

# OPINION

B2 | The Daily Progress

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2010

## You get the VDOT you pay for

I feel compelled to comment about the complainers and naysayers who continue to bash the Virginia Department of Transportation for issues that are beyond its control.

Residents of Albemarle County might be surprised to know just how many VDOT employees were on call for the snow removal effort — four! Yes, you heard me — four, and that was the entire workforce.

You might wonder where the VDOT employees went.

A couple of years ago VDOT was directed by the legislature to reduce its workforce by almost 50 percent, taking an 11,000 person organization down to 7,500 people. If you choose to have smaller government, then you will have fewer services.

Do you want a full-service organization with skills ranging from service workers to engineers and administrators or do you want a management company? Now we have a management company that has been stripped of its funding and told to find more efficiency so that it may operate to the previous level of service with fewer resources. You can only imagine what the result is — slower snowplowing, less road repair, fewer maintenance operations, no state-funded construction, less bridge repair, taller grass, fewer rest areas, less everything.

Critics of VDOT may say that it is not run like a privately held company and they are right. VDOT is not a profit-motivated organization; its decisions are made with public safety in mind. If you want faster snowplowing, it is easy to achieve; but you have to be willing to pay for it. The motorgraders, loaders, dump trucks, plows and salt spreaders require coordination, skilled operators, fuel and maintenance. We, as a commonwealth, have chosen not to fund it.

The moral of this story is: Don't

### LETTERS

The Daily Progress welcomes Letters to the Editor on topics regarding civic life. Letters must contain the author's full name, address, signature, jurisdiction of residence and phone numbers. Limit is 350 words. All letters are subject to editing. Letters should be the original work of the signatory.

The Daily Progress lists the affiliations of writers of letters to the editor when the writers are officially speaking for the organization they represent. Affiliations are not listed when the writers are expressing a personal opinion not officially shared by the organization.

Send letters to The Daily Progress, Letters (P.O. Box 9030, Charlottesville, VA 22906; fax (434) 978-7252; e-mail: Letters@DailyProgress.com.

blame VDOT for its inability to live up to your expectations when you have taken all of the tools out of its toolbox.

**Blair K. Williamson**  
Albemarle County