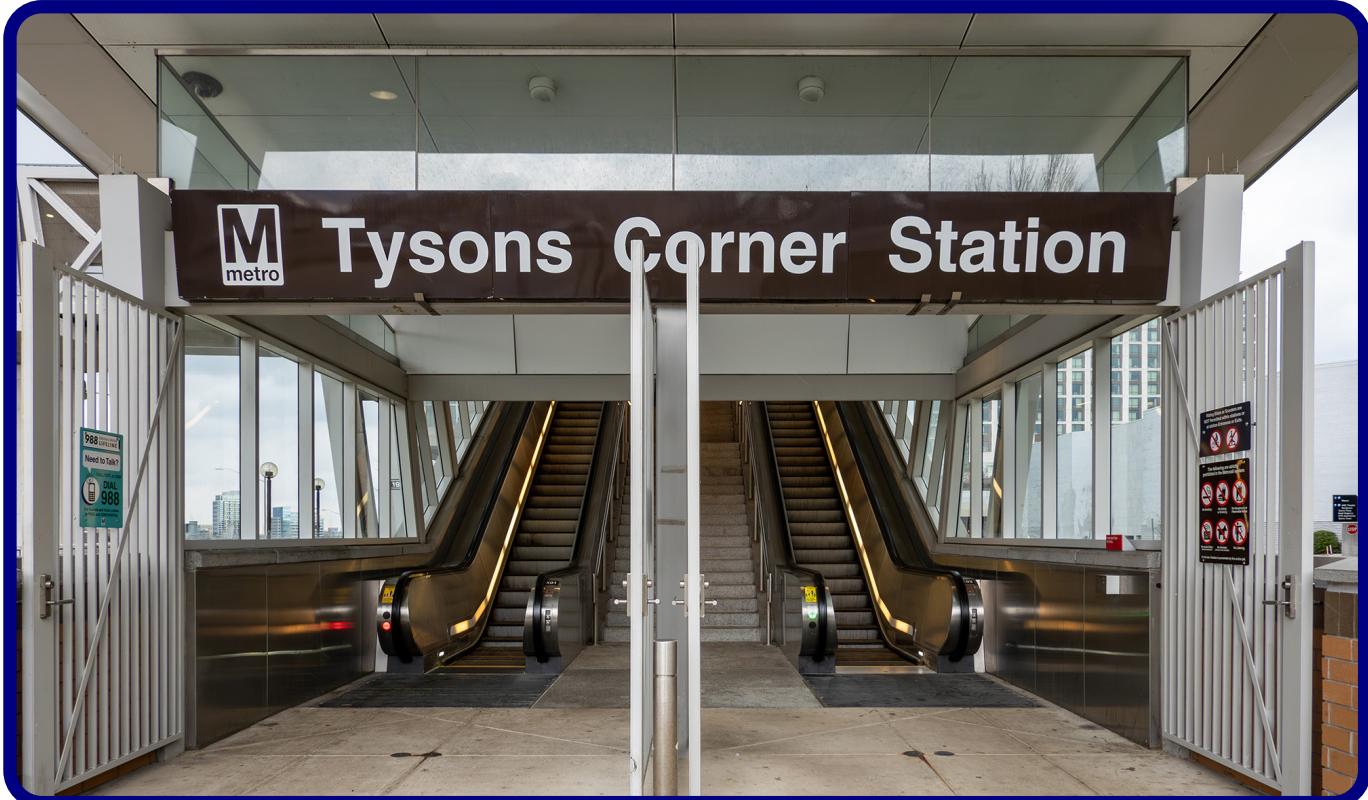


## Transit Legislative Funding Bills of Interest Introduced



Multiple bills have been introduced during the General Assembly session aimed at raising revenues for transit and other public transportation purposes. VACo expected bills that address transit funding to be filed this year as the Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee (SJ 28) [formally transmitted](#) its recommendations to legislators in November 2025. All the bills introduced so far vary but generally raise certain taxes and fees and dedicate them for transit and public transportation purposes.

[HB900 \(Sullivan\)](#) would decrease the statewide retail sales and use tax from 4.3 percent to 4 percent and expand such tax to taxable services and digital personal property beginning on January 1, 2027.

Furthermore, the bill imposes additional retail sales and use tax in any county or city:

- That is a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) at the rate of 0.385 percent
- That is embraced by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority but that is not a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission at the rate of 0.615 percent
- That is a member of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) at the rate of 0.2 percent

The bill would also impose a retail delivery fee in the amount of 20 cents upon each retail delivery made in any county or city located within the Northern Virginia Transportation District. Lastly, the bill would impose a regional highway use fee on all vehicles in the Commonwealth that are subject to the existing highway use fee. This additional fee would be 29.34 percent of the amount of the current highway use fee assessed. This regional highway use fee would, depending on where a vehicle is garaged, be allocated to the proposed Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission Regional Fund or the existing Commonwealth Transportation Fund.

HB 900 would have the funds generated from these various proposals be deposited in the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission Regional Fund. These two funds would then be used to benefit public transportation efforts in the NVTC and PRTC regions through supporting the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Virginia Railway Express and local transit agencies.

[\*\*HB 1179 \(Tran\)\*\*](#) and [\*\*SB 638 \(Ebbin\)\*\*](#) are similar bill to HB 990 in that it would create the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission Regional Fund along with imposing various taxes with the revenue generated being put toward public transportation purposes.

As we saw with HB 990 and SB 603, HB 1179 would create a regional highway use fee in addition to the highway use fee already assessed. The regional fee would be 29.34% of the amount of the current highway use fee assessed. This regional highway use fee would, depending on where a vehicle is garaged, be allocated to the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission Regional Fund or the Commonwealth Transportation Fund.

HB 1179 would impose an additional retail sales tax of 0.2 percent in any locality that is a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission or the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission. The revenue generated and collected from this additional retail sales tax would be deposited in the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund for revenue from any county or city that is a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission or the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission Regional Fund for revenue from any county or city that is a member of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission.

This bill would also impose a transportation network companies tax. A transportation network company (TNC) is a person who provides prearranged rides using a digital platform that connects passengers with TNC partners. Common examples are Lyft and Uber. The transportation network companies tax would be levied at a rate of 4.3 percent statewide and at an additional 1.9 percent within localities that are members of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. Revenues generated from the statewide portion of the tax would be deposited into the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF), which supports all public transit agencies across Virginia. Revenues generated from the additional northern Virginia specific portion of the tax would be deposited in the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund.

This legislation would also impose a retail delivery fee of 50 cents per retail delivery made in the Commonwealth. In addition to the 50 cents fee, retail deliveries made in any county or city that is a member of the NVTC will be charged an extra 25 cents. The revenue generated from the statewide fee

would be deposited in the CMTF while the NVTC portion of the fee would be deposited into the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund.

Lastly, this bill would impose a regional commercial parking tax in any locality that is a member of the NVTC. The regional commercial parking tax would be 10% of the gross receipts for parking or storing motor vehicles or trailers in a public commercial parking lot. There are some exclusions to this tax and all revenue generated is to be deposited in the Northern Virginia Transportation District Regional Fund.

**HB 978 Watts** would expand the retail sales and use tax to many services not previously covered. The bill also imposes the retail sales and use tax on digital personal property.

Revenues generated by the taxes levied on services and digital personal property shall be allocated in the same manner as other sales and use taxes; however, revenues from the state portion of the sales and use tax that would be allocated to the general fund shall instead be allocated as follows:

- Revenue generated by the imposition of such tax on delivery services in the Northern Virginia Transportation District shall be distributed to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
- All other revenues generated by the imposition of such tax on delivery services shall be distributed to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund.
- Of the remaining revenues raised, 60 percent shall be distributed to localities on the basis of school-age population and 40 percent shall be distributed to localities on the basis of the high-need student population in the locality.

The bill clarifies that a high-need student population includes students who are:

- Automatically certified for free school meals because of participation in social services programs
- Participants in a program of special education, or
- English language learners.

The bill provides certain exemptions to the sales and use tax on services.

Finally, the bill exempts food purchased for human consumption and essential personal hygiene products from all state, local, and regional sales taxes on and after July 1, 2026.

VACo staff will continue to monitor and track these bills as they are heard and will be sure to provide updates when applicable. VACo staff believes these bills and their contents will be folded into one larger transportation funding bill at some point during the Session. VACo remains dedicated to advocating for transportation funding policies that empower counties to address their evolving infrastructure needs effectively and to foster economic development.

**VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)**

# Enter the 2026 VACo Achievement Awards

**Deadline is Friday, April 3, 2026**



Dear VACo Members –

It's time for the 2026 Achievement Awards Program. Any county department is eligible to compete so **ENTER NOW!**

## **2026 Achievement Awards Submission Form**

All entries are required to be submitted in electronic form. No paper copy submissions are necessary. The electronic submissions should be a PDF or WORD file. **Electronic submissions through [this link](#) must be received by Friday, April 3, 2026.**

Last year, **[we processed 155 entries](#)** and selected 57 winners from over 32 Counties. VACo presented awards at Board of Supervisors Meetings, recognized winners at the 91st Annual Conference, and issued a news release to statewide media.

The judges for the 2026 Achievement Awards will be announced soon.

VACo has received more than 1,200 entries over the past decade. Last year's Best Achievement winner was **Wythe County** for its "**Hitachi Energy Arena Revitalization**" program.

VACo encourages all Counties, big and small, to enter the 2026 Achievement Awards Program. Please contact **[gcharter@vaco.org](mailto:gcharter@vaco.org)** with questions or for more information.

**[Achievement Awards Submission Form](#) | [Achievement Awards Website](#)**  
**[2025 Achievement Awards Press Release](#) | [Past Achievement Award Winners](#)**

# VA250

## Celebrating Virginia's History: AAF Tank Museum

Visit Pittsylvania County!

Photo Source:  
[AAF Tank Museum](#)  
[Facebook](#)



The AAF Tank Museum is a living memorial dedicated to the Tank and Cavalry soldiers of the world. Before 1981 some of the artifacts that make up the AAF Tank Museum was a private collection belonging to Mr. William Gasser. Mr. Gasser felt that his collection would be beneficial in educating present and future generations to the sacrifices made and the technologies gained during war. Therefore, in 1981 the AAF Tank Museum was established as a non-profit charitable organization, and Mr. Gasser's donated his private collection to the Tank Museum. Mr. Gasser is still active as Volunteer Director and Curator of the Tank Museum and his knowledge of military history has been a great asset to the museum.

SOURCE: [VA250](#)

**JANUARY 2026**

January 23 to March 27 | **Supervisors' Certification Program (Budget Module)** | VACo Headquarters

January 14 | **General Assembly Convenes** | Richmond

**FEBRUARY 2026**

February 5 | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | Omni Richmond Hotel

February 5 | **VACo County Government Day at the General Assembly** | Omni Richmond Hotel

February 6-7 | **Board Chairpersons' Institute** | Omni Richmond Hotel and VACo Headquarters

February 21-24 | **NACo Legislative Conference** | Washington, D.C.

**APRIL 2026**

April to September | **VACo Regional Meetings** | TBA

**MAY 2026**

May 1 to June 26 | **Supervisors' Certification Program (Land Use and Planning Module)** | VACo Headquarters

TBA | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | Prince William County

**JULY 2026**

July 17-20 | **NACo 2025 Annual Conference & Exposition** | Orleans Parish/New Orleans, LA

**AUGUST 2026**

August 13 | **VACo County Officials' Summit** | Omni Richmond Hotel

August 14 | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | VACo Headquarters

August to October | **Supervisors' Certification Program (Leadership Module)** | VACo Headquarters

**NOVEMBER 2026**

November 7-10 | **VACo 92nd Annual Conference** | The Omni Homestead

November 8 | **VACo Board of Directors Meeting** | The Omni Homestead



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#### Strategic Tax Strategy

- Offering a smarter path to budget resilience and employee retention.
  - A proactive approach to healthcare
  - Works within your existing benefits structure
  - Built for self-funded environments
- Proven to lower budget stress in public and private sectors
  - Provides a positive impact in bolstering recruitment and employee retention
  - Predictable results = easier budgeting
- Empowers employees through individually prescribed preventative care and education

## Get to Know Your Associate Members - Golden Transcription Services (GTS)

Golden Transcription Services (GTS) is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year of providing meeting minutes for public bodies across the Commonwealth. After graduating from James Madison University, GTS founder Beth Golden took her journalism degree and landed a job covering local government for a radio station in the Shenandoah Valley. "My station manager was almost apologetic in telling me I'd be covering board, council, and commission meetings," said Golden. "But I was intrigued from day one—not only with the agenda items and occasional controversies but with the public process itself." Beth later filled in as a planning commission clerk for a sole county in Central Virginia, and they liked her minutes so much, they asked her to do them for their other meeting bodies.



That work was the nexus of GTS, which now serves localities in all parts of the state and consists of experienced micro-teams dedicated to each meeting body. "Minutes may seem like something that can just be whipped up on the spot or easily generated by AI from a meeting recording," said Golden, "But capturing precise detail and accuracy, including specific local and regional terminology, is imperative for every set of minutes." She notes her teams' commitment to accuracy and their awareness of the important role meeting minutes play as the official public record. "It's great to have video or audio recordings," Golden said, "But reading the minutes is faster than watching or listening to a meeting and provides the public with a better understanding of the actual decisions made." Virginia Code requires a written record of public meeting attendance, times, and actions taken by the authoritative body; many localities opt to include additional detail such as comments made by elected or appointed officials, staff, and public speakers.

Golden also points out that meetings have gotten longer and much more involved in the time GTS has been doing this work. "We may start out with just one or two meetings to help out a clerk who's swamped with other responsibilities such as FOIA requests, but this often leads to a long-term relationship with that locality, as they view us as an extension of their staff and a way to keep their minutes current." Golden notes that her team has handled backlogs spanning two years or more. She said that prior to beginning any project, GTS communicates with the clerk or a designee from each locality to establish preferred minutes format, such as these customary approaches:

- **Verbatim transcript.** A word-for-word transcript that includes every word spoken by each speaker, edited to remove "ums, ahs, etc."
- **Detailed narrative.** A long-form narrative of all meeting proceedings and detailed summary of what was said by each speaker.
- **Sketch summary.** A shorter descriptive summary that includes concise, abbreviated accounts with all relevant information.

Inquiries or questions regarding Golden Transcription Services, including quotes, are always welcome and completely free. Please contact us at [beth@goldentranscription.com](mailto:beth@goldentranscription.com) or call Beth at 434.365.0420.



## PROTECTING EVERY CORNER OF YOUR COMMUNITY

### School Zones

Protecting Your Community's Youngest Members



### Work Zones

Protecting our Construction Workers



### High Injury Networks

Preventing tragedies before they happen



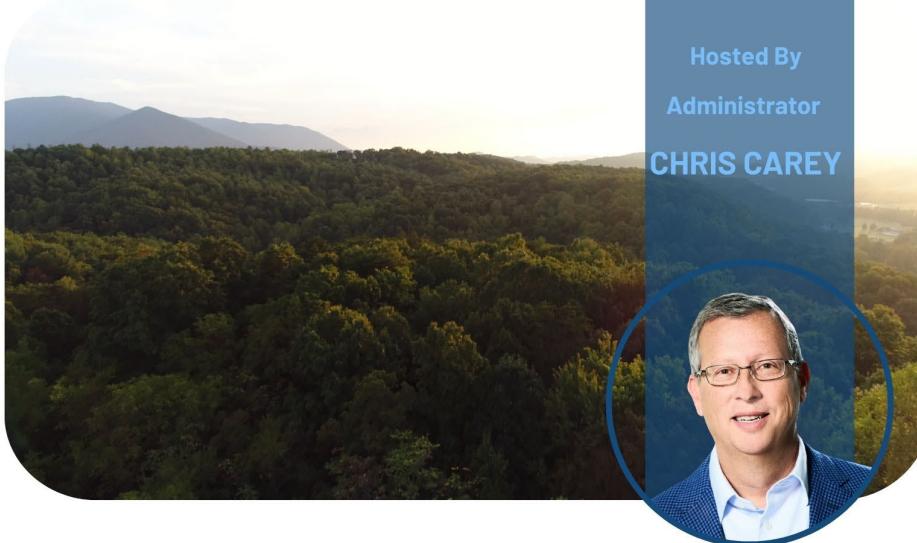
**Blue Line Solutions** is dedicated to keeping all corners of Virginia safe - in school zones, work zones, high injury networks and beyond. Their proven safety success and phased implementation help save lives in communities across our state. Read how you can save lives in your community today with Blue Line Solutions.

**Discover how Blue Line Solutions delivers safety.**



## 2026 Pool Update Virtual Meeting

**JOIN US**  
January 29th  
or 30th, 2026



Hosted By  
Administrator  
**CHRIS CAREY**

**SIGN UP BY CLICKING  
ON "REGISTER HERE"  
OR BY SCANNING  
THE QR CODE**

**REGISTER  
HERE**



**VAcorp is hosting two webinars: January 29 at 2:00 p.m. and January 30 at 10:00 a.m.**

Join VAcorp Administrator Chris Carey for an overview of the risk pool, including VAcorp's financial health and the current state of the insurance industry, with a high-level look at individual lines of coverage. Chris will also discuss program enhancements designed to better serve our members in the year ahead. This is an opportunity to stay informed and learn more about the priorities that guide VAcorp.

**Please register by clicking "Register Here" or by scanning the QR code above.**

A link to join the webinar will be emailed the day before the live session. Each session will be recorded and posted on [www.VAcorp.org](http://www.VAcorp.org) shortly after the presentation.

**Please mark your calendar for January 29 at 2:00 p.m. or January 30 at 10:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you there!**

# Campbell County Celebrates 2025 Graduates of CORE Employee Development Program



RUSTBURG, VA - Campbell County continues its strong tradition of investing in employee growth and leadership development with the January 14 graduation of the 2025 CORE Employee Development Program cohort.

The Campbell County CORE Employee Development Program is an internal development initiative, comparable to its award-winning predecessor, the Campbell County LEADS program. CORE focuses on mastering the skills that make the Campbell County organization exceptional by equipping employees in key functions with the tools, knowledge, and perspective needed to deliver high-quality public service. CORE stands for Culture, Objectives, Relationships, and Engagement, reflecting the foundational values and operating principles that guide Campbell County's work.

The 2025 CORE cohort represents a diverse cross-section of County departments. Over the course of the year, participants engaged in training centered on customer service, communication, budgeting, ethics in local government, emotional intelligence, team building, and innovation in daily operations. Participants also worked in small teams to research organizational and community needs and present practical recommendations to County leadership. As a joint community service project, the group conducted a food and toiletry drive throughout the fall of 2025, working collectively with multiple departments and agencies to make a direct impact to those in need.

More CORE on Next Page

“The CORE Development Program was intentionally designed to reinforce the values that drive how we serve our community every day,” said Sherry F. Harding, co-developer of the program and Director of Public and Employee Relations. “By focusing on culture, relationships, and engagement, CORE helps employees strengthen their leadership and service capacity while seeking new and innovative approaches to their daily work.”

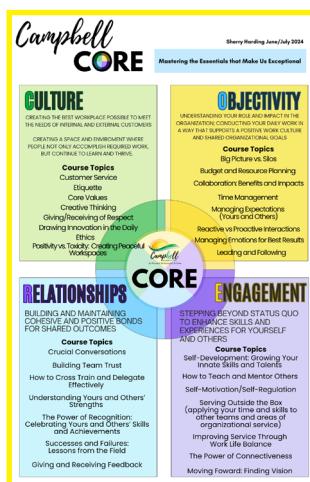
Co-developer L. Jordan Welborn, Director of Campbell County Community Engagement and Quality of Life/Library emphasized the practical, people-focused nature of the program. “CORE is about developing skills that employees can immediately apply in their work—whether that’s communication, ethical decision-making, or collaboration across departments,” said Welborn. “Our goal was to create a meaningful learning experience that supports both individual growth and long-term organizational excellence.”

Campbell County proudly recognizes the following employees selected for—and graduating from—the 2025 CORE Development Program:

- **Kristi Hodges** – Library
- **Susanne Karnes** – Management Services
- **Taylor Kerr** – Information Technology
- **Miranda Lawhorne** – Library
- **Crystal Machhi** – Community Development
- **Drew Patsell** – Parks and Recreation
- **Emily Powers** – Public Safety
- **JB Tannehill** – Public Works
- **Benjamin “Tre” Williams** – Public Works
- **Tammy Williamson** – Management Services
- **Karen Wydner** – Economic Development

Through CORE, Campbell County continues to demonstrate its commitment to professional development, ethical governance, and a culture where leadership is defined by service, accountability, and continuous improvement.

For more information, contact Campbell County Public and Employee Relations at 434-332-9818 or [per@campbellcountyva.gov](mailto:per@campbellcountyva.gov).



## Chesterfield County Promotes Rembold as New Director of Utilities Department



Matt Rembold, assistant director of operations and maintenance for Chesterfield's Department of Utilities for the past three-plus years, has been chosen as its new director.

Rembold, a licensed professional engineer, has more than 21 years of experience planning, designing, operating and maintaining complex water and wastewater systems in central Virginia. He joined Chesterfield in March 2018 as an engineering supervisor, following six years with Hanover County, and was promoted to assistant director in 2022.

"I'm profoundly honored to serve alongside the team of unsung heroes whose expertise and unwavering commitment to our customers has made Chesterfield a model for utilities departments across the nation," Rembold said. "Safe and reliable drinking water is the foundation of every sustainable community. I'm grateful to county administration for putting me in this position of public trust and look forward to building on the legacy of the leaders who came before me."

A 2023 graduate of the county's Emerging Senior Leaders program, Rembold holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Virginia Tech and a master's in Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University. He obtained his certification as a professional engineer in 2009.

In his former role as assistant director, Rembold oversaw Utilities' operations and maintenance division -- supervising six center managers with functional responsibility for water treatment and distribution, wastewater collections and treatment, industrial pretreatment and engineering technical support. His responsibilities also included planning and implementing a \$1.38 billion capital improvement plan for fiscal years 2026-36, while maintaining the department's coveted Triple-AAA bond rating, and obtaining a Virginia Water Protection permit from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for Chesterfield's planned water treatment plant on the tidal Appomattox River.

## Chesterfield County Promotes Billingsly as New Director of Community Enhancement

Rich Billingsley, assistant director of Chesterfield's Community Enhancement Department since 2017, has been promoted to lead the department as its director.

Billingsley, a U.S. Navy veteran, has worked for the county in a variety of roles for more than 22 years. He has expertise in code enforcement and community revitalization, having served as head of the License Inspection Department from 2005-2017 before its duties and others were merged under the newly created Community Enhancement Department.

"I'm humbled that our county leadership has entrusted me with this leadership role and I look forward to continuing to serve the residents of Chesterfield," Billingsley said. "We have an exceptional team of dedicated, diligent professionals who care deeply about our community. It's an honor to work alongside them."

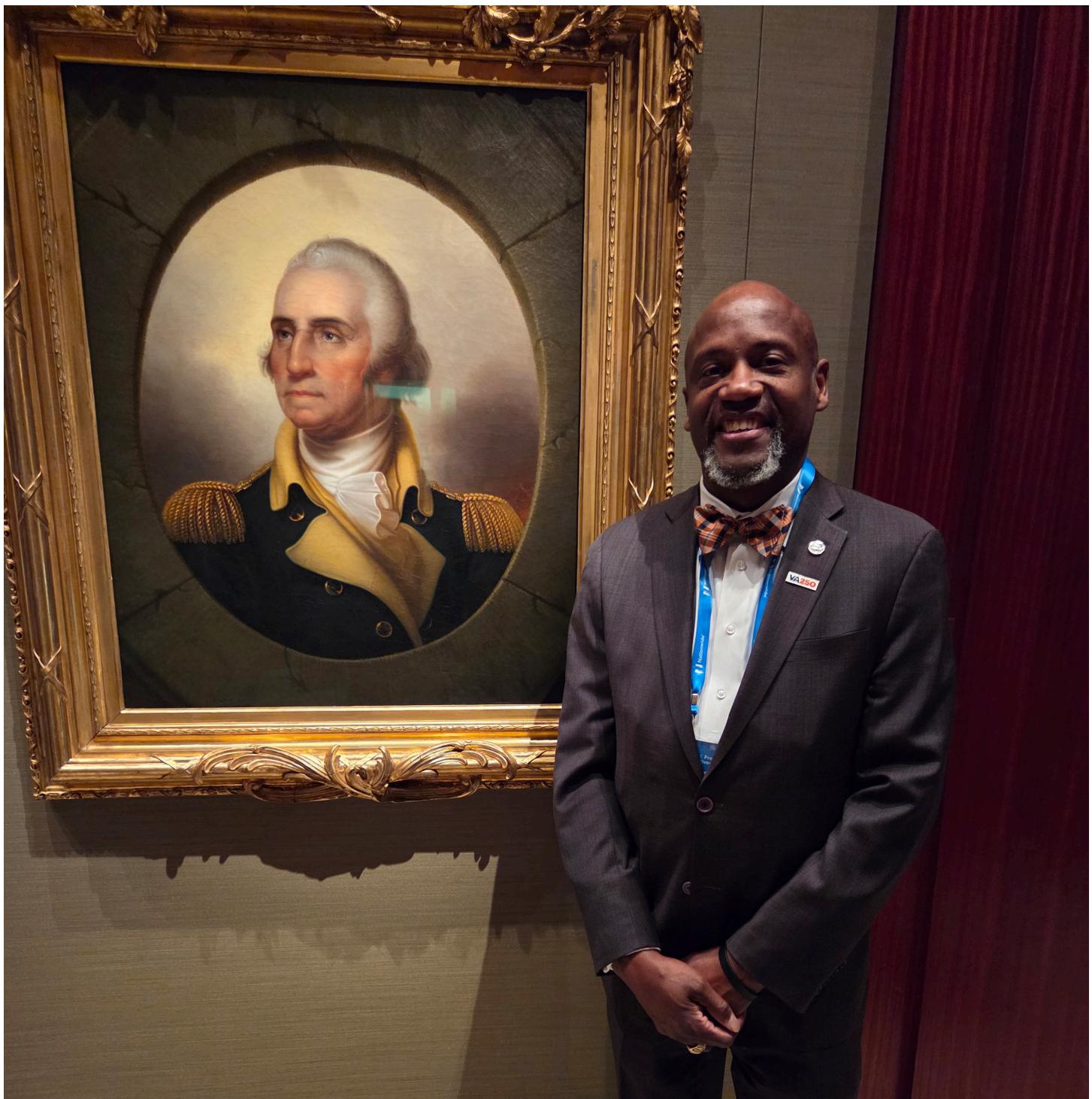
The Community Enhancement Department supports neighborhoods with resources and services regarding revitalization, anti-litter initiatives, license inspection, code enforcement and administration of federally funded housing grant programs.

In his former role as assistant director, Billingsley managed the consolidation of staff from five different departments into a cohesive operational unit. He created a career development plan and training program for Community Enhancement, launched a proactive inspection program that incorporated code enforcement, volunteer management and neighborhood engagement, and supervised a program that installs streetlights in existing neighborhoods as a safety and security enhancement.

During his tenure as director of the License Inspection Department, Billingsley also implemented operational improvements in the enforcement of Chesterfield's Code of Ordinances for business and vehicle licensing that increased local revenue by 200% over a 10-year period.

A 1997 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Billingsley made multiple deployments to the Middle East as a qualified surface warfare officer, ultimately achieving the rank of lieutenant, before leaving the Navy and coming to work for Chesterfield as a deputy license inspector in 2003.





## LOVE THE SMILE!

VACo President and Prince William County Supervisor Victor Angry and VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch represented Virginia last week at the NACo 2026 Presidents and Executives Meeting at Mount Vernon. The program brings state leaders together for policy discussions, federal advocacy, networking, and education.

## Support former VACo President Ruth Larson on Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars



VACo Immediate Past President Ruth Larson has been rigorously training to learn her routines for the 17th edition of "[Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars](#)." The event takes place on March 8, and this year's theme is "An Evening of Magic" featuring Disney songs.

"Although I enjoy learning my dances, what I most enjoy is learning about the two charities the event will support: **Literacy for Life** and **Big Brothers/Big Sisters**," Larson said. "The lives of people in my community are being dramatically changed through the work of these agencies. People like Jo, who lost her dad at 13, and her Big Sister Daisy, who walked her through that rough time until she became an adult. People like Tania, who worked through her literacy challenges and was able to transition from cleaning houses to becoming a dental hygienist—she now wants to help others and maybe become a dentist next."

Ruth is paired with a professional dancer, and has a goal of raising \$5,000 for the charities. Contributions to support the charities and Ruth can be made at this link - <https://www.williamsburgstars.com/post/ruth-larson>.

"It promises to be a fun evening, and I hope you'll come watch and cheer me on!" Larson said.



**David Hutchins** (left) poses with the VACo 2014-2015 Executive Committee. Also pictured from left to right - First Vice President **Judy Lyttle** (Surry), President **Penny Gross** (Fairfax), Immediate Past President **Harrison Moody** (Dinwiddie), Secretary-Treasurer **Don Hart** (Accomack), and Second Vice President **Mary Biggs** (Montgomery).

## Remembering Former Carroll County Supervisor David Hutchins

David Vernon Hutchins, age 79, passed away on January 6 at his home. Born in 1946 to the late John and Lona Vernon Hutchens of Galax, VA, David was a man of deep faith, integrity, and service to others. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Geneva Hale, of Galax.

He is survived by his loving bride of 25 years, De Hutchins; three daughters, Michelle and Rob Cook, Christine Szydlowski, and Licia Szydlowski and husband Seth Harrison; three grandchildren, Jessica Cook, Grayson McKinney and wife Lea, and Joseph Cooper; two step-grandchildren, Reilly Harrison and Cooper Harrison; two nephews Greg, Jeff and a niece, Pam.

David faithfully served his country for 30 years over seeing aircraft maintenance contracts and worked extensively with the V22 Osprey aircraft project with the Federal Civil Service in which he retired. He was also a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Following his Federal Civil Service, he owned and operated Hutchins Electrical Service, LLC, in Galax. Known for his generosity, honesty, and compassion, David was always ready to help anyone in need, treating every customer like family and greeting everyone with a kind word and genuine interest.

David's life was marked by his commitment to community and faith. For the past 13 years, David served as Chairman of the Board for Rooftop of Virginia, where he was instrumental in obtaining grants to help economically disadvantaged citizens become financially and socially independent. Past elected member of the Carroll County Board of Supervisors where he represented the Sulfur Springs District from 2006-2014. Past President of the Gladeville Ruritan Club, where for almost 20 years he led efforts to raise funds to provide scholarships, meals and support for those in the Gladeville community.

He was a member of the Galax Moose Lodge #733, a life member of both the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry and the Old Town Lodge #68, and a member of the Shriners of Galax.

Additionally, he served on the State Building Code Technical Review Board in Richmond, reviewing appeals from enforcement actions involving Virginia building and fire codes.

A dedicated and active member of Midway Baptist Church in Galax, David's love for the Lord was evident in everything he said and did. He joyfully shared the gospel with everyone he met, always reminding others that "God loves you."

A service to celebrate David's life will be held Saturday, February 7, 2026 at 3PM at Midway Baptist Church. The family will receive friends from 2PM until time for the service at Midway Baptist Church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Midway Baptist Church.



## Welcome to the Class of 2026! VACo Supervisors' Certification Program Kicks Off

The 2026 VACo Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program began on January 23 with the Budgeting module led by Hanover County Deputy Administrator Jay Brown (photo above). The 3-course program spans one year, and we're excited at the amount of students in the Class of 2026!

VACo President Victor Angry (photo to the right) shared some words of encouragement to the Class of 2026. Angry is a Class of 2023 graduate.



Open to all county supervisors, this exciting course comprises an opening class session, virtual cohort meetings, and a closing class session. As one of the three courses within VACo's Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program, this course tackles the tough topic of county budgeting led by Class Manager Jay Brown.

## School Construction Financing Bill Advances to House Floor



**HB 334 (Rasoul)**, legislation that once again seeks to grant additional revenue raising authority if approved by local referendum for school capital needs, has been voted forward to the floor of the House of Delegates. On January 21, the House Finance Committee voted 16-6 to report the bill. This followed the actions of House Finance Subcommittee #2 on January 20 to recommend reporting the bill. VACo testified in support of this long-held priority legislation.

As previously **reported**, funding for school construction and renovation is one of the biggest concerns and responsibilities of local governments in the Commonwealth and has been almost solely a local responsibility for decades. The condition of the facilities in which children are educated has a direct impact on their ability to learn.

Many localities face significant challenges in raising sufficient funds to undertake these projects. These challenges include over-reliance on real property taxes to generate revenue, which can have vastly different yields depending on the locality and disproportionately burden a subset of taxpayers within a jurisdiction. This raises concerns about equity and diversity of revenues.

HB 334 would permit any county or city to impose an additional local sales and use tax of up to 1 percent, if initiated by a resolution of the local governing body and approved by voters at a local referendum. The revenues of such a local tax would be used solely for capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools, including service of debt for existing projects. As currently drafted, there are slight differences in the debt services provisions of each bill that VACo is aware of and engaged on.

Currently, this authority is limited to the qualifying localities of Charlotte, Gloucester, Halifax, Henry, Mecklenburg, Northampton, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties and the City of Danville.

**SB 66 (McPike)**, which is the Senate companion to HB 334, has been referred to the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.

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

# Capitol Contact

## Virginia General Assembly

Virginia Association of Counties • 1207 E. Main Street, Suite 300 • Richmond, VA 23219  
www.vaco.org • 804.788.6652

### JANUARY 2025

- **January 22, 2026:** [ACTION ITEM: Call Now to Oppose Bill to Preempt Local Land Use Authority](#)
- **January 20, 2026:** [Governor Spanberger Addresses General Assembly](#)
- **January 15, 2026:** [2026 General Assembly Session is Now Underway](#)
- **January 14, 2026:** [General Assembly Convenes – Look for Capitol Contact on Tuesdays and Thursdays](#)



## Part Two – Saturday, April 18

**In person at VACo Offices – 1207 E. Main Street, Richmond VA 23219**

Join us for briefings by subject matter experts on important topics for Supervisors, including economic development, working with Constitutional officers, and planning and land use, as well as an opportunity to network with fellow Supervisors.

**Registration information** to follow! Please contact Valerie Russell at [vrussell@vaco.org](mailto:vrussell@vaco.org) with any questions.

**REGISTER TODAY!**

February 5, 2026 | Omni Richmond Hotel



**VACo  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
DAY**

**Thursday, February 5, 2026**

**Omni Richmond Hotel**

Virginia Association of Counties invites all elected officials to the Local Government Day. This is the day when all localities come together and advocate on behalf of our communities. Join us for Local Government Day at the General Assembly!

**Date:** Thursday, February 5, 2026

**Reserve a Room:** [\*\*Omni Richmond Hotel Room Link\*\*](#)

**Who should attend:** ALL Elected Officials and staff are encouraged to register and attend. **Registration Fee**

- \$100 | Includes Day Briefing (Noon – 2pm) and Reception (430pm – 630pm)

**Agenda**

- **9am** | VACo Board of Directors Meeting
- **10am** | Registration • 1130am | Lunch
- **Noon** | VACo Local Government Day
- **Afternoon** | Visit the Capitol to speak with legislators
- **430pm-630pm** | VACo Legislative Reception | Omni Richmond Hotel

Please email Valerie Russell at [vrussell@vaco.org](mailto:vrussell@vaco.org) with questions. **REGISTER TODAY!**

**REGISTER TODAY!**



## **Friday, February 6, 2026 and Saturday, February 7, 2026**

**Omni Richmond Hotel and VACo Headquarters**

Virginia Association of Counties invites all County Chairs and Vice Chairs for specific training related to leading a County Board of Supervisors. The Chairpersons' Institute is newly designed to focus on duties and skills needed to be effective Chairs and Vice Chairs.

**Dates:** Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7

**Reserve a Room:** [Omni Richmond Hotel Room Link](#)

**Who should attend:** ALL County Chairs and Vice Chairs

**Registration Fee**

- \$350 | Includes Meals and Materials
- \$175 for Guest

**Full Agenda Coming Soon**

**REGISTER TODAY!**

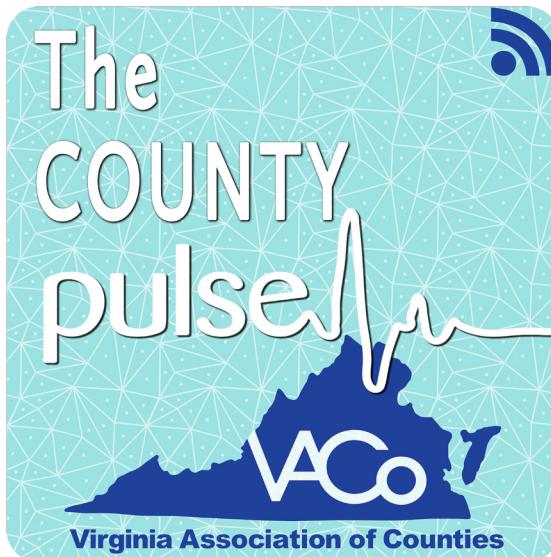
**Friday**

- Early Morning | Breakfast
- 9am | Welcome and Introductions
- 9am-Noon | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- Noon | Lunch
- 1pm-430pm | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- Evening | Dinner with fellow Chairs and Vice Chairs

**Saturday**

- Early Morning | Breakfast
- 9am-1pm | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- 1pm | Adjournment and Box Lunch to Go

Please email Valerie Russell at [vrussell@vaco.org](mailto:vrussell@vaco.org) with questions. And email Karie Walker at [kwalker@vaco.org](mailto:kwalker@vaco.org) for sponsorship opportunities.



## Uplifting Our Children Through Education Series with Jeremy R. Bennett

### Episode 5 | Virginia's K-12 Funding Formula: What the JLARC Report Means for Counties — and What Comes Next



[Listen to the Podcast.](#)

In the latest episode of VACo's Uplifting Our Children Through Education podcast series, host Jeremy R. Bennett is joined by Justin Brown, Associate Director of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), and Mark Gribbin, Chief Legislative Analyst (JLARC) and project leader for JLARC's landmark 2023 [report](#) on Virginia's K-12 funding formula.

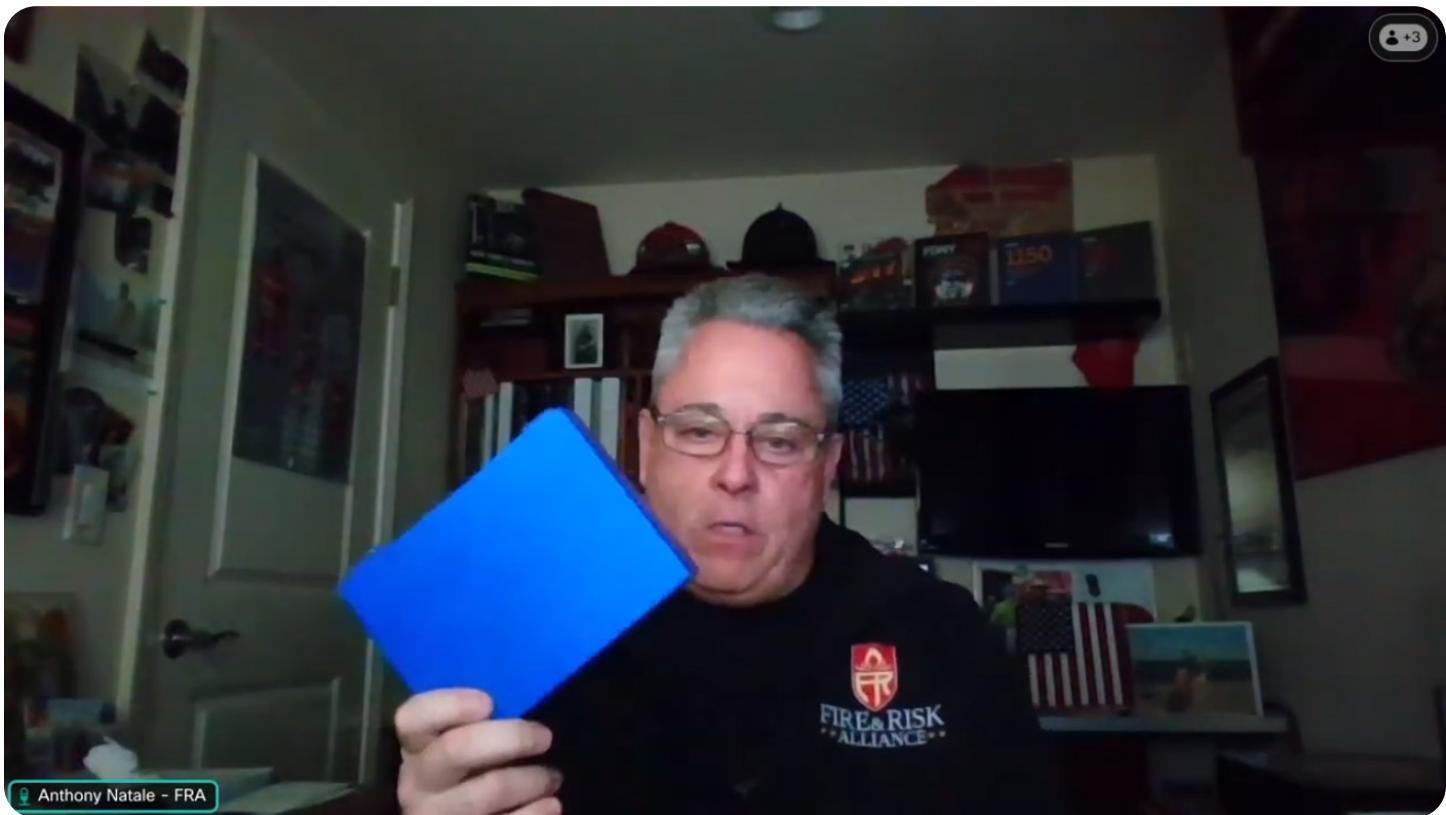
The JLARC study, directed by the General Assembly, found that Virginia's current Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding formula significantly underestimates the true cost of providing a high-quality public education. While the SOQ formula calculated that school divisions needed roughly \$10.7 billion in combined state and local funding in FY21, actual division spending exceeded \$17 billion—leaving counties to absorb much of the gap.

During the conversation, Brown and Gribbin walk listeners through why JLARC undertook the study, how the formula has evolved over time, and which structural issues—such as outdated staffing assumptions, labor cost adjustments, and the treatment of higher-needs students—continue to place pressure on local government budgets.

The episode also explores the report's near-term and long-term recommendations, progress made by the General Assembly since the report's release, and what counties should watch for in upcoming legislative sessions. Listeners will gain valuable insight into how the JLARC findings are shaping state policy discussions and why continued county engagement is essential to achieving a more transparent, predictable, and equitable funding system for Virginia's public schools. Tune in to hear how this landmark report is influencing K-12 education funding debates and what it means for county leaders working to uplift children through education.

Link to JLARC Report and Supporting Documents can be accessed [here](#).

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



## Learn the Basics of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) – Best Practices for Siting and Safety

In this [taped webinar](#), an expert panel gives an overview of energy storage systems, with a focus on BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) and how counties can address their siting, permitting, and safe operation. Presenters include Aaron Berryhill, Solar Program Manager with the Virginia Department of Energy, Chris Meyer, Senior Project Developer with East Point Energy, and Anthony Natale, Director of Risk and Response with Fire & Risk Alliance, LLC.

Where to find out more about topics covered in this webinar.

- Virginia DEQ – Small Energy Storage Facilities Permit by Rule (PBR) (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title9/agency15/chapter100/>)
- NFPA 855 - Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems (<https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/nfpa-855-standarddevelopment/855>)
- Energy Storage Facility Siting Agreement – Chesterfield County Example (<https://chesterfieldcova.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1232/files/agenda/3600>)

VACo Contact: [Joe Lerch, AICP](#)

# VIRGINIA ENERGY SENSE

## VALUE YOUR POWER



No tricks, just energy savings! Unplug your unused electronic devices to avoid inflating your energy bills with **phantom power**.

Nothing is spookier than receiving a mysteriously high energy bill. The scary suspect may be phantom, or "vampire" energy: electricity consumed by devices that are plugged in but not in use.

Energy usage from idle electronics may cost the average U.S. household as much as \$100 a year. You can save money by unplugging devices you're not using such as computers, printers, TVs, gaming consoles and speakers.

If your county is looking to further your sustainability goals and support your residents, Virginia Energy Sense is here to help.

Virginia Energy Sense operates under the guidance of the State Corporation Commission as Virginia's only statewide energy-efficiency education program. Our mission is to empower Virginians with the knowledge and tools they need to:



Drain monthly utility costs



Fend off excessive energy usage



Decrease carbon footprint

We know local government plays a powerful role in charging energy-conscious communities. If your department is involved in sustainability, public outreach or utility services, we'd love to discuss how VES can support your mission.

Visit [www.virginiaenergysense.org](http://www.virginiaenergysense.org) to view our full library of resources. Connect with us directly via email at [EnergySense@scc.virginia.gov](mailto:EnergySense@scc.virginia.gov). Or, call 804-371-9141 to learn more about collaboration opportunities.

Together, we can help Virginians save energy and money. Scan the QR code with your phone's camera to get started.





## Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing

**Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing is a great tool to make your locality's and school division's budget go further!**

**Contact us for details.**

**VML/VACo Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing offers:**

- Competitive rates and low closing costs.
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- Lease terms up to the expected life of the equipment.
- Streamlined process – we handle the details for you.

**Budget less in the current year by spreading payments out over the useful life of the equipment** – perfect for school buses, fire engines, and police cars.

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**Questions?**

Contact Steve Mulroy  
804-648-0635

[smulroy@valocalfinance.org](mailto:smulroy@valocalfinance.org)





## INTRODUCING A VACo PREMIER PARTNER

### Schneider Electric



[Click Here  
to Watch the  
Video](#)

As a Premier Partner of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), Schneider Electric has proudly served as a trusted energy and infrastructure partner across the Commonwealth since 2001. We specialize in supporting school districts, municipalities, higher education institutions, and state agencies in overcoming budget constraints through strategic capital funding solutions.

Recognized as the #1 ranked Energy Services Company (ESCO) since 2017, Schneider Electric delivers comprehensive infrastructure upgrades through performance contracting. Our approach helps clients tackle deferred maintenance by shifting from reactive fixes to proactive, long-term solutions—building resiliency, modernizing facilities, and generating guaranteed energy savings to fund critical improvements.

Join us for our webinar with VACo, where we'll explore the fundamentals of our business model and share real-world examples of how we've helped communities across Virginia achieve impactful renovations.

**Abby Weigel** | Account Executive | 804.248.0523 | [abby.weigel@se.com](mailto:abby.weigel@se.com)

**Kevin DeLeon** | Account Executive | 804.517.2819 | [kevin.deleon@se.com](mailto:kevin.deleon@se.com)

Website: [www.se.com/ww/en/about-us/sustainability/](http://www.se.com/ww/en/about-us/sustainability/)



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VACo Premier  
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is on your side

VACo long-standing partner Nationwide Retirement Solutions, provides these valuable services:

- 457 and 401(a) Plans
- Roth 457 Account
- Protected Retirement Solutions
- Nationwide Retirement Institute
- Social Security

VACo Executive Director, Dean Lynch, recently sat down with Debbie Turner, Charlie Brennan, Lynn Robinette, and David Bazzell to discuss their expertise in assisting counties with comprehensive savings and retirement programs and what sets Nationwide apart.



## 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).



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

What truly distinguishes OneDigital as a leading **insurance, financial services, and HR consulting advisory firm** is our holistic approach to creating environments that enable people to do their best work and live their best lives. OneDigital understands that counties face rising insurance costs while still struggling to attract/retain talent. This is why we use proprietary software to provide accurate and predictable insurance consulting projections for those core benefits that impact your bottom line and incorporate solutions to improve retention. While voluntary benefits may be the focus of other providers, OneDigital has the expertise in alternative funding strategies, best-in-class analytics, and an in-house actuarial team.

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.



### OUR SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

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Recruiting

Development & Training

#### SUPPORT

Benefits & Compensation

Total Wellbeing

Productivity

Retirement Readiness

#### ENGAGE

Culture

Education & Fiduciary

Literacy

Communications

#### PROTECT

Compliance

Workplace Safety

Operational Continuity

Cyber Security



**Ritter Jonas**  
Senior Business Development Executive  
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At OneDigital, we harness the power of one to solve complex challenges for businesses and people. Scan the code to the left to watch the video and learn more.



# The VA250 Mobile Museum: A Classroom on Wheels

Get ready to bring Virginia's history to life! The VA250 Mobile Museum Experience, a hands-on, interactive, and immersive museum on wheels, is coming early 2025. This unique experience will transport students back in time, exploring key stories from every region of the state.

## Perfect for:

- **Schools:** Enhance your curriculum with a memorable field trip.
- **Community organizations:** Host a unique event for all ages.
- **Local festivals:** Attract visitors with a fascinating historical exhibit.

Book the museum for your school or community event today! Visit [the VA250 website](#) for more information and to schedule a visit.



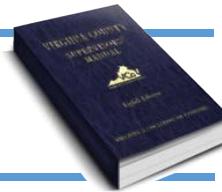
## Get your VA250 license plates - now available

Are you ready to show your pride in America's 250th anniversary? The VA250 commemorative license plate is now available for purchase! As a symbol of our nation's rich history and bright future, this limited-edition license plate offers a unique opportunity to drive with a piece of history.

By purchasing a VA250 license plate, you're not only adding a stylish touch to your vehicle, but you're also supporting a worthy cause. A portion of the proceeds from each plate sold will be donated directly to VA250, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating educational programs, events, and exhibits to commemorate America's 250th anniversary.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to own a piece of history and support a great cause. [Visit the Virginia DMV website](http://VA250.ORG) to purchase your VA250 license plate today.

## Virginia County Supervisors' Manual 8th Edition



Eighth Edition of VACo's ***Virginia County Supervisors' Manual*** is in stock. The Supervisors' Manual is the number one resource on the framework of county government and the responsibilities of the county board.

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#### PAYMENT INFORMATION

Manuals are \$75 for VACo Members. Manuals are \$150 for Non Members.

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Check enclosed for \$\_\_\_\_\_ Make payable to **VACo Services, Inc.**

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804.343.2507



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@vacounties.org).

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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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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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