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Cup of Joe to Go



Joe Casey

Cup of Joe to Go

Last month I addressed an annual protocols reminder for information requests from elected officials and citizens-candidates with focus requests for information from elected officials. This month it involves guidelines for managing requests from citizens and candidates. All citizens are to be served and treated with respect in accordance to their legal rights for information and good customer service business standards. While some citizens may be representing existing or potential candidates for office or are the candidates themselves, this does not lower the standard citizen level of service provided by public servants. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) standards apply to all and all shall be served.

For frequent citizen advocates, association representatives or candidates, additional coordination of information and resources may be needed to make such interactions efficient and productive. Repeated and unscheduled visits should be discouraged and be pivoted through scheduled meetings or e-mail. New information is not expected to be compiled; however, if such information helps serve the locality better and is compiled, then such information may need to be shared to other staff members, and elected officials.

We have HR Policies governing political activities for all non-elected personnel addressing employee involvement in political activities to maintain a clear separation between county operations and the political process. In summary, 1) Employees may run for political office, however employees may not engage in political activity while on duty, while in a uniform or while on government property; 2) Employees may not use resources or equipment for campaign activities or to assist others with political activities; 3) Employees may not accept, store, display or distribute political campaign materials in a government facility or on property; 4) As always, employees should not use their employment or position with government for personal gain; 5) This does not affect the right of an employee to hold political membership, serve as a political party officer, support a political party, vote, express political opinions or attend political meetings.

Again, as we approach primaries and November elections, keep in mind that all employees should follow good principles of providing information and public service.

Please join me in welcoming our newest VLGMA members Michael Lombardo, Essex County Administrator; Susan Elliott, Charlottesville Climate Protection Program Manager; Freda Starnes, Scott County Administrator; Caitlin Verdu, Virginia Tech Associate 4-H Extension Agent; Rebecca Owens, Roanoke Assistant County Administrator; Jessica Rice, Fluvanna County Human Resources Manager and Jayme Salazar, Onley Town Manager.

[Contact Joe Casey.](#)

Position Changes and Other Events

February 2019

- Richard Douglas, city manager for Covington since 2016, resigned.
- Brannon Godfrey, former Warrenton town manager, was appointed town manager for Hartford, Vermont.
- Jonathan Lynn, former town manager for Tyrone, Georgia, has been appointed Surry County administrator.
- Clay Goodman, retired Roanoke County administrator, has been appointed interim city manager for Covington.
- Keith C. Rogers, Jr., former chief of staff and chief administrative officer for the city of Richmond, was appointed town manager for Dumfries.



Tedd's Take



The 2018 EBIS Awards

Once again, it is my pleasure to recognize a few localities and individuals who, along with many others, have contributed to the ongoing success of the Institute's 22-year-old Email Broadcast Information System (EBIS). While it is impossible to recognize all the localities and staff who assist their fellow localities by

Tedd Povar responding to our members' inquiries, we say THANK YOU to some of the best each year via these awards.

Here are the Special Merit awards that were announced at the winter VLGMA conference in Staunton, along with the new Top Ten award winners.

SPECIAL MERIT-Localities

Bath County
Town of South Boston
City of Lexington
City of Fredericksburg

SPECIAL MERIT-Individuals

Greg Woods - Town Manager - Orange
Magalie "Maggie" Kain - HR Director - Vienna
Terri Morris - County Administrator - Floyd County
Jennifer Carpenter - HR Director - Colonial Heights

TOP TEN:

Town of Cape Charles
Town of Kilmarnock
New Kent County
Town of Marion
Town of Pulaski
Goochland County
City of Falls Church
City of Danville
Augusta County
Greene County

Congratulations to each of you. We look forward to continuing this valued program for years to come.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

Letter to VLGMA Members

Letter to VLGMA Members from Brannon Godfrey

To my VLGMA friends and colleagues, I say "thanks", knowing the word itself is insufficient. When I came to Emporia in 1995, I was welcomed warmly by a loving community and the support and sage advice of the Crater PDC managers. Denny Morris made darn sure of that.

There was no better encouragement this young manager could have gotten than to be made to feel like a peer by Lane Ramsey, Clint Strong, Dave Whittington, Bob Taylor, Terry Lewis and Charlie Burgess; or to commiserate about his own cluelessness with his contemporaries - Marty Long, Ken Chandler and William Johnson. The strength of that group was its absolute unselfishness to help each other out, when we could have more easily fought for individual shares of some of the scarcest fiscal resources in the Commonwealth. For what my advice is worth, I urge you to never miss a regional managers' meeting.

I moved around a bit. I have great admiration for those of you who transcend the changing politics of the elected body. I never could get over the seven-year hump. But I am deeply indebted to Tedd Povar and John Anzivino for helping me get to new opportunities in great Virginia towns. Anne Lewis, John Rowe, Kim Payne and Jay Stegmaier also helped me to see opportunities in localities where I thought there were none. Ed Daley has been an invaluable advisor - he accurately predicted what would happen in Winchester; I just didn't listen. Listen to Ed; it might not be what you want to hear, but he knows what he's talking about!

Managers Emeritus Bob Noe and Cole Hendrix always seem to know the right thing to say and just the right time; I am grateful for their supportive calls.

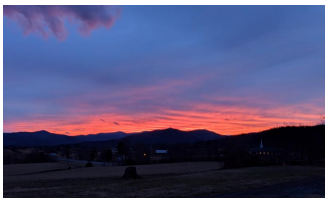
Thank you, Molly, for keeping us connected as VLGMA members.

Finally, I want to publicly thank my two closest friends in the profession - Noah Simon and Mercury Payton. They have always dropped whatever they were doing to help me whenever I asked.

My number one advisor - my wife, Leslie - gave me the "OK" for us leave Virginia. Her birthplace. Home of our alma mater. My professional network. When Hartford, VT offered and she said "let's do it," how could I say "no"? I hope I can impart there a little that I've learned from all of you here. Thanks!

Brannon Godfrey

A DAO in the Life - Garrey Curry



Backyard in
Rappahannock

A DAO in the Life...

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to provide an entry for this column as a deputy county administrator ... fast forward and now I am writing to reflect on my first year serving as county administrator.

Most everyone has a boss, some are good, some could be better, but the obvious big take away from the DAO to CAO transition is the relationship with the sometimes-amorphous Board of Supervisors majority. One day a CAO may have a clear mandate on a particular subject and not too much further into the future have a fragile majority driven direction or redirection. The process of getting to know Board members, gaining trust, and understanding their inherent bias (we all have them) seems like a full-time job. I've relied on something we discussed at SEI, that we should treat others as they would like to be treated ... not necessarily as we would like to be treated. After a few false starts with Board members I've taken this tenant to heart and it seems to be paying dividends.

So now that I have managed to form relationships with my five bosses, every thing should be great, right? Not so fast. Election season is upon us and I now must prepare to start over again with a new set of bosses. I've been told by some seasoned CAOs that the Board that hires you loves you, the next board tolerates

you, and the third fires you ... here's to a few more years before I find out if that is true!

All told, I am happy with my decision to make the transition. I miss all of my former colleagues in Gloucester, but it is hard to beat the unspoiled natural beauty of Rappahannock County. Molly asked for a photo and I figured you'd rather see the view from my backyard than my mugshot. That view in the evening helps to take the edge off of the occasional rough/long day. Stop by some time when you are in the area for some free decompression. You might need it if you make the transition from DAO to CAO too.

[Contact Garrey Curry.](#)

Civic Engagement - County of Arlington

Broadband Access Within Arlington's Affordable Housing Units

By Michelle Thomas, County of Arlington



**Michelle
Thomas**

County officials and non-profit partners gathered on February 4, 2019 to celebrate the County's Digital Inclusion Initiative pilot program that provides high-speed broadband internet to low-and moderate-income families living at [Arlington Mill Residences](#). A 122-unit building owned by the [Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing \(APAH\)](#), this property is home to more than 150 school-aged children and their families. Before this pilot, more than half lacked reliable internet access. Studies have shown that low-income school children often are less likely to own computers and use the Internet than their higher income peers, creating a "homework gap."

Now, through a three-year grant to APAH, the County is supplying broadband internet to residents leveraging the County's fiber-optic network, [ConnectArlington](#). Supporting organizations are providing refurbished laptops to program participants through in-kind contributions.

As a grant condition, [APAH](#) will provide annual performance reports to the County and will develop and administer a survey to help assess the initiative's success. APAH plans to seek private and philanthropic funding sources to continue the program at Arlington Mill Residences and any other APAH-owned properties involved in the [Arlington Digital Inclusion Initiative](#) beyond the third and final year of County grant funding. Through Arlington's Digital Inclusion Initiative, students homework gaps have diminished and digital equity for families has increased. They now have access to online learning, the ability to complete job applications, and more.

"APAH is thrilled by the County's support for bridging the digital divide for our residents at Arlington Mill," said APAH President and CEO Nina Janopaul. "Half of our residents have no reliable access to the internet. Students use internet portals to complete their homework. Parents need the internet to follow their children's progress in school. Workers need the internet to apply for jobs. This program removes a major barrier for our residents to fully participate in our community."

Following the pilot's completion in 2022, the County will continue its work to expand access and digital equity to facilities that serve low-income populations, including affordable housing, assisted living facilities, healthcare organizations, and more. This model empowers residents to become more involved in their community, promotes civic engagement, and exemplifies the power of collaborations and unity.

Watch highlights from the February 4th celebration here!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LF5NEjoR8Ro&feature=youtu.be>

Note to all VLGMA members on the April 2019 Local Government Education Week (LGEW): (Excerpt from <http://www.vaco.org/april-1-7-local-government-education-week/?highlight=local%20government%20education%20week>, 2017)

Let's celebrate and share the Virginia local government story with students and the greater community in April. Participating communities are eligible to win a great elementary school level book on local government services and further education on the importance of public service at the same time.

The 2012 General Assembly adopted House Joint Resolution #93 proclaiming the first week of April as Local Government Education week in honor of the founding of the Council-Manager form of government in Staunton, Virginia, in 1908.

The Civic Engagement Committee of the Virginia Local Government Management Association has developed tools for students - our future leaders - regarding good community building work, the services provided at the local level, and to increase awareness of career opportunities in local government. This will help us strengthen knowledge of local government management/public service as a vital part of our democracy, and possibly as a career path.

As part of this effort, VLGMA asks each locality's governing body to adopt a proclamation honoring this week. A template is available on the Civic Engagement webpage on the VLGMA website (http://icma.org/en/va/resources/civic_education).

Adopting a proclamation is a good first step, but there are many other activities to engage with the local school district and the young people of our community. We encourage each locality to develop an engagement plan that meets your local need. The Civic Engagement Committee has pulled together numerous resources that are posted on the website that include great elementary school level books, a high school teachers' resource guide with lesson plans, and a report of various civic engagement best practices used by VLGMA members. Activities are not restricted to the first week of April but can occur throughout the year and be highlighted in April.

Join colleagues throughout Virginia to promote civic engagement April 1-7, 2019 and beyond!

[Contact Michelle Thomas](#)



Innovation Edge

Give 5 Senior Civic Engagement Program was developed by the city of Springfield, Missouri, and is an Innovation Showcase presentation at this year's Transforming Local Government (TLG) Conference.

The program turns the idea of retirement and volunteerism upside down and serves as a civic matchmaking effort to create authentic community connections - explaining the "why" of dire community needs and providing a look behind the curtain of all local governmental processes and proves the importance of true civic engagement. Take a look [here](#) at the five macro-trends and the design behind this program to make it a successful innovation.

TLG will be held in Reno, Nevada, April 9-13, 2019.

About the Alliance for Innovation: The Alliance for Innovation is inspiring innovation to advance communities. As the premier resource for emerging practices in local government, we are building cultures of innovation and connecting thought leaders in the profession. We are accessible and valuable to all levels of an organization. You can learn more about the Alliance at www.transformgov.org or contact me at saburnett@transformgov.org.

Certificate News



Certificate News

The Virginia Tech Local Government Certificate students and master of public administration students spent the day at the VLGMA Winter conference meeting. We had an excellent day with managers, students and faculty interactions. Thank you to VLGMA for coordinating buddies for all of the students!

Interested in a recruitment session on site? Give Stephanie Davis a call 804-908-5549 or email at sddavis@vt.edu to schedule!

Invitation to Rotary District 7610 Conference Opioid Session

Dear VLGMA Members:

A presentation on Virginia's Opioid Crisis will be presented from 2-3:00pm on Friday April 5, 2019. The session will be held at the Virginia Crossings Resort in Glen Allen, Virginia. Because the session follows a seated lunch, I will need you to

RSVP if you would like to attend. There will be two participation options, one with lunch (\$50 and one without, no cost). Pre-registration is required either way to ensure that seating is available:

1. Attend the lecture session only (no lunch)
RSVP to me (Vance Zavela) by March 27, 2019
at: vance.zavela@fairfaxcounty.gov

2. Attend the seated lunch and Opioid presentation that follows (Lunch 12:00-1:45; presentation to follow from 2:00-3:00 pm)

RSVP and on-line payment system: Cost of lunch \$50.00

<https://www.ismyrotaryclub.com/register4/index.cfm?EventID=77421364>

[scroll to bottom of page and click on guest registration]

Sincerely,

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PublicInput Shares Ideas for Better Community Engagement

PublicInput Shares Ideas for Better Community Engagement



Brad Johnson-
PublicInput

I recently read Vivian Giles' column in February's newsletter - if you haven't, [her positive outlook on civic engagement](#) is inspiring. Giles was right when she said we should, "Be grateful that we live in a society where public engagement is possible...that citizens in our communities have really good ideas, constructive feedback, and care."

She is also realistic about the challenges that planners and communicators face as well: "...if ever you want to test the waters of engaging with your community, try undertaking a controversial project like a landfill."

So, are we to fear a perpetual cycle of "us vs. them" when it comes to community engagement? I actually had a conversation with a planner recently who said city council was thinking about engaging with residents less to avoid the pain of the "frequent fliers".

You can't change the fact that residents are going to have an opinion, but you can change the opinion that residents have about their local government and its leadership.

A simple way to do this is to start by asking second tier questions that are relevant to segments of the community - this lowers the barrier to participation and begins

to build your foundation of trust. I have found that leading with one question that is relevant and accessible helps.

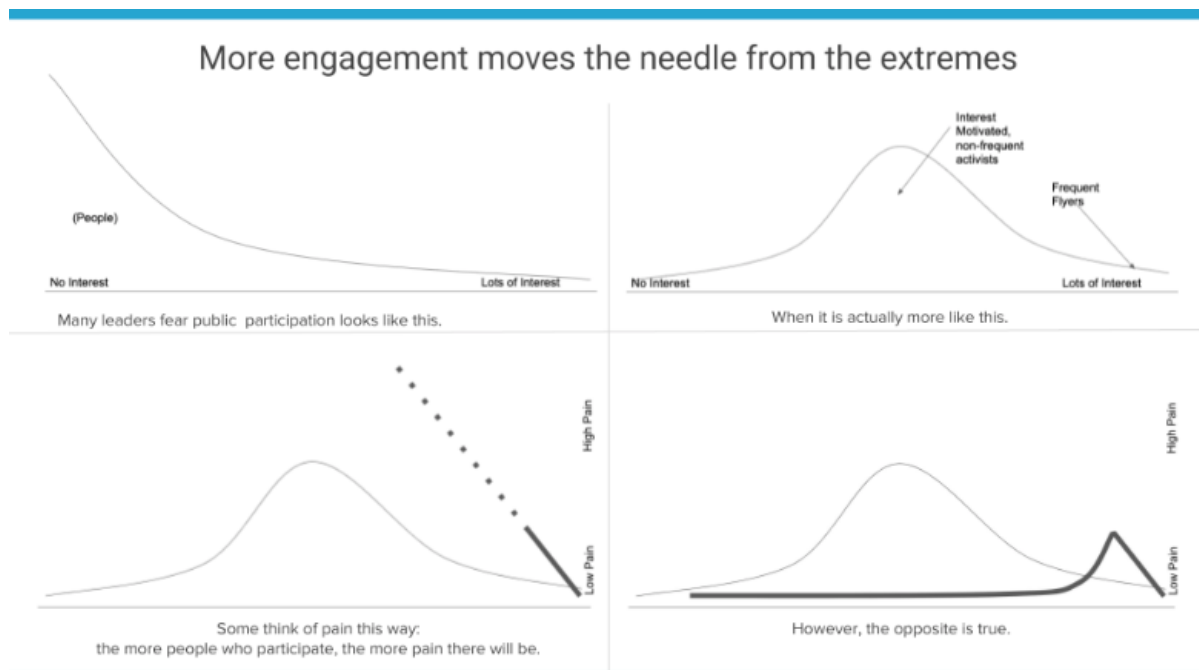
I saw this on a project in Virginia Beach this past year on a series of mural projects. With one click or tap, residents were able to vote-by-picture on their favorite mural option. The combination of a relevant project (public art in a beloved park) and ease-of-use (mobile-friendly, simple survey) allowed Virginia Beach to grow the pool of residents who engage with them, and they could now re-engage with.

This same strategy works even for more polarizing issues like a comprehensive transit plan. Residents are likely to weigh in on a general question about traffic or congestion - and can then be pointed towards a full survey or another next step.

More engagement does not mean more outspoken voices and polar stances, but rather moves the needles towards the middle for a complete picture of the larger community. The problem is when we only reach a few people, you will inevitably only reach the frequent fliers. While these participants can be useful catalysts for communities, they often poison our perception of public engagement. There are several methods for reaching more residents and increasing project awareness - [this blog outlines a few ideas.](#)

The goal of building public trust can be supported by a holistic community engagement process. This doesn't always mean doing more work than you are already doing, but rather creating a cycle of engagement and re-engagement that is reliable, effective, and encourages two-way communication. This starts by reaching a more representative sample of residents - that "Great Middle" that we know exists but don't hear from - and ends with following up with residents with results and next steps.

If there's only one takeaway, know this: your residents want to engage with you, and not just the "frequent fliers".



The 2019 VLGMA Winter Conference used the services of PublicInput to survey attendees to obtain demographic data. This data can be seen [here](#).

[Contact Brad Johnson](#)

Mel's Poetry Corner

Spider Inner-Net

Landscape architects of enviable skill
with a consuming mission to fulfill,
O Spider, your web reminds,
all lives are woven into the grand Design.

You abide in vulnerable suspension,
career is a spinning sensation.
Upside down to patiently wait,
the direction that a new idea will take.

Strategically positioned and set,
attuned to movement on the inner net,
you capture dinner the innovative way
with bytes of information to savor and save.

What sort of web do we weave
with the values we believe?
Do we imprison fear and pain to consume
and digest slowly in our mental room?
Or do we attract healing nourishment
that supports our spiritual unfoldment?

There is no isolated event.
Everything has intent.
Web weavers demonstrate visibly,
how interconnected all of us must be.

Our consciousness allows us all to unite
in the spiritual universe of Truth and Light.



Mel Gillies

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)

Calendar

Upcoming Events

2019 Spring DAO Meeting - April 26th hosted by Cumberland County

[More Dates](#)

Update Email Address



Making a change? To continue to receive the monthly eNews and other VLGMA notices, please email [Molly Harlow](#) to update your contact information.

Future Newsletter Articles



A goal of this e-newsletter is to keep you informed on activities relative to our profession. As with any membership-based organization, contributions by members are welcome and encouraged. Topics can range from a recent achievement in your locality to an upcoming event with networking potential to human interest stories about current or retired members. To contribute simply send your brief e-newsletter content (~5 sentences or less) via email to [Molly Harlow](mailto:Molly.Harlow).

Future Newsletter Articles

[VLGMA Website](#)

[ICMA Website](#)

[Alliance for Innovation](#)

[Virginia Municipal League](#)

[VA Association of Counties](#)

[Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#)

[ELGL](#)

[Website Contact](#)



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