

## Power Packed Lineup of Speakers Confirmed for County Officials' Summit

Agenda Takes Shapes with More Top-Notch Speakers to be Added Soon

**COUNTY OFFICIALS' SUMMIT**  
Join us for some nerdy fun!

**Thursday, August 15, 2024**

- 7:30AM - BREAKFAST
- 9AM - SUMMIT PROGRAM STARTS
- 12:30PM - LUNCH
- 1:45PM - BLOCK A STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS
- 3:30PM - BLOCK B STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Check out the [Agenda](#)

**Register Today!**

**CONFIRMED SPEAKER LINEUP**

**WELCOME 9 AM**  
The Honorable **Ann Mallek**  
VACo President  
Albemarle County Supervisor

**WELCOME 9 AM**  
The Honorable **Levar Stoney**  
Mayor | City of Richmond

**LEGISLATIVE HOT TOPICS 10:15AM-11:15AM**  
The Honorable **Lashrecse D. Aird**  
Senate District 13  
AI and Elections

**LEGISLATIVE HOT TOPICS 10:15AM-11:15AM**  
The Honorable **Carrie E. Coyner**  
House District 75  
Housing

**VIRGINIA POLITICAL TRAILBLAZERS 11:30AM-12:30PM**  
The Honorable **Winsome Earle-Sears**  
Lieutenant Governor

**VIRGINIA POLITICAL TRAILBLAZERS 11:30AM-12:30PM**  
The Honorable **Abigail Spanberger**  
VA 7th Congressional District

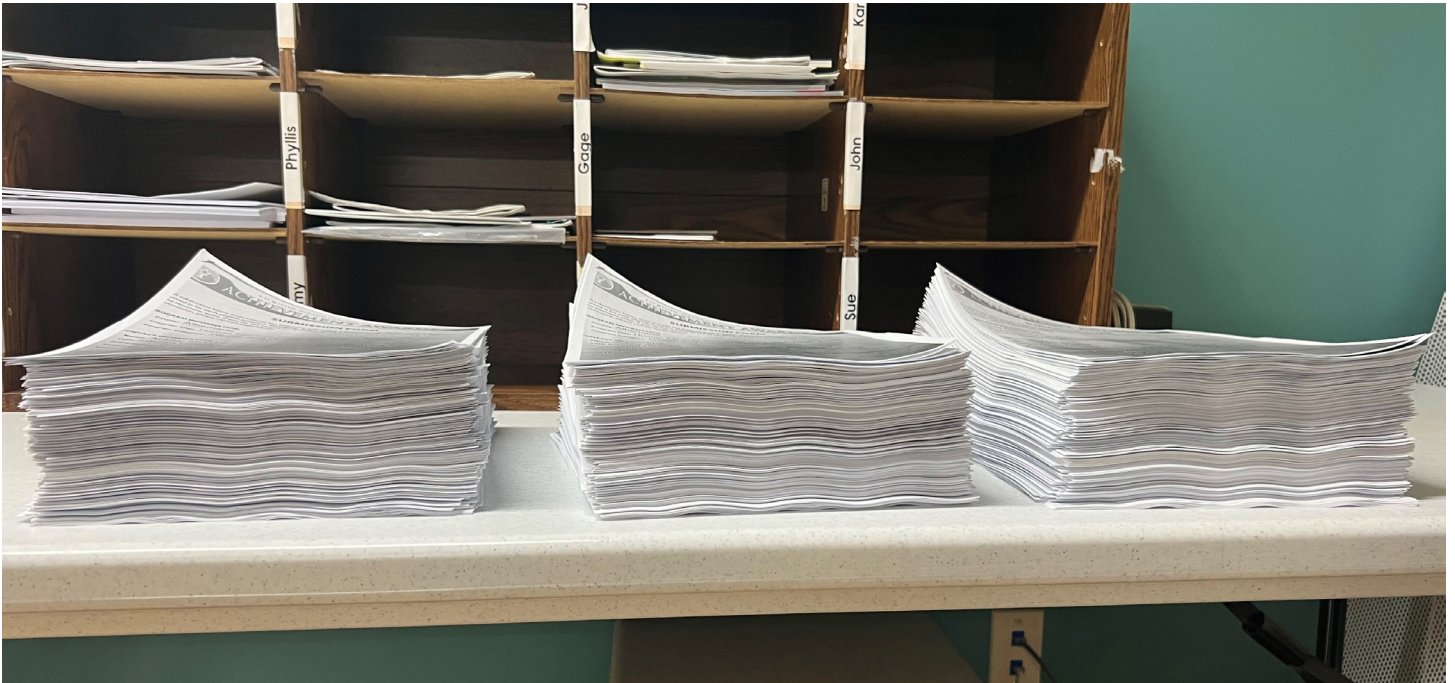
Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears and Virginia 7th Congressional Representative Abigail Spanberger have confirmed their attendance for the August 15 County Officials' Summit in Richmond. Both will speak during the 1130am Virginia Political Trailblazers block.

Also confirming are Virginia Senator Lashrecse Aird and Virginia Delegate Carrie Coyner. Aird will speak about Artificial Intelligence and Elections while Coyner will discuss Housing during the 1015am Legislative Hot Topics block.

The Summit will also feature VACo President Ann Mallek and Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney. Both will kick off the event with words of welcome.

[Please view the agenda](#) and [register today](#) for the County Officials Summit!

We look forward to seeing VACo members on August 15 for a great event.



## VACo Receives 145 Submissions for the Achievement Awards Program

Three stacks of 145 Achievement Awards submissions waiting for the judges to grade. (We also created an electronic database of all the entries.)

The judges for this year are **Charles Hartgrove**, ICMA-CM, Director of the Virginia Institute of Government; **Dr. Sheryl Bailey**, Visiting Professor of Practice at Virginia Tech, and former Chesterfield County Deputy County Administrator; and **W. Canova Peterson**, former Hanover County Supervisor.

Winners will be announced around the first week of August. Thank you and good luck to all who entered.



## JLARC Presents VRS Oversight Report

As part of its July 1 [meeting](#), the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) presented an oversight report of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) as required by the [Code of Virginia](#). The health and well-being of VRS is important to local governments as it administers retirement programs and other benefit programs for state and local government employees, including teachers. VRS receives funds from employer contributions, employee contributions, and investment income.

While information on returns is still being finalized, VRS reported good news that as of March 31, 2024, the Trust fund had a 11.5% return for 1-year period and exceeded the assumed 6.75% rate of return for all other periods. Returns for asset classes met or exceeded nearly all benchmarks. Total Market Fund assets are approximately \$133 billion. The 2024 Appropriations Act reduced contribution rates for state retirement plans, including the Teacher plan. This means that for FY 25-26, the employer contribution rate will be reduced to 14.21%. As of June 30, 2023, the Teacher plan is now approximately 80% funded with \$12 billion remaining in unfunded liabilities. Investment returns are a key source of income for VRS, and meeting or exceeding VRS investment benchmarks is critical to ensuring that employer contributions meant to amortize long-term unfunded liabilities remain low.

VRS serves more than 803,000 active and retired members. Based on assets, VRS is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest public and private pension systems in the United States, and 42<sup>nd</sup> largest in the world. The full report and slides from the meeting can be found [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

VACo Contact: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)

## OSHA Proposes New Emergency Response Standard for Fire Brigades that Creates Potential Unfunded Mandates



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is proposing a [rule](#) to modernize protections for emergency response workers, who often face substantial occupational hazards. This long-developed proposal, officially published in the Federal Register on February 5, 2024, though laudable in its intent, poses potential challenges for local fire organizations and local governments if implemented in its current form.

OSHA's current Fire Brigades standard, 29 CFR 1910.156, provides protection specifically to industrial or private firefighters but no other types of emergency responders. It was published in 1980 and has not been updated with subsequent improvements in personal protective clothing and equipment or advances in safety and health practices. OSHA proposes to replace the existing 29 CFR 1910.156 with the new Emergency Response standard. By expanding on existing standards and potentially applying them to volunteer firefighters, OSHA could impose additional burdens on local governments already struggling to recruit and retain salaried and volunteer firefighters to provide fire protection to their communities. This is especially true of Virginia, where approximately 71% of firefighters are volunteers. The National Volunteer Fire Council elaborates on potential impacts to volunteer fire departments further [here](#).

According to groups like the National League of Cities, recent discussions surrounding the proposed Emergency Response Standard have shed light on significant financial challenges facing local fire departments. These include but are not limited to: potential increases in training and certification requirements for firefighters and officers, additional administrative tasks and documentation requirements, the need to budget for the purchase, maintenance, and replacement of firefighting apparatus, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and communication systems, infrastructure upgrades or modifications to fire department facilities, and additional liability and compliance issues.

As previously [reported](#), local governments across the Commonwealth are struggling to maintain necessary fire services in a time of increased call volume, level state funding, and declining volunteerism. If the proposed rule goes through in its current form, it will pose yet one more challenge to local governments in the form of an unfunded mandate.

The public comment period is open until July 22. VACo intends to submit public comments and will share these with our members. However, if you wish to submit your own public comments, you may do so [here](#).

VACo Contact: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)



Photo Credit: [John Deacon | American Courthouses](#)



## Visit Nelson County and the Nelson County Historic Courthouse

**Location:** 84 Court Street / Main Street

**Built:** 1808 – 1810

**Style:** Greek Revival

**Architect:** Sheldon Crostwait

**Contractor:** George Varnum

**Description:** The building faces south and is a two-story white colored stuccoed brick structure. The rectangular shaped building is located on landscaped grounds in the center of Lovingston with the new courthouse on the north side. The south front has five arches on the first story with a recessed entrance. On the north side are east and west wings with arches. On the hipped roof is an octagonal wood cupola with steep green colored roof. In the interior is a large courtroom with a spectator gallery at the rear with two small stairs against the exterior walls. The gallery is supported by four elongated Tuscan columns and is fronted by a balustrade with molded handrail and turned balusters. Four similar but larger columns support the ceiling. There are two additions: one of ten feet attached to the rear of the original structure and the other is a large lateral wing across the rear of the first addition. Both of these additions were constructed in 1940. The building was remodeled in 1968. In 2015 to 2016, the building was renovated. The architect was Jim Vernon of Architectural Partners and the contractor was Jamerson-Lewis Construction.

**SOURCE:** [courthouses.co](http://courthouses.co)

# VACo 2024 REGIONAL MEETINGS

## IN-PERSON MEETINGS

REGIONS 1&4 - MAY 1 | PRINCE GEORGE

REGION 2 - MAY 22 | JAMES CITY

REGION 13 - JUNE 11 | SCOTT

REGIONS 10&12 - JULY 10 | FLOYD

REGION 3 - JULY 25 | HANOVER

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS

REGIONS 5&9&11 - AUGUST 19

REGIONS 6&7 - SEPTEMBER 23

REGION 8 - SEPTEMBER 26

In Partnership With

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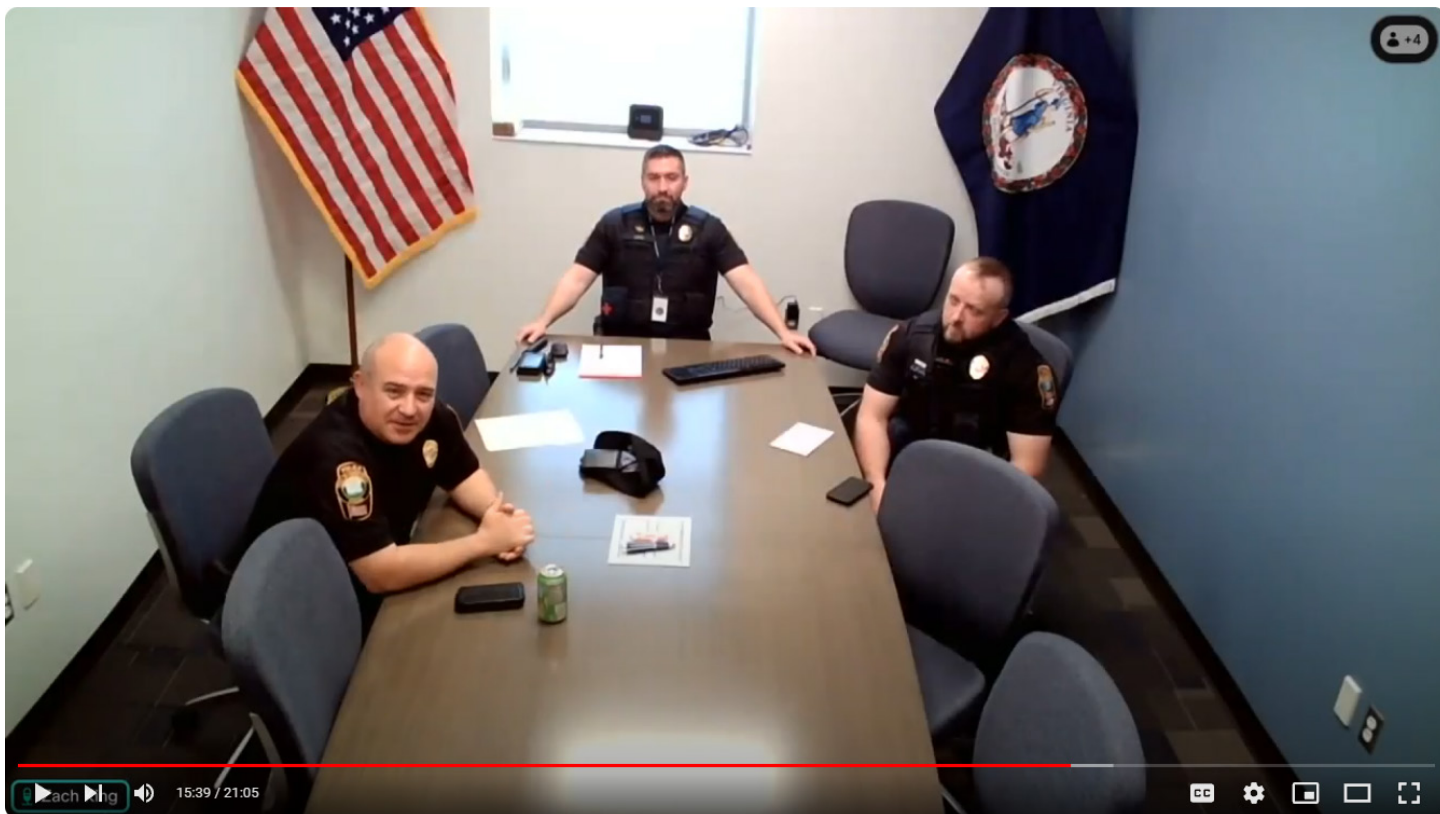
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**Lonnie Pierce, CEO/President**  
[Lonnie@pierceins.com](mailto:Lonnie@pierceins.com)  
Direct Telephone # 252-725-3064

**Donna Pierce, Client Relations**  
[Donna@pierceins.com](mailto:Donna@pierceins.com)  
Direct Telephone # 704-576-0934





## Premier Partner Spotlight

# Blue Line Solutions Testimonials

**Blue Line Solutions** is making a positive impact on communities all over Virginia. In Smyth County - **Blue Line Solutions** recorded during a five-day period that there were 3,530 vehicles traveling through school speed zones at 10mph or higher above the speed limit. That's over 12,000 speeding vehicles a month during school days.

**Blue Line Solutions** uses information and communications rather than focus on enforcement to reduce speeds in school zones.

During **Blue Line Solutions** Public Information Phase of its program in Smyth County - the number dropped to 213 over a five-day period. That's without writing one ticket. The community heard the problem and reacted to it. During the warning phase - the number dropped to 175. Then during the enforcement phase - it dropped to 72. That's a 98 percent reduction of speeders compared to before the **Blue Line Solutions** program.

"That's absolutely fantastic that we can make a difference in a community," Blue Line Solutions CEO/Founder Mark Hutchinson said. ([Click to hear what VACo members are saying about Blue Line Solutions!](#))



## New Kent County Appoints Richard Lawrence, III as New Director of Financial Services



Please welcome Richard Lawrence, III, New Kent County's new Director of Financial Services.

Richard brings nine years of financial analysis and management experience in the fields of regional banking and local government finance to his new role, which began on June 3, 2024.

In his most recent role, Richard served as the Assistant Director of Finance with the City of Fredericksburg assisting with administration of grants and debt service funding for large scale capital projects as well as the creation of the annual capital and operating budget. Other roles with the City include serving as the lead for the City's annual audit and subsequent Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), as well as the Finance Department lead on implementation of a new Enterprise Resource System.

Prior to his time with the City of Fredericksburg, Richard served as a Fiscal Specialist, Senior with King William County and a Branch Manager with Essex Bank. He earned his B.S. at Virginia Commonwealth University and his M.B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

# Prince George County to Host the Dixie Softball World Series July 19 – 31, 2024

PHOTOS CREDIT: Ken Newman  
of Southern Sharp Photography



**Prince George, VA** – More than 800 players and coaches will be traveling to Prince George County July 19 – 31, 2024 for the Dixie Softball World Series. The tournament will take place at JEJ Moore Athletic Complex, located at 11455 Prince George Drive Disputanta, VA 23842. Activities start on Friday, July 23rd with an opening ceremony for all attending teams, and play begins on Saturday, July 20th.

Prince George County will host the Dixie Darlings (ages 7-8), Angels X-Play (ages 9-10), Ponytails X-Play (ages 11-12), and Belles (ages 13-15) at J.E.J. Moore Athletic Complex. Opening ceremonies are scheduled for Friday, July 19, and Friday, July 26, 2024, with tournament play beginning the following day. Championship games for the Ponytails X-Play and Belles are scheduled for July 23.

[More on Next Page](#)





The Darlings and Angels X-Play championship games are scheduled for July 30, 2024. Once released, the schedules and brackets can be found on our website: [www.pgvparksfoundation.org/dixie](http://www.pgvparksfoundation.org/dixie).

Tickets for the tournament will be available to the general public at the tournament. Week-long adult tickets are \$25, and week-long kids (6-12) tickets are \$15. One-day adult tickets are \$10 and one-day kids tickets are \$5.

Sports tournaments like the Dixie World Series provide a boost to the local economy. Per a 2022 Virginia Sports Tourism Impact study conducted by Virginia Tourism Corporation, average trip expenditures for parties attending amateur sports tournaments are estimated at \$1,192 per trip. Virginia's sports tourism industry generated \$2.7 billion in spending across all communities in 2022, a 12% increase from 2021.

“We are excited to host the Dixie Softball World Series tournament,” stated Chairman T.J. Webb. “This will be the second time Prince George County has hosted a Dixie Softball World Series tournament. We know that our community will benefit from this tremendous event as it did in 2021.”

Prince George County would like to thank the sponsors of this event: Wasteknot, The Stodola, Virginia American Water, Prince George Electric Cooperative, Hopewell/Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Johnny's Auto & Truck, AdvanSix, Star Express/Huddle House, Budz with Sudz, Touchstone Bank, Hooper Inc. Surry Seafood Company, W.S. Campbell Towing and Repair and Inn & Suites.

Members of the press who would like to attend and cover the Dixie Softball World Series should contact Jackie Lipford, Public Information Officer for Prince George County, at 804-722-8607 or [jnlipford@princegeorgecountyva.gov](mailto:jnlipford@princegeorgecountyva.gov).



# LUNCH AND LEARN

WITH **DARREN COFFEY**, BERKLEY GROUP PRINCIPAL AND OWNER  
**DR. SCOTT BAKER**, BERKLEY GROUP EXECUTIVE MANAGER

LEARN  
ADVANTAGES TO  
DEVELOPING A  
JOINT COUNTY |  
SCHOOL  
STRATEGIC PLAN

VACo County Members, please come join us for lunch and learn about ways to foster relationships and collaborate with your School Board to develop a strategic plan.

**August 28, 2024 | 11AM-1PM**

VACo Training Center  
1207 East Main Street | Richmond, VA 23219

Lunch compliments of The Berkley Group  
provided by **Sally Bell's Kitchen**

Please RSVP to Karie Walker  
at [kwalker@vaco.org](mailto:kwalker@vaco.org) by August 16.







# Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) Fiscal Years 2025 – 2030 Six-Year Financial Plan Overview

At the June 17 meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) the board was given an update of the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) Six-Year Financial Plan (SYFP). At the same meeting, the CTB was presented with the FY 2025 budgets for the CTF and various transportation agencies. On June 18, 2024, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) unanimously approved the FY 2025 budgets for the CTF, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

## **CTF Six Year Financial Plan Update FY 2025 - 2030:**

The CTF serves as the fund to which all transportation revenues are deposited and then distributed to programs and funds. The SYFP identifies the planned funding for allocation to Highways, Rail, Transit, Ports, Aviation, DMV, and Space Flight. The Preliminary Fiscal Years 2025 – 2030 SYFP allocates **\$54.9 billion total**.

- This includes the use of \$795 million of Route 58 Corridor Bonds and I-81 Financing
- Transfers \$5.8 billion to the three regions for transportation improvements
- Transfers \$838 million in dedicated revenue for WMATA Capital Fund
- Includes \$577 million of dedicated fuel tax revenue for the I-81 Corridor Improvements
- Dedicates \$16.5 billion for Maintenance and Operations
- Provides \$16.98 billion for Construction
  - o Approximately \$3.3 billion of Construction Funding represents Local and Regional Funding for Projects

After the conclusion of the 2024 General Assembly Session, the SYFP was updated to reflect legislative and other changes. Revenue updates post-session show that \$315.7 million total from the General Fund will be provided in FYs 2025 – 2026. Of this:

- \$60.2 million in FY 2025 and \$84.5 million in FY 2026 for Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

- \$70 million for advancement of I-81 Corridor Improvement Program
- \$77 million in FY 2025 and \$24 million in FY 2026 for Toll Relief for eligible drivers on Elizabeth River Crossings

The addition of \$83.7 million in federal earmarks was incorporated into the revenue updates as well. VDOT staff presented allocation updates to reflect changes made post-session as well as administrative changes. The CTF would be impacted through the off the top transfer to the Transportation Partnership Opportunity Fund as passed through the budget ([Chapter 2, Item 438, K. 1.](#)) This amounts to a transfer of \$15 million per year for FY 2025 – 2029. There is a paving need to achieve performance targets which requires additional funding in FY 2025. The SYFP allocation update shows a one-time additional allocation for VDOT Maintenance Program of \$202.5 million and a corresponding share for localities that equates to \$61.5 million. The agency also has adjusted the SYFP to incorporate pay raises for administrative programs. Allocations were updated to include other previously mentioned items like the toll relief program and WMATA funding.

### **CTF 2025 Budget:**

The approved CTF 2025 budget revenues total \$10 billion, which represents an increase of 2.5% from the 2024 CTF budget. A funding breakdown can be found on slide 11 [here](#). To read the full CTF approved budget for FY 2025 click [here](#), the document begins on page 5.

### **VDOT 2025 Budget:**

The approved VDOT budget totals \$8.9 billion. The Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund (HMOF) has an expected deficit of \$829 million which will be filled with \$319 million of federal funds and the crossover of \$510 million of state funds from the Construction Fund. To find a breakdown of the allocations, please view slide 16 [here](#). Click [here](#) and scroll to page 18 to view the detailed VDOT budget document.

### **DRPT Six-Year Improvement Program and FY 2025 Budget:**

DRPT presented its Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP) and its 2025 budget. Both were approved by the CTB.

The total DRPT SYIP 2025-2030 shows an investment of \$6.536 billion in the Commonwealth's transit and rail programs over the coming years. \$5.250 billion of which is dedicated to transit, and \$1.296 billion to rail.

In FY 2025, DRPT plans on investing \$1.208 billion in state, federal, and local resources towards improving public transportation and rail capacity across the Commonwealth. This represents \$167.8 million more in expenditures than FY 2024. Transit budget for FY 2025 is \$983.2 million, which is \$146.8 million more than FY 2024 budget. This increase is driven by the General Fund appropriation for additional WMATA operating assistance and an increase in capital project costs. The FY 2025 budget for Rail is \$42.5 million which consists of funding for freight and rail planning projects, shortline preservation, and rail industrial access programs. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) receives 93% of revenue from the Commonwealth Rail Fund, estimated to be \$162.9 million in FY 2025. A breakdown of specific rail and transit projects can be found starting on slide 5 [here](#). To view the DRPT budget in its entirety, click [here](#) and scroll to page 52.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

# VACo 90th Annual Conference

November 10 – 12, 2024

The Omni Homestead | Bath County



This year's Annual Conference theme - **“Energizing County Governments”** - was selected because of VACo's collective energy and momentum that has jolted counties to many successes. We are proud of our accomplishments and service to our communities.

Join county and state leaders from all over the Commonwealth on November 10-12 at the Omni Homestead for [VACo's 90th Annual Conference](#).

Stay tuned for registration and hotel information, which will be shared soon.

# NACo Annual Conference to Drop Anchor in Florida



[The 2024 NACo Annual Conference](#) will draw more than 3,000 county officials July 12-15 to Hillsborough County, Fla. where they will swap solutions and address the challenges facing local governments.

With four mobile workshops and three programming summits, attendees will have the opportunity for in-depth discussions about how best to effectively serve their counties in challenging times. Three or four spots on NACo's executive committee are at stake, with the second vice presidency up for a vote July 15 during the Annual Business Meeting.

Cascade County, Mont. Commissioner Joe Briggs, Mecklenburg County, N.C. Commissioner George Dunlap and Charlotte County, Fla. Commissioner Bill Truex are facing off, and you can read their candidate platforms beginning on Page 6. Regional caucuses will choose their representatives in the Northeast and Central regions, with the potential for an election in the West region, to boot. Attendees will hear from magnetic speakers during General Sessions, including Tareq Azim on Saturday, July 13. A personal development expert, he created the Afghan Women's Boxing Federation after returning to his homeland more than 25 years after his family fled.

Also at Saturday's General Session look for a report from the NACo Commission on Mental Health and Wellbeing.

On Sunday, July 14, three-time Olympic gymnast Dominique Dawes will address attendees.

On July 12, members of 10 policy steering committees will determine the direction that NACo will take its advocacy in the coming year. They will hear from high-level speakers who represent leading schools of

[More on Next Page](#)



thought in their issue areas, giving county leaders the most informed perspectives to drive their work in the field.

July 13 will see NACo's Large Urban County Caucus, Rural Action Caucus and Western Interstate Region gather to compare notes on emerging trends. NACo's Artificial Intelligence Exploratory Committee will release its county toolkit, following more than a year examining the rapidly spreading technology's potential, and threat, to county management.

Three educational summits and four mobile workshop tours will headline July 14.

**Charting the Path Ahead: A Blueprint for Economic Prosperity:** This summit will examine growth and decline factors and how county leaders can capitalize on those trends to build more resilient and innovative local economies. Experts and county leaders will discuss how to bolster their workforces, strengthen local industries and develop effective planning mechanisms for sustainable business growth.

**Investing in the Future of Our Youth:** This summit will offer practical approaches for supporting youth of all ages and increasing the likelihood that they become lifelong advocates in shaping the future of their communities, with an emphasis on prenatal to age 3. Counties can close the gaps in assistance to young people and families, and these speakers can help county leaders position their resources to do so effectively.

**Navigating Current Global Trends Across Western Democracies:** Democratic systems around the world face new and pernicious challenges and local governments are not immune — including misinformation and disinformation, erosion of public trust and misaligned incentives for political polarization. Participants will explore strategies to boost effective public engagement, align community values, improve civic education and build trust in the public sector — a must-have for county governments. Mobile workshop tours will include:

**Apollo Beach Nature Preserve:** Over the last 28 years, the county and its partnering agencies have restored native habitats, including estuarine marsh, tidal creeks, beach dunes and upland islands and added amenities, including nature trails, picnic pavilions, beach access and an ADA-accessible observation tower.

**Hillsborough County Resource Recovery Facility:** A waste-to-energy facility incinerates garbage — up to 1,800 tons a day — to produce renewable energy to power adjacent Hillsborough County infrastructure, with the excess power sold back to the grid.

**Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park and Museum:** The park's Veterans Resource Center is a one-stop shop showcasing the teamwork of local, state and federal partners dedicated to serving those who served.

**University of South Florida's Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation:** One of the world's largest, free-standing simulation facilities exclusively dedicated to training healthcare professionals is also a key player in the development of the region's economy.

Attendees will also network with county professional staff who compose NACo's affiliate groups and find fellowship in affinity groups who will meet and discuss their organization's plans for the coming year.

# 2024 EMERGING TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE



**Start Date:** 7/17/2024 | 9:30AM

**End Date:** 7/18/2024 | 12PM

**Venue Name:** Hilton Short Pump

**Location:** 12042 West Broad Street | Richmond, VA

**Organization Name:** Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police

**Contact:** Audrey Altovilla | [audrey@vachiefs.org](mailto:audrey@vachiefs.org) | 804.285.8227

**Who:** Communications Professionals, IT professionals, Public Sector/Emergency Communication Leaders

**What:** Converge at the crossroads of technology and public safety

**Why:** Prepare your organization for converging technology in an evolving threat landscape

**When:** July 17 and 18, 2024

**Where:** Richmond Short Pump Hilton, 12042 W Broad Street Richmond, VA 23233

**Topics Include:** AI, GIS, Cybersecurity, IoT, and Converged Communications

**Conference Registration Fee:** \$100 (Attendees only, all those who sell LE related products/services will be removed)

If you are interested in exhibiting or sponsoring this event, please download the [SPONSORSHIP FORM](#) or contact [audrey@vachiefs.org](mailto:audrey@vachiefs.org).

[AGENDA NOW AVAILABLE](#) | [REGISTER TODAY](#) | [VISIT WEBSITE](#)

# VOF opens \$1.7M grant round for open-space projects



## VIRGINIA OUTDOORS FOUNDATION

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) is making \$1.7 million available from its Preservation Trust Fund program for grants that protect open space.

Preservation Trust Fund grants for the fall 2024 grant round will prioritize projects that result in significant public access, but funds may also be used for projects that protect exceptional conservation values such as water quality, historic and cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and high-quality farmland and forestland. A real estate interest must either be acquired by a local government or conveyed to VOF to be eligible for funding, and protection must meet the requirements of Virginia's Open-Space Land Act. Applications must be submitted online by 5 p.m. on August 8, 2024. Eligibility requirements, sample applications, a timeline, and other materials may be found online at <https://vof.org/ptf>.

VOF will host a one-hour Preservation Trust Fund Grant Workshop Webinar on Tuesday, July 2, 2024 from 1-2 p.m. using Microsoft Teams. The webinar will address key program requirements and criteria, provide guidance on material to submit with the application and share tips on navigating the grant portal. Registration is required. [Visit the program web page to register.](#)

VOF encourages potential applicants to contact staff prior to applying to discuss eligibility and seek guidance on producing a successful application. Contact [grants@vof.org](mailto:grants@vof.org) or call (434) 282-7054 with questions or for information on how to apply. To discuss ideas at greater length, use <https://doodle.com/bp/emilynelson/time-to-talk> to schedule a 30-minute meeting with grant program staff.

[Click here for more information.](#)

# VACo Appoints Katie Boyle as Deputy Director



**RICHMOND (June 21, 2024)**—The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) is pleased to announce [the appointment](#) of **Katie Boyle** as Deputy Director. Boyle joined VACo on July 1, 2016, and has been an integral part of the advocacy team as Director of Government Affairs covering finance, elections, and health and human resources.

“Katie is an outstanding team member, who has been a leader and a tremendous supporter to our team for many years,” VACo Executive Director **Dean Lynch** said. “In her new role, Katie will continue to ensure the continuity of VACo’s operations in advocacy, education, community engagement, communications, and business development. Over time, she will also take on a more significant role in our administrative functions.”

Boyle is a highly respected lobbyist who is known for her intelligence, tenacity, and work ethic. Boyle is a comforting ally to many VACo members who seek her expertise on an array of legislative issues.

“I’ve truly enjoyed working with the VACo team, our Board of Directors, and our members, and I’m honored and excited to be supporting VACo in new ways,” Boyle said.

Boyle arrived at VACo after 11 years in Fairfax County where she steadily rose through the ranks. She was named Deputy Legislative Director in 2013 and advocated on behalf of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on a variety of legislative issues before the General Assembly.

Boyle holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English Language and Literature from the University of Virginia.



# Budgeting 5% Return on all Cash In 2025

By Joe Rulison



To budget effectively for 2025, particularly regarding interest income from cash reserves, it is crucial to take proactive steps now. Here's a comprehensive approach based on the current economic outlook:

1. **Monitor current short-term interest rates.** I expect them to stay around 5.0% for the remainder of 2024, due to ongoing inflation management by the Federal Reserve. In regard to 2025, you should anticipate a decrease in short-term rates, averaging between 4.0% and 4.5% as the economy softens without entering a recession.
2. **Proactively manage liquidity by incorporating data analytics.** Thoroughly review the time horizon for all cash reserves and assess any potential stress scenarios. This should also be coordinated with your financial institutions and advisors. In doing so, look to extend the maturities of your cash investments, aiming to lock in higher rates (above 5.0%) now to average out at 5.0% throughout 2025.
3. **Take these action steps:** Review and act now! Immediate action is needed if you haven't already started. By locking in higher rates now, you can ensure better returns for 2025. Ensure that your liquidity management is allowing for safe and accessible cash for day-to-day needs.

[By following these steps](#), you can maintain strong interest income from your cash reserves, and benefit taxpayers and students with favorable rates on taxes or tuition for 2025.

# PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Talking Solar with **Michael Zehner**  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
The Berkley Group

**Part 1**  
*Helping Counties Navigate the Land Use  
Challenges and Opportunities*

**WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP**



# PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Talking Solar with **Michael Zehner**  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
The Berkley Group

**Part 2**  
*The Legislative and Regulatory Framework  
for Approving Applications in Virginia*

**WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP**



# PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Talking Solar with **Michael Zehner**  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
The Berkley Group

**Part 3**  
*The Future Energy Landscape of Virginia*

**WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP**



Talking Energy with the Berkley Group's Director of Planning & Community Development **Michael Zehner.**

Join us for this 3-part series. Click on each panel to view videos.

See how **Blue Line Solutions** helped **Smyth County** become a safer community **VIDEO**



**Mark Hutchinson | CEO/Founder  
Blue Line Solutions**



What makes **Blue Line Solutions** stand out? **VIDEO**





# Aetna® Statewide Wellness Campaign Brings Comprehensive Master Planning and Wellness Programming to Your County

VACo Premier Partner Aetna believes healthier happens together. That's why Aetna has teamed up with [National Fitness Campaign](#) to address health disparities by increasing access to health and wellness solutions for Virginia Counties.

**In Part 1 of this video series**, you'll hear from **Dean Lynch**, VACo Executive Director, **Trent Matthias**, National Fitness Campaign Director, **Bill Deal**, Head of Sales, Public Sector and Labor, Keystone and Capital Markets of Aetna on the exciting new statewide sponsorship and what it can deliver for your county.

**In Part 2**, learn more about the feasibility study process available for your county and hear from leaders in Virginia like [Pulaski County](#) and the [Town of Dumfries](#) who have successfully launched and integrated the comprehensive wellness campaign in their communities.

## Additional Resources

- [Virginia Campaign](#) – Funding Outdoor Fitness Courts across the state
- [Campaign Video](#) – How the fitness court campaign got started, how it works, and how it involves and impacts communities.
- [Outdoor Fitness Court in Pulaski County](#)
- [Outdoor Fitness Court in the Town of Dumfries](#)
- Please click [here](#) to learn more about getting started!

## Aetna Contact

Marcus Duckworth, VP, Client Management | [DuckworthM@aetna.com](mailto:DuckworthM@aetna.com)



## Part 1

[Discover how Aetna's exciting new statewide wellness program can help your county](#)



## Part 2

[Hear from Pulaski County and the Town of Dumfries, which have successfully launched and integrated Aetna's comprehensive wellness campaign](#)





# PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT

What it means for your community

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We are Blue Line Solutions, standing out from other traffic safety firms. Founded by former law enforcement, we combine over 300 years of experience with a commitment to saving lives. Our mission is clear – to enhance safety, reduce vehicle speed, and empower law enforcement agencies with advanced tools to prevent and combat dangerous speed efficiently.



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**Western Virginia RSM Greg Hogston**  
276-759-8064  
ghogston@bluelinesolutions.org

**Eastern Virginia RSM Randy Campbell**  
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# VACo Seeks to Create Mentorship Program for Supervisors



Dear Members/County Administrators...

VACo is blessed to have many smart and experienced Supervisors. This year we welcomed a slew of newly elected Supervisors, some of whom have expressed interest in being mentored. VACo thrives when Supervisors connect and share experiences and challenges. Therefore, we would like to establish an informal, voluntary mentoring program to offer opportunities for personalized connections among Supervisors.

If you are interested in being a mentor or being connected with a mentor, please contact Karie Walker, [kwalker@vaco.org](mailto:kwalker@vaco.org) or 804-343-2504.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

**Karie Walker**  
Director of Programs and Development  
Virginia Association of Counties





## You are VAcorp

You are not merely a customer of VAcorp; you **are** VAcorp! We are both owned and governed by you – our members! VAcorp is created under 15.2-2700 of the local government code where all assets and surplus belong to the members. In addition, VAcorp is controlled by a Supervisory Board that is elected from and by our members. The Board determines and approves all major risk pool decisions, and as a voting member, you have a voice in the decisions that matter most.

### Know Who You Are

Because you are VAcorp itself, we think it is critical that you understand exactly what VAcorp is and why it exists. Many simply think of us as their “insurance carrier” – writing customized coverages and handling claims when they occur – but we are so much more!

## Our History

### The Birth of Risk Pools

VAcorp is not an insurance company, but rather a Risk Pool.

Unstable economic conditions in the mid-1980s led to a commercial insurance crisis with ballooning premiums and widespread policy cancellations. As a result, Risk Pools began to form as an alternative to volatile traditional carriers, allowing Pool members to exert more control over their coverages and costs. Today, almost all public sector entities throughout the country get their coverage from Risk Pools rather than from commercial insurance companies.

### VAcorp’s Origin

VAcorp was founded by a handful of Virginia counties in 1993. The ultimate goals of the program were to provide **cost stability**, the most **comprehensive coverages** possible, and **custom services** tailored specifically to the unique needs of our members. While we are pleased by how well our prices compare against the competition, our goal was never to guarantee the lowest cost. Instead, we promised to avoid the wild price swings that we’ve seen in other providers and provide stable pricing year after year, and that is exactly what we have delivered. VAcorp rates are actually **lower today in 2024 than they were in 1993!**

### VAcorp’s Growth

Today, VAcorp is the **largest self-insurance risk pool** for public sector entities in the Commonwealth with a membership retention rate of better than 98%. Over the years, we have expanded beyond counties to include municipalities, school divisions, authorities, volunteer fire & rescue companies, state agencies, and non-profits funded by taxpayer dollars. **Over 560 members** have joined VAcorp, including 8 of the 10 largest counties, 8 of the 10 largest cities, and 8 of the 10 largest school divisions. We believe that the extraordinary success of the program can be attributed to our unwavering commitment to our founding principles.

## VAcorp Exists to Serve You

VAcorp was created solely to serve Virginia's public sector entities, and from day one until now, we have never lost sight of that purpose. Because we answer only to our members, every decision is designed to benefit the group over the long haul.

VAcorp advocates for local government through a myriad of partnerships with affiliated associations including: VACo, VSBA, VLGMA, VASS, VFGOA, VASBO, LGA, Regional Jail Association, PDC, etc. While there is a cost associated with these partnerships, they add value to the group by aiding in our ability to lobby the General Assembly on behalf of our members.

You may not always see the immediate payoff, but every VAcorp decision is made in alignment with our vision to serve our members and promote the health and longevity of your program.

Take a look at a few of VAcorp's milestones over the years:

- **1993** - VAcorp is established with 12 founding members and less than \$700,000 in annual contribution.
- **1998** - VAcorp terminates service contract with claims administration vendor and hires staff to promote more control and efficiency.
- **1999** - VAcorp offers coverage to K-12 Public Schools across the Commonwealth.
- **2001** - VAcorp begins offering Public Officials Liability coverage in response to VARisk offering limited coverage.
- **2004** - VAcorp begins providing Environmental Liability coverage to all members at no additional cost. Even in 2024, VAcorp is the only provider offering this coverage with a low \$25,000 deductible. Other providers offer this coverage with a \$250,000 deductible.
- **2008** - VAcorp responded to the great recession by freezing rates and providing financial relief with over \$8,000,000 in dividends to members.
- **2011** - VAcorp introduces Line of Duty Act (LODA) coverage, creates the only LODA trust in the state, and absorbs existing LODA losses in response to the state pushing this cost to the local level. VAcorp paid all of its members' 2010 past liability for over \$1,000,000.
- **2013** - VAcorp merges with the VSBA Self-Insurance Group and assumes their liabilities to prevent School Boards from being assessed. This action saves Local Governments in excess of \$5,000,000.
- **2013** - VAcorp becomes the first to offer Cyber Risk coverage in Virginia offering the broadest coverage available to local governments anywhere in the US.
- **2016** - VAcorp offers Student Accident and Catastrophic Accident coverage in order to fill VHSL coverage gaps.
- **2020** - VAcorp provides over \$5,000,000 in rate credits during the COVID pandemic to assist members.
- **2023** - VAcorp includes security risk management coverage (active shooter) for all members (coverage has been included for Schools since 2013).





## Aetna® Statewide Wellness Campaign Brings Comprehensive Master Planning and Wellness Programming to Your County

Accessible world-class outdoor wellness infrastructure for communities and schools across Virginia is now being made possible thanks to the new sponsorship [announced last month](#) between [National Fitness Campaign](#) and [Aetna®](#). Here's what this means for your County:

- Ability to work with experts on comprehensive wellness master-planning services in alignment with County goals;
- Support with community consensus, to engage people to spend more time outdoors to improve physical and mental well-being;
- Invitation to qualify for grants from a pool of \$350,000 in funding that is now available for municipalities and schools across Virginia to build a wellness culture as part of the Aetna® campaign.



Most recently, the Town of Dumfries and Mayor Derrick Wood [celebrated the first Fitness Court® Studio in the state this past fall](#) after responding to community voices who were asking for enhanced outdoor recreation options in their community. Residents can now walk, jog or cycle to their free Fitness Court® Studio at Ginn Memorial Park. Dumfries joins Loudoun County, Pulaski County and a number of other municipalities as the campaign continues to grow across Virginia.

Grant funding and comprehensive planning services will be allocated to support municipalities, schools, and organizations across the state in joining the growing NFC wellness campaign, an award-winning initiative now celebrating its 500th Healthy Community in America.

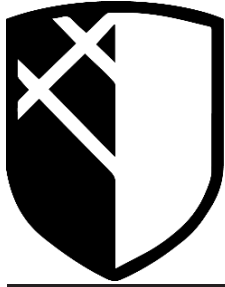
VACo is pleased to share this opportunity with our members who may be interested in qualifying for funding and sponsorship. If you would like to learn more about the Aetna® wellness campaign in Virginia and how to qualify, please fill out the short contact form at [nationalfitnesscampaign.com/virginia](https://nationalfitnesscampaign.com/virginia).

Briefings with NFC require attendance from the Park Director, Public Health Director and/or County Manager/Administrator to qualify for funding and participation in Virginia.

**Let's build a healthier Virginia, together.**

[Learn More About the Campaign in Virginia](#)





# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

**WE MAKE LEADERS BETTER**

## **NACo Cyberattack Simulation**

### **Simulation Topic: Supplier Management Access**

We'd like to share that our **June '24** simulation has been fully sponsored! That means you and an unlimited number of your colleagues/peers can join the virtual training at **NO COST**. Details to review and share with your network are below -- both public and private sector cybersecurity managers and risk leaders are welcome to attend.

### **Simulation Topic: Supplier Management Access**

**Virtual: June 17 - 21**

**[Register Here](#) - No Cost**

Effective supplier management is integral to the operational efficiency of any organization, yet it poses inherent cybersecurity risks, especially concerning supplier access to sensitive systems and data. This cyber attack simulation focuses on evaluating the vulnerabilities and potential threats associated with supplier access including third-party vendor breaches, unauthorized use of supplier credentials, and supplier-initiated cyber threats. The simulation aims to foster a deeper comprehension of the complexities surrounding supplier access risks and to facilitate the development and testing of robust strategies for mitigating these risks effectively.

### **WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?**

Designed with a daily commitment of 45 to 90 minutes for the duration of one week, activities can be accessed anywhere online and can be completed at the convenience of the participant's schedule. The intentionally designed data injections followed by participant responses (nine in total) foster high levels of engagement that assess current preparedness and tools to close security gaps.

### **WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?**

The cyberattack simulation is designed for any cybersecurity manager as well as teams responsible for risk defense, protection, and recovery (including managers in HR, policy, finance, public safety, and emergency services).

**REGISTER TODAY: [sign up here!](#)**

If you have any questions, please email the Academy at [moderator@pdaleadership.com](mailto:moderator@pdaleadership.com).

The Professional Development Academy | [www.pdaleadership.com](http://www.pdaleadership.com)  
Cyberattack Simulation Training: *for a growing threat landscape.*



## OneDigital is thrilled to be one of VACo's newest Premier Partners.

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OneDigital has a track record of providing cost-saving solutions to counties. This has been achieved through creative funding strategies, rate holds, and exclusive partnerships with various carriers. One of these exclusive partnerships is through VACORP and Anthem Life. OneDigital is responsible for the inception of the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) which is through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). Our team of fierce advocates negotiated a 5-year locked rate, including short-term and long-term disability benefits. Your division may already work with us in this capacity, as we currently serve over 270 public sector entities in the VLDP program.



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**Sarah Anne Struckmann**  
**Business Development Executive**  
 sarah.struckmann@onedigital.com  
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The Virginia Association of Counties accepts employment ads in a PDF file or a link to a job site. Please include information for applying, and a link to other important information. Please do not fax your employment ad. VACo members are not charged for placing an employment ad. **The cost is \$100 per ad for non-VACo members.** VACo publishes the ad on its website and mobile app as well as the upcoming County Connections issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please email [Valerie Russell](mailto:Valerie.Russell).

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## VALUE OF VACo



### ADVOCACY

VACo's lobbying efforts have helped stem the tide of unfunded mandates and have saved Counties millions of dollars every year.



### EDUCATION

Our educational programs offer County leaders and staff opportunities to become more effective in their communities.



### MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Some of VACo's best moments are when members convene and work to improve communities all over the Commonwealth.



### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Our business development opportunities offer savings and innovative approaches to delivering services at the County level.

## VACo LEADERSHIP



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Albemarle County



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

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