Governor Proposes Gas Tax Increase

Over the past six months, VTCA has worked with the Administration on the issue of the sustainability of funding for transportation infrastructure. To meet the funding sustainability concerns, Governor Northam has proposed increasing the state’s motor fuels tax from 22 cents per gallon to 34 cents (12 cents) per gallon over a three-year period, and then indexing the gas tax to the rate of inflation.

Virginia’s gas tax is one of the lowest in the country, and over 17% of gas taxes are paid by out-of-state drivers.

The proposal would also eliminate the annual vehicle inspection fee and reduce the state’s vehicle registration fee in half. In addition, annual fees would increase on alternative fuel vehicles.

When fully implemented, the proposal would generate over $385 million a year in new, sustainable revenues for transportation. The additional revenues would allow the Commonwealth to dedicate more funds to secondary road pavements, critical structures and SMART SCALE projects.

Please Renew Your Membership!

VTCA’s Strategic Plan is based on the goal of providing you, our members, with a solid return on your investment in the Alliance. VTCA zealously represents you before VDOT, DMME, DEQ and other state and local agencies. VTCA will never waiver in its commitment to its core purpose – serving as your advocate.

One measure of your ROI is transportation funding. Funding equals work for your company. In a political environment where experts said it couldn’t be done, VTCA delivered on its goal of securing another major transportation funding package. It will provide for nearly $300 million a year in new, dedicated transportation funding.

Each fall we write to confirm your continuing membership in VTCA. If you have not already done so, please take the time now to return your confidential Member Volume Report. These were due back on December 6. We appreciate your support and look forward to another successful year working on your behalf.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact VTCA’s Business Manager Greg Hoffman, greg@vtca.org.

2020 ESCCCC Class Schedule Now Available

Do you implement Erosion and Sediment Control Plans on VDOT projects and right-of-way? The 2020 ESCCC schedule is now available. Sign up today to earn or renew your ESCCC certification. Visit www.vtca.org/events to register.

Richmond - February 27
Roanoke - March 24
Abingdon - May 27
Roanoke - October 29
Richmond - December 2

Spring District Dialogue Announced In Charlottesville

Join your fellow VTCA members for this annual opportunity to meet Culpeper and Fredericksburg VDOT leaders and discuss the important issues that affect you as you do business within these Districts.

The Dialogue will be March 5 at the DoubleTree in Charlottesville. Registration coming soon to the VTCA web site.

VTCA Office Closed

The VTCA office will be closed Friday, January 17 in observance of Lee Jackson Day and Monday, January 20 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
On December 19, Governor Ralph Northam announced a landmark agreement to expand reliability and service on Virginia’s rail lines, creating a pathway to separate passenger and freight operations along the Richmond to Washington, D.C. corridor. The parties will continue work to finalize definitive agreements with execution planned in the second half of 2020.

The agreement between the Commonwealth and CSX outlines a $3.7 billion investment that includes:

- Building a new Virginia-owned Long Bridge across the Potomac River, with tracks dedicated exclusively to passenger and commuter rail;
- Acquisition of more than 350 miles of railroad right-of-way and 225 miles of track; and
- 37 miles of new track improvements, including a Franconia-Springfield bypass.

“We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make our rail system work better for everyone, both in Virginia and along the entire East Coast,” said Governor Northam. “This agreement will change the future of transportation in Virginia, improving our ability to move people and goods across the state, and opening up potential rail service in underserved parts of the Commonwealth.”

Currently Long Bridge, built in 1904 and owned by CSX, carries every passenger, commuter, and CSX freight train that crosses the Potomac River. But it has only two tracks, and is at 98 percent capacity in peak times. The new bridge will relieve this bottleneck, providing track for passenger and commuter trains while freight trains exclusively use the existing Long Bridge.

“CSX is proud of the innovative agreement reached with the Commonwealth of Virginia which will advance our goals for increased safety, efficiency, and volume growth while meeting the public’s desire for more passenger rail service to relieve commuter traffic congestion in the I-95 corridor,” said Jim Foote, President and Chief Executive Officer of CSX. “We thank Governor Northam, Secretary Valentine, and her team for their leadership on this partnership that will benefit CSX and the people of Virginia for many years to come.”

The Commonwealth has negotiated improvements with CSX to increase service levels. These improvements will be phased in over 10 years, resulting in the additional service:

- Doubling the number of Virginia Amtrak trains;
- Providing nearly hourly Amtrak service between Richmond and Washington, D.C.;
- Increasing Virginia Railway Express (VRE) service by 75 percent along the I-95 corridor, with 15-minute intervals during peak periods and adding weekend service;
- Increasing Amtrak service to Newport News and allowing for improved schedule of the third Amtrak train to Norfolk;
- Laying the foundation for Southeast High Speed Rail through the acquisition of the abandoned S-Line which runs from Petersburg into North Carolina; and
- Preserving an existing freight corridor between Doswell and Clifton Forge for future east-west passenger service.

The Commonwealth is bringing together federal, state, and regional partners to fund the proposal, with Amtrak playing a critical role. The Amtrak Board of Directors has approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth that outlines their commitment to this program. These agreements allow the Commonwealth to move forward with confirming commitments from potential partners and give Virginia the opening to bring more partners to the table.

Studies show that highway expansion is increasingly unable to alleviate gridlock and congestion in Northern Virginia. The Commonwealth’s Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment is completing a study of the I-95 Corridor. One preliminary finding estimates a $12.5 billion cost to build one additional lane in each direction for approximately 50 miles—with congestion returning in the peak period the day it opens.

This rail expansion is expected to remove five million cars and one million trucks off Virginia highways each year, and propel the Port of Virginia toward its goal of moving 40 percent of containers by rail. In addition, the acquisition of portions of the Buckingham Branch will preserve a future opportunity to create an east-west “college” corridor.

The Stephen F. Fuller Institute at George Mason University estimates rail commuters will contribute an additional $2 billion annually to Virginia due to expanded commuter activity made possible by a new Long Bridge.
VDOT is notifying contractors on qualified open contracts that they are to begin removal and disposal of existing raised pavement markers on their active projects. The added work directive will be done through work orders and will only require removal of the marker and patching. It does not include replacement of the markers. VDOT issued the directive to District Staff on December 12th. The memorandum is available online at https://bit.ly/2FigI8i.

Contracts Reminded Of Changed Sign Sheeting Requirements

VDOT has reported that as recently as the December bid letting, contractors are asking sign fabricators to provide quotes for Type IX sheeting on standards signs when Type XI is required. In May 2019, VDOT began the transition to Type XI Reflective Sign Sheeting for “most” traffic signs. While there are exceptions for some signs, sign installers and some fabricators apparently are not as aware of the new Type IX requirements in the Supplemental Specifications.

Contractors are encouraged to make sure they or their subcontractors are meeting the new requirements for the Type XI sign sheeting. The VDOT directive to designers, and special provisions are available.


TCMI Registration Open – Industry Seats Limited And Going Fast

A handful of seats remain available for the 2020 Transportation Construction Management Institute being held in Blacksburg February 23-28th. The 32nd installment of the leadership and management development program is specifically tailored for Virginia’s Transportation Construction industry and ideal for continued development of middle and upper management professionals. This year’s program itinerary has been streamlined and reduced from its original 10-day schedule to five days making it easier for attendees to fully engage in the program.

VDOT has identified all 15 of their participants and the remaining industry seats are going fast. I encourage you to register now before the class is full. For additional details and online registration visit http://www.cpe.vt.edu/tcmi/index.html.

Donny Necessary, Jr. Named Bristol District Administrator

Donny Necessary, Jr. has been selected as VDOT’s new Bristol District administrator. Necessary brings over 33 years of transportation expertise to the position, including service as Bristol’s acting district administrator for the past six months.

In making the announcement on December 5, Chief Deputy Commissioner Rob Cary, P.E., L.S., said “Donny’s years of sound program leadership, vast planning experience and invaluable regional partnerships provide a strong foundation for continued success in the Bristol District.”

Necessary will be responsible for the construction, maintenance and operations of nearly 16,000 lane miles of roads in the Bristol District’s 12 counties: Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe.

He joined VDOT in 1986 as a highway engineering technician. He has also served as an assistant district traffic engineer, a transportation operations analysis and enhancement engineer, and, since 2010, served as the Bristol District planner.

As the lead planner for the district, Necessary managed Bristol’s project prioritization program, SMART SCALE, and built vital local and regional partnerships through collaboration with planning district commissions and metropolitan planning organizations. His steady leadership and expertise has been integral to providing smooth short- and long-range planning processes.
New Bridge Weight-Restriction Signage
The Virginia Department of Transportation maintains and inspects over 21,000 bridges in the Commonwealth. Some are over 100 years old. As advancements are made to increase the legal load limits for vehicles, VDOT has re-evaluated the load limits on many bridges. Many bridges that have not had restrictions will now have load limits. Many bridges that have previously been posted may have weight limits changed.

VDOT hosted an online information session about new statewide bridge weight-restriction signage on November 13. Everyone affected by these changes – those in the trucking industry, business owners and drivers – are encouraged to view this information.

If your organization relies on hauling material or equipment, any new bridge postings may have an impact on your delivery costs and schedules. Any bridge or structure can be posted immediately, without warning, following an inspection. No bridge is considered restricted until the signage is installed.

For a current listing (updated daily) of bridges statewide posted with restricted weight limits (does not include height or width limitations), visit https://bit.ly/39yJJes.

A map of state-maintained bridges with restrictions on height, width as well as weight bridges is available upon request to vdotmapfiles@vdot.virginia.gov. The mapping is updated bi-annually.

VDOT to Host 2020 Mid-Atlantic Quality Assurance Workshop
VDOT will host the 2020 Mid-Atlantic Quality Assurance Workshop, set for February 11-13 in Williamsburg. This Workshop includes DOTs and affiliated industries from seven Mid-Atlantic states. Attendance is expected to reach 400 delegates.

VTCA will have a significant role in this event. VTCA will be responsible for four presentations, including Soil Stabilization, Use of #10 Screenings as Embankment and Fill Material, and Aggregate Fines and Manufactured Sand in Ready Mix Concrete.

More information is online at https://midatlanticqaw.com/index.html

Additionally, VDOT is offering sponsorships for the Workshop. If your firm is interested in a sponsorship please contact Angela Beyke at VDOT. Her email is angela.beyke@vdot.virginia.gov. She can be reached by phone at 804-328-3130.

Lunchbox Seminars To Return
After a year hiatus, the VTCA Aggregate Producer Operations Committee will bring back the Lunchbox Seminars in 2020. The first Lunchbox Seminar is scheduled for late February and will be in the Richmond area. The seminar topics will be screen plant maintenance and conveyor maintenance. Stay tuned for details.
Registration For VTCA “Spring Conference” Coming Soon

The annual Spring Transportation Construction Conference will return to Hampton April 1-3. Watch for conference and hotel registration to open in late January. Specific details on the date and time will be announced to VTCA members soon.

“Dedicated To Your Success” Join Us For The Winter Meeting

VTCA’s most intimate gathering, the Winter Meeting creates an atmosphere conducive to developing close personal connections within our industry. The meeting will be held February 6-9 at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess in Scottsdale, Arizona. An outstanding professional development program has been developed.

- Bart Thrasher, PE, VDOT’s Chief Engineer, will talk about Virginia’s historic and complex transportation program.
- Bob Holsworth, Ph.D., one of Virginia’s leading political analysts, will share insights and predictions for what lies ahead for the nation, Virginia, and transportation funding programs.
- VTCA’s Executive Vice President Jeff Southard will discuss VTCA’s work with the Virginia General Assembly. He will also give an update on the issues and initiatives VTCA is pursuing on behalf of its members.
- Environmental compliance is one of our industry’s most complex challenges. “The Devil is in the Details” will be presented by VTCA counsel Pat Genzler of Vandeventer Black, Steve Kuntz, PE, Vice President with Dewberry, and Chuck Smith, Senior Vice President with Shirley Contracting Company.
- Bethany Murphy, CPCU, AFSB, with Scott Insurance, will lead us through a great workshop titled “What Does Your Personal Risk Index Tell You and Your Employer?” Audience members will take an electronic “survey” to see what their personal risk index is and discuss applications for its use in the workplace

All the details are in the Winter Meeting brochure. Please contact anyone on the VTCA staff should you have questions or need more information. We look forward to seeing you in Scottsdale!

Health Care Corner

The IRS has announced the 2020 contribution limits for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs). Employers are permitted to establish lower FSA contribution limits for their employees. This chart summarizes the differences between the 2019 and 2020 FSA contribution limits. As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)</td>
<td>$2,700</td>
<td>$2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Purpose FSAs</td>
<td>$2,700</td>
<td>$2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Care FSAs</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Benefits</td>
<td>$265</td>
<td>$270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**New Members**

*ESP Associates, Inc.* is a multi-discipline engineering design and consulting firm providing clients with civil engineering, surveying, planning/landscape architecture, geosciences, environmental, subsurface utility engineering, and construction engineering inspection.

20484 Chartwell Center Drive, Suite D
Cornelius, North Carolina 28241
704-577-3123

[www.espassociates.com](http://www.espassociates.com)

VTCA Contact: S. Terry Callahan
	tcallahan@espassociates.com

*Clearwater Ventures, LLC* is an ecosystems services company specializing in compensatory mitigation solutions in the areas of stream, wetland and critical habitat restoration, water quality TMDL (total maximum daily load), nutrient offsetting, and ecological monitoring and maintenance.

4704 Rolfe Road
Richmond, Virginia 23226
804-819-0474

VTCA Contact: James Parker, Managing Partner
	parker@clearwaterventuresllc.com

---

**Member News**

*Bryant Contracting, Inc.* has received the 2019 Captain John Smith Award from the James City County Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Authority. The award is presented annually to a business or individual for exemplary contributions to the County. Founded in 1984 by Barry Bryant, in the last five years, Bryant has invested more than $5.4 million in new buildings at their Toano location.

*Wagman* welcomes Jon Bennett, P.E., D.GE to the geotechnical construction team as design-build manager. Jon is an accomplished designer and engineer specializing in deep foundations, excavation support, ground anchors and micropiles. With over 30 years of experience, Bennett is a nationally recognized expert in the field, having presented at workshops and seminars, and has several published works.

*PRIME AE Group, Inc.* has entered into a strategic partnership with NewHold Enterprises LLC. PRIME AE will continue to be led by President and CEO Kumar Buvanendran, the single largest shareholder in the partnership, and NewHold will serve to provide investment in PRIME AE’s long-term growth and success in the AE industry. NewHold will provide capital, as well as industry expertise, and intends to leverage its relationships to strategically enhance PRIME AE’s reach on a national scale.

*Luck Companies*, the nation’s largest family owned and operated producer of crushed stone and aggregates, has been ranked as one of the top three most engaged places to work in the United States by Korn Ferry, a global organizational consulting firm. Winners are companies that hold one of the top three highest scores within their country and category. Luck Companies was selected as a winner in the Small Business category in the U.S. The winners are chosen based on the largest percentage of employees who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statements:

- “I feel proud to work for the company.”
- “I would recommend the company as a good place to work.”

---

**In Memoriam**

Paschal “Pat” Dorsett Brooks, Jr., passed away on December 13 at the age of 86. Brooks was retired from P. D. Brooks Company, founded in 1962 by his father. After serving in the U.S. Army in the 7th Infantry Division in Korea, Pat went on to become an IBM representative before joining P. D. Brooks Company. Pat served as the former president of the American Traffic Safety Association and on the Board of Directors of the American Roadbuilders Association. Services were held at Dover Baptist Church in Manakin-Sabot, Virginia on December 18. The complete obituary can be read online at [https://bit.ly/2QgVbDW](https://bit.ly/2QgVbDW).