



— VIRGINIA SOCIETY of —  
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

# YOUR *association* PRESS

JUNE/JULY 2020

## 2020 VSAE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

VSAE looks forward to seeing fellow members, colleagues, and friends at the **2020 Annual Conference** at the **Williamsburg Lodge** on **Sunday, August 16** through **Tuesday, August 18**.

Colonial Williamsburg Resort's commitment to a clean and comfortable environment for their guests and employees continues to be their top priority. Aggressive health and safety measures were designed to address a broad spectrum of viruses, including COVID-19, and include everything from hand-washing hygiene and the latest cleaning products specifications to a vast array of technology designed specifically for use in public spaces and guest rooms.

Although your stay may be different from the last time you visited, together we can find new ways to create lasting Annual Conference memories.

Please remember that you **DO** need to re-register if you registered for the Conference in May. Email [info@vsae.org](mailto:info@vsae.org) if you need the discount code to waive the registration fee that you have already paid.



## ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT

**Debra Riggs**, the Executive Director of the **National Association of Social Workers, VA Chapter (NASW)**, shared with us how NASW is doing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**What impact has COVID-19 had on your industry overall, and how has the association adapted?**

The impact on the association and membership is varied. Most of our members are professional healthcare providers, and many are getting inundated with work (trauma, etc.). However, some have been furloughed, particularly those who work in public settings, as the economy is unpredictable, employed are working from home with teletherapy, which has resulted in other issues and challenges for our members. However, the association has been experiencing more engagement and tripled our professional development programs, as we moved to a virtual environment. I would say that generally, COVID-19 has given the association opportunities to grow membership and engage non-members.

**How has your role changed due to COVID-19?** My role has not changed at all. My chapter has been working in a virtual environment for 5 years, so I have not had to transition myself or staff to the work we do.

**What initiatives has NASW/NASW-VA Chapter been working on?** The chapter is holding membership Town Hall meetings for all members to come together virtually and discuss challenges regarding COVID and now the national cry out for social justice issues and anti-racism. We are also starting a special advisory council, who will work on the above related to justice/practice/

*continued on page 4 >*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 8**

**SeminarWeb:**

**Your Post-Pandemic Meeting:  
What to Consider**

**TUESDAY, JULY 14**

**AMC Retreat**

Medical Society of Virginia

**FRIDAY, JULY 17**

**SIG-A-Palooza**

Virginia Crossings, Tapestry  
Collection by Hilton

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 22**

**Online Seminar:**

**Tactics for Better Revenue  
Results and Relationships  
with Sponsors, Exhibitors,  
& Advertisers**

**THURSDAY, JULY 23**

**SeminarWeb:**

**Putting the Strategy Back  
in Strategic Planning**

**THURSDAY & FRIDAY,  
JULY 30-31**

**Meeting Planner Summit**

Norfolk Waterside Marriott

**AUGUST 16-18**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

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The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center  
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James River Audio Visual Services  
Newport News Tourism  
Visit Fairfax

# Leadership reflections



Sonnja Montemayor, CAE  
VSAE Executive Director

## Alas, my crystal ball is broken, and I cannot see what lies ahead.

As Virginia and the rest of the country begin to re-open, what will the new normal look like? We have been talking about this elusive “new normal” concept since March, and the time has now come to turn it into a reality. As you know, VSAE is moving forward with our in-person events beginning in July, which does seem a bit surreal after all these months. Please mark your calendars for the **AMC Retreat, July 14; SIG-a-Palooza, July 17; Meeting Planner Summit, July 30-31; and of course the Annual Conference, August 16-18.** Our first few events will be small gatherings and we will follow the guidelines outlined by the CDC and the state. As always, lessons learned from one event will be applied to the next so that we continue to create experiences that are not only meaningful and engaging, but also safe. I’ve heard from many colleagues these last few weeks about the successes of their first forays into in-person meetings. I am so encouraged by these stories as they confirm that with patience, understanding, and a little grace, our attendees will feel safe

and comfortable as they enjoy their learning experience.

Who amongst us can say what the future of in-person meetings will look like? Though no one knows for sure, I am confident that all of us at VSAE, and in the association community as a whole, will shape the future together one success at a time. Please continue to share with VSAE your success stories so we can pass them on to the membership. We can all learn from each other and build upon our collective successes and knowledge. To that end, VSAE is creating a work group of members to help create a socially distant in-person Annual Conference that combines the best parts of the traditional event with the new focus on safety.

We are looking for volunteers from all areas of our association community to give guidance and input on our beloved Annual Conference. If you are interested in exploring the best ways to restructure the traditional order of how we move and interact with each other, we want to hear from you! We welcome all perspectives—CEOs, meeting planners, consultants, hotel and venue personnel, CVB and tourism folks. Learn more about this work group at [vsae.org/workgroup](https://vsae.org/workgroup).

True, what lies ahead is an unknown, but it really always has been. All we know is what we can do today. Now is the time to celebrate our small wins as monumental victories and continue to build upon them. At some point in the future, we won’t be looking into our crystal ball for the answers, but in the rearview mirror with pride in how far we’ve come.



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**Contact Erin Eissens to start planning!**

1700 Coliseum Drive | Hampton, VA 23666 | (757) 213-8516  
[Erin.Eissens@AtriumHospitality.com](mailto:Erin.Eissens@AtriumHospitality.com)





> Association Spotlight, continued from page 1

policy, etc. The chapter turned an in-person conference with 400-plus attendees to a virtual event in two weeks, resulting in a very successful event. We will go with a hybrid event (a mixture of both online and in person) next year now that our members have embraced the necessary technology.

**Have you been working with other regional, state, or national peer associations during the pandemic?**

Yes, we are part of a national association and all are one legal unit. Our 55 chapters and national office work together in partnership to discuss challenges and opportunities regularly. We have Town Hall meetings and regular video conferencing meetings with our peers and colleagues.

**What challenges do you see for the association in the next year to two years?** I see more opportunities than challenges as we are finding and experiencing new ways to engage with our professional community. I have found that during this extraordinary time in our lives, our professionals are searching for a home of like-minded people. We now have a tag line: Your home for social workers—we are your social worker.

**What was the most challenging thing(s) you encountered while planning/hosting a virtual meeting?**

The stress of turning it in two weeks and working within two different registration systems that did not “talk to each other.”

**What was the most surprising thing(s) you encountered while planning/hosting a virtual meeting?**

That if you are nimble and flexible, anything is possible.

**What feedback from your members/sponsors/etc. have you received about moving to a virtual meeting?**

We have received more amazing feedback than we could have ever imagined. Our members are generally people-oriented by their practice and work. They had technology challenges and did not previously go online for events on a large scale. Our evaluations, comments, and feedback were all beyond positive, and members were connecting post-conference to talk about the great experience. Many want another virtual conference next year!

**What advice do you have for VSAE members that may be planning or hosting a virtual event soon?**

To explore and research the different platforms that work best for your specific event. And, to learn and embrace this technology because it is probably here to stay!

**Any other general thoughts you would like to share with your friends and colleagues in VSAE?**

I would say that in challenging times there are always opportunities and positive outcomes. Being nimble is my priority, and to envision the future with my members’ needs in mind so that we can continue to be present for them.



## ADJUSTMENTS TO 2020 CAE RENEWALS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation or postponement of many educational events, the CAE Commission is offering the following temporary options to assist those due to renew their CAE credential in 2020:

The renewal deadline has been extended from December 31, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

The cap on self-study has been lifted. All 40 credits needed for renewal may be taken through any amount of live and/or approved self-study courses.

The early-renewal discount will be extended to completed renewals submitted through March 31, 2021. The discounted renewal fee is \$275 for ASAE members and \$425 for non-members.

Forty credits will be required for renewal, including one credit of ethics-focused education. Up to 10 credits from association management leadership, instruction, or writing activities may still be submitted on the application.

All credits for this renewal must have been earned from January 1, 2018, through March 31, 2021. All credits must be completed when you submit your application.

Opening Fall 2020



## Morning Routine

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# WHAT VIRTUAL ATTENDEES WANT

A new survey, conducted in mid-April by CensusWide for promotional-product distributor Promoleaf, reveals that an attendee's age doesn't matter much when it comes to preferred length, time of day, or cost of an online event—but other factors do.

The best bet for drawing a large audience to a virtual educational event: Hold it on a Wednesday morning for two hours, and charge about \$100.

This survey of more than 1,000 people who have attended at least one in-person conference and one virtual conference, the preferences for how virtual events are scheduled, priced, and executed became clear—and revealed a few surprises. For instance, 85% of respondents under age 24 prefer in-person conferences to virtual ones, despite their technological acumen. On the other hand, only 67% of respondents aged 35-44 preferred in-person events, with family responsibilities being a likely factor driving that lower percentage.

When planning a virtual conference, consider this: 59% of respondents said that two hours is the ideal length, while 19% said they would prefer up to four hours daily. In light of this, planners could convert typical in-person meetings into virtual ones that happen across more days in order to maintain interest.

As for which day to hold those two-hour blocks, Wednesday is the most-preferred day to host a virtual conference (34%), with Tuesday the second-most preferred day of the week (25%). Monday was the least-preferred day, at just 12%. And the best time of day to host a virtual conference is in the morning, said 56% of respondents. One unified theory: A Wednesday event splits the workweek evenly, while a morning start time doesn't break up an attendee's daily workflow, allowing them to be more focused.

Other interesting results from the survey: 38% of respondents said they would not be willing to pay more than \$100 to participate in a one-day online event. The largest block of respondents—45%—said they would be willing to pay between \$100 and \$200 to attend, while 10% said they would be willing to pay \$300 or more to attend. Given this, offering a single-day fee option for a multi-day virtual conference could draw the largest audience.

Lastly, 46% most prefer a live session that allows audience questions, while 40% of respondents want an online event to be accessible on demand afterwards.

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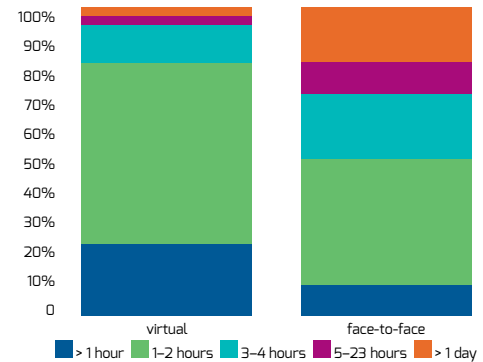
## The Preference for In-Person Conferences

Percentage of people who preferred in-person conference by age



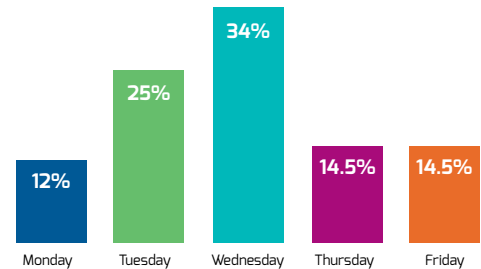
## The Ideal Length of a Conference

How long people think a virtual and face-to-face conference should last



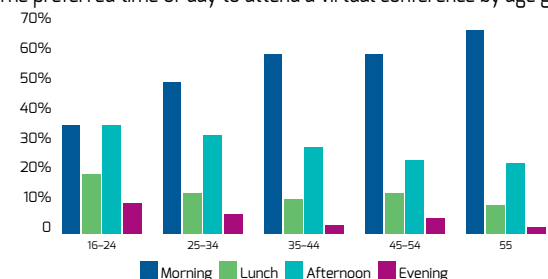
## Hump Day!

The preferred day of the week to attend a virtual conference



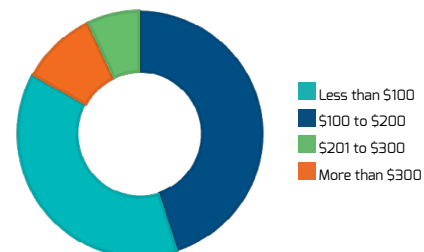
## Morning People?

The preferred time of day to attend a virtual conference by age group



## To Pay or Not to Pay

How much people would be willing to pay to attend a virtual conference



The research was conducted for PromoLeaf by Censuswide, with 1,008 respondents in the United States who have been to a F2F conference and a virtual conference. The survey was conducted on April 9, 2020. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Rob Carey** is Senior Content Producer with MeetingsNet.



## ASSOCIATION BOOKSHELF

What are you reading? If you have a book you'd like to recommend to your association colleagues, let us know! Send the title and author, along with a brief description, to **Lorraine Meade** at [lorraine@vsae.org](mailto:lorraine@vsae.org) and look for them in future newsletters.

### *Upstream—The Quest to Solve Problems Before They Happen* by Dan Heath

If COVID-19 hasn't gotten you thinking differently about tomorrow, author Dan Heath will. "So often we find ourselves reacting to problems, putting out fires, dealing with emergencies. We should shift our attention to preventing them," Heath says.

Heath confirms change doesn't happen until something is noticed. Unfortunately, it's easier for us to react "downstream" than it is to ask the seven questions Heath presents to prevent the problem from happening "upstream."

What a perfect book for association leaders to read during this exceptionally disruptive pandemic.

**Bob Ramsey, CAE**

### *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo

This book guides us through subjects to help us have conversations about race and racism, and how they effect almost every aspect of life.

**Maureen Dingus, CAE**  
**VA Society of CPAs**

### *Fearfully and Wonderfully: The Marvel of Bearing God's Image* by Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey

Dr. Brand's stories of his treatment for leprosy in India all blend in with his fascinating description of how our cells, organs, skin, bone, blood, breath, and nervous system (pain is good) work in amazing conjunction to make our bodies function.

These descriptions are used to explain how individuals with different gifts in the Church are meant to work together seamlessly to carry out its mission. His analogies can and should also apply to people working together, humbly, as a cohesive team, in any community or organization.

It's a most informative and inspiring book!

**Paul Howe, CAE, CF**  
**P. R. Howe, LLC**

### *The Woman in the Window* by A.J. Finn

Escapism in the form of a gripping thriller soon to be released as a feature movie starring Amy Adams and Julianne Moore. I always like to read the book before seeing the movie!

**Chandler Owdom**  
**VA Bankers Association**

## HEALTH CARE CORNER



In late May, Governor Northam vetoed SB 235/HB 795 and SB 861 relating to Association Health Plans and the pooling of insureds. The good news is the VSAE's Health Plan Consortium is still alive and well. Many members have inquired about the VSAE Health Consortium Plan and how it can help their members and their association. Please direct all inquiries to:

**Monty Dise** at [mdise@apgroupinc.com](mailto:mdise@apgroupinc.com)

**Lee Biedrycki** at [lee@benefinder.com](mailto:lee@benefinder.com)

**Rick Eisenman** at [reisenman@eisenmanassociates.com](mailto:reisenman@eisenmanassociates.com)

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In an effort to Stay A Part of Safety during uncertain times, The Omni Homestead Resort is committed to providing exceptional service in a safe environment for guests. As a part of the "Omni Safe & Clean" initiative, the resort has enhanced cleaning measures and implemented additional processes to ensure the health, safety, and comfort of guests and groups.

Located on 2,300 acres in the scenic Allegheny Mountains, this iconic destination features 100,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor function space. Meeting space includes the 13,485 square foot Grand Ballroom and the 10,368 square foot Regency Ballroom, both of which can be modified to allow for social distancing, so that groups can feel confident in Staying A Part of Meeting at America's First Resort.

Whether an association annual meeting, corporate retreat, or rewarding incentive trip, The Omni Homestead offers the facilities and amenities, including a variety of teambuilding exercises, to create a successful and memorable event. Many of these custom programs are created from the resort's existing recreational activities such as golf, shooting club, fly-fishing, falconry, and skiing.



During free time, groups can treat the mind, body, and senses to a rejuvenating experience with The Omni Homestead Resort's comprehensive wellness services. From the award-winning spa, to the premium and full-service fitness center, to the all-natural mineral springs and sparkling pools, these amenities are designed to promote healthy habits and re-energize.

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### CONTACT:

For more information or to begin planning your upcoming meeting or event, contact The Omni Homestead Sales Team at (888) 796-5838 or [meet@thehomestead.com](mailto:meet@thehomestead.com).

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## AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH



**Gordon Dixon** is now the Executive Vice President with the **VA Transportation Construction Alliance**.

**Katie Newland**, Executive Director of **ACG National Capital**, has been elected to a two-year term as a Board Director for Historic Vienna Inc.

**Brandon Robinson, CAE** is now the CEO of the **Associated General Contractors of Virginia**.

The **VA Council of CEOs** is now serving the Roanoke/Blacksburg area, after growing to

230 members in Richmond and Charlottesville. VSAE members **Scot McRoberts, MPA, IOM** and **Connie Bruce, CAE** are reaching out to small business CEOs who lead \$1 million-plus revenue businesses to join in peer roundtables and exclusive learning events. As a way to serve small businesses that have been hit hard by the pandemic, VACEOs is offering complimentary membership for the rest of 2020, which includes participation in virtual CEO roundtables.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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**Shelley Gravatt**  
VA Beer Wholesalers  
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