

YOUR ASSociation PRESS

MAY 2016

IS YOUR ORGANIZATION FULLY MAXIMIZING ITS POTENTIAL?

Every organization has something unique to offer—a compelling reason to believe and a differentiating value to 'buy' into. Every leader has the tools needed to successfully discover and shepherd it. But the question is: are you fully maximizing the potential?

Learn about 3 key guiding principles to discover during Hanah Holpe's presentation, "Bring Your Value Proposition To Life," at our monthly luncheon and seminar on Friday, June 3 at the Four Points by Sheraton Richmond.

Hanah will also be presenting, **"5 Ways to Use Creativity to Increase Membership Value"** during the luncheon.

Hanah Holpe started wonderSPROUT to use

her brand expertise to help both small businesses and large corporations maximize their full potential by sharpening their value proposition and bringing it to life. She has nearly a decade of



experience in shaping high impact businessbuilding strategies across many industries. She received her Masters in Communications Strategy from Virginia Commonwealth University's esteemed Brandcenter and her B.S. from Florida State University in Advertising.

WESTFIELDS & VISIT FAIRFAX HOST STELLAR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Nearly 200 attendees joined VSAE at the Westfields Marriott Washington Dulles for the 2016 Annual Conference hosted by Visit Fairfax. Top quality content leaders, superb food and beverage, along with the amazing hospitality of the conference hosts, all combined to make for one of the best conferences to date. The conference began with an Opening Reception at the Westin Washington Dulles where Chairman Sharon Bulova with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors declared Sunday, May 1 as Association Leadership Day. Sunday evening concluded with an after-dinner gathering at the Hilton Washington Dulles Airport.

The opening keynote speaker, Candace Bertotti, talked about how to more effectively communicate with members and co-workers using the Crucial Conversations approach. After the keynote, attendees chose from breakouts on legislative advocacy, budgeting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NEXT EVENT

JUNE MONTHLY LUNCHEON & SEMINAR

Friday, June 3 Four Points by Sheraton Richmond

SCHEDULE Registration 8:00 a.m. Seminar 8:30–11:00 a.m.

BRING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION TO LIFE Hanah Holpe wonderSPROUT

Reception Luncheon

11:00–11:45 a.m. 11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.

5 WAYS TO USE CREATIVITY TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP VALUE Hanah Holpe wonderSPROUT

Register online at vsae.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteer at the Hanover Habitat for Humanity May 19 and 20 CANCELED-TO BE RESCHEDULED IN THE FALL

AMC Retreat July 11–12 *Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel*

Meeting Planner Summit August 29–30 Embassy Suites Hampton

Monthly Luncheon & Seminar September 9

Richmond Marriott Downtown CEO & Senior Staff Retreat

September 19–20 Kingsmill Resort

Check out all events at vsae.org/upcoming-events.



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MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

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VSAE's Association Press newsletter continues to evolve. Last year, as VSAE unveiled a new brand identity the newsletter was updated, as well. The rebranded newsletter was given a newer, more modern look consistent with VSAE's new logo. It included more graphics and images, and less text. More importantly, the content of the newsletter shifted to focus more on you, our members. The strength of VSAE is its members, so we wanted the newsletter to reflect that strength. Then with the start of 2016, we made an additional change to the newsletter.

Starting with the January 2016 issue, the newsletter has adhered to an editorial calendar coinciding with VSAE's events and educational offerings. In January, VSAE held its annual "Virginia Politics" seminar with Dr. Bob Holsworth, and that month the newsletter focused on legislative advocacy. In March, the seminar was on volunteer management, and the February newsletter promoting that event focused on volunteers, including VSAE's own 2016 Call for Volunteers. April's issue was about annual conferences, including VSAE's conference, and included a great article interviewing some of VSAE's expert meeting planner members. And finally, this issue is on communication and has an article on research into how associations communicate with their members.

The full editorial calendar for 2016 is listed to the right.

We are always looking for ways to better serve our members. Many members say they read the *Association Press* from cover to cover. It's full of fresh content, useful information about VSAE's programs and services, and updates on VSAE members. The creation of an editorial calendar will add even more value by supplementing the content from events. We will also continue to feature members prominently throughout the newsletter. This includes encouraging more members to write articles and provide content.

We also encourage members to let us know if there are pertinent topics you don't see listed here. This list will continue to evolve to cover areas of importance to members, so we value your feedback. Our ultimate goal remains to return value to members and this should be another great way for us to do exactly that.

> Brandon Robinson, CAE Editor and VSAE Executive Director



2016 Editorial Calendar

January Legislative Advocacy February Volunteer Management March Governance April Annual Conference May Communications June/July Strategic Planning August Education/CAE/Professional Development September Meeting Planning October Leadership November Legal & Ethics December Legislative (Looking Forward to 2017)

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR PROFILE!

We are in the process of compiling the **2016–17 Membership Directory and Facilities Guide,** YOUR valuable membership resource.

Because we want the most current information possible, please take a moment to log in to your online profile at **vsae.org** to be certain it is up to date.

THE INFORMATION IN THE DATABASE AS OF JUNE 3 WILL BE PRINTED IN THE NEW DIRECTORY.

Look for the **2016–17 Membership Directory and Facilities Guide** in August! If you need help accessing your profile, please call our office at (804) 747-4971.



Sheraton'

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and finance for non-profits, association thrivability, or a deeper dive session on Crucial Conversations.

At lunch, VSAE recognized its newest CAE member and outgoing board members before installing the 2016-2017 Board of Directors. President Barbara Homiller, CAE shared her personal story of how she went from stay-at-home mom to association executive and President of VSAE. Outgoing President Wilmer Stoneman, III, CAE also gave moving remarks about his own journey as VSAE's president.

After lunch, attendees could choose from more breakout sessions or attend the increasingly popular IGNITE presentations. IGNITE presentations are short 5 minute presentations about a topic which ignites a passion in the audience, speaker, or both. This year's topics included essential oils, introverts, music, puppies, running, and travel. The IGNITE presentations and handouts from many of the conference's content leaders can be found on the VSAE website. (Events and Education Tab after logging in.)

On Monday evening, after a day of great educational content, attendees could relax, network, and celebrate at the Annual Networking Reception and Gala Dinner. During dinner, President Homiller and Executive Director Brandon Robinson, CAE shared with attendees the current state and future plans for VSAE. VSAE is in the middle of a member driven strategic planning process focused on how to continue being the "gold standard" for members while building an innovative association for the future.

The conference concluded with a dynamite presentation from Meagan Johnson on how to approach the varied generations in the workforce—from the traditional generation to millennials—and everything in between.

If you missed this year's conference, be sure to mark your calendars now for 2017, April 30-May 2 at The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center.



Thank you to our event photographer, BOB UPDEGROVE, for capturing the energy and many fun moments at the Annual Conference. Contact Bob at (703) 771-4282 or bobupdegrove.com for any of your wedding and event photography needs.



Thank you to James River Audio Visual Services for providing top notch AV services for our events! Contact them for meetings, events, and weddings at (757) 342-2502 or jravs.com.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

What success stories do you have with communicating with your membership? We help our member businesses engage and communicate with their employees to educate and motivate involvement in the political process through VirginiaWins. In the 2013 election for governor, we had over 175,000 unique visitors come to VirginiaWins to learn about where the candidates stand on the issues impacting Virginia's business climate. When voters are educated and informed, Virginia wins.

What have been some challenges with communicating with your membership? Our biggest challenge is being too reliant on email to reach our membership. While it is certainly the most efficient and cost-effective manner to disseminate information, it can easily get lost in the abundant amount of emails people receive each day. We continue to look at other outlets to easily keep in touch with our membership. Face to face interaction is still the most effective way to get your point across.

What is the biggest issue facing you as an association executive? The balance and co-existence between the mission and vision of the Virginia Chamber and the ever-changing political environment.

Who have been mentors and/or role models in your life/career? I have had the fortunate opportunity to work for many great leaders across

- Who handles all the logistics for your meetings?
- Who keeps your meeting attendees happy and makes you look good?
- Who always goes above and beyond to get the details right?
- They might do it all without the words "meeting planner" in their title.
- Yet, you couldn't live without them.

Recognize them for all they do.



VBBSENESs

Fyan DUNN, CRE Executive Vice President of Corporate and Government Affairs Virginia Chamber of Commerce

> the Commonwealth. My mentors include: Bobbie Kilberg of the Northern Virginia Technology Council, Jay Timmons of the National Association of Manufacturers and Barry DuVal of the Virginia Chamber.



What do you enjoy doing in your time away from work? I enjoy spending time with family, golfing, bowling, and raising a vegetable garden.

What's on your music playlist? Chris Stapleton, Old Crow Medicine Show, Alabama, and Jamey Johnson.

What sports/teams do you root for? All things Virginia Cavaliers. Go Hoos!

What drew you to the association industry? I enjoy the intertwined mission and vision of an association with the legislative and political process.

What advice would you give your younger self? Patience is a virtue worth practicing.

What was the last great piece of advice you received? The future is now: realize the opportunity of the now to dictate the future.



Greater Richmond Convention Center. Register at vsae.org/expo. AnyList

This app helps our family organize our grocery list, keep a running meal plan including links to recipes, and even a Target list!

My husband and I can add/delete items at the same time and see it real time.

Robin Gahan, MSW

🔋 Bitmoji

Silly but loads of fun, Bitmoji allows you to create your own avatar to use on Facebook, in texting, and so on. Wherever you go, your avatar is now just a click away. Easily insert bitmojis anywhere you communicate on the web. You can change outfits and there are loads of different messages to choose from.



Blanche Powell

It helps me keep track of my son's pitch count and statistics during his baseball games. I have a history of his performance, but more importantly, it keeps me focused during the long hours watching his games.





At a previous association, we used Core-Apps. It is a multi-event app, so it stores and separates information for each event your association holds so you can access anything at any time.

Carter Lyons



A free application that's wonderful for capturing notes, photos, and so on. Its best

We asked you about your favorite mobile apps...and this is what you said!

feature is the easy search capabilities. It's a digital file cabinet, note-taking tool, daily journal, task/project management system, recipe-keeper, and more. It's cloud-based so I can retrieve the information on my smartphone as well as any computer.

Bob Ramsey, CAE



It is a social network for your neighborhood. I like this app because you can keep up with different happenings in your area, such as events, crime alerts, yard sales, lost pets, etc.

A Fan/Museum District package thief was recently caught because of surveillance posted on this app.

Kristina Preisner



OneNote has become the replacement for carrying a notebook anywhere I go. It syncs across my iPhone, iPad, and PC laptop seamlessly. It also syncs up and integrates with Outlook, so I can use it to track projects, tasks, and emails. I can also import handwritten notes, handouts, or other files directly into my OneNote file. For years, I had tried to go all electronic so I had everything at my fingertips wherever I went. It wasn't until I started using this app that I was able to do so.

Brandon Robinson, CAE



Love this app when out at a restaurant. It provides a fast and convenient way to calculate the gratuity for any bill.

Sandra Peterson



This traffic and GPS App uses real time traffic reports to guide you from point A to point B in the fastest way possible.

I like it because not only does it help me get around some of the worst rush hour and accident caused traffic, but it also takes me on routes that I never would have known about or thought of. Because it's based on real-time technology, it can give a pretty accurate arrival estimate MOST of the time. It will also tell you how long it estimates you'll be sitting in traffic when you do run into traffic, and also tells you if time will be added or subtracted from your drive because traffic is freeing up or building up ahead.

Sarah Sutton



Take AIM How to Implement a Successful Communications Plan in 2016

By Jill Andreu

Results of Naylor Association Solutions' 2015 Association Communication Benchmarking Report suggest that while associations are making great strides in their fight for member engagement, they still struggle with content relevancy, communication integration, and using data advantageously to learn more about their members. And while staffing has increased slightly, it does not seem to be increasing sufficiently to handle the everincreasing communication workload at today's association. With so many association initiatives tied to communication staff, creating and executing a formal and fully integrated strategy can be a daunting task.

But it doesn't have to be that way if you implement a simple Take AIM (Assess, Integrate, Measure) approach.



To build better content and greater engagement, you must start by asking what members want and why.

Assessment through surveys and faceto-face interaction is a very basic content strategy step, yet it is often overlooked. In an already-cluttered communication space, associations fear they're asking too much of members and don't want to add a survey request that requires a decent bit of time and attention. But with communications strategy in a membership-based organization, how can you give members what they want if you don't ask? Remember, members live and work in the industry every day and are your best subject matter experts. Administering a survey also involves them in your process, giving them a real sense of association ownership.

Take a closer look at who your stakeholders are and what they are telling you – and what they're not – to uncover areas for improvement and set your goals.

Members, staff, and advertisers are all stakeholders when it comes to an association's communications program. An assessment that takes all these audiences into consideration

"Avoid the temptation to be all things to all people."

can provide your team with an opportunity to uncover previously unidentified areas for improvement.

Something as simple as looking at your membership demographics can help you make more informed decisions about the best ways to provide information consumption choices. If you were to ask members which competitive publications they read on a regular basis, and the one competitor your staff expected to find is hardly mentioned, then you've just uncovered an important factor that will help refine your future strategy.

Particularly with small associations, the question remains: Are we employing a social media program just because? If you don't have a social media strategy, get one.

Social media gives your association exposure, helps cement your status as an industry thought leader and offers a simple (and free) content integration opportunity. Use your survey to learn more about members' level of social media adoption. Again, stay away from general questions about whether or not they use it; learn why they use it, which channels are most important to them, and build strategy around their preferences.

When it comes to your digital communications, make every message count.

eNewsletters held their perch again this year as the most highly valued digital communication opportunity. And, while associations feel they are making progress in combating information overload, this challenge has remained the single most frequently cited communication challenge since we began our annual study in 2011. It's imperative that you have a plan and avoid a fire drill approach when it comes to your email communications.

Subject lines are no different than headlines; you need to grab attention and draw readers to click. Once they click, what will they find? Is the design attractive? Are the sources reputable? Are there content takeaways? How often do you include photos, graphics, and videos? Ask members what they think about the content.

Stop under-utilitizing video. Yesterday.

According to Forrester Research, 74 percent of all Internet traffic will be video by 2017. While our own research found that only one-third of associations (37.9 percent) consider video part of their overall content strategy, continuing education, event memorialization, live streaming, and integration opportunities make video an incredibly viable communication tool. Sponsorship and advertising opportunities also fit well into this vehicle, providing your trusted vendors an opportunity to have considerable branding time in front of members.



Designate an Ambassador of Integration.

Effective integration remains a pain point for associations of all sizes, with a paltry 6.3 percent of respondents to our annual Association Communication Benchmarking Study claiming to have a fully integrated communications program. Small associations feel they need to be more consistent, midsize associations want to know how to best utilize content across all channels, and large associations have trouble engaging new members, which can be improved by better communication integration.

No matter what your current integration challenge is, appoint someone who can interact with all other departments to ensure that your integration efforts are not in vain. Having one member of the team who can promote the benefits of integration while ensuring that it is happening on a daily basis will keep your integration goals top of mind for everyone.

Review available communication vehicles and consider how much more powerful a message can be if it's repurposed across different channels.

For instance, your pre-conference magazine is mailed to members well in advance of the event. That serves the dual purpose of enticing members and driving registration. How much more powerful is that effort if you create a video that brings the magazine to life, then use social media and your eNewsletter to push that video to members? Within the video, you can tease to stories in the magazine, talk up conference speakers, and encourage viewers to follow you on social media. That one example gives members an opportunity to consume information several different ways and gives you an opportunity to drive home your key messages and most important content.

Make sure your content and communication vehicles are ready for consumption on the go.

Integration also helps solve the mobile strategy issue many associations identified as a major hurdle this year. A mobile strategy doesn't have to be a difficult task – just keep members' mobile habits in mind as you create your strategy. However, with just half (55.2 percent) of respondents indicating their websites are optimized for mobile and onethird (33.5 percent) optimizing newsletter and blog content for mobile, the challenge seems to lie with technology and cost. Again, a proper assessment with the right questions (How often do members access information on the go?) provides you data to support potential financial investments.



Don't wait to measure – incorporate it as an everyday practice.

So often, associations put a plan in place and run full throttle toward an end goal of better engagement. We advise that you look at this Take AIM approach holistically, and continually review the goals set in the assessment phase. Measure early and often, and chart how your different communication vehicles are performing so you'll know what's working best.

Track your results, and if you didn't perform well in a certain area, ask for help.

Associations are notorious for running lean. The great thing about having data that identifies members' wants and needs in comparison to what your staff is able to deliver is that you can make a case for a budget that includes vendor resources and/or additional staff. So, although it may feel cumbersome at first, the more comfortable you get with making measurement a part of your process, the more likely you are to get the help you deserve.

CONCLUSION

As we said in our 2014 recommendations, avoid "shiny-object syndrome" and the temptation to be all things to all people. Consider how relatively simple a communications strategy can be with a Take AIM approach. Gather member feedback, deliver great content, monitor results, and watch engagement levels rise.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The following committees and task forces are comprised of member volunteers with the purpose of supporting the programs and activities of VSAE.

These volunteers are your association leaders, and they play a large part in ensuring you are getting the most from your membership.

CAE Committee

Chair: Laura Cobb, CAE

Promotes the Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential and plans study groups (CAE members only).

Community Service

Chair: Cassie White

Organizes community service activities and fundraising activities to support charities suggested by the membership.

Conference Task Force

Chair: Robin Byrd

Promotes attendance, recruits sponsors, and assists staff with conference planning and marketing.

Education

Chair: Bob Bradshaw, MAM

Develops educational content for VSAE events including speakers at the Annual Conference, the Expo, and Monthly Seminars.

Ехро

Chair: Charles Waddell, CHSP

Secures vendors to exhibit at the Expo. Encourages attendance by members and other qualified meeting planners.

Government Affairs

Chair: Jonathan Williams

Monitors state legislative, executive, and regulatory actions that impact association management (Executive members only).

Membership

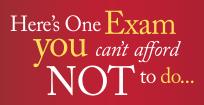
Chair: Carter Lyons

Promotes membership and assists with member retention. Welcomes new members.

Silent Auction Task Force

Chair: Rachel Reim

Promotes the Silent Auction primarily through soliciting donations.



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Monty Dise, AP Group, President Served on Gov. Kaine's Access to Healthcare Committee and Gov. McDonnell's Virginia Health Reform Initiative Advisory Pane

MEMBERS CAN LEARN FROM YOU!

Share your expertise or experiences in association management with our membership by writing for the *Association Press!* Contact Brandon Robinson by calling (804) 249-2234 or write him at brandon@vsae.org.



HEALTH CARE CORNER

When buying health insurance coverage, it is important to know the limitations of your provider network (doctors, clinics, and hospitals). There are basically three types of provider networks: One type is Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) that many times require referrals from your primary care doctor in order to have coverage for specialist visits. HMOs typically do not have outof-network coverage unless the illness is a medical emergency. Another type of network is Point of Service (POS) networks that are typically larger provider networks than HMOs. POSs normally do not require referrals while in network and they also provide out-ofnetwork coverage. Finally, the most flexible networks are Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs). PPOs typically have national provider networks and provide the most freedom in provider choices, however they are more costly than HMOs and POSs.

Please contact me with any questions.

Monty Dise (804) 423-7700 mdise@apgroupinc.com

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

MORE THAN A HOTEL OR CONFERENCE CENTER – IT'S A DESTINATION

Hilton Norfolk The Main is Norfolk's newest destination and a premier meeting destination on the East Coast. Opening early 2017, Hilton Norfolk The Main will feature a Hilton hotel, the Exchange, an IACC certified conference center with the latest technology, as well as three unique restaurants with stunning views.

Located in the heart of downtown Norfolk at the corner of Granby and Main Streets, The Main is within walking distance to many of Norfolk's top attractions and best dining. The Main is also easily accessible from Norfolk International Airport (ORF), only nine miles away.

DEMANDING STANDARDS FOR THE MOST DISCERNING

Hilton Norfolk The Main will feature 300 exquisite guest rooms, including 11 suites, with panoramic views of the Elizabeth River. The eclectic décor will create a hotel environment unlike any other in Virginia. Expect The Main to transcend standards and deliver an unparalleled guest experience.

The Main's amenities allow guests to conduct productive meetings with a tiered meeting room, an innovative collaboration room, and two boardrooms.

AN INTERSECTION OF INNOVATIVE SPACE & IDEAS

The Main will feature 42,000 square feet of flexible meeting space with two ballrooms, including the largest ballroom in Virginia with an 18,500 square-foot grand ballroom, plus an abundance of pre-function space.

The Exchange is a technologically advanced, state-of-the-art conference center with dedicated professional staff and classrooms that intentionally open up to "think tanks" where ideas and dialogue can continue and be exchanged.

For meetings ranging from 10 to 2,000 attendees, The Main offers the perfect space for productive and enhanced meetings in upscale surroundings, as well

HILTON NORFOLK THE MAIN



as thoughtful details such as built-in registration desks and continuous break stations.

TAKE IN THE VIEWS AND DELECTABLE CUISINE

Offering three diverse restaurants – Varia, Saltine, and Grain - The Main is the central meeting point for office lunches, savory dining, after-hour drinks, special events, and everything in between.

VARIA

Varia, a modern Italian trattoria restaurant and wine studio, allures guests into a sophisticated and eclectic modern design. The dining room culminates in a large millwork library featuring hidden doors in the bookshelves that lead into an ultra-private dining room for exclusive events.

SALTINE

This street-level restaurant and bar is an urban seafood bistro. To add to the distinctive downtown



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- 2 ballrooms including 18,500 Grand Ballroom, the largest in Virginia
- Abundance of exhibit space
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appeal, craft cocktails are a signature specialty. A raw bar showcases the region's finest oysters, clams, and shrimp. The menu is inspired by the freshest seafood and matched with produce from local farms.

GRAIN

Grain is a rooftop bier garden - the perfect place to relax with a craft beer and enjoy the downtown nightlife. The 10,000 square foot space includes an oversized fire pit that doubles as a stage for live performances and spectacular views of the Elizabeth River.

CONTACT:

Justin Beale Director of Sales and Marketing Justin.Beale@TheMainNorfolk.com (757) 305-9758 Hilton Norfolk The Main



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

EXECUTIVES

Sabrina Soto Association of School Business Officials International Reston

Siobhan McMahon

Association of School Business Officials International Reston

ASSOCIATES Jennifer Eichel

Conference Solutions Fairfax Station

Kristin Frye Lansdowne Resort Leesburg

PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to VALERIE VAUGHN. Conference Manager at the Virginia Society of CPAs, who is our April Monthly Seminar evaluation prize winner. Valerie won an overnight weekend stay in a Stay Well room with breakfast for two at the **Richmond Marriott** Short Pump.

EXPO BOOTHS NOW AVAILABLE

Booths are now on sale for the Expo, Virginia's only tradeshow specifically geared toward association staff and professional meeting planners. More information including the booth contract and other forms are available at vsae.org/Expoinfo or call Tracie at (804) 249-2244 or write her at tracie@vsae.org.

AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

Karen Hudgins, Vice President of Employee Benefits for TB&R Insurance recently completed The National Association of Health Underwriters Self-Funding Certification.

The Virginia Trial Lawyers Association has named Valerie O'Brien as its new Executive Director. She succeeds Jack Harris, who has retired as Executive Director after 27 years in the position.



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Brandon Robinson, CAE Executive Director

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