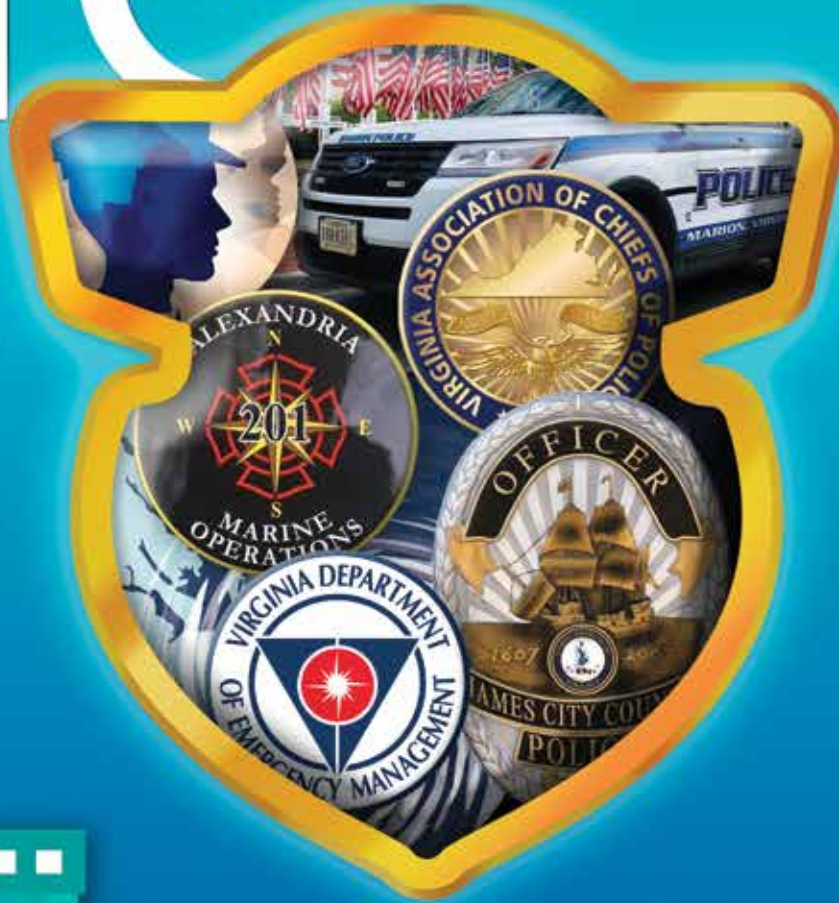


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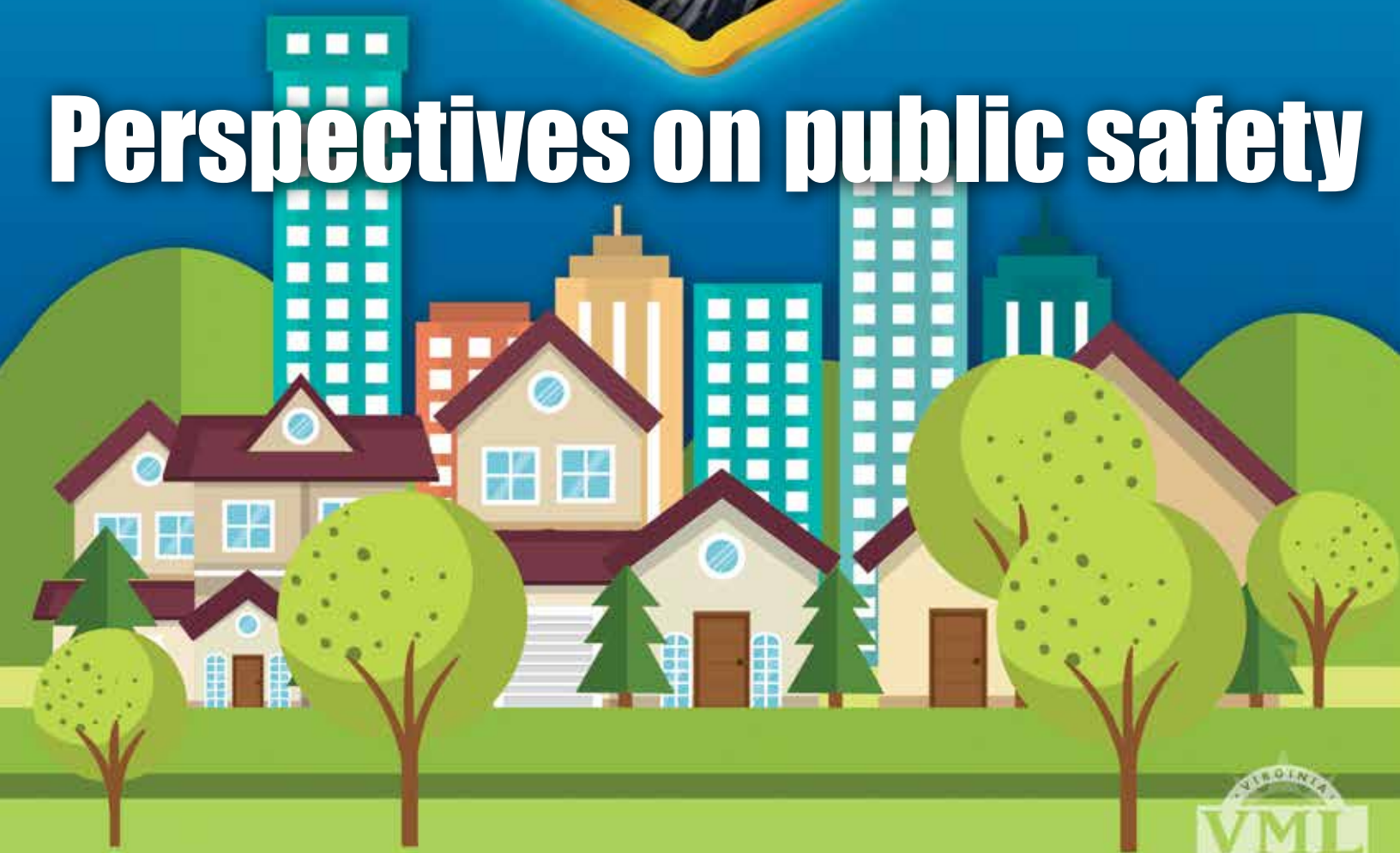
VIRGINIA
TOWN & CITY

VOL. 58 NO. 1 JAN./FEB. 2023

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



Perspectives on public safety





VRSA

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

VOL. 58 NO. 1 JAN. / FEB. 2023

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ABOUT THE COVER

Public safety is job #1 for all levels of government. Why? Because without it not much else matters. Here's a big shout-out to the folks that keep us safe. Thanks!

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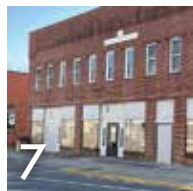
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Where heroes meet healing

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Be prepared to support public safety personnel (all of them)

MOST DAYS DURING my commute I see that “one driver” that I hope a policeman pulls over. I’m sure all of you can relate with your own “one driver” experiences! On the other hand, it makes me smile when I see a police officer helping someone on the side of the road. And of course, I’m thankful when I hear about firefighters saving people from a burning home or even just going to a child’s birthday party. These are the actions that inspire future generations to seek a life in service to their community. Maybe it’s because we see and hear about them so often that we automatically think about police and fire personnel when we think “public safety”. But the people who form the public safety net for our communities also include the 911 dispatchers who are the first point of contact between the community member experiencing an emergency and the services that can help them. They include the water and wastewater people who ensure that we have safe water to drink and the people who keep our sidewalks and roads safe for travel. These people, and so many more, are all responsible for our public safety. So, let’s thank all public safety employees for all that they do!



In preparing your locality for an emergency, it’s important to know the roles of the local, state, and federal government. *Virginia Code Title 44, Chapter 3.2* sets out the rules for state and local government emergency management. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management is responsible for the Commonwealth Emergency Operations plan which “...provides for state

government’s response to emergencies and disasters wherein assistance is needed by affected state, tribal, and local governments in order to save lives, protect public health, safety, and property, restore essential services, and enable and assist with economic recovery.” (Executive Order 42, 2019)

The same *Virginia Code* chapter tasks local governments with appointing a director of emergency management and creating an emergency operations plan that outlines the responsibilities of all local agencies and a chain of command. Both the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund are to be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency. The local plan must be reviewed every four years and adopted formally by the locality’s governing body. To make matters more complicated, all political subdivisions must provide an annually updated emergency management assessment and data related to emergency sheltering capabilities to the State Coordinator of Emergency Management on or before August 1 of each year.

While this may sound like a lot of work, it’s important to keep in mind that these plans are what your public safety officials will rely upon when a disaster occurs. As a local elected official or employee, you should be aware of what is in your locality’s plan and what (if anything) you are responsible for under the plan. While we all want to be helpful during an emergency, if something falls outside your realm of responsibility then your role is to be in the background and provide support to those tasked with dealing with it directly.

In addition to the emergency plans that local governments draft and enact, it is also important to think about how to provide information to the community. Is it by social media, email, text, or flyers in mailboxes? Depending on where you are and what your message might be, it is important to have a deliberate messaging campaign to provide information and demonstrate the continuity of government. You also need to think about who makes the messaging decision. Do you have a communications person? Is it the mayor and manager together or separately? Or does the council or the board have time to work collectively on a message?

During the emergency, while our public safety officials stay out in the field working hard to stymie the disaster – which could last hours or days (or longer as we were reminded in 2020) – it is important to stick to your role and to know how best to support the team.

Finally, after any disaster or drill there should be a wrap-up meeting – with a lot of appreciation and cookies! This wrap up is a great opportunity to learn how things can be handled better in the future and is a great time to revamp your plans!

Thanks to all our public safety officials and please enjoy this magazine!

In Memoriam: Jill Carson

TOWN OF PENNINGTON GAP Councilmember and VML President Jill Carson passed on Saturday, January 28. Originally from Connecticut, Carson spent her formative years in Boston, MA where she met Ron Carson, a native of Pennington Gap. After the two were married and had been working in the Boston area for over a decade they made the decision to move with their young son Kevin to Pennington Gap. Soon afterward their daughter Alexis was born. Carson, who had worked for Prudential in Boston, became a finance officer for Lee County public schools' Head Start program and also contracted with the Department of Health and Human Services which gave her opportunities to travel and visit Head Start programs around the country.

The Carsons quickly became friends with Dr. Art Van Zee, his wife Sue Ella Kobak, and Sister Beth Davies all of whom were involved in working for the rights of the area's coal miners and went on to fight on the front lines of the opioid epidemic. Jill became a community organizer and in 2012 was one of the founding members of the Pennington Gap Industrial Development Authority. Ron, after helping to implement a grant for black lung benefits in the region, eventually became the chair of the National Black Lung Coalition for which he was recognized by Congress and President Biden. He now serves as the 2nd Vice Chair of the 400 Years of African American History Commission.

When the couple learned that the county planned to demolish the one-room schoolhouse in Pennington Gap where Ron had attended elementary school, they fought to save it. After finally gaining control of the building and grounds, the Carsons turned it into the Appalachian African American Culture Center. The Center's work collecting the stories of the region's Black voices and related memorabilia has garnered national attention.

Carson was elected to the Pennington Gap Town Council in 2014, the first Black woman to do so. She would later serve as the town's Vice-Mayor. Of her time on council, Carson was quick to cite the town's purchase and restoration of the historic downtown Lee Theater as among her proudest accomplishments. Carson began serving on the VML Executive Board in 2016 and was a fierce advocate for Virginia's small towns. She was elected President by VML's members at the 2022 annual conference in Richmond where she delivered an inspirational address on the importance of civility in government.

Carson's work on council, for VML, and the Cultural Center continued unabated despite declining health in recent months. She will be remembered as a cherished member of her family, a dedicated servant to the Town of Pennington Gap, and a champion for marginalized people in small communities across the Appalachian region and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Services were held at the Lee Theater on Saturday, February 4. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Appalachian African American Cultural Center to help continue their great work in Jill's honor.

Remembering Jill...

"Over the years of attending VML meetings and events, Jill was always there being an advocate for Pennington Gap and many Virginia towns. We shared many stories about being among the few Black vice mayors throughout Virginia. She was a fighter. She spoke her mind and was very respected and loved. I will miss her deeply."

- VML President-Elect and Town of Farmville Vice Mayor Chuckie Reid



"Jill and I first met at a VML Annual Conference. I didn't know her at the time but she walked right up to me and she said, 'I need to get on the VML Executive Board. I'm from Southwest Virginia and we are not well represented!' So, we talked, and I said 'OK' and started telling people we needed to vote for her. Actually, I was the president of the City Section at the time and was trying to get on the Board myself! But I got behind her.

She was pretty right on and she supported me 100 percent when I was president. She was a wonderful board member and became president. She and her husband Ron loved Pennington Gap and did so much including founding the Appalachian African American Cultural Center. She was always taking care of Southwest Virginia."

- VML Past President and City of Galax Mayor Willie Greene

"I am beyond at a loss for words. I cannot believe my dear friend is gone. I feel blessed to have had her in my life – she was such a good friend, so proud of the many accomplishments of her family, her passion for far Southwest Virginia as she would remind us, and her love for so many people! Her heart was so big – Jill blessed so many."

- VML Past President and former City of Roanoke Vice Mayor Anita James Price

Learn more about Jill Carson's amazing life and work in the cover story interview of the December 2022 issue of *Virginia Town & City*.

Blacksburg selects English as first career rescue chief



- English -

On February 6 **David English** took the helm as the first career rescue chief in the Town of Blacksburg's history. In 2003, English joined Blacksburg Rescue Squad as a volunteer. In the years that followed he served as lieutenant and captain, before being appointed volunteer chief in 2015. Prior to accepting the career position of chief, English was a deputy with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office for fourteen years, serving eight of those years supervising the jail medical department. For the past six years, he has also worked as the training coordinator for the Sheriff's Office.

English presently serves as vice chair of the New River Valley Regional 911 Authority Joint Advisory Board, and he's a member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee, and Fire and Rescue Commission. Additionally, he represents Montgomery County on the Western Virginia EMS Council Board of Directors. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he supported the Blacksburg community by working as a part of the incident command team for the New River Valley Public Health Task Force.

English became certified as an EMT in 2000. In the fall of 2002, he moved to Blacksburg from Long Hill Township, NJ to attend Virginia Tech, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a minor in Mathematics. He would go on to complete a paramedic program from Southwest Virginia Community College in 2011, and earn a graduate certificate in Local Government Management in 2016 as well as a Master's degree in Public Administration from Virginia Tech in 2021.

DeDomenico-Payne appointed Front Royal councilmember



On January 23, the Front Royal Town Council appointed **Dr. Melissa DeDomenico-Payne** to fill the seat left vacant as a result of Lori A. Cockrell having been elected mayor.

- DeDomenico-Payne - DeDomenico-Payne is the Grants Manager at Laurel Ridge Community College in Middletown.

Of her appointment to council, Dr. DeDomenico-Payne said the following in a press release: "I am grateful for and honored by the council's appointment. I look forward to contributing my best efforts to town service. I understand the incredible responsibilities and opportunities the position holds. I am committed to listening to the citizenry and learning from them. I believe community engagement will be so integral in helping me to be responsive and active in pursuing the best interests of the town."

Movers and shakers

Do you know someone who's on the move? Send your announcements about new hires in local government, promotions, retirements, awards and honors to Rob Bullington at rbullington@vml.org.

DeDomenico-Payne holds a Bachelor's degree in English and Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Shenandoah University, a Master of the Arts in Psychological Services Counseling from Marymount University, and a Doctoral Degree in Public Administration from Capella University.



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Kenbridge Mayor Morrison takes office and makes history



When **Wanda Gordon Morrison** began her two-year term as mayor of the Town of Kenbridge on January 1, she became both the first person of color and the first female to hold that position. She ran unopposed and received more votes than any of the candidates for the town council.

- Morrison -

Morrison has roots in Kenbridge and is a 1978 graduate of Central of Lunenburg High School graduate. She was first elected to council five years ago when a vacancy opened up and she went on to serve as vice-mayor.

The community came together to congratulate and celebrate Morrison on her historic achievement at the Mayor's Inaugural Meet-and-Greet on February 25 at The Lunenburg Country Club.

Morrison attended VCU and Strayer University and holds a Master's degree in

Business Administration. She served 38 years in the U. S. Army Reserves and retired as a Sergeant Major (SGM), the highest rank a Non-Commissioned Officer can reach in the Army. She worked for more than three decades for the former SunTrust bank (now Truist) and retired as group vice president.

Jenkins is the new chief of police in Portsmouth



- Jenkins -

In early January, interim chief of police **Stephen Jenkins** was appointed as the City of Portsmouth's new chief of police. Chief Jenkins has been the interim police chief since July 6, 2022 and has been a member

of law enforcement for over two decades. He has been a Portsmouth police officer since 2003, rising through the ranks and holding several positions as an investigator with the department's Professional Standards Unit (Internal Affairs) and the Property Crimes Unit. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 2011. He served as a supervisor in Uniform Patrol, Property Crimes, and the Major Crimes Unit/Homicide. Jenkins was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in 2018. As a Lieutenant, Jenkins has been the commander of the Professional Standards Unit, the Training Division, and the Special Investigation Division, supervising the Special Investigations Unit (Narcotics), the Fugitive Apprehension Unit, and the Gang Intelligence Unit. He was appointed interim assistant chief in December 2021.

Jenkins has received numerous awards and accolades throughout his law enforcement career and has made many accomplishments. He is a 2006 graduate of the Virginia School of Polygraph and attended the International Association of Chiefs of Police Leadership in Police Organizations — Session 6 in 2018. He received a Meritorious Conduct Medal in 2013, a Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce Life Saving Award in 2013, Supervisor of the Year in 2015, and American Legion Post 190 Police Officer of the Year in 2016.

Chief Jenkins, a Hampton Roads native, was raised in Chesapeake and is a 1992 graduate of Deep Creek High School. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Virginia State University and is currently enrolled and working on his Master's degree in Organizational Leadership at Columbia Southern University.

Celebrating Our 20 Year Milestone

Thanks to all of our 308 (and counting) Virginia local government participants!

- ▶ More than 300 loan closings*
- ▶ \$4 billion in invested assets
- ▶ Over 200 accounting engagements and actuarial studies

(Background image: A road stretching into the distance under a sunset sky)

* Includes loans and Municipal Advisory engagements | valocalfinance.org

New Market selects Nicholson as new town manager

On January 30, the New Market Town Council unanimously agreed that **Amos “Buster” Nicholson** will become the new town manager.

Nicholson will replace Todd Walters who is retiring after five years in the position and 35 years total in municipal government work. Walters’ will remain town manager for two weeks after Nicholson begins work to aid in the transition.

Nicholson is a former elementary school teacher in the Loudoun County Public Schools division and a former town administrator of Round Hill. In New Market, the town manager also serves as the town clerk. Nicholson served in those dual roles during his tenure in Round Hill. Since June of 2020, he has worked as an account manager for American Military University in Charles Town, WV.

Before beginning his job at American Military University, Nicholson served almost two years as the director of public works for the town of Purcellville.

Of Nicholson’s selection, Councilmember Peter Hughes observed: “We’ve got lots of (public works) projects going on in town and he has experience in many similar kinds of projects, and I think he’s got a high level of determination in project management that will help us.”

Nicholson, who currently lives in Charles Town and plans to move to the New Market area, said after the meeting that the town manager’s opening appealed to him for several reasons. For example, he said he loves working for municipalities, looks forward to working on New Market’s numerous planned projects, such as its water tank, sewer line and sidewalk projects, and embraces the opportunity to continue living in the Shenandoah Valley.

“It’s a great place,” Nicholson said. “I just love it. How can you not, right?”

Nicholson earned a Bachelor’s degree in Education from Shepherd University, in Shepherdstown, WV and holds a Master’s degree in Supervision and Administration also from Shenandoah University.



- Nicholson -

James City County’s Ruch elected to regional committee and work group

James City County Deputy Coordinator **Sara Ruch** was recently elected as vice chair of the Hampton Roads All Hazards Advisory Committee (AHAC). AHAC provides policy direction and oversight for the development and maintenance of a coordinated and integrated regional approach to emergency management planning and response systems.

Ruch was also elected as the chair of the Hampton Roads Urban Area Working group which ensures that applications for funding under grant programs such as the Hampton Roads Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program, support closing capability gaps or sustaining capabilities in Hampton Roads.

The term for both positions is Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023.

Ruch has worked as the deputy emergency manager for James City County since April 2017.



- Ruch -

Geist is South Hill’s new deputy chief of police

The Town of South Hill welcomed **Greg Geist** as their new deputy chief of the South Hill Police Department with a swearing in ceremony on January 30. He supersedes William Shane Johnson, who retired in December 2022 after twenty-three years of service with the department.

Geist has served with the Petersburg Bureau of Police since 2004 most recently as their field operations division captain, and before that as the bureau’s administrative division captain. He has held supervisory positions in Criminal Investigations, Major Crimes, and Narcotics. He served as a state police task force officer for three years and as a patrol officer before that.

Geist will be completing his Master’s degree in criminal justice this May from Liberty University and holds a Bachelor’s degree from Philadelphia University. Geist is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy.



- Geist -

Staunton hires Kaufman as assistant city manager

On February 21, **Amanda Kaufman** began work as the City of Staunton’s new assistant city manager.



- Kaufman -

Kaufman brings a wide breadth of local government management experience to the City of Staunton, having served in localities across the United States.

Most recently, she served as deputy county administrator in Bedford County where she provided oversight, guidance and direction to numerous county departments including Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Human Resources, Information Technology, Tourism, Public Information, and the nursing home. Kaufman also helped lead the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic and had leadership roles in special projects, including the community-wide broadband initiative and implementation of a strategic plan.

Prior to Bedford County, Kaufman served in the City of Marion, IA for seven and a half years, first as assistant to the city manager and finally as deputy city manager. While in Marion, she worked extensively on the development of internal services functions, including communications, information technology and budget. In this role, she developed and managed the capital improvement program, was extensively involved in economic development, held leadership roles in a variety of strategic initiatives and served on city and community boards.

Before serving in Marion, Kaufman was a local government management fellow through the International City County Management Association (ICMA) with the City of Olathe, KS.

Kaufman earned a Bachelor’s degree in Public Administration and Political Science with minors in Economics and Women’s and Gender Studies from Winona State University in Minnesota. She holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before attending graduate school, Kaufman spent a year in the AmeriCorps as a community outreach coordinator for two Minnesota non-profit organizations.

Big news about grants in Onancock

AS PART OF MORE than \$24.7 million invested in 22 Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) grants announced in late 2022, the Town of Onancock received a \$1 million grant to rehabilitate the Lilliston building, the largest, most centrally located and visibly blighted structure in the town's downtown. The Lilliston building, which has been vacant for nearly two decades, will be renovated into a mixed-use structure with first floor commercial space and six residential units on the second floor.

The grant also creates a pool of funds to provide low-interest loans to future developers of other vacant, blighted commercially zoned properties in downtown Onancock. It is hoped that these renovations will be a catalyst for economic resurgence in the immediate area.

The funds were obtained through a partnership between the Town of Onancock and Onancock Main Street (OMS) which identified the IRF grant as the best source of funds to rehabilitate the property. OMS also coordinated the application process with the developer, town, and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The town will administer the funds in perpetuity.

"This grant is a major advancement to incentivize investment in our downtown while improving the vibrancy and attractiveness of Onancock to residents and tourists," said Matt Spuck, Onancock town manager in a press release. "It

also demonstrates the power of a shared commitment between the town and OMS to achieve these goals."

The Town Onancock also recently received VDOT's Ready, Set, Go! Grant. The Town has a Sidewalk Connector project that would connect two sidewalk terminations to provide safe passage for pedestrians around a blind corner next to a commercial truck entrance.

VDOT's Ready, Set, Go! Grant is designed to help smaller communities develop a Transportation Alternative (TA) program eligible idea into a project that is ready for application submission to the TA program.



NVRC designated a Certified Virginia Values Veterans Employer

THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA Regional Commission is pleased to have been designated a Certified Virginia Values Veterans Employer (V3).

According to the V3 website, "The V3 Program not only aims to educate and train companies on why it is a good business decision to recruit, hire, train, and retain veterans, but also to help those committed companies meet their hiring goals." The Virginia Values Veterans Program is a free training and certification program for employers to help them implement nationally recognized best practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly skilled and dependable veterans. In 2022 Northern Virginia was designated as a Great American Defense Community.

NVRC has a more than decade long history of working with the military and has a dedicated Community, Military and Federal Facilities Partnership Committee. The Committee is currently co-chaired by Fairfax County Supervisor Penelope A. Gross and Prince William County Supervisor Victor Angry.

The Co-Chairs of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission's Community, Military and Federal Facilities Partnership Committee, the Honorable Penelope A. Gross of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Honorable Victor S. Angry of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, proudly displaying the certificate designating the Commission as a certified V3 employer.



Norfolk receives additional Community Flood Preparedness Funds

ON DEC. 30, 2022, THE VIRGINIA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) announced \$51.7 million in supplemental awards for the third round of the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) Grant Application. The City of Norfolk will receive more than \$24.6 million to support its Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) Project – the largest grant amount awarded in this round.

In conjunction with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the CSRM Project was authorized in January 2022 as part of President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to strengthen port and waterway supply chains and bolster climate resilience. Under this plan, the city will receive nearly \$400 million in federal funding to increase community resilience to flooding. As the nonfederal sponsor, the city is required to assemble a 35 percent match prior to the commencement of each project phase.

To support the nonfederal match efforts, the city’s Office of Resilience submitted a CFPF grant application for Phase 1A of the project, which is focused on the Ghent-Downtown-Harbor Park Flood Protection Barrier System. The \$24.6 million in CFPF funding will support developments that provide protection from coastal storm surge flooding using structural and non-structural means. This phase provides the most natural and nature-based features (NNBFs) of any coastal flood protection project within the system, and within any single project in Norfolk’s history.

Phase 1A of the project will protect the most vulnerable populations within Norfolk, including assisted housing residents of the St. Paul’s Transformation Area that will include thousands of residents returning to the Tidewater Gardens community, as well as those currently residing in the Young Terrace and Calvert Square housing communities. The project will construct a hybrid flood barrier system consisting of a green levee extending eastward from the I-264 Berkley Bridge, beyond Harbor Park with hybrid I-/T-walls terminating at the soon-to-be-completed Ohio Creek Watershed flood protection project, itself a \$112 million resilience project funded in part through grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The CFPF was established to provide support for regions and localities to reduce the impacts of flooding. DCR administers the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund and grant program in cooperation with the Virginia Resources Authority.



Portsmouth ranked #1 market for first-time homebuyers by Realtor.com

REALTOR.COM’S 2023 HOUSING Forecast includes insights into expected sales and price growth in the nation’s 100 largest metros. In crafting the list for the best markets for first time homebuyers, they included growth expectations for each market’s surrounding metro area. Towns and cities were ranked according to a list of key guiding criteria that could be attractive to first-time buyers. Overall, 659 cities and places with a population of more than 5,000 that are located within the 100 largest metro areas were ranked. The rankings were based on the following criteria:

- The share of 25- to 34-year-olds in the local population.
- The availability of homes for sale, measured by active listings per 1000 existing households, to ensure that homebuyers have a good amount of choice in their search.
- A measure of affordability, estimated by the ratio of listing prices to gross incomes of 25- to 34-year-olds in that city.

- A measure of job opportunities, estimated by the forecasted unemployment rate of the city’s surrounding metro area.
- The average commute time to work.
- A measure of the amenities in an area, estimated by the count of food and drink establishments per 1000 households in the city’s surrounding metro area.
- Forecasted metro home sales and home price growth in 2023, as new buyers may want to ensure they locate to a healthy market which will support equity growth and an easy transition when they have outgrown their home.

Based on the above criteria, and a cap of one city per metro to allow for a greater diversity of options across the country, Realtor.com’s #1 pick for First-Time Home Buyers for this coming year was...(drum roll)...Portsmouth, VA!

Of the ranking, Portsmouth Mayor Shannon Glover said: “I am elated to see our city recognized as number #1 on the list for First-Time Homebuyers in 2023. We continue to make Portsmouth a community where first-time homebuyers will choose to Live, work and play. We are Portsmouth Proud of this outstanding recognition.”

Additional information available at www.realtor.com/research/first-time-homebuyer-markets-2023.



Newport News debuts new city brand and strategic message

AFTER A THOROUGH PROCESS involving hundreds of residents, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders, the City of Newport News has launched a new brand and strategic message – Newport News: Built on Breakthroughs.

“Newport News is a city of dreamers and doers, innovators and inventors, scholars and singers, and everyone in between,” said Newport News’ then mayor McKinley L. Price in a press release. “We are a city on the move, constantly changing and always creating. Our breakthroughs are built to change today and impact tomorrow. We smash atoms and build nuclear aircraft carriers – anything is possible in Newport News!”

This initiative is much more than a logo and tagline; it is a community pride-building campaign that will be activated artistically and three dimensionally by the city, businesses, and residents. Initial plans include signage, murals,

outreach campaigns, increased messaging, and much more.

The city website, www.nnva.gov, has been updated to reflect the new brand and additional site enhancements have increased functionality to communicate the dynamic new message.

Newport News partnered with North Star Place Branding and Marketing on this project. A leader in capturing and crafting the story of places, North Star has helped develop brands for more than 250 communities.



Emporia Pathways Project selected for Fannie Mae Innovation Challenge 2022 contract

IN JANUARY, FANNIE MAE announced the selection of five organizations to receive deliverable-based contracts under the Sustainable Communities Innovation Challenge, a nationwide competition to help advance racial equity in housing. Through the Innovation Challenge 2022 (IC22), the company sought innovative, scalable proposals to remove barriers that currently prevent many households, including Black households, from purchasing or renting a home.

Among the IC22 contract awardees is the Southside Community Development & Housing Corporation (SCDHC), a non-profit housing developer in the Richmond Metro Area. SCDHC creates viable, thriving, and sustainable communities across Central Virginia by providing residential and commercial development, homeownership and financial counseling and coaching, employment services, and supportive programs to low-income families. Their Fannie Mae contract advances their SCDHC Emporia Pathways Project, which includes the construction of affordable

housing. The project is part of a 3-5 year construction pipeline that will include rental housing and homeownership opportunities as well as rental and prepurchase counseling, foreclosure prevention services, workforce development training and a range of financial capability services.

About Fannie Mae

Fannie Mae has been at the forefront of developing and implementing products and programs that facilitate equitable and sustainable access to homeownership and quality affordable rental housing. In 2022, the company released the Equitable Housing Finance Plan, a series of actions that address different barriers in housing experienced by homebuyers and renters.

About the Innovation Challenge

The Innovation Challenge is part of Fannie Mae’s Sustainable Communities Partnership and Innovation initiative, which focuses on developing collaborative, cross-sector approaches to advancing sustainable communities and generating solutions for the nation’s most pressing housing issues. Fannie Mae solicited proposals that specifically address the insufficient supply of quality affordable housing options, insufficient funds for upfront and unexpected housing costs, and consumer credit challenges, including low credit scores and credit invisibility.

To learn more about IC22, the contract awardees, and their innovative solutions, visit www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge.



Falls Church library honored with prestigious 2022 Star Library rating

THE MARY RILEY STYLES Public Library (MRSPL) in the City of Falls Church has been named a “Star Library” in Library Journal’s recently released Index of Public Library Service 2022. This is the 15th year in which Library Journal has scored U.S. public libraries on the LJ Index of Public Library Service and awarded Star Library ratings. MRSPL has received a star designation 14 of the 15 years.

The LJ Index rates U.S. public libraries based on selected per capita output measures, including:

- Circulation (both items and electronic materials)
- Library visits
- Program attendance
- Internet computer use
- Public wi-fi sessions
- Electronic retrievals (from online databases)
- Library website visits

The 2022 scores and ratings are based on Fiscal Year 2020 data – the most recent nationally available – from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Public Library Survey (PLS). For 2022 – again based on 2020 data – 5,359 public libraries received LJ Index scores, and 258 of them received Stars.

To learn more, view the complete America’s Star Libraries 2022 list at www.libraryjournal.com/page/star-libraries-2022.



Tappahannock receives IRF and VBRSP grants

RECENTLY, THE TOWN OF TAPPAHANNOCK was pleased to announce that the town, in partnership with Ross-Simpson Properties, is a recipient of a \$250,000 grant award from the Virginia DHCD, 2022 Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) Awarded Projects. These funds will support the renovation of historic Emerson’s Ordinary, a tavern dating back to 1710 and considered one of the oldest surviving ordinaries in Virginia.

In July 2022, Tappahannock suffered a massive fire that destroyed almost an entire block located in the historic downtown. The 1710 Tavern project will fill the need for fine dining in Tappahannock’s downtown district and further enhance the town as a tourist destination. The project serves as a cornerstone in advancing Tappahannock Main Street’s initiatives and is expected to create between 20 to 30 new jobs.

The owners’ vision is to restore Emerson’s Ordinary, a structure steeped in patriotism and the founding of our country. The building’s history includes ties to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and other prominent historical Virginians. The owners envision the 1710 Tavern to be a meeting place for residents, visitors, and a home to a new generation’s celebrations. “A place for everyone to enjoy fellowship of this community in a living piece of history.”

The town is also the recipient of a \$261,300 grant award from the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) Development Grant. This grant is awarded from the Virginia Economic

Development Partnership for planning and design services. These funds will support the development of an industrial park located at 540 Airport Road – a property formerly known as the ‘old airport.’

540 Airport Road is a former Federal Airport that was decommissioned in 1955. Following that, the property was acquired as a donation to the town. Since the acquisition, the 126-acre property has been rented out to local farmers for temporary grain storage. The town has aspired to turn this property into an industrial park for many years.

Construction is not expected to begin for another 24-36 months. The town’s goal is to locate higher wage paying employers shortly after construction is complete. The principal use of land and buildings will be for light use manufacturing and assembly plants, processing storage, warehousing, wholesaling, and distribution. It is the intent that permitted uses of each operation is confined within an enclosed building limiting noises, odor, dust, and glare.





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Perspectives on public safety



Five dimensions for better policing

“In any enterprise requiring the collaboration of intelligent people – and that means just about any enterprise worth doing – the ‘underlying cause’, or motivating principle, should never remain a guarded secret or a vaguely articulated cliché.”

– Alan Axelrod, “Eisenhower on Leadership”

As a chief of police, I strive to bring clarity to my jurisdiction’s law enforcement mission. I don’t want our ideology to be a vaguely articulated cliché. In my experience, many police departments fall victim to expressing their organizing principles and mission scope as vaguely articulated clichés. In those jurisdictions, the result is often what political scientist Steven Teles terms the “kludgeocracy.” These are:

“...systems in which every solution is basically an inelegant patch put in place to solve an unexpected problem and designed to be backward compatible with the rest of the system. This creates a very complicated program that has no clear organizing principles, is exceedingly difficult to understand, and is subject to crashes.”

I can’t think of a better description than “kludgeocracy” for the organizational ills afflicting many contemporary law enforcement enterprises. Of course, most people outside law enforcement likely consider our task straightforward: make arrests and write tickets. However, the task is only simple if the goals stop at the end of the of the police cruiser’s hood. The reality is that our profession’s goals can be far more comprehensive. As an example, consider this draft mission statement for my department:

“The Marion Police Department delivers core law enforcement services, in a relational tone, and with a professional character consistent with the expectations of our community.”



We are a genuine and legitimate contributor to the safety and security of our citizens, and thereby a vital part of our shared and flourishing society.”

Note that I don’t want us to do everything. Rather, I want us to perform our department’s core tasks relationally and professionally. I want us to be genuine contributors to the safety of our citizens. I want Marion to flourish because of the department and the community’s shared efforts.

Here are the five dimensions for better policing, I believe will bring this vision into reality:

1. The essence of policing should remain an analog endeavor.
2. Wisdom makes for better policing than worldview.
3. Irenic policing genuinely contributes to a flourishing society.
4. Core competency is the root of professionalism.
5. Legitimate policing is whole community shaped.

Ultimately, I want our citizens to have the confidence to know that the police department is not only doing what the Code of Virginia requires, but so much more – internally and externally.

1. Analog endeavors

To understand what I mean by “analog endeavors” it’s helpful to paraphrase author Neil Postman who observes that in our technology driven society we are surrounded by throngs of zealots who only see what new technology can do and are incapable of imagining what it can undo. This is what concerns me as well – all the things technology makes impossible.

Don’t mistake my concerns about technology as a Luddite desire to tear it all down! The amazing benefits we all reap from medical technology are a prime example of how it can make our lives better. Rather, my concern is that technology not be back fed into the essence of policing. At its core, policing is a relational endeavor which demands making connections in the real world. Or, to put it in the language of audiophiles – it is analog, not digital. As such, I am immediately critical of processes which introduce barriers to real world relationship. So, when I am confronted by a proposed process, I ask a simple question: Does this (action, technology, or equipment) discourage the building of relationships on the ground? If it does, we should avoid it.

I’ll admit, these days the task becomes increasingly difficult as technology is not merely integrated into our culture, it literally BECOMES our culture. The ubiquity of it, however, doesn’t change basic truths. Twitter, for example, is not a real place. What is real is the anguish and pain experienced by people who call the police for help. Also real is the hope and relief first responders can bring. We don’t

always bring succor perfectly, and at times not even admirably, but I maintain that hope and relief would never be found by interacting with a digital law enforcement kiosk.

I realize that my commitment to the “analog” approach is likely only feasible in smaller jurisdictions. This is fine with me; I work and live in a small town. I’m not concerned with going viral. I’m concerned with my neighbors, all 6,000 of them. So long as I’m the chief of police in my community, I won’t waiver in my commitment to actualizing their experience with our department through people hand-selected for the task. I have yet to hire someone for their demonstrated technical prowess. Rather, I hire individuals for one quality – character driven, relational, humanity.

2. Wisdom over worldview

This dimension is perhaps best summarized by the axiom to “Never confuse the map, with the terrain.” A good map, even one drawn to scale, can never convey the nuances of interaction between the traveler and terra firma. The elevation may be calculable, but not felt. The undergrowth indicated, but not experienced.

Worldview thinking is like understanding the world as though it were a map instead of a place. This way of thinking is resistant to learning, self-contained, and in many instances just plain lazy. It’s a quick and easy way to appear as if you understand your neighbor, without actually having to do any of the work of getting to know them. Worldview thinking is why so many of us are so willing to do battle with our neighbors, on almost any topic, at any moment. If this way of thinking were an animal, it’s habitat would be social media!

Wisdom, however, is “the soul’s attunement to the order of reality.” So, policing from a perspective of wisdom means that we ask what we don’t know about a particular person, situation, or problem as opposed to asserting what we think we know. After the events in Minneapolis in 2020, wise policing led me to sit with our friends at Mt. Zion Church for over four hours to hear and experience their perceptions of our community and the role of our agency within it. This led me to what I hope were informed, tone-literate, and empathetic responses. Wise policing led me to deeply consider what it means that the demographics in my community differ from those in most of our nation. Wise policing is why I write a bi-weekly column to better ensure that my community knows exactly who I am in my own words. Wise policing is the best kind of policing, and it’s the kind every small community should have.

3. Municipal irenicism

“Let us not think that because we are less brutal, less violent, less inhuman than our opponents we will carry the day. Brutality, violence, and inhumanity have an immense prestige that schoolbooks hide from children, that grown men do not admit, but that everybody bows before. For the opposite virtues to have as much prestige, they must be actively and constantly put into practice...”

- French activist and philosopher
Simone Weil

To me, Ms. Weil’s final line is the most striking – virtue must be “actively and constantly put into practice.” Merely being less aggressive doesn’t do the trick, there must be an active propagation of actions tending towards peace – this is known as irenicism.



(L-R) Chief John Clair, Sgt. Kevin Testerman, and Ofc. Mason Wagoner.

Don’t misunderstand me. I’m all too familiar with the bare realities of life to embrace an uncritical or unrealistic belief in social cohesion. Rather, I submit that as a community we can, with deliberate effort, counteract the cultural tranquilizers of isolation, propaganda, and polarization. In this vein, I believe law enforcement can be far more humanistic and empathetic than mere “order-maintenance policing”, which is simply an attempt to achieve a false tranquility. Municipal irenicism is about socio-redemptive acts of reconciliation, mediated and facilitated by police officers in a deliberate way.

In our efforts to encourage equitable treatment of our neighbors, we need not completely abandon the mission of community policing: To bring criminal offenders to justice. Social and criminal justice, however, should not be mutually exclusive. Rather, the goal is to make peace, reconciliation, and justice the core components of a law enforcement agency that genuinely works to help our society to flourish.

I recently had reason to know my irenic outlook was well-founded, when one of our officers encountered a man with a hunting bow who was determined to either kill or be killed. At the risk of his own life, the officer took every possible action to avoid bloodshed. In response, we awarded the officer with the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Medal of Valor – for propagating peace and preserving life.



This was taken at a council meeting with we hired two new officers. Ofc. Michael Lester and Ofc. John Blevins.

4. Core competency

In my experience, working to avoid mission creep might be the most overlooked task that small police departments can perform to improve their department's culture. To the contrary, too many departments have a mindset that "expansion = success" thus making mission creep a core feature of their culture.

I've traveled in the chief of police "circles" for about 10 years and I've met chiefs from organizations both large and small, from across the nation. During this time, I've noticed one constant among all those chiefs – the amount of "bling" a chief tends to wear on his or her uniform is typically inversely proportional to the amount of people he or she supervises. In short, when the chief looks like a tin pot dictator, the department is usually small – really, really, small.

The same observation can be applied to small police departments organizationally – the wider they look, the less depth they have. It comes down to resources and staff. There's a tendency for small departments to try to "look" like large departments in capability even though they lack the corresponding capacity. This imbalance deprives the department of core mission delivery and leads to sloppy police work. The same small agency that has a motor unit, honor guard, marine unit, drone unit, and task force, will inevitably, cut corners on the simple tasks to create capacity for the extras. I'm committed to avoiding this dilemma by focusing on core competencies – the "shoot, move, and communicate" (as we would say in the Army) equivalent to police work.

As leaders, we're prone to forget that the public's perception of our department will mostly be formed during standard service calls. We must focus on the little things and ensure that we deliver good "fit and finish" to meet our community's expectations. All the flash is nice, but in the end, basic, tactically-sound, community-engaged, police work is the only thing that matters. For this reason, at the Marion Police Department, we reward efforts to solve the small crimes. I'm not concerned with how long it takes to solve a lawnmower larceny – this is exactly what we should be doing! The day in and day out



work of the patrol officer is the most important work we do, and it's enshrined in our general orders as a constant reminder to everyone, at every level:

"In the same ethos that makes "Every Marine a Rifleman", every member of this department is a patrol officer."

– Marion Police Department General Order 1.18.

5. Community shaped

To introduce the concept of community shaped policing, I'd like to paraphrase Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones (Mayor of Toledo, Ohio 1897-1904):

"The only law that can be enforced is the law that the public sentiment of the community will uphold."

Of course, there is plenty of room to argue with Mayor Jones' assertion, but I appreciate the sentiment. Most of us believe that the law is immutable in a certain sense, but let me ask the reader this question: Do you believe that every community has the right to shape the character of the enforcement of the law? I believe this to absolutely be the case which leads me to ask myself: Am I creating the type of police department I want, or the department that the community wants?

To be the police department our community wants, we need to visualize ourselves not as heroes capable of amazing victories (though, those will happen from time to time). Rather, we need to see ourselves first and foremost as shouldering the larger responsibility of building a flourishing society one person at a time. I believe this is what most of our community wants from its public servants: the daily implementation of common sense, on common ground, for the common good.

As a result, I'm building a tactically capable and responsive agency, which enforces the law (these components are immutable) but also one which stresses a high degree of good old fashioned customer service. This is what small towns are all about. We try to consistently get the little things right. "If you take care of the small things, the big things will take care of themselves," observed Emily Dickinson and I believe her.

To bring this point home, at our local "Officer of the Year" awards, we seek to give the award to the officer who brings the most positive impact to the agency and the community. Not the officer who makes the most arrests or writes the most tickets.



Coda: Bringing it all back home

One of the many lessons of the events of 2020 is that police departments must engage with all their stakeholders across the socio-economic strata. In many communities, we quickly lose sight of this basic tenant of our profession with long-lasting consequences. Small town police work is a relatively narrow enterprise. As such, we should focus on being the best at that work, and less concerned with creating



unnecessary mission diversity. I want my community to know that their relationship with their police department is not mediated by screens, social media, or hollow slogans. This keeps the focus on legitimate policing, which at its best is shaped by the community.

About the author: *John Patrick Clair is the chief of police for the Town of Marion.*

Now more than ever: The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and the role of a professional law enforcement service organization

Get to know the VACP

In 2016, the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police merged with its Virginia Police Chiefs Foundation to become a non-profit 501c3 educational foundation that could qualify for government grants and charitable donations while remaining a membership organization. The VACP enjoys a diverse membership comprised of federal, state, local, private and campus police executives. We work with our affiliate organization, the Virginia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, to promote safer college campuses in the Commonwealth.



VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION
of CHIEFS of POLICE
& Foundation

IT HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT two years for Virginia law enforcement. High profile press coverage of negative, national incidents has fostered community mistrust of police agencies in both large and small localities. During this time, efforts to defund the police came hand in hand with demands for more training, stricter hiring standards, and broadened standards for decertifying police officers. All of this has added stressors to an already stressful job and severely impacted morale at police agencies across the Commonwealth.

At the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP), we are proud of our police professionals who have stayed the course and remain dedicated to their communities and to their departments. Virginia is fortunate to have a strong corps of police leaders who will groom the next generation of police chiefs and command staff. The VACP supports those efforts by providing training, education and assistance that help enhance the quality of life for our members and the communities that they serve. In this article, we take a closer look at some of these offerings.

Leadership training and education

A primary mission of the VACP is to provide training and education programs that develop Virginia's police executives into ethical, knowledgeable leaders. We offer First Line Supervisors Training, the Institute for Leadership in Changing Times (ILCT), and the Professional Executive Leadership School (PELS). We also offer a variety of other training programs as needed, including the New Chiefs/Deputy Chiefs School. Our regional and independent criminal justice training academies offer basic and in-service training for officers to help our chiefs develop and groom the next generation of leaders. We also hold at least two training conferences, as well as a small agency symposium, each year to provide certified training programs for our members. Learn more at www.vachiefs.org/leadership_education.



Police Chief Assessment Centers

The police chief is one of the most highly visible leaders in any community and is a vital part of a locality's success. The VACP believes in helping our communities hire qualified police chiefs who are the best match possible for their agencies and their communities. We work with managers, boards, and councils to identify their public safety priorities and recommend the best police chief candidates through a series of interviews and other evaluation tools developed by the VACP. We follow up with the new chief and with community leadership to ensure that there is a smooth and successful transition into the police chief role. While there are many national firms that offer this service, the VACP has a strong working knowledge of Virginia communities and police professionals that gives us an advantage in finding the right person for the job.





Law Enforcement Executive Certification Program

This relatively new program is for VACP or VACLEA member chiefs and command executives who have met established benchmarks of professional police leadership through training, education, and community involvement. The certification program is designed to encourage police leaders to pursue a qualified path of training and education and to be active in community service and professional leadership programs. The end goal is to raise the professional profile of our police leaders in Virginia and ensure better service to their agencies and communities.

The program offers two levels of certification for Virginia public safety leaders: Chief Executive Officer, for the chief or commanding officer of a law enforcement agency; and Command Executive Officer, for a law enforcement command officer who serves in an executive or upper management position. Certification is for three years, and participants must recertify every three years to remain active in the program. Learn more at www.vachiefs.org/certification.

Advocacy

Issues involving law enforcement and public safety often dominate the agendas of federal, state, and local leaders and the VACP helps ensure that policymakers are well informed on best practices in policing. We have long advocated for the 599 Aid for Localities with Police Departments to help our agencies receive the funding they need for training and equipment and to offer competitive salaries and benefits. For example, during the police and social reform movement of 2020, the VACP worked with legislators on policy and best practices to address concerns about police professionalism.

Another example: The pandemic and police reforms led to a downturn in traffic enforcement with COVID safety concerns and the exodus of many officers from the law enforcement profession. Legislation that stripped police of the primary enforcement authority of several traffic laws has resulted in fewer traffic fines being collected for these violations. In fact, the severe reduction in traffic enforcement in 2020 and 2021 resulted in at least a \$1 million dollar loss in state revenues dedicated to Virginia's regional criminal justice academies! The VACP is working with our academy directors to encourage additional funding in the state budget to restore the funding losses suffered due to decreased fine collections.

It's important to note, however, that the VACP does not operate a political action committee and we do *not* make political endorsements or contributions. Rather, our value to elected officials lies in our knowledge base and in our willingness to assist in developing sound policy and legislation. Learn more at www.vachiefs.org/advocacy.

Other services

Other services of the VACP include police management studies, technical assistance to our members and to government leaders, and the mentoring of new police chiefs. We partner with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to promote traffic safety and enforcement programs. We also partner with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to train public safety officers in the proper use of naloxone to revive overdose victims. As part of the First Responder Naloxone Program we also help our agencies secure naloxone kits free of charge so that trained officers are always equipped with life-saving tools. Learn more at www.vachiefs.org/naloxone.



Looking ahead

This is a challenging time for police agencies in Virginia. While the VACP supported many of the police reforms legislated in 2020, the legislative threats to qualified immunity coupled with the increasingly negative public perception of law enforcement led to hundreds of officers leaving the profession. Most agencies still struggle to recruit and retain qualified professionals to serve as police officers. Salary and benefit competition among agencies has resulted in recruiting officers as lateral hires from agencies that already paid to put recruits through basic training. This fierce competition between agencies and a diminished pool of qualified law enforcement recruits likely will adversely affect the development of police professionals for many years to come in Virginia.

For all these reasons, the work of the VACP is more important than ever! As we look towards our 100th anniversary in 2026, the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police will build upon our strong relationship with local government organizations like the Virginia Municipal League to further our shared goal of safer communities through crime prevention and intervention by professional police services.



About the author: Dana G. Schrad is the executive director of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and Foundation, Inc.

Urgent issues in policing: An experienced perspective on leadership

I HAVE SPENT A SIGNIFICANT portion of my life working in the public safety arena. In addition to four years of military service, I have been privileged to serve the wonderful people of James City County for 25 years in the police department with the last seven of those years as the police chief. For the past two years, I have held the position of assistant county administrator overseeing public safety, among other things. Over the course of my career, I have had the good fortune of learning from many in local government and throughout the public safety community.

From my perspective, the biggest issues facing public safety today are staffing, officer well-being, and leadership. While these may be unsurprising choices, I believe that many outside the public safety sector would be surprised to learn that the urgency to address these issues has increased significantly in the last few years.

To better understand the situation, let's take a closer look at each issue.

Staffing

The applicant pool for law enforcement officers has dwindled to such an extent that unless we begin to do more to bring people into the profession, the welfare of our communities could be compromised. In the past, it was not unusual to have 50-100 applicants for every open position in public safety. The job was seen as an opportunity to help the community and protect the public. It was an honorable position, revered by many, respected by nearly all, and acclaimed in movies, television, and media outlets. Children dressed up as police officers or firefighters for Halloween and looked up to them as heroes in their community. Police and fire departments drew a wide array of applicants who were supported and encouraged to join these noble professions.

Over the past decade, however, departments across the state and nation have reported a growing trend in staffing shortages upwards of 30-40 percent. While most people understand that being understaffed causes immediate issues in any field – think restaurants, hotels, and grocery stores during the pandemic – a police department that is chronically understaffed will have deep public safety impacts on a community for years to come. Today, we see understaffed departments pulling officers from other positions and outreach programs to fill patrol slots just to be able to cover service calls. While this may not seem like a major issue, it reduces the ability of police departments to develop and maintain positive relationships with their communities. Even more troublesome, this decreased capacity to engage communi-

ties is coming at a time when it is more important than ever for police departments to nurture and sustain those positive community interactions and relationships. The result: Community policing is being hit the hardest at the very moment it is most needed.

Undoubtedly, the current staffing crises is due in large part to the heinous criminal acts that have been committed by a very small percentage of public safety personnel in recent years. The damage caused by these incidents is immense and affects police departments across the nation. Why would someone enter a line of work that not only fails to adequately compensate them for the dangers they will likely face but also potentially exposes them to a high level of public scrutiny? Make no mistake, we absolutely must weed out those that are in this job for the wrong reasons, but not at the expense of ruining our chance to fill positions with good people. The job of a police officer has become increasingly challenging over the last decade with every move, slightest mistake, or lapse in judgement having the potential to be judged in the court of public opinion – a court that is decidedly slanted against law enforcement at this time. We need professionals who truly love people and have a genuine concern for the well-being of others. But as professionals, they should be able to expect compensation in keeping with the work they do. Undercompensating these positions leads to understaffed departments scrambling to fill vacancies with individuals who are unwilling or unable to maintain the honor and the integrity of the profession.

Well-being

Public safety employees are being bombarded daily with negative comments on the news and social media that drains their self-worth and affects their ability to do their jobs. Moreover, while doing their jobs, they regularly see and hear terrible things that most people rarely or never experience. Taken together, these stressors can have a big impact on their physical and mental well-being. It's not enough that communities appreciate and respect the work being done by their public safety personnel. They also need to feel that they are appreciated and supported back at the station. Peer support teams, chaplaincy programs, in-house counselors, and critical incident debriefs are vital to help employees cope with traumatic events. Furthermore, public safety employees should undergo both physical and mental health checkups annually. It may cost your department money up front, but you will reap the benefits of these programs in the years to come.





I have seen too many good officers leave the profession because of public negativity and being unable to overcome traumatic experiences in their careers. For decades, we did not talk about why these good people were leaving the profession and simply filled those vacancies with new people. Now, with fewer good people seeking a career in law enforcement, we have finally been forced to reckon with these issues. Of course, we've only just begun and there is much more work to be done.

Leadership

I was very fortunate to serve on the Executive Board for the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and during that time I learned a lot from my peers across the state. Many departments have forward-thinking leaders within their departments who are bound by traditional mentalities that conflict with the evolving expectations of the 21st century employees and citizens they serve. The fact is that in an ever-changing world we have seen very little change in the mindset or organizational structure of public safety departments. As leaders, we must work to change how these agencies operate. We simply cannot keep doing the same things in the same ways as our predecessors.

Leaders form strong relationships.

Foremost among the changes we can make is to deemphasize the importance of degrees and certifications and emphasize the importance of positive relationships with employees and peers. Of course, you must maintain a certain proficiency in your field, but proficiency does not equal success. Rather, positive relationships with employees and peers can have the biggest impact on what you are able to accomplish and the overall morale of the agency.

Leaders recognize differences.

I have heard many times over the years that leaders must treat everyone the same. Of course, leaders must be fair with everyone, must listen to everyone, and must accept everyone. But a leader should not interact with everyone the same way. We all require different things, and expectations vary from employee to employee. Employees today want, more than ever, to be a part of solutions and bring skills and tools to the table that can have a dramatic positive impact on the entire agency. To encourage individuals to work for the benefit of the group it's important to allow them to let their differences inform what they bring to the table.

Leaders ask for help.

Do not be afraid or too proud to reach out for information. This is where strong relationships with your peers often comes into play. I have reached out more times that I can remember to other chiefs,

sheriffs, and administrators to ask questions or learn from their experiences. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness or ineptitude, it is simply an acknowledgement that nobody knows all there is to know. I have always operated under the mindset that I will use not only my knowledge, skills, and abilities but also those that I can borrow from others. If you start asking for help, you will find (as I have) that nearly everyone wants to share their knowledge and experience.

Leaders know they will sometimes be wrong and make mistakes.

As a young man, I skied a lot. People often asked how many times I fell to which I would usually respond: "More times than I can count!" Some people assumed I must not be a very good skier. Certainly, I wasn't Olympic material, but I was passably good and enjoyed my time on skis (even the falling). Plus, I got better each time I went out!

How can we ever expect to improve or get better at anything if we are unwilling to challenge ourselves and potentially fail? Police and fire chiefs are sometimes afraid to try new things because they fear how any degree of failure will be perceived. Ironically, failure is all but certain if a department never grows and never adapts to changing times because its leader is afraid to fail.

Leaders know when it is time to move on.

I have seen far too many people in the public safety field who continue to work when their love for the job has faded. This leads to cynicism at work and often leads to a variety of problems both at work and at home because, try as we might, it is all but impossible not to let one's work life affect one's home life. A cynical attitude reflects poorly on the individual – whether they are entry level staff or the chief – their department, and the community they serve.

When I left my job in law enforcement after 25+ years, I still loved my job, but I found myself less enthusiastic about my work and less tolerant of a workforce that demands so much. Indeed, because I loved my job, I knew it was best for the department to have someone with new ideas, new perspectives, and a fresh outlook to move things forward.

At the end of the day

Bad things will happen, so be prepared to lead. I have spent and continue to spend time thinking about all the "what ifs" that can occur in the public safety profession. I wish I could say that nothing surprises me anymore, but I continue to be surprised by the bad things that happen. There is no easy answer, no sure-fire way to know you are ready for the next bad thing. But if, as a leader, you are willing to make changes to meet the times then you will be doing what is best for your community and that's all that can be expected of any good leader.



About the author: *Bradley Rinehimer served nearly three decades with the James City County Police Department, including serving as chief. He currently holds the position of assistant county administrator.*

Meet a public safety specialist: Gary Dillon of the Virginia Risk Sharing Association

FOR 23 YEARS, VRSA Public Safety Specialist Gary Dillon proudly wore the badge. In 1994 he began his career in law enforcement as an officer with the Town of Orange and subsequently served as a sergeant in the City of Charlottesville and as deputy chief of police for the Town of Warrenton. Dillon also worked as an accreditation program manager for the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

In 2018, Dillon joined the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA) in the role of law enforcement specialist which has since broadened to include public safety.

“I’m a public servant at heart,” says Dillon. “VRSA has enabled me to facilitate change for our public safety members – whether that’s by advocating for better mental health services or drafting sample policies to insulate those members from liability, my role gives me great latitude to serve our members to help them provide their best service to their citizens.”

As public safety specialist, Dillon provides several services for VRSA members, including policy review and assistance, providing sample policies and procedures, performing internal affairs/disciplinary case reviews, loss and injury analysis, and more.

Dillon has also worked with several members to assist them in earning state accreditation. During his time with DCJS, Dillon worked closely as the staff liaison with the state commission that awards accreditation, as well as developed teams to assist law enforcement agencies, and helped the program develop into a national model for state accreditation.

“Now, more than ever, law enforcement needs to be accredited to show that the department is striving for professionalism and excellence,” says Dillon.

Dillon devotes much of his time on providing training to law enforcement departments throughout the Commonwealth. While much of his training focuses on reducing law enforcement liability, he has also made the Below 100 training program a priority.

The mission of Below 100 is to reduce line-of-duty police deaths to less than 100 per year. The training is designed to provide officers with vital information aimed at reducing the number of preventable operation incidents in daily law enforcement that contribute to the majority of line-of-duty deaths.

Throughout the past year, Dillon has also worked to expand VRSA’s outreach and relationship with members in the fire and emergency medical services field. In 2022, VRSA began offering members access to the Fire Rescue Fitness online program providing fitness and health resources for first responders.



Gary Dillon

Through the VRSA Public Safety Academy, VRSA provides free, unlimited training to eligible members belonging to the Cardinal, New River, and Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel District criminal justice academies. These classes currently provide in-service credit from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

“Most law enforcement agencies are struggling with staffing shortages,” says Dillon. By offering online options, VRSA can continue to deliver training pertinent to their roles, while eliminating travel time to a training site.”

Dillon also works with VRSA’s risk services staff to provide comprehensive inspections of member-owned facilities. He received the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Practitioner designation, which allows him to assess the environmental safety of member-owned facilities and make

recommendations on changes that may reduce the incidence of crime, such as barriers, lighting, traffic calming, and more.

He has also been certified as an instructor for Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE), allowing him to provide training in active shooter response to members from all entity types.

“I have the pleasure of interacting with public safety leaders across Virginia and the country,” observes Dillon. “These relationships give me the energy to work hard for them because I understand their role and the stresses that come with the job – either as an officer, or an administrator – and in some small departments the officer is also the administrator.”



Making the right decision for public safety in Crozet

IN HIS OFF TIME, Dillon serves as fire chief for the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department. He was instrumental in bringing career staff from Albemarle County Fire Rescue into Crozet to fill coverage gaps after 110 years of all-volunteer service. After a thorough study, Dillon called a meeting of all members, both active and inactive, and presented options for the future. The department unanimously agreed to partner with Albemarle County Fire Rescue and accept daytime staffing. Dillon feels that their partnership can be a model for other volunteer departments facing the same struggles.

“The decision to request paid staffing was one not taken lightly after being an all-volunteer station for over 100 years,” acknowledges Dillon. “There is a certain level of pride that comes with over a century of service, and I was cognizant of that. However, Crozet has grown exponentially over the past few years. We were concerned that our volunteer staff could no longer meet the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) standards for training and response times. Our primary concern is to fully protect the community and I am confident that we are achieving that.”

Mental wellness to the forefront

Since first pinning on the badge in 1994, Dillon has witnessed a lot of changes in the law enforcement field, most notably recent police reforms in the wake of George Floyd’s murder and a new focus on mental health.

“Mental health was never a focus when I was an officer,” observes Dillon. “But looking at the number of suicides compared to line-of-

duty deaths, we are now seeing more emphasis on mental health wellness for all first responders – and that is long overdue.”

Dillon works closely with staff from the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police and the Virginia Municipal League to provide thoughts and ideas on proposed legislation. In the past, these have included police reform bills such as the de-certification process and the Marcus-David Peters Act.

Moving forward, Dillon sees earning and maintaining public trust, recruitment, and mental health as the top challenges for public safety today.

“Our public safety employees come to work every day and face the unknown – yet they still show up. Our leaders are in a position to bring change that will take care of their public safety personnel by creating policies that better protect the officers from liability and adopting wellness programs that allow those employees to remain physically and mentally fit.”

VRSA is here for you!

VRSA’s public safety services are focused on reducing injuries and liabilities among our covered law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services members. Our coverage even protects canine members in the field. These services and resources are included as part of the VRSA Difference.

We look forward to continuing to aid our members in strengthening their policies and programs so you can focus on what matters most – serving and protecting your communities.

About the author: *Hollie Cammarasana is VRSA’s director of communications.*





Overcoming the challenges to public safety interoperability

PUBLIC SAFETY CANNOT CONTINUE to depend on commercial communications systems that are frequently overwhelmed and unavailable during critical incidents. The public safety radio communications of the future will have emergency responses that are coordinated among agencies and jurisdictions in real-time enabling responders to handle situations more effectively, efficiently, and safely.

Interoperability is the ability of public safety agencies to talk to one another via radio communications systems – to exchange voice and/or data with one another on demand in real time. Barriers to interoperability include incompatible systems, aging communications equipment, limited and fragmented funding, and a lack of vision and cooperation.

Creating interoperability is a challenge that requires leadership, planning, and partnerships among disparate groups at the local, state, and federal levels. However, it is a challenge that Virginia’s public safety agencies and their stakeholders have embraced by collaborating with industry leaders to advance interoperability in public safety.

The path forward

Since September 11, 2001, the Commonwealth has worked to improve interoperability and break down barriers in communication. Significant investments have been made in the Statewide Agencies Radio System (STARS), Commonwealth’s Link to Interoperable Communications (COMLINC), and regional radio systems comprised of local jurisdictions. It is clear, however, that more needs to be done to create a shared vision to meet the goals set by stakeholders across the Commonwealth, and fulfill the framework established in the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP).

Advancing interoperability in the Commonwealth is a continuous and iterative process. Virginia’s regional approach to improving interoperable communications, along with the specific initiatives as outlined in the 2021 Virginia Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP), will help address interoperability issues both short and long term.

The right tools for the job

Public safety has unique and demanding communication needs that require:

- Dedicated channels with priority access always available to handle emergencies.
- Reliable broadcast capability, a feature not generally available in cellular systems.
- Highly reliable and redundant networks that are engineered and maintained to withstand natural disaster and other emergencies.
- The best possible coverage within a given geographic area, with minimum dead zones.
- Unique equipment designed for quick response in emergency situations. The normal routines of dialing, waiting for a call connection, and reaching a busy signal are unacceptable during critical events when seconds can, and often do, mean the difference between life and death.

Communications. Public Safety mission critical Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems provide first responders with communication from the initial 9-1-1 call throughout the entire public safety response. Emerging technologies in public safety have increased the type and volume of information responders receive, the tools they communicate with, and the complexity of new and interdependent systems.

Networks. Long Term Evolution (LTE) is the technical mechanism that enhances coordination across public safety disciplines, communications functions, and levels of government to ensure emergency communications capabilities are interoperable, reliable, and secure. LTE bridges LMR with 4G/5G wireless capability used in public/private cellular networks. The LMR/LTE interface to cellular networks will allow expanding data capability such as video, voice, IP technologies and internet of things (IoT).

Security. Cyber risks and security to LMR systems today are susceptible to vulnerability and attacks such as malicious code, device attacks, insider threat, and communication interception. Converging LMR and LTE technology will enable a more secure system that is less vulnerable to attack with the ability to encrypt and allow a more robust integration.

The role of governance

Technology itself cannot solve all the problems. For interoperability to succeed, governance plays a major role and should include a group that is authorized to make decisions and oversee the implementation of the interoperability initiative. A well-defined governance structure enhances communications, coordination, and cooperation; establishes guidelines and policies; and reduces “turf battles.”

Guiding principles for establishing a strong interoperability governance structure include:

- Ensure involvement and participation from all involved agencies and jurisdictions.
- Set realistic goals and objectives with a reasonable time frame.
- Identify immediate short-term successes that can be achieved early in the process.
- Identify regional cost sharing opportunities.

Leadership and vision

Champions at all levels of government are needed to recognize, emphasize, and promote the importance of interoperability. Achieving interoperability is a challenging job, particularly in times of budget short falls, ever-changing technologies, system convergence issues, and high public expectations. But so long as our leaders remain committed to the vision and goals of the project through completion Virginia can achieve interoperability.



About the author: D. Terry Hall is director of the York-Poquoson-Williamsburg Regional 911 Emergency Communications Center.

Build stronger communities through a “Man in the Mirror” approach to policing

AS THE FAMOUS SONG “Man in the Mirror” by Michael Jackson reminds us, “If you wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself, and then make a change.” The same can be said for building stronger partnerships between law enforcement and the community. Ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities requires a collaborative effort between these two groups. But too often, tensions between law enforcement and the community prevent meaningful partnerships from forming, leading to mistrust and division.

This is why ongoing dialogue and collaboration is so important for building strong partnerships between law enforcement and the community. By taking a look at themselves and making a change, both law enforcement and the community can play a crucial role in making our communities safer and more just.

So, what can be done to encourage this dialogue and collaboration? Here are some roles and actions that both law enforcement and the community can take to get started:

For law enforcement

- Engage in regular community outreach and engagement initiatives, including town hall meetings and community events.
- Listen to and respond to community concerns and incorporate this feedback into policing practices and policies.
- Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for officers, including de-escalation training and cultural competency training.
- Work with community organizations and leaders to address community safety concerns and promote positive relationships between law enforcement and the community.
- Be transparent and accountable, regularly reporting on police use of force and other key metrics and taking steps to ensure that all officers are held to the highest standards of professional conduct.



For the community

- Participate in community policing initiatives and events to help build stronger relationships between law enforcement and the community.
- Advocate for reforms that will make law enforcement more accountable, transparent, and just.
- Encourage community organizations and leaders to work with law enforcement to address community safety concerns and promote positive relationships between law enforcement and the community.
- Report incidents of police misconduct and advocate for reforms to the criminal justice system to reduce over-criminalization and reduce the impact of mass incarceration on communities of color.
- Support community policing programs and initiatives, including youth engagement initiatives and partnerships between law enforcement and community-based organizations.

If nothing changes...

Let's stop just talking about what's wrong with the police departments and our public safety departments and start acting! If nothing changes, nothing changes. Like Michael Jackson, we all need to start saying "I'm starting with the man in the mirror." Both law enforcement and the community must take a look at themselves, identify areas for improvement, and make a change to build stronger partnerships that promote public safety, community well-being, and mutual respect. Let's start today. Take action and make that change!



About the author: *Derrick R. Wood is the mayor of the Town of Dumfries and vice president of the VML Executive Board.*



Public Safety means so much!

WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK about public safety, they think of policing or fighting fires. Of course those things are important (really important!) but public safety means so much more! It means ensuring the quality of the water we drink, staying safe during extreme weather events, handling hazardous materials spills...really, it's a very long list. We've gathered some shout-outs to highlight some of these lesser considered but critically important aspects of local government public safety.

VDEM: Updated "Hurricane Evacuation Guide" and guidance for inland localities

Source: Lauren Opett, VDEM director of communications & chief agency spokesperson

Each year, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management produces and distributes a Virginia Hurricane Evacuation Guide primarily targeted at coastal areas in hurricane evacuation zones. This effort is led by VDEM's communications division in coordination with the agency's regional offices and local emergency managers. The guide includes important information such as preparedness tips, evacuation information (such as "Know Your Zone"), and local emergency management office contact information.

However, in recent years, some of the areas most affected by tropical weather have been in the southwestern portions of the Commonwealth. So, for the first time, VDEM has also produced an inland hurricane guide to provide critical information on preparedness, response, and recovery activities specifically related



2022 edition of the guide.

to inland threats such as flooding and high winds. Both the evacuation guide and inland hurricane guide will be available electronically on VDEM's website in the coming months. Printed copies will also be available for those communities that may lack reliable internet access. We encourage localities to identify the best method to distribute the guide for their community. For example, a link to the electronic version can be shared via a localities' website or social media. Printed copies can be placed in public places such as libraries, in government buildings, or through other community resources.



Upcoming awareness weeks

Severe weather awareness week will be held March 6-10, 2023, with a statewide tornado drill scheduled for March 7 at 9:45 a.m. Flood awareness week will take place the

following week beginning March 12. Hurricane awareness week is slated for the week of May 15.

Being prepared not only saves lives, but can significantly reduce fear, anxiety, and property losses that accompany disasters. VDEM encourage everyone to promote VDEM's messaging on social media and other platforms to ensure residents and visitors are prepared as we enter peak storm seasons.

More information is available at www.vaemergency.gov. Follow VDEM on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Henrico: Public safety means ensuring safe drinking water for everyone

Source: Henrico County Annual Report FY 2021-22

Well-testing initiative

The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) began a comprehensive testing of private wells near White Oak Swamp following an October 2022 notice from the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality that potentially harmful chemicals known as PFAS had been found in samples of surface water from the Chickahominy River Basin. Of the 259 residential wells tested, 229 – or 88% – showed no detectable presence of PFAS, also known as per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances. Thirty wells had some level of PFAS. DPU continues to work with state agencies to assist residents with further testing, installation of filtration systems, extension of public water infrastructure and determining the source of the chemicals.

DPU's response was recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo). DPU also earned a NACo award for its use of trained volunteers to remove litter in and along streams that flow into the James River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay

For more information, go to www.henrico.us/utility/well-testing.



Improving utilities system monitoring and control

Construction is underway on a \$25 million project to upgrade the monitoring and control system at Henrico's wastewater treatment facility, pump stations and drinking water facility. The Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system will enhance the Department of Public Utilities' ability to monitor and control the water and wastewater equipment that produces and distributes drinking water and removes and treats wastewater. Construction at the wastewater treatment facility is expected to end next June, with work at the Woodman Road Operations Facility and pump stations scheduled to conclude in mid-2024. Construction at the drinking water facility is set to begin in winter 2023.



City of Alexandria: Specialty Operations

Sources: Alexandria Fire Department 2019 Annual Report and www.alexandria.gov

The City of Alexandria's Special Operations program provides a wide variety of specialized services to the community including technical rescue, hazardous materials response and mitigation, inland water rescue, ice rescue, and marine operations. In addition to serving a critical role at fire, rescue, and medical incidents, members of Special Operations are specially trained for, and charged with, responding to those events involving dangerous/hazardous goods or physical conditions that pose potential harm to people, property, and/or the environment.

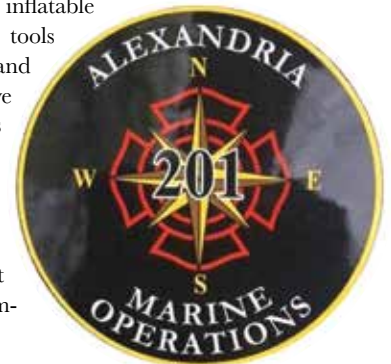
Technical Rescue involves incidents such as auto accidents requiring vehicle extrication, metro and train incidents, building collapses, trench rescue, confined space rescue, and high and low angle rope rescue. Members of the Special Operations Technical Rescue Team receive extensive training in an array of special equipment such as extrication tools, cribbing, generators and power units, lifting and moving tools, shoring jacks, pressurized air bags, breaching and breaking tools, mechanical advantage systems, confined space rescue equipment (tripods, system hardware, and ropes), communications equipment, and patent packaging and removal systems.

HAZMAT responders are specially trained for, and charged with, responding to those events involving dangerous goods or physical properties that pose potential harm to people, property, and/or the environment. In addition, the members of the Special Operations HAZMAT Team are charged with maintaining a working knowledge of specialized chemical protective equipment, safe methods for the containment of chemical spills, appropriate techniques for the "off-loading" of chemicals from damaged containers as well as the efficient and effective use of reference material to determine chemical hazards that may cause harm to themselves and the community.

Marine Operations is based out of Firehouse 204 in the city's East End. With 4-6 members per shift across three shifts and additional personnel spread throughout department, the Marine Operations Team (MOT) performs fire suppression, emergency medical services, search and rescue, and everything else on the Potomac River from Reagan National Airport to Gunston Cove.

The MOT maintains three tiers of training developed by the Alexandria Fire Department (AFD): Crewmember, Engineer, and Operator. All team members must pass a boater's safety course and the United States Coast Guard's Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels course, though licensing is not required. The shipboard fire training provided to each MOT member is an in-house program that is the only one of its kind in the region. The fireboat officer is the company commander and may exercise control over the fireboat or multiple fireboats and holds the rank of Captain in the AFD. The fireboat itself is a hi-tech, 50-foot craft able to reach 40-45 knots. With firefighting capabilities, radar, thermal imaging, sonar, electronic plotters, fire and marine radios, plus a full array of search and rescue equipment, the vessel is ready to handle all manner of public safety demands on the water.

Inland Water Rescue responders are specially trained to handle flood, ice, and swift water responses in areas inland of the Potomac River. The members of the Special Operations Inland Water Rescue Team operate using trailered inflatable rescue boats along with specialized tools and equipment designed for water and ice conditions. Team members receive extensive rescue training that involves swimming and navigating while in flood and swift water conditions. The Inland Water Rescue and Marine Operations Teams work together to handle the flooding conditions that regularly impact the Alexandria community and region.



Where heroes meet healing

THE VIRGINIA LAW Enforcement Assistance Program (VALEAP) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) committed to serving law enforcement officers and first responders who have undergone traumatic critical incidents in the line of duty or in their personal lives. Established in 2008, in the wake of the mass shooting at Virginia Tech, the organization has served thousands of officers from over 100 Virginia agencies and trained over 500 law enforcement peers to date. The program implements proven methods of peer support and mental health services to provide psychological and emotional healing to all participants.



Services

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) – VALEAP answers statewide calls for response in the event law enforcement officers, dispatchers, and other first responders have been exposed to traumatic events either on duty or in their personal lives. These services include one-on-one individual peer support and group peer support in the form of Crisis Management Briefings (CMB), Defusing, funeral support, and Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD). These services are facilitated by well-trained and experienced peers and clinical mental health professionals. CISM response aims to provide psychoeducation on the immediate, short, and long-term effects of stress and how to apply productive coping strategies.

Couple's Enrichment Seminar (CES) – The CES is a three-day seminar that aims to foster resiliency among LE couples relating to the stress associated with the profession, boasts communicative skills, and how to productively navigate challenges as they arise in a healthy way.

Post Critical Incident Seminars (PCIS) – The PCIS is a copyrighted, three-day, life-altering event for law enforcement professionals and other first responders. Here, attendees are provided with research-based, peer-reviewed, and empirically supported peer support methods and clinical mental health services. This seminar is

facilitated by well-trained peers who have also attended a PCIS themselves. Along with peers, clinical mental health professionals are in attendance to facilitate clinically based methods of support as well as chaplains to address any spiritual needs of attendees. VALEAP has hosted 27 PCIS events since 2008 where over 1,070 law enforcement officers, other first responders, and their significant others have benefited from proven methods of support.

Education – VALEAP provides CISM training statewide along with pre-incident education and other more specialized training. VALEAP is in multiple law enforcement basic academies, in-services, Crisis Intervention Trainings (CIT), and many more.

Wellness app – VALEAP is proud to have a wellness app that provides 24/7 access to our statewide resources with complete anonymity for users. This includes access to our peer directory, volunteer therapist's directory, chaplain directory, self-assessments, crisis lines, and much more.



Get in touch

VALEAP is prepared to respond to the needs of the commonwealth's heroes 24/7 with complete anonymity. To contact VALEAP regarding services, training, support, etc., please contact Operations Director Adam Blevins, CCISM at adamblevins.valeap@gmail.com or call (540) 817-9736.

You can learn more about VALEAP by visiting our website at www.valeap.org.





Join VML

Set your organization apart in the local government marketplace of product, services, and ideas by joining the VML Community Business Membership (CBM) program. For more information contact Rob Bullington at rbullington@vml.org or check under the "Corporate Engagement" tab at www.vml.org.



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AIA Virginia
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VIRGINIA TECH.
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BRONZE MEMBERS



About the VML Community Business Membership (CBM) Program

As a CBM organization you hold a sustaining membership in VML and keep your firm or organization connected with the issues that are important to municipalities around you. Being a CBM places your organization at the forefront in the minds of VML members, ensuring you the visibility, access, and awareness that will help move your organization forward.

Please note that each level of membership includes both year-round benefits as well as benefits specific to VML's Annual Conference held in the fall.



Turn something old into something new.

Learn how federal Housing Credits can help you create new, affordable workforce housing and enhance or revitalize a neighborhood — while lowering development costs. Contact Virginia Housing's Director of Housing Credit Programs, J.D. Bondurant:
JD.Bondurant@VirginiaHousing.com | 804-343-5725



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