

The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League

# VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

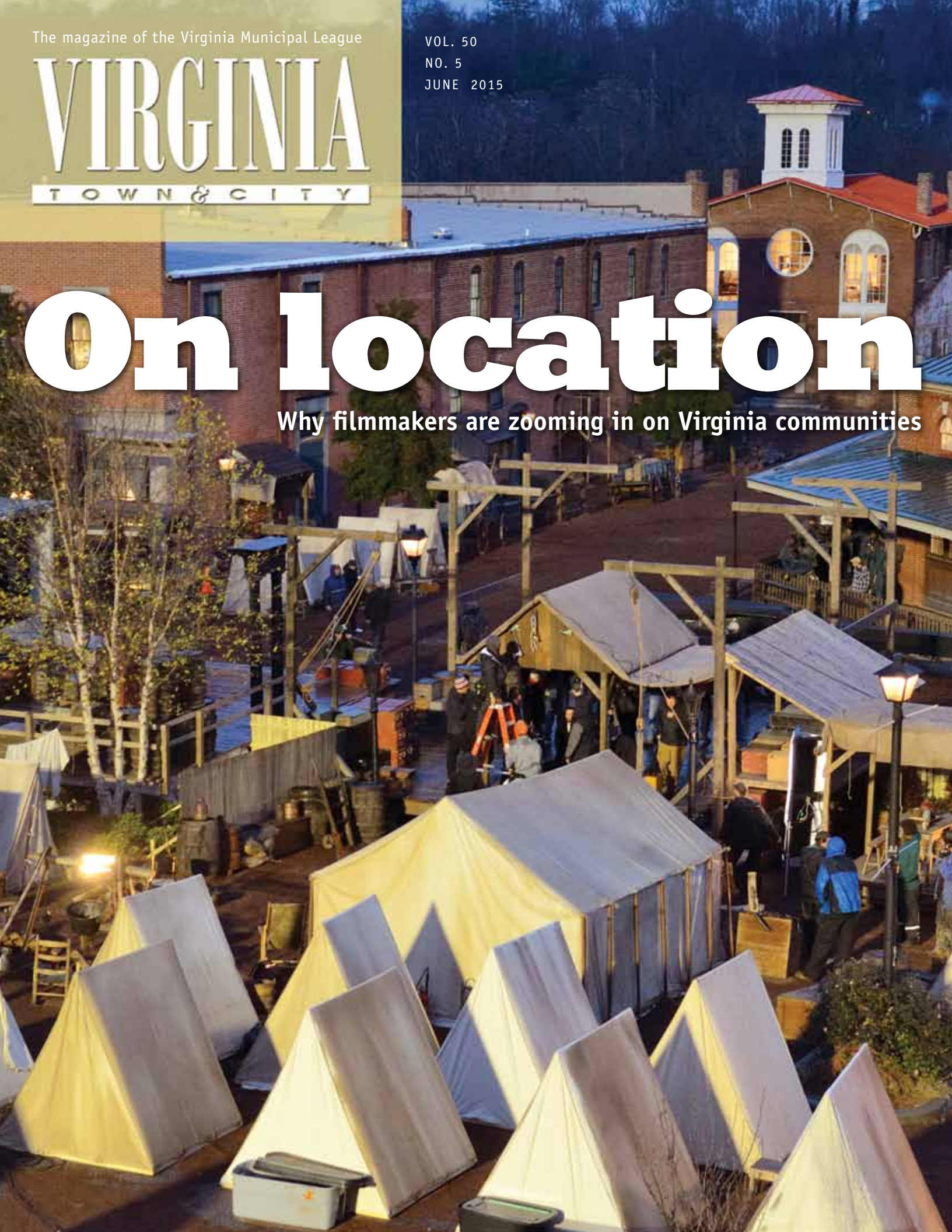
VOL. 50

NO. 5

JUNE 2015

# On location

Why filmmakers are zooming in on Virginia communities







*Administrative Coordinator Deborah Hand with the Hampton Roads Regional Jail Authority accepts the award from VMLIP Members' Supervisory Board member Clarke Wallcraft*

## Congratulations to the Hampton Roads Regional Jail Authority!

The authority received the prestigious Margaret A. Nichols Risk Management Leadership Award at the 2015 VML Insurance Programs (VMLIP) Annual Meeting. This year we also congratulate:

### **Risk Management Performance Award winners:**

Town of Rich Creek  
Bedford Regional Water Authority  
Town of Strasburg

### **Risk Management Excellence Award winners:**

Ann Irby, Arlington County Schools  
Karen Barger, Town of Herndon  
Jackie Herrmann and Julie Phares, City of Williamsburg  
Monica Dodson, Town of Front Royal  
Sheryl Johnson, Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Casey Nance, York County





### About the cover

Steven Spielberg chose Petersburg and Richmond as the setting for his Academy award winning biopic Lincoln. For this scene, the filmmakers recreated a tent camp where Lincoln has a poignant exchange with two African-American Union soldiers. Photo courtesy of City of Petersburg.

## Departments

- Discovering Virginia** ..... 2
- People**..... 3
- News & Notes**..... 4
- Calendar**..... 24
- Marketplace** ..... 26
- Professional Directory** ..... 28

## Features

### You oughta be in pictures

The Virginia Film Office reveals why more and more film producers are flocking to Virginia and how more localities can get in on the action. Local officials explain the good, the bad and the ugly of having Hollywood come to town.

By Nancy Chafin

Page 6

### Buyer beware: Changes in Virginia Procurement Act



Virginia localities with populations over 3,500 will have to make some changes in the way they purchase goods and services beginning July 1. Changes to the Procurement Act will affect how you do business, especially when it comes to construction projects.

By Mark Flynn

Page 11

### Beyond sustainability: Thriving in an imperfect world

For decades, conscientious leaders have tried to fight environmental and social crises through “sustainable” practices aimed at achieving balance in nature and society. New theories suggest that balance isn’t possible and that we need to manage imbalance by making our communities more resilient to change.

By Matt Thornhill and John Martin

Page 12

### Lower flood insurance rates where you live



Localities can reduce their flood insurance rates for homes and businesses through certification with the National Flood Insurance Program. Learn how to accrue points for things your locality already does and how to earn more points towards reducing your rates.

By Joe Lerch

Page 16

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kimberly A. Winn

#### EDITOR

Nancy Chafin

#### DESIGN EDITOR

Manuel Timbreza

#### ADVERTISING MANAGER

Anita Yearwood

#### CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sherall W. Dementi

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

William D. Euille (President), Alexandria  
Ron Rordam (President-Elect), Blacksburg  
Robert K. Coiner (Vice President), Gordonsville

Katie Sheldon Hammler, Leesburg  
David P. Helms, Marion  
Mary Hynes, Arlington  
Ceasor Johnson, Lynchburg  
Edythe Frankel Kelleher, Vienna  
Christina Luman-Bailey, Hopewell  
Mimi Elrod, Lexington  
Anita James Price, Roanoke  
Faye Prichard, Ashland  
Patricia Woodbury, Newport News

**Virginia Town & City** (ISSN0042-6784) is the official magazine of the Virginia Municipal League. Published 10 times a year at 13 E. Franklin St., P.O. Box 12164, Richmond, VA 23241; 804/649-8471. E-mail: e-mail@vml.org. Reproduction or use of contents requires prior approval of the Virginia Municipal League and if granted must be accompanied by credit to *Virginia Town & City* and the Virginia Municipal League. Periodicals Postage paid at Richmond, VA. (USPS 661040) Subscription rates: members - \$8 per year, non-members - \$16 per year. Single copies - \$2 each. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Virginia Town & City*, P.O. Box 12164, Richmond, 23241-0164.

*Virginia Town & City is printed on recycled paper.*

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





## REGIONAL SUPPERS

# Ham Biscuits and Oysters, Oh My!

**W**ELL, MY FIRST TRIP to the Eastern Shore was terrific. Mary Jo Fields, VML Director of Research, Joe Lerch, Director of Environmental Policy, and I headed out for one of our recent regional suppers, which was hosted by the Town of Wachapreague.


I am sure that I don't need to tell you all that the drive was remarkable. Going over and under water as we crossed the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel was a sight to behold. After its completion, this unique crossing where the Chesapeake Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean was named one of the seven engineering wonders of the modern world. This girl from land-locked Kansas was truly impressed. For more on the history of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, go to [www.cbtt.com](http://www.cbtt.com).

On this trip, I learned that the Eastern Shore has its own unique history. The natural elements of the Eastern Shore, fertile land surrounded by the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and the inlets leading to the Atlantic Ocean, have shaped the history of the towns up and down the Eastern Shore. And, truly those same elements will direct their future.

Our regional meeting was held at the Island House Restaurant overlooking Wachapreague Harbor. As we were gathering for the meeting, we watched the fishing boats coming in and going out as seagulls of numerous variety landed on the piers – truly a unique and beautiful location.

And, can I just say, “sweet potato ham biscuits, and fresh oysters?” I loved these Eastern Shore specialties! Everything about this restaurant was terrific – from the food to the service. For more information about the Island House Restaurant, go to [www.theislandhouserestaurant.com](http://www.theislandhouserestaurant.com).

In addition to the amazing location, the topic of this particular regional supper was of great interest to me. As I noted before, I am from a land-locked state in the middle of the country, so sea level rise is a topic that is completely new to me. The speakers presented in great detail the challenges facing the towns on the Eastern Shore.

I am planning another trip to this area in the near future so that I can spend more time enjoying all that the Eastern Shore has to offer. For more information or to plan a visit, go to [www.esvaturism.org](http://www.esvaturism.org). 



**The Island House Restaurant overlooks the beautiful Wachapreague Harbor.**

**Charlottesville COO/CFO Watts retires after 52 years serving local governments**



Charlottesville City Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer **Aubrey V. Watts, Jr.**, will retire from the City of Charlottesville at the end of July.

- Watts -

A graduate of Virginia Tech, Mr. Watts began his career in 1963 in the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia serving as Deputy City Treasurer, Assistant Director of Finance, Director of Personnel, Director of Public Utilities, Deputy City Manager and finally as City Manager until 1991. Mr. Watts then became City Manager of the City of Greenville, South Carolina.

He joined the City of Charlottesville in 1999 as Director of Economic Development and became COO/CFO in 2002.

“I really believe in service to one’s community,” said Mr. Watts. “Local government is what affects most people’s lives on a day-to-day basis.”

Among his proudest accomplishments, Mr. Watts points to the initiation of a long-term water supply plan in Virginia Beach, Greenville’s downtown revitalization and the development of successful partnerships through the Charlottesville Economic Development Authority. When asked of what he is most proud, Mr. Watts said the people he has worked with, mentored or “in some way” helped along their careers.

“It would be impossible to overstate how much we, as a city and an organization, have benefited from his work ethic, wisdom and leadership,” said City Manager Maurice Jones. “During his years of dedicated service to local governments, Aubrey has left an indelible mark on three communities, and the State of Virginia.”

In 2014, the International City Management Association recognized Mr. Watts for 50 years of local government service.

**Ashland appoints business expansion manager**

The town of Ashland has named **Joseph M. Topham, Jr.** as its new Business Retention and Expansion

Manager. Topham comes to Ashland from King William where he served as the Executive Assistant of Operations since 2011. Prior to serving in King William, Topham was District Liaison for Congressman Tom Perriello in Central and Southside Virginia. He is a graduate of VCU’s Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, as well as the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia.

**Alexandria promotes Taylor to director of finance**

City Manager Mark Jinks announced the selection of **Kendel Taylor** as Director of Finance for the city of Alexandria, effective June 1. Taylor has served as Acting Finance Director since August 2014. A 20-year veteran of the city, Taylor spent most of her career in the Office of Management and Budget. She then moved to the Department of Finance, where she focused on implementing a complex, citywide financial and human resources enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Most recently, she completed a bond refinancing for the city that will save taxpayers more than \$3 million over the next 10 years.

**Marion Councilmember Jim Owens passes away**

**James “Jim” Douglas Owens**, age 72, beloved husband, father and grandfather, passed away March 16, 2015. First elected to Marion Town Council in 2010, Owens had just begun his second term. He was a proud United States Navy Veteran who served in Vietnam. Owens was born and raised in Glade Spring, Va. He was a lifetime member of the VFW Post 4667, Kiwanis member and past president. Jim Owens lived a life of service and was proud to represent his town and community as a town councilman for the past four-and-a-half years.

**Boones Mill selects Town Manager**

The town council of Boones Mill has hired **Matthew Reges Lawless** as the new Town Manager. Prior to the appointment, Lawless worked as a management fellow for the Albemarle County executive’s office, and previously in the human resources departments in the cities of Charlottesville and Winchester.

Lawless is a native of Winchester. He holds a bachelor’s degree from the College of William & Mary and a Master’s in Public Administration from American University.

**Bluefield promotes Gunter to succeed retiring Chief Cundiff**

The Town of Bluefield has promoted former **Lieutenant Michael Shane Gunter** to Chief of Police, following the retirement of **Chief Harry Cundiff**.



- Gunter -



- Cundiff -

Gunter came to the town of Bluefield from the town of Pocahontas. He started out as a patrolman in 2004, working his way up to sergeant in 2007. He was promoted to first sergeant in 2010 and to lieutenant in 2013. Gunter holds a Bachelors Degree from Bluefield College in Criminal Justice. He is also a graduate of the Professional Leadership Academy and Mountain Empire College.

His predecessor Chief Harry Cundiff started his career with the town of Bluefield in 1972 as a Dispatcher before moving to the Tazewell County Sheriff’s Department in 1973 where he worked as a Deputy for five years. He was a sergeant with the Tazewell County Sheriff’s Department until 2000 when he was promoted to chief deputy. Cundiff worked as chief deputy for the Tazewell County Sheriff’s Office for five years before accepting the chief of police position with the town of Bluefield.

**Arey retiring as Bluefield town attorney**

After 36 years as Bluefield’s town attorney, **Stephen Arey** will retire June 30. During his tenure, Arey worked with five different town managers and advised numerous mayors and town council members. While serving as town attorney, Arey maintained an active law practice in Tazewell serving as attorney for Tazewell County planning

## People



- Arey -

commission, Tazewell County department of social services and the town of Pocahontas. In addition to his law practice, he continued to serve in the Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force. Arey says that his greatest pride in serving as town attorney has been his involvement in the growth of the town during that time, including two annexations and several major commercial developments. His greatest joy has been the “can do” attitude of the town per-

sonnel and the many friendships he has developed in Bluefield over the years.

### Lynchburg’s Foster receives bar award

The Lynchburg Bar Association honored Lynchburg City Council member **Joan Foster** with its Liberty Bell Award. The Liberty Bell Award is given annually to a non-lawyer and Foster was chosen for stimulating a civic sense of responsibility. Foster, the City Council’s current longest-serving member, was Lynchburg’s first female mayor and served in the role from 2004 to 2012. She was recognized not only for her



- Foster -

service to local government but also to a large number of nonprofits throughout Lynchburg. She currently serves as director of development with Lynchburg Beacon of Hope, an organization that encourages Lynchburg City Schools students to pursue post-secondary education.

## News & notes

### Petersburg Public Library wins project of the year

The American Public Works Association (APWA) Mid-Atlantic Chapter recently selected the City of Petersburg’s Public Library for Public Works Project of the Year for structures costing \$5 million to \$25 million. The new library opened April 2014.

Selection criteria included: good construction management techniques, safety performance, community relations, environmental resource safety and awareness, unusual accomplishments under adverse conditions and use of sustainable infrastructure.

“The project was designed utilizing the United States Green Building Council’s LEED rating system and this project received LEED Certification. This demonstrates the City’s commitment to create more livable and sustainable communities,” said Steven W. Hicks, Director of Public Works.

The Petersburg Public Library was a joint effort between the City of Petersburg Department of Public Works, Petersburg Public Library System, Enteros Design Architects and EDC Construction Company. The project has also been nominated for a national APWA Public Works Project of the Year award.



The Petersburg Library opened in 2014.

### Goochland County earns AAA credit rating

Standard & Poor’s Rating Services (S&P) has assigned the highest credit rating possible of AAA to Goochland County. In receiving the AAA rating in its first-ever attempt, Goochland also becomes the only small county in Virginia to be rated AAA by S&P. Currently, no other county with a population under 60,000 is designated AAA. Goochland County’s current population is estimated at 21,400.

### Manassas Utilities host Brazilian delegation

A reverse trade mission from Brazil visited the city of Manassas utilities department in May. They came to see how the city of Manassas manages its water, sewer and electric utilities. Ten members of the delegation questioned Acting Utilities Director Tony Dawood about the full deployment of the Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) that is currently underway. This system makes load management more accurate and timely for residents and the city. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that in 2013, Brazil was the eighth largest energy consumer in the world and the third largest in the Americas, behind the U.S. and Canada.

### City of Danville adds budget information to online data portal

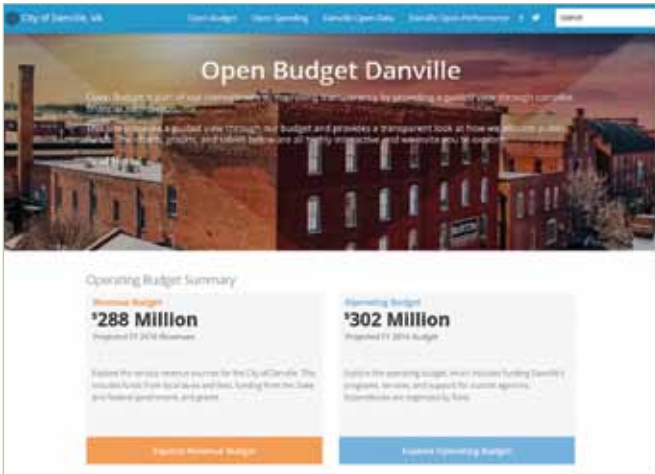
The City of Danville has launched a new application that provides insight and details into the city’s budget in a way never before available to residents of Danville.

Through the application called Open Budget, citizens can go online and drill down to budget revenue and spending numbers in a self-service, consumer-friendly format.

Open Budget is part of a suite of applications developed by Socrata, a company that creates performance and financial transparency apps for governments.

In March, Danville launched an online data portal called





**Citizens can log on to Open Budget Danville to see the city’s budget revenue and spending.**

Open Data Danville using Socrata applications. Anyone can access the portal directly at [data.danvilleva.gov](http://data.danvilleva.gov) or from the city’s main website – [danvilleva.gov](http://danvilleva.gov).

Citizens and staff see budget and spending data in vivid color. The charts, graphs and images are attractive, navigable and easy to understand. People can search the data, download the data, embed the data on their own site and build apps with it. Danville is only the second Socrata client to launch the Open Budget 2.0 app since it was made available.

**Herndon authorizes downtown land purchase**

Following a public hearing in May, the Herndon Town Council adopted an ordinance authorizing a contract to purchase approximately 1.67 acres of land in Herndon’s historic downtown.

Combined with approximately three acres of land already owned by the town, the purchase clears the way for a comprehensive development project in the downtown, in accordance with the town council’s Downtown Master Plan.

The town is purchasing the land from Ashwell, LLC for \$3.519 million. The land will be rezoned in

**On May 27, Mayor Lisa C. Merkel and Ronald K. Ashwell of Ashwell, LLC, the private holder of the land, met at the Herndon Municipal Center to sign the contract.**

conformity with the adjacent town owned property, which allows for mixed-use commercial and residential development. This will make nearly five acres of town-owned land available for private development. The town has invested just under \$5 million, more than half obtained through federal and state grant funding, in underground duct bank to facilitate undergrounding of utilities and is completing streetscape upgrades throughout the downtown.

“The council’s decision to move forward with the contract brings us ever closer to the reality of a vibrant, energized

downtown that fulfills the vision established in our Downtown Master Plan,” said Mayor Lisa Merkel.

**Newport News opens new James River Fishing Pier**

Just in time for the summer, the first 900-foot section of the new James River Fishing Pier has opened. In light of the extensive repairs needed, the city determined the best alternative was to demolish the pier and replace it with an all concrete structure. The site has been closed since December 2013.

The pier is being constructed in two phases. The first section of the new pier extends 900 feet into the river. An additional section, which will extend the pier, add a floating dock and gangway, is scheduled to be completed by the end of August 2015. Phase II of the project will extend the pier a projected additional 1,400 feet.



**(L to R) Councilmembers Sandra Cherry, Sharon Scott, Bert Bateman, Patricia Woodbury and Vice Mayor Rob Coleman get the “first cast” on the new James River Fishing Pier.**

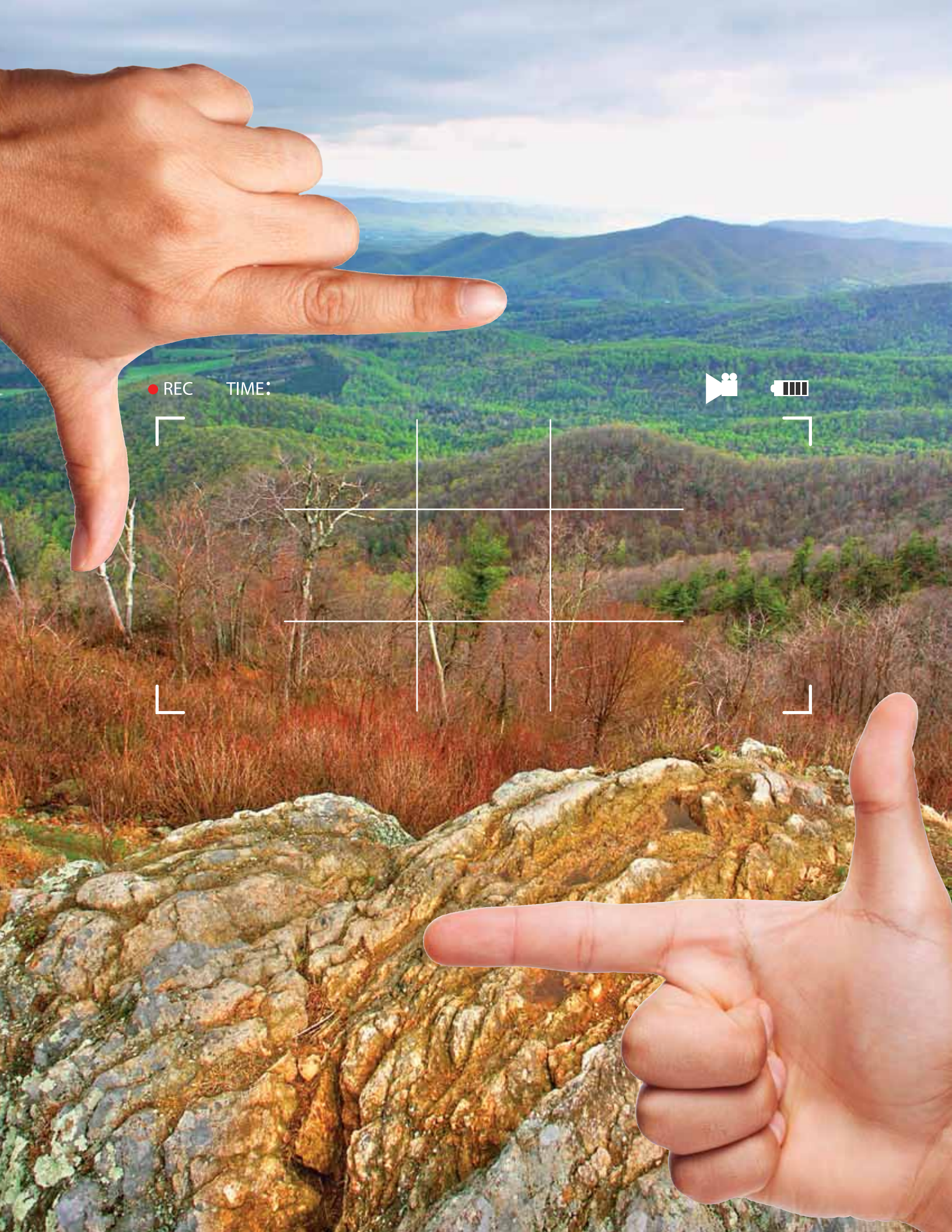
Located adjacent to Huntington Park, the pier is licensed for fishing. A concession and bait stand will be open and other amenities will be added as the continued rebuilding occurs.

The first fishing pier was part of the original James River Bridge. In 1928, the original James River Bridge opened connecting Newport News and Isle of Wight County. The original bridge was replaced in 1975 and approximately 3,000 feet of the original bridge on the Newport News side became the James River Fishing Pier.

**Staunton installs electric car charging station**

In collaboration with a private owner/operator, Staunton has opened an electric car charging station at a central parking lot. The fast-charge unit is compatible with nearly all electric vehicles. It can power two cars at once and can charge the average electric passenger vehicle in about an hour. A six dollar fee per 20-minute session will apply. City staff worked with Virginia Clean Cities, ChargeUp, and owner/operator Robert Pingry to bring the unit to Staunton. Pingry will manage the operation, maintenance, fees, and other systems related to the charger and site. The City’s only role is to provide a designated area for the charger.





REC TIME:





# On location in Virginia

## How communities get discovered by Hollywood

FROM *LINCOLN* TO *ARGO* to *Big Stone Gap*, Virginia has rapidly become a favorite setting for filmmakers. Today, the film industry contributes more than \$380 million annually to the Virginia economy.

"I like to say Virginia is a small America. It has great architecture and topography in a relatively small area," says Andy Edmunds, Director of the Virginia Film Office. Production companies love Virginia because they can be an hour from the mountains in one direction and an hour from the beach in the other. Between the two, they'll find historic buildings, rivers, lakes, industrial scenes and just about anything else they could want.

When Hollywood comes knocking, it can be the opportunity of a lifetime for a community. In the case of Giles County, the rural community is still reaping the benefits of *Dirty Dancing* – 28 years later. The movie catapulted Mountain Lake and Giles from relative unknown status to a well-known vacation destination for people who love the movie or just its picturesque setting.

But the major motion pictures you hear about are the tip of the iceberg. Literally hundreds of independent films, documentaries, TV shows, commercials and print ads are produced each year in Virginia.

The economic impact on a city, town or rural area can be huge. "Production companies are like super-tourists with a payroll. They touch all parts of the local economy. They buy paper clips, lumber, helicopters and everything in between," says Edmunds.

The film industry creates local jobs as well. In 2013, the film industry created more than 3,000 full time jobs in Virginia and \$187 million in additional labor income.

No one knows the power of Virginia's film industry better than Petersburg. In just the past three years, this small city has hosted Spiel-

berg's *Lincoln*, Meg Ryan's *Ithaca* and is now in its second season filming AMC's series *Turn: Washington's Spies*.

For every incentive dollar that Virginia provided to AMC's *Turn*, in the form of a tax credit or grant from the Commonwealth, \$8 was returned to the Virginia economy. Eleven projects including *Lincoln*, had an average return on investment of 11 to one.

"We encourage them to buy locally. They use our hardware stores, restaurants, electricians and much more," says Brian Little, director of cultural affairs, arts and tourism for the City of Petersburg.

Rental fees paid by film companies are often a life saver for historic buildings and areas. "We might not have the funds to maintain historic buildings," says Little. "Income from film companies helps us to maintain and renovate them."

Even the stars frequent local shops. During the filming of *Ithaca*, Meg Ryan hosted a daily staff meeting at Demolition, a coffee and sandwich shop in Petersburg.

"Meg Ryan gave us great reviews. It brought in lots of business," say Demolition cook Antonio

Tabon. "It's been a good thing for the whole downtown."

In addition to the economic windfall, communities enjoy many fringe benefits. "It creates a sense of excitement and community pride when local residents see their community highlighted," Jean Clark, director of tourism for Lexington & the Rockbridge Area Tourism.

Clarke has served as the local liaison to films produced in the Lexington area as since 1990's *Somersby*, a box office winner starring Jodie Foster and Richard Gere. More recently, Lexington was the setting for the 2014 release *Field of Lost Shoes*, starring David Arquette, based on the true story of the young VMI cadets who fought in the Battle of New Market in the Civil War.



**"Production companies are like super-tourists with a payroll. They touch all parts of the local economy."**

**Andy Edmunds, Director of the Virginia Film Office**

### The filmmaker's canvas

Where in Virginia are production companies going? In 2013, production of film, television, commercials and other media contributed:

- \$110.8 million to the Northern Virginia economy. (\$16.4 million in tax revenue)
- \$14.7 million to the Central Virginia economy. (\$2.2 million in tax revenue)
- \$22.7 million to Hampton Roads economy. (\$3.4 million in tax revenue)
- \$9.2 million to Southwest and Shenandoah region's economy. (\$1.5 million in tax revenue)

**Source:** VA Film Office 2013 Year End Report

## Get discovered

### Step 1 Show what you have.

Post local photos in the library at film.virginia.org. Production companies use this library to find what they're looking for. Get on the Film Office's e-mail list announcing projects currently scouting locations.

### Step 2 Give them a single point of contact.

Appoint a film liaison from local government who can make anything and everything happen quickly. Film liaisons often work in the Tourism or Special Events Departments. In a small town or rural area, it could be the Town Manager or County Administrator.

### Step 3 Develop a film friendly reputation.

Positive word of mouth is everything in LA and will get you repeat business.

### Step 4 Enjoy the excitement!

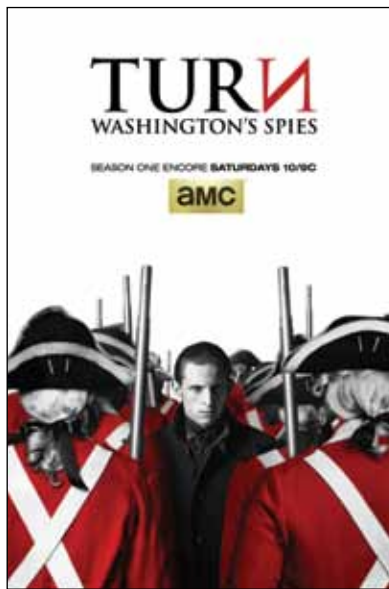
Local residents are frequently hired as extras. Jason Kilgore, a town councilman in St. Paul, Virginia, stars as the villain in the sci-fi thriller *Survival's End*. The movie will begin filming in St. Paul in August.

Giles County Administrator Chris McKlarney appreciates

the tourism benefits. His community just wrapped up filming *Wish You Well*, a new release based on the best-selling book by Virginia author David Baldacci. "In Baldacci's film, the [Giles County] landscape is almost a character in the movie. A movie showcases our community in a way we could never afford to do ourselves," says McKlarney.

McKlarney is resourceful in engaging the cast and crew with the community in meaningful ways, asking famous actors like Josh Lucas and others to speak to school groups, for example.

Having a major production come to town can be a lot of work, but localities overwhelmingly agree that the benefits far outweigh the temporary inconveniences.



## How does a community break into show business?

For localities yet to be discovered by filmmakers, the first step is to show what they have. The Virginia Film Office provides an online library where localities can upload a catalog of photos showing what



Actor Samuel Roukin (left) talks with guest director Andrew McCarthy (center) during filming of an episode of *Turn: Washington's Spies*. The AMC series is now in its second season of filming in Richmond and Petersburg. Photo by Anthony Platt.





**Big Stone Gap, based on the best-selling trilogy, was filmed in Wise County in 2013. (above) Ashley Judd stars as Ave Maria Mulligan. Her ever-present truck belongs to Town Manager Pat Murphy. Photo by Ron Flanary.**

their location has to offer.

What kind of pictures should a locality post? “Show us the beauty and the beast,” says Edmunds. Of course a town should feature rare historic gems – the courthouse, historic mansion homes and Main Street vistas. They should also catalog natural landscapes and rare topography – mountains, rivers, lakes and the like. But production companies also look for the ordinary – schools, suburbs, rest stops – and even the not-so-glamorous – abandoned properties, rusty junk yards, industrial sites.

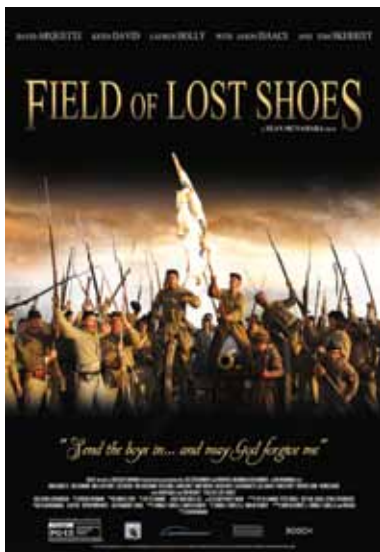
In addition to posting photos online with the Film Office, Edmunds says communities should compile a list of assets and a directory of local services. These should be kept up to date so a local liaison can respond very quickly when filmmakers come calling.

For production companies, using local services is usually more affordable and more efficient than flying in an army of craftsmen. Production companies need places for staff and crew to eat and sleep. On the set, they’ll employ the services of carpenters, electricians, heavy duty vehicles, quarries, stables and everything in between.

Once a film has set its sights on a location, the most important thing for a locality to have is a point person who can make anything and everything happen – from permitting to street closures, re-routing traffic and commerce.

Film savvy localities have a person who knows all the contacts

**The 2014 release, *Field of Lost Shoes*, was filmed in Lexington, VA.**



## On location in Virginia

and can make things happen quickly. “Filming needs often runs 24/7 and it moves at 190 mph,” says Edmunds.

“You have to be flexible,” says Little. “The production schedule can be revised and moved to another part of town at a moment’s notice.”

Petersburg and Lexington liaisons agree that their most important job is to communicate to all the stakeholders about what will be happening.

“Assemble a team – law enforcement, schools, other departments – and make sure all partners are on board,” says Clark.



**Scores of crew and cast members prepare to shoot a scene for *Big Stone Gap* in Wise County. Photo by Anthony Platt.**

Local governments must remember to communicate to residents and businesses about traffic detours and disruptions to commerce. “The best thing is when the location director and a city official deliver flyers together on foot to area businesses,” says Little. Clear signage also helps residents to tolerate traffic detours.

“Every city has its naysayers – find your champions,” says Petersburg City Manager William Johnson.

Once a community lands a big fish, the next step is to make life as easy as possible for the production company. This is how to get repeat business.

## Proceed with caution

Localities overwhelmingly extoll the benefits of having production companies come to town – from the economic boon to tourism and civic pride. But there are a few things to be cautious about.

“Be prepared that some damage and wear and tear will occur,” says Little. He requires a deposit on the rental of historic facilities – one that would cover any repairs.

Cities and towns should always consult with their legal department and talk about risk management.



**(Above) Scenes from *Wish You Well*. Giles County was the setting for the 2013 release, based on the bestselling novel by Virginia's own David Baldacci. "The [Giles County] landscape is almost a character in the movie," says County Administrator Chris McKlarney. Photos courtesy of Life Out Loud Films.**

The Film Office also serves as the locality's advocate. Although they are in the business of bringing film to Virginia, they also represent the interests of the local community. "We're here to protect and advise the community," says Edmunds. "Production companies can be needy. We can tell the community what's normal and what goes beyond the expected."

He adds, "We never want to burn a location. We want it to be available for the future."

In all the excitement, it's also important to remember a local government's core duties. "Make sure you don't allow filming to delay important projects," says Johnson.

Finally, localities shouldn't let the opportunity cloud their judgement. "Not every project is something your locality might

be proud of," said Clark, who politely passed on the reality show *Trailer Park Wars*.

"Vet the opportunities carefully," she says. "Does it fit with your brand? Is it true to who you are? Is this how you want to be remembered?"

In other words, think twice about that episode of *Teenage and Pregnant*.

## Curtain call

### How to get more mileage out of the moment

"Everyone likes the windfall, the big boost in their paycheck, but it's a short window of opportunity and you have to get it while you can," says Clarke, who compares the economic impact of film to the holiday retail season.

But there are ways to get more mileage out of a film event and to create a local industry that is more sustainable and less episodic.

Most important is establishing a film-friendly reputation that will bring more film business to the area.


"The first step is treating them well while they are here," says Allen Rothert, special events manager for the city of Richmond. "Back in LA, there's a lot of shop talk. Filmmakers want to know, 'How were you treated?'" Rothert says positive word of mouth is a major factor in getting more film to come to a town.

Beyond encouraging new productions, there are also clever ways to extend the life of a completed production. "We're learning to negotiate to keep sets up after a production, so that everyone can experience the magic," says Johnson. "The public gets a kick out of it." Petersburg created a self-guided walking tour of the various "scenes" in the movie.

Location towns can follow the life of the film as well. For example, have a local premiere party. "When *Lincoln* was up for an Oscar, we transformed the train station for an Oscar watching party," says Little. These events are further revenue opportunities for local businesses.

The greatest opportunity lies in projects that have a longer life span, which is why the Film Office is going after more series TV. Petersburg and Richmond are now in their second season of AMC's *Turn*, which chronicles the story of Washington's spies during the Revolutionary War. The two cities also just landed the PBS series *Mercy Street*, now filming its first season.

It's easy to think that film is just something for the big cities. Wise County knows differently. In 2013, the rural county that borders Kentucky hosted production of *Big Stone Gap*, the screen adaptation of Adriana Trigiani's bestselling novels.

"Every community has an opportunity to participate at some level," says Edmunds. The secret is being ready when Hollywood comes to your door – ready for anything. 

### About the author

*Nancy Chafin is editor of Virginia Town and City.*



# How will changes in the Virginia Procurement Act affect your locality?

**V**IRGINIA LOCALITIES WITH populations over 3,500 will have to make some changes in the way they purchase goods and services beginning July 1. These changes are a result of revisions to the Virginia Procurement Act by the 2015 General Assembly.

The bills follow a two-year study group that included representatives of private vendors, government agencies and others. As is typical in the political process, following the work of the group, during the session, some parties tried to add their own ideas with last minute changes. In the end, identical bills, HB 1835 (Gilbert) and SB 1371 (Ruff) were passed.

The bills have several main provisions that affect local governments.

In the past, construction could not be done through small purchasing. The maximum amount for a small purchasing procedure is \$100,000.

## The loss

Construction may not be acquired through a piggy-back cooperative procurement. In the past, if locality A acquired construction services, locality B could piggy-back onto A's contract, with some restrictions. This saved locality B the cost of going through the procurement process. That will no longer be possible. The bills do allow two or more localities or other public agencies to go together in a single, joint procurement of construction if they do it on the front end of the procurement.



## Job Order Contracting (JOC)

JOC is a method of procuring construction “by establishing a book of unit prices and then obtaining a contractor to perform work as needed using the prices, quantities and specification in the book.” An example of a JOC contract is to hire a construction company to repair windows, as needed, during the year. Instead of going through procurement each time a window needs replacing, the winning contractor replaces windows throughout the year.

Individual JOCs are limited to \$500,000 for an order and a total of \$5 million for a year from a construction company. Within strict limitations, architectural and engineering services related to the construction project may be procured through JOC. JOC may not be used to procure construction related

to highways – this is existing law.

The bills require all public agencies, including localities, to report to the Department of General Services if any method other than competitive sealed bidding is used for construction costing more than \$2 million. That obligation ends July, 2017.

The Virginia Procurement Act generally does not apply to towns with a population under 3,500, with certain exceptions.



### About the author

*Mark Flynn is General Counsel for the Virginia Municipal League.*

Currently, for a locality to use competitive negotiation (Request for Proposals - RFP) instead of competitive sealed bidding (Invitation to Bid - ITB) to acquire goods or services, the act requires the public body to determine in advance that sealed bidding is “either not practicable or not fiscally advantageous to the public.” (Va. Code §2.2-4303.) The bills strike that requirement. As a result, a locality may use an RFP process to acquire goods and services without having to justify it.

Local governments experienced gain and loss when it comes to procuring construction:

## The gain

Non-transportation related construction may be purchased through a small purchasing procedure adopted by a locality.

## The shift from sustainability to resiliency

**F**or more than a century, cities and metro areas in America have been growing at a faster clip than rural areas. That trends shows no sign of slowing. New data on Virginia's population change from 2010 to 2014 shows that 99% of the total growth occurred in cities.

More people in our cities and metro areas put pressure on all of the systems designed to maintain a certain equilibrium, especially in unforeseeable times of shocks and stresses. Flat or declining populations in rural towns and counties across Virginia also put pressure on local officials trying to manage with fixed or declining resources.

For decades, the people who fight against environmental destruction, poverty, food insecurity, energy scarcity, and climate change have used "sustainability" as the rallying cry. Their thinking was that by providing the right mix of incentives, regulations, technology, and societal change, everyone would support the goal of reaching equilibrium with Mother Nature and each other. Together we would live in sustained harmony.

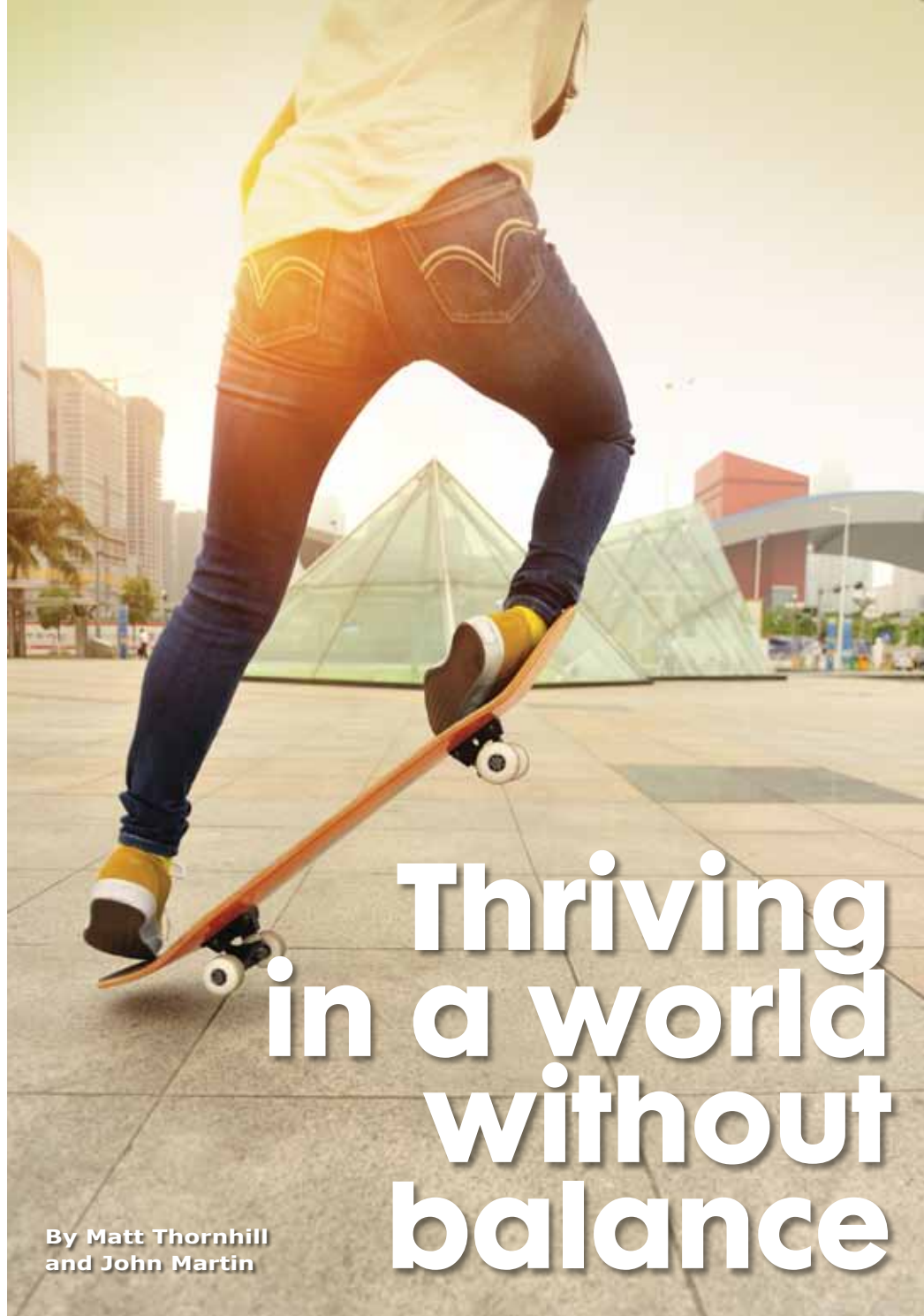
A new line of thinking is emerging among government and community leaders: trying to achieve such balance in an out-of-balance world is futile. Instead, we need to seek ways to better manage disequilibrium. To do that, the new goal should be one of achieving "resilience."

### What is resilience?

"In truth, this is not so much a new concept as a new way of thinking and working together," says Christine Morris, the chief resilience officer for the city of Norfolk (see page 15). "It is a way for local officials to think and plan more systematically, to better understand the strengths and weaknesses throughout

**"Where sustainability aims to put the world back into balance, resilience looks for ways to manage in an imbalanced world."**

**Andrew Zolli**, coauthor of *Resilience: Why Things Bounce Back*



# Thriving in a world without balance

By Matt Thornhill and John Martin

your community of all of the important elements – people, infrastructure, systems, and leadership.”

A community's ability to handle unpredictable shocks and stresses typically becomes evident in a crisis, be it an act of nature or an angry mob.

Andrew Zolli, coauthor of *Resilience: Why Things Bounce Back*, sums it up this way:

“Resilience: how to help vulnerable people, organizations and systems persist, perhaps even thrive, amid unforeseeable disruptions. Where sustainability aims to put the world back into balance, resilience looks for ways to manage in an imbalanced world.”

A key aspect of resilience is that it seeks to build capacity across communities for flexibility, responsiveness and decision



## Resiliency isn't about planning for every contingency, but planning to manage through unusual circumstances in the moment and bouncing back quickly.

economical and follow best practices when it comes to sustainability. But also build in capacity to withstand unforeseeable situations by including redundancy and flexibility.

Case in point: lower Manhattan was rebuilt after 9/11 to be sustainable, not resilient. Every new building met or exceeded the latest “green” standard. Yet when the floodwaters came with Superstorm Sandy, nothing was designed to bounce back from flooding – including the power grid, which was out for days. Resiliency planning would not have built in flood protection, but it would have put in place redundancy in the power grid.

Resiliency isn't about planning for every contingency, but planning to manage through unusual circumstances in the moment and bouncing back quickly.

Howard Shultz, chair of Starbucks, recently wrote, “How we respond to the unexpected – how resilient we are – matters more than proper planning.” He adds, “Stop trying to control everything, because it is futile.”

That is the essence of resiliency planning: roll with the waves;

making as events unfold. Moreover, it also tries to improve how well people – citizens and public servants – respond when a crisis occurs.

For many communities, resiliency starts appearing when urban planners tackle issues about replacing failing infrastructure. Yes, be

don't try to stop the ocean. To embrace and practice this perspective, keep two of the primary tenets of resilience planning in perspective: look for co-benefits and build a system of systems.

## Look for co-benefits

Those who are already applying resiliency to their community are discovering that better outcomes happen when those who are engaged look for co-benefits. The question to ask is, “How can my spending in this area also benefit or strengthen another area?” The money could be a capital investment in infrastructure – for example, when there is a need to dig up the roadway to replace water or sewer lines. With the holes dug, can the telecommunications or power lines be moved underground at the same time, reducing the risk of outages when tree limbs fall during a storm?

Resiliency planners will focus on the overall objective rather than the specific project under consideration. Again, another example: rather than one department focusing on which multiband handsets to buy for use during emergencies, try to address the broader issue; what do you need to change or improve to enhance cross-functional communication during an emergency, especially if power goes out for an extended period? Or, think about how an operational decision in one system – social services, let's say – impacts another system, like disaster recovery.

Let's say the Red Cross operates shelters during emergencies. Their policy is no pets. Emergency responders evacuating vulnerable residents often find they won't leave their house without their pet. The resident says, “I'm not leaving without my dog.” Everyone, residents included, needs to step back and look at the bigger picture – in advance of the emergency – and agree together on what will create the desired outcome: more residents evacuated to safety, especially those most at risk.

Thinking long and hard about the co-benefits is essentially the positive side of unintended consequences. This is especially true when two systems bump into each other during a time of stress. Think about what happened in Baltimore when law enforcement and city management clashed with the community's view of social equality and opportunity.

Often policies are put in place by one organization without much consideration beyond their own purview. By thinking about the co-benefits of every decision, departments and institutions across a community can all get on the same page.

The best resiliency planning also includes strong community engagement from the beginning. Understanding the specific needs of citizens, neighborhood by neighborhood, is the best way to put resiliency planning into practice.

## A system of systems

A second key aspect of resiliency planning is getting all of the seemingly disparate systems thinking about issues in the same way at the same time. That includes public and private organizations as well as citizens. By collaborating and working together rather than dictating and operating in parallel worlds, cities and communities can create system-wide improvements in how they bounce back from the inevitable curves that come their way.

### About this series

THIS ARTICLE IS THE FIFTH in a series on the future of Virginia's cities, towns, and counties, called 324 Places. VML has partnered with the Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc., and GenerationsMatter, to bring this program to the VML membership. Our goal is to provide leaders in municipalities across Virginia with the information, insights, and tools they need to understand and respond to what's coming.





**Resiliency planning would not have built in flood protection from Superstorm Sandy, but it would have put redundancy in the power grid, which was out for days.**

When Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans a decade ago, we observed how not to respond when disaster strikes. Among all the things that went wrong, one sticks in our mind.

Who can forget that image of row after row of empty school buses parked and not being used to evacuate residents of the Ninth Ward? Was it because the city only allowed drivers with a certain class of license to operate the buses? Was it because the school system, which owns the buses, had no relationship or connection with those in emergency preparedness? Resiliency planning might equip New Orleans and other cities to respond more effectively in the future.

What is important to keep in mind is that leaders cannot accurately predict the future. They don't know what's going to happen, or how things will unfold. They can't even control when things happen. All they can expect is to be surprised and therefore they should have capacity in place across all of the systems in the community and a willingness to make decisions with the entire area in mind. As one observer put it: be pragmatic and more politically inclusive, but be prepared for the exceptions and respond exceptionally.


## Thinking ahead

Many cities, towns, and counties already take a resiliency approach to planning. The uncertainty of the future continues to make this the right strategy to pursue—and besides that, it simply makes more sense.

Furthermore, it fits the Millennial generation's orientation toward the collective self. The Millennial generation will be shaping Virginia's society and culture by 2025. They are hard-wired to want to work together, and they see wisdom in the crowd, not in the individual. Resiliency planning—co-benefits and a system of systems—fits their way of thinking about the world. If your community is publicly being resilient, like Norfolk, you will be more appealing and attractive as a place they'll want to live, work, and pay taxes.

To learn more about resiliency planning, a range of online resources is available. A basic Google search will start you on

your way. Even better, there are experts in resiliency who are members of the Virginia Municipal League and would welcome the opportunity to share their lessons learned. Reach out to VML to make connections. The academic community has a head start on investigating resiliency as a planning approach. Virginia Tech has even put on conferences and symposiums on the topic. Search “resiliency” and “Virginia Tech” to get some specifics.

Finally, plan to attend VML's annual meeting, October 4-6, 2015. We'll explore in more detail how the resilience perspective offers valuable lessons for our 324 Places across the Commonwealth, and how this new planning philosophy will ensure Virginia will remain a model of resilience for the next 400 years. 

### About the authors

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

## Qualities of resilient systems

ENHANCING THE QUALITIES of the individual systems that make up a city will improve the resilience of the city overall. Resilient systems withstand, respond to, and adapt more readily to shocks and stresses, emerging stronger after tough times and living better in good times.

**REFLECTIVE** – Able to learn

**RESOURCEFUL** – Can easily repurpose resources

**ROBUST** – Limits spread of failure

**REDUNDANT** – Has backup capacity

**FLEXIBLE** – Has alternative strategies

**INCLUSIVE** – Broad consultation and communication

**INTEGRATED** – Systems work together

*From The Rockefeller Foundation's [www.100ResilientCities.org](http://www.100ResilientCities.org)*



## Norfolk: One of the 100 most resilient cities in the world

THE NEED FOR RESILIENCE sensibilities is visible from wherever you stand in the city of Norfolk – water is everywhere. While the water, with its natural beauty, active harbor, and recreational access, is among the city’s greatest assets for tourism and quality and life, water is also a primary variable to consider from the resilience perspective. And, that’s precisely what Norfolk is doing. With over 144 miles of shoreline, Norfolk has learned much about water-related resiliency over the years by bouncing back from high seas, over-abundant precipitation and land subsidence issues. The long-term threat of rising seas from climate change will continue to shape the city’s resiliency planning and attitude, especially now that the city is part of an elite group of international cities harnessing the power of intentional resilience planning.

When The Rockefeller Foundation announced a program to incentivize 100 cities across the globe to embrace resilience, Norfolk’s forward-looking mayor, Paul Fraim, and city manager, Marcus Jones, leaped at the chance to be included. Their pitch was compelling and effective. Norfolk was one of the first of 33 cities to be accepted into the program, joining the likes of New York, Rome, and Bangkok as model cities. Christine Morris, one of Norfolk city government’s big-picture thinkers, was appointed as the city’s first CRO – chief resilience officer – for the city of Norfolk.

Christine says her focus so far has been to build capacity at the neighborhood level, so that when trouble comes, everyone can withstand it and make the right decisions “in the moment.” But this is not emergency preparedness, or even sustainability, under a new banner. “My job isn’t about tomorrow or next week, but rather about cultivating a long-range ‘connectedness’ perspective,” said Morris.

“My goal is to make sure our systems can handle bad things when they happen, including our social system,” Morris said. Her biggest concern is making sure those who are most vulnerable are supported. “That starts in the neighborhood by understanding the existing support structures in place – the neighbor down the street, the local church, the community center – and linking them to the city or a social services organization, so everyone knows their role and who can be counted on to help in a time of need.”



- Christine Morris -

A major hurricane and a mandatory evacuation of the city would certainly test all the systems Morris is organizing. “Our focus isn’t on how our transportation will work to move people to safety; others have that specific responsibility,” said Morris. “Our concern is those who are unlikely to survive if disruptions happen, and putting support in place to make sure they are not vulnerable.”

Morris believes the biggest shift toward resilience thinking is when each key player – law enforcement, emergency responders, transportation planners, utilities, government leaders, and citizens themselves – realizes they are a system of systems that should focus on outcomes – keeping people safe or returning life to normal when something unexpected happens.

And it will!

**Check out Norfolk’s resilience plan online.**  
<http://www.norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16292>







**HIGH  
WATER**



# Localities can reduce flood insurance rates through voluntary program

**A** VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION OF municipalities by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) can lead to reduced flood insurance premiums issued for homes and buildings making real estate more affordable. This also helps to maintain the population and tax base of a community. The Community Rating System (CRS), administered by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), employs a class rating system similar to fire insurance rates to determine flood insurance premium reductions for policy holders. Many Virginia local governments can qualify for existing practices they currently employ, including stormwater pollution reduction, advanced building codes, more stringent floodplain ordinances, and open space protection.

To date, 22 Virginia localities have qualified under CRS resulting in insurance premium reductions ranging from five to twenty percent for policy holders whose property lies within Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). The result is an average annual savings of approximately \$600 for more than 5,000 individual policy holders.

## How it works

A locality accrues points to improve its CRS class rating, thereby receiving increasingly higher discounts (see table below). Points are awarded for engaging in any of 19 activities, organized under four categories: (1) public information; (2) mapping and regulations; (3) flood damage reduction; and (4) warning and response. For example, the James City County receives points for their development and annual update of a floodplain management plan.

## How an improved rating affects insurance premiums

Ratings Class	Points	Premium Reduction
1	4500+	45%
2	4000-4499	40%
3	3500-3999	35%
4	3000-3499	30%
5	2500-2999	25%
6	2000-2499	20%
7	1500-1999	15%
8	1000-1499	10%
9	500-999	5%

CRS was implemented in 1990 and, while adoption by communities in Virginia and the nation as a whole has been slow, that is likely to change for two reasons. One, relative sea-level

rise and repetitive property loss is prompting many coastal communities to participate in CRS as a means to engage citizens and property owners in proactive measures to mitigate and adapt to changing conditions.

Second, recent federal reforms to the NFIP to address its financial solvency has resulted in increased insurance premiums, leaving many homeowners and businesses scrambling to pay the new rates. Of the top 50 localities in Virginia, in terms of the number of issued flood insurance policies, only 18 participate in CRS. The remaining 32 localities represent more than 40,000 policy holders with the potential for more than \$20 million in annual savings.


## Alexandria's Success Story

The City of Alexandria recently earned enough points to move from class seven to six, the highest in Virginia. By doing so, policy holders within the City have realized a 20 percent reduction in premiums.

## How does a locality become certified under CRS?

The first thing to do is contact the regional FEMA office to indicate interest in certification. For Virginia localities, this is the Region III office located in Philadelphia. Working with the Insurance

Services Office (ISO)/CRS specialist, a locality submits an application along with documentation showing evidence of implementation of creditable activities. The specialist reviews the application on behalf FEMA and insurance companies to verify credit points. This includes a visit to the locality. Once approved, FEMA notifies the locality, the state, and insurance companies. A locality must also verify that it is continuing to perform its creditable activities through annual recertification. Additionally, a locality can improve its class rating by undertaking new activities to earn even more points, thereby increasing the rate reduction for policy holders.

For more information, including technical assistance, interested localities should contact Mari Radford, mitigation planner with the FEMA Region III office, at [Mari.Radford@dhs.gov](mailto:Mari.Radford@dhs.gov) or (215) 931-2880. Additional information and assistance is also provided by Virginia's office of Floodplain Management housed within the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Interested localities should contact Charley Banks, floodplain program engineer, at [Charley.Banks@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Charley.Banks@dcr.virginia.gov) or 804-371-6135. 

## About the author

*Joe Lerch is VML's Director of Environmental Policy.*

# How do you picture your retirement?

## Virginia Retirement System has the tools to help you plan for it



**T**HINK YOU NEED to save and plan more for retirement? Start small. Give up that second cup of coffee. Pass up the car-chase app on your smartphone. Take an online financial planning course. When it comes to retirement, small sacrifices now and a little advance planning can quickly add up to a more secure future.

The Virginia Retirement System (VRS) can help you as a VRS member make sense of retirement planning. From videos on the basics of saving to a variety of opportunities for investing, VRS has education and retirement planning resources to guide you throughout your career so you arrive at a well-planned retirement. These resources are all available online at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### Start with the basics – Money Matters for Virginians

If you're wondering where to start, the series of online videos, Money Matters for Virginians ([www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org)) guides you through establishing credit, saving, filing taxes and investing for retirement. Choose any topic whenever you need to brush up on your financial savvy.

### myVRS is always there for you

For one-stop retirement planning, you can't beat your myVRS account ([www.varetire.org/myvrs-access](http://www.varetire.org/myvrs-access)). Start by reviewing your member account to find out:

- Your earliest retirement eligibility dates and estimated benefit amounts
- Your current account balance, years of service, employment history, compensation history and life insurance coverage, if applicable

Once you see where you are, use the Retirement Planner to see where you're going. Available through your myVRS account, this tool allows you to set different retirement dates and benefit payout options, and view different benefits amounts.

Create a Quick Plan for a result based on your current account information and general assumptions, or develop a Detailed Plan customizing your retirement plans using different ages, years of service, income and expenses and including:

- An estimated annuity from the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 plan, if you participate, or 403(b) plan, IRA or other savings plan



- Estimated income from a spouse, part-time job, rental property, etc.
- Your projected Social Security benefit
- Estimated expenses for health insurance and income taxes
- Expenses such as housing, food, clothing

## Want to learn more? VRS has courses for every stage of your career

The following free education courses ([www.varetire.org/members/education](http://www.varetire.org/members/education)) teach you smart retirement planning moves for every stage of your career. Take them in person or as online presentations.

**Are You on Track?** – If you are a Plan 1 or Plan 2 member in early- or mid-career, learn about your VRS benefits and optional programs, purchase of prior service and member resources such as *myVRS*.

**Are You Ready to Retire?** – If you are a Plan 1 or Plan 2 member within five years of retirement, this course provides guidance on when to retire and how to select a benefit payout option. Learn about using *myVRS* as a retirement planning tool and the benefits you are eligible for after retirement.

**Your Next Steps** – If you are a Plan 1 or Plan 2 member within 12 months of retiring, this course walks you through the retirement application process and covers a timeline of action items. It also provides an overview of taxes and cost-of-living adjustments and VRS resources in retirement.

**Retirement Education Seminar I** – Learn about the psychological adjustment and non-financial planning for retirement, mid- and long-range financial planning, estate planning and legal readiness.

**Retirement Education Seminar II** – This seminar covers short-term financial planning, long-term care, Social Security and Medicare.

## Tools for hybrid retirement plan members

In addition to the Money Matters series and the seminars, there are specific presentations on investing and planning available for Hybrid Retirement Plan members (find these at [varetire.org/hybrid](http://varetire.org/hybrid)):

**Features and Benefits Series** – This video series includes an introduction to the Hybrid Retirement Plan, a description of how contributions and investments are handled and an explanation of benefits and retirement eligibility.

**Defined Contribution Learning Opportunities** – You can choose from webinars and one-on-one sessions to learn about managing your money, investment opportunities and the other benefits available to Hybrid Retirement Plan members.

**Investment Videos** – Learn about your investment options in the Hybrid Retirement Plan.

## Deferred Compensation Plan regional education meetings

If your employer participates in the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Plan, VRS offers deferred compensation plan regional education meetings to help you get the most out of your saving and investing. The meetings are held at sites around the state and cover topics such as long-term planning for financial security, managing your plan and distribution strategies. Learn more at [www.varetire.org/DCPlans](http://www.varetire.org/DCPlans).

## Member counseling

Have specific questions? Meet with a counselor. Counseling is available from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday–Friday. Call VRS toll-free at 1-888-827-3847 for information.

For questions about the Hybrid Retirement Plan, call the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team at 1-855-291-2285.



## Your VRS website

Finally, you can always refer to the VRS website at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). The website is your source for basic information on your benefits and retirement planning. It features member handbooks and publications that offer details about your retirement eligibility requirements, planning for retirement and your benefits, both in retirement and while working.

Visit the website for news about your benefits, recorded webinars and forms. Read the member newsletter, Member News online or subscribe to receive it in your personal email. And don't forget to keep up with the VRS community by liking VRS on Facebook (Facebook/VirginiaRetirementSystem).



### About the author

*Kathleen Dimond is Public Relations and Communications Specialist for Virginia Retirement System.*

# University and city join forces to serve first-time voters in Radford

**E**ACH FALL, new college and university students flood campuses, full of energy and ready to experience the first steps toward adulthood.

The city of Radford and Radford University are now focusing on one of those rites of passage: first-time voting.

Research shows that the more positive voting experience a first-time voter has, the more likely that person is to continue voting and become a fully engaged citizen.

To foster a better experience, volunteers trained and supervised by Radford general registrar's office will staff a Voting Action Center from August through Election Day in November. The goal will be to nurture engaged and informed citizen scholars on Radford's campus.

Student volunteers will be trained in voter registration, absentee voting, and Virginia and Federal election law.

The volunteers have to pass a one-hour training seminar given by the general registrar and be sworn in as volunteer voter registration deputies. The deputies then will be armed with official forms, applications, and the expertise of the city of Radford's elections office.

As official "Deputy Registrars," the students, in conjunction with the elections office, will be the official on-campus resource for election information, voter registration, and absentee voting. By serving as the single official resource on campus, the Voting Action Office will:

- help students become civically engaged
- counter misinformation distributed by third-party registration groups
- increase awareness of elections

- make the experience of first-time voters a positive one.

Forms and applications that were offered piecemeal in the past will now be available in a single, accessible environment. The campus population will have an officially sanctioned, convenient resource. Students will no longer have to rely on fragmented information, fruitless online searches, or poorly trained third party groups.

This concept has already started garnering attention from other registrars and persons concerned with maintaining the integrity of the election process and promoting increased participation in elections. After hearing a presentation recently on this initiative, Jean Jensen, a former secretary of the State Board of Elections, said, "I really appreciate that you don't have a young person showing up at the polling place





on the day of the election and finding that they aren't registered."

## What's in it for student volunteers?

The program, set to begin this fall, will offer student volunteers credit in community service and possibly creditable intern hours. As official Deputy Registrars serving a one-year term, the students will also build credible resume experience.

The Voting Action Office is a new

venture. The Student Government Association incorporated this concept as part of its bylaws this past April. The plan is to have the center operate initially during the months of August, September, October and early November through Election Day to provide answers to voting questions.

Volunteer deputies may branch out to high traffic areas of campus to increase visibility and expand its campus footprint to reach the maximum number of potential voters. Because the deputies are not beholden to any

outside group, agency or campaign, they will be able to offer non-partisan elections information that will increase civics education.

Deputies will not only be working with individuals but also with third-party groups that conduct voter registration campaigns on many campuses. Often the volunteers (or paid staff) for these groups do not understand the process of voter registration in Virginia. Students then discovered too late that they were not registered because the group conducting the registration drive did not understand how to 1) complete the forms or 2) return them to the appropriate location.

Jean Jensen, a former secretary of the State Board of Elections applauded the Radford initiative, saying, "I really appreciate that you don't have a young person showing up at the polling place on the day of the election and finding out that they aren't registered."

## How are student registrars trained?

Deputies will be trained on all the major components of voter registration, including a box-by-box explanation of the Virginia state voter registration form, the national registration form, voter identification requirements, a step-by-step explanation of the absentee ballot application, information security and the legal framework for elections. In addition, the training manual includes a series of frequently asked questions that voters usually pose.

The end result should be a better informed student body and less frustration with the voting process for students. Given the relatively low level of voter participation in elections, every step that can be taken to improve civic education and voter participation is important.



**More Ways To Serve You**

- Fixed Rate Loan Program
- Equipment Leasing
- Commercial Paper
- Virginia Investment Pool
- Pooled OPEB Trust
- OPEB Actuarial Services
- Accounting Services

**VML VACo FINANCE**  
valocalfinance.org

VML/VACo Finance has been serving Virginia local government since 2003. MSRB-registered.



### About the author

Tracy D. Howard is the general registrar of voters for the city of Radford. He can be reached at [thoward@radford.va.us](mailto:thoward@radford.va.us).

# Celebrating building safety month

**L**OCAL BUILDING OFFICIALS throughout Virginia put the spotlight on safety successes with celebrations across the state during Building Safety Month in May.

The city of Alexandria held its annual exhibit and cook-out celebrating best practices that keep places where we live, work and play safe. Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille, president of



**Presentation of Building Safety Month Proclamation by Gov. Terry McAuliffe - (L to R) James Rogers, Norfolk Director of Neighborhood Development; Sean P. Farrell, Prince William Code Compliance Supervisor and VBCOA President; and Maurice Jones, Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade. Photo courtesy of Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development.**

VML, kicked off the festivities. The event showcased innovative products from local building supply companies as well as the work of local non-profit organizations dedicated to improving housing conditions in the city.

Warren County and the town of Front Royal, in partnership with the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association and others, held its first safety month event May 8 in Front Royal with a focus on resilient communities. Front Royal Mayor Timothy Darr and Warren County Board of Supervisors Chairman Richard Traczyk spoke at the event.

In Norfolk on May 8, Mayor Paul Fraim opened the city's celebration which featured the presentation of a proclamation

in honor of Building Safety Month issued by Gov. Terry McAuliffe. Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones presented the proclamation to the presidents of several building safety organizations, including the International Code Council, VBCOA and the Virginia Plumbing,

Mechanical and Inspectors Association. Speaking at this event, VBOCA President Sean Farrell said that VBCOA's "goal is to build trust and work together for better buildings and safer communities."

Fairfax County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services manned "Ask a Pro" informational booths at four local Home Depot Stores on May 2 and May 3. Customers at the stores could ask questions related to the building codes, and check out building equipment and safety appliances including carbon monoxide alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and radon test kits.




**Wendell Phillips, Property Maintenance Supervisor, City of Alexandria.**

The Code Compliance Office in Williamsburg offered free safety inspections throughout the month of May. The inspections focused on increasing awareness of disaster preparedness, energy, water safety and fire safety.



**(L to R) Steve Higginbotham, Building Inspector, City of Fairfax; Ellis McKinney, Construction Codes Supervisor, Arlington County; Charles Cooper, Site Plan Reviewer, City of Alexandria.**

The Isle of Wight Department of Inspections had personnel at local building supply stores on May 9 to provide information on building safety, permitting and inspections. In addition, the department supplied materials on building decks, pool safety and workbooks for children, to allow them to earn their "Junior Building Safety Inspectors" certification.

For additional information on Building Safety Month, go to <http://bit.ly/1Jz1qu6> or <http://bit.ly/1EBpQ1e>. 



**Erica Fritts, City National Bank; Amanda Kindall, City National Bank; Sean Wallace, International Code Council; Alyssa Peterson, Sweet Frog; Sweet Frog Mascot.**



**Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille; Donna Daily, Permit Technician, City of Alexandria; and Diane Best, Administrative Services Division Chief, City of Alexandria.**

## About the author

*Mary Jo Fields is VML's Director of Research.*



## Andy Boenau on How to create walkable streets

**M**ORE THAN 4,500 pedestrians are killed by motor vehicles every year in the U.S. Likewise, traffic accidents take the lives of 700 cyclists annually and leave 45,000 others injured. Against the backdrop of these sobering statistics, there is new hope in the Vision Zero movement taking hold in cities across the country from LA to New York. The goal is to reduce pedestrian and cyclist deaths by motor vehicle to zero. Many cities and towns are learning there are specific, measurable steps they can take to make their streets safer and more walkable.

### **Q: What's the biggest public misconception on how streets and landscapes should be designed and built?**

**A:** The giant misconception is the implementation. People think that the planning and engineering professionals of modern America are delivering helpful infrastructure. In reality, local and state governments across the country waste billions of dollars on junk infrastructure.

We lost individual liberty to car-oriented street design.

### **Q: In your opinion, what purposes should a street in an urban area serve?**

**A:** My definition of an urban area is a place where people congregate. That does include places like Manhattan. But it also means towns like Woodstock, VA. Or neighborhoods like Willow Lawn and Bon Air in Richmond.

Streets are for people. A street in an urban area should accommodate walking, skateboarding, bicycling, and driving. And it's not about balancing walking with automobiles. Good street design is about making the environment safe and comfortable for a person outside their vehicle, where they're most vulnerable.

Yes, it will be less convenient to drive below 45 MPH through an urban area. But that's good. Forty-five MPH is a sign of a deadly street. I'd rather see street design that saves lives instead of taking them.

### **Q: Can you give an example of a project you're working on that will improve an urban streetscape and create a sense of place?**

**A:** "Greening America's Capitals" is a study focused on Richmond's Jefferson Avenue in the Church Hill area. It's a new project I'm excited about.

The City of Richmond was selected for a technical assistance project managed by EPA. We're working with Parker Rodriguez, a design firm based in Alexandria to come up with a vision for the corridor that could realistically be achieved.

The steering committee includes neighbors, business owners, landscape architects, engineers and planners.

We'll be looking at things like the interaction between buildings and the street, the pedestrian environment, the experience crossing some of those very wide intersections, bicycling, bus service, activating dormant parcels and buildings.

### **Q: What's the biggest obstacle local governments face in redesigning streets for people and what can they do to overcome that obstacle?**

**A:** Local government is the biggest obstacle to local government.

Design requirements and zoning regulations have played a huge role in destroying American streets. You

*continues on next page*



Andy Boenau has 17 years' experience in transportation planning, engineering and design. He leads the urban planning practice at Timmons Group, a Richmond-based engineering and design firm.

The average person thinks the public realm should be built to accommodate human beings. People expect infrastructure to support the basic need to exchange ideas, goods, and services.

Our streets and landscapes have been designed and built around the automobile. The idea was rooted in freedom – that we should be able to move around easily. The irony is that, in the quest to make life more convenient, roads have bisected communities and ripped them apart – figuratively and literally.

Wider streets and intersections designed around cars made driving a deadly activity. And Americans are still stuck in traffic, so we can't even say, "Well at least we reduced congestion even if it costs 30,000 lives per year."

The best way to get out of traffic is to walk – the fundamental mode of transportation for a human. But streets are designed to be hostile for walking so people don't dare walk, unless they're too poor to afford a car.

# Ask a Pro ...

*Continues from page 23*

can't wag your finger at engineers without acknowledging that they're usually following the rules created by politicians and professional planners.

The best way to redesign streets for people is for local governments to com-

mit to public safety. If safety is your top priority, then you can't help but make walkable, bike-friendly streets. I've been pointing people to the Vision Zero movement. Take a look online at what cities are doing to reduce traffic deaths to zero.

Here's an insider tip: since most public street networks are much bigger than they need to be, great streets can

be designed within the existing public right-of-way. Start with making your car lanes 10-foot wide instead of 12. You'll be amazed at how much room DOTs and public works departments have.



## Calendar

### VML Policy Committees (Day 1)

Thursday, July 23, Henrico County

Three of VML's six policy committees – Finance, General Laws and Environmental Quality – will meet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Westin Hotel, 6631 West Broad Street in Richmond. The Westin is located near the junction of I-64 and West Broad Street. Contact: Janet Areson - jareson@vml.org; 804/523-8522.

### 324 Places Webinar - Community Image & Reputation

Tuesday, July 28, 11 a.m. - Noon

More and more cities and towns are focusing on improving their community image and reputation by more effectively branding themselves, finding a unified messaging platform to help build community pride and recruit newcomers and tourists. How can a municipality change its image and reputation effectively and efficiently in light of other priorities? What new municipal marketing techniques can be used to shape tomorrow? Join us on this VML-sponsored webinar to find out the answers to these questions and more. Register for the webinar at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org).

### VML Policy Committees (Day 2)

Thursday, July 30, Henrico County

Three of VML's six policy committees – Community & Economic Development, Human Development & Education, and Transportation – will meet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Westin Hotel, 6631 West Broad Street in Richmond. The Westin is located near the junction of I-64 and West Broad Street. Contact: Janet Areson - jareson@vml.org; 804/523-8522.

### VML Fall Regional Suppers

VML will conduct seven Regional Suppers around the state this fall to provide local government officials with timely information. Each of the dinner meetings will include presentations on changes to the Conflict of Interest Act as well as a preview of local government issues likely to surface during the 2016 General Assembly. Contact: Anita Yearwood at [ayearwood@vml.org](mailto:ayearwood@vml.org) or (804)523-8534.

### 324 Places Webinar - Education

Tuesday, August 25, 11 a.m. - Noon

Budget cuts have caused problems for most public school systems today. What are the future prospects for additional funding; bolstering Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education; re-examining the importance of standardized testing; sparking innovation; ensuring opportunity for all; and strengthening the teaching profession? This VML-sponsored webinar will examine education challenges and opportunities facing local governments. Register for the webinar at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org).

### 324 Places Webinar - Transportation & Mobility

Tuesday, September 22, 11 a.m. - Noon

Autonomous cars from Google, ridesharing from Uber, and changing preferences of young Millennials and older Boomers are redefining mobility. The challenge ahead is not in building more roads to move cars, but in developing enticing ways to move people. In the future, people will seek neighborhoods and even communities that provide a range of options for getting around. Join us on this VML-sponsored webinar to find out what you should be doing today to get ready for the "car lite" lifestyles of the future. Register for the webinar at [www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org).

### VML Newly Elected Officials Conference

Saturday, October 3, Richmond

Held prior to the start of the VML Annual Conference, this workshop will address the fundamentals of serving as a council member, including information on making the most of meetings, budgeting, the Freedom of Information Act, the Conflicts of Interest Act, and a public official's liability. It will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn, located at 501 East Broad Street in Richmond. Contact: Anita Yearwood - [ayearwood@vml.org](mailto:ayearwood@vml.org) or (804)523-8534.

### VML Virginia Mayors Institute

Saturday - Sunday, October 3-4, Richmond

This two-day program exposes mayors and vice mayors to issues essential to their roles as local government leaders. Covered topics will include the principles of effective leadership, mayor-council relations, the Freedom of Information Act, the Conflicts of Interest Act, constituent relations and conducting effective meetings. Held prior to the start of the VML Annual Conference, the Virginia Mayors Institute will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn, Richmond. Contact: Anita Yearwood - [ayearwood@vml.org](mailto:ayearwood@vml.org) or (804)523-8534.

### VML Annual Conference

Sunday - Tuesday, October 4-6, Richmond

The 2015 VML Annual Conference will be held at the Richmond Marriott. The conference theme will be The Future of Virginia: 324 Places. Participants will work in groups focused on specific study areas from the 324 Places Initiative and in regional discussions around the topics. Registration opens in July. Contact: Anita Yearwood - [ayearwood@vml.org](mailto:ayearwood@vml.org) or (804)523-8534.





VML ANNUAL CONFERENCE • RICHMOND

## Featuring two exciting pre-conference events

Virginia Mayors Institute | October 3-4

Newly Elected Officials Conference | October 4

### Registration Opens in July

**Make your hotel reservations now.**

#### **Richmond Marriott**

500 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219

(804) 643-3400

Online Reservations: <http://bit.ly/1CzBxBb>

#### **Hilton Garden Inn**

501 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA, 23219

(804) 344-4300

Online Reservations: <https://aws.passkey.com/g/39966255>

### **Converged Infrastructure Engineer, Virginia Beach**

Salary: \$79,396 - \$119,094 plus benefits. Full Time. Energetic, self-motivated, systems engineers with experience designing, implementing, and maintaining current Windows services and applications, or supporting enterprise wide desktop support services for an organization consisting of 300 servers and 5,000 client computers. Desired Skills: Data Center Design, Implement and support virtualization technologies to include Microsoft Hyper-V and VMware vSphere components. Open until filled.

### **Tourism Development Manager, Franklin County**

Salary: DOQ/DOE. Full benefits. Full time. Responsibilities and expectations include: developing and implementing strategies, programs and events that result in increases in transient, meals and sales tax revenues, as well as the location of new residents to the area; developing advertising and marketing campaigns; recruiting and leading volunteers in special events. Education equivalent to a BS Degree with major work in tourism, public relations, special events. Minimum of 2 years experience. Open until filled.

### **Children's Services Act (CSA) Coordinator, James City County**

Salary: \$43,667. Full benefits. Full time. Social Services seeking responsible individual to coordinate and oversee services to at-risk children and their families under the Children's Services Act (CSA). Responsibilities: coordinates CSA services for Social Services Division, Colonial Behavioral Health, the Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, and the Court Service Unit; manages the Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) process; screens and refers cases. Open until filled.

### **Residential Building Inspector, Herndon**

Salary: \$50,190-66,225 (full range \$50,190-86,055), DOQ. Full Benefits. Full Time. Duties include investigating complaints of building code violations. Lead inspector is responsible for the Rental Inspection Program. Participate in joint inspections with inspectors from the town's zoning office. Minimum three to five years' experience in the enforcement of building codes, health codes, fire codes or related code enforcement and/or

a minimum three to five years' experience in new construction. Open until filled.

### **Real Estate Appraisal Supervisor, Manassas**

Salary: \$60,236.80 - \$78,291.20. Full benefits. Full time. The Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue is seeking a seasoned professional with real estate appraisal and supervisory experience as a Real Estate Appraisal Supervisor. Successful candidate should be skilled in analyzing cost, market and income data to develop individual factors for valuation benchmarks. Associate's degree in Real Estate, Business or related field and four years experience in appraising real property. Open until filled.

### **Engineering Manager/Assistant Director, Amherst County**

Salary: \$65,983 - \$105,928. Full benefits. Full time. This position involves complex technical and managerial skills in water and wastewater utilities design, construction, operations and maintenance. Responsible for construction management, development of the utility's asset management program and numerous special projects. Open until filled.

### **Senior Systems Analyst for Fire Rescue, Albemarle**

Salary: \$55,058 - \$66,070. Full benefits. Full time. Position provides leadership for managing technology related systems for Information Technology and Fire Rescue. Evaluates and integrates new software and hardware technologies. Develops user requirements and specifications for business process improvements. Must have five or more years combined experience as a systems analyst, programmer/analyst, or related position in a similar hardware and software environment. Open until filled.

### **Maintenance Technician I, Winchester**

Salary: \$28,641.60-\$45,801.60. Full benefits. Full time. This position assists in maintaining landscaping including planting, pruning, mowing and removal of trash. Performs routine carpentry and painting in the repair and maintenance of park grounds and equipment. Cleans shelters and park facilities as needed. Runs errands for supplies and materials. May perform minor electrical and plumbing repair work. Maintains athletic fields. Ability to work nights, weekends and holidays. Open until filled.

## **Want to see more jobs?**

For details on these and many more local government jobs across the state, visit VML's extensive job directory at [vml.org/job-listings](http://vml.org/job-listings).

### **County Attorney, Culpeper**

Salary: DOQ/DOE. Full Benefits. Contract position. The Culpeper County Attorney is chief legal officer and counsel to the County's Board of Supervisors, departments, and various committees, boards, and commissions. Successful candidate must be experienced in Virginia local government law. Position Deadline: Thursday, July 2, 2015.

### **Building Maintenance Inspector, Petersburg**

Salary: \$28,431 - \$34,437. Full Benefits. Full Time. Performs technical work in the enforcement of the City's minimum housing codes. Tasks include but are not limited to: educating and providing customer service through the proper enforcement of codes and ordinances to landlords, tenants, and public. Considerable experience in home construction maintenance and repair required. Open until filled.

### **Maintenance Mechanic I, Albemarle County**

Salary: \$13.09 - \$15.71/per hour. Full benefits. Full time. Maintenance Mechanic I performs routine semi-skilled work in the servicing, repair and maintenance of County buildings and associated equipment. Subject to overtime assignment and call-back for emergency situations. A minimum of two year's work experience in building maintenance and repair work. Position Deadline: Sunday, July 5, 2015.



# Still comparing apples to oranges?

U.S. Communities delivers cooperative purchasing solutions that can't be matched.



You may think all cooperatives are the same or heard claims that others are just like U.S. Communities. The fact is there are advantages that are unique to U.S. Communities. What sets us apart is our priority to protect the interests of public agencies and our dedication to providing unmatched value through:

- **Commitment by all suppliers** to offer their lowest overall public agency pricing
- Contracts that are **solicited, awarded and updated** by a lead public agency—not the cooperative
- Quarterly performance reviews and annual, independent third-party audits to **ensure contract compliance and performance**

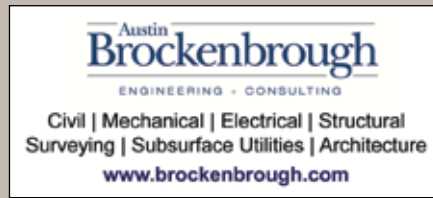
**Stop comparing and experience the unmatched value of U.S. Communities.**  
**Register today!**

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



**U.S. COMMUNITIES™**  
GOVERNMENT PURCHASING ALLIANCE



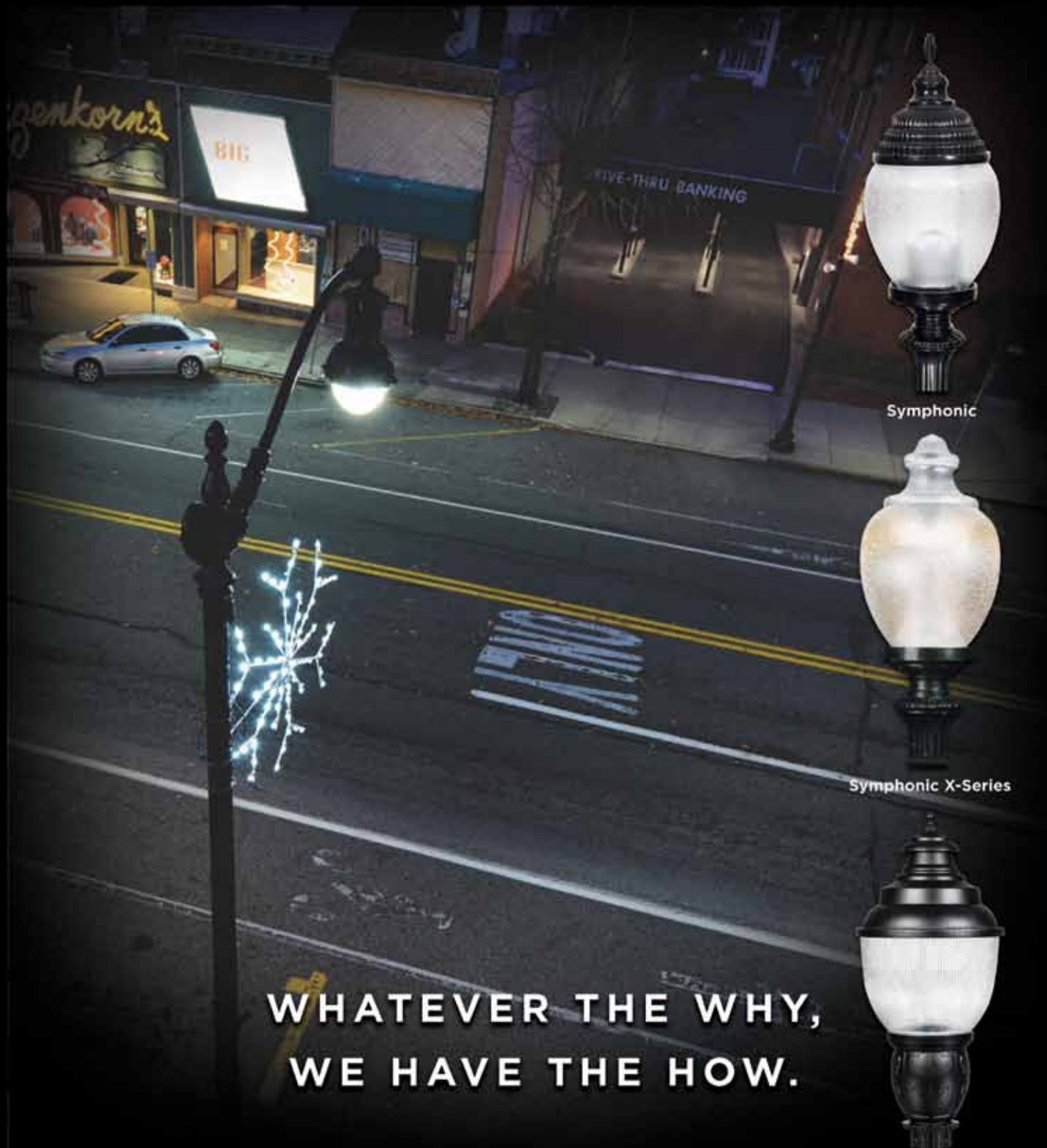


# Want to reach the local government executive market?

## Put "Virginia Town & City" to work for you.

Call Anita Yearwood at (804) 523-8534 and ask about Professional Directory and display advertising.





# WHATEVER THE WHY, WE HAVE THE HOW.

No matter the application, Spring City has the correct solution.

Spring City's full line of LED products offers flexibility in aesthetics, performance, wattage, and heat temperature. Engineered to perform and last, it's a guarantee that no matter what the why, Spring City has the how.

Visit our website to learn more or give us a call, 610-948-4000.

Smooth Top Glass



## Spring City™

CLASSIC MADE BETTER.

One S. Main St. | Spring City, PA | 19475  
610-569-4224 | marketing@springcity.com



Made in the United States of America



Start a  
*metamorphosis*  
**of your own.**



Before



After - The Dutch Inn, Lexington, Virginia

**Transform your small town — while preserving its history.** Join the growing number of Virginia communities using VHDA resources to bring about revitalization and create quality housing. With our financing expertise and flexibility, your plans for building a brighter future can begin to take flight.

To learn how VHDA financing can help transform your community, please call 804-343-5735, or email [MUMI@vhda.com](mailto:MUMI@vhda.com).



Virginia Housing Development Authority | [vhda.com/CaseStudies](http://vhda.com/CaseStudies)

