

2023 Annual Conference Breakout Sessions



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023

10am – 11:15am

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

STATE BUDGET OUTLOOK: PREPARING FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM | Mount Vernon

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Jim Icenhour**, Supervisor, James City County

SPEAKER: **James J. Regimbal, Jr.**, VACo Economist, and Principal, Fiscal Analytics, Ltd.

The adoption of a new biennium budget – one of the most important tasks facing the 2024 General Assembly – presents critical opportunities for county officials to advocate for local needs. This session provides a preview of key budget pressures and economic trends that will be part of the budget development process.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR CRISIS CARE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVERSION | Stratford

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Pam Carter**, Supervisor, Augusta County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **Jeffrey C. McKay**, Chairman, Fairfax County;
Doug Bilski, Assistant Director, Clinical & Prevention Services, Chesterfield
County Mental Health Support Services

How can communities meet the needs of individuals in crisis before they interact with the criminal justice system? What solutions are available within the criminal justice system to address behavioral health and substance use disorder needs and avoid unnecessary incarceration? This session will showcase local solutions to these important issues and provide an opportunity for counties to learn from each other.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE | Piedmont

MODERATOR: The Honorable **April DeMotts**, Supervisor, Montgomery
County

SPEAKER: **Evan Feinman**, Director of Broadband Equity, Access, and
Deployment Program, U.S. Department of Commerce, National
Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

Over \$42 billion in federal funds will be disbursed to help Americans receive fast and reliable internet access through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD). Virginia's allocation under BEAD is \$1.48 billion and will build upon the work of the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) to reach the remaining unserved, and underserved, regions of the Commonwealth. This session will provide an overview of BEAD and how Virginia counties can partner with internet service providers in applying for BEAD dollars, including using State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program, set up with the American Rescue Plan Act, as part of the required qualifying match.

STATE AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

| Blue Ridge

MODERATOR AND SPEAKER: The Honorable **Penelope A. “Penny” Gross**, Supervisor, Fairfax County

SPEAKER: The Honorable **David Bulova**, House District 37

Virginia is gifted with extraordinary beauty from all corners of our beloved Commonwealth. From the mountains to the Chesapeake Bay, we are never far from a scenic view. We all want to protect and conserve this beautiful scenery while still being able to prosper and grow within our communities. This session will explore recent developments, actions, and initiatives within the environmental community. As drought, flooding, coastal resilience, and natural disasters are of concern to Virginians, what are the local and state perspectives on how to combat and mitigate these unfortunate occurrences? Join us in hearing from local and state government leaders to discuss what is going on in the environmental policy sphere as well as programs and initiatives that aim to support communities experiencing issues with their natural habitat.

11:30am - 12:45pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

ISSUES IN K-12 EDUCATION FUNDING AND SCHOOL BOARD RELATIONS | Mount Vernon

MODERATOR: **Jeremy R. Bennett**, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Virginia Association of Counties

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **Jason D. Bellows**, President, Virginia Association of Counties, and Vice-Chairman, Lancaster County; The Honorable **Meg Bohmke**, Immediate Past President, Virginia Association of Counties, and Supervisor, Stafford County; The Honorable **David R. Woodard**, President, Virginia School Boards Association, and Member, Tazewell County School Board

Funding for K-12 education remains the largest funding item of a county government’s budget. The recent report from the Joint Legislative

Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) confirms what many in local government already know to be true: the State Standards of Quality (SOQ) formula yields substantially less funding than actual local school division spending and benchmarks. Leaders in County Government and the President of the Virginia School Boards Association will share their thoughts on the state of K-12 education, what they think can be done better, and invite audience participation.

VIRGINIA’S ENERGY LANDSCAPE | Stratford

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Andrea G. Bailey**, Supervisor, Prince William County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **Terry G. Kilgore**, House District 1; The Honorable **Michael R. Turner**, Supervisor, Loudoun County; and **Katharine Bond**, Vice President of Public Policy, State and Local Affairs, Dominion Energy

Changes in how we consume, produce, and deliver ever-increasing demands for electricity to serve Virginia’s households, businesses, and industry are having profound impacts on our economy and landscape. Whether it is a utility-scale solar installation, a cloud computing center, or high voltage transmission lines, counties are at the forefront of managing how these pieces are incorporated into comprehensive plans and land use decisions. Opportunities for economic development with these changes are often balanced with needs for protecting farms, forests, adjacent land uses and water resources. This session will explore these changes and challenges and how state and local leaders can prepare to address them.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ELECTION

ADMINISTRATION | Piedmont

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Dan Storck**, Supervisor, Fairfax County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **John O’Bannon**, Chairman, State Board of Elections; **Arielle A. Schneider**, CIPP/US, CISM, Privacy Officer, Virginia Department of Elections

Major changes in election law have been put in place in recent years. This session is a chance to hear from leaders in election administration about important policy discussions and opportunities in the field, including an update on the state’s security standards for local systems interacting

with the state voter registration system and the resources available to assist localities in compliance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE LAW UPDATE – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW | Blue Ridge

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Mary Biggs**, Supervisor, Montgomery County

SPEAKER: **Andrew McRoberts**, Shareholder, Sands Anderson

This session will include a review and analysis of recent state court decisions on topics affecting local government such as Freedom of Information Act, taxation, land use, and employment, among others, and will include a discussion of practical implications for the local governments.

2:45pm - 4pm

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | Mount Vernon

MODERATOR: The Honorable **James M. Griffith**, Supervisor, Alleghany County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **M. Keith Hodges**, House District 98

Rural Virginia faces unique challenges in creating and expanding businesses and jobs. Beyond capital investment in infrastructure such as rail, roads, utilities, and internet access, many communities lack the necessary training and development to supplement the workforce. Additionally, lack of affordable housing and childcare in rural communities creates barriers to building the labor market for existing and prospective employers. This session will explore these challenges and what can be done at the state, regional and local level to address them.

REAL REGIONAL – A BRIEF ON VIRGINIA’S REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES AND INITIATIVES WITHIN |

Stratford

MODERATOR: The Honorable **William M. McCarty Sr.**, Supervisor, Isle of Wight County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **Vivian E. Watts**, House District 39; **Kevin B. Page**, Executive Director, Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission; **Chet Parsons**, Executive Director, Central Virginia Transportation Authority

Whether it is known or not, your local transportation system has a great impact on the lives on citizens in your locality. How people get to work, emergency response times, and access to various goods and services are just a few of the things that rely in part on the various modes and quality of local transportation systems within a locality. Join us to hear elected officials and transportation professionals discuss Virginia’s regional transportation authorities, their impact on transportation in Virginia, and where transportation in the Commonwealth is headed!

COUNTIES REVIVING LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY – HEAR THEIR STORIES | Piedmont

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Jason D. Bellows**, President, Virginia Association of Counties, and Vice-Chairman, Lancaster County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **Ruth Larson**, First Vice President, Virginia Association of Counties, and Supervisor, James City County; **Michael W. Hatfield**, County Administrator, Wise County; **Douglas P. Stanley**, County Administrator, Prince Edward County; **Dennis Bickmeier**, Executive Director, Henrico County Sports and Entertainment Authority; **J.C. Poma**, Executive Director of Sports, Visitation and Entertainment, Chesterfield County

Visitor spending in the Commonwealth generated \$30.3 billion in 2022, an increase of 20.3% from 2021 and exceeding 2019 levels by 4.4%. Many visitors didn’t just come to see the sights but rather experience Virginia and what our beautiful state has to offer. Virginia’s counties are a

leading driver of tourism – helping revive the industry by focusing on their natural and manmade assets. Five counties will share their tourism journey, and how these efforts have brought not only revenue opportunities but also pride to their communities.

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO CALL? ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES IN PUBLIC SAFETY | Blue Ridge

MODERATOR: The Honorable **Joel C. Acree**, Board Member, Virginia Association of Counties, and Vice-Chairman, Isle of Wight County

SPEAKERS: The Honorable **Walter T. Bailey**, Member, Virginia Fire Services Board, and Supervisor, Charlotte County; **Randy Campbell**, Regional Sales Manager, Blue Line Solutions

Ensuring the safety and security of communities is one of the primary responsibilities of local government. Panelists will discuss insights into potential strategies to recruit and retain top-tier first responders, the findings of the recent statewide study on fire and EMS services, and other pertinent issues such as budget constraints, the integration of new technologies, and the evolving demands placed on first responders.