

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of the
Virginia Association of Counties

December 15, 2008



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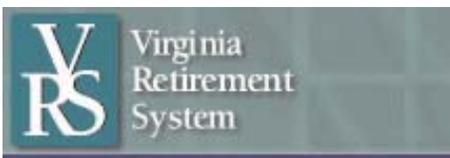


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VRS funds hit by economic turmoil

By Dean Lynch
dlynch@vaco.org



Reports generated by staff for the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission indicate the value of the VRS (Virginia Retirement System) trust fund has dipped to \$40.6 billion. The Commission heard on Dec. 8 that the fund's value was \$59.4 billion in September 2007, which means that the trust fund has lost about 32 percent of its value in the last 14 months. The market value of the fund declined 20 percent from July 1 to Oct. 31, 2008.

The drop in investment earnings is important because 70 percent of retirement benefit costs have been funded through these earnings. Other costs not funded through investments are funded through contribution rates.

Local and state governments can expect the economic downturn to lead to higher retirement contribution rates in the future, although VRS projects that the impact on employer contribution rates will be small in the near term. That is partly due to the five-year smoothing technique used by the VRS actuary, in which only 20 percent of the losses or gains are recognized each year.

Investment returns are not the only factors affecting the VRS trust fund; benefit increases do as well. In the 2007

Counties urged to adopt VACO's state budget resolution

Declaration seeks to partner with the governor and the General Assembly

By Mike Edwards
medwards@vaco.org

Virginia's 95 counties are urged to adopt VACO's model resolution regarding the state budget troubles. The resolution seeks to partner with the Commonwealth in addressing the 2009-2010 state budget shortfall approaching \$3 billion, and offers specific state budget and revenue recommendations to the governor and the Virginia General Assembly.

Counties are urged to adopt the resolution and communicate their actions to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine and legislators.

The 2009 legislative session is scheduled to convene on Wednesday, Jan. 14. VACO is asking counties to adopt the resolution in advance of 2009 VACO-VML Legislative Day, Thursday, Feb. 5. The House and Senate will adopt their respective budgets soon after Legislative Day.

The resolution and its recommendations are the byproduct of VACO's Overarching 2009 Priority Policy statement regarding State and Local Fiscal Sustainability. The statement is included in VACO's 2009 Legislative Program. Printed copies of VACO's 2009 legislative priority policy statements soon will be mailed to each county, the governor and 140 legislators.

The statement and resolution include five specific budget and revenue recommendations, which intended to i) help the state effectively resolve the state budget shortfall and ii) mitigate the impact of the shortfall on Virginia's counties.

VACO recognizes that some counties will use the list of recommendations as a "menu," choosing to adopt some but not all five. The VACO model is a template; counties are encouraged to tailor their resolutions to address specific local concerns.

Summary of VACO's budget and revenue recommendations for the 2009 legislative session to the Governor and Virginia General Assembly:

-Budget and appropriate sufficient withdrawals from the state's Revenue Stabilization Fund ("Rainy Day Fund") to help offset necessary state budget

THE BUDGET



Retiree Health Care Solution: A Win-Win for Counties and Retirees



How many times have you heard it? County employees wondering how they will ever afford the cost of health care after they leave county employment. Rising medical costs, pharmaceutical costs and long-term care outlays frighten even the most

well-invested county employees.

Those are only one set of concerns. Those counties that offer retiree health care benefits are now required by the Government Accounting Standards Board to report the value of those benefits in their financial statements. This liability, previously not required to be reported, could mean that county budgets will not balance.

NACo and Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) offer a solution that provides a win-win for county employees and counties alike.

The NACo Post Employment Health Plan (PEHP) provides employees with an employer-funded, tax-free benefit that provides resources to employees after they leave county employment. The employer funds the contributions over the employees' working careers during collective bargaining or through noncollective bargaining wage and benefit changes. The funds are invested and earnings accumulate tax free for the purpose of reimbursing medical expenses after employment.

The employer has incentives to provide the benefit, since the contribution is not subject to FICA taxes, assists in reducing recognized unfunded FICA tax liabilities for compensated absences, and may reduce pension contributions. The plans may be funded as part of an annual wage increase, through the use of funds set aside for compensated time off at termination, and through other resources identified by the employer.

The plan allows for two employer funding options: a universal reimbursement account, through which an equal dollar contribution is made for each employee (e.g., \$25 per pay period per employee); or an insurance premium reimbursement account, through which an equal percentage contribution is made for each employee (e.g., one percent of employee salary). The employer pays no fees or charges in the program. Each employee pays an annual administrative fee and an asset management fee.

The employees direct the investment of the funds within their individual accounts. Among other funds available through the plan, PEHP offers five asset allocation funds ranging from an aggressive fund to a conservative fund. Employees select the fund that matches their comfort level for investment risk. All accumulated funds and earnings are available tax-free to the employee upon separation from employment for use in paying medical expenses.

This dynamic program enables counties to establish a low-cost, turnkey employee benefit. It is available for collectively bargained and non-bargained employees. It reduces FICA, pension and unfunded liabilities for the employer, while providing employees with a post-employment health benefit. It also provides an incentive for the employee to accumulate sick leave benefits, rather than use them indiscriminately. Clearly, the PEHP is a "win-win" solution for counties and county employees.

(For more information, or to schedule a consultation, contact the NACo Financial Services Center at 202/942-4270, or your Nationwide representative.) (The Financial Services column was written by Lisa Cole, Director of the NACo Financial Services Corporation.)

Account participant profile not participating in PEHP

County employee
Annual income earnings: \$40,000
Compensated time off equals: \$28,710, payable upon termination or retirement
Compensated time accrued: \$28,710

Taxes due:
Federal: 28% -\$8,038
State: 6.93% -\$1,989
FICA: 7.65% -\$2,196
Subtotal: \$16,487 (subtotal of balance of compensated time accrued)

Investment on earnings @6% for 16 mos.: + \$989
Tax on earnings @28%: - \$277
Post-termination health care costs (\$350 month for 16mo): - \$5,600
Remaining balance: \$11,599 (final balance of compensated time accrued)

Account participant profile participating in PEHP

County employee
Annual income earnings: \$40,000
Compensated time off equals: \$28,710, payable upon termination or retirement
Compensated time accrued: \$28,710

Taxes due: 0
Investment on earnings @6% (tax-free): + 1,723

Post-termination health-care costs (\$350 month/16mos.): - \$5,600
Remaining balance: \$24,833
Remaining balance: \$24,833 Win for County Employee
County FICA tax savings: \$2,196
Win for County

Commission on Climate Change adopts final report

By Larry Land
lland@vaco.org

The final report by the Governor's Commission on Climate Change has many ambitious recommendations. The report was adopted during the 43 member Commission's 10th (and final) meeting on Dec. 4.

Some recommendations in the report would significantly change the way Virginia's electrical utilities operate.

Others would alter the state/local framework for regulating development and land use. And with approximately one third of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Virginia attributable to moving vehicles powered by fossil fuels, the report also recommends important reforms to Virginia's transportation system.

Several of the report's recommendations seem to bear a limited relationship with reducing GHG emissions; like the one, for example, that emphasizes the need to continue state funding of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's agricultural best management cost-share program.

Another recommendation suggests that the state establish a goal of achieving a 50 percent diversion rate of solid waste from sanitary landfills.

The report's broad span of 65 recommendations and 30 findings reflects the diverse backgrounds and interests of Commission members.

There were representatives from the utilities, manufacturing interests, transportation, the environmental community, and academic institutions. There were seven members of the General Assembly: Delegates Joe Bouchard, David Bulova, Joe May, Kenneth Plum; and Senators Ralph Northam, Creigh Deeds, and Frank Wagner. There were two local officials: Penelope Gross of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Ron Rordam, Mayor of Blacksburg. Also Paul Ferguson, former member of the

Arlington County Board, served on the Commission. The Commission was chaired by Secretary of Natural Resources, Preston Bryant.

For local governments, one of the report's key findings states that "local governments are the Commonwealth's critical partners in both reducing the level of GHGs and addressing the impact of climate change. Localities have the authority over land use, zoning, and development decisions; the maintenance and operation of local infrastructure and vehicle fleets; and enforcement of building codes. The response to climate change will be most effective if the mechanisms that are in place properly coordinate between state and local levels of government."

Invoking VACo's name, there is a related recommendation of critical importance stating that:

"Local governments are on the front lines of many climate change adaptation approaches and may not have the authorities needed to put those in place. The General Assembly should, with the assistance of the Virginia Municipal League (VML) and the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), undertake a review of legal authorities of local governments, and enact enabling authority that is needed."

Excerpts of other key findings and recommendations potentially with the most direct impacts upon local governments are listed below. (A copy of the full report and a full list of Commission members are available at www.deq.state.va.us/info/climatechange.html.)

Key findings

- * Sea level rise is a major concern for coastal Virginia.
- * Climate changes such as sea level rise pose serious and growing threats to Virginia's roads, railways, ports, utility



systems and other critical infrastructure.

- * It is also important to make sure that federal flood insurance programs discourage development in sensitive coastal areas.
- * Climate change will have a significant impact on Virginia's ecosystems. At varying rates, vegetation ranges are

moving from current locations to higher altitudes and latitudes. The effect of this will be that suitable habitat for some species will decline, other species will be extirpated, and others will become extinct.

- * Virginia's agriculture and forestry industries, as well as commercial and sport fishing industries and park land, will be impacted by climate change.
- * Virginia's forestlands sequester approximately 23 million metric tons of CO2 per year. Unless current land conversion trends are reversed, however, this number will decline every year, as Virginia loses 27,000 acres of forestland annually to development.
- * The three largest sources of GHG emissions in Virginia are electricity generation, transportation, and non-utility uses of fuel in industrial, commercial, and residential facilities.
- * According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, annual per capita energy consumption in Virginia (345 million BTU/capita, 2005 data) far exceeds European countries like the United Kingdom (165 million BTU/capita), Germany (176 million BTU/capita), France (182 million BTU/capita), and Italy (138 million BTU/capita).

Key report recommendations:

- * The Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy should work with localities to establish a central, publicly-adminis-

CLIMATE

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Inventing Your County's Future: The Role of Community Planning

Friday, Jan. 30, 2009, Charlottesville 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Friday, March 27, 2009, Charlottesville 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Cost: \$400, includes books, materials, refreshments, meals

This comprehensive program with home study and a follow-up session is open to all County Supervisors. It is one of the five core courses in the Virginia Certified County Supervisor Program, a joint effort of Virginia Tech and the Virginia Association of Counties.

Mike Chandler, Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech, and Scott Tate, Community Viability Specialist, with Virginia Cooperative Extension, will lead the course, utilizing examples and calling on practitioners from around Virginia. There is an eight-week home study segment following the January session.

Meeting Location: Albemarle Satellite County Office Building, Fifth Street

Registration Information: Visit www.vaco.org and click on link to Supervisor Certification Course. All the instructions are there for you to register. You can also call 804-343-2504 and speak with Larry Land.

Counties urged to prepare for the introduction and enactment of federal stimulus package

By Mike Edwards
medwards@vaco.org

County leaders should begin developing specific project lists in anticipation of a new federal economic stimulus package. The Congress intends to act on a plan in January.

Counties should provide project lists to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine and also should consider sending project lists to Congressional leaders.

News out of Washington, D.C., coupled with President-elect Obama's recent comments to the National Governor's Association (NGA) in Philadelphia suggest a new bill will include infrastructure funding for state and local transportation, public works – including water and sewer – broadband and school projects. NGA is requesting \$180 billion for the states.

While definitive project and state and local match criteria have not been

established, recent reports indicate eligible projects must be “shovel ready.” VACo understands shovel ready to mean projects i) past the design and preliminary engineering stages, and ii) set to start within six months.

At this time it is unclear whether or not the Congress will name projects in a bill, appropriate the dollars to the states, appropriate the dollars to the states through existing programs (e.g., CDBG, Highway Trust Fund, etc.) or a combination of the above.

Being specific is important. Your list should include project names and descriptions, estimated costs of construction, identified funding and construction timetables.

VACo will continue to monitor the development of a federal economic stimulus package.

Wanner to retire as county administrator

Sandy Wanner told the James City County Board of Supervisors last week that he will retire as county administrator effective July 1.

Wanner, 72, served as administrator for 12 years and plans to return to teaching.

“I have a degree in teaching, so I would like to either become a substitute or hold an adjunct position at the new Thomas Nelson Community College,” Wanner said in a Daily Press article.

Wanner's retirement announcement came on the same night he was given the Chairman's Award for exemplary work with the county. Board of Supervisors' Chairman Bruce Goodson presented the award.

Wanner has also held positions as assistant county administrator and general manager for the James City Service Authority.



An admiral and a county administrator

It was an unexpected phone call, one that had Mark J. Belton shaking at the knees. On the other end of the call was the chief of naval reserves, Belton's boss, and someone who could alter the Page County administrator's life with just a few spoken words.

"I was more than nervous," Belton said. "It's not every day that the chief of naval reserves calls you."

Though Belton is a reservist, he is one of the Navy's best in the field of logistics. At any time he could be assigned to active duty.

But that wasn't the purpose of this telephone call. Not on this day. And when Belton heard the words promoted and rear admiral, he smiled, pride gushed over his body and a million thoughts meandered about his mind. He had earned a star.

"I was stunned, proud, humbled all at the same time," he said. "You hope and think you might have a chance, but there are so many terrific and accomplished officers out there. You just do the best you can over a career and sometimes you are recognized for your efforts."

Mark Belton was now Rear Admiral Belton, assistant director, supply programs and policy (OPNAV N41R).

BELTON

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Rear Admiral Mark J. Belton speaks during his promotion ceremony at the Yorktown Weapons Station. Belton also serves as Page County administrator.

Photo courtesy of Mark Belton



Mark Your Calendars

**Regional public hearings on the governor's proposed
2008-10 biennial state budget**



The General Assembly's House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees will conduct regional public hearings regarding the governor's proposed state budget. Gov. Timothy M. Kaine will release his proposed budget amendments in Richmond on Dec. 17.

Those wishing to speak may register at each hearing site. Registrants must do so no earlier than one hour prior to the start of the hearing. Speakers will be taken in the order of registration. Each person may register only one speaker at a time. Speakers are asked to limit their comments to three minutes or less. Speakers representing groups and organizations should consolidate remarks to reduce duplication.

Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009

Hearing begins at 10 a.m.:

Alexandria - Northern Virginia Community College, Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall

Please note: The sign-up for the Alexandria hearing will begin at 9 a.m.

Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009

Hearings begin at noon:

Newport News - Christopher Newport University, Performing Arts Center

Charlottesville - Piedmont Virginia Community College, V. Earl Dickenson Humanities and Fine Arts Building

Friday, Jan. 9, 2009

Hearing begins at noon:

Lynchburg - Central Virginia Community College

Monday, Jan. 19, 2009

Hearing begins at 1 p.m.:

Richmond - General Assembly Building - House Room D

Questions about the meetings: (804) 698-1590 (House) or (804) 698-7480 (Senate)

Those unable to attend may comment in writing to either:

The Hon. Lacey E. Putney
Chairman, House Appropriations
P.O. Box 406
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Hon. Charles J. Colgan
Chairman, Senate Finance
10th Floor
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**Key 2009 dates for
VACo members**

General Assembly Convenes
Jan. 14, Richmond

Rural Caucus Reception and Dinner
Feb. 4, Richmond Marriott

VACo/VML Legislative Day
Feb. 5, Richmond Marriott

VACo Board of Directors Meeting
Feb. 5, Richmond Marriott

Chairperson's Institute
Feb. 5-7, Richmond Marriott

General Assembly: Legislative
"Cross-over" deadline
Feb. 10

General Assembly: Scheduled Sine Die
(adjournment)
Feb. 28, Richmond

NACo's Legislative Conference
March 7-11, Marriott Wardman Park,
Washington, DC

VACo Board Meeting
May 2, Melfa

VACo Resolutions Committee
May 8, location TBD

NACo's 2009 Annual Conference &
Exposition
July 24-28, Nashville, TN

VACo Summer Meeting
Aug. 14, Richmond
The board of directors and steering
committees will meet

VACo Resolutions Committee Meeting
Sept. 11 Conference Call

VACo's 75th Annual Conference
Nov. 8-10, The Homestead

CTB sets public hearings for updating six-year improvement program



The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has scheduled five public hearings to be held around the state in January so that citizens may review potential revisions to the Six-Year Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2009-2014. This mid-year revision of the fiscal year 2009-2014 program is in response to transportation revenue reductions of more than \$2.6 billion resulting from the downturn in the economy.

CTB members will host the hearings, and representatives of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will be present to provide information and answer questions.

“We are holding this unusual mid-year revision of the six-year program because of the significant changes in the official transportation revenue estimate,” said Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer. “While this revised plan cuts \$1.2 billion from our six-year program, we know that additional cuts of approximately \$400 million will be necessary before this plan is brought before the CTB in January.”

These reductions are a result of reductions in the official state transportation revenues and in addition to \$1.1 billion in cuts made last June when the six-year plan was approved. All transportation agencies are making other reductions in the programs and services they provide.

Lists of specific projects and changes from the current program will be available at each public hearing, on VDOT and DRPT’s Web site at www.VDOT.Virginia.gov and www.DRPT.Virginia.gov, and at VDOT district and residency offices prior to the hearing.

Except where noted, each hearing begins at 6 p.m. Please attend the hearing that is most convenient for you. The districts of focus for each meeting are listed after the meeting location.

Monday, Jan. 5, 2009

New River Valley Community
College
5251 College Drive
Dublin, VA 24084
Bristol/Salem

Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009

VDOT Culpeper District Auditorium
1601 Orange Road, Culpeper, VA
22701
Culpeper/ Staunton

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2009

Hampton Roads Planning District
Commission
723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, VA
23320
Hampton Roads

Monday, Jan. 12, 2009

VDOT Central Office Auditorium
1221 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA
23219
**Richmond/
Fredericksburg/
Lynchburg**

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009

7 p.m.
Fairfax County Board Room
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
Northern Virginia

Verbal and written comments will be accepted throughout the hearings. During the comment period, individuals may speak for up to three

minutes. Groups and organizations each should designate one member to speak. Those who cannot attend may send comments after the hearing for up to 10 calendar days to:

Public Information Office

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
1313 E. Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219
DRPTPR@DRPT.Virginia.gov

Programming Director

Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219
Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov

VRS

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session, for example, the teachers' health insurance credit was increased from \$2.50 to \$4 per month for each year of service.

In addition, the General Assembly in 2007 required localities to offer enhanced retirement benefits for deputy sheriffs, and increased the retirement multiplier (used in the calculation for of the monthly retirement benefit) for sheriffs and State Police from 1.70 to 1.85 percent of average final compensation.

The same statute allowed localities

to adopt the higher 1.85 percent multiplier for all public safety officers (not just the sheriff), which will increase local contribution rates.

The Commission also heard that VRS's annual performance has outperformed assumptions, falling below the assumed rate of growth (either 8 percent or 7.5 percent, depending on the year) in only six of the last 19 years.

Should the economic downturn be prolonged for some time, VRS projects that it has enough cash flow through 2018 to pay expected benefits without the liquidation of holdings.

Visit
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all the
General Assembly
news that matter
to you.

CLIMATE

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tered capital fund for energy efficiency investments in residential and small commercial markets.

* The General Assembly should phase in requirements that all new commercial buildings will meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) energy standards or equivalent standards. (Note: At the Commission's Dec. 4 meeting, several business groups expressed opposition to this recommendation.)

* The Department of Housing and Community Development should work with stakeholders to incorporate increased energy efficiency requirements into the 2009 and 2012 uniform statewide building codes, so that by 2012, the resulting codes are at least 30 percent efficient than the 2006 code.

* The Governor should ask Congress to act as soon as possible to pass comprehensive climate change legislation. (Note: This recommendation would include a mandatory cap and trade program, and would aim to achieve an 80 percent reduction in U.S. GHG emissions from current levels by 2050 nationally with near-term reductions of at least 20 percent by 2020).

* The Governor should ask Congress to support the accelerated establishment of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for heavy trucks and stronger CAFE standards for passenger vehicles.

* The General Assembly should amend current law pertaining to the Statewide Transportation Plan to require that the Plan including coordination of transportation and land use as a key policy goal and to require the Plan to include quantifiable measures and achievable goals relating to GHG reduction.

* The Commonwealth should fund and support, through VDOT and other agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, working with Planning District Commissions, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and local governments, a set of statewide region-by-region scenario analyses of local transportation and land use planning.

* The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has amended its road construction standards to make new or upgraded roads more pedestrian and bike-friendly. The CTB should ensure that funding is available for localities to implement these standards, develop and provide funding and technical assistance to encourage local governments to construct pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and compile and coordinate local and regional plans to develop a pedestrian and bicycle network.

* The Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) should continue to promote the expansion of broadband access to our

homes and businesses, a key trip avoidance.

* Local governments should enhance the convenience of using transit compared to driving.

* VDOT should work with regional and local governments to harmonize the state transportation plans and local land use plans on the same five-year schedules.

* Landfills generate significant amounts of methane for the degradation of putrescible wastes. Methane is more than 20 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide. Emphasis should be placed on recycling reusable material and diverting putrescible wastes for composting or cogeneration of electricity and thermal energy.

* VDOT should, in cooperation with local governments, allow its rights-of-way to be used for connection of renewable power projects, such as form solar and wind sources, or combined heat and power projects to the power grid.

* The General Assembly should encourage local governments to establish tree canopy preservation goals through incentives and ordinances and provide technical assistance to localities seeking to establish such goals.

* Virginia should recommend (CAFE-like) standards for local government-owned fleets (especially school buses and transit vehicles).

* All state agencies, institutions and local governments should take actions to minimize vehicle miles traveled related to state and local operations.

BELTON

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Belton has so many people to thank, but when asked about Page County, he immediately pointed out a fact that so many of us tend to forget.

“Our nation is at war and we utilize military reserves and the national guard quite a bit,” Belton said. “Local governments are employers of many reserves and members of the national guard. Localities are constantly giving up employees for a year or more.

“The Page County Board of Supervisors has been very supportive of my military duties. I could not fulfill my military orders without such support.”

As much as Belton is grateful for Page County’s backing, it’s a two-way street according to Page County Supervisor Carol Lee Fischer-Strickler.

“They wear the uniform and they walk a mile in front of us to protect us,” Fischer-Strickler said. “We are proud to do our part for Mark. We have very strong management people in our county who always stand ready to assist any time Mark has to go and report for duty.

“To me, it’s part of our obligation to support not only our active troops but our reservists who are ready to go at a drop of a hat.”

Belton was honored at an Oct. 3 ceremony at the Yorktown Weapons Station. Fischer-Strickler was among the nearly 150 who attended the event.

“It was a truly perfect day,” Fischer-Strickler said. “The sun was shining, the wind was blowing. The thing that left a mark on me, what I’ll always remember about that day was all the people and friends who were there to support Mark. He is someone who has positively affected many people.”

Belton knew he wanted to be a naval officer in the eighth grade. He was born in New Jersey but grew up in Maryland, so the Naval Academy in Annapolis helped inspire his dream.

“It’s funny because my wife and I have six children, and one graduated from college and another is planning on going next year,” Belton said. “Neither of them know what they want to do for a career. I knew at an early age.”

After graduating from the Naval Academy, Belton served his active duty as a division officer aboard the USS Seattle and on the supply department staff at the Naval Academy and as supply department head aboard the USS De Wert.

His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (seven awards) and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. In 2001 he mobilized with a Defense Contributory Support Team (DCST) to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.



As a civilian, he has held positions in state and local government leadership. He was Queen Anne’s County (MD) administrator and was assistant secretary for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

He accepted the Page County administrator after deciding that, though he enjoyed state government work, he preferred the local level better.

“You really get to see the effects of the work more closely,” Belton said.

There are a lot of similarities between his position as county administrator and his naval specialty of logistics, which involves decisions in transportation, inventory, finances and procurement. Logistics officers are often referred to as the business managers of the Navy.

“When you work for a county, you become a part of a family,” Fischer-Strickler said. “That’s the same way in the military. You are part of a family that delivers services to people. Mark understands this and his work reflects this methodology.”

Once in a while, Belton reflects on the journey to this point. He remembers the training at the Naval Academy, the discipline and grit it took to graduate and the years of active and reserve duty. Now he’s a rear admiral.

“How about that? Who would have thought?”

BUDGET

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reductions.

Counties will shoulder a significant percentage of the state's budget cuts because nearly 50 percent of the Commonwealth's general fund is appropriated to local governments for mandated services, including K-12 public education. Significant FY 2010 state budget reductions will be required with or without a FY 2010 Rainy Day Fund transfer, but the total dollar amount of cuts will be less if the state makes a sizable yet allowable transfer from the Fund.

-Before budgeting and appropriating necessary state budget reductions, revisit recent state tax exemptions. Since the late 1990s the state has enacted more than \$1.8 billion in net biennial tax reductions and specific General Fund transfers.

Many of the reductions were enacted in good economic times. The current economic downturn warrants a reconsideration of exemptions before cutting state funding to the core government services.

-Oppose the enactment of new unfunded and under-funded state mandates that will impose new costs on

local governments. Additionally, consider repealing specific, unfunded and under-funded state mandates.

VACo annually adopts an aggressive priority policy statement opposing unfunded mandates —new as well as existing. The 2009 Legislative Program contains a similar statement. The current budget shortfall serves to highlight the importance of this position.

-Enact a law authorizing equal taxing authority for counties.

Counties should be enabled, like cities and towns, to institute specific taxes, including a meals tax without a referendum. The new sources of revenue would be tailored to the needs of a jurisdiction and could help local governments protect adequate funding for the core government services including K-12 public education, and reduce county dependence on property taxes.

-Permit local governments, at their option, to implement a one-half percent increase in the sales tax as a way to minimize the potential burden passed on to homeowners through increased real property taxes.

The new local revenues will help to
i) protect adequate funding for the core government services, including K-12

public education, ii) reduce county dependence on property taxes, and iii) offset forthcoming state budget reductions.

The Overarching policy statement regarding State and Local Fiscal Sustainability initially was drafted by a special VACo committee. The statement subsequently was ratified by the Finance Steering Committee, the Resolutions Committee and the general membership. The general membership adopted the statement as part of the 2009 Legislative Program on Tuesday, Nov. 11 during the annual business meeting in Bath. The special committee was established last August by the Board of Directors and included members of the Executive Committee and the Finance and Transportation Steering Committees.

Forwarding addresses:

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Legislators' mailing addresses:
legis.state.va.us/

See Page 11 to view VACo's model resolution.

Gov. Kaine announces federal disaster designations

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine today announced that the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has designated Albemarle, Buckingham, Caroline, Fluvanna, Franklin, Goochland, Greene, Hanover, Henry, Isle of Wight, Lunenburg, Powhatan and Rockbridge counties primary natural disaster areas due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and excessive heat that occurred this calendar year.

These disaster designations make farmers eligible for low-interest loans and any supplemental relief that might be provided by Congress in the future.

Farmers in the independent cities of Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Franklin, Lexington, Martinsville, Newport News and Suffolk as well as in these adjacent counties have received contiguous disaster status and also may be eligible for federal assistance: Alleghany, Charlotte, King William, Patrick, Amelia, Chesterfield, Louisa, Pittsylvania, Amherst, Cumberland, Madison, Prince Edward, Appomattox, Essex, Mecklenburg, Roanoke, Augusta, Floyd, Nelson, Rockingham, Bath, Henrico, New Kent, Southampton, Bedford, James City, Nottoway, Spotsylvania, Botetourt, King and Queen, Orange, Stafford, Brunswick, King George, Page, Surry

"Approval by the USDA means Virginia farmers in these localities are eligible to be considered for assistance," Governor Kaine said. "We will continue to work with other affected areas and anticipate that the federal government will soon respond to these additional requests."

Disaster declarations make farm operators in both primary and contiguous areas eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provided they meet certain eligibility requirements. This assistance includes FSA emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) which was approved as part of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. FSA will consider each application on its own merits by taking into account the extent of the losses, security available and repayment ability. Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with additional information.

December 15, 2008

VACo Resolution regarding the Commonwealth's FY 2009-2010 Budget Shortfall

Whereas, name of county is committed to ensuring fiscal sustainability at the local and state levels of government because fiscal sustainability enables the Commonwealth and its local governments to provide high quality, cost effective, core public services that benefit Virginians today and for generations to come; and

Whereas, the current difficult economic and financial times require government, at all levels, to evaluate service delivery responsibilities and to determine the continued importance of programs meeting critical needs; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth must resolve an estimated 2009 and 2010 biennial revenue shortfall approaching \$3 billion that may in fact continue to escalate in the near term; and

Whereas, name of the county must resolve significant local revenue shortfalls for these periods as well; and

Alternative Whereas clause – alternative to the above: Whereas, name of the county must resolve an estimated local 2009 and 2010 revenue shortfall of x; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth's General Fund supports most critical core government services including public education, health and human resources, including the Comprehensive Services Act, public safety, natural resources and environmental services by dedicating almost 50 percent of the state's General Fund to local governments (with 74 percent of this funding supporting K-12 public education); and

Whereas, if one level of government establishes and ensures a priority, it is then incumbent upon that level of government to adequately fund the services necessary to meet that priority; and

Whereas, the current economic environment threatens the sustainability of these critical core public services if the Commonwealth is required to reduce its contribution to the financial partnership between the state and its local governments including name of county; and

Whereas, specific and necessary state budget reductions may impact a wide array of core public services, including but not limited to public education, the Comprehensive Service Act, and public safety, and many local governments, including name of county, will absorb significant state reductions in 2009 and may be compelled to increase real property taxes to help ensure the continuation of vital core public services; and

Whereas, name of county stands ready to partner with the Commonwealth to make the difficult budgetary decisions required, including thoroughly evaluating programs and working together to maintain a structural balance between revenues and expenditures that promotes the long-term viability of our Commonwealth.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Supervisors of name of county respectfully offers the following budget and revenue recommendations for the 2009 legislative session to the Governor and Virginia General Assembly including name of county's Delegates and Senators:

Budget and appropriate sufficient withdrawals from the state's Revenue Stabilization Fund ("Rainy Day Fund") to help offset necessary state budget reductions. Global and national financial markets are imbalanced; consequently, Virginia is one of many states facing a significant state revenue shortfall. The Commonwealth is required to replenish the Fund when economic conditions improve, and name of county supports recapitalizing the Fund in better economic times.

Before budgeting and appropriating necessary state budget reductions, revisit recent state tax exemptions. Since the late 1990s the state has enacted more than \$1.8 billion in net biennial tax reductions and specific General Fund transfers.

Oppose the enactment of new unfunded and under-funded state mandates that will impose new costs on local governments. Additionally, consider repealing specific, unfunded and under-funded state mandates. In the area of public education, the Governor and Virginia General Assembly should consider providing localities and school districts maximum flexibility to i) suspend specific mandates and ii) manage specific public education reductions.

Enact a law authorizing equal taxing authority for counties. Counties should be enabled, like cities and towns, to institute specific taxes, including a meals tax without a referendum. The new sources of revenue would be tailored to the needs of a jurisdiction and could help local governments protect adequate funding for the core government services including K-12 public education, and reduce county dependence on property taxes.

Consider additional possibilities for mitigating the impact of state cuts on local governments. Local governments will have to make significant cuts in services because of flat or decreasing real estate revenues. Permit local governments, at their option, to implement a one-half percent increase in the sales tax as a way to minimize the potential burden passed on to homeowners through increased real property taxes.

Furthermore, name of county offers these recommendations in the spirit of compromise and partnership to the Governor and Virginia General Assembly including name of county's Delegates and Senators.

Employment Opportunities

Employment ads are edited due to space considerations.

To view the full versions, visit www.vaco.org and click the man at the typewriter on the right rail of the page.

PSA Engineer/Carroll County

The Carroll County Public Service Authority is accepting applications from qualified individuals for the full-time position of PSA Engineer. The successful candidate will have 3 to 5 years of project management experience; or any equivalent combination of training and experience, which provide the required skills, knowledge and abilities. Experience with large water and sewer projects is preferred. The PSA Engineer will report directly to the Executive Director of the PSA. A valid VA Drivers License is required. Review of the applications will begin on Jan. 12, 2009. A full position description is located at www.CarrollCountyVA.org/Employment. The position will remain open until filled.

Human Resources Assistant/Isle of Wight

Starting salary \$28,700

Isle of Wight County seeks a full-time assistant in the Human Resources Department. This position assists in recruiting, tracking statistics, employee events, additional HR functions as needed, and provides administrative support. Experience with MS Office required; experience with HR information systems preferred. Must have a HS diploma or equivalent education; additional education and prior experience with Human Resources preferred. Interested candidates should submit an application and resume by 5 p.m. on Dec. 19 to: HR, P.O. Box 80, Isle of Wight, VA 23397. Visit our Web site at www.iwus.net or call 757-365-6263.

**Finance Director-Town Treasurer/
Town of Culpeper**

Salary: \$69,205 – \$99,736 + benefits. \$84M budget 162 Town employees, 9FT + 1PT Treasurer's Office employees.

Requires bachelor's degree in finance/accounting/related field and minimum 5 years financial management experience; excellent interpersonal and communication skills; extensive knowledge of municipal budgeting, accounting, financial policies procedures, tax collection and utility billing; strong customer service orientation. Interested persons should complete and return a Town application, cover letter, and resume to: the Department of the Town Manager, 400 South Main Street, Suite 101 Culpeper, Virginia 22701. Application forms, complete job ad, and job description are available online at www.culpeper.to or by calling the Town Manager's office at 540-829-8250.

Senior Planner/Town of Leesburg

Salary Range: \$55,390-\$92,969 DOQ
Closing Date: Dec. 19

This is responsible senior-level professional work in the Department of Planning and Zoning performing a variety of planning, analytical and research functions, including reviews of land development applications for rezonings, special exceptions and comprehensive amendments.

TO APPLY: See www.leesburgva.gov or request an application from the HR Dept. at 703-737-7177. Mail application to: Town of Leesburg, HR Dept., 25 W. Market St., P. O. Box 88, Leesburg, VA 20178. Applications may be faxed to the HR Dept. at 703-737-7190. Resumes may be submitted as supplemental only.

**Director of Capital Projects
Management/Town of Leesburg**

Salary Range: \$83,673-\$140,440 plus excellent benefits

Closing Date: Jan. 16, 2009 at 5 p.m. Required: Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering; minimum of eight to ten years exp. in capital projects design and construction work with a government office/consulting firm including supervisory/managerial exp. OR equivalent combination of education and exp.

TO APPLY: See www.leesburgva.gov or request an application from the HR

Dept. at 703-737-7177. Mail application and resume in confidence to: 25 W. Market St., P. O. Box 88, Leesburg, VA 20178. Applications may be faxed to the HR Dept. at 703-737-7190. Resumes may be submitted as supplemental only.

Building Official/City of Portsmouth

SALARY RANGE: \$71,996-\$97,195
Bachelor's Degree in Engineering Technology, Construction Management, Physics or Math; 3 to 5 years

progressively responsible work experience in building inspection, engineering, construction or a related field. Must be able to obtain certification, or become a building official within six months. Submit City of Portsmouth application and resume to City of Portsmouth, Department of Human Resource Management, 801 Crawford Street, Portsmouth, VA 23704. www.portsmouthva.gov. Open Until Filled.

**Environmental Codes Compliance
Officer/King and Queen County**

BS in Environmental Science or related field with a minimum of two years experience and DCR E&S certification required within six months of hire.

Salary: DOQ with excellent benefits. Please send letter of interest, resume and three professional references (no emails, faxes, or phone calls, please) to: Thomas J. Swartzwelder, Esq. County Attorney
11817 Canon Blvd., Suite 408
Newport News, VA 23606
Position is open until filled.

**Director of Utilities/Gloucester
County**

(Please note revised qualifications)
Salary: DOQ/DOE + excellent benefits package.

Gloucester County is a rural community of 35,000+ residents centrally located on the Eastern Seaboard

EMPLOYMENT

Continued from page 10

with easy access to the Chesapeake Bay, Virginia's Historic Triangle, and major cities. Visit us online at www.gloucester-va.info to review complete job description and download employment application. Position is open until filled. To apply submit Gloucester County application with cover letter and resume to Gloucester County Human Resources, 6467 Main St., Gloucester VA 23061.

Economic Development Director/Prince George County

Bachelor's degree in business administration, marketing, public administration, economics, economic development, or related field required; Master's Degree in related field is desirable. Extensive professional experience in economic development, preferably in local, state, or regional government. Pre-employment physical/drug testing and criminal background check, to include fingerprinting, required. For more details, complete job description, and to apply online, please visit the County's Web site at www.princegeorgeva.org. For additional information, call 804-722-8669. Open until filled.

Director of Tourism/Town of Appomattox

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Responsible for planning, organizing, directing, developing and implementing short and long range goals and strategies to promote the Town area as a travel destination, to provide positive impressions and experiences for area visitors and to raise awareness of and coordinate community hospitality efforts. Town application required. Call 434-352-8268, e-mail fguill@appomattoxva.gov. Submit application, along with resume and cover letter to: David T. Garrett, Jr., Town Manager, P. O. Box 705, Appomattox, VA. Open until filled.

Director of Finance/Hanover County

Bachelor's degree in finance, accounting

or related field, supplemented by 8 years of progressively responsible experience, 3 of which in a supervisory capacity. Local government experience is preferred. Master's Degree, CPA or CGFO desired. Ability to deal effectively with department heads, staff, officials, and the public required. Salary range \$98,424-\$132,875 plus excellent benefits. For more information or to apply for this position, please visit our career site at www.hanovercountyjobs.com (804)365-6075, (TDD# 365-6140).

County Engineer/Louisa County

If you have a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from a four-year college or university, enjoy working in a fast paced, challenging environment and want to be part of a County that is experiencing unprecedented growth, please visit our Web site at www.louisacounty.com for complete details or call 540-967-0401. The position will remain open until filled. Salary commensurate with experience.

Public Works Engineer/Gloucester County

In this position, you will be part of our top notch Engineering Division in a growing community that offers challenging and rewarding opportunities to provide construction project oversight and management services and assistance for County projects. Salary \$47,872/yr or higher DOQ. With an excellent, benefit package. Open Until Filled. Details along with an application for employment may be obtained online at www.gloucester-va.info. Gloucester County Human Resource Department 6467 Main St. Gloucester, VA 23061. 804-693-5690.

Plans Examiner/Isle of Wight County

\$36,862-\$46,000 Requires a Bachelors Degree or equivalent, and 3-5 years of related experience. Must possess, or be able to obtain within 18 months of employment, state certifications as a One and Two Family Combination Inspector, Building Plan Review,

Electrical Plan Review, Mechanical Plan Review, and Plumbing Plan Review. Position is open until filled. Interested candidates should submit an application and resume to: HR, P.O. Box 80, Isle of Wight, VA 23397. Visit our Web site at www.iwus.net or call 757-365-6263.

Engineer II/York County

Base salary \$51,887 or higher commensurate with experience, qualifications; excellent benefits. A York County application is required and may be obtained from the Human Resources Office, 120 Alexander Hamilton Boulevard, Second Floor, Yorktown, VA; from the County's Web site www.yorkcounty.gov; or by calling 757-890-3690. Hearing impaired only call TDD 757-890-3300. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

Administrative Officer-Budget Analyst/Arlington County

\$49,816 - \$82,388 Requires analytical problem solvers with a breadth of budgeting, finance and administrative systems expertise needed to help the Department of Human Services (DHS) execute its mission to "make a real difference in people's lives by meeting them where they are, wherever they come in." HOW TO APPLY: Go to ww.arlingtonva.us/pers (click on "County Jobs" on the right of the screen). You may attach your resume to the Internet Employment Application if you wish. E-mail any questions to pers@arlingtonva.us (no resumes to this address, please).

Public Health Division Financial and Administrative Support Services Chief/Arlington County

\$53,040 - \$87,672 Successful applicants will model the department's values of excellence, dignity, integrity and accountability. HOW TO APPLY: Go to www.arlingtonva.us/pers (click on "County Jobs" on the right of the screen). You may attach your resume to the Internet Employment Application if you wish. E-mail any questions to pers@arlingtonva.us (no resumes to this address).

VACo Committee Interest Form

VACo is looking for county supervisors and chief administrative officers interested in serving on the association's steering and operational committees. The steering committees consider proposals from member counties for inclusion in VACo's annual legislative program. They also provide direction to the VACo staff on policy issues arising from legislative and state agency studies. Steering committee members are selected from each of VACo's 13 regions. Committees also include several members appointed at-large. The operational and ad hoc committees are responsible for helping direct the staff in the activities, programs and functions of VACo.

Attendance will be expected of committee members at the VACo Annual Meeting, and at least two other committee meetings during the year. VACo asks that committee members or the counties they represent assume responsibility for travel arrangements and costs associated with attending committee meetings. Committee appointments are made each year by the president of VACo. **If you are interested in being considered for an appointment, complete this form and return it by December 15, 2008, to VACo, 1001 E. Broad St., Suite LL 20, Richmond, VA 23219-1928, fax (804) 788-0083.**

County officials that currently serve on a committee need to submit this form by December 15 to be reappointed to a committee in 2009.

name _____

title _____ county _____

address _____

phone number _____ e-mail _____

Please indicate your first, second and third choices:

STEERING COMMITTEES

- ___ Environment and Agriculture
- ___ Finance
- ___ Education
- ___ Administration of Government
- ___ Health and Human Services
- ___ Community Development and Planning
- ___ Telecommunications and Utilities
- ___ Transportation

OPERATIONAL COMMITTEES

- ___ Nominating
- ___ Budget
- ___ Conference Planning

Description of Steering Committees are on the back.

Steering Committees

Administration of Government: This committee covers general issues not falling within categories addressed by other steering committees. Administration of Government will also address issues pertaining to law enforcement, corrections, fire and emergency services.

Community Development & Planning: Land use planning, economic development, infrastructure, growth management

Education: Educational issues

Environment & Agriculture: Environment, agriculture, public works activities affected by environmental laws and regulations

Finance: Appropriations and taxation

Health and Human Services: Social services, health, welfare and "at-risk" youth and crime prevention

Telecommunications/Utilities: Telecommunications, non-environmental issues relating to utilities (e.g. electric utilities deregulation)

Transportation: Transportation issues

Operational Committees

Budget Committee: Establishes a budget format and a budget that directs resources to the top priorities set by the membership to allow the association to achieve its goals

Conference Planning Committee: VACo's conference planning committee helps assure that the annual meeting provides members with valuable information for planning and implementing new ideas and technologies and serves as a focal point for imparting information about legislative issues.

Nominating Committee: This committee meets before the annual business meeting and prepares a slate of officers to present to the attending membership.

**Virginia County Board
Chairpersons' Institute
Feb. 5-7, 2009
Richmond Marriott**

Lodging

The room rates are \$129 for a single or double room. To reserve a hotel room, call 1-800-228-9290 by Jan. 16, 2009 with the following code: VACO/VMLLEGDAY.

Enrollment

Institute enrollment will be limited to approximately 25 participants.

Institute Fee: \$295.00

The fee covers course materials, coffee breaks and meals. Spouses and guests that plan to attend may register for \$100, which covers those meals. Lodging costs are not included in this fee. There will be no part-day registrations.

Registration

To register, complete and return the registration form below along with the institute fee of \$295, made payable to VACO. The registration deadline is Jan. 26, 2009. Advance registration is required and enrollment is not guaranteed until the registration fee is paid.

Refund Policy

Requests for registration refunds are honored if received by Jan. 26, 2009. However, substitutions are accepted at any time. For questions about registration, call VACO at (804) 788-6652.

Name _____

Guest's Name _____

County _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Home Address _____

State _____ Zip _____ Fax _____

Payment Method: Check___ MasterCard___ Visa___ Amex___

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____

Authorized Signature _____

Please return to VACO with payment by January 26, 2009: 1001 E. Broad St.
Ste. LL20, Richmond, VA, 23219. Credit card payments may be faxed to
(804) 788-0083.



1001 E. Broad St., Suite LL 20
Richmond, VA 23219

Executive Committee

President: Donald L. Hart Jr., Accomack County
President-Elect: Phillip A. Bradshaw, Isle of Wight County
1st Vice President: Robert R. Adkins, Wise County
2nd Vice President: Barbara A. Favola, Arlington County
Secretary Treasurer: Catherine M. Hudgins, Fairfax County
Immediate Past President: William B. Kyger, Jr., Rockingham County

Staff

Executive Director: James D. Campbell, AICP, CAE
General Counsel: Phyllis A. Errico, Esq., CAE
Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs: Michael L. Edwards
Director of Policy Development: Larry J. Land, CAE
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs: Dean A. Lynch, CAE
Director of Governmental Affairs: Ted McCormack, AICP
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Director of Technical Services: John N. Kandris, A+, ACT, CCA
Director of Member Services: Carol I. Cameron
Director of Communications: Gage Harter
Administrative Assistant: Pricilla Wallace
VACo Risk Management Programs: Chris Carey, Administrator,
(888) 822-6772

VACo exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.

1001 E. Broad St.
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Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 788-6652
Fax: (804) 788-0083
www.vaco.org

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