



— VIRGINIA SOCIETY of —  
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

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MARCH 2018

## PACKING A PUNCH with Your Communications, PR, and Marketing Campaigns

Join VSAE on Friday, April 6 at the **Delta Hotels by Marriott Richmond Downtown** for the April Seminar Series with Breakfast. **Sheri Singer**, president of Singer Communications, will present **"Packing a Punch with Your Communications, PR, and Marketing Campaigns."**

In this session, Singer will discuss the steps necessary to launch market research on a budget, identify target audiences, and create a strategic plan. Focusing on utilizing both traditional and non-traditional communications channels—such as mobile

and viral marketing—this session will provide participants with the necessary tools to create a successful strategic plan and develop impactful communications content across all channels. The breakfast presentation, **"No Need to Panic: Managing a Crisis Effectively,"** will offer information about handling a crisis in a way that preserves your reputation.

**Sheri Singer**, an award-winning communications practitioner, is president of Singer Communications and vice chair of ASAE's Healthcare Community Committee.

REGISTER AT [VSAE.ORG](http://VSAE.ORG).

## REGISTER NOW FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Advocacy | Communications | Leadership | Meetings

Have you registered for the 2018 VSAE Annual Conference, **Ideas That Work**, May 6-8, at Hilton Norfolk The Main? This year's focus is on ideas, presented in four breakout session tracks—Advocacy, Communications, Leadership, and Meetings. Learn everything you need to know to excel for your association and its members.

The conference offers over 6 hours of CAE qualified education. Here is a peek at that content.

### Opening Keynote—Christine Cashen\*

#### Get What You Want With What You've Got!



Join the campaign to stop global whining—because it's dangerously contagious. Life is too full of opportunity to waste energy on complaining. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem. You have what it takes right now to make a difference in your personal and professional life.

We are all given what we need to succeed and Christine will help you put those skills to the best use. This program will help you:

- ▶ Communicate effectively with all different personality styles.
- ▶ Create a better day with more energy and time.
- ▶ Discover how to have less stress and more fun.

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### NEXT EVENT

#### SEMINAR SERIES WITH BREAKFAST

Friday, April 6

*Delta Hotels by Marriott  
Richmond Downtown*

Speaker: **Sheri Singer**

8:00 a.m. Registration

8:00–8:30 a.m. Reception

8:30–9:45 a.m. Breakfast

**"No Need to Panic:  
Managing a Crisis Effectively"**

10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Seminar

**"Packing a Punch with  
Your Communications, PR,  
and Marketing Campaigns"**

[Register at vsae.org](http://Register at vsae.org).

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### SENIOR STAFF SIG

Friday, March 23

*VA Transportation Construction Alliance*

#### SMALL ASSOCIATION CEO SIG

Tuesday, March 27

*VA Agribusiness Council*

#### MEETING PLANNER SIG

(3 PART SERIES)

Tuesday, April 17

*MSV Building, 2nd Floor Classroom*

#### 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 6–8

*Hilton Norfolk The Main*

#### SEMINAR SERIES

WITH LUNCH

Friday, June 1

*Richmond Marriott Downtown*

[Check out all events at  
vsae.org/upcoming-events](http://Check out all events at vsae.org/upcoming-events).



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# Leadership reflections



Brandon Robinson, CAE  
VSAE Executive Director

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of hosting my colleagues for a two-day meeting in Virginia Beach. The Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront hosted over 20 members of the Association Societies Alliance (ASA). ASA is association for the chief staff executives of the local, state, and regional societies of association executives. This group gets together to exchange information and bring back ideas to better serve you, our members.

I came away with a very positive outlook for our industry. And thanks to our friends at the **Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront**, the **Virginia Beach CVB**, and the **Cavalier Hotel**, we all came away knowing what great hospitality was.

Then just a few weeks ago, I had the privilege to attend the Association Trends Salute to Association Excellence event in Washington, D.C. where I was honored as one of the 2017 Association Trends Young & Aspiring Professionals. This annual event recognizes outstanding associations and association professionals. I was inspired by the words of the Association Executive of the Year, Arlene A. Pietranton, PhD, CAE, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

Arlene discussed the importance of the work of associations. She talked about the pride she had in her organization, and implored us all to excel for our industries, for our members, for our associations.

VSAE's mission is to be the best at making you and your associations the best, therefore it is my hope that VSAE can inspire you to perform at your best. Whether it is a keynote speaker at a conference, a content leader at a seminar, or a conversation with a colleague, this is our focus. How are we doing? Write me and let me know at [brandon@vsae.org](mailto:brandon@vsae.org).

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Julia Henderson  
Membership Development Director  
Virginia Society of CPAs

### What are you working on that's new and different?

We're always trying something new at the VSCPA. We're currently working on a years-long process to innovate our membership model. We're testing different options for individuals and groups and exploring how we can package our benefits to deliver the greatest value. It's been a lot of fun learning from our members and also exploring how other industries have innovated similarly.

### What is the biggest issue facing you as an association executive?

Making sure I understand the changing market and member needs far enough in advance to make relevant and impactful changes.

### What drew you to the association industry?

I was drawn to associations because they are a blend of non- and for-profit business. I love that in associations we exist to serve our members and that our business model gives us resources to create and innovate.

### If you could visit any place in the world, where would it be?

I'm ready for a trip back to the Mediterranean. A nice sailboat cruise from the Amalfi coast to the Greek Isles would do the trick.

### How do you recharge?

I volunteer for the Richmond-based organization SPARC. I am a weekly classroom volunteer

with the Live Art production. I have a blast singing, dancing, and drumming along with the kids and instructors each week.

### What is the most important lesson you've learned in the last 3 years?

Slowing down. When I slow down, I listen and empathize more, allow others to join me in the idea, and we reach the finish line together.

### What character do you most admire in others?

Enthusiasm.

### What are your favorite apps to use for work? For play?

For work: Asana. Asana is a free project management tool that can be used on your computer or phone. For play: Instagram. I love sharing videos and photos from my life and getting a peek into others.

### Would you rather be invisible or be able to read minds?

Read minds, of course. Think of how much meeting time that could save.





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> ANNUAL CONFERENCE, continued from page 1

Take charge of what you can change today. You'll leave feeling charged up, motivated, and excited to get back to it.

### Closing Session Keynote—Dave Davlin\* The Game-Winning 3: A Roadmap for Professional & Personal Development



Success can be defined in its simplest form as making life better for someone else. Whether it comes in creating a better product, helping to relieve someone's stress or pain, bringing someone laughter or joy, or helping someone get more out of their life, success is always about serving.

This presentation is an hour of interaction, humor, and audience participation mixed with a powerful message. It is a roller coaster ride of emotion that will find the audience laughing one moment and brought to tears the next.

\*Provided courtesy of Powell Kohne Associates, LLC.

## Pre- and Post-conference Activities



Sunday, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

### Nauticus & the USS Wisconsin Battleship (BB-64)

Explore the USS Wisconsin Battleship, the largest and last battleship ever built by the U.S. Navy, during a guided private tour of areas not available to the general public. After the tour, explore Nauticus, an exciting interactive science and technology center featuring hands-on exhibits, HD and 3-D films on a giant screen, sharks, the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, and more.



Sunday, 11:00–4:00 p.m.

### Norfolk Brewery Tour

The tour will stop first at O'Connor Brewing Co., a mighty yet humble craft brewery located in the historic Ghent neighborhood. After O'Connor's, head to Smartmouth Brewing Co. in Norfolk's Chelsea District. Since 2012, Smartmouth has helped shape the Hampton Roads craft beer scene with unique styles, quality ingredients and an emphasis on flavor over flash. Tour includes transportation.



Sunday, 12:00–4:00 p.m.

### Norfolk Tides Baseball Game

Join colleagues for an afternoon baseball game along the Norfolk Waterfront as the Norfolk Tides play the Louisville Bats. The Norfolk Tides are a minor league baseball team in the Triple-A International League. As an affiliate team of the Baltimore Orioles, the Tides play at Harbor Park. The game starts at 1:00 p.m. and will include food and beverages of your choice.



Tuesday, 1:00–5:30 p.m.

### Golf at Riverfront Golf Club

Join colleagues for an afternoon on the links. Designer Tom Doak sculpted the beautiful layout of Riverfront Golf Club to take full advantage of the local natural beauty. It is a magnificent waterfront golf design. Tees are typically at ground level, the fairways are generally wide and friendly, and chipping areas are plentiful. Large deep bunkers combined with undulating greens make shot-making crucial.

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# Breakout Sessions & Speakers

## MORNING

## AFTERNOON

### ADVOCACY

#### #FreeTheMimosa: How Grassroots Advocacy Changed Hundred-Year-Old Blue Laws

Jeff Tippett | Founder, Targeted Persuasion

Using the successful and popular North Carolina “Brunch Bill” campaign as the case study, this breakout session offers a deep dive into how to shape public opinion and engage to action covering topics like: messaging and imagery, websites and petitions, calls to action, email marketing, testing and running social media, engaging press, and positioning your association to lead within your space. Participants will leave with skills and resources to begin using public opinion to shape policy decisions for their association members.

#### Seeking Consensus, Mediation and Negotiation Skills for Association Executives

Mark Rubin | Executive Director, VA Center for Consensus Building

When everyone takes a position and holds on to it for dear life, is agreement possible? It is. This program will provide association executives approaches, ideas, and tools to avoid an impasse and gain consensus. Whether you are negotiating internally with members, volunteer leaders, government regulators, or legislators, the skills learned in this session will be key to your future success. The session will cover listening techniques, negotiating strategies, and mediation, including specifics on public policy issues.



JEFF TIPPETT



MARK RUBIN



JASON MOREAU

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### Google Analytics in a Nutshell

Jason Moreau | Owner/Instructor, Mind The Metrics

According to Google, about 90 percent of websites have Google Analytics installed, but only 30 percent of people actually log in to look at their analytics dashboard. Of that 30 percent, most people don't know what they're doing. In this presentation, you will learn the basics of Google Analytics. This is not a course for tech experts, but for marketers who want to understand how to interpret their data. You will learn to better connect with your membership base and identify which marketing initiatives are really working.

#### Rethinking Membership Communications

J.J. White | Executive Director, Dale Carnegie

Communicating with members and getting your message out is never easy. Association emails typically have an open-rate of around 30 percent, which means 70 percent are *not* reading your emails. How do you get your message heard? What's the right channel for your audience? This highly interactive session will help you try to find answers to these questions. Hear from colleagues who have had success breaking through the clutter, then learn from fellow attendees in a facilitated conversation about how to get your message to your members, to your industry, and to your intended audience.



JJ WHITE



ROSE MARKEY

### LEADERSHIP

#### Be Bold. Be Vulnerable. Be Mindful.

Rose Markey | Sr. Learning & Development Consultant, University of Virginia

Vulnerability is not a term often associated with leadership yet being vulnerable can be a key asset to leadership. This breakout session will examine the four myths of vulnerability and discuss how practicing vulnerability makes you a better leader. Attendees will learn strategies to rationally respond to stressful situations, and practice applying self-compassion. Take a bold step, be a little vulnerable, attend this session, and learn how to be a better leader.

#### Who Has Time To Lead?

Dave Phillips, CAE | VP of Industry Relations, realtor.com

In today's fast-paced world, leaders struggle to find the time to lead. The attention span of Americans is down to 7 seconds and that means your members and your employees are harder than ever to lead. Learning about the three leadership gifts discussed in Phillips' book, *Time to Lead*, will create time for you and change your organization.



DAVE PHILLIPS



KRISTEN CLARKE

### MEETINGS

#### Alternative Learning Formats: Avoiding Death by Panels

Kristin Clarke, CAE | Consultant, Clarke Association Content  
Rhea Blanken, FASAE | President, Results Technology  
Frank Gainer | Conf. Dir., American Occupational Therapy Assn.

While panels dominate the education formats at many association conferences, they can often be a yawnfest. Open your mind and let three experienced session designers immerse you in at least one alternative format firsthand, while also sharing creative formats adopted by others. Among the cool formats covered will be speed soloing, networking salons, fly-on-the-wall, walking for wisdom, vending machine learning, and much more. The session will also include stories on format failures, and engaging introverts and ultra-experienced members. Even the most panel-loving groups will find something new to try in the name of learning.

#### Create Mobile Experiences That Drive Member Engagement

Lauren A. Wolfe | Manager, Integrated Marketing & Comm.

Associations are continually evolving and embracing technology in the race for relevance. Your members expect more than ever before. What happens after a big event when your members go home? Do the conversation and engagement end? Associations are leveraging mobile technology to extend member engagement year-round. Each success story is unique and offers perspective on using technology to connect on a deeper level. Hear association success stories about how you can be empowered to create dynamic experiences that keep members coming back to you for content and ways to connect.



RHEA BLANKEN



FRANK GAINER



LAUREN WOLFE

# YOUR VOTE COUNTS!



## VOTE FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS AT THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING ON APRIL 6

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Immediate Past President **Barbara Homiller, MBA, CAE**, and the Board of Directors, nominate the following slate of officers and directors for the 2018-2019 year (May 1–April 30). The slate includes the following.

### OFFICERS

#### PRESIDENT

**Ray Mattes, III, CAE**  
President & CEO, Retail Alliance

#### PRESIDENT ELECT

**Duront "D" Walton, Jr., CAE**  
Executive Director  
VA Telecommunications Industry  
Association

#### TREASURER

**Phyllis Errico, JD, CAE**  
General Counsel  
VA Association of Counties

#### SECRETARY

**Maureen Dingus, CAE**  
Chief Operations Officer  
VA Society of CPAs

#### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

**Scot McRoberts, MPA, IOM**  
Executive Director  
VA Council of CEOs

### DIRECTORS

**Trace Carson**, Senior Vice President, Organization Management Group; **Amy Hewett, CAE**, Vice President of Strategy & Communications, VA Health Care Association; **Katie Newland**, Executive Director, ACG National Capital; and **Tom Witt**, Engineer Director, VA Transportation Construction Alliance, to begin new two-year terms.

**Courtney Fleming**, Vice President of Education & Training/Communications, VA Bankers Association; **Katie Frazier**, President, VA Agribusiness Council; **Ashton D. "Danny" Mitchell, III, AAI, AAI-M**, Vice President of Business Development, Independent Insurance Agents of Virginia; **Matthew Stanley**, Vice President of Government Affairs & Association Relations, Elwood Consulting, LLC; **Steven Williams**, Partner, Hardiman-Williams, LLC, to continue serving the remainder of their current terms.

**Jim Roman** to serve a second one-year term as Associate member representative.

Additional candidates for the offices to be filled (except President and Past President) may be placed on the ballot with a petition signed by at least 10 percent of the members eligible to vote. The petition shall be filed with the Secretary at least one week before the election. The Secretary shall send notice of such additional nominations to all members eligible to vote before the election.

Vote on the VSAE 2018-2019 slate of officers and directors at the Annual Business Meeting and Board Election, held on April 6 at the Seminar Series with Breakfast at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Richmond Downtown.



There is still time to plan and host a meeting or group with prime dates and space available this year. Call us to learn about our special group offers or to plan your visit for the following events:

- **May 4-6:** Concours D'Elegance
- **July 5-8:** The Greenbrier Classic, A PGA Tour/FedEx Cup Event
- **July 26-August 15:** The Houston Texans Training Camp
- **September 14-16:** The Greenbrier Champions Tennis Classic

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### Share Your Expertise!

Back by popular demand, this year's Annual Conference will feature IGNITE presentations from attendees. IGNITE presentations are fast-paced five minute presentations with 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds. Topics range from the personal to the professional. ALL ATTENDEES are invited to submit their ideas to give an IGNITE at this year's conference. Learn more at [vsae.org/ignite](http://vsae.org/ignite).

# Why an Annual Content Plan is Paramount to Member Communication Success

The annual Association Communications Benchmarking Study conducted by Naylor Association Solutions revealed that nearly 50 percent of survey respondents say they have a single strategy for communicating with all members:

## Communication Strategies for Member Engagement

46% have a single strategy for communicating with all members

28% have a platform-specific strategy

26% have a department-specific strategy

## Why is this bad?

Chances are your members interact with your association in more than one way. They attend events, open your emails, visit your website, follow you on social media, watch your videos, and participate in meetings at a frequency and level of involvement that fits their professional role and aspirations at the moment. Not all members prefer to receive communications the same way, at the same time, in the same format.

In short, they want it their way. Selfish? Not really. Catering your association's member communications to specific member segments' knowledge levels, device choices, and frequency preferences will almost always result in your members paying closer attention to your association's information. Members who engage more with their association **report higher satisfaction with membership** and greater loyalty to their association.

## Almost all of the most frequently-cited communication challenges in the study relate to poor planning:

- Communicating member benefits effectively (68 percent of participants cited this challenge) – Is it possible to do this WITHOUT a plan?
- Engaging young professionals (54 percent) – If you don't communicate to young professionals the way they want to receive information, you will stumble trying to involve them.
- Facilitating member to member communication (40 percent) – Rarely does that just happen.
- Helping members find information quickly (39 percent) – A plan is needed to organize existing content, and easily categorize and organize new content.
- Maintaining position as industry's number one info source (35 percent) – Being the best resource for industry-specific trends, technologies, leadership tactics, and business trends takes planning with a critical eye to any information gaps in an association's portfolio and a blueprint to fill them.
- Communicating legislative, regulatory, technical updates (30 percent), and keeping members informed about new events and continuing education (30 percent) – A content plan helps your

association stay on track covering all areas it needs to within a reasonable time frame.

A comprehensive content plan, done well in advance, forces your association to look at themes you want to cover and communication goals you want to accomplish during a specified time period. This is often thought of as looking at member communications from a bird's eye or broad perspective.

## Plan to cover all topics

The first step most associations take when forming a content plan is: What topics should we cover? Based on the nature of your industry or profession, you probably know which essential topics must be included for your association to remain relevant.

Take another step and track the types of communications members have recently viewed. Are they engaging with you on career development topics, advocacy topics, or peer networking opportunities? Associations must better understand each member's interests, then send targeted communications about those relevant topics and less information about one-size-fits-all topics that are no longer as relevant to members as they were in previous years.

## Most Important Topic to Members

As has been the case in recent years, career-related topics continue to gain prominence among the most important topics to members.

| Topic                                    | Rank 2016 | Rank 2017 |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Network with Industry Peers              | 2         | 1         |
| Career Professional Development          | 3         | 2         |
| How to/Best Practice                     | 1         | 3         |
| Industry News/Trends                     | 4         | 4         |
| Lobbying/Advocacy                        | 5         | 5         |
| Information about Products/Resources     | 7         | 6         |
| Programs for Young Professionals         | 10        | 7         |
| Technology                               | 6         | 8         |
| Coverage of Key Industry Events          | 9         | 9         |
| Member News                              | 8         | 10        |
| Industry Job Openings                    | 11        | 11        |
| Succession Planning                      | 13        | 12        |
| Data/Stats for Improving Job Performance | 12        | 13        |

Source: 2017 Association Communications Benchmarking Study

Once overall content themes are established, your content plan can be broken down into specific topics and assigned to an appropriate content avenue. As you work through your plan, you may decide to add topics

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> ANNUAL CONTENT PLAN, continued from page 7

that become significant to members or give less emphasis to topics that have waned in importance since the plan's creation. It is a good idea to allow room in your plan for modifications like these. Having a foundational content plan, however, will ensure that over time, your association covers all themes essential to providing the best membership value possible.

What does one theme applied to different member segments and communication platforms look like in practice? For instance, a theme of technology could result in a magazine article geared toward C-suite executives that talks in high-level general terms about technology, while a monthly blog or social media post geared toward younger generations can dive deeper into specific technology trends. Consider the group you are trying to reach and what is important to them.

Furthermore, a strong content plan helps your association inventory existing content and decide what new content you need to develop to fill in any knowledge gaps. An inventory reveals what content should be created, which content needs updating, and which content has reached its retirement point. Viewing your association's body of content from a high level also reveals the usefulness (or not) of your communication channels – your newsletter that consistently earns high open rates, for example, or your blog that just does not get the traffic you hoped it would. Although the work involved on the front end of conducting a content inventory can be time-consuming, over the long run this regular practice

## Best Ways to Gauge Member Needs



**7 out of 8**

(▲13% from 2016)

face-to-face interaction at live events or their annual meeting.



**2 out of 3**

(no change from 2016)

member satisfaction surveys or member service calls/emails.



**2 out of 5**

(no change from 2016)

social media or the association website.

Source: Association Adviser Communications Benchmarking Survey

pays off in terms of less time spent overhauling outdated content and stuck with outdated tools. Instead, a well-maintained content inventory allows your communications staff to be more agile in responding to members' knowledge needs and improving upon already relevant communications.

When your association compares its content inventory against your association's goals, your communications plan will practically write itself.

### Plan to reach all member segments

Your association should create a plan based on member segments. Different groups of members have different information needs: Think younger vs. seasoned members, members with more experience vs. members new to the profession, and members of varying seniority/positions within your association's industry.

### Plan to cover all platforms

Only one in four associations have a department-specific or platform-specific content strategy. Associations consist of many subgroups within

their overall membership – if you are not serving the technical, content, or frequency needs of members, they will simply not read your content or consider their membership in your association to be as valuable as it should be.

How do you know which platforms your members are using? Ask them. Half of the associations surveyed say they conduct a member communication survey every 12 to 24 months. Naylor recommends surveying your members about what kinds of topics they want information about, through which channels, and how often at least once per year. Regular brainstorming sessions by your staff that review survey results will ensure all relevant platforms are in play and reaching all of your members.

Side benefit: If your communications are getting face time with all member segments, the better chance you will have of securing contributors to your publications in the future.

### Get Started

Knowing your association's goals and how member communications contributes to them will set your association on a path of better member engagement and satisfaction. Save your association time and headaches: Create a multi-pronged content plan that gives all members the type of content they are looking for in the communication channel they are looking for it in and continue to cultivate and grow your membership base.

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Contact Brandon Robinson at [brandon@vsae.org](mailto:brandon@vsae.org) or (804) 249-2234.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



**Jeanie Clapp** is Content Strategist at Naylor Association Solutions.

# LESSONS FROM THE SIG

Pixelstrike Creative, VSAE member and local marketing and design agency, had the pleasure of presenting at the February Communication/Marketing Shared Interest Group (SIG) where they busted common myths related to social media marketing for Associations. SIGs are one of VSAE's invaluable free resources—are you plugged into a SIG?

## Social Media Myths

I need a young person to manage my social media



Managing and posting on social media takes a lot of time out of my day



My association should be on every platform



Paid ads are expensive



There is no return on effort

I don't have anything relevant to share



### HAVE YOU JOINED A SIG?

Shared Interest Groups (SIGs) are a great way to learn from fellow association executives. The member-led groups are organized around areas of interest and offer a forum to discuss what matters most to you.

To learn more about the current SIGs available to VSAE's Executive members, visit

[vsae.org/shared-interest-groups](http://vsae.org/shared-interest-groups)

Social Media is only for selling something



### What's stopping you?

Don't let the myths hold you back from success. Have the confidence to take control of your social media presence and share your Association's message with your audience.

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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## EXECUTIVES

**Christina Barrille**

VA Pharmacists Association  
Richmond

**Justin Rinaldi**

American Council of Engineering  
Companies of Virginia  
Henrico

**Cindy Squires**

International Wood Products Association  
Alexandria

## ASSOCIATES

**Brooke Driver**

Holiday Inn Charlottesville-  
University Area  
Charlottesville

**Mike Edwards**

Meadows Urquhart Acree & Cook  
Richmond

**Blake Fisk**

The Blackburn Inn  
Staunton

**Vibha Madan**

Crowne Plaza Hampton Marina  
Hampton

**Monica McDearmon**

VA Bankers Association  
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The Virginian Hotel  
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& Conference Center  
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge  
Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront

## HEALTH CARE CORNER



Medical expenses continue to be one of the top causes of personal bankruptcies in the United States. Ironically, many people who file for bankruptcy due to medical expenses have health insurance coverage.

Unfortunately, certain people who experience a medical crisis cannot afford their out-of-pocket maximums related to large deductibles and co-insurance. Therefore, it is important for employers to offer employee paid voluntary benefits, such as Aflac, in order to assist employees with their out-of-pocket medical expenses. Contact me today to learn more about voluntary benefits.

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## PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

## VIRGINIA BEACH CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Virginia Beach is more than a top Virginia meeting destination with unbeatable service—it's a game-changer in providing excellent meeting experiences. Where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Chesapeake Bay, this premier destination balances coastal charm and metropolitan flair with meeting experiences that create a distinct vibe for meetings of any size and budget.

From well-known national brands to independent properties, Virginia Beach offers a wide variety of lodging options from resort, downtown, to retreat type settings. The coastal city's portfolio is getting an exciting upgrade as the historic **Cavalier Hotel** will open this month after more than \$80 million in renovations and restorations. Having hosted a wide range of celebrities, dignitaries and even ten U.S. Presidents, the Cavalier is an epic venue that is sure to impress the most discerning of attendees. The much anticipated opening of this property, a member of Marriott's Autograph Collection, will bring unrivaled luxury and historic charm back to the mid-Atlantic for your next event. Be sure to experience the Cavalier first-hand at VSAE's CEO & Senior Staff Retreat, September 16–18, 2018.

For larger events, perhaps your regional or national organization's program, the LEED Gold-certified Virginia Beach Convention Center offers more than 500,000 square feet of column-free space, including a 150,000 square foot exhibit hall, more than 29,000 square feet of meeting space and a 31,000 square foot ballroom. Innovative designs throughout the building allow for creative meeting experiences and huge cost savings. Great facilities and coastal recreation are a natural part of the Virginia Beach meetings experience. As a community that is as culturally and environmentally focused as it is service-minded, Virginia Beach offers a wide range of off-site venues that add meaning to your meeting or event. One of the most energy efficient smart buildings in the nation, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center serves as



a sustainable alternative to traditional meeting venues.

Virginia Beach takes meeting and eating very seriously. Delegates can enjoy upscale dining at some of Virginia Beach's AAA Four Diamond Restaurants, including Salacia Prime Seafood and Steaks, Terrapin, and Zoës Steak & Seafood all located near the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Chef-driven menus at the Virginia Beach Convention Center feature hand-cut herbs and vegetables from its onsite garden beds providing a unique way to savor the local flavor. After a full schedule of meetings and networking, local craft breweries throughout the city welcome groups to quench their thirst and enjoy lively

conversation. For a more cosmopolitan vibe, explore the wide range of upscale dining and entertainment offerings at Town Center, located minutes from the Oceanfront.

To learn more about Virginia Beach's meeting and event offerings, or to explore facilities, check out [VBMeetings.com](http://VBMeetings.com).

### ARE YOU READY TO BRING IT TO THE BEACH? CONTACT:

**Lisa MacArthur**

Convention Sales Manager  
Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau  
**757-385-6661 | [vbmeetings.com](http://vbmeetings.com)**



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## AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH



**Tracie Grady** is now Sales/Account Manager with Exhibits, Inc.

**Merry Beth Hall** with the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors (PHCC) Educational Foundation has been promoted to Vice President, Education Content.

**James River Transportation** is celebrating its 90th Anniversary this year. The company has locations in Richmond and Norfolk, along with airport operations in both of those cities.

## PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to **Heather Greenwell, CAE**, of Greenwell & Greenwell Association Management, Inc., who is the February evaluation prize winner. Heather won a seminar pass that will allow her to register for one of the remaining five VSAE seminars in 2018 for free.

Be sure to send in your feedback on VSAE events by completing the evaluation survey. Your comments are important for planning future successful events.



## Jessica Bello Joins the Team at Eisenman & Associates

Eisenman & Associates recently hired **Jessica Bello** as their Director of Operations & Meetings. Jessica will help manage a variety of meetings for E&A and will serve as Director of Meetings for VSAE.

Jessica has over ten years professional experience in association management and higher education, particularly in communications and events.

Jessica is thrilled to join the team at E&A and looks forward to serving the members of VSAE.



### 2017-2018 OFFICERS

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*Content, layout, and design*

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