



— VIRGINIA SOCIETY of —
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

YOUR association PRESS

July/August 2025



Get ready to engage with fellow VSAE members on Thursday, August 7 and Friday, August 8, with robust discussions you've come to expect from SIG meetings, where a variety of experiences and viewpoints can be shared. The virtual format lets you attend multiple SIG meetings each day.

TIME	THURSDAY, AUGUST 7	FRIDAY, AUGUST 8
9:00–10:00 am	CEO	Association Management Company (AMC)
10:30–11:30 am	Senior Staff	Membership, Marketing, & Communications (MMC)
1:30–2:30 pm	Associate Member	
3:00–4:00 pm	Meeting Planner	

Register at vsae.org/sig-a-palooza

Discover the Power of Positivity



In today's fast-paced and often stressful world, cultivating joy is more important than ever. At VSAE's upcoming Seminar with Lunch, you'll learn how to transform challenges into opportunities for growth and connection.

Join us on Friday, September 5, at the **Richmond Marriott Downtown**, for a presentation by Alison French, Managing Partner for Alto Solutions, LLC, and Sarah C. B. Guthrie, MFA, artist.

This interactive session, Own Your Journey – Reclaim Your Joy, will help attendees reframe difficult moments as “Joy Junctions” and develop personalized Joy Practices to support themselves and their teams. Research shows that fostering joy in the workplace leads to greater employee engagement, stronger retention, and healthier organizational cultures.

Leaders of staff, volunteers, or members will especially benefit from the tools and insights shared during this session.

The seminar is in-person only. Lunch will follow the seminar.

Register at vsae.org/calendar. Earn 1.5 CAE credits.

DON'T MISS OUT! UPCOMING EVENTS

SIG-A-PALOOZA
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7–
FRIDAY, AUGUST 8
Virtual

**SEMINAR SERIES
WITH LUNCH**
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5
Richmond Marriott Downtown

FALL CONFERENCE & EXPO
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
Greater Richmond
Convention Center

**SEMINAR SERIES
WITH LUNCH**
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Jepson Alumni Center
University of Richmond

**CEO & SENIOR
STAFF RETREAT**
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17–
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18
The Draftsman
Charlottesville

**AWARDS LUNCHEON
& SILENT AUCTION**
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5
Hilton Richmond Hotel
& Spa–Short Pump

**VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS AT
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Norfolk Waterside Marriott
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Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

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Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau
Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump
Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
Lansdowne Resort
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Omni Richmond Hotel
Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel
Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
The Virginian Hotel
VisitNorfolk

Leadership reflections



Terry Monroe, MBA, CAE
VSAE Executive Director

“It’s not the destination, it’s the journey.”

Reflections From The Road

This is it, my final column as Executive Director. As I prepare to step aside at the end of September, what stands out isn’t any one program or event. It’s the people, the purpose, and the impact we’ve created together over the past five years.

Serving in this role has been the highlight of my career. It’s been a privilege to work with outstanding boards, a talented and committed team, and a membership that believes in the power of community and shared learning. I’m especially grateful to my colleagues at Eisenman & Associates (and to Rick for taking a chance on me) and to my family, especially Kim, my partner and best friend, for their unwavering support.

I’ve been asked about what’s next. No, this isn’t retirement, just a shift in focus. My plans include giving back to our VSAE community through mentoring and connection, enjoying time with my granddaughter, and exploring the world.

Public service has always been at the core of who I am, professionally and personally. From government to associations, the thread has always been about service. That commitment has led to some meaningful work: advancing telecommunications competition, expanding global internet access, and supporting the fire service. And along the way, a few lessons have stuck:

Be curious.

Lifelong learning isn’t just a catchphrase; it’s how you stay sharp, relevant, and open to what’s next. VSAE is committed to supporting learning at every career stage, and connecting professionals where they are. Whether it’s through formal education or peer exchange, there’s always something to gain from shared experiences—and VSAE creates the space for that to happen.

Don’t fear change—expect it.

Change is constant. If you’re not evolving, you’re falling behind. Few things stall progress faster than the mindset of “but we’ve always done it that way.” Moving forward takes intention, flexibility, and the courage to challenge assumptions. VSAE strives to

be the gold standard for association professionals in Virginia, offering best practices, fresh strategies, and a space to think ahead.

There are few new ideas, just new twists.

The longer you work, the more you realize how much gets recycled. Trends resurface, challenges repeat, and what’s “new” often isn’t. Innovation matters, but so does perspective. VSAE is uniquely positioned to offer both: a space to explore what’s next, and a community that remembers what’s worked (and what hasn’t).

People matter most.

Relationships are what make a career meaningful. I’ve had the privilege to work alongside smart, generous, thoughtful people who made me better. I hope I’ve done the same for them. At the heart of VSAE is a strong, connected community, a place where relationships are built, ideas are shared, and members support one another. It’s a safe space to learn, to lead, and to grow.

Make it count.

Whatever you’re doing, do it with purpose. Associations give us the chance to make a real impact, not just on industries we support, but on people’s lives. That’s always been the “why” behind my work, and it still is. One of the best ways to carry that forward is by getting involved with VSAE, whether through volunteering, stepping into a leadership role, or simply showing up for your peers. VSAE thrives because members invest in each other, and that’s what keeps the community strong.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “It’s not the destination, it’s the journey.” And what has made mine so meaningful are the people along the way: friends who encouraged, mentors who guided, and colleagues who challenged and inspired. The rough patches—the hard calls and setbacks—offered just as much growth. For all of it, and especially for the people, my appreciation and thanks.

Be well. Keep doing the good work. See you around.



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2025-FALL-CONFERENCE.

New Changes for the 2025 Fall Conference & Expo

We're excited to announce changes to this year's conference and expo, shaped by your feedback and the collaborative work of the Fall Conference Task Force. One thing that hasn't changed—our commitment to building strong connections between Virginia's association professionals and industry partners.

New for 2025

Micro-Learning Sessions: Delivering key insights and actionable takeaways in a time-efficient format.

Meaningful Connections: Scheduled appointment times for association executives and exhibitors to connect one-on-one.

Maximize Your Time: Enjoy a focused one-day experience, culminating with an afternoon reception on the expo floor.

Enhanced Info Exchange: Attendees and exhibitors will receive pre-event details about products, offers, needs, and preferences

Flexible Exhibit Options: Exhibit fees have been reduced and we've added a high-top table option to expand exhibit opportunities to meet all budgets.

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Visit Myrtle Beach
Visit Newport News
VisitNorfolk
Visit Richmond VA
Visit SoSi
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge
Visit Williamsburg
Westfields Marriott Washington Dulles
The Westin Richmond

Agenda



7:30 am	Registration Opens
8:00–8:45 am	Continental Breakfast & Welcome
8:45–9:45 am	OPENING REMARKS AND KEYNOTE Change Your Narrative—Get Clear. Get Free. Get Going. Dave Sanderson Courtesy of PK Speakers Bureau, LLC Life is defined not by what happens to us, but by how we respond and the story we choose to tell ourselves. In this powerful talk, Dave Sanderson, a survivor of the Miracle on the Hudson, shares how a single moment can reshape your perspective, reframe your narrative, and propel you toward extraordinary success. Drawing from his near-death experience, Dave reveals how resilience, mindset, and decisive action can turn even the most challenging circumstances into opportunities for growth, leadership, and transformation. His journey from survival to success demonstrates how anyone - regardless of their past or current obstacles - can take control of their story and create a future of purpose, impact, and fulfillment.
10:00–11:00 am	SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS How Meeting Planners Can Use AI to Work Smarter Jennifer Haire and Rich Vallaster AI is everywhere, and for many meeting planners, that's a little scary. But here's the good news: AI isn't coming for your job, it's here to make it easier. From budgeting to brainstorming, see how AI can take on the busywork so you can focus on what matters: creating meaningful, memorable events. Leave the session with tools you can try right away. Updating Your Association's Governance Eileen Johnson This session focuses on updating your association's governance by challenging the assumption that "we've always done it this way" is the only or even the best way to govern your association today. Learn how to take advantage of changes in statutes and practices to improve your association's governance so that board and committee meetings are more effective, and volunteering becomes more inviting. Creating Powerful Peer Exchanges That Work Carter Lyons The best peer learning doesn't come from advice—it comes from shared experience in a space built on trust. In this session, we'll explore what makes peer exchanges and shared interest groups effective, and how to create the structure, presence, and confidentiality needed for real connection and growth. Whether you're looking to strengthen existing SIGs or launch new peer networks, you'll leave with practical strategies to boost engagement and build member-driven communities that matter.
11:10–11:40 am	QUICK TAKES Event Contracts Decoded: Trends to Know, Pitfalls to Avoid Tom Spong Get smart about what's changing in venue and vendor contracts. Walk away with practical tips to protect your organization, avoid common missteps, and negotiate with confidence. A Financial Strategy for Today's Volatility Rutherford Ferguson As markets shift, it may be time to reevaluate your organization's investment strategy. Learn how to align your investments with your mission and risk, and depart with key questions to ask your advisor now. What's Worth Sponsoring? Insights from the Partner Perspective Jamie Rawls and Lisa Meriwether Not all sponsorships deliver, and your partners know it. Hear directly from them about what makes an opportunity worth it, what misses the mark, and how their expectations are changing. Walk away with clear, practical insight to shape sponsorships that work.
11:50 am–12:20 pm	QUICK TAKES Speakers Bureaus: Myths and Must-Knows Sadie Powell and Blanche Powell Cut through the confusion on how bureaus work, common misconceptions, and how they can make your job easier. Walk away with tips for finding the right speaker, avoiding surprises, and creating a program your attendees will love. Building Your Volunteer Pipeline Leslie Frazier and Robin Spensier Every association and non-profit needs a steady flow of engaged volunteers, but keeping that pipeline full takes more than a call for help. This session will offer practical tips for identifying potential leaders, making the ask, and creating simple pathways for them to step up and stay involved.
12:30 pm	Expo Opens
12:30–1:15 pm	Lunch in Expo
2:15–3:00 pm	Expo Reception
3:15 pm	Expo Closes

This agenda is subject to change.



3
CAE
Credits

Register at VSAE.ORG/2025-FALL-CONFERENCE

Abby's Leadership Lesson Series



During my opening remarks at the 2025 Annual Conference, I shared six personal leadership lessons that have shaped my path. Throughout this year, I'll be spotlighting each one here in our newsletter, with the hope that they'll offer insight, encouragement, and a fresh perspective for your own leadership journey.

Leadership Lesson #2: Embracing the Unknown to Unleash What's Possible

Change is no longer a season—it's the climate we live in. For association professionals, that can be both daunting and energizing. Leadership today isn't about avoiding change; it's about leaning into it, seeing it as fertile ground for innovation, growth, and reinvention. When the familiar fades—like the departure of a respected CEO—it's natural to feel uncertain. But great leaders recognize these moments as invitations to rise, recalibrate, and reimagine what's next.

Terry Monroe's legacy is a powerful reminder that when leadership is built on vision, integrity, and collaboration, it leaves behind more than a memory—it leaves momentum. As new chapters unfold, our job as association executives is not to replicate what was, but to build boldly on what's been created. The opportunity in front of us is not just to find a new leader—it's to become stronger, more nimble, and more intentional than ever before.



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Congratulations

Congratulations to the following members who recently earned the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation:

Leslie Frazier | VA REALTORS
Jennifer Haire | National Center for State Courts
John Newby | VA Biotechnology Association
Erin Schrad | VA Association of Chiefs of Police & Foundation
Karie Walker | VA Association of Counties

Their success reflects the value of VSAE's peer-driven study group model, which blends weekly sessions, shared resources, and strong support from domain leaders to build confidence and readiness.

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE!

A new study group begins September 16 for the December 2025 exam. Nine sessions are held virtually each Tuesday, from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. The program includes:

- ✓ Kick-off orientation with tips for taking the exam and first study session.
- ✓ Weekly sessions (virtual) focusing on each of the 8 domains and exam questions.
- ✓ Sessions led by experienced CAEs (session leaders available for follow-up).
- ✓ All sessions are recorded and available on-demand.
- ✓ Optional review session prior to the exam.
- ✓ Online discussion group for class participants.

VISIT [VSAE.ORG/CAE-STUDY-GROUPS](https://vsaе.org/cae-study-groups) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

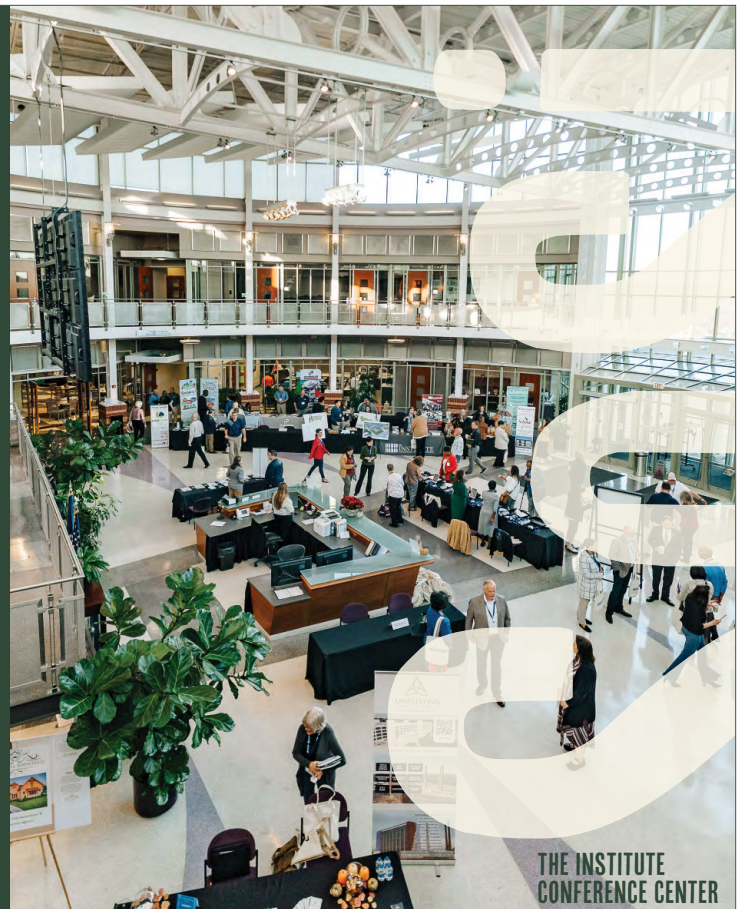
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VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



LET'S RECAP

No Playbook, No Pause Button: Takeaways from VSAE's AI Summit

On June 4, association professionals and industry partners gathered in Richmond for VSAE's first-ever AI Summit, with the primary focus on strategic questions association leaders need to be asking right now—around policy, legal risks, data management, and workforce readiness. There was a shared sense that we're all walking an AI high wire—trying to strike the right balance between setting up structure and guardrails, while also staying curious and moving forward, even if we don't have it all figured out yet. As the day unfolded, some key themes rose to the top:

AI is here to stay, and it's moving fast.

The tools we're using today will look completely different six months from now. While the old playbook for adopting new technology still has value, it wasn't built for this pace. We've got to stay nimble, pay attention, and be ready to adapt quickly.

It's a chance to innovate and work smarter.

AI isn't about replacing staff; it's about freeing them up to focus on what really matters. It can take repetitive tasks off our plates, surface insights from data, and help us deliver better, more personalized member experiences.

Don't wait for a perfect plan.

Christina Lewellen said it well: if we wait until everything's figured out, we'll never move. Start small. Try a tool. See what works. Give yourself—and your team—permission to test and explore without needing all the answers first.

Support your team and make space for failure.

This shift won't happen without people. Encourage your team to try things out, share their successes, and also what didn't work. That's how we build real knowledge and confidence.

Build policies that enable more than restrict.

Your AI policy should be a guide, not a roadblock. Rick Bawcum emphasized the importance of policies that outline what's possible, rather than just a list of "shall nots." Make sure your policy aligns with your mission, values, and strategic goals.

Recognize the risks but don't let them stop you.

Yes, there are real concerns: copyright, data privacy, bias, misinformation. But those aren't reasons to avoid AI, they're reasons to be intentional. Know the issues, get legal guidance where needed, and put appropriate safeguards in place.

So, where do we go from here? The Summit was a starting point for VSAE. We'll continue creating opportunities to learn from one another, share what's working (and what's not), and help our members navigate through this change.

The good news is you don't need to have it all figured out. But you do need to pay attention, ask questions, and think about how AI fits into the bigger picture of how your organization works and serves. And you've got to try things, because that's how you figure out what's useful and what's not.



AMC Summit

Earlier this month, VSAE members, prospective members, and partners gathered at the newly opened Publisher Hotel in downtown Fredericksburg for the annual AMC Summit. The event featured meaningful connections, valuable content, and engaging conversation. Attendees represented a diverse range of association management companies from across the Commonwealth, each contributing unique perspectives and insights.

Topics covered included trends in associations and AMCs, building strong board relationships, employee development, and sustainable revenue models.

Special thanks to AMC SIG Co-Chairs Daniel Whitehead and Nicole McAllister for their leadership and help organizing the event. If you're a VSAE member working with an AMC, reach out to Daniel or Nicole to get involved with the group.



NOVA Networking

Continuing our efforts to connect with the association community in Northern Virginia, VSAE hosted a networking lunch on July 16 at Matchbox in Fairfax. The event brought together current and prospective members for lively conversation, shared insights, and plenty of laughs.

These informal gatherings are a great way to connect with peers in the region, exchange best practices, and build valuable relationships.

Many thanks to our event sponsors—Lansdowne Resort, Visit Loudoun, and the Greater Richmond Convention Center—for their continued support. If you're in the Northern Virginia area, we hope you'll join us for the next event!

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Roman Luxury Meets Southern Charm with Caesars Entertainment

Roman luxury meets Southern charm in historic Danville, Virginia. This all-new destination resort brings the iconic Caesars brand to the heart of Southern Virginia and stands as the crown jewel of our regional portfolio. Caesars Virginia offers a luxurious experience featuring a full-service spa, pool, world-class dining, upscale bars and lounges, expansive convention space, and exceptional entertainment.

Opened in late 2024, Caesars Virginia is a newly constructed, \$650 million destination resort that delivers everything meeting planners expect from the iconic Caesars Entertainment brand—along with the practical advantages of a modern, purpose-built venue.

With over 50,000 square feet of meeting and convention space, the resort is fully equipped to meet the needs of high-caliber meeting planners. The 320-room property includes a full-service spa, pool, and fitness center designed to satisfy even the most discerning VIP attendees. The hotel tower offers stunning floor-to-ceiling panoramic views of the Southern Virginia skyline and the historic “Three Sisters” smokestacks. Each room is thoughtfully designed to reflect the charm of the local countryside, featuring warm décor and gold and blue accents that enhance the luxurious ambiance.

Conference and executive retreat attendees will enjoy a diverse array of onsite dining options. Caesars Virginia does not disappoint, boasting 12 restaurants and bars ideal for exclusive VIP receptions or casual networking. Highlights include Ramsay’s Kitchen by multi-Michelin-starred chef and television personality Gordon Ramsay, Dan Dan Noodle, Three Stacks, and the 500 Block Food Hall—developed in partnership with local developer Rick Barker and restaurateur Steve Parry.

Beyond the meeting rooms and dining experiences, guests can enjoy a vibrant casino floor, live entertainment venues, and curated cultural experiences that celebrate the region’s rich history. The resort also features outdoor spaces perfect for receptions, team-building activities, or simply enjoying the scenic beauty

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Association Coalition Secures Important Victories in Tax Bill

ASAE-led coalitions successfully advocated for important policy advancements in the tax bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump last week.

"The investment by our members and other nonprofit organizations in ASAE's coalitions was critical for ensuring that the voices of the association community were heard in the 2025 tax reform debate," said ASAE President and CEO Michelle Mason, FASAE, CAE.

"We thank Congress for their engagement with association leaders in shaping this tax bill.

Coalitions like these will continue to be essential in educating members of Congress about the important role associations play in our economy."

The Community Impact Coalition, launched by ASAE in January (of which VSAE is a member), led advocacy to Congress on preserving the current tax treatment of nonprofit organizations. Thanks to the coalition's advocacy, sweeping tax increases on the nonprofit sector were never introduced in draft legislation, and two narrower tax provisions were removed during the legislative process:

- Taxing nonprofit organizations' expenses on parking and transportation fringe benefits
- Taxing royalties generated from a nonprofit's name and logo

Additionally, this legislation provides Americans with new tools to access the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in today's economy.

Thanks to advocacy from ASAE's Tomorrow's Workforce Coalition, the final bill includes the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act.

This bill expands the use of 529 plans to cover postsecondary training and credentialing, such as licenses and nongovernmental certifications.

It transforms these college savings plans into career savings plans and creates more viable pathways to career success.

ASAE thanks coalition members for their ongoing support and encourages associations to join these coalitions to support future advocacy on public policy issues and to continue educating lawmakers on the importance of nonprofit organizations.

WHERE TO THRIVE IN '25!



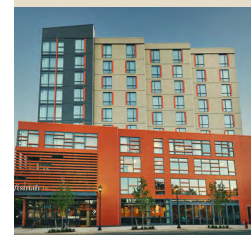
Join other like-minded professionals to share various experiences and viewpoints organized around areas of interest. This virtual event allows participants to attend more than one SIG meeting.

SIG-a-Palooza! August 7-8 Virtual



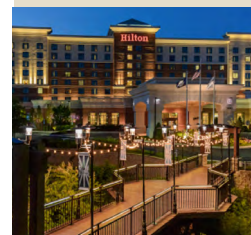
Virginia's premiere conference for association executives and meeting planners, offering an Expo with 70+ exhibitors and multiple educational sessions.

Fall Conference & Expo September 25 Greater Richmond Convention Center



Top-level decision makers focus in on the current challenges and opportunities in leading their association into the future.

CEO & Senior Staff Retreat November 17-18 The Craftsman



VSAE's most popular event! Bid on over 80 donated items, then enjoy a luncheon at which the winners of the Awards of Excellence are recognized.

Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction December 5 Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa Short Pump

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Let Kalahari Resorts & Conventions inspire the next era of your events. As the backdrop and the best part of your next meeting, Kalahari is a venue you and your attendees will value.

We look forward to helping you create more meaning at your event with options that go beyond your planned agenda. Attendees will enjoy reconnecting at our on-site restaurants, engaging in group activities, or catching new music from our regular schedule of live entertainment. Be among the first to host your event and change the way you do meetings at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in Spotsylvania County, opening in late 2026.

CONTACT

LILLY MITCHELL

Sales Manager

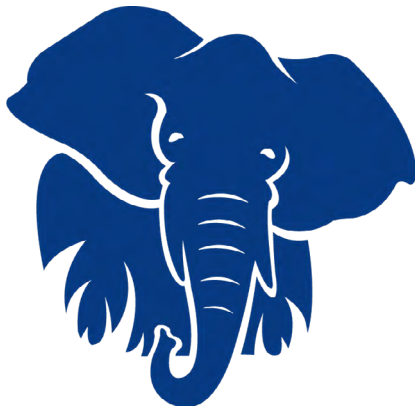
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BEYOND THE BOXED LUNCH



Meeting food is ... well, meeting food. Under-seasoned and underwhelming. But not at Kalahari. Start your event meal with mouthwatering appetizers, like our Nashville Hot Texas Quail with pickled slaw, green tomato, orange blossom honey, and buttercrust bread. Our passion for food is beyond conventional.



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Terrance Lasher | VA Forestry Association | Richmond

Tara Modisett | Alliance for Patient Medication Safety | North Chesterfield

Danielle Thomas-Pollard | Auto Care Association | Bethesda, MD

Kenya Williams | National Student Nurses' Association | Alexandria

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