center is closed.

Placement of the Throne units is a temporary solution while the city considers plans for permanent restrooms in Fairfax City parks. The pilot program will monitor maintenance issues and seek feedback from users. The Fairfax City Council approved funding for the Throne contract on April 25, 2023.

“When we don’t provide bathroom facilities to visitors, we are forcing them to leave our public spaces,” said City of Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. “The lack of public bathrooms also puts businesses in the position of hanging ‘Restrooms for Customers Only’ signs – not a warm, welcoming greeting and not a good look for any downtown.”

Van Dyck Park is the city’s largest and busiest park. Old Town Square is the epicenter of the city’s special events. Rock the Block concerts are held there every fourth Friday from June through October.

How Throne works

Throne leverages solar power, internet-connected sensors, and mobile technology to provide a more sanitary experience

than traditional port-a-johns. The self-locking, ADA accessible units have hands-free toilets and sinks, changing tables, non-slip floors, and walls decorated in a floral pattern to discourage graffiti. Water and sewage levels are monitored remotely, and technicians are dispatched when notified to eliminate an interruption in service.

Throne users may enter the restroom by simply texting the number on the unit, using the Throne app, or getting an access card through the parks department. (Access cards that can be shared by family members will be available soon.) Phone numbers used to enter a Throne unit are converted to a random unique user ID and anonymized in the company’s system. There is no charge to use a Throne unit.

After use, users are prompted to review the cleanliness of the unit. Operators are on call any time the units are open, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. If a user responds that a unit needs to be cleaned immediately, a cleaner is dispatched. If a user indicates a major issue such as broken plumbing or any issue that would make the unit unusable, it will close automatically. Service technicians who can resolve facility issues are on call seven days a week.



The VML Voice is the official podcast of the Virginia Municipal League. Each episode explores a different locality or issue but the focus is always on Virginia and the local governments that make the Commonwealth work for everyone.

Contact Rob Bullington, rbullington@vml.org to suggest topics, ask questions, or inquire about sponsorship opportunities.



Listen to our newest episode at www.vml.org

SAVE THE DATE



VIRGINIA LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS CONFERENCE

Friday, Jan. 5, 2024

The Elected Officials Conference is a valuable training and networking opportunity for newly elected and veteran local officials from across the Commonwealth. In addition to information on good governance, basic budgeting, and land use, the agenda will include a preview of what to expect from the 2024 General Assembly and so much more!

Plan to be in Richmond – or to attend virtually – on Friday, January 5th. A reception for those attending in person will be held early evening on Thursday, January 4th.

Visit the VML Calendar at www.vml.org for registration and details.



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Announcing the winners of the 2023 VML Innovation Awards

THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE (VML) is pleased to announce the winners of its annual awards for excellence in local government. The statewide competition recognizes innovative problem-solving, excellence in management, citizen participation, and improved services to citizens.

The judges selected one winner in each of seven categories. One of the category winners was chosen by Town of Farmville Vice Mayor and VML President A.D. “Chuckie” Reid to receive the President’s Award for Innovation. The winners were presented with their awards at VML’s 2023 Annual Conference during the Awards Banquet the evening of October 9 at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott.

Thanks to everyone who submitted and congratulations to all the winners!

The 2023 winners are:

- Community Health & President’s Award** – Town of Blacksburg
- Environmental Quality Award** – County of York
- Communications Award** – City of Williamsburg
- Economic Development Award** – City of Roanoke
- Public Safety Award** – City of Manassas
- Working with Youth Award** – City of Covington
- Risk Management Award** – City of Chesapeake



TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARD & PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR INNOVATION



Growing a Community Garden Program

IN 2019, A PRIVATE LANDOWNER approached the Town of Blacksburg to donate five acres of land with the already established and thriving Hale Community Garden. The landowner wanted to ensure it would be maintained as a community garden and community asset in perpetuity. While the town was excited to acquire the land and help support the thriving community garden, there were

some concerns about the staffing needed to maintain and expand the garden operations and programming.

To address this challenge, the town developed a beneficial partnership with Live Work Eat Grow (LWEG), a local nonprofit organization. Because of this partnership, the community garden program has grown substantially to include three established gardens with two more under development.

Along with providing space for community members to garden, LWEG hosts a variety of gardening and healthy living classes for all ages, along with regular potluck suppers and community gathering events.

The community garden program provides a robust learning and service environment, while promoting healthy food and fostering a collaborative community spirit.



What the judges said:

“Excellent project that helps underprivileged residents of the town. This should transfer well to other localities.”



(L-R) Council Member Susan Mattingly, Council Member Michael Sutphin, Vice Mayor Susan Anderson, Town Manager Marc Verniel, Town Sustainability Manager Carol Davis, Mayor Leslie Hager-Smith, Council Member Jerry Ford, Jr., and Town Clerk Lorraine Spaulding.

COUNTY OF YORK & HAMPTON ROADS SANITATION DEPT.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AWARD



Next Generation Wastewater Treatment Project

YORK COUNTY PARTNERED WITH Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) at the York River Treatment Plant to manage the wastewater and research nutrient reduction methods. After approximately 10 years of research, HRSD in partnership with DC Water developed an innovative method to upgrade the existing systems to remove nitrogen more efficiently from the wastewater. It is now the first facility in the world to remove a significant amount of nitrogen from the mainstream treatment system using anammox.

This represents a paradigm shift for wastewater treatment, offering an opportunity to achieve sustainable nitrogen removal, energy neutral or even energy positive facilities, dramatic reductions in treatment costs, capacity benefits, and significant decreases in carbon footprint.

What the judges said:

“Even someone without a background in wastewater management would be able to tell that this has innovative, significant benefits for the county’s residents.”



(L-R) Assistant Director of Public Works Jon Seiter and HRSD Chief of Treatment Bob Rutherford.



“Future Festivals” Initiative to Inform Two-Year Plan

IN THE FALL OF 2022, the City of Williamsburg hosted eight public input sessions called “Future Festivals”. Attendees played games designed to gather feedback that would inform the development of the Goals, Initiatives, and Outcomes document that informs the city’s two-year workplan. To encourage attendance, the city implemented an extensive communication plan through news releases, videos, and recurring and varied

social media promotions. In addition, Williamsburg police officers delivered fliers in the neighborhoods located near an upcoming Future Festival in the days ahead of the event.

In the end, more than 900 people attended Future Festivals, and more than 700 completed a survey, resulting in more comprehensive data from a more diverse participant pool than ever before.



What the judges said:

“Williamsburg’s initiative was ambitious, had excellent quantifiable results, and involved a very significant commitment from the city staff from beginning to end.”



(L-R) Assistant City Manager Michele Mixner DeWitt, Vice Mayor Pat Dent, City Council Member Barbara Ramsey, Mayor Douglas G. Pons, City Manager Andrew O. Trivette, City Council Member Caleb Rogers, Economic Development Director Yuri Adams, Communications Director Nicole Trifone, Planning & Codes Compliance Director Tevya Griffin, and Multimedia Designer Micah Lewis.



Revitalization of Historic Fire Station One

HISTORIC FIRE STATION ONE was the first ever built in the City of Roanoke, making its debut in 1907 with a set of horse-drawn wagons. In 2007, the building was decommissioned, and the Georgian Revival structure sat vacant for many years. Then Old School Partners proposed a private-sector solution to re-purpose and restore the building with the intention of making it a vibrant anchor at the south end of the City Market.

On September 23, 2022, the city celebrated the grand reopening of Historic Fire Station One. The first floor contains the flagship retail gallery of a Roanoke-based furniture manufacturer. Upstairs has been converted to a seven-room boutique hotel. An event space is situated amid the guestrooms. The station is complete with Stock Café and Bar, a 40-seat restaurant

offering indoor-outdoor dining with handcrafted elements throughout.

After 100 years of service and 15 years of vacancy, this cherished landmark is again teeming with life!

What the judges said:

“Excellent use of old infrastructure to leverage \$2 million in private investment.”



(L-R) Assistant City Manager Sam Roman, Council Member Peter Volosin, Director of Economic Development Marc Nelson, Council Member Stephanie Moon-Reynolds, President of Hill Studio David Hill, and Economic Development Specialist Brady Woolwine.



Parent E3 Series

THE PARENT E3 SERIES is designed to “Engage, Educate and Empower” the City of Manassas’ parents and caregivers to address at-risk behaviors affecting the city’s youth. The program was created by the Manassas City Police Department’s Community Vitality Officer, Thomas Rodriquez. The police department partnered with the school system to develop language-inclusive content and on-site translations for Spanish-speaking residents, and to disseminate information about the program to parents in the community.

During Parent E3 Series events, the Manassas City Police Department offered dinner to all guests and volunteers through generous donations from the community’s Kiwanis Club. Manassas City Public Schools offered childcare for parents with young children, to ensure everyone’s basic needs were met so they could be fully present for the program.

The Parent E3 Series’ second installment saw significant improvements and overall participation more than doubled.



What the judges said:

“The educational and problem-prevention approach of this excellent program is healthy and would work in any locality.”



(L-R) Council Member Tom Osina, Police Accreditation Manager Mason Riggs, Council Member Ralph Smith, Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger, Sergeant Brett Stumpf, Vitality Officer Ana Brown, City Manager Pat Pate, Community Vitality Officer TJ Rodriquez, Lieutenant Amilcar Barahona, Vice Mayor Pamela Sebesky, and Community Council Member Theresa Coates Ellis.



AHPS School Consolidation Project

ON JULY 1, 2022, COVINGTON City Public Schools and Allegheny County Public Schools formed Allegheny Highlands Public Schools (AHPS). This merger occurred after years of preparation, public participation, and development of agreements, including shared funding agreements with both localities. The project emphasizes regional collaboration in the best interests of children and their education as well as economic and workforce development. The school consolidation builds upon regional collaborative efforts, including work of the Allegheny Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and the Allegheny Highlands Economic Development Corporation.

The creation of AHPS can be viewed as a paradigm-shifting moment in the overall development of the region. By coming together to support children, its most precious

resource, the Allegheny Highlands has created a best practice model of regional unity that supports a vital community.

What the judges said:

“Impressive cooperative effort in a region that has had a difficult history of collaboration.”



(L-R) Council Member Raymond C. Hunter, Council Member William L. Carson, Mayor Tom H. Sibold Jr., City Manager Allen Dressler, and Council Member Fred Forbes III.



Route 168 Bypass Emergency Bridge Repairs

ON MAY 11, 2023, A BARGE struck the underside of the southbound span of the Rt. 168 Great Bridge Bypass Bridge, damaging one of the girders which forced the closure of the outside lane creating gridlock. Given that the bridge, a main route to the Outer Banks, normally carries nearly 70,000 vehicles daily off season and more during the summer, it was critical to move quickly.

Public Works staff worked with a project consultant to determine the degree of damage and what repairs were necessary and developed and implemented traffic control plans to keep traffic moving as efficiently as possible.

The city's rapid, organized efforts enabled the consultant to identify one of only two contractors in the nation that could perform such a repair. It was estimated the repairs could take as much as 2 months, but the team's efforts resulted in all repairs being performed, inspected, accepted, and the roadway reopened in a mere 13 days and in time for the busy Memorial Day traffic.



What the judges said:

Planning for scenarios such as these can assist localities in identifying the resources, teams, and action items needed to respond... Chesapeake's bridge repair response is something other localities could adapt."



(L-R) Council Member Robert C. Ike, Jr. and Legislative Liaison David C. Wescott.





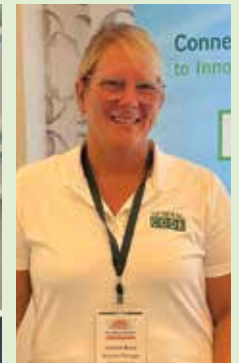
2023 Annual Conference Highlights

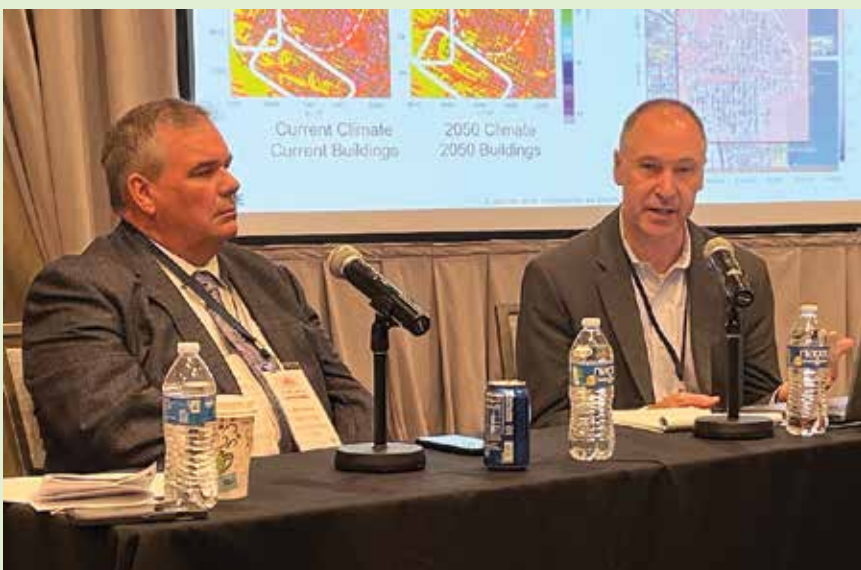
Hundreds of local government mermaids and mermen from all over Virginia made a splash in Norfolk this October as part of the 2023 VML Annual Conference. Thanks to all the attendees, vendors, and speakers who helped us ride a wave of success. We couldn't have made it to shore without you!





Conference Highlights





Conference Highlights





Virginia's public libraries: The essential community resource

RECENTLY, PUBLIC LIBRARIES have found themselves in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. However, amid the controversies and debates, it is essential to recall the incredible work Virginia's public libraries do every day. While this work doesn't earn any headlines, it is quietly improving communities across the state. In 2022, over 50 million items were circulated through 18+ million visits by 5+ million library cardholders. But the value of libraries goes far beyond the materials they make available to the public at no cost. In fact, the myriad benefits that Virginia's public libraries provide play a positive role in the lives of millions of Virginians.

Workforce development and job success

As futurist Alvin Toffler aptly put it, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." This is especially true in the areas of job skills and workforce development. Virginia's public libraries are at the forefront of this paradigm shift. They serve as vital hubs for workforce development, providing access to resources, workshops, and training programs that equip individuals with the skills they need to succeed in today's rapidly evolving job market.

For example, libraries offer support and assistance with résumés and job searches; new skills such as Microsoft Office proficiency, coding, and editing; English classes for non-native speakers; and more. All these learning opportunities are available in both virtual and in-person formats.

School readiness and success

For many families, quality preschool education can be prohibitively expensive or simply unavailable. Virginia's public libraries bridge this gap by offering a wide array of early learning resources and programs. In fact, for some, the public library *is* their preschool. Moreover, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries have played a crucial role in supporting remedial education efforts, helping to ensure that no child is left behind. Additionally, homeschooling families can access resources online and in person to support their curricula. Lastly, the online, live tutoring program "Homework Help-Now" – which is available from every public library in the Commonwealth – supports hundreds of thousands of students and helps them achieve academic success.

Government services and business needs

In an increasingly digital age, the digital divide is more pronounced than ever before. Virginia's public libraries serve as lifelines for those caught on the other side of the divide by providing access to essential government services and business resources. From assistance with online applications to notary services, copies, and faxing, libraries are indispensable community resources.

Prior to the COVID19 pandemic, libraries were often the only place members of our rural communities could access reliable high-speed internet. During the pandemic, public libraries leapt to action by providing wi-fi hotspots, extending their wi-fi range into their parking lots, and circulating data enabled devices. Libraries continue to bridge the digital divide by enabling telehealth visits, remote job interviews, and other personal meeting needs for people in underserved areas.

Public libraries also provide support and assistance in accessing government services. Everything from tax forms to simple legal documents and veterans' benefits are available to access at your local public library.

Digital access and literacy

The digital landscape is evolving at an exponential rate, and with it comes an urgent need for digital literacy. Virginia's public libraries are committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of age or background, can acquire the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the digital world effectively. They offer workshops, classes, and one-on-one assistance. As broadband access expands throughout the Commonwealth, this need will only increase as more people engage in online activity for the first time.

For example, digital literacy tutors from the Smyth County Public Library provide one-on-one support for people in the Town of Marion who are new to, or struggling with, their digital devices.

Social engagement for all

Issues associated with isolation are becoming increasingly prevalent as our population ages. Libraries have become community places where seniors can engage with others and learn new things, both of which are key components of healthier aging. Additionally, the rise in people experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges

*"Books are our brand
but not our business."*

- Susan Benton, Urban Libraries Council



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"GovDeals has proven to be an invaluable service for our Real Estate Tax Sales that we conduct for the City of Portsmouth, VA. In the past 18 months, we have conducted 60 online real estate auctions using this service and have had outstanding results with over \$2.3M in sales." - Jason A. Dunn

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TOWN OF HERNDON

Meet Councilmember Naila Alam

NAILA ALAM IS THE FIRST Pakistani immigrant to serve on council for the Town of Herndon. She is currently serving her second term. After catching up with her at the annual conference, *VTC* followed up with a phone call in late October to learn more about her past experiences and future plans.

VTC: What brought you to the United States and what made you stay?

NA: My sister Yasmeen Durrani and I came to visit the United States in 1995. I liked the United States very much, so I changed my visa to be an international student and began studying hotel restaurant management in Northern Virginia. But in the first semester I became seriously ill with a life-threatening condition that required treatment and blood transfusions for five years. My sister helped me cope with the illness while I continued my studies because I had to maintain my credit hours to keep my visa. I give all the credit for my survival to this beautiful country because the treatments were not available in Pakistan so if I had become ill at home I wouldn't have lived.

My husband eventually joined me in U.S. and then someone sponsored us, so we got green cards and were able to stay. We became naturalized citizens in 2008. The U.S. has given us a lot and it saved my life; we have a life here with more opportunities than we ever thought possible.

VTC: Did that experience affect what you wanted to do with your life?

NA: Very much so. When I was sick, I spent a lot of time in the hospital. I saw that there were women who couldn't speak English and the doctor couldn't understand their needs. In 2003, I started a non-profit organization to help people in Virginia without the means or knowledge to get connected to health care. In 2008, my non-profit received an award from President Bush for the work we had done with a grant from the Department of Labor to train ladies to become home care aides.

I continue to run my non-profit and we recently received a \$30,000 grant from Fairfax County to buy gift cards to give to needy families in Northern Virginia.

VTC: What made you decide to run for office?

NA: When I was in school in the U.S. I became interested in public service and politics and began campaigning for people. The first person I campaigned for was Tim Kaine when he was mayor of Richmond and was running to be governor. And then I started doing different campaigns. I campaigned for Hillary Clinton when she was running for President and traveled to North Carolina as part of that work. I also completed bipartisan training from the Sorenson Institute of Political Leadership. My husband encouraged me to run for office. He said, "Naila, you should run for office because then you can become a voice for not only immigrants but for anyone who needs to be heard."

VTC: What was that first campaign for town council in Herndon like for you?

NA: My first campaign was during lock-down in 2020. People were scared of getting COVID and often would not answer when I knocked. I understood their concerns, so I left a lot of flyers outside doors. The first thing I did as a new councilmember was help establish vaccine clinics at the Herndon Community Center. The clinics were operated by staff from the Town of Herndon and Fairfax County Health Department.

Also, during that time DMV centers were closed to the public, so I invited the DMV to come to Herndon to operate a satellite location at the Herndon Community Center. They did this five days a month for several months and were able to help a lot of people.

VTC: Who were your biggest supporters?

NA: Many Herndon residents supported my campaign for council and the Pakistani and Muslim communities were strong supporters as well. That experience made me even more aware of the distance between those communities and the Christian community because the groups don't have many occasions to mix and meet. This is a gap I want to

fill. We are citizens of the same country, and we should know each other better.

The Town of Herndon has a diverse immigrant population thanks to its proximity to the airport and its many IT companies. I recently held a Pakistan Heritage Day with support from the Town of Herndon. I wanted to showcase Pakistani culture. Many people, not just people from Pakistan, came to the event and it was a success. Next year I hope to expand the focus to include South Asian countries as well.

VTC: What does service on council mean to you?

NA: It is like getting wings! It has given me the ability to help bring changes, to help people with problems. For example, I am now working on making improvements to the sidewalks. They are in bad shape and are difficult for people in wheelchairs. I want to bring a permanent DMV location to Herndon to help those that don't have their own car. I am also trying to bring more EV charging stations to Herndon and would like to establish a permanent place for clinics like we had during COVID to help those who can't read or write English. We need to be ready to help all our citizens. I would like to have more festivals and events during which the town council, staff and residents can mingle.

VTC: Any advice for other immigrants who may want to serve on their local council?

NA: There are people who have the spirit and the necessary qualities, but they don't know it until they start getting involved. Before I was on the council, I felt shy as an immigrant – as a brown person – to attend council meetings. More Pakistanis and Muslims should run for office and show that we are all one...there is no difference between Muslim, Jew, Christian in wanting to serve and help the larger community. This is the best part of the U.S.A...we are all one!





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| 13. Publication Title | | 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Virginia Town & City | | October 22, 2023 | |
| 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation | | | |
| Primarily membership throughout Virginia | | | |
| | | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
| a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run) | | 3,550 | 3,425 |
| b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail) | (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) | 3,450 | 3,325 |
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| | (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS® | 0 | 0 |
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| f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15b and 15c) | | 3,520 | 3,395 |
| g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page 4)) | | 25 | 24 |
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 If this publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the October 22, 2023 issue of this publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
 Signature: *Rob Bullington* Date: Oct. 22, 2023

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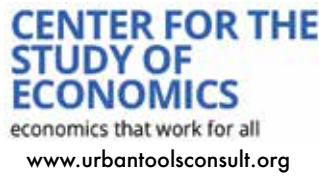
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