

A man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, stands smiling in front of the Virginia State Capitol building. The building is a large, white, classical-style structure with many columns. An American flag is visible on a pole to the left. The sky is clear and blue.

VIRGINIA
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About The Cover:

Richard F. Sliwoski leaves Virginia state government following a distinguished career in public service that spans almost four decades. Photo by Dena Potter, Director of Communications, Department of General Services.

On The Web

www.vccqm.org



Cleaner Tomorrow

By SENATOR TIM KAINE

THAN TODAY



Senator Kaine and Pete DeBusk at the LMU College of Veterinary Medicine teaching center in Ewing, Va.

On August 3rd, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized the Clean Power Plan, to reduce the pollution responsible for climate change. For all its complexity, its goal is simple—power plants should generate 32% less carbon pollution by the year 2030 than they do today. In 1962, President Kennedy challenged our nation to go the moon by 1969. If America can get to the moon in 7 years, emitting one-third less air pollution in 15 years is surely within our grasp.

From the overwhelming majority of scientists, to the U.S. military, to coastal planners in Hampton Roads, to His Holiness Pope Francis, the consensus is clear—climate change is real, it is driven primarily by the burning of fossil fuels, and we must do something about it. For Virginia, climate change is a today issue, not a tomorrow issue. Coastal communities see the impacts of sea level rise and recurrent flooding on their daily lives—from impassable roads in flooded areas, to skyrocketing flood insurance costs, to the readiness of military installations during extreme weather events.

It's true that climate change is not the only cause of sea level rise in Hampton Roads, and that no one is certain how high and how soon the seas will rise. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) projects anywhere from 1½ to 7 feet of sea level rise by the year 2100. But if we act now on clean energy and infrastructure resilience—and sea level rise is on the low end of that spectrum—we'll have cleaner air and tougher infrastructure, and our fossil energy resources will still be there. If the reverse happens—we don't act now, and sea level rise is on the high end—our generation

will have much to answer for with our grandchildren.

Virginia's state goal is on par with the national goal—a one-third cut in power plant pollution by 2030. I'm confident we can meet this goal because we already met it between 2005 and 2012 without a Clean Power Plan. The EPA also made several changes to its draft proposal that I had suggested in a letter to the Agency last year. These included making Virginia's target slightly easier than in the proposal, to reward states that reduced emissions before federal law required them to, as well as a way to adjust the plan if there are unforeseen impacts on grid reliability. As Governor of

Virginia, I signed into law voluntary state targets of 15% renewable electricity by 2025 and a 10% improvement in energy efficiency by 2022. If the Commonwealth can hit these targets while maintaining market trends toward natural gas, we can hit our goal.

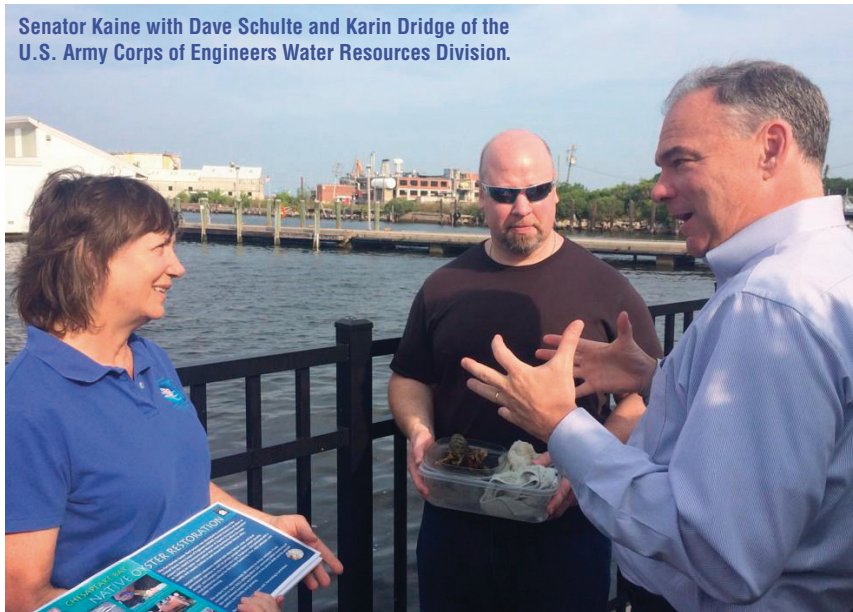
It's also true that the pollution cuts in the Clean Power Plan are small on a global scale. Some have cited this as a reason not to bother addressing climate change at all. In my view, that's like saying I shouldn't work out if I can't drop every pound on Day 1. The key is to move down the

carbon ladder one step at a time, to meet sensible, achievable goals that build momentum and set the conditions for others to follow suit. The country that innovates fastest—cheaper renewables, higher efficiency, and yes, cleaner fossil fuels—will reap the economic rewards.

I've never accepted the idea that we must choose between growing the economy and protecting the environment. I've seen

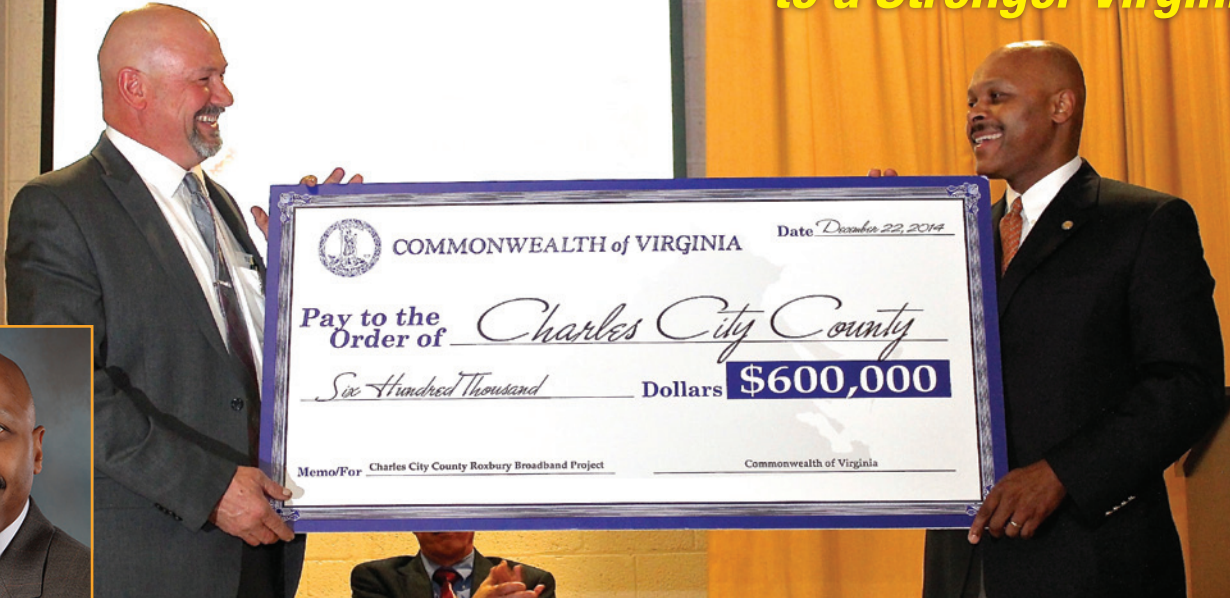
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Senator Kaine with Dave Schulte and Karin Dridge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Water Resources Division.



BROADBAND

Connecting the Dots to a Stronger Virginia



By MAURICE A. JONES, SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND TRADE

In today's connected world, many of us take for granted the easy access we have to high-speed Internet. Think about your job: what would you do if you were unable to access the Internet? How hard would it be for your business to thrive without this necessary tool? In this global economy, it is almost impossible to compete or succeed without it.

Approximately 70% of Internet traffic goes through Virginia. In the 2015 Akamai State of the Internet Report, Virginia ranked number two nationwide in average connection speed with a 34% increase year-over-year and number three nationwide in average peak connection speed with a 47% increase year-over-year. These statistics show that the Commonwealth is headed in the right direction, but there is still work to be done.

Risks

The Akamai Report also shows that 55% of Virginia's rural population does not have access to broadband according to the FCC's definition, and 29% of Virginia's rural population does not have access to broadband by any definition. This is not simply an issue of not having access to technology. This infrastructure is vital for today's community and economic development prospects. Many of Virginia's rural communities built their economies largely on single industries such as rail, textile, manufacturing and resource extraction. While some of these sectors still contribute to the economic base of rural communities, long-term growth will come from economic diversity. Quick, reliable and affordable access to the Internet is a prerequisite for all businesses—large, small or home-based—and is critical for attracting, retaining and growing businesses and jobs in a community.

For the most part, in heavily populated urban and suburban areas, there is access to high-quality telecommunications infrastructure, providing access to reliable high-speed Internet. The private sector provides reasonable levels of broadband access to the many communities that have high density and significant demand, but with low population density and relatively limited demand in rural areas, these private sector providers often lack the economies of scale necessary to invest the capital in expanding their infrastructure. This has resulted in pockets of rural areas that lack

the basic infrastructure to extend high-quality Internet access to businesses, schools and homes in those communities. This presents a substantial community and economic development disadvantage for areas of Virginia that need new industry and a growing business sector.

Opportunity for Growth

Governor McAuliffe understands this opportunity and is working to address it through his efforts to build a new Virginia economy. One of the pillars of his New Virginia Economy Strategic Plan, released in December of last year, is hosting world-class infrastructure, including broadband access. Access to high-quality Internet connectivity is one of the most critical tools for communities to succeed in growing and diversifying their economic base.

The efforts on which this administration has been and will continue to focus are comprehensive planning and strategic deployment of broadband infrastructure in the most in-need areas. This process involves two critical, parallel paths to success.

Long-term Planning

The first path is to continue to incent localities and communities to engage in strategic, long-term planning for broadband infrastructure deployment in their areas. These communities must first know their infrastructure needs in terms of who they want to attract, where the most critical areas are to maximize business and economic development and how deployment dollars can be used most efficiently. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has been providing dollars to communities for this type of planning and must be provided the necessary resources to expand this effort.

The Virginia Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by DHCD, utilizes state resources to improve the lives of Virginians and make our communities viable places to live and bring new business. In December 2014, Governor McAuliffe announced, through the CDBG program, a \$600,000 Community Economic Development grant for the Charles City County Roxbury Broadband Project. The County will undertake a

See *BROADBAND*, continued on page 6

BROADBAND from page 5

Connecting the Dots to a Stronger Virginia

broadband installation project, with approximately four miles of fiber, to serve the Roxbury Industrial park and other business areas along Route 106 to retain nearly 175 jobs from one of the County's largest employers. This project will also help supply broadband availability to new businesses in the eastern portion of the County as the sole Internet provider in this area has stated that they have reached their system capacity and will no longer provide Internet access to new businesses. This is the type of long-term planning that helps our communities gain access to the critical infrastructure they need.

The Commonwealth must also be willing to provide gap funding to help communities that have already developed a plan to move to strategic deployment. Some communities are willing to make meaningful financial commitments to deploy infrastructure, but simply do not have enough to get across the finish line. Given the importance of locality connectivity to the overall Virginia economy, the Commonwealth would benefit tremendously by putting additional skin in the game for the areas that have a plan and need to deploy. This bottom-up approach pushes localities to make the necessary investments to get their businesses and areas connected today and quickly transition to a diversified economy.

Statewide Connectivity

The second path is for the Commonwealth to take an expansive, comprehensive look at the connectivity of the entire state. This includes gaining a better understanding of the pockets of Virginia that are entirely unserved, analyzing the assets the state currently has that can be leveraged for cost-effective deployment, such as state land and public rights-of-way, and finding private-sector partners to work with to lower the upfront capital costs of infrastructure build-out. These high-level efforts are important and necessary components of employing a Virginia-wide strategy.

All of Virginia's communities have something special to offer businesses, residents and visitors alike. As we move forward, we must continue to focus our efforts on creating a strong quality of life that will attract people to live, work, play and do business in Virginia. Broadband is a critical tool we need to ensure our communities will grow and thrive in the global economy. █

Cleaner Tomorrow from page 4

firsthand how strong environmental policies helped us clean up the James River in my hometown of Richmond, improving both our economy and quality of life. Cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay improved the Bay's health and bolstered its tourism and fisheries economy. And no Virginia communities should be left behind in a clean energy economy, including the Commonwealth's traditional coal communities, which is why I sponsored legislation in the Senate to ramp up federally-backed clean coal R&D. I also co-founded the Senate Career and Technical Education (CTE) Caucus to improve CTE and workforce training to prepare the next generation for in-demand jobs.

Ensuring our energy production is cleaner tomorrow than today is good for our economy and good for our planet. To paraphrase JFK on America's moon shot, climate change is a challenge "we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win."

Senator Kaine was elected to the Senate in 2012 as a can-do optimist skilled in bringing people together across old lines of party, race or region. In the Senate, he serves on the Armed Services, Budget, Foreign Relations and Aging Committees and is Ranking Member of the Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee. █



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General Services Director Leaves Mark on Capitol Square

By DENA POTTER

Long after Richard F. Sliwoski leaves his post as Director of the Department of General Services, the Capitol Square grounds that he presided over for nearly a decade will continue to bear his mark.

When he first arrived to the department in 2000 as its Director of the Division of Engineering and Buildings, “there were trees growing out of the side of the Oliver Hill Building,” Sliwoski said. Little by little, he led major renovation projects to the buildings that dot Capitol Square, including not only the Oliver Hill Building but also the Patrick Henry, Washington, and Madison buildings, and the current Ninth Street Office Building project. In the middle of it all sits his crowning achievement: the construction, renovation and underground extension of the historic Virginia Capitol, completed in 2007.

“There are no words I can give you that describe the pride I have for having my name associated with Mr. Jefferson’s Capitol for time immemorial,” said Sliwoski, P.E., from his office overlooking the Capitol.

Sliwoski will retire in October from the department he has lead since 2006. His public service career spans nearly four decades, including a decorated career with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Sliwoski’s reach as DGS Director extends far beyond the Capitol grounds. When he couldn’t find a welcoming landlord for the Richmond Health Department’s new Richmond office, he led the effort to purchase a new building downtown, along with Main Street Centre. His department has built parking decks for state employees, constructed a new Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Staunton, the Albert G. Horton Jr. Memorial cemetery in Suffolk, the Sitter-Barfoot veterans care center in Richmond, the Southeast Virginia Training Center, a new forensics lab in northern Virginia and new facility for his department’s Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, among others.

Still, construction is only a portion of Sliwoski’s responsibilities running the state’s most eclectic department.

Under his watch, DGS transformed the way the Commonwealth manages its real estate portfolio, resulting in over \$125 million in cost savings and avoidance. It performs over 7 million analytical laboratory tests annually from suspected Ebola cases, to screening newborns for rare but deadly disorders, to testing the food we eat and the water we drink. It runs the Commonwealth’s electronic procurement system, eVA; maintains a state vehicle fleet of 4,700; runs a 7,000-space parking system; operates the federal and state surplus programs; tends to the grounds of Capitol Square and over 3 million square feet of facilities; and runs the Virginia Distribution Center that provides over \$34 million of food and janitorial supplies throughout the Commonwealth, with an annual cost savings of \$15 million in each of the last five years.



“I’m proud of all the innovations we were able to put into the system; better ways to do business, more cost-effective for the taxpayers,” Sliwoski said. “When I came here, DGS was pretty much viewed as providing merely mops and brooms. I think we have developed an appreciation and acknowledgment of the professionalism and excellent customer service that DGS provides.”

Sliwoski’s goal was to create a department that was viewed as “entrepreneurs of state government,” he said. The U.S. Treasury twice called on Sliwoski to travel overseas -to South Africa and then to Slovenia -to teach about the capital acquisition process and provide suggestions on how to improve their capital project delivery processes.

He tries to talk to every new DGS employee on their first day, stressing the importance of professionalism and explaining how they fit into the labyrinth that is DGS.

“I tell them that they will be treated with dignity and respect and that we appreciate their contribution at whatever level they are because they all contribute to our success and our reputation,” he said.

In a department with more than 640 employees, Sliwoski led by example, Secretary of Administration Nancy Rodrigues said.

“Rich put the right people in the right positions at the right time and then stepped back and let them shine,” Rodrigues said. “He offers the perfect combination of support and direction, and he led his staff with strength and empathy.”

Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Senate, has worked with Sliwoski for over 15 years and calls him “a great professional and friend.”



“I have the utmost respect for his professionalism and ability. He is always able to see the ‘big picture’ on a project and understand the players on each project,” she said. “It was my honor to work with him on the Capitol renovation and expansion project. We are very proud of the project and that everyone was able to put aside their turf battles for the good of the building.”


House of Delegates Clerk G. Paul Nardo called Sliwoski a consummate professional and “a valued asset to the Commonwealth.”

“I have admired his ability to balance competing priorities and personalities, while always trying to get projects not just completed but done right, on time and on budget,” Nardo said. “I’m especially grateful for Rich’s many contributions to improving and preserving our Capitol and Capitol Square for the use and enjoyment of generations to come. I wish him continued success as he sets off toward new horizons.”

Sliwoski said his philosophy has been “just going out there and doing what’s best for the Commonwealth.” And while he smiles when he passes the plaque inside the Capitol that bears his name, he says that’s not his greatest accomplishment as director of DGS.

So what is?

“Just the work DGS does,” he said. “I’m proud of the folks.”

Dena Potter is Director of Communications at the Department of General Services. 

Virginia Wounded Warrior Program Rebranded as Virginia Veteran and Family Support

New Program Name Emphasizes Services to all Veterans and Families



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Virginia Veteran and Family Support



By BRANDI JANCAITIS
DIRECTOR, VIRGINIA VETERAN AND FAMILY SUPPORT
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES (DVS)

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) rebranded the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) as Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) on October 1, 2015. DVS ceased using the VWWP brand on September 30.

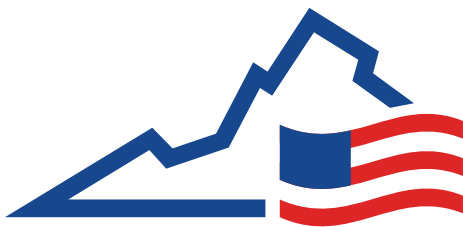
The program name was changed to emphasize the core services – peer and family support and comprehensive care coordination – that VVFS provides directly to veterans and their families. The benefit of the new VVFS brand is that it communicates every aspect of what the program represents to all touched by it – veterans, families, employees, and community partners. Experience with the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program demonstrated that service members, and veterans coping with behavioral health concerns may not identify themselves as “wounded” or “warriors,” and may thus not seek the help they and their families need for recovery and resiliency. The new name is positive and inclusive and will help ensure that those that VVFS serves are comfortable seeking and accepting the help they have earned through military service.

The statewide services provided under the rebranded program will not change. VVFS will continue to serve Virginia veterans coping with the impact of military service, deployments, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and stress- or trauma-related conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder resulting from military service.

This will be accomplished through peer and family support, and comprehensive care coordination services. Working with its established federal, state, and local government partners, and with the non-profit community, VVFS will continue serving as a healthcare and supportive services safety net with an integrated medical and behavioral healthcare focus for all Virginia veterans, including National Guard and Reserve Component service members, and their families. VVFS will also continue to provide dedicated outreach and care coordination to Virginia’s most vulnerable veterans, including those involved in the criminal justice system and veterans experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.

Additionally, the name change will avoid brand confusion between VWWP and the national nonprofit organization the Wounded Warrior Project, which has many objectives that are not the same as VWWP.

Continued on next page



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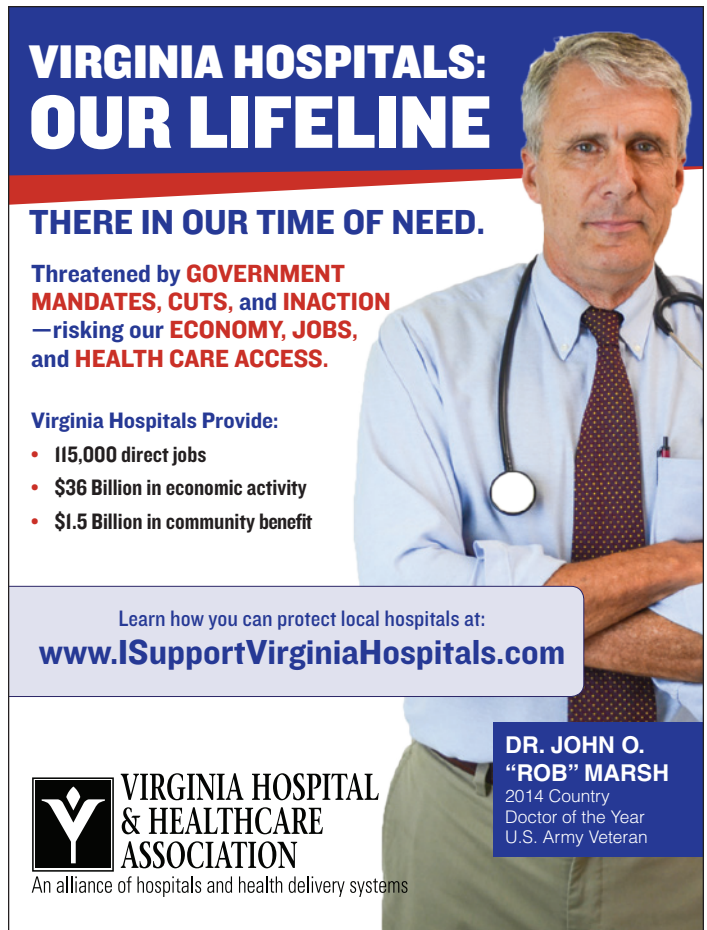
The critical role that VVFS plays in the lives of veterans and their families is illustrated by the recent case of a veteran in Northwest Virginia.

A local law enforcement officer was dispatched to the home of a veteran who has served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The veteran was experiencing a mental health crisis and was threatening suicide. There was a firearm in the house. The officer had received Crisis Intervention Training, and applied the lessons he'd learned during the military cultural competency block, taught by a local VVFS team member. The officer successfully de-escalated the situation and transported the veteran to a local hospital.

The officer then contacted VVFS, where a Resource Specialist provided intensive support and care coordination to ensure quick access to the Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center for follow-up inpatient treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Prior to this intervention, the veteran was not aware of how to access VA treatment and had experienced suicidal ideation in the past. The VVFS Resource Specialist also worked with the veteran's spouse and children to meet the needs of the entire family unit during this transition. Recovery is an ongoing journey, and VVFS will continue to be there for this family as needed along the way.

To learn more about the Virginia Veteran and Family Support program and the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, visit our website at www.dvs.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program (formerly Virginia Wounded Warrior Program) was established in 2008 by the Virginia General Assembly to ensure that services to military service members, veterans and their families are readily available in all areas of the Commonwealth. It is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services and numerous partners including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



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Career and Technical Education: Essential to the New Virginia Economy

By DR. BRENDA D. LONG

Career and technical education doesn't stand alone, and career and technical education doesn't stand still. When one breaks that statement down, it means CTE is an integral part of public education and reinforces not only technical skills but academic skills. It isn't a standalone course focusing only on one subject. And CTE doesn't stand still. Just take a look back on your high school career: What were the course offerings then compared with what students have the opportunity to take now?



Classes today include Cyber Security, Biotechnology Applications in Agriculture, or Computer Integrated Manufacturing. Programs today include Governor's STEM Academies, Virginia Teachers for Tomorrow and Project Lead the Way. These were not likely in your course catalog. The CTE curriculum must change as the skills needed in the workplace change. CTE doesn't stand still.

CTE curriculum consistently evolves to meet the needs of employers and the competitive and global workforce. Virginia adopted the 16 Career Clusters as an organizing framework for CTE programs, encompassing every industry, sector, and career, and all states use Career Clusters in some way. By using this framework, high-quality CTE curricula are delivered through programs of study. The Career Cluster framework encompasses the knowledge and skills expected by employers and needed in the workplace. Career Clusters are a useful guide for students to develop their program of studies and discover their interests and passions, which will guide them to select educational pathways. In turn, it will lead to their success in high school, in postsecondary programs, and in their careers. Additional information on Career Clusters is available on Virginia's Career and Technical Education Resource Center's website, www.cteresource.org.

For more than 30 years, the CTE Resource Center has worked with state and local educators and with Virginia employers to keep Virginia's CTE curricula up to date. CTE curricula are revised every three to five years with the input and assistance of business/industry panels and teachers. The CTE Resource Center works to align CTE courses with Virginia's Standards of Learning; provides up-to-date, Virginia Board of Education-approved information about certifications and licensure requirements for CTE teachers and students; and aligns courses with national and state certification standards, when available, and with competitive standards for career and technical student organizations. These services plus professional development and in-service meetings are provided at no cost to Virginia public school teachers and divisions. The CTE Resource Center is an integral component of the statement, "CTE doesn't stand still."

CTE curricula are rigorous and relevant and address not only technical skills but workplace readiness skills. The programs provide students with a competitive edge to compete in college and the workforce and are delivered with project-based learning activities and simulations that mirror the workplace environment. These simulations promote critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaborative skills, all of which are important parts of the CTE curriculum and needed traits within the STEM fields and programs.

A recent article in Forbes by Nicholas Wyman entitled, "Why We Desperately Need To Bring Back Vocational Training In Schools," notes the need for a diverse workforce that is equipped with a variety of backgrounds and skills. The author states the value of and need for increased support for CTE; students who enroll in CTE programs are building the skills they will need for their future careers and preparing themselves for success in whatever field they choose.


Virginia CTE students have the opportunity to earn, not only technical skills, but also nationally industry recognized certifications, credentials, and licensures that provide an edge in securing employment, as well as earning college credit through the successful completion of a program. CTE pathways provide opportunities for stackable credentials—certifications that build on one another—which also increases the potential of higher earnings.

With the support of the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education Services, the Manufacturing Skills Institute (MSI) and the Virginia Manufacturers Association recently announced the expansion of its industry-education partnership in Virginia to include several high schools throughout the Commonwealth.

Phoebus High School in Hampton and the Burton Center for Arts and Technology—Roanoke County High Schools in Salem are the first secondary education MSI Academic Partners in the Commonwealth offering the MSI Manufacturing Specialist (MS) and Manufacturing Technician Level 1 (MT1) certifications. Fifteen additional Virginia high schools will become MSI Academic Partners this year, including, but not limited to, Brooke Point High School in Stafford, Chancellor High School in Fredericksburg, John Handley High School and Millbrook High School in Winchester, and Pittsylvania County High School in Chatham.

CTE doesn't stand alone, and CTE doesn't stand still. CTE is the educational vehicle for the new Virginia economy, preparing students for successful careers and engaging with business and industry partners to continually provide updated curricula.

Dr. Brenda D. Long, Executive Director, Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education, has more than 30 years of experience as a CTE Director and Teacher. ▣



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Building a Demand Driven Talent Pipeline in Virginia

By BARRY DUVAL

There is no more critical issue to address for Virginia's future success than aligning workforce training opportunities with the job market.

As I meet with employers of all sizes across Virginia, they tell me that they are able to fill low skill job openings, and they have the resources and the available talent pool to recruit qualified candidates for high skill positions. But where they see a gap, and sometimes a significant one, is in filling middle-skills positions that require more than a high school education, but often experience or certifications that don't require a 4-year higher education degree.

A National Skills Coalition analysis confirmed what we have heard from our membership, which exceeds 22,000 businesses in Virginia. Middle skill jobs will represent nearly 50 percent of future job openings, while we have just 40 percent of our workforce equipped with the right training to step into those jobs.

This is a problem that must be addressed, because we can only be as successful as a Commonwealth as our workforce allows us to be.

Every successful model for workforce training across the country includes an active leadership role from the business community. If we simply guess as to what our future workforce needs will be, or encourage students to pursue training in skills that they can't put to use, we're doing a disservice to both future employees and to the businesses that want to hire them.



The Virginia Chamber of Commerce identified improvements to education and workforce training as the top priority in Blueprint Virginia, our long-term business plan for the Commonwealth developed in 2013 with the input of more than 7,000 business and community leaders. We know that when we strengthen the private sector voice in state level workforce efforts, we put ourselves on the path to future prosperity.

Strengthening the private sector voice will require regionally tailored efforts that use real-time private sector input to equip job seekers with the right skills for in-demand jobs.

To that end, the Virginia Chamber held a conference on workforce Oct. 6 in Richmond, featuring remarks from Governor McAuliffe and from some of Virginia's largest employers, including a keynote address from Mike Petters, President and CEO of Huntington Ingalls Industries, Inc. and Chairman of the Virginia Business Council. I encourage anyone who is interested in joining the Virginia Chamber in improving our workforce training programs and in elevating our many successful regional efforts to participate in our effort.

The conference served as the kickoff for statewide action on the critically important issue of closing the gap between the training of our workforce and the needs of employers. Meeting this challenge will require new thinking in how we organize and manage all levels of education to create the workforce pipelines for our employment needs, from upper management and professionals to the middle-skill workforce.

Barry E. DuVal is President & CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

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Sorensen Institute's Emerging Leaders groups propose policy changes for Virginia

Class of 2015 Emerging Leaders Program graduates (left to right) Lauren Marshall, Terrell Kingwood, Julie Kinzer, Lindsey Watson, Leslie Frazier, Daddy Cordero, Diana Trinh, Eric Bateman, Jennifer Bowles, Paul Davis, Khaki LaRiviere, Chris Atkins, Cameron Sasnett, Matthew Shapiro, Ryan Ramirez, Joe Dillard, Jr., Ashton Fallen, Sarah McCoy, Bethal Abraham, Rachel Dyer, Jediah Jones, Paul Logan and Lesley Shinbaum.

This three-part set of legislative proposals stitches together summaries of the three Emerging Leaders Program groups whose legislative policy projects were judged by Delegate Alfonso Lopez, state Sen. Bryce Reeves, David Bailey and Bob Gibson on August 23 at Montpelier.

Sorensen policy projects are created by groups whose members research a public policy issue and consider ways to improve the lives of ordinary Virginians. The groups include people from different regions of the state and differing philosophies. They come together to research and draft a bill for the Virginia General Assembly to consider to improve policy in some way. This year's Emerging Leaders Program class met from late July to Aug. 23 and developed proposals to improve policy in the areas of economic development, education and agriculture and tourism. Here are short summaries of their proposals.

DISTILLERIES: Agriculture and Tourism

In 1799, Virginia boasted the largest distillery in the nation, producing about 11,000 gallons of whiskey a year. The distillery was located at George Washington's Mount Vernon Plantation in Northern Virginia.

Today, Virginia is better known for quality wines and was recognized as one of the top 10 wine travel destinations in the world for 2012 by Wine Enthusiast Magazine. It is also known for craft beer, an industry that has exploded from a handful of breweries only a few years ago to more than 100 today.

Virginia's 260 wineries and 125 breweries can attribute part of their success to recent changes in state law that allow them to market and serve their products directly to consumers on-site.

Nationally, craft distilleries have proliferated from 234 in 2011 to 580 in 2014, and their ranks are estimated to surpass 1,000 nationwide by 2018. In Virginia, however, this once thriving industry has found itself singled out for burdensome regulations that do not apply to producers in the wine and beer industries.

These regulations mean that Virginia's more than 20 distilleries, including the recently reopened distillery at historic Mount Vernon, are denied opportunities to attract visitors to sample their products and connect with their brands.

Virginia wineries attract more than 1.5 million visitors a year, helping them generate more than \$750 million in annual economic impact. Distilleries in the Commonwealth, however, face far more restrictive regulations that stand in the way of hosting events and allowing visitors to experience their products.

At a winery, a visitor can tour the facility, sample every product the winery produces, and purchase a bottle to enjoy on-premises. Current policy set to go into effect in 2018 would limit distillery visitors to sampling just 2 total ounces and prohibit them from ordering a full cocktail, as most people enjoy their distilled spirits.

We propose raising the sampling limit at distilleries to at least 3.0 ounces, which would be the alcohol content equivalent of just two glasses of wine or two bottles of beer. We would also eliminate the regulation that prevents a visitor from sampling the distillery's product as part of a full cocktail.

Virginia has gained recognition as a culinary destination with award-winning craft products, which has helped drive a 4.1 percent increase in tourism from 2013 to 2014. Tourism supports 216,900 jobs in Virginia, according to the most recent reports.

Demand for craft spirits has exploded nationally and Virginia's distilleries, in spite of regulatory challenges, are producing award-winning products. We have seen the effect that legislation expanding on-site sampling had on Virginia's thriving craft beer and wine industries. The General Assembly has an opportunity to level the playing field for all craft beverage producers and to spark growth in an industry where Virginia once led the nation.

For more information regarding the proposed amendments to the Virginia Code regulating distilleries, and our request for a resolution proclaiming July 2016 as "Virginia Craft Spirits" month, please visit our website: www.elpdistilleryproposal.com.

EDUCATION: A Community Schools Policy Initiative

There is a wide range of issues facing our education system, including persistent achievement gaps, chronically underperforming schools, and the declining desirability of teaching as a profession. Children across the Commonwealth of Virginia do not have equal access to resources needed to achieve academic success. Often, schools in low-income communities serve students with more pervasive academic, nutritional, health, and socio-emotional needs. Teachers are forced to wear multiple hats, social worker, college counselor, food bank, and triage nurse, instead of focusing on quality instruction.

Our solution is to create a grant program that establishes a pilot of community schools across the state. The Coalition for Community Schools defines community schools as, “both a place and set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.” Community schools are an effective, cost-efficient way to strengthen our public elementary and secondary school system.

In its initial phase, the pilot program awards grants to five K-12 schools across five fiscal years, allowing time to assess student performance and adjust programming. For succession planning purposes, an advisory review board, assesses the effectiveness, measures return on investment, identifies trends and best practices, as well as makes recommendations for future expansion. The board is introduced as complimentary legislation to the budget amendment for the grant program.

The fiscal impact of the proposal is \$3.425 million in General Funds, spanning FY 2017-2021. Annual fiscal impact, totaling \$685,000, reflects associated costs of establishing and assessing the effectiveness of five pilot community schools: grants for program administration, salary and benefits for a central coordinator at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), salary and benefits for one site program coordinator per school, and miscellaneous funds for supplies, travel, outreach, community events, etc.

Through the Constitution of Virginia, localities have more authority: “Local school boards and local school superintendents manage the most expensive government service provided by Virginia government, K-12 education.” Resources, rather than the authority to establish community schools, remain an issue. Therefore, the grant program administered by VDOE, would assist a great deal in providing the means to expand this initiative. To make this idea a reality, it is important to view the proposal from all angles, rally support from stakeholders and be flexible in interacting with state legislators and other political leaders in explaining the importance of community schools and why there should be expansion throughout Virginia.

By adopting a community approach, centralizing and streamlining existing services, allowing flexibility to localities with regards to implementation, and facilitating public-private partnerships, community schools foster a unified approach to education. By addressing students’ basic needs and surrounding them

with the wraparound services they need to be successful, community schools create healthier, higher achieving students, families, and communities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Investing in Small Farms

This policy group took seriously Gov. Terry McAuliffe’s admonition to “take risks and be bold. We cannot hope to accomplish great things if we are not willing to take chances.” The group tried to adopt an approach for invigorating Virginia’s economy with the belief that taking daring and diversified steps to create a broad and sustainable array of markets is essential to the growth of Virginia’s economy.

With such a commitment, combined with the state’s abundance of agricultural resources, the group proposed a pilot program investing in the development and growth of small farms to implement viable economic development. They propose creation of a Virginia Small Farms Investment Fund that would provide resources to new and emerging farmers in Virginia by providing matching grant funds for investing in their creation and growth. This fund, administered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, would allocate \$1 million each year to match up to 10 percent of a farmer’s capital investment.

Statistics for small farms investments coupled with the size of the grant program could equate to an \$18 million direct return on investment to Virginia’s economy, the group said. Implementing this would be in line with many steps that provide the tools to facilitate the Commonwealth’s plans to diversify its economy. Small and family-owned farms that currently operate in Virginia, or those seeking to start a farm, and make less than \$350,000 in gross income from their farm would be eligible for this investment subsidy. This program would work similarly to the Small Business Investment Grant Fund currently administered by the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity. Eligible applicants could receive up to 10 percent matching funds for farm-related capital investments. This investment grant fund would be designed to help spur and sustain the growth of small farms in Virginia.

With passage of this proposal, Virginia would see growth and diversification in the largest sector of the state’s economy. Anticipated short-term results would include increased productivity in agricultural yields, increased spending in capital investments on farms and an increasing number of farms contributing local food and farm products. It would incentivize farmers to find ways to become more productive and help ensure that farmers continue to produce safe and quality products. It would help increase farm revenue and find and fund new farmers, young farmers and others currently not able to afford new technology.

Agriculture has long served Virginia well. This proposal would boost the state’s economic wellbeing by enhancing farm-to-table productivity of small farms that ensure continued growth in local food and protect Virginia’s healthy balance of farmland in a rich geographical diversity. ▣



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Reaching Higher in Virginia

BY PAUL C. HARRIS, PH.D.

First Lady Obama's Reach Higher initiative has inspired many to actively support all students to pursue postsecondary training, whether through a professional training program, a community college, or a four-year college or university. Significant partners in this effort include school counselors.

While school counselors have been engaged in preparing all students to be college and career ready for decades, the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative has significantly mobilized such efforts in unprecedented ways. Her visit and presentation to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) conference in 2014 represented an important partnership between school counselors and the White House on reaching the following goals: 1) Exposing students to college and career opportunities; 2) Understanding financial aid eligibility that can make college affordability a reality; 3) Encouraging academic planning and summer learning opportunities; and 4) Supporting high school counselors who can help more kids get into college.

A number of White House-endorsed meetings have occurred over the last couple of years, the goal of which has been for each state to design and implement strategic plans to reach the above goals. In November 2014, representatives from the Virginia School Counselor Association (VSCA) Board attended a White House Convening in San Diego, CA. There, we consulted and collaborated with other state teams around how to develop and implement systemic interventions that would ultimately benefit all K-12 students in Virginia.

We were pleased to be able to share some of the progress we've already experienced in Virginia—for example, having our School Counseling Specialist position restored at the Virginia Department of Education, and engaging in conversations with other stakeholders



around the state around strategic partnerships. We left San Diego with plans to strengthen such partnerships and to begin partnering with and mobilizing school counselor educators around these efforts as well.

A year later, we reflect on a very successful Counselor Educator Summit sponsored by VSCA this past spring, and now look forward to the work of newly formed partnerships amongst various stakeholders around the state—VSCA, VDOE, SCHEV, and district school counseling leaders to name a few. A team representing these entities will be traveling to the University of North Florida in November for this year's White House convening to outline specific short and long-term plans for revision of school counselor training programs and school counselor professional development as it relates to college and career readiness.

With the support from our First Lady, the enthusiasm of our profession, and the shared vision of colleagues in other college access-related fields, our hope is to see our K-12 students in Virginia more than prepared to pursue their college and career endeavors. It is an exciting time!

Dr. Paul Harris is an assistant professor in the school counseling program in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia (UVA). His research agenda focuses on the college and career readiness of student athletes, with emphasis on Black male student athletes. Prior to transitioning to UVA, Dr. Harris was a high school counselor in Newport News, VA, and Loudoun County, VA. He is currently President-Elect of the Virginia School Counselor Association.



IN 2014,

THE VIRGINIA DOMESTIC TOURISM INDUSTRY:

GENERATED

\$22.4 billion
IN VISITOR SPENDING

SUPPORTED

216,900 jobs

PROVIDED

\$1.5 billion
IN STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

TOURISM IS THE
5th Largest

EMPLOYER IN VIRGINIA

There's no confusion: *this is a choice*

BY MEGAN RHYNE

Let's clear up this so-called confusion about whether the personnel exemption (or any other exemption) is mandatory.

This "problem" arises in the context of the ABC refusing to release the results of the State Police's investigation of the ABC officer who arrested UVA student Martese Johnson. The investigation clears the officer, but ABC is refusing to release the report.

In its press release, the ABC states, "Because Virginia law prohibits disclosure of personnel files, the administrative review will not be released, and Virginia ABC cannot comment on specifics of the matter."

Virginian-Pilot reporter Patrick Wilson confirmed with the ABC spokesperson that the "Virginia law" referenced was the personnel exemption of FOIA, section 2.2-3705.1(1).

At that, I and others pointed out that FOIA doesn't prohibit disclosure. The exemptions are discretionary and records that MAY be withheld may also be released.

But wait! said a few, both in and out of government. FOIA says "except where prohibited by law," so they ARE prohibited from disclosing the record.

No. That's just not the case. And here's why.

Let's start with FOIA's policy statement (2.2-3700). In addition to pointing out that the "affairs of government are not intended to be conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy," the policy also states:

Unless a public body or its officers or employees specifically elect to exercise an exemption provided by this chapter...all public records shall be available for inspection and copying upon request.

"Elect to exercise" is the same as discretion. Either you elect to exercise an exemption (and the records are withheld) or you don't (and the records are released).

Next, look at FOIA's procedures for records requests. In 2.2-3704 it says that the government must give one of four responses to a FOIA request for records, that is, if they are not turning over all the records: (1) release some records but withhold or redact others; (2) withhold all of the records; (3) explain that you don't even have the records; or (4) ask for additional time to respond.

With respect to (1) and (2), when records are withheld or redacted, FOIA requires government to state in writing why the release is "prohibited by law or [why] the custodian has exercised his discretion to withhold the records in accordance with this chapter [i.e., FOIA]," AND the custodian must "cite...the specific Code section that authorizes the withholding of the records."

So here again is a clear distinction between discretion under FOIA and other laws that may prohibit release.

Finally, there is the opening phrase that starts each category of FOIA's exemptions. (FOIA's exemptions are grouped in categories to make it easier to locate relevant topics. They are: exclusions of general application; public safety; administrative investigations; educational institutions; health and social services; proprietary records and trade secrets; and specific public bodies and limited exclusions. These are numbered 2.2-3705.1 through 2.2-3705.7 respectively.)

Each of these sections begins:

The following records are excluded from the provisions of this chapter [i.e., FOIA] but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law.

Then the exemptions under each category are listed. The personnel exemption is the first one listed under 2.2-3705.1 but it is not the only one. Twelve more exemptions follow. They are all governed by that same introductory phrase, just as all the exemptions in all the other categories are.

The specific phrase that stands out, of course, is "but may be disclosed," which means (harking back to the policy statement and the procedures) that the use of an exemption under this chapter [i.e., FOIA] is a discretionary act. They may elect to release the records, but they may choose not to.

But some are getting hung up on the next phrase that says "except where such disclosure is prohibited by law." They say that FOIA's exemption prohibits the disclosure. Under this interpretation, FOIA's exemptions are discretionary except where prohibited by law and that law is FOIA's exemption. But that is circular logic that would make the several references to discretion meaningless.

Instead, what this section means, and how it has been interpreted for decades, is that FOIA's exemption may be invoked unless an OTHER law prohibits release. That is a law OTHER THAN FOIA; a law elsewhere in the Virginia Code, or federal law, or court ruling.

And as FOIA's procedures state, whether electing to use an exemption or relying on an "other law," the government must specify the statute. The ABC specified the personnel exemption not an "other law." The ABC did not cite an "other law" that "prohibits" the release of this file.

I'm not arguing that the personnel exemption does not or could not apply. It does, it can, I get that.

What I'm arguing against is the misinterpretation of FOIA that deflects responsibility for the decision to withhold a record on some "law" and not on the individuals making that decision. This is a CHOICE to withhold. It is a choice supported by law, but it is a choice nonetheless.

The agency could also choose to release all or some of the file. It could choose to redact portions of the file. It could choose to explain the policies at issue and what would/would not constitute violation of those policies. But instead, the agency is choosing not release any information about a disturbing event that generated local, state and even national attention.

This may sound like inside-baseball to some; the nit-picking of a statute. But it matters. It matters because government must get it right, especially on such a prominent stage.

The agency and the administration must take responsibility for their choice and be willing to change their course in some way or else be willing to suffer the slings and arrows that come their way. They should not, however, shift responsibility to a mythical interpretation of FOIA. Just like the 171 other records and meetings exemptions in FOIA, the personnel exemption is discretionary, not mandatory. Period.

Megan Rhyme is Executive Director of the Virginia Coalition for Open Government. 

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Maymont Fall



The
Homestead

Jamestown





Jefferson's Feet



Bruton Parrish Church

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF Wanda Judd



Capitol Postcard



The Homestead





Virginia State Parks volunteers— *Modern programs with historic roots*

By JOE ELTON

When Virginia State Parks opened six parks on June 15, 1936, it was the first state to open an entire park system on a single day, (Douthat, Fairy Stone, Hungry Mother, Staunton River, Westmoreland and Seashore, now First Landing state parks).

The parks had been carved out of Virginia wilderness by the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a federal program created less than three years earlier to put young people to work on land restoration, conservation and construction projects.

Today, Virginia’s version of the CCC carries on the environmental tradition with the young women and men of the Youth Conservation Corps and the Virginia Service and Conservation Corps. This year, the two programs provided nearly 80,000 hours of service to state parks, which are managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Youth Conservation Corps crews consist of approximately 10 young people, ages 14-17, and three supervisors of college-age or older. The three-week long program benefits the parks in direct work, but it’s also life-changing for the young participants.

The productivity of participants is staggering. In 2015, 20 Youth Conservation Corps crews with more than 200 members and more than 40 crew leaders served 25 parks. The crews maintained nearly 90 miles of trails, constructed 5.5 miles of trails, built 43 picnic tables and 16 benches and installed 27 benches. Crews built eight campground sites and seven picnic pads while making improvements to 33 campground sites and 26 picnic pads.

Two crews installed canoe-in campgrounds with three new campsites at Westmoreland State Park as well as four sites at Leesylvania State Park. The groups also cleaned up more than 7 miles of roadside and 12.8 miles of shoreline which resulted in 87 bags of trash.

“Youth Conservation Corps participants learn valuable life lessons while they develop an appreciation for the environment and stewardship of Virginia’s natural resources,” said Cyndi Juarez, Director of Community Engagement and Volunteerism for Virginia State Parks.

“Both crewmembers and crew leaders gain work experience and life experience as they work and live in the parks and enjoy programs, cook and eat together in the evening,” she said. “They develop teamwork, self-esteem, social responsibility, and respect for the environment.”

Participants appreciate their time in the program, often with glowing reports.

“Hard work pays off in a big way,” said a young woman about her time in the YCC. “Having a positive attitude is vital and more fun and being a part of a team is a really fun, irreplaceable thing.”

Other comments from crewmember surveys about what they learned include:

“No matter how much you want to give up on yourself or your team, don’t, because the outcome is worth it. Thank you staff for being so amazing!”

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

“The importance of hard work, good quality work and how much goes into preserving the environment.”

“Hands will be nothing more than hands unless you use them to create.”

“Don’t underestimate what you are capable of and that being in the middle of nowhere with strangers was better than I thought it would be.”

“The most important thing that I learned was about diversity and accepting people’s cultural backgrounds.”

“Everybody’s views are important, and no matter what you think you know, there’s always more to learn.”

In the 15 years since its creation, the YCC has had more than 2,500 participants, including Cameron Lipscomb, Chief Ranger at Powhatan State Park and a YCC graduate.

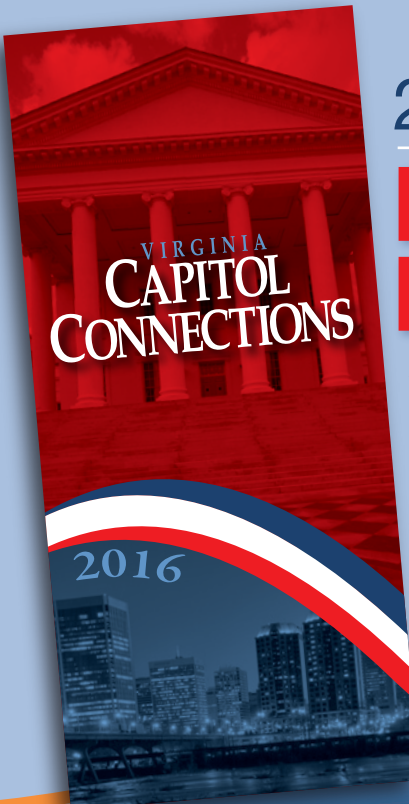
This year, 870 young people applied to the program, but only 22 percent were selected.

In addition to the hard work of crewmembers, supervisors also have the responsibility of directly supervising crews while trying to create a supportive atmosphere, as they motivate and discipline team members, ensure their well-being and help plan events.

Applications for crew leaders are now being accepted. Applications for crewmembers will be accepted after Jan. 1.

For more information, visit, www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/youth-conservation-corps.shtml

The 36 Virginia State Parks host more than eight million visitors a year, and are an economic engine fueling the local and state economies –generating more than \$170 million in economic activity annually. For more information about Virginia State Parks, visit www.virginiastateparks.gov.



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Lamont Bagby is a graduate of Henrico High School. He earned his bachelor of science degree in business education from Norfolk State University and master in education leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has been an educator in Henrico County Public Schools since graduating from Norfolk State University. Serving as a coach, business teacher and administrator, Bagby takes pride in his commitment to school improvement. He dedicates himself to giving back to the community that nurtured him and positively impacted his life.

Recently, Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Bagby to the Norfolk State Board of Visitors. He was also named to the 2009 class of Style Weekly’s Top 40 Extraordinary Leaders Under 40. Bagby also currently serves as the Director of Operations at Peter Paul Development Center. Peter Paul’s transformative Youth Program provides year-round support for youth that reside in one of the most economically disadvantaged areas of the City of Richmond. Children raised in this environment are at great risk of poor academic performance, behavioral issues, truancy, and school dropout.

Prior to joining Henrico School Board and Peter Paul Development Center he also sponsored the Distinguished Gentlemen, a youth mentorship and development program, at Henrico High School prior to accepting an administrative position at Fairfield Middle School. One of Bagby’s objectives was to fully fund the Distinguished Gentlemen program at Henrico High School. During his first year on the Henrico School Board he successfully accomplished that objective and now every middle and high school in Henrico County has a mentorship program with annual funding thanks to Bagby’s efforts.

www.lamontbagby.org

Joint Statement of The Arc of Northern Virginia and Parents and Associates of the Northern Virginia Training Center to Members of the Special Joint Subcommittee to Consult on the Plan to Close State Training Centers

Thank you for your service on this Subcommittee. My name is Rikki Epstein. I am Executive Director of The Arc of Northern Virginia. I am delighted to be joined today by Jane Anthony, Co-President of Parents and Associates of the Northern Virginia Training Center. We appear today on behalf of organizations in Northern Virginia that represent individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Today, we share a common interest in seeing that both the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) plan to implement the Settlement Agreement and the quality assurance provisions of SB 627 are carried out in the best way to meet the needs of Northern Virginians.

Specifically, we believe success requires three things:

1. Revise the DBHDS Trust Fund provisions to assure that the revenues from the sale of the Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC) property are used to serve the needs of people with I/DD who reside in this region, and assure that the proceeds from the sale of other Training Centers' property go to support people in their respective regions;
2. Make sure the outcome of Medicaid Waiver Reform is a system that provides funding that is appropriate to each region of the State. Equity requires that sufficient funds be made available so that people with I/DD, either moving from NVTC or from the waiting list, are able to find local placements in Region II to remain in contact with their families and communities of natural supports, just as people with I/DD from other regions of the Commonwealth have the resources to remain in their local regions; and
3. Assure that all people with I/DD who receive services from the state benefit from a robust quality management system based on scientifically sound methods and establishing performance baselines to ensure people's health, safety, and well-being.

The Trust Fund. As the planned closure deadline for NVTC fast approaches, we have some increasingly urgent concerns about the current Trust Fund that is slated to receive and distribute proceeds from the sale of the NVTC property. As the language for the Trust Fund is currently written, the funding from the NVTC sale could be used in areas of the state outside Northern Virginia or could be diverted for other purposes entirely.

The Trust Fund must assure regional equity. As you all know, Northern Virginia is a more expensive area to live in than many other parts of the State. The service providers and Community Services Boards in this area have consistently said that the very high cost of living in the Northern Virginia region is a substantial hurdle to opening more residential settings, especially on tight timelines. Statewide, the waiting list for community waiver slots is well over 10,000 people, almost exceeding those receiving waiver supports, and in Northern Virginia the waiting list for ID Waivers already exceeds the number receiving supports by 34%. Clearly, there is a need for start up money to serve people with disabilities within all regions and especially Region II and for revisions to protect the Trust Fund assuring that it serves its intended purposes.

NVTC families have researched the history of the creation of NVTC and affirmed that many of their families were involved in donating some of the land NVTC was built upon. Their very purpose was to enable the State to build a local facility so that they could spend more time with their loved ones with disabilities. Out of a basic sense of fairness for those families and the thousands of Northern Virginians with I/DD on waiting lists for services due to funding shortages, we ask you to ensure that the DBHDS Trust Fund is protected and used as intended.

In protecting the Trust Fund, this Subcommittee and the General Assembly at large will be taking a big step towards fulfilling the promise of appropriate, quality care in the community and offering choice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. To secure these protections, we request that you take the following actions:

1. Reestablish the Trust Fund through a constitutional amendment that requires funding derived from the sale of Training Center lands be used only for people with I/DD in the region from which funding originated for one-time needs such as start-ups and unforeseen emergencies; and
2. Require that DBHDS submit a clearly detailed report annually to this Subcommittee and the General Assembly on all deposits into the Trust Fund and all expenditures.

Funding Medicaid Waiver Reform to Assure Local Placements.

With the new reforms not scheduled to be implemented until after the March 2016 closure date for NVTC, local providers have been reluctant to assume the long-term obligations for the residents with the most significant disabilities leaving NVTC and those coming off of the waiting lists. To underscore this concern, there have been anecdotes of people opting for placements outside the region in order to get the services they need. According to the Department's data, only 24% of those discharged from NVTC in 2015 found local placements in contrast with 74% for the rest of the state. A recent DOJ letter supports this conclusion. Given the importance of keeping those with I/DD near their families and natural supports, we request that the Subcommittee:

- Secure from DBHDS the information necessary to understand the magnitude of this problem so that the General Assembly will be better able to understand how Medicaid Waiver Reform must be crafted to meet the needs of Northern Virginians.
- Establish a Quality Management system that assures the safety, health and integration of people with I/DD. The settlement agreement contains detailed requirements for Virginia to collect new data, to greatly expand its quality management for those in the community, and to report on instances of mortality and significant harm to those who transition from Training Centers into the community. In addition, SB 627 requires that DBHDS certify that the residents of Training Centers who move into the community receive supports and services that are "comparable" to the ones being received in the Training Center. These basic provisions of the settlement agreement and SB 627 are essential for the health, safety and well-being of those with I/DD receiving waiver supports in the community. They will benefit both those moving from the Training Centers and off the waiting lists. Unfortunately, the necessary quality management measures do not track the closure schedule for either SVTC or NVTC or with the schedule in the settlement agreement. It is vital that DBHDS expedite quality management employing scientifically valid data and methods.

To enhance quality management, we ask that the Subcommittee request DBHDS to take the following action:

Describe and report to the Subcommittee and the public, within 3 months, the scientifically valid performance measures DBHDS plans to use to address each important aspect of health, safety, and well-being for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities currently served by DBHDS. This report should include an analysis of mortality data for individuals who have left Training Centers. Thank you for your dedication to ensuring that all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Virginia receive the supports and services they need to live healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives in Virginia.

Testimony provided September 2, 2015. [V]

Our Kids

BY DEBBIE JOHNSTON,
VIRGINIA'S ADOPTION CHAMPION

The kids in foster care belong to us. As our neighbors and members of our community, these kids make up the future of our state and our country. We are responsible for that future. We are responsible for assuring each has a safe and rewarding upbringing. They are our kids and we need to look out for them.



The disappointing truth is that, unless you are personally affected, our community rarely gives youth in foster care a second thought. My foundation Connecting Hearts and I are determined to change this habit. We know that if the public were better educated on the foster care and adoption needs in our state, our kids would get the attention and support they deserve.

Let us take a moment to get to know our future! Let us take a moment to get to know our kids. From newborns to teenagers soon reaching adulthood, our boys and girls come from every background, every race, and every ethnicity. They were placed in foster care due to absolutely no fault of their own for reasons of neglect, abandonment, abuse, or other risks of endangerment. Each one has suffered some type of trauma and all have a unique set of needs.

Through my work, I have had the pleasure of connecting with them. At a photoshoot for kids looking for forever families arranged by Change Who Waits and Connecting Hearts, I met a set of four young brothers. All were currently placed in separate foster homes due to differing needs. Being such a rare occurrence, spending the day together was an exciting event. When asked what made him most happy, the oldest gestured at his brothers and said, "Being with these guys."

This family of boys along with over 800 other kids in Virginia are available for Foster2Adopt. This program is a preferred type of foster care placement in which a child's foster parents agree to eventually adopt them if going home is no longer considered an option. Adoption

by the foster family is often the best option for a child because the family is already familiar with a child's background and behaviors. They are better able to understand and respond to a child's needs in a positive and appropriate way.

The lack of sufficient awareness about Foster2Adopt leaves hundreds of children without forever families and Virginia in desperate need of parents. Connecting Hearts is organizing many events across the state in order to bring attention to the kids who need our help and to hopefully inspire Foster2Adopt parents to step forward.

To support our much needed mission, Connecting Hearts is hosting a golf tournament here in Richmond. We tee off on October 12th at Hermitage Country Club. Along with business and community leaders, we will have foster care youth in attendance to play with teams and to volunteer. A team is only \$800 (or \$200 for individual players) and includes lunch, drinks, play for 4 people and a BBQ awards ceremony post play. Special speakers will include myself and the Secretary of the Commonwealth Levar Stoney. If the date doesn't work for you or you can't find four players, you may donate a team or spot to foster youth who would love to play!

I challenge you to join us in putting a spot light on our kids! Let's take responsibility of our community's future and guarantee every child in Virginia finds a permanent, loving home!

Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Debbie Johnston as Virginia's Adoption Champion in August of 2014. An adoptee herself, she is a successful entrepreneur, author, public speaker, and philanthropist. She is the founder, owner, and CEO of multimillion dollar healthcare companies, Care Advantage, Inc., All About Care, and Nurse Advantage.

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PUBLICATIONS

Soon to be New Delegates Running without Opposition

By HAYLEY ALLISON

Lashrecse Aird | Democrat

Lashrecse Aird will replace current delegate Joseph Preston in the 63rd district. Aird attended Virginia State University. She is the Executive Assistant to the President and Board Liaison at Richard Bland College of William and Mary as well as chairman of the Petersburg Democratic Committee, the 16th Senate District nominating committee and several other Petersburg committees. Aird previously served as Chief of Staff to Senator Rosalyn Dance, former 63rd District Delegate. Aird her husband Blaine and their two sons live in Petersburg. www.airdfordelagate.com



Chris Collins | Republican

Chris Collins the new delegate of the 29th district defeated incumbent Mark Berg in the June 9th primary, which secured him the seat in the November 3rd election since he is running unopposed. Collins is a James Madison University Graduate. Since graduating college and serving as a member in the National Guard, Collins has owned a small business and served as both a deputy sheriff and volunteer firefighter. Collins has served in many different leadership roles in his community including being a member of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors. Collins his wife Therese and their son have lived in the Winchester and Frederick County area for several years. collinsfordelagate.com



Nick Freitas | Republican

Nick Freitas will replace current delegate Ed Scott in the 30th district. Freitas joined the Army right out of high school. Freitas has an extensive military background which includes serving two tours in Iraq as a Special Forces SGT and Special Forces Intelligence SGT. Since being honorably discharged in 2009, Freitas has worked as Director of Operations for a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Company which services disabled Veterans and he lead a successful campaign for Senator Bryce Reeves in his hometown of Culpeper. Freitas was elected to be the Culpeper County Republican Committee Chairman in 2014. Freitas his wife Tina and their three children reside in Culpeper. www.nickjfreitas.com



Steve Heretick | Democrat

Steve Heretick defeated veteran delegate Johnny Joannou for the 79th district seat in the June 9th primary. Heretick attended the College of William and Mary before being accepted into a dual doctoral program at Hahnemann University Medical School and Villanova University Law School. Heretick was appointed to the Virginia Board of Medicine by Governors Warner and Kaine. In 2007 he was the first non-physician in Virginia history to serve as President of the Virginia Board of Medicine. Heretick also has an extensive and prestigious law career, which includes owning his own practice. He was also a member of the Portsmouth City Council for seven years. Steve his wife Stephanie and their son live in the Portsmouth area. www.heretickfordelagate.com



Paul Krizek | Democrat

Paul Krizek will replace delegate Scott Surovell in the 44th district after defeating Justin Brown in the June 9th primary. Krizek attended the University of Virginia before attending Columbus School of Law at Catholic University in Washington D.C. Krizek has worked as a nonprofit executive, a legislative staffer for Congressman Jim Moran and as the Chief Counsel and Vice President in charge of fundraising for Christian Relief Services Charities, Inc. Paul has chaired the Mount Vernon and Fairfax County Democratic Committee as well as being involved in many local Mount Vernon organizations. Paul his wife Tracey and their daughter live in the Mount Vernon area. www.paulkrizek.com



Mark Levine | Democrat

Mark Levine will replace delegate Rob Krupicka in the 45th district after winning the June 9th primary against four other primary candidates. Levine is a graduate of Harvard University and Yale Law School. Levine has served as precinct captain for the Alexandria Democratic Committee, and as the Voter Protection Attorney for the Virginia Democratic Party. Levine is a resident of Old Town Alexandria. markfordelagate.com
Hayley Allison is a Bluefield College Senior and former Intern with David Bailey Associates. ▣



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The Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia is pleased to announce our 3rd Annual Autumn Gala to be held Tuesday evening, Nov. 10, in Pentagon City's Ritz Carlton in Arlington.

Our featured speakers will be U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine; Admiral John Harvey, Virginia state Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs; and Philip Zelikow, former executive director of the national 9/11 Commission.

Massimo Calabresi, of Time, Inc., will serve as the moderator of a discussion of the collaborative and bipartisan efforts to introduce legislation in Congress to better define the nation's war powers.

The event is an annual Sorensen Institute fund-raiser attended by 200-300 Northern Virginia alumni, political and business leaders and is truly bipartisan one week after Election Day. The discussion topic grew out of a study at UVA's Miller Center of Public Affairs co-chaired by Sens. Kaine and John McCain about updating the involvement of the Congress in declaring war.

The public is invited to attend and individual tickets are on sale for the event at \$300 per person or through table sponsorships. For information, please call Colleen Smith at (434) 982.4910. Here is a link to our Gala: <http://www.sorensengala.com>.

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Pulaski County Farm to School Collaborating for a Healthier Community

By SHELLY RASNICK

Pulaski County’s School Nutrition Program received support this year through the USDA’s Farm to School Program, which has enabled the school system to begin taking the steps needed to make providing fresh, local foods in the school cafeterias a reality. The program has concentrated its efforts on building collaborations with community organizations and local farmers to benefit both student health and the local economy. The long term goal of this program is to “connect schools with local farms in order to serve healthier food options, support community health and nutrition, and provide agriculture and nutrition education opportunities.”

A diverse and dedicated group of individuals has come together to form the “Pulaski County Farm to School Team” and has worked to make this goal attainable. Members of the team include school administrators, school nutrition staff, teachers, farmers, community organization representatives, parents, and others who recognize the importance of local foods in both ensuring that students’ nutrition needs are being met and that the local farmers have a reliable market for their produce. The team has worked to plan and execute a variety of Farm to School activities such as local food taste tests, classroom agriculture and nutrition lessons, a community Farm to School night at the local farmers market, a family food show and summer camp activities. The team continues to expand the program and is planning to implement educational farm visits so that students can gain first hand experiences of where their food comes from. They also are working to set up a series of trainings with the school nutrition workers so that they will be better equipped to use fresh produce as part of the daily school lunch menus.

One of the most important parts of the program activities is student taste tests. Taste tests take advantage of available local produce and allow students to try new recipes and then vote on their favorites. The benefits from these taste tests are plentiful: school nutrition staff get to experiment with new recipes, farmers get to put their crops to good use, children gain ownership over what is served to them for lunch and they get to do it in a fun way! In one taste test, students were able to try overwintered carrots that were grown just a few miles away from their school. The carrots were served raw, as carrot “fries” and in a carrot apple salad. After sampling all three of these different preparations, students voted on which one they would like to see on their school lunch menu. The carrot apple salad was the winner and was featured as part of the lunch menu the next month!

The Pulaski County Farm to School Program is a continuing effort that will expand and change in response to the needs of the community. While the focus of the program is currently on fruits and vegetables, there is hope to one day incorporate even more products - like local meats and dairy. Student health is a top priority and this program will continue to support that by making sure Pulaski County students have access to fresh, local, and delicious school meal items!



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David Bailey is president of David Bailey Associates of Richmond, Virginia. A former college history professor, he is a veteran of more than 500 performances in 13 states of *Mark Twain Alive*.



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In addition to WBRA (Roanoke), *This Week in Richmond* is seen on WVPT (Harrisonburg), WCVE (Richmond), WHTJ (Charlottesville), WHRO (Norfolk), and on TV-48 Norfolk's Neighborhood Network.

Programs are available on demand at blueridgepbs.org/index.php/videos/local-productions/this-week-in-richmond.

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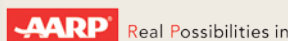


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Be Our Guest—for *This Week in Richmond*

In today's fast-paced, high-tech world, we're constantly bombarded with media messages everywhere we go. But what ends up passing for news these days is often just a bunch of repetitious soundbites and exaggerated headlines.

This Week in Richmond is a public television program that captures first-hand perspectives of state legislators and other decision-makers from around the Capitol. It is hosted by state capitol veteran David Bailey, produced by Blue Ridge PBS, and recorded live to tape in Commonwealth Public Broadcasting Corporation's Capitol Studio in the General Assembly Building.

With *This Week in Richmond*, viewers get a non-partisan, in-depth look at current events, developments and decisions coming out of the Capitol each week through complete, unedited interviews with the people who are making Virginia's government work every day.

From budget cuts to regulatory affairs, the program spotlights the latest happenings at the General Assembly while it is in session. During the rest of the year, it provides timely insights and behind-the-headlines analysis about taxes, education and other matters that are critical to people across the Commonwealth.

Originally airing weekly on Blue Ridge PBS during sessions and then once a month the rest of the year, the half hour program started out focusing on issues of greatest importance to the southwest region of Virginia. It quickly expanded to cover issues that affect all Virginians, and it now airs weekly throughout the year on various PBS stations and other outlets around the state.

Since its inception, *This Week in Richmond* has hosted a veritable who's who of movers and shakers connected with Virginia government—each with their own unique perspective on what's happening at any point in time.

From the leadership in both chambers and the executive branch, to agency heads and cabinet members, to the clerks of both the Senate and the House of Delegates, to current and former governors and first ladies, to Virginia members of Congress, the show has given viewers a chance to hear directly from a wide range of the most influential people behind the scenes.

Some of the shows feature a unique mix of perspectives and others revolve around a common theme. For instance, one show featured the



three colonels—from three different branches of service—who serve in the House of Delegates. Both the viewers and participants enjoyed the experience so much that there have even been requests for an encore.

For its guests, the show is an increasingly rare opportunity to expound on the issues that matter to them the most in an easy going and relaxed atmosphere.

For viewers, it's an equally rare opportunity to get a glimpse of the people and personalities behind the positions through complete and unedited conversations.

As one viewer said, "The main thing I like about the show is that the host doesn't constantly interrupt the guest or interject his own ideas about the subject. He lets his guests talk."

As with other PBS productions, *This Week in Richmond* depends on the generous support of its underwriters to help produce, direct, tape and distribute the program throughout the year. People and organizations who believe in the importance of transparency in state government, as well as having week to week coverage of what goes on at the Capitol, provide the funding needed to make each show possible. *This Week in Richmond* thanks them—and the show participants—for all that they do.

If you want to stay informed about the most current issues facing our Commonwealth—from the point of view of those who are making government work here in Virginia—this is the show you need to watch.

If you want to get your message out to your constituents—and all Virginians—to keep them informed about the issues that are most important to them, this is the show you need to be on.

Check your local listings for dates and times for the show on stations across the state. You can also check out past programs that are available on demand at www.blueridgepbs.org.

Whether you're a participant or a viewer, you can cut through all the other media noise out there and stay informed each week with a straightforward, detailed report about what's going on here and now in Virginia's Capitol. Simply put, you are cordially invited to relax, pull up a chair, and be our guest—for *This Week in Richmond*.

Sarah Alderson is an award-winning freelance writer who also works in the Senate broadcast control room during sessions and the Capitol Studio throughout the year. She can be reached at aldersonproductions@gmail.com.

This a shortened version of an article that originally appeared in the Winter 2013 issue of *Virginia Capitol Connections Quarterly Magazine*.

This Week
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VIEWING
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Blue Ridge PBS -WBRA (Roanoke, Lynchburg)—Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Sunday at 2:30 p.m. • Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Southwest Virginia PTV

Monday at 6:30 a.m. & 8:30 p.m. • Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. • Friday at Noon

WCVE 23.1 (Richmond)—Sunday at 9 a.m.

WHTJ 41.1 (Charlottesville)—Sunday at 9 a.m.

WVPT (Harrisonburg)—Tuesday at 5 p.m.

WHRO-World (Norfolk)—Tuesday at 5 p.m. • Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

Norfolk's Neighborhood Network, TV-48—Sunday through Tuesday, 12 noon • Wednesday through Saturday, 7:30 a.m.

Weekly show information is on Facebook—**THIS WEEK IN RICHMOND**

All shows are archived here:

<http://blueridgepbs.org/index.php/videos/local-productions/this-week-in-richmond>

Remembering Chris Spanos

By CHARLES NANCE

I remember the Sunday afternoon in the “Watergate summer” of 1974 when I met Chris Spanos. I happened to be the only one volunteering in the Herb Harris for Congress headquarters that afternoon—a rarity—when he came into the campaign office to check on things.

Chris quickly introduced himself and asked how I ended up there. I explained that I was right out of William and Mary and eager to help out. He teased me about being a “Richmond-type” and later gave me an even worse Spanos moniker, labeling me “a



mushy Moderate.” But I had started a friendship that would last until Chris’ death in Charlottesville on September 11.

Chris was just 28 when we met but he seemed to me then at least a generation older, because he had *done* so much in his few years. He’d gone to college in his native Maryland and married Anne Reed in Norfolk. They had an adorable toddler, their daughter Courtney. Son Stephen would be born a month or so later. He and Anne had already bought their first home in Mt. Vernon. Chris was a decorated veteran of the Army Medical Services Corps in Vietnam. He’d been executive assistant to Virginia Lt. Governor Henry Howell, and a prime mover in Henry’s razor thin loss to Mills Godwin in the 1973 gubernatorial campaign. He had an important behind the scenes role in the election of his close friend, state Senator Joe Gartlan. And Chris was just four years older than I was. His had been—then, and always—an impressive life of accomplishment. Of always *doing*.

One thing that struck me in that first campaign we shared was how influential Chris was, even though he seemed to have no official role. He had the candidate’s ear and respect. He asked the right questions in campaign meetings and kept people on track. And he took great notes and prepared and distributed next-day memos about everything that was decided. (As he explained to me later,

“If you are the one who writes the memo, you have more influence over what happens later.”)

Herb Harris won that congressional election; Chris became his chief of staff and I signed on as a legislative assistant.

Other lessons of politics and life followed.

“Here’s how you drive on Lee Highway,” he said once, and he showed me.

“The first rule of politics,” he told me early on, is “if you don’t want to read about it on the front page of *The Washington Post* and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, you don’t do it, you don’t say it, you don’t even think about it.”

I reminded Chris that he’d already told me the ‘first rule’ was to ‘Know your base and don’t cross it.’

“Yeah, that too.”

It’s sad how cynical people are now about politicians and people in politics. “They are all the same.” “They’re just out for themselves.” “They’re all crooked.” You’ve heard it all. Chris’ civic and professional life proves just the opposite.

Chris’ work in Virginia politics was always for causes he believed in. That’s why he worked so hard in politics. Whether working for a candidate, an office holder, a business, non-profit or government entity, Chris fought to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable Virginians.

- For the Federal VISTA program, he helped start 23 child development centers in Tidewater.
- In Alexandria and across the state, Chris worked with Community Services Boards, mental health centers, and clinical social workers to improve mental services.
- Chris lobbied the General Assembly and various governors to transition the state’s mental health system to a





community based services system, and to establish a coordinated service system for children and families.

- Business leaders, governors and legislators of both parties turned to Chris for strategies to elect leaders pledged to address Virginia’s capital and human service needs in the next generation, not just in the next election.

But if you asked Chris Spanos his greatest accomplishment, he would say, without question, it was his marriage and family. Despite having two very demanding careers, Chris and Anne Spanos always placed their family at the center of their lives—their aging parents, their siblings, their accomplished children and especially their grandchildren.

Chris’ friends didn’t just learn lessons about policy and politics from him. By his example, we learned how to be better spouses, better friends, better citizens and better people. And I’m grateful for our friendship.

Charles Nance is an attorney with The Nance Law Firm, PLC in Richmond, where he does estate planning and administration, Veterans assistance and nursing home planning. V

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