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Winter 2015



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*Virginia Capitol, Richmond Virginia*  
photograph by Wanda Judd

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# A 2015 Portrait of State Employees

By **NANCY RODRIGUES, SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION**

Keeping the engine of Virginia state government operating is no small task. Yet 125,000 state employees somehow manage to maintain this bureaucracy moving the wheels forward with efficiency, dedication and accountability on a day-to-day basis. Because of their efforts, state government has functioned smoothly both in difficult financial times and during the worst public emergencies.



In my travels across the Commonwealth, I have been privileged to see firsthand our employees' commitment to excellence despite shrinking resources. Governor McAuliffe and I recognize the importance of making Virginia state government a world-class place to work, and we are committed to doing everything within our power to attract, retain and support the hard working men and women who serve our great state.

There is no question that we will face challenges, but I have great confidence in the men and women who serve this Commonwealth as state employees.

## A Portrait of the Virginia Workforce A Diverse Yet Aging State Workforce

The Commonwealth has about 105,000 salaried and 20,000 hourly state employees. 54 percent are female and 46 percent are male. 34 percent are minorities and 8 percent are veterans. While our diversity is strong, our workforce is older than that of the private sector. The average state employee's age is 46.7, compared to 42.2 years in the private sector.

## Employee Turnover

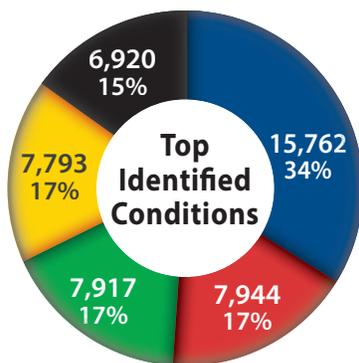
While the average turnover rate overall for state employees is 11.1 percent, turnover for those with up to five years of service is 53.1 percent. This does not bode well for recruiting and retaining new workers. 11 percent of employees are eligible to retire now, and 25 percent of the workforce will be eligible to retire within five years.

## Health of the State Workforce

The health of our state employees is at stake. Employees are experiencing emotional and financial stress, depression and anxiety.

In fiscal year 2014, 8.5 percent of employees using the state's behavioral health benefit were treated for depressive and anxiety disorders. During the same period, stress was the number one self-reported issue of concern by those taking the health assessment, representing 34 percent of all responses.

Stress can lead to other health issues. About 60 percent of the workforce is overweight or obese, which correlates with serious illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes, and other chronic health conditions. The total health care cost per employee in fiscal year 2014, including employer and employee expenses, increased 6 percent. In addition, health care costs for employees rose 2 percent in fiscal year 2014.



- Stress Issues
- Sleep Disorders
- Exercise Issues
- Overweight
- Adult Obesity

However there is good news in that participation in CommonHealth (the state's wellness program) rose from 19% in 2013 to 30% in 2014.

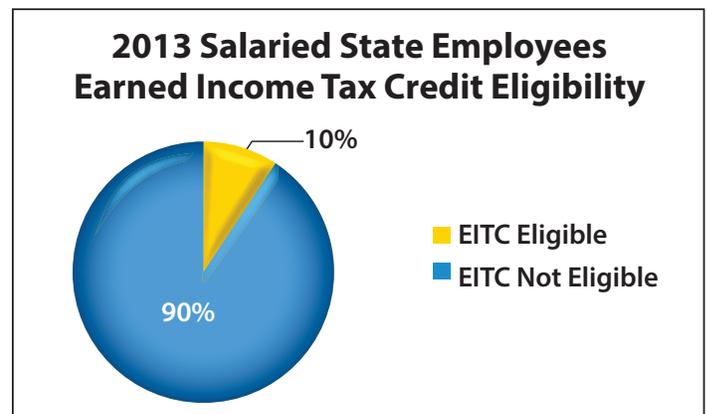
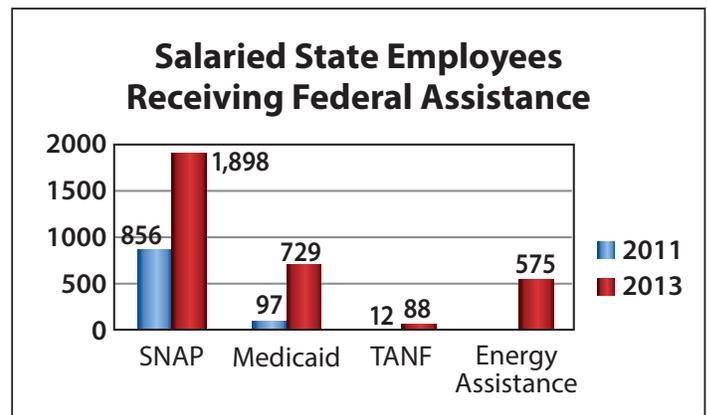
For a long time, our state employees and their families have made great sacrifices while providing the utmost in public service. 10 percent of our state workforce is receiving some form of federal assistance, even while working full time.

## Federal Assistance

Currently, 1,898 are eligible for food stamps, compared to none in 2007. Currently, 2,287 employees are receiving federal assistance, compared to less than 12 in 2007, and only because of legal guardianship of grandchildren.

## Earned Income Tax Credit

- In 2013, 10 percent of salaried, full-time state employees qualified for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
- From 2010 to 2013, there was a 2.6% increase in the EITC eligibility threshold.
- From 2010 to 2013, there was a 5.4 percent increase in state employees who qualified for the EITC.



## Compensation

Currently, 3,800 state employees earn an annual salary that is below the \$23,850 poverty level for a family of four, and 900 have pay below the \$19,970 poverty threshold for three people. The Commonwealth's employee compensation rate now lags considerably compared to other states. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Virginia's state pay ranking in 2013 was 33rd in the nation, below its 32nd pay ranking for 2012. This ranking is derived from payroll records of what is actually paid to employees as reported quarterly to employment commissions. Our overall average state employee salary in 2014 was \$46,041.

*Continued on next page*

# Reforming the P3 program for the public good

By AUBREY LAYNE, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

One of the most critical transportation bills before the General Assembly this session will reform the way projects are delivered under the Public Private Transportation Act (PPTA), also referred to as the P3 program. The P3 program allows the private sector to partner with the state to finance and build projects such as roads, bridges and other transportation improvements.

This program is a valuable procurement tool to finance and build certain transportation projects that would otherwise not be completed. But only when the deals are negotiated in a manner that protects taxpayers' interests.

Virginia is a national and global leader in partnering with the private sector to deliver multi-billion-dollar transportation projects under the P3 program. A good example is the recently opened I-95 Express Lanes in Northern Virginia. The state contributed more than \$70 million in return for a project valued at nearly \$1 billion. Transurban shared in the risk, bringing significant private capital to the table with the expectation of making a reasonable return on its investment through tolling. This is truly a risk and reward partnership that made good business sense for the Commonwealth. The public's interests came first.

The P3 process works for the right projects, but it is not the solution to deliver every project. It should not have been used to procure the U.S. 460 project, which would have built 55 miles of new highway parallel to the existing one in southeastern Virginia. This project lacked the right balance of risk and reward. The private sector was not willing to invest its capital or take significant risk because the reward of making a return on investment was not there. This project was forced through the P3 process, at a cost of \$300 million, while the state assumed the financial risk should the project not be permitted. The process lacked transparency and decisions were being made without engaging important stakeholders, such as the General Assembly. One of Governor Terry McAuliffe's first actions in office was to stop contract work on the project. With his approval, I subsequently issued a work order last March to focus solely on getting a permit.

In the Hampton Roads region, the P3 for building a second Midtown Tunnel imposed tolls before any new capacity had been built. Shortly after taking office, Governor McAuliffe urged the Commonwealth Transportation Board to cut those tolls in half during construction. With both this and the U.S. 460 project, accountability was lacking and the public's best interests were not protected.

The McAuliffe administration is committed to restoring public confidence in the P3 program so it is used for the right projects such as the 95 Express Lanes. Governor McAuliffe will introduce legislation,



patroned by Delegate Chris Jones, to reform the P3 process so good business decisions are made on behalf of the taxpayers while still encouraging and rewarding private investment.

The legislation will require the P3 program to minimize risk for taxpayers by selecting projects in which the private sector is willing to make the appropriate investment in expectation of getting a reasonable return. Risk should shift from the Commonwealth to private partners. This legislation will put in place new procedures for high-risk projects that will shield the public from unexpected liabilities.

Transparency will be increased, requiring that all nonproprietary information be on the table before critical decisions are made. The Commonwealth will work with legislative partners so they are involved in the P3 process from the beginning of a project's development. Legislative staff from the House and Senate will be on the P3 steering committee that will determine if a project should be a P3 candidate. They will assess if there is truly a risk and reward relationship between the public and private sectors. There will also be representatives on the finance side of government to advise if projects meet criteria for a P3. This will reduce political risk and uncertainty.

The legislation will draw clear lines of accountability. The secretary of transportation will be required to sign a document attesting that the project qualifies as a P3 project, meaning risk has been transferred to the private sector and that the original purpose of the procurement has not changed. There will be no way to duck responsibility for transportation decisions. It will protect taxpayers from undue risk, while using the P3 process in the intended way to deliver projects that move Virginia's economy.

The P3 program will be built on three factors—minimizing risk for taxpayers, increasing transparency and strengthening accountability. By making this part of transportation law, I am confident the Commonwealth can move forward in the best interest of Virginians. I for one will be held accountable during my term as transportation secretary to deliver a P3 program that protects citizens' interests while leveraging our private partners' expertise. ▣



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*Continued from previous page*

## Developing Strategies

To have a viable workforce in the future, we are looking for and must find the resources to attract people to public service and motivate them to stay. Additionally, we must continue to focus on giving employees the tools to improve their own health, which will subsequently reduce health care costs for both the state employee and the Commonwealth. These steps will go a long way to help alleviate the financial and emotional stress that will in the long term sap productivity and effectiveness of our state workforce.

The Commonwealth is fortunate to have an extremely altruistic workforce. Men and women working in state government have given back to their communities time and again. Despite these austere

times, our state employees in 2014 donated more than 2.5 million dollars to charitable organizations through the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) for workplace giving. Also, this does not take into consideration the countless hours of volunteer service that our state employees consistently provide in our communities throughout the Commonwealth.

Through dedicated service to state government and to the communities throughout Virginia, our state employees are vital to helping to build the new Virginia economy. In my role as Secretary of Administration, I am committed to helping to improve the health and workplace for all state employees. ▣

# Updates on Select Pieces of the Healthy Virginia Plan

BY WILLIAM A. HAZEL JR., SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

In September 2014, Governor McAuliffe unveiled *A Healthy Virginia*, his plan to expand access to health care in the Commonwealth in the absence of Medicaid expansion. While the coverage gap remains open, this plan offers programs and services to improve the health of Virginians, including individuals with serious mental illness, veterans and families. Comprised of 10 initiatives, the plan aims to strengthen our health care system through strong outreach, increased access, and thoughtful innovation. Each piece of *A Healthy Virginia* is designed to remove barriers and provide solutions.



A few short months later, all of these initiatives are underway. The following is an update on several pieces of the plan that have been implemented.

## The Governor's Access Plan for Medical and Behavioral Health Services

Because we know that mental illness can be devastating to individuals, families and communities, and is inextricably linked to physical health, *A Healthy Virginia* has a clear focus on delivery of mental health services. Among the initiatives taken by the Administration is a program called the Governor's Access Plan (GAP), which offers limited physical and behavioral health coverage for uninsured Virginians with serious mental illness whose income is at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, which is less than \$12,000 annually for an individual. The plan is designed to ensure that up to 20,000 Virginians with serious mental illness get the care they desperately need. The Department of Medical Assistance Services in Virginia worked tirelessly with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to develop this program in the summer and fall of 2014. Partnering with Community Services Boards and Magellan of Virginia, the Commonwealth's behavioral health services administrator, the GAP program will begin on January 12, 2015 and end either after two years or when Medicaid is expanded in Virginia, whichever occurs first.

## Reducing Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse

Overdose deaths from heroin and prescription opioids are rising at an alarming rate in Virginia. In 2013, more than 900 Virginians died from an overdose. This is a complex public health issue that requires awareness from the public, health care providers, mental health workers, and law enforcement about the causes and effects of opioids, including both heroin and prescription narcotics. On September 26, 2014, Governor McAuliffe signed Executive Order 29, forming the Governor's Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse. The Task Force, which will produce a comprehensive implementation plan to combat opioid abuse by June 30, 2015, has already provided initial recommendations to the Governor, including several pieces of legislation.

## Prioritizing the Health of Virginia's Veterans

Virginia has the honor of having the fastest growing veteran population of any state in the nation. Unfortunately, the capacity of the VA system has not kept up with the rapidly growing population in the Commonwealth. Many veterans have to wait too long or travel too far for their VA appointments. The Administration is committed to

working with the VA to ensure that all Virginia's veterans have access to timely, quality health care. On November 3, we convened the first-ever Summit on Expanding Health Care Access for Virginia Veterans, bringing together over 70 top leaders from the VA and private health systems to discuss how to work together and leverage the new federal Veterans Choice Act to improve access for veterans. One of the positive outcomes of this event is that several Federally Qualified Health Centers have already signed up with the Choice program and can see eligible veterans in their communities who previously would have had to travel over 40 miles to VA facilities for appointments.

## Supporting Enrollment in the Federal Marketplace

During the current open enrollment period, we are working to ensure that Virginians who are eligible for health insurance on the Federal Marketplace are fully aware of their options. In addition to the Community Health Education Project, an education campaign being administered by the Virginia Poverty Law Center, Virginia has also kicked off a traditional marketing campaign. On January 1, 2015, nearly 90,000 Virginians had signed up for new health insurance plans on the Marketplace, and about 75,000 more had renewed existing plans. With the leadership of community and state partners, Virginia now has a dedicated team of in-person assisters and health insurance specialists working to guide individuals through the application process. Open enrollment will end on February 15 this year, and most Virginians will not be able to purchase insurance again until the fall of 2016, when open enrollment begins again.

## Informing Virginians of their Health Care Options

Additionally, Virginia enhanced the [CoverVa.org](http://CoverVa.org) website to help support open enrollment goals. The site, which previously was a resource for Virginians to learn about the Medicaid and FAMIS programs, was enhanced just prior to open enrollment to include information about the Federal Marketplace. The site was reorganized for clarity in differentiating

programs, and several features were added to help Virginians interested in enrolling on the Federal Marketplace. In addition to new information and resources, the site also now has a new eligibility calculator and a tool to connect Virginians with consumer assisters in their local communities.

- Since November 15, [coverva.org](http://coverva.org) has received:
- More than 120,000 unique visits
- More than 2,500 click-throughs to [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov)
- More than 5,500 click-throughs to Virginia's CommonHelp online application
- Almost 19,000 eligibility screenings

## State Innovation Model Grant

On December 16, 2014, Virginia was awarded a \$2.6 million federal grant to develop new statewide health care models built around a series of aggressive public health goals ranging from reductions in tobacco use to improved mental health care. The one-year grant awarded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will provide financial and technical support beginning in January to develop the Virginia Health Innovation Plan. The goal of the plan is to improve health outcomes for all Virginians, regardless of insurance status.

While we continue to work toward realizing the goals of *A Healthy Virginia*, it is important to recognize that the coverage gap still exists in Virginia. Expanding Medicaid is the best way to create access for the estimated 400,000 Virginians who are currently uninsured. █

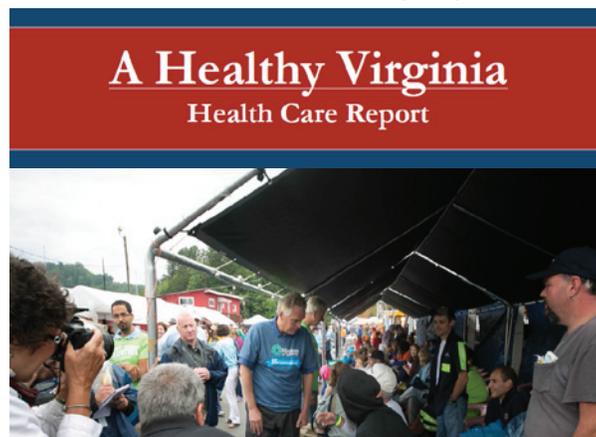


Photo by Michael White

# Feds Fund Expansion of Virginia Preschool Initiative

By HOLLY COY

In mid-December the U.S. Department of Education awarded Virginia a \$17.5 million Preschool Expansion Grant which will enable the Commonwealth to build upon our existing public preschool program, Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), which serves 18,000 at-risk four year olds annually. The grant will support expansion and improvement of the Virginia program in 11 high-needs school divisions beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.



“Expanding preschool is essential to ensure that all Virginians—regardless of income or background—acquire the education and skills they’ll need to participate and succeed in the new Virginia economy of the 21st century,” Governor McAuliffe said. “This grant is a big win for the children of the Commonwealth.”

The divisions were selected based on the following indicators of need: poverty, number of Title I schools, percentage of children entering kindergarten below the state’s literacy readiness benchmark and the number of unserved at-risk four-year-olds. Together, the divisions have committed to establishing 88 new classrooms and improving services for children in 94 existing preschool classes through a program called VPI Plus. When fully implemented, VPI Plus will serve more than 3,000 students per year at or below 200% of the poverty line.

In addition to providing high-quality preschool experiences and activities, VPI Plus will include focused outreach to families and communities, as well as individualized support for children with unique learning needs, including students with disabilities, English-language learners and children from military families.

“This exciting Preschool Expansion Grant is proof that Virginia’s dedication to early childhood education is recognized nationwide,” Secretary of Education Anne Holton said. “Access to high-quality early childhood education is a determining factor in future success, especially for at-risk young people.”

“This new grant will enable the Commonwealth to expand access to high-quality preschool, which is an essential foundation for any student’s academic success,” said Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam. “This is an exciting opportunity for Virginia, and the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success looks forward to supporting the program.”

The Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success, which was created by Governor McAuliffe in August 2014 and is chaired by the Lt. Governor, serves as the mandated advisory council for the grant.

The grant also will fund a state-level effort—led by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia (UVA)—to improve preparation and professional development for preschool teachers and administrators.

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The awards were announced by President Obama during a December White House Summit on Early Education as part of more than \$1 billion in new federal and private-sector investments in early childhood education. The awards are first-year grants with the potential of continued funding for three additional years.

*Holly Coy is the Policy Director for the Office of Lt. Governor Ralph Northam.* [V]

# The Virginia Department of Veterans Services Answers Governor McAuliffe's Charge to Keep Virginia the "Most Vet Friendly" State in the Nation

By JOHN L. NEWBY II

Since its establishment in 2003, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services has maintained a proud history of dedicated support to our Virginia veterans, National Guard members and reservists. Starting in its infancy with two foundational services—our Benefits offices and our Amelia veterans cemetery—we have grown to provide what is arguably the most comprehensive menu of veteran-friendly services in the country, including our Wounded Warrior Program, a 400-bed long term care service line, a robust veterans education and employment service and the best state-run war memorial in the nation.

But we're not stopping there. Governor Terry McAuliffe has challenged us to lean forward and prepare for the evolving needs of the Commonwealth's growing and diverse veteran population. And we are doing just that. From assisting service members' transition to civilian life by facilitating employment and education, to increasing veteran access to health care and housing, and more, we will ensure that Virginia remains the best state for veterans and soon-to-be vets. Here are just a few ways the Department is moving out on the Governor's charge.

## Putting Veterans on a Path to Employability

Our Virginia Values Veterans Program's (V3) mission is unique in that it seeks to educate employers throughout the Commonwealth on why and how to hire, train and retain veterans. In Governor McAuliffe's first year in office, the number of veteran jobs pledged by our V3 companies has jumped by 75%, and the number of veterans hired by V3 companies has soared by 118%. Currently, 233 companies participate in this program and have pledged to hire 9,055 veterans; 6,777 have already been placed in to full time quality jobs. Concurrently, we are working with our partners in Virginia's community college system and four-year institutions to expand the award of academic credit for military training. This will shorten the time it takes for transitioning service persons and veterans to get the certificate or degree necessary to enter desired career fields, thus speeding them along their path to employability.

## Increasing Access to Healthcare for Virginia's Veterans

Over the next five years, nearly 1 million service members across the world will transition to civilian life. As the state with the 7th largest veteran population in the nation and home to numerous key military facilities, the Commonwealth stands to have a large portion of these persons calling Virginia home. Under Governor McAuliffe's leadership, we are taking steps to ensure that our current and future veteran population has access to the healthcare they have earned and need. This past November the Governor convened a Health Summit on Veterans Healthcare Access, connecting Virginia's three federal Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center directors with state and private partners to create



new points of access for primary health and mental health care. The goal: to ensure that a veteran seeking such care will be served as quickly as possible. And here at the Department, we are excited for this year's opening of a new 40 bed addition to our Richmond-based Sitter & Barfoot long term veteran nursing care center. This expansion from 160 to 200 beds, complemented by our 240 bed facility at our Roanoke Virginia Veterans Care Center, will give greater access to both long and short term rehabilitative care for our veterans.

## Combating Veteran Homelessness

It is entirely unacceptable that more than 617 veterans who call Virginia home actually do not have a home. Last September the Governor attacked this problem head on when he announced the launch of the statewide 100 Day Challenge to end veterans homelessness in Virginia. Leading the charge on the Challenge, the Department hosted members of local, state, and federal governments, as well as nonprofits, charities, and faith-based organizations, in creating and executing strategies to eliminate veterans homeless in the Commonwealth. As a result of this effort, the communities of Roanoke, Richmond and Hampton Roads have housed or is in the process of housing 395 homeless veterans, putting us squarely on the path to reduce veterans homelessness to a functional zero by the end of this year.

## Honoring Those Who Served

Since its dedication in 1956, the Virginia War Memorial has evolved to become the nation's leading state war memorial. Serving a record 68,142 visitors in 2014, the Virginia War Memorial's unique educational and programmatic offerings preserve and pass on the stories of sacrifice of all Virginia veterans. Groundbreaking on an expansion to the War Memorial will occur in the spring of 2015, with completion expected in 2016 or early 2017. This expansion will allow us to continue to honor all Virginians who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country.

## Greater Outreach

Our knowing that we are the most veteran friendly state means nothing, unless our veterans and citizenry know about the myriad services that the Commonwealth provides. Our agency balances the use of technology with personal service to efficiently reach our customers. Our newly redesigned web site offers a more functional, user friendly experience, and provides links to a multitude of local, state and federal veteran resources. In addition, we have rolled out a new mobile app to provide ready access on smart phone and tablet devices via iTunes and Google Play. We will continue to provide new and innovative ways to connect Virginia's veterans to the benefits they have earned.

The Department of Veterans Services is committed to ensuring that Virginia remains the state of choice for our nation's heroes. We look forward to continuing to serve you.

*John L. Newby II is the Commissioner of Virginia Department of Veterans Services, [www.dvs.virginia.gov](http://www.dvs.virginia.gov).*

Each year, in communities across the country, dynamic, passionate candidates engage in a spirited competition to earn The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's "Man & Woman of the Year" titles by raising funds for blood cancer research. Every dollar raised counts as one vote, and the titles are awarded to the man and woman with the most votes at the end of the ten week campaign. Nationally in 2014, LLS' Man & Woman of the Year campaign raised over \$22 million for research and patient services, with a record-breaking \$340,000 in Virginia. The 2015 season will begin with a Kickoff Party on February 26th and culminates with a Grand Finale Gala on May 8th.

*Dear Friends,*

*Today I am writing not as a contributor to Virginia Capitol Connections, but as someone who had cancer. Every day, when I do something, even something simple like writing another magazine story, I think, "Wow. That's something I was able to do because I recovered from cancer." I want that for everyone who is touched by this disease. **I had leukemia. But it doesn't define me.** What does define me? A positive attitude, a strategic recovery plan and hope for a cure.*

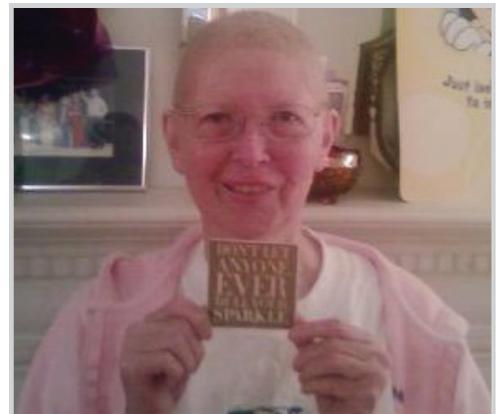
*The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is at the threshold of cures for more patients. LLS-funded targeted immunotherapies are zeroing in on cancer cells, and are saving thousands of lives a day. But we're not there yet. Help me and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society close the book on blood cancers.*

***Join Team Bonnie!** Support LLS by making a donation to my fundraising campaign for Woman of the Year. I am working to raise as much as possible in a 10-week period beginning on February 26th. Every dollar I raise counts as one vote, and the candidates who receive the most votes, one man and one woman, are named the Man & Woman of the Year.*

*All donations are tax deductible and will support LLS research, patient services, advocacy, public and professional education, and community services.*

*Thank you for your support!*

*Bonnie Atwood*



**To make an online donation, visit my fundraising page:**

**[www.mwoy.org/pages/va/richmond15/batwood](http://www.mwoy.org/pages/va/richmond15/batwood)**

**Start Donating on February 26, 2015!**

# A Report on Virginia's Conservation & Recreation Agency

By JULIE BUCHANAN

## Inspired by the past, working for the future

In 2016—a year from now—the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will celebrate its 90th year in existence. Few Virginians alive today remember its beginning, but virtually all feel its influence and impact on the quality of life for Virginians.

In its first decade, it set out to capitalize on Virginia's rich natural treasures and cultural history. Between 1926 and 1936, massive efforts were made to acquire land and to work collaboratively with the federal government to design, build and open Shenandoah National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Virginia's original six state parks—Hungry Mother, Douthat, Fairy Stone, Staunton River, Westmoreland and Seashore (now First Landing). They were big dreamers and they accomplished a lot. These days Shenandoah entertains about 2 million visits a year, the Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited national park with some 14 million annual visits and Virginia's national award-winning state parks enjoy about 9 million visits annually. These parks, along with the many others in Virginia today, enhance the quality of life for Virginians and our visitors, provide scenic habitat for our remarkable flora and fauna, and stimulate economic activity in nearby localities and the Commonwealth at large. Natural and cultural tourism, and outdoor recreation, are big business.

Our state park system is coming off another record year with nearly 9 million visits and a total economic impact of \$208 million. That is an 11.5 fold return on investment given that the system receives about \$18 million annually in general funds. Virginians are proud of their state park system as evidenced by the more than 4,000 members of the Virginia Association for Parks and the nearly 70 per cent support when voters supported general obligation bond referendums in 1992 and 2002. Our system has been recognized on three occasions (1999, 2001 and 2013) as a finalist for the national gold medal that honors state systems who have demonstrated "excellence in the field of park and recreation management." From 2001-2003, Virginia owned the national gold medal.

One of the most recent accolades involves the new marina at Occoneechee State Park near Clarksville. DCR's consultant for the project, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. (VHB), has received an Engineering Excellence Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies for design of the park's 54-slip marina. The award is to be presented in February.

But state parks are just a part of what DCR provides for the Commonwealth.

Virginia's official guide for the planning of public outdoor recreation and land conservation has been revised and is available online. The Virginia Outdoors Plan, which is updated every five years,

highlights the beautiful natural resources and historical attractions Virginia has to offer. This is the 10th plan to be produced since the 1965 publication of "Virginia's Common Wealth," the first comprehensive study of Virginia's outdoor recreation facilities and resources. It is the first to be completely paperless and includes a user-friendly online tool for mapping outdoor recreation resources and conserved lands.

This plan's theme is "Virginia is for Outdoor Lovers," and recommendations focus heavily on expanding tourism opportunities and the economy through outdoor recreation and land conservation. First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe debuted the publication with a video that can be viewed at [www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/).

Virginia's Natural Heritage Program, housed at DCR, is one of the top programs of its kind. Natural heritage programs exist in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces and 18 Latin American countries. This science-based program was presented in 1994 with the Outstanding Natural Heritage Program Award and in 2006 with NatureServe's Conservation Impact Award. The program's many contributions include collecting new information on the natural communities and species of Virginia, natural area protection and restoration, and development of new technologies for biodiversity conservation.

Good decisions can only be made using current and accurate information. A strength of the Virginia Natural Heritage Program is that its biologists track information on 505 natural communities and 1,641 rare plants and animals in the Commonwealth. Notably, they have discovered 313 species new to Virginia, including 36 species never before known.

The State Natural Area Preserve System has grown to 61 preserves and encompasses 55,300 acres protecting 441 different rare species and natural communities. In addition to the management and restoration of numerous rare habitats, the program has developed parking areas, trails, boardwalks and interpretive signs at 21 preserves.

The Natural Heritage Program has data on 7,211 known locations for rare species. Until recently, little was known about where else these species were most likely to occur. With support from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Virginia Department of Transportation, DCR staff is among the first in the nation to use state-of-the-art technology to model with the highest possible levels of certainty where else these species are most likely to occur. In addition to informing land conservation decisions, this information is critical to saving the economic development community time, effort and money when planning for projects.

Helping Virginians protect their soil and water resources is another important function of the agency. DCR's Soil and Water Conservation staff works with Virginia's agricultural community and lawn-care companies to prevent runoff pollution from entering local waterways. Much of this work is done in partnership with Virginia's 47 soil and water conservation districts.

In December, Governor Terry McAuliffe presented 10 Virginia farmers with the prestigious Virginia Grand Basin Clean Water Farm Award. The award honors farmers and farm owners who have reduced nutrient pollution through innovative practices and technologies. The Governor presented the awards at the annual meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. See the list of winners at [www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil\\_and\\_water/cwfa/winners.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/cwfa/winners.shtml).

Governor Terry McAuliffe joins Lou Ann Wallace, President of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward in presenting Willis and Krystal Heatwole of Rockingham County with the Grand Basin Clean Water Farm Award for the Shenandoah River basin.



Photos courtesy of DCR.



**DCR Natural Area Protection Manager Larry Smith discusses plants during a field trip to Mill Creek Springs Natural Area Preserve in Montgomery County.**

Also during the meeting, the first certificate of resource management plan implementation was presented to Clem and Keith Horsley of Gloucester County. Resource management plans encourage farmers to use a high level of conservation practices to reduce nutrient pollution. The plans are integral to Virginia's strategy to clean up local waters and the Chesapeake Bay. The Horsleys, owners of Holly Springs Farm, are the first Virginians to implement a resource management plan.

**By ensuring the proper and safe design**, construction, operation and maintenance of dams, DCR helps protect lives and property. In 2014, the General Assembly passed—and the governor signed—legislation that authorized a new study to be completed by Dec. 1, 2015, of Virginia's probable maximum precipitation, or PMP.

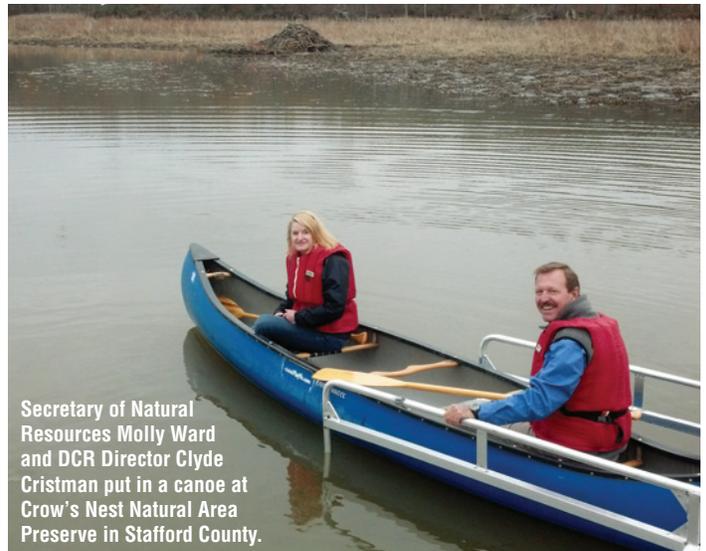
The major cost for many owners of dams classified as significant or high hazard is for the rehabilitation of their emergency spillways to meet capacity requirements based on the PMP. Existing high-hazard dams are required to pass a rainfall event greater than the maximum

recorded in the Commonwealth. This shall be deemed to be 90 percent of the maximum precipitation. Existing significant-hazard dams must pass 50 percent of the PMP.

A new study may reduce PMP values, which, in turn, could reduce or eliminate costs to dam owners for emergency spillway rehabilitation. Since the existing PMP data for Virginia is about 40 years old, additional storms can be analyzed and modern tools and methodologies employed.

In May 2014, Applied Weather Associates was contracted for the PMP study. DCR established a review panel of experts and cooperating state and federal agencies to provide expertise throughout the study. To date, the review panel has met twice, and the study is on track to be completed by Dec. 1.

*Julie Buchanan is the Acting Public Relations Manager for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.*



**Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward and DCR Director Clyde Cristman put in a canoe at Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve in Stafford County.**

## More happenings at DCR Public–Private Partnerships

The Virginia Association for Parks and the Garden Club of Virginia are working together with Virginia State Parks to raise \$5 million in private funding for what is the largest public-private collaboration in the 80-year history of the state park system. The six-year campaign, called the **Partnership for Parks**, is endorsed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe and First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe. The campaign's bipartisan steering committee includes retired Senators John Chichester and Mary Margaret Whipple, as well as former Delegates Jim Dillard, Tayloe Murphy, Harvey Morgan and Preston Bryant. The effort will provide state park visitor centers with innovative and engaging exhibits that will interpret our state's cultural and natural history for all age groups while promoting a healthy active lifestyle for citizens. One component of the project is the Outdoor Challenge, an exhibit that promotes a variety of healthy outdoor activities at each park and encourages involvement through a simple, point-based challenge. For more information, visit [www.VAParks.net](http://www.VAParks.net).



**The Richmond Regional Ride Center** is a collaborative effort to address the public demand for outdoor recreation areas and facilities in Central Virginia and a legacy project of the Richmond 2015 UCI World Cycling Championships. The goal is to rehabilitate 15 miles of existing mountain bike trail at Pocahontas State Park and construct an additional 20 miles. Combined with existing world-class trails in Richmond's James River Park System, the new trails at Pocahontas State Park will give the region more than 70 miles of offroad cycling.

The Richmond Regional Ride Center will be unique in that it will include facilities that will cater to individuals with disabilities. The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Mid-Atlantic Chapter is seeking to bring awareness to adaptive sports, especially handcycling, and the RRRC will help to accomplish this goal. The RRRC will provide the disabled community a safe place to handcycle, an increased support system and a way to build confidence to live an active, healthy lifestyle. This project is a state and regional partnership involving DCR, the Virginia Association for Parks, the City of Richmond, Chesterfield County, the International Mountain Bike Association, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Friends of Pocahontas State Park, Richmond MORE, and Sportsbackers. Early corporate sponsors include Dominion, Altria, Ukrop's and MeadWestvaco. For more information visit, [www.rvaridecenter.com](http://www.rvaridecenter.com).



In 2001, DCR staff founded **The Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project Inc.** to gather private support and resources to produce a manual of all Virginia plants—a tool sorely needed by DCR field staff and other natural resources personnel. In 2012, the manual was published and is already in its second printing. The Flora of Virginia Project is now working on an app to provide the Flora to a much wider audience. DCR will continue to support this \$250,000 effort so that more people will have a tool for understanding Virginia's plants. For more information visit, <http://floraofvirginia.org/>.



# Virginia's Voluntary Protection Program

*...the Best of the Best!*

By MILFORD STERN, JAY WITHROW, BILL BURGE, CHRIS BUISSET, JIM MORRIS

Delta Airlines, Miller Coors, Raytheon, Eastman Kodak, International Paper, Dominion Power and the Lunenburg Correctional Center, are just a small sample of the 43 Virginia employers providing exceptional worksite safety and health protections for over 11,000 employees through the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's (DOLI) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).

Virginia VPP participating worksites average 65% lower injury and illness rates than their counterparts in their respective industries. With the average cost of a non-fatal workplace injury to an employer of \$53,000 (source: National Safety Council), the value of providing workplace safety and health protections through VPP becomes self-evident. But VPP is much more than just saving money. Virginia VPP members report improved employee morale, and increased productivity and competitiveness, to go along with decreased absenteeism, and lower workers' compensation costs and insurance premiums.

## What is the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP)?

VPP was originally created in 1982 by the US Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) as a voluntary partnership of employees, management and government to recognize and promote occupational safety and health excellence. VPP now engages approximately 900,000 employees at over 2,300 places of work in America.

In 1996, the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program adopted VPP as a component of DOLI's larger mission to "make Virginia a better place in which to work." The Virginia VPP is based on the national model with two levels of participation, STAR and MERIT, and is currently restricted to fixed site locations.

Besides meeting all required VOSH safety and health standards, each site that is considered must have rates of occupational injuries and illnesses that are below their respective national rates and meet the requirements of the four major elements of VPP:

- Management Leadership & Employee Involvement
- Worksite Analysis
- Hazard Prevention & Control
- Safety & Health Training

The VPP concept recognizes that enforcement alone can never fully achieve the objectives of the OSH Act of 1970. Exceptional safety and health management programs that go beyond VOSH standards can protect workers more effectively than simply complying with laws that set minimum safety requirements. Historically, VPP sites average over fifty percent less OSHA recordable injuries and experience dramatically lower workers' compensation costs.

Beyond these facts, many VPP sites are "the Best of the Best" in numerous other measurable ways.

Cintas in Chester, Virginia, has received the Cintas Annual Outstanding Achievement Award for the 6th time this past year. Mr. Howard Baron, General Manager, states that "VPP has provided our employees with many opportunities to continuously improve performance and boost pride." The Chester site consistently achieves high national rankings among 430 worksites in the Cintas Corporation in the US and Canada. Additionally, the site has received numerous awards for management leadership, sales and profits results and has experienced very low turnover of the site's 122 employees.



Some of the many VPP participants.

## What does it take to become a VPP participant?

An initial inquiry by an employer to DOLI's VPP Office starts a process of self-evaluation for conformance to the VPP elements, mentoring from other VPP sites and corrective actions as needed. A VPP application can be completed once the annual self evaluation finds a compliant safety and health management system in place and functioning. This process is self-paced and requires documentation to be provided to DOLI's VPP division.

Once a VPP application is accepted, a visit to the site is scheduled to observe the functioning and documentation of the VPP safety and health management system by VOSH VPP staff. Then a volunteer VPP Evaluation Team conducts an onsite evaluation and a report is prepared to detail the site's efforts to conform to VPP elements, highlight the best practices observed, and discuss recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the applicant's safety and health programs. After any deficiencies are corrected, final approval is determined by DOLI's Commissioner.

One Virginia company during its application process saw its total expenditures on workers' compensation claims reduced as follows:

2008:	\$293,481.70
2009:	\$47,346.31
2010:	\$6,651.36



NIBCO staff looks on during VPP Flag Raising Ceremony.

## VPP works in the public sector too!

The Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) has two facilities in VPP (Lunenburg Correctional Center in Victoria and Augusta Correctional Center in Craigsville). They are the only correctional facilities in the VPP nationwide. Both facilities have consistently incurred lower workers' compensation costs than other comparable VADOC sites and have significantly lower OSHA rates (TCR, DART) than the national rates for Correctional facilities. These sites have also been leaders by example in changing the safety culture in VADOC by providing expertise and guidance for what is possible in occupational safety and health at VADOC.



DOLI Commissioner C. Ray Davenport speaks at Huber Best Practices Day.

## Benefits of VPP...

Besides enhanced safety and health, there are numerous other benefits that individual VPP sites experience. Collaboration with VOSH has included opportunities to showcase best practices at conferences and workshops or occasions to train with VOSH employees to share the latest efforts in worker safety and health. Active employee involvement in safety can also lead to higher quality production, better general housekeeping, suggestions that translate into improved efficiency and other exceptional business metrics.

## The Future of VPP...

As the news of VPP's success nationally and in Virginia has spread, so has the number of sites and employers interested in this game-changing approach to safety and health management systems. The many months of preparation and review required by the VPP process do not seem to be a deterrent for the newcomers. In 2014, there were six new sites reviewed by onsite evaluation teams for inclusion in VPP. Many new sites are expected to be ready for application in 2015.

International Paper's Richmond Corrugated Division has been a VPP site since 1999. Ms. Mildred Johnson, the site VPP Coordinator, states that VPP has elevated the "process of safety" as a way of doing business for both management and employees at their site. Members of the United Steel Workers Local 08-694 are entrusted to initiate, monitor and complete many duties associated with plant safety at this corrugated "bulk box" manufacturer.

Management's confidence in the engagement of employees in their own safety is evident in the consistent investments in safety and new equipment at this established facility

The Associated General Contractors of Virginia (AGCVA) is working with DOLI to develop a program that would bestow a similar recognition for construction sites and contractor members who have adopted enhanced safety and health programs. These efforts have resulted in the creation of the Building Excellence in Safety and Training (BEST) program, which provides a unique model for partnering with exemplary general contractors to improve site safety and health and a vital safety model for improving employee protections in this hazardous group of industries.

Success at the Virginia Department of Corrections has inspired agency management to expand participation in VPP by establishing a process to prepare their sites internally for VPP. According to Mr. Michael Williford, Risk Manager for the VADOC, the consistent safety performance at the Lunenburg and Augusta facilities has reduced injuries for staff and offenders, resulting in significant cost avoidance which benefits Virginia taxpayers.

DOLI and VADOC are developing a strategic partnership to implement VPP challenge concepts to establish a formal method to prepare additional correctional facilities for VPP participation.

The Challenge project could offer a prototype for other employers or other government agencies to replicate the VADOC's achievements.

The Governor's Office has proposed legislation this year that would create a formal statutory framework for VPP and offers the Commonwealth a unique method of partnering with the "Best of the Best" employers in Virginia to create a network of safety and health excellence to share with other aspiring Virginia workplaces.

Visit DOLI's website for valuable information and education at [www.doli.virginia.gov](http://www.doli.virginia.gov).

Another valuable source of information is the VPP Participants' Association (VPPPA). The VPPPA members are a ready source of experience and knowledge for existing and aspiring VPP workplaces. If you are interested in VPP, consider attending the 19th Annual Region III VPPPA Conference March 4-6, 2015 at the Homestead in Hot Springs, Virginia to meet employees and managers from some of the Association's member sites in attendance. [7]



# AmeriCorps—A Community Resource Available Statewide

By AMANDA S. HEALY

What could be accomplished in your community with at least 10 additional pairs of hands, dedicated to one project, for 12 months? What compelling community need could be met?

This is the question that Fran Inge, Director of the Division of Community and Volunteerism Services, asks of leaders across the Commonwealth of Virginia. When local governments and non-profits identify projects and programs that need to be planned, implemented or expanded, Inge is quick to suggest that AmeriCorps be considered.

In Virginia, AmeriCorps is managed through the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). As the Virginia Service Commission, VDSS accesses AmeriCorps funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), and then makes it available to meet community needs. AmeriCorps focuses on education, economic opportunity, services to veterans and military families, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, and disaster readiness and recovery. Funding for special initiatives is occasionally made available, as well. Examples include programming to recruit and train volunteers, and programming designed specifically to help veterans complete educational or vocational training using their GI benefits. Virginia's current portfolio of AmeriCorps State programs includes educational programming from pre-K through high school and beyond, financial literacy training, anti-hunger support, job readiness training, and trail maintenance on public lands.

Inge is quick to point out the multi-level benefits of AmeriCorps programming.

"First, there is the community benefit—the school children who are tutored or mentored, the veterans who fully utilize the benefits to which they are entitled, the households with additional income because individuals completed training programs. We (the Virginia Service Commission) also expect

our host organizations to ramp up their volunteer recruitment and management efforts, so the community also has the benefit of new, trained and engaged volunteers. Second, there is a benefit to the host organization, whether public or private. The host organization gains valuable experience in managing a federal grant, and in overseeing a program requiring high accountability with very specific, ambitious outcomes. The third level of benefit is to the AmeriCorps members themselves. They gain valuable leadership and work experience, make great contacts and join a nationwide cadre of national service participants. Moreover, upon completion of their terms of service, AmeriCorps members have an educational award made available to them (or their children or grandchildren) to put toward existing student debt or for future educational or vocational training."

In addition to AmeriCorps, which is high impact, long-term direct service, with relatively low cost to the host organization, CNCS offers other national service programs. AmeriCorps VISTA is another high impact, long-term, and low cost anti-poverty program supporting organizational capacity building and indirect service. The National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) is geared toward direct or indirect service through high impact, short-term and low cost projects. CNCS also sponsors Senior Corps, which uses the skills and talents of older citizens in Foster Grandparents and in Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

Inge urges anyone interested in finding a solution to unmet community needs to visit [www.vaservice.org](http://www.vaservice.org), or call (804) 726-7065. "The needs of your community," says Inge, "may be met by AmeriCorps and national service."

*Amanda S. Healy is the AmeriCorps Program Manager for the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service in the Virginia Department of Social Services.* 

## Nomination Reform 2016

By STEPHEN J. FARNSWORTH

As Virginia's deeply divided political culture embarks on another year of frustration and gridlock, I'd suggest lawmakers spend some time on a matter nearly all Virginians can agree on: breaking the insane tyranny of Iowa and New Hampshire over the presidential nomination process.

Granting these two small and unrepresentative states disproportionate influence year after year has never made any sense for either political party. Furthermore, it's bad for Virginia and for the other 47 states basically forced to consider as potential presidents only the top two or three finishers who have performed best in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Virginia shouldn't have to act alone. A number of other larger states, particularly Michigan and Florida, have chafed at the outsized influence of those two breathtakingly unrepresentative jurisdictions. The Old Dominion can and should take the lead in breaking a system that unfairly advantages two small states deserving no such advantages.

The fact-based case for Virginia's first-ness is wide-ranging. First of all, the state is far closer to America in miniature than those two places—or, for that matter, Nevada or South Carolina, two other highly favored states on the presidential nomination calendar.

Virginia has its ideologically liberal northeast and a replica of Silicon Valley in Northern Virginia. The Commonwealth has its



own Sun Coast and an industrial heartland in Hampton Roads, and a variety of politically and culturally distinct urban and suburban communities along I-95, I-66, I-81 and I-64. Many other regions of the state are populated by farming communities and small towns that call to mind the Great Plains or the South. It has substantial numbers of Christian conservative voters and Tea Party supporters as well.

But there's more. Population statistics demonstrate the demographic advantages of the Old Dominion over the first two nomination states. Virginia's population is about 69 percent white, as compared to more than 90 percent of the residents of those two politically favored states. (The national population is about 72 percent white). In presidential elections, Virginia routinely comes very close to the national division of votes.

To make the case even stronger, many of today's Virginia voters came here from somewhere else, and many of them are active-duty or retired military families. They add an unusual regional diversity to the state electorate—another reason why the Old Dominion deserves to be at or near the head of the line. Other states can and should make similar cases.

Iowa and N.H. try to sell the rest of the nation on the idea that they represent that last vestiges of Norman Rockwell's America, where deliberate, sober voters offer an allegedly grateful nation their carefully considered preferences. In fact, the current process is more Norman Bates than Norman Rockwell. Iowa often favors an extreme candidate and N.H. generally turns to a well-funded, media-friendly candidate. (Plus Iowa demonstrated in 2012 that it

*Continued on next page*

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can't count, first claiming that Mitt Romney won and then correcting the record to name Rick Santorum as the winner.)

Why should these two small states have such outsized influence every time? Consider this: the 122,000 votes cast in the 2012 Iowa GOP caucus is less than the number of votes cast in the race to lead the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in November 2011. The votes cast for that one Fairfax race, plus those for two other contests that year—Henrico County Sheriff and Stafford County Commonwealth's Attorney—exceeded the 249,000 votes cast in the N.H. Republican Primary. (In 2012, President Barack Obama was effectively unopposed for re-nomination so there was negligible interest on the Democratic side).

Playing by rules that favor far less representative states gets Virginia and other more representative states nowhere. Last time, the Old Dominion was one of 11 states voting on March 6, and it received little attention in that mad rush. Indeed, the GOP candidates demonstrated their indifference to the state during the ballot qualification process—despite the huge field that descended on Iowa and New Hampshire four years ago only Mitt Romney and Ron Paul bothered to collect enough valid signatures to end up on the primary ballot.

N.H. and Iowa will not allow this twisted process to end without a fight, and that's why Virginia can't work alone. Ideally, Virginia could take the lead in creating a multi-state coalition to end the undesired special status of those first two states. Politicians in a variety of cash-strapped states would likely see the appeal of taking turns hosting the candidates and the media if such a movement got going. (A group of states cannot be easily ignored or punished, particularly when they work together).

With Virginia helping create a "Nomination Spring" reform, the U.S. could move to a primary schedule determined by lottery or a regional primary system that would give at least one of the 48 states not named N.H. or Iowa a chance—for once—to vote on a full candidate field.

*Stephen J. Farnsworth is professor of political science and international affairs at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, where he directs the university's Center for Leadership and Media Studies. ▣*



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# Mobilizing Our Community: *The Arts Education Balance*

By CASEY POLCZYNSKI

It is lunchtime in Henry County, when twenty-five fourth graders from Campbell Court Elementary, filter into a corner of a busy cafeteria set-up as a make shift art studio. Clad in paint splattered jeans, teaching artist, Kevin Reese, greets students amid the clatter of clanging trays and chattering voices. Reese's hair and personality are reminiscent of the professor from the movie "Back to the Future."

Reese exclaims and then pauses, "There is one rule to making a mobile." Students look among themselves pondering Reese's statement thinking he is talking about touching the art materials or following directions. Reese continues, "Mobiles are made from the bottom up!" Next, students are asked to find their "2 fer", a piece of wire having a shape attached at both ends. Reese enthusiastically blurts out "find the balance point!" A sea of index fingers emerges with "2 fers" identifying "the balance point" as the area along the wire where the equal distribution of

weight is achieved. Wire is bent and re-bent as students learn the manipulation and configuration of mobile making. The energy in the make shift studio increases as students add each successive layer to their "maquettes" or mini-mobiles.

Arts education is the "2 fer" in a balanced education. The Virginia Commission for the Arts provides grant funding for PreK-12 artist residencies like the innovative nationwide school sculpture program "Mobilizing Our Community" created by Reese. Arts in Education grants give students and teachers the opportunity to work with professional artists either in a school setting or through after-school or summer programming. Students who engage in the process of creating art not only learn the hands-on skills related to a specific art form, but also gain essential lifelong experiences that impact their social and intellectual development. Taylor, a 4th grader shared, "I learned that when you get one idea, you can change it into another." Artist residencies are a component in balanced education programs that build supportive, creative environments, in which teachers/staff and artists work together to offer learners new knowledge and experience in the arts.

Kevin Reese's "Mobilizing Our Community" was the first visual arts residency in Martinsville and Henry County that involved four hundred and ninety students from nineteen different schools with additional collaborative support and efforts of local businesses and community organizations. Like other school sculpture programs he has led in schools throughout the country, Reese's residencies result in full sized mobiles designed for public spaces. VCA grantee, Piedmont Arts, located in Martinsville, applied for the Arts in Education grant. Barbara Parker, Piedmont Arts Director of Programs and the project coordinator stated, "Seeing the students work through the design process and then reaching that moment when they understand why and how a mobile does what it does is so exciting." She added, "Even students who begin the project by saying they are not artistic come to realize that creativity isn't necessarily about being a great artist. It's about making something that is uniquely their design."

This past December, one hundred and twenty five students, parents, and community supporters, celebrated the unveiling of the mobiles at the grand opening of a month long show at Piedmont Arts. Dr. Sherri Lewis, principal of Drewry Mason Elementary was in attendance. Dr. Lewis shared her appreciation for VCA grant funding "to reach a broad spectrum of interests and students through the various art forms because arts education enriches the curriculum and motivates students who might otherwise drop out of school. We couldn't do it without the support."

Forty large mobiles ranging from three to sixteen feet were on display and installed throughout the community to all participating schools and businesses. Any remaining mobiles will be available for "adoption." To check the availability of any remaining mobiles or to learn more about the project, contact Piedmont Arts at [www.piedmontarts.org](http://www.piedmontarts.org).

In 2014, The Virginia Commission for the Arts awarded twenty-five Arts in Education grants to communities large and small throughout the Commonwealth. Applicant for the 2015 AIE grants may apply to the Commission for funds up to \$10,000 and must secure a one-to-one match for the requested amount. VCA's mission is to support artistic excellence and encourage growth in artistic quality for the benefit of all Virginians. For more information visit the Commission's website at [www.arts.virginia.gov](http://www.arts.virginia.gov).

*Dr. Casey Polczynski is the Arts in Education Coordinator for the Virginia Commission for the Arts. [V]*



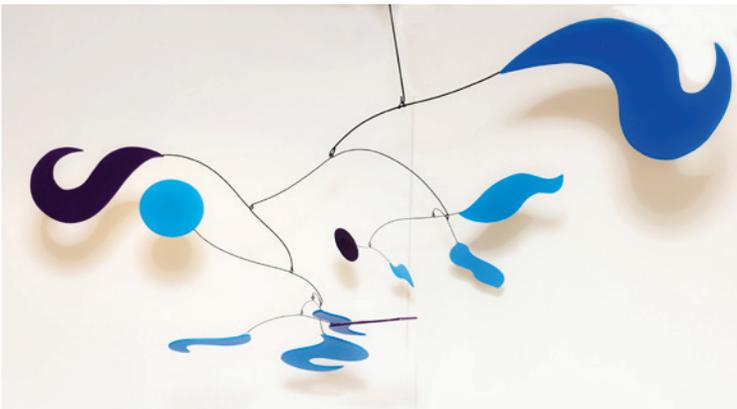
A sample of the mobiles made by the students during the workshop.



Kevin Reese, teaching artist and enthusiastic motivator.



One of the participants finally found her own piece of art on display.



A mobile made by one of the students during the workshop.

## Switchin in Da Kitchen By BONNIE ATWOOD

An idea started to simmer at the Virginia Capitol when Senate Doorkeeper Ida Annette Minor Ward struck up a conversation with lobbyist David L. Bailey about pies.

“I have always, throughout my childhood, loved sweet potato pie,” said Bailey. “They’re hard to find—the ones that were made the way I remember them.”

That was the only ingredient Ward needed to cook up a great idea. She said, “Oh, you’ve got to get my mother’s recipe!”

Ward did something even better than passing along the recipe. She baked a pie, and dropped it off to Bailey. His reaction was like the icing on the cake.

“It was just the same pie that I remember!” he exclaimed.

Encouraged by his hunger for more, Ward carefully combined a 635-page cookbook: “Switchin in Da Kitchen with Mama ‘Nem,” a collection of recipes inspired by Ward’s mother, Ida B. Minor, who is Mama, a culinary queen of Southern cuisine. The book also contains mouthwatering recipes from “Nem,” Mrs. Ida’s sisters and friends, and also recipes from other sources.

What comes out of the book, piping hot, are such delights as Mrs. Ida’s Old Fashioned Christmas Fruitcake, Aunt Gertie’s Pineapple Pie, Aunt Nolie’s Oven-Baked Wrinkle Steaks (also known as chitterlings), Miller and Rhoads-Style Turkey Pot



Pie, Thelma Carter’s Sweet Potato Casserole, Lucille’s Spinach Fried Rice, Kim’s Delicious Broiled Asparagus, Grandma’s Corn Pudding, Mrs. Smith’s Old-Fashioned Potato Salad, and Choir Rehearsal Fried Cabbage.

And that’s just a taste! There are many more recipes. There are helpful cooking points, from how to freeze soups into convenient single servings, to how to use Coca-Cola to make your ham moister. You’ve also got preplanned menus, including those for picky children, who will love Bologna Cheese Rolls, Tuna Cakes, and Pasta Wheels and Cheese. You’ve got Parent Points, including Old Timey Table Manners and Crafts. You’ve got Kitchen Weights and Measures, and Advice on canning and cleaning. I bet you didn’t know you could use vodka to remove bandages, or that you could use bubble bath to wash your car. Even if you are a hesitant cook, we guarantee you will like Chapter 7, which gives a Spotlight on Three of the Richmond Area’s Premier Southern Cooking Restaurants, including store hours, favorite recipes, and even noise levels.

“Switchin in Da Kitchen with Mama ‘Nem” captures a priceless tradition of Southern cooking and family bonds. It is a beautiful tribute to lives well lived.

*Bonnie Atwood, a freelance writer with Tall Poppies Freelance Writing LLC, is the winner of 24 national and state writing awards, and represents legislative clients with David Bailey Associates. She can be reached at [BonAtwood@verizon.net](mailto:BonAtwood@verizon.net).* [V]

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**GENERATED**

*\$21.5 billion*  
**IN VISITOR SPENDING**

**SUPPORTED**

*213,000 jobs*

**PROVIDED**

*\$1.42 billion*  
**IN STATE AND LOCAL TAXES**

**TOURISM IS THE**

*5th Largest*

**EMPLOYER IN VIRGINIA**



## Cleveland Christmas

By MICHELLE BLALOCK

Lights, Camera, Action is typically how the saying goes. But a Virginia Beach Company specializes over the holidays on darkness so Christmas lights can shine. Intelligent Illuminations crossed the Virginia border all the way to Ohio to ensure extra brightness for a spectacular downtown Cleveland Holiday Lighting show known as Winterfest. For the first time, Cleveland Public Power used the Intelligent Light Unit Monitoring System called ILUMS to turn off streetlights near Winterfest. Crowds of thousands were treated to an extravagantly lit celebration without the interference or glare from street lights. James A. Ferguson Chief of the Cleveland Public Power Bureau of Street Lighting says: “Winterfest was scheduled during our off hours. The use of the ILUMS Smart Photocell allowed us to participate and positively impact the event by prescheduling the photo cell to turn off and back on automatically using preset times. The lights went out for the Christmas tree lighting and fireworks and we scheduled lights to turn on just after the fireworks were scheduled to end. Typically this scope would have required having crew involvement on off hours, which can become costly.”

Intelligent Illuminations CEO Larry Williams and Virginia native says: “I’m excited to see our technology used in such a specific niche market. It makes my Christmas even brighter knowing that providing darkness allows for better illumination of a visual focal point!”

Everything from the stage lights, to the Christmas tree and nighttime fireworks benefit from the use of ILUMS. At the end of the celebration all street lights were restored to the proper setting so the crowd could exit the area safely. “I thought it was a great opportunity to test the available features offered by ILUMS. It allowed the ceremonial lighting and fireworks to be enjoyed much more. Folks were able to focus on the event without overbearing ambient light,” Ferguson says.

Although a first for Cleveland, ILUMS has been controlling street lights in the Virginia area for the holidays since 2013. Norfolk Botanical Garden (NBG) continues to use ILUMS to enhance their Dominion Garden of Lights celebration each year between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. As you enter NBG, the street lights that would typically interfere with the beauty of the holiday lights remain off during the hours of the show. This year NBG also used ILUMS to control the street lights for runners going through the garden for the 2015 Fun Run.

Cathy Fitzgerald Director of Donor Relations for Norfolk Botanical Garden says: “For NBG to be able to have control of the street lights gave our runners a more enhanced experience for our first fundraiser of the year.”

Hundreds of runners and their families enjoyed the Dominion Garden of Lights annual light show extravaganza while starting off the New Year on the right foot—and the left with the perfect amount of lights for safety!





In addition to spreading holiday cheer, ILUMS patented technology and retro-fit system equips customers with the ability to:

- Monitor and control individual luminaires
- Comply with lighting regulations and standards
- Generate significant savings and assess on-going efficiencies
- Protect infrastructure investments
- Support existing and future infrastructure and technology upgrades, including LED conversions
- Create greener communities through reduced energy consumption

Intelligent Illuminations Inc. is the industry leader and only provider of a secure, point-to-point wireless solution for smart roadway and area lighting control and monitoring. [i]



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# Professional School Counseling

By **BRETT WELCH**

When talking with our Virginia Senators and Delegates, we often hear two key and apropos questions: what role do school counselors play in our schools and what do we need to do our jobs more effectively? Professional school counselors are in every school level (Elementary, Middle and High) wearing professional hats of all shapes, colors and sizes! First and foremost, we are mental health professionals and licensed educators trained in school counseling with unique qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. We collaborate with school stakeholders to advocate for students to feel safe, ensure equity and access to educational rigor, and encourage the leader inside each of them to pursue what lies beyond K-12 education. We are often the hearts and the historians of the schools, as we work with multiple children in a family, becoming the bridge between home and school and advocate for the whole child. We have the unique opportunity to look at the big picture for each student, as we are typically his/her counselor over multiple years, and parents rely on us to be their voices when they cannot be present. Our goal and mandate is to address the needs of all students through prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program. [Adapted from *VSCA Professional School Counseling Program Manual*, (VSCA, 2008)] Unfortunately, there are many other responsibilities outside of these essential roles that also fall to the counselor, though what those responsibilities are differ in each school building, i.e. lunch duties, state testing

coordination, special education meetings, Response to Intervention, committees, volunteer coordinator, etc. Though each of these tasks is important and necessary, and every faculty member must contribute so that each school runs effectively, too many of these hats being stacked upon the counselors' heads inhibit them from doing the necessary and crucial work of running comprehensive school counseling programs from which students directly benefit. Our current Virginia standard of accreditation §8VAC 20-131-240 is for school counselors to spend a minimum of 60% of our time to counseling of students, though the national standard is a minimum of 80%. One thing school counselors need to do our jobs more effectively is to raise this state bar legislatively so that school counselors can spend 80% or more of their time working with students to help them be successful academically and emotionally so that they can prepare for and successfully pursue their future education and career opportunities. We so value the relationship we have with our legislators taking the time to hear from and listen to those with boots on the ground every day in our schools and the hearts and voices of the students foremost in mind. Thank you for asking those questions and valuing our responses. Thank you for working and advocating for Virginia's kids. Know that we, as school counselors, strive to do the same with passion and perseverance each and every day to help each student reach high and succeed.

*Ms. Brett Welch, MA is a professional school counselor and VSCA President-Elect. [V]*

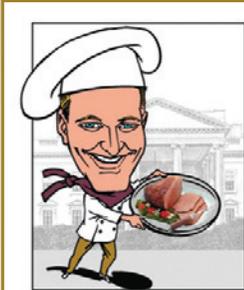
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## Partnerships Help Students Chase Big Dreams

By THOMAS BREWSTER

A panel tasked with eliminating unfunded state mandates recommends that we stop requiring our public school students to create career and college plans. With respect to the panel, that idea is harmful to our children and their future. Two out of every three jobs available in Virginia will require a college credential before the end of the decade. That is the reality into which our students will graduate.

Instead of eliminating career and college planning, we should expand it and we can with some creative partnerships.

We challenge our students to dream big as they work through Pulaski County Public Schools. Thanks to our partnership with New River Community College, our students have more tools than ever before to pursue those dreams. Further, that collaboration ensures that the material we teach our young people is applicable to the careers available in a rapidly changing economy.

Innovative programs within that partnership are helping students connect their studies directly to good-paying jobs and even earn an associate's degree, sub-associate's credential or even a bachelor's degree from a university. Perhaps the best part is the access our students have to an expert that can help them chart the way, a community college Career Coach.

Career Coaches are community college employees who work in our public high schools. They help students create career and college plans, often helping families understand just how accessible and affordable college can be. They supplement what our school counselors can provide.

"Often guidance counselors are busy assisting students with academic and personal needs, leaving little time to assist them with exploring their academic and career options," said Pulaski County High School lead Guidance Counselor, Chrissi Vest. "There's not

See *Partnerships*, continued on page 30



Kathy Kleppin with student Hannah Gray discussing career plans.

# Today's Career and Technical Education By DR. BRENDA D. LONG

Currently, what is career and technical education (CTE)? It is a sequence of cutting-edge, rigorous, and relevant programs that prepare youth and adults for high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers. It also addresses the goal of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Health Science Academies that are designed to expand options for students to acquire literacy and other critical skills in these fields.



Nationally, 94 percent of high school students participate in CTE programs. In the 134 school divisions in Virginia, during the 2012-2013 school year, 576,454 secondary students enrolled in one or more CTE courses and approximately 46 percent of high school graduates completed two or more CTE courses, thus becoming a CTE "completer." In addition, 48 percent of students receiving an Advanced Studies Diploma also enrolled in one or more CTE classes.

During the 2013-2014 school year, 103,599 CTE students earned industry credentials (up from 67,035 credentials earned in the previous school year). Education and nationally recognized industry credentials are important milestones for many high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers. Both at the secondary and postsecondary levels, students can earn credentials that verify skill mastery, educational attainment, and

## Partnerships from page 29

enough hours in the day to meet the needs of every student. The Career Coach steps in and compliments our work," Vest states.

Here in Pulaski County, our Career Coach is part of our team that provides a comprehensive network of support for students.

"Many of my students are potential first generation college students, so it's important for me to assist students on how to navigate the transition from high school to workforce or higher education opportunities," said Kathy Kleppin, the Career Coach serving PCHS.

Our Career Coach begins each year by creating awareness about the services she provides and building relationships with students and families. She uses technology to keep in constant touch and she uses tools like the Virginia Education Wizard, a free online career education resource developed by Virginia's Community Colleges. The Wizard allows students to create a profile to explore careers that connect with their interests and abilities, the education necessary to access those careers and even how to pay for that pursuit.

Career Coaches also help our teachers integrate career education concepts throughout their classes by providing valuable professional development, resources, and technical assistance. This strategic focus on career education awareness is not just for our students, but it involves our school leaders, teachers, counselors, staff members, families, and other community partners. It is important that we are all aware of the abundant current and future career opportunities that exist for our students.

We are not alone when it comes to understanding the value of these Career Coaches.

The State Superintendent of Louisiana, John White, recently asked a high school counselor about the frequency in which she met with students to discuss their careers, goals and options. To his amazement, the counselor answered that she might typically meet with a student one time over the course of four years for career counseling services. White described the encounter as a "humbling experience" and demanded immediate changes, namely adopting the Career Coach model created here in Virginia.

Our partnership with the community college provides a link for students and families to the resources they need to see beyond high school. This college and career focus provides an achievable transition from their K-12 experience.

the ability to perform a task or operation. All of these factors convey real economic benefits in the workforce by allowing employers to determine the skill or education level of applicants.

What does this mean? Data supports CTE's role in preparing students to become career ready and college ready. (*For additional data, review the Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education's [VACTE] CTE Fact Sheet at [www.vacte.net](http://www.vacte.net).*) Ensuring that students are career and college ready has become critical in preparing them for a competitive workforce throughout their careers. Usually, college readiness discussions are limited to academics, but career readiness requires a rigorous blend of academic, technical, and employability skills. CTE already has the foundation for strengthening these skills and offers this blend through 16 Career Clusters, as well as through the Workplace Readiness Skills Examination.

Secondary schools in Virginia provide students with an opportunity to build a strong foundation in academic, technical, and employability skills to help them prepare for their futures. But most will need postsecondary education (a one- or two-year certificate program, a four-year college, or beyond). CTE programs provide students with the opportunity to be a step ahead and armed with an industry credential that enhances these three skills.

So what is CTE today? CTE integrates, with academics, a rigorous and relevant curriculum, fulfills employer needs in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand areas, and prepares students to be career ready and college ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills, and technical skills. Whether it is secondary students who need secondary job skills to transition into the workplace, employees who need to upgrade skills, adults who need to acquire new skills, or college graduates who want enhanced technical skills, all are served by Career and Technical Education programs.

For additional information, visit [www.vacte.net](http://www.vacte.net).

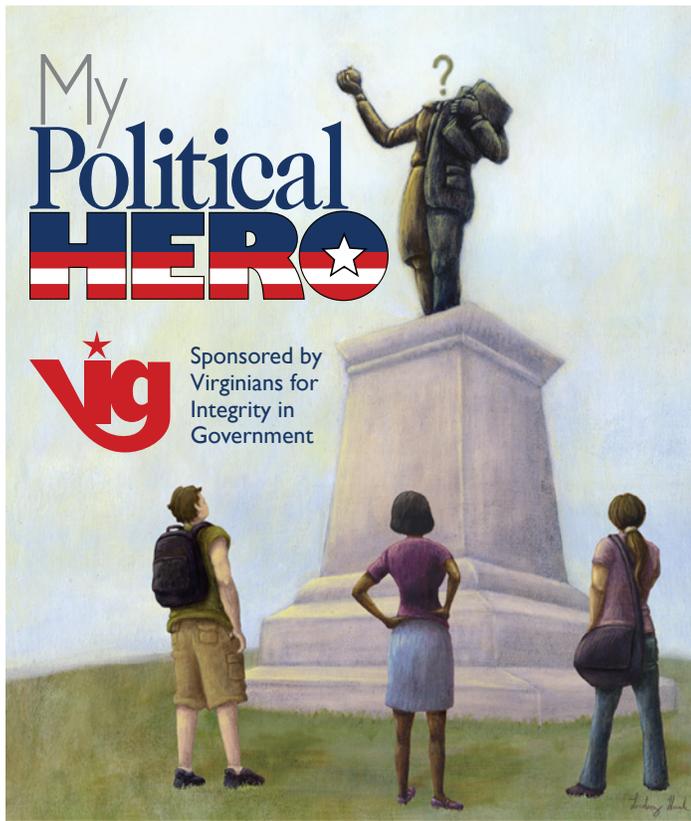
*Dr. Brenda D. Long is the Executive Director of the Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education and has more than 30 years of experience in CTE as a classroom teacher and administrator. ▣*



Students need a goal beyond high school graduation. We all recognize that merely improving our graduation rate is not enough; we have to prepare our students to be college and workforce ready.

Jamie Escalante was right when he said that students rise to the level of expectations set for them by the adults in their lives. If we fail to provide them with high expectations and the necessary resources to dream big, then we fail to provide them with the benefit of a true education. Increasingly, Career Coaches are essential to helping us deliver that benefit.

*Dr. Thomas Brewster is the superintendent of Pulaski County Public Schools. Dr. Brewster is a member of the Virginia State Board for Community Colleges. He can be reached at [tbrewster@me.com](mailto:tbrewster@me.com) or by calling 276-970-1884. ▣*



## Honor Your Heroes! Virginia Student Essay Scholarship Contest

Virginians for Integrity in Government (VIG), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, announces a 2015 **My Political Hero Essay Contest** for high school students. David Bailey, a veteran lobbyist and member of the Board of VIG developed the contest to challenge and encourage Virginia high school students to pay tribute to their living political heroes and heroines. The winner of the contest will receive a \$2,000 post-secondary scholarship. VIG will also award \$1,000 scholarships. The essays will be printed in *Virginia Capitol Connections Quarterly Magazine*.

The “heroes” can be elected officials, teachers, relatives, or any other citizens. They must be living Virginia residents.

VIG seeks to shed a more positive light on political figures and activists—the same light that is often reserved for scandal. Many political heroes and excellent public servants work in state legislatures, schools, neighborhoods, and ordinary households. The **My Political Hero** essay contest provides an avenue in which to recognize living influential persons.

### Contest Rules

**1.** All materials submitted become the property of **VIG**, and cannot be returned. **2.** Entries must be original and previously unpublished. **3.** This contest is open to residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia only. Entrants must be currently enrolled as high school students in Virginia public schools, Virginia private schools or Virginia home schools. **4.** The “heroes” of the essays may be women or men. They must be Virginians—that is, they must have been born in Virginia, or currently reside in Virginia, or have given significant public service to the Commonwealth of Virginia. They must be living as of the date the essay is submitted. **5.** Essays must be typed and submitted via email to [mypoliticalhero@capitol-square.com](mailto:mypoliticalhero@capitol-square.com) or by mail to **VIG Essays** 1001 East Broad Street • Suite 215 • Richmond, VA 23219. They must be no longer than 800 words in length. They must be clearly labeled with the entrant’s name, school, and home address. **6.** All entries must be received by May 1. **7.** Entries will be judged equally on the basis of

merit by a selection committee that will look for: Originality • Clear reasoning • Good writing. The decisions of the judges are final. **8.** VIG has the right to edit and publish entries as the editors of *Virginia Capitol Connections Quarterly Magazine* deem fit both in print and on the Web. **9.** The winner, and his or her parent or legal guardian, agree to the use of the winner’s name, and entries in any form for publicity or trade purposes by VIG, without additional compensation. **10.** There are no substitutions of prizes offered. **11.** Winner will be announced in a future issue of *Virginia Capitol Connections Quarterly Magazine*. **12.** The winner will be notified by mail and announced no later than June 1st. **13.** The first prize is \$2,000 to be sent to a post-secondary school or college of the winner’s choice, upon his or her admission to that school. An unspecified number of runners up will be selected from the entries.

**All entries must be received by May 1.**

### Pickle Ball



As the local ambassadors for pickle ball in Richmond and Chesterfield, we enjoyed Charlie Todd’s article last quarter, entitled “Pickle Ball and Politics.” Although quite funny, what he says is largely the truth. However, I will add one more thing. Pickle Ball is a team building experience. We would love to set up a demonstration and encourage Republicans, Democrats and Independents to play this game while working on some issues they have in common. Just let us know when and where... we will be there.

### Poor Mans Dinner



Renae Mitchell Chamber attorney, Raquel Lyons Chamber attorney, Elle Lyons, Marty Hall President Twin County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Erin Dehart Bland County Commonwealth Attorney, Senator Ben Chafin and Delegate Buddy Fowler at the 2014 Poor Mans Dinner—Galax Old Time Fiddlers Convention. This years dinner will be on Aug. 8, 2015. Call 276.236.2184 for information.

Dave and Linda Scott, USA Pickleball Ambassadors for Chesterfield/Richmond, District Ambassadors for the Mid-Atlantic States, [www.GreaterRichmondPickleball.com](http://www.GreaterRichmondPickleball.com).

## In Memoriam

# Former State Delegate Vince Callahan—

## *A Man for All Seasons*

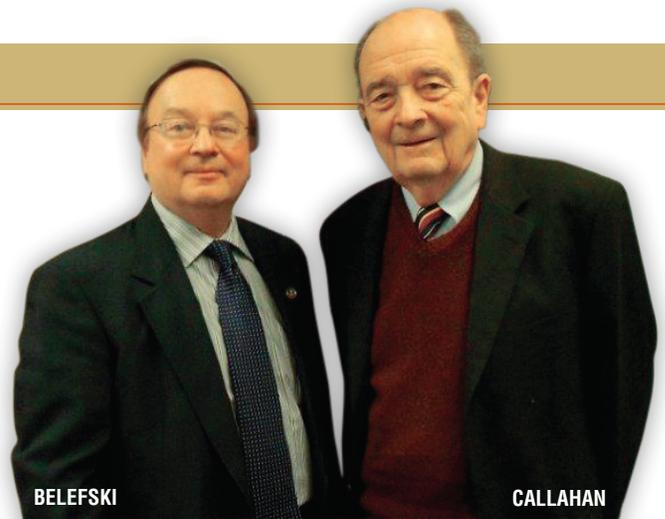
By MICHAEL E. BELEFSKI

Vince Callahan, who died last September, left an indelible mark of achievement in his forty years as a state delegate from 1968-2008. His political career began by a run for lieutenant governor in 1965 with a GOP ticket led by Linwood Holton. Both men would not win that year but Vince would win a House seat in 1967 and Linwood would win the governorship in 1969.

As the longest serving Republican and the second-longest-serving member of the House that Jefferson built you have to admire Vince when you listened to his many historical recollections of the institution that told us of a statesman who had a devotion to history and his remarkable place in Virginia politics as he first entered the House of Delegates among just 14 other Republican members.

It was during Vince's campaign for U.S. Congress in 1976 that I first met him as a young political consultant. Taking a poll of voters in early October of that year, we found out that he would lose the election to then Congressman Joe Fisher. After spending a considerable amount of money on radio and print ads, we took another poll of voters in mid-October that showed an increase in name recognition but no movement in a head-to-head contest. From this unsuccessful congressional campaign, Vince decided to continue his long political career in the House of Delegates.

In 1982, House GOP members selected Callahan as minority leader. In 1998, he became Co-Chairman of the Appropriations Committee under a power-sharing agreement with the Democrats, who controlled half the chamber's seats. Two years later, when Republicans gained an outright majority, he became its first Republican Chairman in Virginia history. Vince told me very early on that "once this humble Irishman had the opportunity to meet and greet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, II on our soil for the 400th Anniversary of the Jamestown settlement, he would retire" before the next election cycle. The Queen visited the General Assembly in 2007 and Vince kept his word.



Vince worked hard to form bipartisan consensus on the budget among the members of House Appropriations Committee and to ensure the AAA Bond rating that the Commonwealth covets in today's financial markets.

A sign "The Buck Stops Here" on his desk said it all. As he told me and others, he brought "home the bacon to NOVA more than anyone else."

As Appropriations Chairman, he steered tens of millions dollars to projects in Northern Virginia, including among other worthy projects as establishing Georgetown Pike as a scenic byway, establishing the Dulles Toll Road, buildings at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College and educational programs at the Wolf Trap for the Performing Arts Center.

Vince knew his 34th District well enough to be re-elected 20 times in General Elections and winning Republican primaries when challenged within his own party. His leadership style will be sorely missed, but his memory will remain as among one of the most dedicated members of the General Assembly who put people first above party politics to reach a consensus for the good of the Commonwealth so that future generations will benefit from the positive work of a kind and respected Virginia statesman.

*Michael E. Belefski is President of CPC CORPORATION, a Communications and Marketing Firm specializing in Performance Management Analysis in Business, Law and Political Systems. He can be contacted at [cpccorp@verizon.net](mailto:cpccorp@verizon.net).*

## Virginia's Dr. Education Bill Boshers

By DR. BOB HOLSWORTH

The sudden passing of our colleague Bill Boshers in December was a terribly sad moment. His death is a great loss for his family, for our community and the Commonwealth. A man of unwavering loyalty to his faith, his family and his friends, his life mattered in every way that was important.

Bill began his career as teacher and never stopped being one. He taught literature at Tucker High School, public policy at VCU, and Sunday School at Fairmount Christian, the church he loved. Bill's calling extended far beyond the classroom. His weekly television editorials on educational issues, for example, was his way of engaging the entire community on the issues to which he devoted his life. You couldn't go to lunch with Bill without another patron or a member of the wait-staff stopping by to discuss what they watched on the weekend.

Like all great teachers, it was Bill's wisdom that people sought, not just his content area expertise. Students at every level wanted to discuss their dreams and life plans with him. Former students who might have made a bad choice came

to him to talk about getting their life back on track. Parents called him to obtain his advice about the best educational choices for their children. Former colleagues consulted him on their career options. And prospective Governors, from both parties, asked for his advice on their education platforms before they published them for public consumption.

Bill's skill as a teacher made him a natural leader. I always thought that he had become Virginia's unofficial Educator-in-Chief. He served as Superintendent of the region's two largest school system, Chesterfield and Henrico. Committed to choice within the public school system, he started a number of specialty centers that were extraordinarily popular with students and parents.

He served as state Superintendent of Schools under Governor Allen and was instrumental in establishing and implementing quality standards that placed Virginia in the forefront of educational reform.

And as Dean of the School of Education at VCU, Bill focused on how universities could best meet the needs of teachers and administrators who working in the K-12 system.



# Former Member of Congress Herb Harris

By CHARLIE NANCE



When former U.S. Representative Herbert E. Harris II (D-8th), was elected in the post-Watergate tide of 1975, he was different kind of congressman from Virginia.

Like his colleague Joe Fisher from Arlington, Herb Harris defeated an incumbent Republican in a wave election. He had also risen to political prominence, not the General Assembly, but through his leadership in area civic associations and the PTA, working with fellow citizens to



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build the schools and infrastructure needed to accommodate the area's explosive growth.

Herb entered local government as Mt. Vernon district supervisor in Fairfax County in 1968, part of a civic reform campaign that was fueled, in part, by the indictment of several members of the prior county Board of Supervisors on corruption charges.

Northern Virginia politics was new and different in Herb's early campaigns, and was a source of great mystery to downstate reporters, voters and candidates. Herb's Mt. Vernon neighbor, Charley McDowell, described it to readers of the Times-Dispatch as a land of "come-heres", where politics was run not by traditional office holders and political bosses but by ladies (and men) in tennis shoes.

What was most impressive about Bill's leadership skills was how he so effortlessly bridged the partisan divide. A conservative in disposition and values, Bill worked equally well with Democrats and Republicans, even at times when partisan spirits were rampant. It could be said that Bill was one of those rare people who knew how to "cross the aisle." But the truth was that Bill didn't see the aisle. He only saw the kids and the future that they could have.

As impressive as Bill Boshers' accomplishments as a teacher and a leader were, there was yet another quality that set him aside and made him one of the extraordinary individuals that we had ever met. Bill had the unique ability to touch the lives of everyone with whom he came into contact in a memorable way. We remember the support and hugs he gave us at a difficult time; how he diffused an intense conflict with his self-deprecating humor; and how he provided the encouragement that someone needed to achieve a goal that they were unsure they could reach.

He was truly a magnificent man. We were all graced to have been lifted up by him.

Our prayers and thoughts are with his wife JoAnne, his family, and his seven wonderful granddaughters.

Robert D. Holsworth, Ph. D. Chairman,  
GRASP Board of Directors Managing Principal, DecideSmart. 

Herb and his supporters were impatient and in a hurry. (They still are.) In Herb's political world, you didn't wait to get "the nod" or be anointed or invited to enter politics. You seized the opportunity and drew people to you who shared a vision for the kind of community you could become. As Herb's grandson reminded us in a moving eulogy recently, Herb believed you shared your story with others and worked for them and with them until they made it their story, too.

In Congress from 1975-1981, Herb Harris increased funding for Metro, expanded the Manassas National Battlefield Park, worked for the immigration of Soviet Jews, stopped efforts to impose a DC "commuter" tax on Virginians, fought for Federal workers and created the Quantico National Veterans Cemetery (where he was buried on January 5).

But more importantly, he made his community and his friends believe that, working together, they could make things better. In his personal office in the Longworth Building, Herb always kept a small Miro print of Don Quixote, reminding him—and us—that decency and honor can change the world.

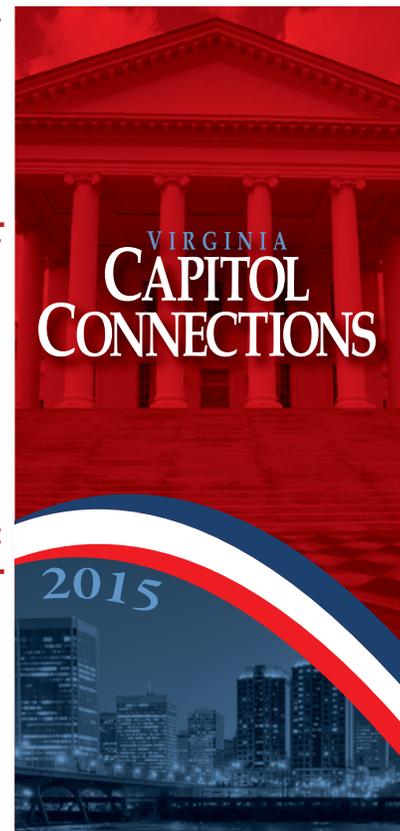
His Jesuit education and strong Catholic faith informed everything Herb Harris did in politics, and in life. After service as a Navy officer in World War II, Herb came to Washington to study law at Georgetown. There his post-war classmates included John Dingell (who retired Congress in January as its longest serving member), Father Bob Drinan (who served with Herb on the House Judiciary Committee), and his friend and fellow Mt. Vernon resident, former State Senator Joseph V. Gartlan.

After law school, Herb and his wife Nancy made their home in an apartment in Prince George's County, Maryland. One Sunday, they saw an ad for new homes in the Washington Port, and ventured across the Wilson Bridge to check out a new neighborhood in southern Fairfax County.

I've often thought that if the Harrises had bought their first house on the other side of the river, Herb would have been U.S. senator from Maryland. But Virginia would be poorer for the experience.

*Charlie Nance is a Richmond lawyer and a former elected member of the Richmond Public School Board. He was a legislative assistant to Congressman Harris from 1975-1979, leaving periodically to work on political campaigns. *

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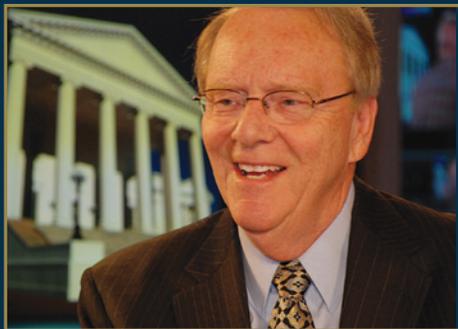
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