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TOWN & CITY

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Healthy Eating
Active Living
campaign takes hold
in Virginia





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About the cover

(L-R) Leesburg Town Council Member Katie Sheldon Hammler, Crewe Town Council Member Phil Miskovic and Richmond City Council Member Cynthia Newbille demonstrate that even a routine government meeting can be a healthy exercise. Each of the council members represents a Virginia local government that has adopted Healthy Eating Active Living resolutions promoting active communities, healthy workplaces and increased access to nutritious food.

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Healthy Eating Active Living campaign taking hold in Virginia

The values of community health align closely with the values of local government leaders, the business community and families. Healthy communities are places where people want to live, work, raise a family and age. They value quality of life, encourage activity and offer healthy food options across neighborhoods. The investments in these healthy environments pay handsome dividends.

By *Kate McGrail*

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324 Places: Effective workforce development requires aligning multiple agendas

An easy way for local governments to prepare for 2025 and beyond is by focusing on educating their citizens. The responsibility for educating young people today is shared among many stakeholders: parents, teachers, school administrators, school boards, local jurisdictions, state educators and the federal government. Interestingly, one important stakeholder is often excluded: employers.

By *John W. Martin and Matt Thornhill*

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Roanoke's Main Library reinvents itself

When you walk through the entrance of Roanoke's newly-renovated Main Library, be prepared to forget everything you thought you knew about public libraries. The space will impress you with its inviting, playful and contemporary atmosphere, designed with age-specific "zones" for children, teens and adults that invite learning experiences.

By *Melinda Mayo*

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Call for entries: 2015 VML Achievement Awards

VML is soliciting entries for its 2015 Achievement Awards program. The deadline for submittals is Friday, May 29. Winners will be featured in an upcoming issue of Virginia Town & City. The awards will be presented at the 2015 VML Annual Conference in Richmond on Tuesday evening, Oct. 6.

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WEEKEND OUTING

A historic plantation, battlefield

ON A RECENT WEEKEND, my two sons and I took off on an excursion that landed us at Shirley Plantation. Just southeast of Richmond, this grand homestead on the banks of the James River in Charles City County is the oldest surviving plantation in Virginia and the oldest family-owned business in North America.

The guided tour of the “Great House” was a lovely trip back in time through 11 generations of one family – all direct descendants of the original owner, Edward Hill I. The plantation passed to the Carter family upon the marriage of Edward Hill’s great-granddaughter (Elizabeth Hill) to John Carter. There were great tales of the role that Shirley Plantation and its owners have played in the military history of this country. Indeed, Robert E. Lee’s mother was born there and his parents were married at Shirley.

By far my favorite story was about Mary Braxton Randolph Carter (who just happened to be a direct descendant of Pocahontas). During the Civil War, many of the plantations along the James River were plundered and burned. The goal was to break the economy of the South and plantations were critical in that effort. Mary Carter’s husband was patrolling the James and often was away for periods of time.

One morning Mary Carter awoke to find hundreds of Union soldiers injured and dying on the property. A Union officer came to the door and demanded that the family abandon the mansion so that it could be used as a hospital. In all likelihood, the mansion and surrounding property would be burned when the soldiers moved on.

But, thinking on her feet, Mary offered a different proposal. She reminded the officer that he had wounded and dying men and that she and the women of Shirley could care for them under three conditions: 1) No man was to


step foot in the Great House; 2) she and the other ladies would be treated with respect at all times; and 3) when the soldiers leave, they were to take nothing but what they brought with them.



Shirley Plantation, the oldest surviving plantation in Virginia, sits along the James River in Charles City County.

The Union officer agreed and Mary and her daughters set about caring for the soldiers. Every bedsheet in the house was used for bandages. When the soldiers left, they kept their word and Shirley was not plundered or burned. As a result of Mary Carter’s quick thinking and compassionate care, Shirley stands as one of the only remaining plantations that was not destroyed during the Civil War.

For a slightly off-the-beaten-path trip, I highly recommend Shirley Plantation as a stop along the way. For more information about Shirley, go to www.shirleyplantation.com.

On our way back home, the boys and I drove through part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park. We stopped at Malvern Hill and learned about the Union Army of the Potomac’s attempt to work its way up the James from Fort Monroe in Hampton to capture the City of Richmond in the summer of 1862. Referred to as the Seven Days Battles, these confrontations forced the Union troops led by Gen. George McClellan to retreat down the Peninsula. Fort Monroe was one of the first places that we visited upon our arrival in Virginia so it was interesting to watch my kids as they traced the map and began to understand the geography of Virginia and how it affected our history. For more information on the Richmond National Battlefield Park, go to www.nps.gov/rich/index.htm. 



Richmond National Battlefield Park visitors can learn about the Seven Days Battles that unfolded in the summer of 1862.

Meyera Oberndorf, longtime Virginia Beach mayor, dies

MEYERA OBERNDORF, THE FIRST directly-elected mayor of Virginia Beach and the first woman to hold the office, died March 13. She was 74 and the longest-serving mayor in the resort city's 52-year history. She served as president of VML in 1995-1996.

Mrs. Oberndorf, who was first elected to City Council in 1976 and served as mayor from 1988 to 2009, was remembered as a leader who made a point to get to know the people of her city during her more than 30 years of public service. She was a leader who showed "diplomacy through kindness and love," according to her granddaughter.

In 1996 *Newsweek* magazine named her as one of the 25 most dynamic mayors in the United States. She was the epitome of public service. Among her accomplishments: She helped establish the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission, pushed for economic development,

and supported e-government, which resulted in the city being recognized as the top digital city in 2004.

In addition, Mrs. Oberndorf traveled to China, Japan and Norway to further economic development and cultural relations with other nations. She served on the executive committee of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and was vice chairwoman of the National League of Cities International Task Force. She also chaired the Public Library Board for nine years.

As she left public office, City Council voted to rename the central library on Virginia Beach Boulevard in her honor as a way to recognize her achievements and service to the city.

To friend Terry Jenkins, she was an advocate for so many who needed it, including those living with the disease she would later be diagnosed with: Alzheimer's.



- Oberndorf -

Arlington manager set to retire

Arlington County Manager **Barbara Donnellan** will retire at the end of June after serving the county for 32 years.



- Donnellan -

Donnellan began work for the county government as a budget analyst and worked her way up to county manager in 2010. Deputy County Manager **Mark Schwartz** will serve as acting county manager while a national search takes place.

Cape Charles hires town manager

The Town of Cape Charles has hired Woodstock Assistant Town Manager **Brent T. Manuel** as town manager effective April 6.



- Manuel -

Manuel has more than 16 years of experience, having served in the towns of Purcellville, Strasburg and Woodstock, as well as Frederick County. For the past 13 years, he was Woodstock's assistant town man-

ager of operations and director of the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Petersburg names Reid new fire marshal

Petersburg selected **Jim Reid** as the city's new fire marshal in the Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services effective April 6.

Reid, who has 28 years of fire, building and life safety code enforcement experience, served most recently as the fire marshal for the City of Hopewell. Prior to that, he served as the deputy state fire marshal for the Virginia Office of State Fire Marshal where he managed inspections, office and field work in the Central Virginia region.

Alexandria hires transportation director

Yon Lambert was promoted to director of transportation and environmental services for Alexandria. He had been serving as acting director since Aug. 1.

Lambert joined the city government in 2006 as pedestrian and bicycle coordinator responsible for development of a non-motorized transportation program. He was later named a principal transportation planner and,

in 2010, deputy director of operations with responsibility for public works programs and policies. Prior to his work in Alexandria, Lambert served for 10 years with Palmetto Conservation, a statewide non-profit in South Carolina.

Salem selects deputy fire chief

Salem promoted Fire and EMS Capt. **Matt Rickman** to deputy chief effective March 15.



- Rickman -

Rickman joined the Salem Fire Department in 2005. He was named a paramedic and senior firefighter in 2008 and was elevated to the rank of captain and named the city's EMS coordinator in 2011. Rickman replaced **John Prillaman**, who was promoted to chief.

R. David O'Dell dies; was Montross mayor

Montross Mayor **R. David O'Dell Jr.** died Dec. 31 after a brief illness. He was 71.

Mr. O'Dell served the town he loved for more than 30 years both as a council member and mayor. First elected to

People



- O'Dell -

council in 1980, he also served as mayor in 1988-1992 and again from 1999 until his death. He served as vice mayor from 1992 until 1999.

Mr. O'Dell's 34-year tenure on council

and his 19 years serving as mayor are both the longest in town history. He also served on the town Planning Commission from 1980 until his death, 15 of those years as chairman.

His obituary said that the mayor "will long be remembered for his wit and candor, short town meetings and loyalty to family, friends and community."

Submittals: Send news about people in your city, town or county government to Nancy Chafin at nchafin@vml.org

News & notes

Norfolk DPW cited for role in new library


THE AMERICAN PUBLIC Works Association (APWA) Mid-Atlantic Chapter has selected the Slover Library in Norfolk as the Project of the Year in the structures category for buildings costing between \$25 million and \$75 million.

The award recognizes the efforts of Norfolk's Department of Public Works in coordinating and managing this multiyear project. The award will be presented to the Norfolk Public Works team on May 7 at the APWA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Conference in Baltimore. The chapter represents Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. The Slover Library project is now under consideration for the APWA National Project of the Year Award.

Norfolk's Department of Public Works Slover team coordinated the multiyear project that included planning and siting the building, managing the design and construction, and overseeing the start-up and occupancy of the building. As a cost reduction measure, the team purchased the

fixtures and furniture that the vendor later installed.

The city's Information Technology Department worked with the Department of Public Works to independently install the extensive state-of-the-art technology systems. The project was completed on time and on budget, with a good worker safety record. Additionally, Slover is on-track to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold which is a set of rating systems for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of green buildings.

The Slover Library, Norfolk's new main public library, opened to the public in January. It encompasses three centuries of architecture: The historic Seaboard building (1800s), the Selden Arcade (1900), and a new six-story tower that connects them all. The 138,000-square-foot jewel combines traditional library functions with innovative technology, stunning ornamentation and engaging community spaces. Communication and information technologies are the core of the high tech library. 



The Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the American Public Works Association honored Norfolk's Department of Public Works for its role in construction of the new Slover Library.

Court upholds zoning of Alexandria waterfront

The Virginia Supreme Court recently upheld the Alexandria Circuit Court's dismissal of *Burke v. City Council*, the last remaining lawsuit challenging the zoning underlying the city's Waterfront Plan.

The Court found that the plan had been lawfully adopted by Alexandria City Council.

The plaintiffs protested the city's rejection of an appeal that would have required at least six of City Council's seven members to approve the zoning changes instead of the usual four. In March 2013, City Council approved the zoning by a 6-1 "supermajority" vote, which the court found addressed the plaintiff's request. As a result, there was no additional relief the court could provide.

"The Court found that the plaintiffs were not actually aggrieved, and therefore dismissal of the case was proper," said City Attorney James L. Banks, Jr. "This puts an end to all of the pending litigation on the waterfront and allows approved and pending redevelopment projects to move forward."

The zoning changes that were the subject of the court case increased the amount of development on the three major "redevelopment parcels" identified by the Waterfront Plan, and permitted up to two hotels of no more than 150 rooms each. One hotel, proposed by Carr Hospitality, was approved in early 2014. A second hotel is proposed as part of the Robinson Terminal North redevelopment, currently scheduled for public hearings in June.

Petersburg launches online recruitment site

The City of Petersburg has launched a new electronic applicant tracking system that eliminates paper job applications for all city employment opportunities.

Applicants are now able to view and apply for city jobs online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week from any location with Internet access. Also, applicants can create an account that stores an application so that a person does not have to fill out a new application each time they apply for a job in an area of interest. Applicants may check their ap-

plication status online anytime.

The city has partnered with the Workforce Investment Group, local Goodwill stores, the Virginia Employment Commission and the Petersburg Public Library to provide computer and Internet access to assist people during their job search. Computers are also set up on the first floor of the City Hall Annex for applying.

The city will continue to accept paper applications until May 31 when the switch to electronic applications only takes effect.

Newport News dam named best in state

The Virginia Lakes and Watershed Association recently presented the Newport News Water Department an award for having the best maintained publicly-owned dam in the state. The Little Creek Dam impounds water in James City County pumped from the Chickahominy River.

To be awarded the distinction, the dam must have no flaws in maintenance, have a regular Operational and Maintenance Certificate with proper regulatory paperwork and must have an outstanding appearance. Little Creek received this award for being well maintained in terms of regular mowing and having good operation of the gatehouse equipment.

The dam was nominated by a regulatory official at Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation who oversees the city's dam compliance activities.

Alexandria adds animal licensing online

The City of Alexandria has expanded its animal licensing program to include a new online option. Pet owners may now register dogs or cats, or renew existing licenses, by visiting www.alexandrianimals.org/licensing.

Online customers can upload required documentation and pay license fees by credit card, and multiple pets may be licensed in the same transaction. A permanent license tag for each animal will then be delivered by mail. To improve the efficiency and security of processing and payment data, online registration is handled by a third-party vendor under contract with the city.

City Code requires all dogs and cats over the age of four months to be licensed, and requires each owner to obtain a license within 30 days of acquiring the pet or moving it into the city. Licensing and enforcement helps reunite lost pets, reduces the spread of rabies, decreases the number of animals entering shelters, offsets the expense of caring for lost, stray, surrendered, and abandoned animals, and helps the city plan resources like dog parks and animal control services.

In addition to the new online option, customers may continue to license pets in person and by mail.

Front Royal prints incentives brochure

The Town of Front Royal has published a new brochure designed to explain several incentive programs for business development and façade improvements.

Front Royal decided to print and distribute the brochures for business and property owners after it established tourism zones in the town. The brochure is available at town and EDA offices, as well as on the town's website.

Petersburg honored for cultural diversity

Petersburg was one of seven cities recognized recently by the National League of Cities for implementing programs that enhance and promote cultural diversity in their communities. The award was presented recently at the "Celebrate Diversity Breakfast" during NLC's Congressional City Conference in Washington.

The National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO) City Cultural Diversity Awards recognize municipal programs that encourage citizen involvement in improving and promoting cultural diversity through collaboration with city officials, community leaders and residents.

Petersburg (population category 25,001-100,000) was recognized for being home last year to a three-day International Film Festival that featured a diverse array of films, panel discussions with prominent actors, workshops, musical events, food, product and equipment presentations at a variety of venues throughout the city and at New Millen-

nium Studios. Screenings included 30 short- and feature-length films from a select group of directors and producers from more than 10 countries to serve as a vehicle for opening dialogue on issues and ideas that build community, cultural awareness and appreciation.

Other cities recognized were Bellevue, Wash.; Gainesville, Fla.; Cupertino, Calif.; Beaverton, Ore.; District Heights, Md., and Pembroke Park, Fla.

For more information on the City Cultural Diversity Awards, visit NBC-LEO's website at www.nlc.org/nbcleo. For more information on city services, news and information, visit: www.PetersburgVA.gov.

Leesburg attains triple 'Triple A' bond status

The Town of **Leesburg** received AAA credit ratings from Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings for a municipal bond issuance last month. The ratings from Moody's Investors Services and Fitch were upgrades from Aa1 and AA+ respectively.

Leesburg is the only town in Virginia to currently hold Triple-A ratings from all three major credit rating agencies, according to a press release that it issued.

Internet access: Appomattox case study released

The Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) has published a case study outlining the partnership between Appomattox County school and government technology services to provide free internet access to the nearly 60 percent of students who currently have no access to the internet outside school. The lack of internet access greatly restricts educational and economic opportunities for students in rural areas.

"Too many students in Appomattox and other rural areas lack internet access outside of their schools," said Brette A. Arbogast, director of technology for Appomattox County Public Schools. "This initiative leverages all of our public resources – general government and schools – to close this digital divide so that our students have access to greater learning opportunities."

After a countywide survey in late

2014, Appomattox officials found that 59 percent of their students do not have sufficient internet access at home, constraining "digital learning opportunities" that other more affluent counties provide. To solve this problem, county officials developed a four-phased approach to consolidate and leverage general government and school administration technologies and internet infrastructure to provide students with free wireless access after school.

"This case study can serve as a roadmap not only for rural areas, but also for other areas of Virginia that can better use all their public assets to solve their unique broadband challenges," said Sandie Terry, CIT broadband program manager.

For more information on the case study, Appomattox County Public Schools' "After School Wireless Connection Program," click: <http://1.usa.gov/1CZL7Tb>.

Smithfield earns public works accreditation

The Smithfield Public Works Department has been accredited by the American Public Works Association (APWA). The Isle of Wight County town began working toward accreditation in 2012.

The accreditation indicates the department has met an assortment of applicable documentation and practices. Smithfield joins Alexandria, Prince William County, Newport News, Richmond and Chesapeake as accredited agencies in Virginia.

Falls Church promotes solar powered homes

Solar power for homes will be easier and more affordable than ever thanks to another round of Solarize Falls Church. From April through July, the program will again offer bulk purchasing discounts and free solar site assessments to homeowners in select communities in Northern Virginia. The program kicks off in Falls Church as a limited-time, one-stop-shop for community members to learn more about solar power options for their homes and facilitate the installation and financing of their own project. This grassroots, community-based outreach initiative is sponsored by the

Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) in partnership with the Local Energy Alliance Program and the individual localities. Solarize NOVA launched in the Fall of 2014 in the Town of Leesburg and Loudoun County. To date more than 15 solar array contracts valued at nearly \$375,000 have been signed. More than 100 free Home Energy Check-Ups were completed as part of the campaign.

Visit www.solarizefallschurch.org for more information.

ELSEWHERE ...

The **Lynchburg Police Department** was reaccredited recently by the international Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. ...

Historic Manassas Inc., a charitable, non-profit corporation funded by private donations and the City of Manassas, has received a Virginia Main Street Milestone Award for volunteer investment in downtown revitalization efforts. Since 1997, more than 60,000 volunteer hours have been donated to the historic downtown area for events and revitalization. ... **Herndon** Town Council adopted an ordinance that moves the town's election date from the first Tuesday in May to the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, beginning in 2016. ... **Chesapeake** has awarded the construction contract for a new Public Safety Operations Building. The center will house the 911 Dispatch Center, Emergency Operations Center and offices, Customer Call Center, IT Network Operations and some Fire Department training offices. Construction will begin this spring and take about two years to complete. ... **Vienna** Town Council has formed a public arts commission to advise and assist it on matters relating to the advancement of public art in the town, including the development and funding of a public art program. ... The **City of Roanoke** has given its electronic newsletter a snazzy makeover. Check out an issue at <http://bit.ly/1I4C5Dz>.

Farmville celebrates Spates' anniversary

WELL-WISHERS FROM EVERY segment of the community crowded into the foyer of the Farmville Town Hall on Feb. 27 to congratulate and thank Gerald J. Spates on his 40th anniversary as town manager. Mayor David Whitus presented a resolution from the town council extolling Spates' contributions to Farmville. Longwood University President W. Taylor Reveley IV presented a resolution on behalf of the university, highlighting the working relationship the university has with town government. Former House of Delegates member Watkins Ab-bitt spoke as well, saying that "he wished every town had a manager as good as Gerry. The state would be a lot better off." Following the presentations and remarks, the crowd enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, cake and punch. Spates came to work in Farmville in 1973 after serving six years as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

VTC



Mr. Spates and his wife, Linda



Mr. Spates and Longwood University President Taylor Reveley, IV



Mr. Spates and VML Director of Research Mary Jo Fields

Piedmont Regional Jail Board – Chairman Vivian Giles, Sheriff Darryl Hodges and Piedmont Regional Jail Superintendent/Council member Donald Hunter





Healthy Eating Active Living campaign taking hold in Virginia

HEAL initiative attracting a new type of local government commitment

THE VALUES OF COMMUNITY health closely align with the values of municipal leaders, the business community and families. Communities that are healthy for children, families, the elderly, businesses and employees are places where people want to live, work, raise a family and age. This kind of community values quality of life, encourages activity and offers healthy food options across neighborhoods. And the investments in these healthy environments pay dividends: Healthcare costs are reduced, workplace productivity is increased, and academic performance is enhanced. Children in these communities grow up, go to college, and return to the community to work and raise families. How many of the children in your schools today will be living in your community in 10 or 15 years?

There is a natural connection between local planning and health; now more than ever it is essential to recognize and build on that mutual interest, particularly as an obesity epidemic overtakes the nation. The small town of Haymarket in Prince William County has identified the intersection. The success of a recently completed streetscape project, which allows pedestrians and residents to safely walk, bicycle or jog the length of the town under a lighted sidewalk, has inspired Haymarket to create even more connections throughout the town.

“Since its completion, we see people daily taking advan-

tage of the ability to walk throughout the town,” said Town Manager Brian Henshaw. “As we strive to become more walkable, we believe that this provides a direct linkage to successfully calling ourselves a HEAL community.”

HEAL is shorthand for the Healthy Eating Active Living Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic, an initiative with that supports local policymakers to ensure that as many Virginians as possible live high-quality, healthy lives. The HEAL campaign, which now includes 14 Virginia local governments, is specifically designed to help local policymakers proactively foster healthy environments by adopting and implementing local policies that increase access to healthy eating and active living, the two components that help combat obesity.

Obesity is an epidemic from which Virginia is not immune. Obesity rates in the Commonwealth have nearly doubled in the past 15 years; in 1995 the rate was 14.2 percent and by 2011 it was 29.2 percent. This trajectory is projected to reach nearly 50 percent of adults by 2030. Obesity is associated with a higher risk of several chronic diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and some cancers. In addition to the costs of treating these conditions, obesity causes decreased worker productivity, increased absenteeism and increased workers’ compensation claims.



Healthy communities enjoy reduced healthcare costs, increased workplace productivity and better academic performance.



Obesity rates for the Commonwealth have nearly doubled in the past 15 years.

Obesity is a preventable disease. Its main causes are poor nutrition and lack of physical activity. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Trust for America's Health estimate that by reducing the overall average body mass index (BMI) by as little as 5 percent, the Commonwealth could avoid nearly 107,000 cases of Type 2 diabetes, more than 118,000 cases of obesity-related cancers and almost 443,000 cases of coronary heart disease and stroke in just 10 years. The reduction is predicted to lead to healthcare savings of more than \$6 billion in 10 years and \$18 billion in 20 years. These are savings that can fund economic development, debt obligation repayment, and capital projects. The benefits also include a healthier, more productive workforce.

What does a 5 percent reduction in BMI look like? This means, for example, a six-foot tall, 200-pound person would need to lose about 10 pounds to reduce their BMI by 5 percent. BMI is calculated using a person's weight and height to measure body fat; adults with BMI between 25 and 29.9 are overweight; adults with a BMI of 30 or greater are obese.

Although many decisions about eating better and moving more are the result of an individual's choice, those decisions are not made in a vacuum. An individual's health choices are made based on the options available. For example, if the local grocery store does not provide fresh, affordable, healthy food, a family on a budget has limited choices. If neighborhoods are not safe, it is unlikely residents will walk in their communities or use community parks to be active. Vending machines in office buildings provide convenience, but if they only offer sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy snacks, a healthy choice is not an option.

Without opportunities to make healthy choices, the environments in which we live, work, learn and play contribute to the obesity epidemic. As leaders elected and appointed to influence and develop the policies that shape community environments, local policymakers have an important role to play in addressing this epidemic. By recognizing that planning decisions affect health, local leaders have the opportunity to support families, children and businesses in their decisions to be healthy.

"When we discussed joining the HEAL program, there were concerns that it would require the City to tell citizens what to eat and what not to eat," said Staunton City Council Member Eric Curren. "Program advocates were easily able to show that HEAL was not about taking away anybody's Big Gulp, but was instead just about helping to level the playing field for healthy local food in a marketplace dominated by pack-

HEAL initiative

aged, convenience and snack foods from big national brands. Actually, it was about giving eaters more choice, not less, and empowering citizens with information to make smarter choices about their eating and overall wellness."

A similar sentiment is shared by Cindy Curtis, deputy city manager in Virginia Beach. "We celebrate an individual's right to make choices," Curtis said. "However, without knowledge of what your real choices are and what the impact of your decision could be, an individual is not making an informed choice. Our HEAL campaign centers on providing choices of healthy food, whether it be in a restaurant that has designated certain menu items as meeting a healthy criteria or whether it is at a farmer's market brought to a local library. The healthy choice should be an easy choice; however, it can't be made if it is not offered or accessible."

The HEAL campaign

The HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign pairs the unique power of local government with the public health expertise of the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI). IPHI is the public health institute representing the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. It has worked in strategic partnership with the Virginia Municipal League since 2012. Local governments' participation in the HEAL Campaign is free, thanks to generous support from the Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States. "We believe that healthy policies are integral to healthy communities," says Celeste James, Director of Community Health at Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States. "With this investment we are increasing opportunities for Virginians to live healthfully in communities that support wellbeing."

Local leaders across the United States are now recognizing that HEAL policies should be a part of short- and long-term city and town planning as a key component to reducing health care costs, creating safer community environments, improving quality of life and attracting economic development.

"At the Institute for Public Health Innovation, we know that policies that address healthy living at a local level are critical to addressing the personal, collective, and economic impact of obesity in our region," said Marisa Jones, director of the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic. "We're confident we can make great headway by partnering with local officials to benefit the lives of their residents and employees."

While there are a number of other initiatives across the Commonwealth aimed at reducing obesity and preventing chronic disease, the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign is focused on supporting local governments to adopt and implement policies that shape the environments in which residents and employees make decisions about physical activity and nutrition. The HEAL campaign coordinates with other initiatives aimed at individual-level interventions and encourages them to take full advantage of resources available to them to prevent obesity and chronic disease.

The steps to joining the HEAL Cities, Towns, & Counties Campaign are outlined below, and begin and end with a commitment to improving the health, wellness and prosperity of your community.

How to become a HEAL community

Step 1: Articulate your vision

Identify goals that help your community achieve its vision of being a healthy, prosperous community. Pass a resolution stating one to three policy goals your municipality will work on to make it easier for citizens to eat better and move more. The HEAL campaign has a draft resolution available on its website that local governments can use as a starting point. HEAL staff can help you select evidence-based policies that are known to work and that are a right fit for your community.

Step 2: Share the news

Once a resolution is passed, you are an official member of the campaign – celebrate it! You will receive a HEAL logo to use, media relations assistance and recognition at Virginia Municipal League events.

Step 3: Get free help

Free technical assistance includes access to sample policies, strategies for successful policy adoption, regional trainings, webinars, on-site meetings with HEAL staff and phone access to HEAL staff. Visit www.healcitiesmidatlantic.org for useful information to learn more about HEAL, including a policy menu, draft resolutions, fact sheets and webinars related to healthy eating and active living. You can also follow HEAL on Twitter at @HEALMidAtlantic.

Step 4: Adopt policies

Use the HEAL resolution as a roadmap to become a healthy, prosperous community, and advance the policies your community resolved to work on in its HEAL resolution. Take advantage of the resources available to you as a HEAL city, town or county to advance your community's goals.

Step 5: Implement policies

As a member of the HEAL campaign you will be eligible – for the first time ever – to apply for funding to help kick start your policy implementation.

No matter the size, location or demographics of your community, the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign can work for you. While our current menu includes more than 50 policies, the following are policies any community can adopt under the three main HEAL topic areas of Active Communities, Healthy Food and Workplace Wellness:

- Complete Streets
- Including health goals/walkability/bikeability into the Comprehensive Plan
- Develop procurement standards for nutritious foods
- Workplace Wellness initiatives

The City of Virginia Beach is the most recent member of the campaign, adopting a HEAL resolution in March.

“The HEAL staff have provided technical assistance, guiding us through the process to develop a resolution framework that

clearly outlines our strategies for improving access to healthy nutrition in Virginia Beach,” said Department of Public Health Director Dr. Heidi A. Kulberg. “Serving as a clearinghouse of information about existing, successful programs, the HEAL campaign enabled our city team to focus resources on tailoring programs to meet the needs of our citizens rather than spending time reinventing the wheel. Additionally, working on this campaign has heightened the awareness and involvement of diverse leaders throughout the city. The city council’s adoption of our HEAL resolution signifies to all that the health of our citizens and visitors is vitally important to our *City for a Lifetime*.”

Does your community already have a policy that supports active communities, healthy food access or work place wellness? Share it by contacting the Campaign Director Marisa Jones at mjones@institutephi.org and talk with the Campaign Team about becoming a HEAL member eligible for free technical assistance.

First time HEAL grants available


This spring, the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign is offering \$40,000 in grants to HEAL cities and towns for implementation of HEAL policies. Funding is provided by the campaign sponsor, Kaiser Permanente for the Mid-Atlantic States. The official application will be posted on the HEAL website (www.healcitiesmidatlantic.org) on May 4, 2015, and will close on June 25, 2015.

All cities that join the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign by June 25, 2015 will be eligible to apply for these grant funds. Two types of funding are available:

- Kick-Off grants up to \$500 (up to 6 awards)
- Implementation Grants will be between \$5,000 and \$9,000 (4-6 awards)

See the HEAL website for more information on the types of projects that could be funded by HEAL grants.

More about IPHI

The Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI) creates partnerships across sectors and cultivates innovative solutions that improve health and well-being for populations and communities across Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Its work strengthens health service systems and public policy; enhances the environments and conditions in which people live, age, work, learn, and play; and builds organizational and community capacity to sustain progress. Find IPHI on the web at: www.institutephi.org; on Twitter at @InstitutePHI; and on Facebook at InstitutePHI. 

About the author

Kate McGrail is a program associate for the Institute for Public Health based in Washington, D.C. With contributions from HEAL staff members.



These 4 cities and towns walk the talk

HERE ARE JUST FOUR EXAMPLES of local government initiatives across Virginia aimed at improving the collective health of communities. Both of the cities and both of the towns described are participants in the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign.

City of Charlottesville – Complete Streets

With a focus on equitable development, the City of Charlottesville is more than just a college town. The most recent update to the city’s comprehensive plan included a focus on better connectivity, increased pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and economic assessment of land use and zoning, particularly around the West Main Street corridor, a colonial thoroughfare connecting the University of

ensure that all transportation agencies within the city routinely plan, fund, design, construct, operate and maintain streets according to the Complete Streets principles with the goal of creating an attractive, connected, multimodal network that balances the needs of all users.

The City of Charlottesville understands the positive role that good pedestrian and bicycle facilities play in attracting population growth and sustainable economic development. Speaking about the city’s adoption of its HEAL Resolution, City Councilwoman Kristen Szakos said, “It’s helped show how every decision we make has some impact on the physical well-being of our citizens, and to make those decisions consciously in an effort to make Charlottesville a healthier place for everyone.”

Making travel choices more convenient, attractive and safe means people do not need to rely solely on automobiles and can replace congestion-clogged trips in their cars with heart-healthy walks or bicycle trips.



The City of Charlottesville understands the positive role that good pedestrian and bicycle facilities play in attracting population growth and sustainable economic development.

Virginia to downtown Charlottesville and the surrounding neighborhoods.

In February 2014, City Council reaffirmed its commitment to this goal by adopting a Complete Streets policy titled, *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*. Complete Streets principles highlight that streets serve a greater purpose than for motorists alone. Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops and bicycle to work.

Charlottesville’s Complete Streets policy was adopted to

City of Richmond – Health in All Policies

In addition to passing a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) resolution promoting active communities, healthy workplaces and increased access to nutritious food in January, Richmond City Council also unanimously adopted a Health in All Policies (HiAP) resolution to ensure the incorporation of health and health equity into its policy-making processes. While the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign incorporates eating better and moving more in policymaking, HiAP takes that concept even further, by considering all health impacts of decisions made by all aspects of local government.

Recent research published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* has suggested that only 10 percent of health is determined by medical care alone. Other aspects that influence health outcomes include social, economic, genetic and environmental factors. When such elements are considered in policymaking and in long-term planning decision processes in sectors other than health, decision makers can explicitly address health while also achieving the non-health agency mission. A team of Richmond city departmental leaders will be formed to implement the HiAP framework across all departments, agencies, and offices.

“These are great additions to the things we are already doing for our residents in conjunction with the Healthy Richmond Campaign,” said Mayor Dwight C. Jones, who served

as co-patron for both pieces of legislation. Chris Hilbert, City Council vice president and co-patron of the HiAP resolution, shared the sentiment. “Our residents will benefit tremendously from this process of incorporating health equity into all policymaking decisions,” he said.

The Institute for Public Health Innovation provided technical assistance in the development and adoption of both the HEAL and HiAP legislation. “What Richmond has done is historic, as only a handful of localities across the country have passed HiAP legislation,” noted Dr. Michal Royster, vice president of IPHI.

Town of Crewe – HEAL Taskforce

With a population of just over 2,300, the Town of Crewe in Nottoway County is one of the smallest municipalities in the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign, but its vision for a healthy and prosperous community is reflective of any other member: It sees a healthy community that is equally desirable to visit, own or operate a business and raise a family. It was also the first HEAL community in Virginia to join the campaign in January 2013.

The town was introduced to the HEAL initiative after encountering the Institute for Public Health Innovation at a VML conference in 2012. Upon identifying similar goals and vision with the campaign, the town immediately embarked on adopting a policy for the creation of a HEAL Taskforce. The mission of the taskforce is to identify obstacles to providing healthy eating and active living opportunities to residents and visitors, and proposing improvements for long-term healthy lifestyles.

The adoption of the policy creating the taskforce has institutionalized the existence of a body of stakeholders who continuously assess the resources and vulnerabilities to creating a healthy and productive community. In addition to increasing opportunities for healthy eating and active living, the taskforce’s goals include engaging and communicating with residents about HEAL efforts.

“Crewe’s HEAL initiative is a grassroots effort facilitated by town leadership,” said Town Council Member Phil Miskovic. “We bring to the table citizens, businesses, and faith-based and community organizations in a cohesive effort to identify problems and create solutions for achieving a healthier community. We seek to inform the uninformed, engage the informed, and cultivate the activity of the engaged.”

Outreach efforts have led to specific HEAL goals such as creating a crosswalk across busy Route 460 to connect the business district to the community park; promoting fresh, local foods available in small businesses; and creating senior recreation leagues for older residents.



Town of Leesburg – Healthy Vending

Upon visiting Leesburg, it is readily apparent that the state’s largest town has set forth its vision to be a walkable, healthy and prosperous community. The Loudoun County town’s main streets are home to vibrant, thriving locally-owned businesses, which create a place where people want to spend time and money. The town is home to numerous



Leesburg adopted a Healthy Vending Policy to offer healthier snack options in vending machines on town property.

parks, which house recreation activities as well as enable residents and visitors alike to enjoy its natural green space.

After learning about the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign at a VML Annual Conference in Arlington several years ago, Council Member Katie Sheldon Hammler took action.

“I brought the HEAL Campaign back to our council because I knew that one of the fastest rising line items in the Town of Leesburg’s budget – 12 percent in FY15 – is our staff health care costs,” said Hammler, a member of the VML Executive Committee. “Promoting fitness and nutrition is part of our fiscal responsibility to our taxpayers.”

Taking note, the town decided to focus the HEAL Cities, Towns & Counties Campaign goals on creating a municipal workplace conducive to employees making healthy decisions about nutrition and physical activity while at work. To support that, Parks and Recreation staff participated in a HEAL campaign webinar, Healthy Meetings and Vending to Improve Workplace Wellness. Equipped with tools and knowledge on how to improve the nutritional content of foods sold in vending machines and concessions, the Leesburg adopted a Healthy Vending Policy to increase the percentage of nourishing foods served in vending machines on town property. This policy ensures that municipal employees and visitors to town-owned buildings have the opportunity to make healthy choices about snacks when they are at work and on the go.

... Compiled by *Kate McGrail*

Effective workforce development requires aligning multiple agendas

By John W. Martin and Matt Thornhill

AN EASY WAY for local governments to prepare for 2025 and beyond is by focusing on educating their citizens. The responsibility for educating young people today is shared among many stakeholders: parents, teachers, school administrators, school boards, local jurisdictions, state educators and the federal government. Interestingly, one important stakeholder is often excluded: employers.

As in most states, neither the K-12 nor the higher education systems in Virginia are completely aligned with the needs of employers. While we would love to suggest ways to change the K-12 system to be more in line with employer needs, the clearer opportunity for local government leaders to affect change is with workforce development. Let's focus on that.

The winners in Virginia's future will be those communities that successfully align education, economic development, workforce and business agendas to educate and develop talent with the "right stuff" necessary to get the job done, from low-skill tasks to sophisticated, high-level skills. More and more city, town and county leaders are realizing that the quality and skills of their local government's workforce will determine its future economic competitiveness and long-term success.

"Technology and the economy change more quickly than education systems, particularly today, which means education and labor market institutions are perpetually out of sync."

Chris Womack
Executive Vice President and
President of External Affairs, Southern Company

Getting from here to there

Across the country, states and local governments are recalibrating their approach to workforce development. Rather than focusing exclusively on the "supply side," or what is taught to their young people and workers, they are beginning to engage and involve employers on the



About this series

THIS IS THE THIRD in a series of articles on the future of Virginia's cities, towns and counties, a VML initiative for 2015 called *324 Places*. The 10 topic areas to be covered in the series were identified from a survey of VML members in late 2014. To bring this program to the league membership, VML has partnered with the Richmond-based Southeastern Institute of Research and its nationally renowned research-based think tank, GenerationsMatters. The goal is to provide local government leaders across Virginia with the information, insights and tools needed to understand and respond to the trends that will shape their communities over the next decade.



“demand side” – what employers want and need in worker skillsets.

In addition, the economic competitiveness of a city or county was once all about attracting large companies, who in turn attract workers of all skill levels. Now, large companies won't even consider a site unless the region has the right type of workforce already in place. The pressure is on cities, towns and counties across Virginia to educate, train, retain and re-train workers of all skill levels to remain attractive and competitive in the global economy.

The Great Recession has increased this pressure. According to a recent survey, one in three city officials report that their cities have become more involved in workforce development in light of changes in economic conditions. Demographics dictate the need for action as well. The Boomer generation is now aging out of the traditional 20- to 54-year-old labor pool. As a result, the labor pool is projected to remain essentially the same size over the next 15 to 20 years, even after factoring in immigration. This means the supply of workers will remain flat. Growth and prosperity in one locality will only come at the expense of decreases in others. Competition for workers will intensify exponentially. Undoubtedly then, it's time for all local government officials to realize their role in leading education and workforce development.

Stakeholders representing education, economic development and even social services issues are the ones who most often implement education and workforce development train-

ing at the local level. In workforce development training, for example, a variety of groups typically offers services simultaneously, and usually independently from each other. Each may deliver benefits to individual citizens, but no overall strategy links educational institutions, workers and employers together. That's where local government leaders can lead and inspire a movement that aligns the community's workforce needs with its education and training strategy and resources.

Helping local government lead

The opportunity to lead starts with understanding the current players and programs, then leveraging local government's role in affecting change. The most important first step is to ensure that local employers, big and small, are engaged. Ultimately, the economic success of your community depends on businesses succeeding, and their most important asset is their workforce.

The steps local government can take include providing financial or staffing resources for a business-led coalition, connecting the many stakeholders who do not traditionally interact, or aligning economic development efforts with workforce goals. Whatever the case, you won't be starting from scratch, but instead working to build connections between various stakeholders and interests to create stronger programs.

So let's start by taking a quick look at the four stakeholders who most often engage in local workforce development, from a 2010 report by the National League of Cities:

Workforce Investment Boards

The primary workforce body at the local level is the Workforce Investment Board (WIB). WIBs are the central planning authority for federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds, and are governed by a board of local businesses, educational institutions, unions and other community leaders (*see below*).

New federal workforce law takes shape

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014, replacing WIA. The act is designed to 1) help job seekers access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market, and 2) match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system. Look for updates this spring from the Department of Labor on the implementation schedule and regulation rules at www.doleta.gov/WIOA.

Each area has at least one central location that provides services to job seekers, generally in the form of a local “One-Stop Career Center.” Depending on the governance structure, city officials may have little or no interaction with their local WsIB.

Community colleges

Community colleges have long been one of the most important local partners in workforce development. As better jobs today require some form of post-secondary education, these schools are becoming increasingly more important through their focus on building necessary skills across a broad demographic of students. It is important that your local community college be tightly linked with local employers to ensure they are teaching the skills most in demand. Surprisingly, not all of them are connected with employers.

Community-based organizations

Community-based organizations are natural partners for workforce development. These organizations often provide various forms of the wrap-around support that unemployed or low-income individuals need, including programs like affordable or emergency housing, childcare, food assistance, or English as a Second Language courses.

Economic development organizations and businesses

Partnerships between city and county agencies and economic development organizations, such as a local chamber of commerce, are fairly common – they probably exist in your locality, given that economic development is a primary function of local government. Nationally, we’re seeing the creation of more regional economic development efforts across jurisdictional lines and better alignment efforts between workforce and economic development.


Leadership and intentionality

Those local governments that are best at workforce development will be the biggest winners in economic development and long-term prosperity. Organizing and leveraging all the key stakeholders is a role best suited to local government lead-

Finding funds for education

NONPROFITS AND FOUNDATIONS across Virginia have the funding available to support education by investing in their local communities. Take Cox Communications Virginia, which recently presented \$135,000 in grants to 15 nonprofit organizations in the state through their Cox Charities grants program. One such grant awarded \$10,000 to the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula for their RoboClub program. This initiative will partner with Newport News Shipbuilding to launch a new robotics program throughout the clubs, using the Lego Mindstorms system to introduce the clubs’ youth to education and potential careers in STEM fields.

ers. Creating excellent workforce development systems that match your citizens to the needs of your employers leads to attracting, retaining, and expanding jobs in your community.

Intentionally partnering closely with economic developers and local employers can help local governments focus education and workforce development on meeting the demand in the marketplace. In the end, citizens with good jobs – and easy access to those jobs – are what will make any community successful in 2025 and beyond. 

About the authors

John W. Martin is the president and CEO of the Southeastern Institute of Research Inc., a 50 year-old full service marketing research firm headquartered in Richmond. Matt Thornhill, founder and president of GenerationsMatter, is a leading national authority on Baby Boomers. The two have conducted studies, held workshops or presented for a number of associations in Virginia, including VML. Recent consulting engagements include assignments for the cities of Richmond, Norfolk, Lexington, Buena Vista and Winchester, as well as the counties of Arlington, Henrico and Rockbridge. National clients include AARP, Google, NASA, the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, and Walmart. Visit sirresearch.com or generationsmatter.com for more information.



State is leading push to match Virginians with high-value workforce credentials

By Maurice Jones

IN LESS THAN a decade, Virginia will need to replace more than 930,000 retiring workers and will create half a million more new jobs. Fifty to 65 percent of those will be skilled and specialized technician level jobs. These jobs are readily available, afford access to a middle class lifestyle, and are accessible with far less formal education and training than that required for a baccalaureate degree. They are accessible with high-value credentials such as industry-recognized certifications, licenses, apprentice credentials or occupational certificates or associate degrees from a college or university – in other words, Credentials to Compete. In August 2014, Gov. Terry McAuliffe signed Executive Order 23. This order identifies increased attainment rates for these credentials as a primary, statewide strategy for filling the “skills gap” between industry

the Council for Virginia’s Future, a first-ever long-term goal for workforce credentials. That goal is for Virginians to attain nearly half a million such credentials by 2030. Doing so would make our Commonwealth the number one state in the U.S. for the percentage of the population holding a workforce credential. That top ranking will attract fast-growing businesses to Virginia.

Governor’s Workforce Agenda in the 2015 General Assembly

The Governor’s Workforce Agenda for the 2015 General Assembly session was designed to increase the workforce system’s capacity to deliver Credentials to Compete. Legislation carried by Del. Kathy Byron and Sen. Frank Ruff redirects nearly \$4.5 million annually from available federal funds to support regional training for workforce credential attainment. The legislation also establishes the workforce system’s first pay-for-performance program, rewarding local WIBs and their education and training partners for meeting benchmarks for credential attainment. To stimulate collaboration and resource sharing between regional stakeholders, the legislation requires workforce regions to identify a convener for workforce solutions. The bill also requires common performance metrics and reporting accountability, so that all public CTE and workforce programs in Virginia strive toward the same goals on workforce credentials, job placement and business engagement.

The new federal Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act provides the Commonwealth an unprecedented opportunity to produce a single, combined state plan

for all of Virginia’s federally funded workforce programs with a combined annual budget of \$218 million. The governor’s legislation includes a requirement for the Commonwealth to develop a single plan for federally funded workforce programs and makes the Virginia Board of Workforce Development more strategic, streamlined and business-driven.

The governor’s policy agenda also included legislation, carried by Sen. Kenneth Alexander and Del. Jeion Ward, to spur the number of registered apprentices in Virginia by making it easier for companies to sponsor apprenticeship programs. Registered apprenticeships offer job seekers immediate employment opportunities at higher than average wages, while also providing skills development and a nationally recognized, portable credential. The governor’s apprenticeship bill provides businesses with a single point of contact for the



Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones (second from left) and Gov. Terry McAuliffe (far right) tour operations at Bauer Compressors, Inc. in Norfolk. The company announced a \$15 million expansion project in October 2014. Photo by Michael White

demand for workers with the competencies to fill available positions and the supply of skilled workers for these jobs.

The governor’s challenge to the Commonwealth’s 15 local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and eight state agencies administering 24 career and technical education (CTE) and workforce programs is to increase by 50,000 the number of STEM-H (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Health) credentials earned during this administration. This goal responds to the human capital needs of key industry sectors: advanced manufacturing, energy, information technology and cyber security, logistics and transportation, health care and more. The importance of these workforce credentials to business and economic growth was underscored last September when I announced, alongside the Virginia Business Higher Education Council, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and

One model: Peninsula Workforce Development Center

IN 2001, THE PENINSULA WORKFORCE Development Center was created with funding from the Virginia General Assembly and six Virginia local governments: Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, York County, James City County and Williamsburg. Today, this regional center houses Thomas Nelson Community College's workforce training programs, Old Dominion University's Peninsula Higher Education Center, the Virginia Employment Commission's employment programs, and the Peninsula's one-stop career resource centers.

The facility provides workforce training and employment programs to the entire Virginia Peninsula community, serving everyone from high-tech companies moving to the Peninsula, to existing businesses seeking to improve workers' skills, to individual job seekers.

One unique governance structure that has enhanced the region's ability to align its workforce development with economic development is the newly created Peninsula

Council for Workforce Development. The council, which serves as staff to the local workforce investment board (WIB) and oversees the one-stop center, effectively creates a regional system that enables each partner to leverage key resources, ensuring access to a talented workforce for all greater-Peninsula businesses.

For more information, visit www.pcfwd.org.



apprenticeship system, expedites the process of establishing an apprentice program, and, through administrative reform, saves the Commonwealth about a half million dollars annually that can be redeployed for pay-for-performance incentives.


To expedite veterans' attainment of college credentials and get them more quickly into high-skilled civilian careers, the governor moved forward a successful policy to ensure that community colleges will uniformly award college credits for prior military education and training. The governor's budget amendments also included support to drive workforce credentials with nearly \$1.1 million in the state's final budget, for the first-ever financial aid program for students enrolled in community college non-credit programs leading to an industry certification. The financial aid program will support pilots at six community colleges.

Current initiatives

Executive Order 23 and the governor's successful workforce agenda in the General Assembly are already eliciting change in state agencies and regional programs. Simultaneous with the governor's call for 50,000 more STEM-H workforce credentials, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) unveiled major strategic plans to drive post-secondary education and workforce credentials. In December 2014, Governor McAuliffe and the VCCS announced a pilot pay-for-performance program that redirects \$500,000 in federal funds for incentives to eight community colleges for student attainment of industry certifications aligned with regional labor market demand. The VCCS is currently leading a series of town hall meetings across Virginia to obtain business input into a plan, to be released this summer, to expand the number of workforce credentials awarded by the state's community colleges. The community colleges have formally committed to tripling all

credentials awarded by 2021. Likewise, other agencies have written plans to increase workforce credential attainment by Virginians of all ages and life circumstances, from high school students to veterans to adults with barriers to employment. Increased collaboration toward that common goal by Virginia's workforce programs and state agencies has led to Virginia receiving almost \$60 million in new federal funding to support workforce credential attainment since last summer. This includes a new \$22.3 million grant to the Virginia Department of Social Services to provide workforce training to 3,760 Virginians enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The Governor's Office will continue to drive public awareness of the great opportunities that exist for skilled workers in high-demand fields in the Commonwealth, and the credentials that provide access to technician-level jobs. The administration will soon release a Request for Proposals for regional competitive grants to business-led consortia, comprised of public and private partners committed to expanding sector strategies, career pathways, apprenticeships and incumbent worker training. To further increase funds available to regions for workforce training and credential attainment, a private sector match will be required of successful grant applicants.

We are currently working with major industries in the private sector, and soliciting others, to launch a statewide campaign to promote to young people and their parents, teachers, and counselors these Credentials to Compete – the job opportunities available to technicians, technologists, and trades workers, and the workforce credentials that can rapidly move them into well-paying, technical jobs. This is work, and a campaign, to drive the new Virginia economy. We look forward to your participation. 

About the author

Maurice Jones is secretary of commerce and trade for the state of Virginia.

Roanoke's Main Library reinvents itself

Who knew going to a library could be so much fun?

WHEN YOU WALK through the entrance of Roanoke's newly renovated Main Library, be prepared to forget everything you thought you knew about public libraries. This space will impress you with its inviting, playful, and contemporary atmosphere, designed with age-specific "zones" for children, teens, and adults that invite learning experiences. Indeed, Roanoke's Main Library is an excellent example of how libraries have broken the stereotype of places with just books.

"The newly renovated Main Library is a vibrant, flexible space," says Sheila Umberger, director of Roanoke Public Libraries. "In this renovation, we were able to take the original 1950's building and bring it into the 21st century with features like a fun, interactive children's area; books; computers; and laptop areas."

As part of the renovation, the Main Library added lots of technology: 40 new computers, new improved free Wi-Fi access, an area for numerous laptop users with plug ins and charging areas, six touch-screen library catalogs, and special early literacy computers for toddlers. And the library circulation desk now accepts credit card payments to make paying library fines easier.

In addition to all of this, there are bookshelves – lots of bookshelves – lined with best-selling novels and volumes on just about any topic you can imagine, as well as periodicals, CDs, DVDs, and video games. And don't for-

get the Virginia Room, Roanoke's premier history archive, is housed within this facility. All this, with existing online access for patrons to the card catalog and to E-books, makes the Main



The renovation preserved the original 1950s exterior while creating a bright, fun interior complete with 21st century technology.

Library a premier facility for 21st century learning.


The changes aren't limited to the inside of the library. There's also a new screened-in porch on the front of the building. And to complement the improvements to Elmwood Park (its next door neighbor) the Main Library added a deck on the back of the building, which faces the park. "Bistro-style" tables and tall chairs comfortably accommodate 40 to 50 people. In addition to hosting library programs, the deck is available for use during amphitheater events and for private rental. This space is also used in conjunction with special events in Elmwood Park.

After a year of construction, the Main Library officially reopened in October 2014. Renovations to the library were completed on time and

An eye-catching, imaginative children's play area is defined by a creative "neighborhood," featuring oversized cutouts of houses connected with cloud-shaped bookshelves, a miniature wooden picket fence, a dog house, and a fire plug.



Roanoke Public Library

under budget at a cost of \$3.27 million. The Library Master Plan recommends continued investments in existing branch locations. Improvements to Jackson Park and Gainsboro branches were completed prior to the Main Library. Renovations are underway at the Raleigh Court branch, with improvements at the Williamson Road and Melrose branches to follow. The plan also addresses the need to provide library services to underserved areas of the city by building a new branch in the Countryside neighborhood, and constructing an e-branch in South Roanoke. 

About the author

Melinda Mayo is public information officer for the City of Roanoke.



Mayor David Bowers leads the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Main Library, with the help of Roanoke City Public School students, City Council Member Bill Bestpitch, Vice-Mayor David Trinkle, and City Council Member Anita Price.



A striking two-story partition designed as a modern cityscape serves as the base for a counter with computer stations, and as a visual barrier for a stairway which provides access to the Children's Mezzanine.



Book drops and self-service check-out stations greet patrons as they enter the lobby.



Two decorative glass panels with enlarged photos of the Roanoke skyline serve as a stately entrance to the Teen Center.



The Children's Mezzanine sits above the main floor, used for story time and other kids' activities. The area includes a colorful wall mural that continues the cityscape theme, grass-like carpeting, and special lighting with fixtures which resemble puffy clouds.



An enormous yellow slide offers a ride for children to get from the mezzanine down to the Children's Section, where child-sized chairs and tables welcome readers. This section appeals to kids with movable book carts, interactive computers, and carpeting designed with the alphabet and numeric characters.



To complement the improvements to Elmwood Park (its next door neighbor) the Main Library added a deck on the back of the building, which faces the park. Bistro-style tables and tall chairs comfortably accommodate 40 to 50 people.



Stylish tables, chairs, and booths await teenagers in their special library space designed for learning and entertainment. There's also a side room equipped to seat 30 young people in a classroom setting.

This building inspector made a difference

May is Building Safety Month across U.S.



WHETHER IT'S TACKLING the problems surrounding hoarding, ensuring that decks won't crumble when a crowd is on them, or making sure that electrical systems are installed properly, employees in local building inspections departments have the jobs of overseeing construction and renovation projects in order to protect the safety of structures.

Sometimes, however, employees, go beyond the minimum requirements of their jobs.

Chesterfield County Property Maintenance Inspector Bonnie Johnson is one such example. Johnson, a member of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association, was recognized in an article in the March 30 issue of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* for helping a local resident obtain repairs that enabled him to move back into his house, which had been condemned.

According to the article, a water leak had started in Kenny Oney's house while he was in the hospital. Oney, who had had to quit work for medical reasons and is on disability, was unable to pay to have the problem fixed and was unable to pay the water bill. The house could not be lived in because there were no sanitary facilities.

That's where Johnson came in. She made numerous telephone calls to the utilities department, but more importantly, to plumbing companies to find volunteers to fix the water leak.

According to the newspaper account, "American Leak Detection of Central Virginia located the leak in the waterline, Colonial Plumbing & Heating fixed the waterline and several leaks under the house, and Lyttle Service Co. replaced the cap on a well on the property."

Johnson is now working with the utilities department to get the water turned back on so that Oney can move back into his home. The house is in need of other repairs, and Johnson is spearheading efforts to get those tackled as well.

The article shows that Johnson doesn't think of herself as a heroine: "Despite all she's done and Oney's teary gratitude, Johnson refused to take any credit for helping Oney. 'This is just part of my job. This is just what I do,' she said. 'All I did was

make phone calls. I didn't turn one shovel of dirt, I assure you.'"

James Kestor, co-owner of Colonial Plumbing, was also self-effacing. The article noted that the company performed about \$1,200 of work on Oney's house. It quoted Kestor as saying, "When we are able to help others out we certainly want to do that. We had some resources available, both in manpower and funds, so it just worked out well."


The full article is available online at <http://bit.ly/1OPVfma>.

Building safety month

Building departments across the state will be highlighting building safety issues throughout May, and councils and boards of supervisors will be adopting proclamations supporting the



Chesterfield County Property Maintenance Inspector Bonnie Johnson made numerous calls to plumbing companies to find volunteers to repair Kenny Oney's condemned home.

crucial work of the building officials. The City of Alexandria Code Administration Department, for example, ramps up its civic education efforts by holding a barbeque that also features displays by local wholesale and retail building product suppliers to showcase innovative products and technology. A raffle will be held to support a local non-profit focused on improving housing conditions for Alexandria residents. 

Recent court rulings affect Virginia local governments

STATE AND FEDERAL courts have ruled on a number of cases of interest to local governments in Virginia in recent months. Here is a summary of some of those cases and what they mean for cities, towns and counties in the Commonwealth.

Validity of local sign ordinance

In a case involving the First Amendment and free speech, the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over Virginia, upheld a City of Norfolk decision regarding a building sign that was some 10 times the maximum size allowed by the city's zoning ordinance. In *Central Radio Company v. City of Norfolk*, the city's housing authority had attempted to condemn Central Radio's land for use by Old Dominion University. The Virginia Supreme Court ruled the housing authority could not condemn the land. Soon after, Central Radio installed a 375 square-foot sign on its building strongly complaining about the ordeal. The sign ordinance allowed 60 square feet for this kind of sign.

The city received complaints about the sign and thus began enforcement against Central Radio to remove the sign or bring it into compliance. Central Radio sued the city on the basis that the sign ordinance discriminated based on the content of the speech. Under the First Amendment, a locality may regulate the time, manner and place of speech, but may not regulate speech based on its content. The court applied the test on content neutrality it had used in an earlier, similar case: "regulation is not a content-based regulation of speech if (1) the regulation is not a regulation of speech, but rather a regulation of the places where some speech may occur; (2) the regulation was not adopted because of disagreement with the message the speech conveys; or (3) the government's

interests in the regulation are unrelated to the content of the affected speech."

The court ruled that the sign ordinance was content-neutral. The court went on to rule that when the regulation is content-neutral, it will be upheld if the regulation "furthers a substantial government interest, is narrowly tailored to further that interest, and leaves open ample alternative channels of communication." The court ruled that the sign ordinance complied with this test, because it prevented large signs that could be disruptive to traffic. Accordingly, it upheld the sign ordinance and the owner was required to comply with the ordinance.

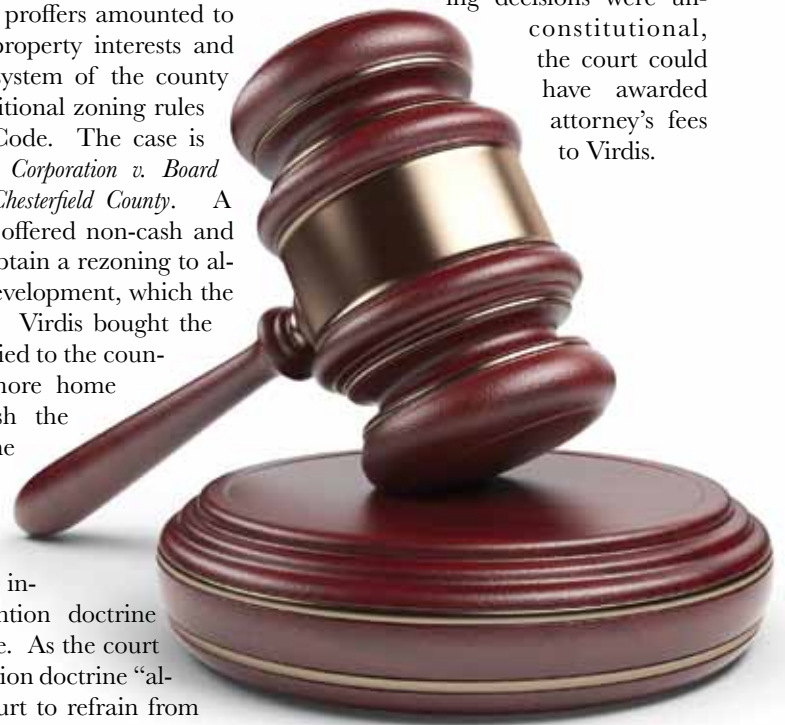
Is a land-use decision a matter for the federal courts to judge?

In February, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District upheld Chesterfield County's cash proffer provisions against a developer who sued on the basis that the proffers amounted to a taking of his property interests and that the proffer system of the county violated the conditional zoning rules of the Virginia Code. The case is *Virdis Development Corporation v. Board of Supervisors of Chesterfield County*. A prior owner had offered non-cash and cash proffers to obtain a rezoning to allow a 49-home development, which the county approved. Virdis bought the project, then applied to the county to add one more home and to extinguish the cash proffers. The county declined to abandon the cash proffers.

The court invoked the abstention doctrine to dismiss the case. As the court stated: the abstention doctrine "allows a federal court to refrain from

interfering with complex state regulatory schemes where state-court review is available if a case "[1] presents difficult questions of state law bearing on policy problems of substantial public import whose importance transcends the result then at bar, or [2] if its adjudication in a federal forum would be disruptive of state efforts to establish a coherent policy with respect to a matter of substantial public concern." The court went on to state that if a case is solely centered on the construction of state and local land use or zoning law and no constitutional issues are involved, the federal courts should stay out of the fray and allow the state courts to handle the matter.

One wrinkle with this case is Va. Code § 15.2-2208.1, which went into effect July, 2014. It allows Virginia state courts to award attorney's fees against a locality that violates the constitutional rights of a private party in acting on a permit or other approval application filed by the private party. Had Virdis filed the case in the Chesterfield Circuit Court and had the court ruled the zoning decisions were unconstitutional, the court could have awarded attorney's fees to Virdis.



Virginia Supreme Court reaffirms a deputy sheriff's employer


In *Roop v. Whitt*, Montgomery County Sheriff's Capt. Brad Roop had a falling out with the sheriff over Roop's complaints about the policies and practices of the office. The sheriff fired Roop, who then sued, complaining that the firing was in retaliation for his whistleblowing. He based his claim on the protection afforded "local employees" when they speak out on "matters of public concern." Va. Code §15.2-1512.4. The section defines "matters of public concern" to include "(i) evidence of corruption, impropriety, or other malfeasance on the part of government officials; (ii) violations of law; or (iii) incidence of fraud, abuse, or gross mismanagement." The section is a whistle-blower provision, meant to protect local government employees from retaliation from calling out improper practices.

The Virginia Supreme Court ruled that sheriffs' deputies are not local employees for purposes of § 15.2-1512.4. The court found that a "sheriff's deputy is appointed only by the sheriff" and is not subject to the supervision of the governing body. This led the court to rule that a sheriff's deputy is not a local employee, but, rather, solely an employee of the sheriff. Expanding its decision to all constitutional officers, the court found that "consequently, while constitutional officers may perform certain functions in conjunction with local government, they are neither agents of nor subordinate to local government. The local government has no control over their work performance. Similarly, constitutional officers are elected by the voters for prescribed terms. They are neither hired nor fired by the locality. They therefore are not local employees."

The relationship of the constitutional officers and the local governing body is often one that generates friction. This case makes it clear that constitutional officers' employees are not employees of the locality. By agreement, a constitutional officer may have his or her employees treated as local government employees, for example, making them subject to the locality's personnel policy. The employees, however, are still not local government employees.

Prayer at government meetings

Last May, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the constitutionality of prayers at the start of a council meeting in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*. In short, the Supreme Court reversed the standing rule of the federal 4th Circuit Court of Appeals and stated that allowing a sectarian opening prayer complies with the First Amendment, at least if the prayer fits the facts in the Town of Greece case.

VML suggested how a city or town prayer policy can be crafted to comply with the decision. A helpful guide is posted on the VML website at <http://bit.ly/1Gu2vQT>. 

About the author

Mark K. Flynn is general counsel for VML.



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VML IS SOLICITING ENTRIES for its 2015 Achievement Awards program. The deadline for submittals is Friday, May 29, 2015. Please take a few minutes to look over the rules and guidelines that follow. The winners of the five Population Categories, the Communications Award and the President's Award will be featured in an issue of *Virginia Town & City* magazine this fall. The awards will be presented at the 2015 VML Annual Conference in Richmond on Tuesday evening, Oct. 6.



THE 2015 VML ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS recognize the accomplishments of member local governments for innovative problem-solving, excellence in management, increasing citizen participation and striving toward higher service levels.

Population awards

The VML Achievement Awards competition includes five categories based on population so that local governments compete with other local governments of comparable size. The population categories are: (1) under 5,000; (2) 5,000-10,000; (3) 10,001-35,000; (4) 35,001-90,000; and (5) more than 90,000.

A local government may submit up to three entries in its population category. One winner will be selected from each population category to receive an Achievement Award. The winner of the President's Award – the entry that does the best job of fulfilling the criteria set forth below – will be chosen from the five population category winners.

Entries in the five population categories will be evaluated on the following criteria, which emphasize innovation, efficiency and entrepreneurship:

- Generally speaking, accomplishing projects and implementing programs that enhance the vitality and quality of life in cities, towns or counties;
- developing more innovative ways of delivering government services;
- implementing new or improved approaches in addressing a significant community need, or significantly improving an existing program;
- reflecting excellence in management;
- increasing citizen participation;
- striving toward higher service levels;
- possessing ideas and approaches that make a project or program relevant to other local governments;
- having a long-term value to the community; and
- showing a documented record of effectiveness that illustrates how a project or program has achieved its goals.

NOTE: All submittals in a population category must list one of the five population brackets on the cover page of the entry. For entries that represent significant improvements to existing programs, the improvements must have been made between Jan. 1, 2014 and May 1, 2015.

President's award

The winner of the President's Award – the entry that does the best job of fulfilling the criteria set forth above – will be chosen from the five population category winners. The winning entry will, in effect, be the equivalent of a best-in-show selection.

Communications award

The Communications Award recognizes the best in local government communications programs. Local governments of all sizes may submit one entry for this award.

Projects may include publications, audio-visual productions, special events, speeches, crisis plans, websites, social media initiatives, etc. CDs, DVDs and flash drives also may be submitted.

NOTE: All submittals in this category must list the entry as "Communications Award" on the cover page of the entry.

The judging

Entries will be screened by the VML staff and judged by a panel selected for its expertise in local government.

The winners

All winning entries will be featured in stories published in an issue of *Virginia Town & City* this fall. The Population Category winners, the winner of the President's Award and the winner of the Communications Award will be recognized and presented with their awards at the 2015 VML Annual Conference in Richmond on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Rules for entering ...

The competition is open to all Virginia Municipal League local government members.

Entries must describe programs or projects brought to conclusion or showing significant results between Jan. 1, 2014 and May 1, 2015.

Each entry must include a cover page bearing the title of the entry, the category of entry, the name of the locality submitting the entry, and the signature of the local government's chief administrative or elected official.

All entries must be typed double-spaced, and the

2015 VML ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CALL FOR ENTRIES



body of the entry, which does not include the cover page, appendices or any supplemental materials, must be at least two pages and not more than eight pages.

All entries must be bound or submitted in a notebook or presentation folder.

Submit one complete bound copy of your entry, including the cover page, all appendices and supplemental materials.

Entries may be accompanied by photographs, artwork, CDs, DVDs or flash drives.

A local government may submit up to four entries: three in its population category and one in the Communications category.

An entry that is entered in a population category may not be entered in the Communications category.

Entries must be postmarked by May 29, 2015.

The 4 possibilities

Each VML local government has the opportunity to submit up to four entries in this year's competition: three in its population category, plus one entry for the Communications Award. The winner of the President's Award will be selected from the winners of the five population categories.

Writing & presentation

Although the presentation of your entry will not be the most important consideration of the judges, it will be taken into account. Therefore your entries should have a neat appearance and should be well-written. Photographs or artwork are encouraged.

In writing your entry, be succinct and clear. State the program's goals and objectives; explain how the project or program was accomplished; and provide as much relevant information about quantifiable results as possible.

Write your entry so that it progresses in a logical manner and tells a story. Your introduction should include background information, such as the need for the project, how it originated, and the goals and objectives. Clearly explain how the project or program was carried out or how a program operates. Also include how the project or program is financed and staffed. Your conclusion should state the results of the project or program.

Helpful reminders

The staff person who assembles an entry should read all of these instructions in their entirety.

The entry must be signed on the cover page by the chief administrative officer or the chief elected official.

The cover page must show the category of entry, (e.g. Achievement Award - Population 35,001-90,000; or Communications Award.)

Only one copy of each entry needs to be submitted.

Final checklist

Does each entry have a cover page showing:

- The title of the entry? The category of the entry? The name of the locality? The signature of the chief administrative officer or elected official?
- Are your entries neatly and securely bound?

Entries will not be returned.

Deadline & address

All entries must be postmarked by May 29, 2015 and mailed to:

VML Achievement Awards
P.O. Box 12164
Richmond, VA 23241

or shipped (UPS, FedEx, etc.) to:

VML Achievement Awards
13 E. Franklin St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Entries will not be returned. If you have any questions, contact Nancy Chafin after April 1 at nchafin@vml.org or by telephone at 804/523-8527.



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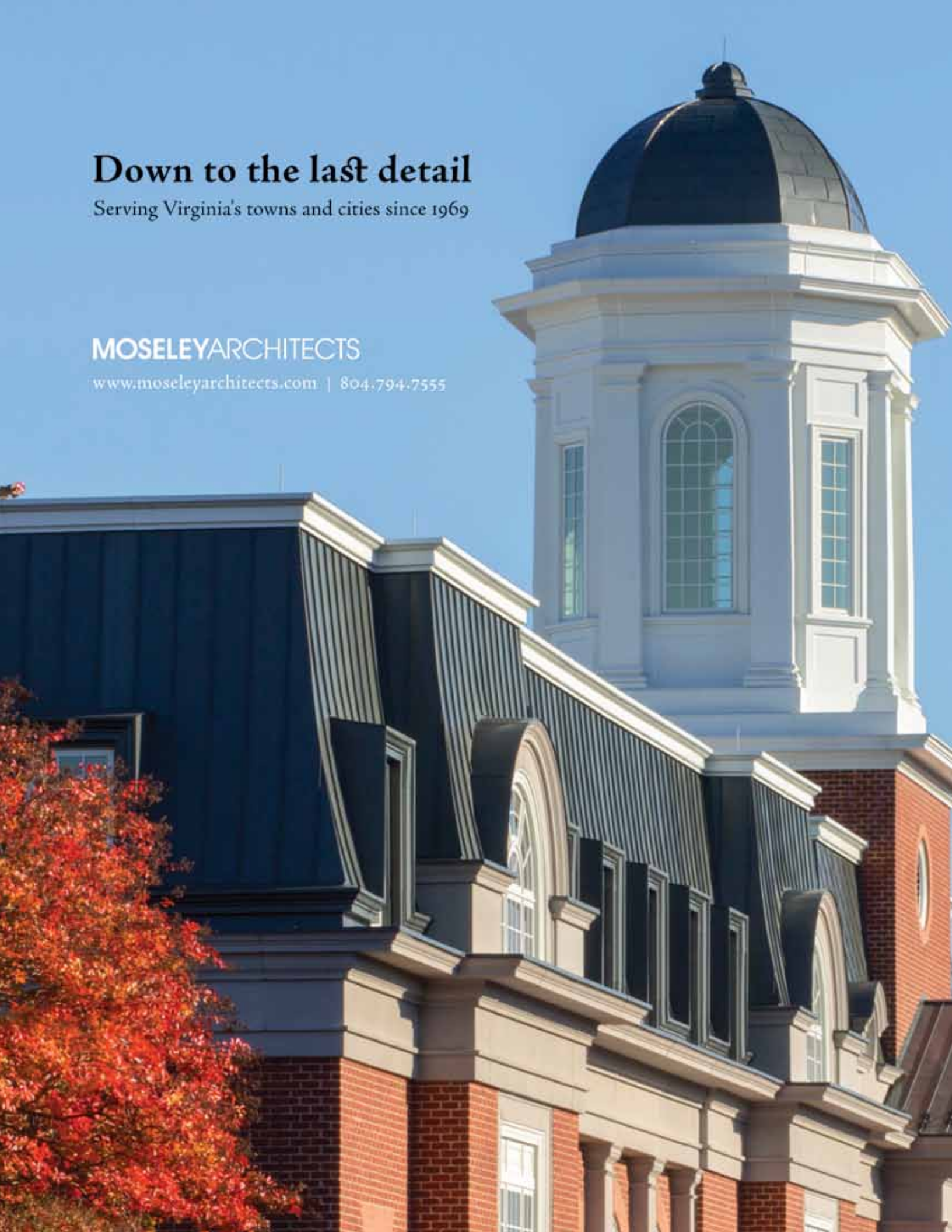
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