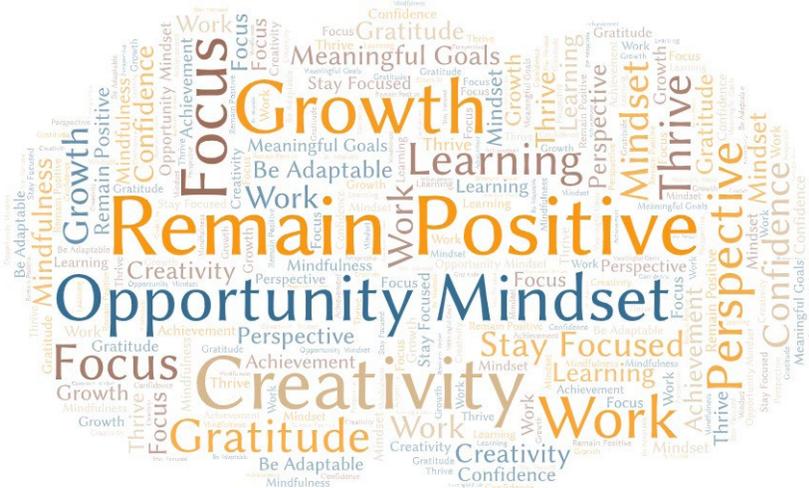




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JANUARY 2021



Remaining Positive in Times of Crisis

Amid the current challenges facing our world, millions of people are dealing with unprecedented levels of stress and uncertainty. However, even in challenging times, we still possess the ability to make the best of our circumstances, develop positive habits, and manage our mindset effectively. Join fellow VSAE members for **“Remaining Positive in Times of Crisis” on Friday, February 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Register at vsae.org/calendar.**



Tyler Enslin has designed this program to help attendees navigate the issues caused by the COVID-19 crisis, addressing the impact on both our professional and personal lives. Participants will learn strategies to control stress levels, build habits that promote growth, and focus on opportunities.

Tyler Enslin, founder of Tyler Enslin International, is a full-time speaker providing lively, engaging, and practical professional development content to audiences around the world.

How the Pandemic Will Change Association Advocacy

While government relations (GR) teams pivoted to virtual advocacy at the start of the pandemic, more adjustments are emerging. Let’s take a look at how GR pros are changing the ways members engage, the ways their associations tell stories, how they frame issues, and more.

It’s become cliché by now, but the COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything, including how association government relations teams do their work. Looking ahead, when things settle into whatever the “new normal” will look like, what will we take from this experience? How will our jobs be different?

continued on page 6 >

UPCOMING EVENTS

WE’RE ALL VIRTUAL!

From now through April 2021, all VSAE events will be virtual. We look forward to being together again in person with VSAE members and Partners beginning in May 2021.

While the events will be virtual, our focus remains the same: offering association professionals relevant and practical knowledge and providing opportunities to network, share, and support one another.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28

Meeting Planner SIG
Managing the Meeting Manager: Are You Prepared for “Event Mode” in 2021?
2:00–3:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Seminar
Remaining Positive in Times of Crisis
9:00–10:30 a.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Seminar
Are You An Accidental CIO? Get Tips from IT Pros
11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS AT [VSAE.ORG/CALENDAR](https://vsae.org/calendar)



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Widespread Risk Advisors

Leadership reflections



Phyllis Errico, JD, CAE
VSAE President

Welcome to 2021, VSAE!

I can't think of anyone who has not been looking forward to a new year and a fresh start, and here we are! I hope that each of you had a safe and happy holiday and you found a way to let all the people important to you know that they are in your thoughts. And with vaccines currently being distributed around the country, we are one step closer to being able to resume our in-person meetings and events.

I want to thank everyone who donated items, bid on those items, and otherwise participated in our "Twelve Days of VSAE" Silent Auction. The VSAE staff did a terrific job and we had a very successful event that brought us holiday cheer and provided a nice donation to the wonderful Beacon Tree Foundation benefiting young people with mental health and emotional challenges—a cause that is so important now. I hope everyone is excited about their auction winnings. I know I will be wearing my Fredericksburg Nationals gear proudly. A special shout-out to VSAE board member **Shannon McCabe** who will be taking a wonderful Aruba vacation in 2021 as the winner of the special live auction trip.

All VSAE events are virtual through April. We've got a great schedule planned, including timely topics on diversity and inclusion, having COVID-safe in-person meetings and events, and technology. As a reminder, all VSAE learning programs are eligible for CAE hours. We remain hopeful about joining together this May at the Marriott Resort Virginia Beach Oceanfront for VSAE's Annual Conference.

"During this unprecedented time, organizations like VSAE are more relevant and important than ever to association professionals at all levels."

Your VSAE Board of Directors has been hard at work on a revision of the Strategic Plan with the help and facilitation of **Dave Phillips, CAE**. One of the silver linings of this pandemic year is that as a board we have had the time and opportunity to look at our VSAE Strategic Plan and adjust for the road ahead. You will be seeing the results of this Strategic Plan revision in the coming months. During this unprecedented time, organizations like VSAE are more relevant and important than ever to association professionals at all levels. Please encourage members of your team that may not be engaged with VSAE to become involved.

In closing, please let us know if we can help in any way; that is what we are here for. We will continue to focus on our mission, which is being the best at making associations the best through connecting, learning, and leading. Happy New Year and see you at our upcoming VSAE events!



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2021 Call for Volunteers



Get involved and help shape our future by being a volunteer with VSAE. Volunteering is an excellent way to give back to your association community.

VSAE's committees and task forces are instrumental in a variety of activities. They help plan the educational content for meetings, recruit new members, and promote events like the Annual Conference and the Fall Conference. Volunteering is also a great way to network, meet other members with similar interests, and build your resume.

In mid-February, VSAE will send out its 2021 Call for Volunteers email invitation. The email will include a link to a form. If you want to volunteer to serve on a committee, to be a New Member Mentor, or to be a Content Leader, respond to that message by completing the form. The Call for Volunteers closes on Friday, March 12, and members will be notified of any appointments by mid-April.

The following committees will be seeking volunteers to begin May 1.

■ CAE

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

■ Community Service

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

■ Conference Task Force

Promotes attendance and develops ways to enhance conference experiences.

■ Education

Selects educational content for VSAE events including speakers at Annual Conference, Fall Conference, and the Seminar Series.

■ Membership

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

■ Silent Auction Task Force

Promotes Silent Auction primarily through soliciting donations.

There are also other ways to volunteer:

■ New Member Mentor

Developed by the VSAE Membership Committee, this program facilitates the integration of new VSAE members into your association community. Mentors reach out to new members, provide a network link, and help them navigate VSAE.

■ Content Leader

Share your expertise or experiences in association management with members by presenting at a VSAE event or writing for the *Association Press* newsletter. For more information on speaking at a VSAE event, visit vsae.org/opportunities-for-content-leaders.

Questions?

Contact VSAE Executive Director Terry Monroe at terry@vsae.org or (804) 249-2234.

Board Approves Revised Strategic Plan

On January 8, the Board approved proposed revisions to the VSAE Strategic Plan. The revised Strategic Plan builds upon the three strategic positions adopted in 2019: Engaging Members, Developing Leaders, and Serving the Association Community, with an emphasis on:

- Expanding participation and engagement among non-CEO professionals and industry partners in all regions
- Providing more opportunities for deeper connections among members
- Mentoring and developing VSAE's leadership pipeline
- Encouraging dialogue and sharing best practices on diversity and inclusion
- Continuing to offer learning both in-person and virtually

The Strategic Plan is available at: vsae.org/strategic-plan

LET'S RECAP!

12 Days of VSAE Silent Auction

The holiday spirit was alive and well during the **12 Days of VSAE Silent Auction** last month! While this year's event looked a bit different than it has in the past, VSAE is grateful for the donors, bidders, and volunteers who helped make this event an overwhelming success. The event raised nearly \$24,000 as 149 bidders took their chances on 90 donated items—including golf packages, trips, gourmet dinners, curated gift baskets, and luxury hotel stays.

Proceeds of the event support both VSAE educational programming and the Beacon Tree Foundation, a Chesterfield-based non-profit whose mission is to help local children and their families battling mental and emotional health issues.

VSAE would like to thank Robert Hayes from the Aruba Convention Bureau and Griselda Jara from the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino for donating this year's grand prize live

auction item, a 5-night stay at the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino with complimentary daily breakfast for two, round trip airport transfers, and the choice of select activities, including a Jeep tour, snorkel adventure, and UTV tour. There were several bidders vying for the live auction item, but congratulations go to **Shannon McCabe, CAE** of the **Association of Consulting Foresters** for submitting the winning bid. Enjoy the sand and sunshine, Shannon! **Connie Bruce, CAE**, of the **VA Council of CEOs** won the 50/50 raffle, taking home half of the \$525 raised. Congrats, Connie!

As always, VSAE extends a big "thank you" to the Silent Auction Task Force, the VSAE staff, and all donors and bidders for their participation in this year's event. The support and pride that VSAE members continue to show year after year is a testament to the generosity and dedication of our membership.

2021 Virginia Political Outlook and Legislative Roundtable

On Friday, January 8, VSAE hosted the **2021 Virginia Political Outlook and Legislative Roundtable**. VSAE was once again pleased to kick off the new year with a presentation from Dr. Bob Holsworth of DecideSmart—for the 23rd time! A leading voice on Virginia and national politics, prior to joining DecideSmart Dr. Holsworth was the Founding Director of the Center for Public Policy and the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Dr. Holsworth's timely presentation included his thoughts on the current political landscape both at the federal and state level, an analysis of the 2020 election cycle, as well as a forecast for the 2021 General Assembly session. Following his presentation, VSAE hosted a special legislative roundtable on "The Challenges of Lobbying in a COVID-19 World" led by **Kyle Shreve**, Executive Director of the **VA Agribusiness Council** and leader of VSAE's Government

Affairs SIG. The roundtable discussion also featured VSAE members **Dale Bennett** of the **VA Trucking Association** and **Chris McDonald** of the **VA Association of Counties**. Topics discussed included the challenges of virtual lobbying, ideas and innovative solutions for lobbying during the pandemic, and ways in which VSAE members could support each other in their lobbying efforts.

All in all, the traditional event was a successful beginning to a new year of educational and insightful programming for VSAE!

To view a recording of the **2021 Virginia Political Outlook and Legislative Roundtable**, visit:

<https://bit.ly/38A5nRe>



VSAE has released its

2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit vsae.org/calendar for currently scheduled educational and networking opportunities.



2021 Membership Renewal is Available Online

PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BY JANUARY 31 TO REMAIN ACTIVE.

1. Log into vsae.org with your member credentials.
2. Click "Mbr Center—My VSAE" on the menu bar.
3. Click "Your Organization" under "My Profile."
4. Click "Invoices."
5. Pay online via credit card or print and mail with a check.

QUESTIONS?

Contact **Tami Guthrie** at tami@vsae.org.



NEWS

NEW REQUIREMENTS

Anyone renewing their CAE is required to fulfill one of their 40 credits with an ethics focused credit. This credit is included in the 40 credits required every three years, not in addition to it. Bookmark the VSAE Events Calendar to stay current on in-person and virtual learning opportunities.

2021 EXAM APPLICATION DEADLINES

The deadline for the May exam is Friday, February 26; the deadline for the December exam is Friday, September 24.

NEW EXAM CONTENT

The new CAE Exam Content outline took effect with the December 2020 exam and continues through the May 2025 exam. If you are planning to take the exam in May, we encourage you to purchase the CAE Study Guide right away through ASAE (it is currently on backorder).

TRACKING CEUs

VSAE members can view and print a record of CAE-eligible events for which they have registered from January 2020 to present. To access your registration record, follow these steps:

1. Log in at vsae.org (CE hours will not appear unless you log in with your username and password).

2. Click on the “Mbr Center–My VSAE” blue menu tab.
3. Click on “CEU Tracking” at the very bottom.
4. Your current CEUs will appear. You can filter by date range, category, etc.
5. In the upper right corner is a button to Export a pdf.

VSAE is verifying your *registration* only for these events. It is each individual’s responsibility to account for his or her actual *attendance*. If you need information prior to January 2020, there is a record of all events for which you have registered since 2015 in your profile under “Submissions.” Please allow 1–2 weeks after an event for CEU credits to be processed.

Additional details are available on the CAE Information page, vsae.org/cae-information.

STUDY GROUP

VSAE offers a facilitated CAE Study Course at no cost to VSAE members; non-members may participate for \$100. **The Spring CAE Study Group begins Tuesday, February 23, 2021** and meets virtually every Tuesday (except March 30), from 8:30–10:00 a.m., through April 27. Register online at vsae.org/cae-information.

Course Includes:

- Weekly video sessions focused on each of the 8 domains
- Review of study questions with experienced CAEs and peers
- Recordings of meetings available
- Optional review session immediately prior to the exam

For more information, contact **Terry Monroe** at terry@vsae.org.

> ADVOCACY, *continued from page 1*

ASAE’s Government Relations and Advocacy Professionals Advisory Council (GRAPAC) Thought Leadership and Content subgroup had a discussion around these questions and reached out to our respective networks for their input. We discovered the following insights.

Virtual Increases Engagement

Although something is lost in not having in-person meetings, most of us have pivoted to virtual fly-ins. However, a virtual meeting can get more engagement from members who typically are unable to fly into DC. Also, by scheduling a series of “virtual fly-in” meetings, association members are able to meet with a member of Congress, rather than their staff, as was typical during in-person fly-ins. That has been impressive to our members and increased the perceived value of the program within the association.

“With advocacy in Washington being shut down, the value of holding local, virtual congressional, and state meetings has shown that you can be nimble and meet with staff in a new and meaningful way,” said Joe Franco, Vice President of Grassroots at LeadingAge.

Betsy Vetter, the Field Grassroots Director for the American Heart Association, noted that more members are interested in engaging. “Since the onset of the pandemic and now with the social unrest, I think we are seeing an increase in the number of people wanting to engage,” she said. “People are involved and speaking out. With more and more people homebound, I think you are seeing people seeking out opportunities to continue to use their voices.”

Focus on the Now

If your association’s legislative priorities don’t align with current events, it’s time to reconsider and adapt. Ned Monroe, CAE, President and CEO of the Vinyl Institute, said associations should “strategically prioritize issues to current events” since elected officials are hyper-focused on critical issues like economic recovery.

HEALTH CARE CORNER



Happy New Year to all! With the new year the IRS has announced the new 2021 contributions limits for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). The table below summarizes the difference between the 2020 and 2021 contribution limits.

Plan	2020	2021
FSA Maximum Employee Salary Contribution	\$2,750	\$2,750
FSA Maximum Employer Contribution	\$500	\$500
FSA Dependent Care (individuals or married couples filing jointly)	\$5,000	\$5,000
FSA Dependent Care (married couples filing separately; combined limit \$5000)	\$2,500	\$2,500
HSA (Self-Only)	\$3,550	\$3,600
HSA (Family)	\$7,100	\$7,200

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

“Remain focused on helping solve these current problems, particularly as it intersects with your priority issues,” he said. “For example, some groups are heavily engaged in visa issues because they are trying to reshore manufacturing to the United States to meet critical supply chain issues for PPE [personal protective equipment]. Restricting L1 visas could slow this manufacturing reshoring.”

Mind the budget

Most associations are struggling, having lost revenue from their in-person events or declining membership. While many are looking to cut costs, Monroe suggested caution.

“Don’t cut so deep that it causes fundamental harm to programs,” he said. “Sure, be frugal and tighten your budget belt. However, stepping away from government relations in times of crisis will harm your ability to tell your stories, solve problems, and impact decisions. Cuts that are too deep will hurt current and future programs. They will also diminish the value your members desire.”

Tell Stories

Associations have powerful stories to tell, but it’s important to consider the medium you’re using to share them and adjust your message accordingly. For example, you’ll want a more photo-heavy post for Instagram, while Twitter has a strict character limit.

“There is hardly a substitute for good face-to-face interaction, a sit down meeting, a chat over some coffee, or a tour of a member’s facilities,” said John Torres, CAE, Executive Director of Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc. “Associations that rely on face-to-face grassroots advocacy have to find ways to leverage technology to meet the demands of advocacy. Various communication alternatives should be integrated into your outreach strategy, including video storytelling, webinars, and consistent online community interactions. We all need to dive into the deep end of the technology pool to get the job done. Those who don’t will get left behind and left unheard in the public square.”

Give Advocates a Break

Maria Matthews, CAE, Senior Manager, Grassroots Programs and State Relations, at the American Society of Civil Engineers and GRAPAC member, stressed the importance



“Associations have powerful stories to tell, but it’s important to consider the medium you’re using to share them and adjust your message accordingly.”

of managing your volunteer network. “While interest in public policy and engagement have certainly increased, there is still value in fallow periods for grassroots and grassstops networks,” she said. “In late March/April, we reached out to our network of member advocacy leaders to lay out our vision for their engagement. We forecasted potential peaks and valleys for their engagement. It’s been helpful because whenever we’ve gathered them for briefings and broadcast other calls to action, they seem fairly quick to engage.”

Secure a Seat at the Table

Julie M. Broadway, CAE, President of the American Horse Council & American Horse Council Foundation, predicts there won’t be large coalition group meetings once in-person meetings resume. Rather, she anticipates small meetings with less than four people, using social distancing. If that is the case, it will be even more important

to have a literal “seat at the table” in priority coalition meetings.

We are living in extraordinary times and have had to get creative on a number of fronts, including advocacy. The most successful of these adaptations will certainly become part of our government relations programs in the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Liz Novak, CAE and **Amy Showalter** are Co-Leaders of ASAE’s Government Relations and Advocacy Professionals Thought Leadership & Content group. Liz is responsible for advocacy and publications at the International Association of Plastics Distribution (IAPD). She can be reached at lnovak@iapd.org. Amy is an advocacy and PAC trainer, consultant, and author who helps national and state associations and corporations accelerate their advocacy and PAC results. She can be reached at amy@showaltergroup.com.

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AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH



Carter Lyons, CAE, is now the Director of Communications for the **Association of General Contractors of Virginia**.

Sonnia Montemayor, CAE, is now the Deputy Executive Director for the **VA Forestry Association**.

Tom Osina, CAE, IOM, of **Non-Profit Help**, has been elected to the Manassas City Council. He was sworn in for a 4-year term at the beginning of January.



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