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PRESS

September/October 2025

VSAE Welcomes New Executive Director



Please join us in welcoming **David Walsh**, who will become VSAE's next Executive Director in October.

David brings more than a decade of association management experience to the role. During his 13 years with SNAC International—the trade association representing the \$100+ billion snack industry—he advanced through leadership positions in membership, communications, sponsorship, and government affairs.

Most recently, as Vice President of Membership & Communications, David led member

engagement, recruitment, sponsorship and partnership development, and communications strategy. He also played a key role in planning and delivering SNAC's flagship trade shows and leadership events.

A frequent speaker at industry events, David has shared expertise on market trends, consumer behavior, and policy issues shaping the food sector. He is widely recognized for strengthening member value, building partnerships, and advancing associations through innovative programs and thought leadership.

A graduate of the University of Virginia, where he studied Economics and History, David will be relocating with his family to Richmond, VA, ahead of beginning his new role.



Shaping the Future of Association Boards: Nine Recommendations for Action

Presented by
Jeff De Cagna, AIMP, DAIG, FRSA, FASAE

Friday, November 7
Jepson Alumni Center

How can all association community stakeholders work together to create a better future for association boards? *The Future of Association Boards (FAB) Community Dialogue Report*, which was released in July 2025, proposes answers to this question with nine recommendations for action for association stakeholders to pursue together as they shape a better future for our community's boards.

Join us on **Friday, November 7**, at the **Jepson Alumni Center** at the University of Richmond to learn of the report's nine recommendations, share next practices to facilitate their implementation, and invite participants to offer their ideas and insights.

The seminar will be lead by **Jeff De Cagna AIMP, DAIG, FRSA FASAE**, executive advisor for Foresight First LLC in Reston, Virginia.

A networking reception and luncheon will take place after the seminar. 1.5 CAE credits.

Register at vsae.org/calendar

DON'T MISS OUT!

SEMINAR SERIES WITH LUNCH

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Jepson Alumni Center
University of Richmond

9:00 am

Registration Opens

9:30-11:00 am

Seminar

11:00-11:45 am

Networking Reception

11:45 am 1:00 pm

Luncheon

Register at

vsae.org/calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

FALL CONFERENCE & EXPO

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Greater Richmond
Convention Center

SEE INFO ON PAGES 4 & 5

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
[VSAE.ORG/CALENDAR](https://vsae.org/calendar)

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The Omni Homestead Resort
Visit Loudoun
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

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Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel
Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
The Virginian Hotel
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Leadership reflections



Abby Tammen
VSAE President

“Let’s not
just welcome
change—let’s
shape it.”

Creating Opportunity Through Change

Leadership transitions are more than milestones—they’re moments of momentum. As we welcome our new Executive Director to VSAE, we find ourselves at a powerful intersection of continuity and possibility.

First, I want to express heartfelt appreciation to our outgoing Executive Director, Terry Monroe, for his years of dedicated service and leadership. Terry’s steady hand, strategic insight, and unwavering commitment to our mission have left an indelible mark on VSAE. His legacy is one of integrity, collaboration, and progress—and we are deeply grateful for the foundation he built.

Now, as we turn the page, we do so with confidence and excitement. Change in leadership naturally brings questions, but it also brings opportunity. This is our chance not just to adapt, but to create our own disruption—to challenge assumptions, refresh our approaches, and lean into the future with intention.

With the full support of the Board of Directors and the staff from Eisenman & Associates, this transition is grounded in stability and guided by our strategic plan. That plan remains our compass, ensuring that even as we evolve, we stay aligned with the values and vision that define VSAE.

Our new Executive Director, David Walsh, brings a fresh perspective and a wealth of experience. His enthusiasm throughout the interview process and the depth of insight reflected in his background make him an exciting addition to our community. Under his leadership, we have the opportunity to explore new ideas, enhance member value, and deepen our impact across the Commonwealth.

As we look ahead, let’s not just welcome change—let’s shape it. Together, we have the insight, energy, and unity to turn this transition into a defining chapter for VSAE.

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 Craddock Terry, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel
 Delta Hotels by Marriott Richmond
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 DoubleTree by Hilton Charlottesville
 DoubleTree by Hilton Richmond-
 Midlothian
 DoubleTree by Hilton Williamsburg
 Explore Charleston
 The Founders Inn and Spa
 Fredericksburg Convention Center
 The George Washington Hotel
 Great Wolf Lodge
 Greater Richmond Convention Center
 The Greenbrier
 Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau

Hampton Roads Convention Center
 Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention
 Bureau
 Hilton Norfolk The Main
 Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
 Hotel 24 South
 Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley
 Conference Center
 The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
 The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton
 Conference Center
 The Institute Conference Center
 Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
 JW Marriott Reston Station
 Kalahari Resorts & Conventions
 Kimpton The Forum Hotel
 Kingsmill Resort
 Kingston Resorts
 Lansdowne Resort
 Linden Row Inn
 Lynchburg, Economic
 Development & Tourism
 Massanutten Resort
 Minuteman Press—Glen Allen
 Mountain Lake Lodge
 Newport News Marriott at City Center
 Norfolk Waterside Marriott
 Novi AMS
 Omni Charlottesville
 The Omni Homestead Resort & Spa
 Omni Richmond Hotel
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 The Publisher, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel
 Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk
 Waterfront Hotel Quirk Hotel
 Richmond Marriott Downtown
 Richmond Marriott Short Pump
 Schooley Mitchell
 Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel
 Sheraton Reston Hotel
 TriNet
 Virginia Beach Convention Center
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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, III 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 and Colleen Briley 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. Reserves Done Right: A Financial Strategy for Today's Volatility Rutherford Ferguson With today's increasingly volatile financial markets, it may be time to reevaluate your reserve strategy. Learn how to align your reserves 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 Today's sponsors are looking for more than logos and lunch breaks. Get an inside look at what makes a sponsorship valuable, where associations often fall short, and how expectations are shifting. Walk away with fresh ideas for revamping your sponsor program to better reflect partner goals while delivering real value for your association.
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 Spensieri 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
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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.

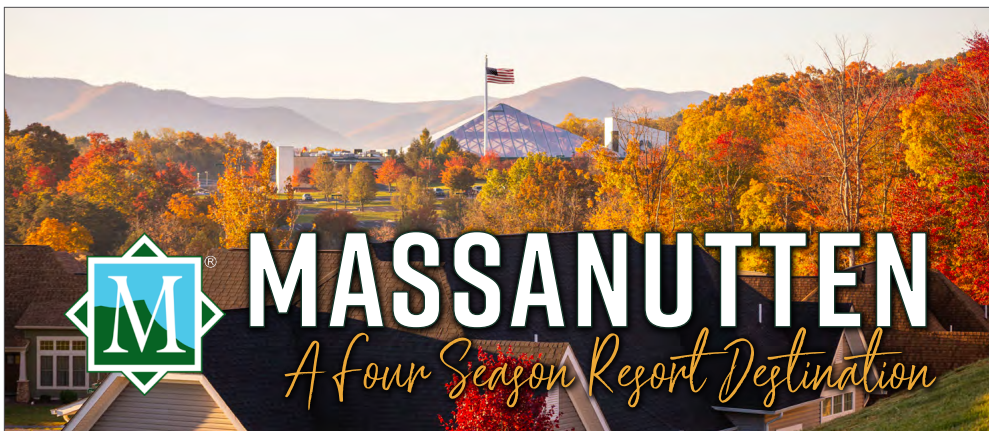
Leadership Lesson #3: Opportunity is Everywhere

In a world where change is constant, opportunity isn't something we wait for—it's something we learn to see. As association professionals, we're often navigating shifting landscapes, unexpected challenges, and evolving member needs. But within every pivot, delay, or detour lies a spark of possibility.

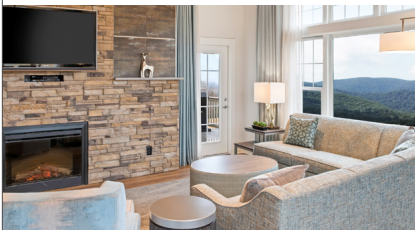
Strategic vision and curiosity are our greatest tools. They help us look beyond the surface of a setback and ask, "What could this become?" Whether it's a canceled event that opens the door to a new format, or a staffing gap that reveals untapped talent, opportunity is rarely loud—it's subtle, waiting for leaders who are paying attention.

This season, I invite you to lean into the small shifts. Ask bold questions. Celebrate the quiet wins. Because when we train ourselves to see opportunity everywhere, we don't just adapt—we lead.

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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Susie Timbrell Group Sales Manager

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ceo *and* senior staff *retreat*

Creating Stability in Unstable Times

When stability is elusive and disruption is the norm, how do association leaders effectively reset, function, and even thrive? This is the central question we'll explore at this year's CEO and Senior Staff Retreat, **November 17–18**, at **The Draftsman** in Charlottesville. Lowell Aplebaum, EDD, FASAE, CAE, CPF, CEO of Vista Cova, will lead the program designed specifically for those guiding their organizations through complexity and change.

Beyond offering a moment to step back and reflect, the retreat will dive into the strategic forces reshaping associations and the leadership skills required to meet them head-on. Through candid peer exchange and future-focused dialogue, you'll leave with sharper clarity, fresh ideas, and a stronger sense of direction to lead with purpose in a rapidly evolving environment.

Register at vsae.org/ceoretreat 7.25 CAE Credits (applied)

Registration closes at 12 pm on Wednesday, November 12.

SCHEDULE

Monday, November 17

8:30 am – 9:30 am	Welcome & Introductions
9:30 am – 11:30 am	Educational Session
11:45 am – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:45 pm – 3:45 pm	Educational Session
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	Wrap Up
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Relax and Recharge
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Reception
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Dinner

Tuesday, November 18

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am	Educational Session & Peer Exchanges
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Wrap Up and Closing Remarks

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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 Draftsman



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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We believe that some of the most meaningful connections happen over shared meals. Solete, our signature oceanfront restaurant, serves chef-driven menus in a relaxed setting with stunning views. Mellow Mushroom, conveniently attached to the hotel, offers a laid-back, crowd-pleasing option for social gatherings, sponsor events, or casual dinners.

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Your Vision, Our Venue

Whether you're looking for a high-tech conference space or ready to host a meeting in historic downtown Danville, SoSi has it all. The Institute Conference Center offers more than 25,000 square feet of premier meeting space, while Caesars Virginia boasts a 51,000 square foot Convention Center. Enjoy the beautiful countryside and luxurious indoor conference space at the Berry Hill Resort & Conference Center or gather at the spacious and grand Atkinson Farm. If you're exploring more unique venue options, discover Cottontail Weddings & Events, Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex, and Motley's Mill Waterfall Estate. SoSi will meet your needs, no matter the style.

Stay in Style

You won't need to compromise style for comfort while you stay in SoSi. Book a night at The Bee Hotel, in Danville's River District, and experience a buzzworthy stay in a renovated, historical newspaper office. The Holbrook Hotel, located in SoSi's Old West End Historical District, offers modern luxury in walking distance to local coffee shops and dining options. Looking to experience a little fun during your conference? Book an evening at Caesars Virginia resort and casino, boasting 320 guest rooms. With over 1,200 total available rooms throughout Danville and Pittsylvania County, SoSi is here to accommodate your needs.

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Emily Ega | National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations | Richmond
Thomas Stefaniak, CAE | Management Solutions Plus | Alexandria

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Cynthia Mohr, CFMP | Visit Myrtle Beach | Myrtle Beach, SC
Sharon St. Clair, CPA, CGMA | Your Part Time Controller, LLC | North Chesterfield
Caleb Shifflett | Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center | Harrisonburg

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Joe Barrow is now the Vice President of Sales, Marketing & Revenue with **Kingsmill Resort** in Williamsburg.

CONGRATULATIONS

The following members have been named to the Virginia 500 Power List by *Virginia Business Magazine*:

Dale Bennett, President & CEO, VA Trucking Association
Stephanie Peters, CAE, President & CEO, VA Society of CPAs
Eric Terry, President, VA Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association

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October 20

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