



Old Dominion Highway Contractors Association Newsletter

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A Landslide Victory for Republicans Annual Meeting Recap

by Ben Dendy

On November 3rd, a tradition which began in 1977 continued as Virginians elected a Governor from the opposite party of the President elected in the previous year. Concerned about expansive federal initiatives in health care and climate control and the increasing federal deficit, Virginia voters appear to have "buyer's remorse" about President Obama.

Republicans had big wins in the House, gaining six net seats and boosting their majority to 61, including the two independents who caucus with the Republicans. House Republicans clearly benefited from recruitment of strong candidates to take on incumbent Democrats, particularly in Northern Virginia. The large margin of victory by governor-elect Bob McDonnell and his running mates also helped these challengers secure victory, in most cases by a margin of 350 votes or less.

The only incumbent Republican who lost was Delegate Philip Hamilton (R-Newport News), a budget conferee and Chair of the

House Health Welfare and Institutions Committee, who faced ethics charges. Democrats also picked up the seat of retiring Delegate Jeff Frederick (R-Prince William County), who was removed earlier this year as Chairman of the Virginia Republican Party. Taking this seat is the first African American legislator to be elected from Northern Virginia in a number of years, Luke Torian. The closest race was that of Virginia Beach City Councilman Ron Villanueva, who defeated Delegate Bobby Mathieson by just 16 votes, requiring a recount.

A number of the House Republicans who were considered to have difficult races were re-elected in landslides including Delegate Danny Marshall (R-Danville), Delegate Anne Crockett-Stark (R-Wythe County) and Delegate Thomas Gear (R-Hampton). Two Northern Virginia House Republicans, who faced serious challenges won comfortably, Delegate Tom Rust (R-Herndon) and Delegate David Albo (R-Fairfax County) □

The Annual Meeting of the Old Dominion Highway Contractors Association took place Friday, October 16, 2009 at the Boar's Head Inn in Charlottesville Virginia.

After meeting at noon for a group lunch, the Board of Directors discussed agenda items including the Association's 2010 budget, bylaws update, PAC update and the 2010 legislative dinner. The board voted to keep dues at their present levels for the coming membership year, with a continued focus on new member recruitment.

At the General Membership Meeting, outgoing President David Branscome gave his President's report as well as an update on how VDOT is involving the industry in responding to required state budget cutbacks. Those members currently serving on VDOT advisory committees also provided updates. After unanimously approving a revision to the bylaws to make technical corrections and provide the board with greater flexibility to conduct business, the membership voted unanimously to approve the following slate of officers for the 2009-2010 year:

- President- **Wilson Whitehurst**, Whitehurst Paving Company
- Vice-President- **Rocky Hedrick**, Fort Chiswell Construction Company
- Secretary Treasurer- **Tom Sproule**, Adams Construction Company
- Past-President- **David Branscome**, Branscome Paving Company

- Also elected to the board of directors:
- Ed Dalrymple** of Chemung Construction
 - David Houser** of Blakemore Construction
 - Jerry Short** of W-L Construction & Paving

Following the General Membership Meeting, Phil Abraham of the Vectre Corporation moderated a Transportation Panel of John "Butch" Davies of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and VDOT Chief Engineer Malcolm Kerley. Both provided candid comments regarding Virginia's current transportation issues and responded to questions from the audience.

Following the pre-dinner reception, the Honorable Gerald Bailes, 65th Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia and Director of the Miller Center of Public Affairs, joined Association members for dinner and provided details on the transportation infrastructure recommendations the Center will be providing to Congress in the near future.

On Saturday following breakfast, members had the opportunity to stay for golf. □

Scenes from the 2009 ODHCA Annual Meeting



Above left: Past President David Branscome congratulates 2009-2010 ODHCA President Wilson Whitehurst.



Above right: The Honorable Gerald Bailes, who served as dinner speaker, with Phil Abraham of Vectre.

At right: Wilson Whitehurst introduces Butch Davies, who serves on the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and VDOT Chief Engineer Malcolm Kerley. Phil Abraham moderated this transportation panel.



Meet the 20 New House of Delegates Members



Robin Abbott (D-93rd) is a partner at Consumer Litigation Associates. After working as a legal secretary for the FBI and Dept. of Justice, she attended college and law school while raising her children and working full time. Her son Nicholas was diagnosed with cerebral palsy in 1980, leading her to a successful career as a consumer advocate. Abbott is recognized nationally for her defense against predatory mortgage lenders and foreclosure abuses.

Richard Anderson (R-51st), who defeated incumbent Paul Nichols, served 30 years in the Air Force as a senior military advisor who commanded Titan II ICBM combat crews and served at both the U.S. Atlantic and Pacific Command Headquarters as well as the Pentagon. A Sorenson Institute graduate, he is active in several military and civic organizations and seeks to keep taxes low, help small businesses and prioritizing government spending on education, transportation and public safety.



Dickie Bell (R-20th) is a special education teacher and coach at Riverheads High School in Staunton. He served in the U.S. Navy Hospital Corps during Vietnam and also on the Staunton City Council. He wants to ensure workers in his area can find good jobs and keep more of their money instead of paying higher taxes.



Betsy B. Carr (D-69th) serves on the Richmond School Board and is Outreach Director at St. Paul's in downtown Richmond. She founded the Micah Initiative, which provided over 1000 volunteer tutors to elementary schools, and has held positions at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, University of Richmond's Women's Resource Center, and Virginia Historical Society.



Bill Cleaveland (R-17th) worked for Corning Glass before attending law school. He served as a prosecutor for the City of Roanoke Commonwealth Attorney's office before going into private practice focusing on defense, plaintiff's injury and civil litigation.



Barbara Comstock (R-34th), who defeated incumbent Margi Vanderhuy, attended Georgetown University Law School while raising her family. She has served as a senior aide to Congressman Wolf, on the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, leading communications efforts at the Department of Justice, the FBI and other department agencies. She presently works at Corallo Comstock, a public relations and government affairs firm she co-founded.



John Cox (R-55th) is the owner of several transport companies, including Cox Transportation, and a past president of the Virginia Trucking Association. A champion of the free enterprise system, he wants to see fiscal responsibility and budget restraint exercised at all levels of government.



James Edmunds (R-60th) is a 3rd generation farmer who has served on the Halifax County Board of Supervisors for 10 years. He has a degree in Business Administration and says his primary goals are to create new jobs in his area while preserving gun and hunting rights.



Scott Garrett, MD (R-23rd), who defeated incumbent Shannon Valentine, is a long-time Lynchburg-area surgeon elected to City Council in 2006, where he has been a strong voice for fiscal responsibility and government accountability.



Thomas "Tag" Greason (R-32nd), who defeated incumbent David Poisson, graduated from West Point and earned an MBA from George Mason. He coaches his children's sporting teams and was recently appointed as a commissioner of the county's Economic Development Commission. As Executive VP for Current Analysis, Inc., Greason was instrumental in turning around the company, experiencing firsthand the positive effect of reducing taxes and government spending.



Patrick Hope (D-47th) is Director of Legislative Policy at the American College of Cardiology. He is active in organizations that include the National Alliance on Mental Illness and ARC of Northern Virginia, and said he is committed to providing Northern Virginia with a permanent funding mechanism for transportation improvements.



Matthew James (D-80th) is President and CEO of the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development after holding several key positions in Portsmouth City government. Understanding the key role of transportation, he wants to address his regions needs in bridges, mass transit and high speed rail.



Mark Keam (D-35th) is an attorney who worked as an FCC prosecutor, and who implemented portions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. He then was assistant chief counsel in the Office of Advocacy within the Small Business Administration implementing the Access to Capitol Electronic Network, an online matching program that allowed start up entrepreneurs and angel investors or small venture capitalists to find each other.



The \$5 Transportation Solution: a Win for Virginians

ODHCA President Wilson Whitehurst recently submitted the following op/ed article

Most Virginians would agree that efficiently moving goods and people is paramount to establishing and maintaining a vibrant economy. The wheels of commerce are greased by roads and railways that allow unimpeded, safe travel. Our transportation networks are valuable assets, the tools with which Virginia builds business and creates prosperity.

There also is no debate that one of the core services of state government is providing for the transportation system. Party ideologies aside, the next Governor and members of the General Assembly must confront and, at least, begin to solve how Virginia will sustain and enhance its transportation system. If they can deal effectively with this issue, our Commonwealth will be poised to embrace the economic recovery and prosperity that will most surely come.

Another compelling reason to maintain a substantial investment in transportation is jobs. Infrastructure construction employment is one of the most effective ways to keep people working. Everyone agrees that reducing unemployment and maintaining workforce productivity is at the heart of recession recovery.

If all this is true, then why do Virginians seem unwilling to face our transportation needs? Why are the politics of a difficult economy blinding our elected officials and candidates? Why can't we make some prudent and seemingly logical decisions regarding our roads, railways, and public transit system?

Four essential components to any viable transportation funding package are:

1. Those using the system must proportionally pay for the system.
2. The funding mechanism must operate efficiently, free from large overhead costs.
3. Those travelling through Virginia from other states must pay to use the system.
4. Transportation funding must be statewide in scope.

Virginia's fuel tax is the ideal mechanism for supporting our transportation needs—a true "user fee" with a simple, effective collection system already in place. Anyone purchasing fuel in Virginia – regardless of their state of registration – pays the tax.

Virginia's fuel tax rate has not increased in 23 years, while fuel consumption has decreased, the cost of maintenance and construction has dramatically increased, and the system has been vastly expanded. The funding shortfall is substantial.

Though opinions vary regarding the magnitude of the funding shortfall, most set the annual gap at about 1 billion dollars. How do we, the citizens of the Commonwealth, begin to address this problem? I submit that an increase of a dime to the fuel tax would be a substantial beginning. This would generate about one half of the shortfall – about \$500 million per year.

The actual cost of such an increase to the average motorist is often misunderstood and distorted. If your vehicle gets 20mpg, then the dime increase will cost an additional one half cent per mile. That means the average driver, travelling 12,000 miles per year, would spend a mere \$5 more per

month. Adding an indexing feature to this new tax rate which would adjust automatically to economic conditions would ensure that legislators would not have to revisit transportation funding every few years.

Some might charge that a contractor lobbying for transportation money is self-serving. On the contrary, if the fuel tax is increased, VDOT contractors, like me, will actually be paying a large portion of this fee, since we operate fleets of heavy motor vehicles which travel many more miles than the average Virginian. While the members of my association are in the business to trade work for transportation dollars, most are not only concerned for their own businesses and the people they employ, but care about the infrastructure of the Commonwealth. We realize how much the system has been neglected and needs repair. We experience, firsthand, the commerce in our state slowing to a crawl. We witness the huge traffic problems and quality of life issues that arise from an overwhelmed transportation network on a daily basis.

All citizens must realize that we are not entitled to well-maintained roads and bridges in Virginia—we must be willing to pay for the freedom and ease of mobility. Our transportation systems are essential investments that we can't ignore anymore. Let your legislator know that funding transportation is the right thing to do for Virginia.

Wilson Whitehurst is president of Whitehurst Paving Company, Inc., a Richmond-based VDOT contractor, and President of the Old Dominion Highway Contractors Association, a state-wide transportation contractors association. □

**More scenes from
ODHCA's Annual Meeting,
held October 16-17, 2009
at the Boar's Head Inn in
Charlottesville, are online
at www.odhca.com**



Above, B.P. Short and Chip Quicke. **At left**, Julie Dime of Vectre and attorney Chris LaGow. **Below**, Tom Sproule, Jerry Short and Ken Taylor.



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Kaye Kory (D-38th) is vice-chair of Fairfax County's Public School Board and served two years as a volunteer working on housing and anti-poverty issues. As program advisor to a Community Agency on Aging and Executive Director at the Saunders Moon Senior Citizens Center, she established a free transportation network for the elderly.

Jim LeMunyon (R-67th) is a technology entrepreneur who co-founded Sterling Semiconductor, now a unit of Dow Corning, which produces an advanced electronic material needed for electric cars and energy efficient lighting. He presently leads HexaTech, a company developing novel sources of ultra-violet light for water purification and new components for wireless communication systems. While serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce, he reduced the agency's budget while making the agency more effective.



James W. "Will" Morefield (R-3rd), who defeated incumbent Dan Bowling, comes from a mining family. After graduating from Midwest University in Texas, he returned home to fight for victims of black lung disease. Morefield serves on a number of community boards, including The Tazewell Area Chamber of Commerce. He considers coal the lifeblood of his area and said he will fight anti-coal policy in Richmond.



Chris Stolle, MD (R-83) trained as a nuclear engineer in the U.S. Navy and is a medical doctor who also earned an MBA from the College of William and Mary. Dr. Stolle and his sister, also an OB/GYN, started a small business and developed a new concept in the delivery of obstetrical care that resulted in documented life-saving interventions as well as improvement in safety and patient satisfaction, while decreasing malpractice risk and cost. He currently serves in an administrative role at Riverside Regional Medical Center and is also a practicing physician.



Scott Surovell (D-44th) is an attorney whose practice includes criminal defense, family law, personal injury, small business litigation and consumer matters. He is currently a law partner with State Senator Chap Peterson. In 2005, he was selected for the Fifth District Attorney Discipline Committee which adjudicates ethical complaints against Virginia attorneys. He states that "Virginia has virtually abandoned its obligation to build and maintain roads, largely because some powerful legislators do not understand our needs and do not help address our problems." His website addresses the impact of transportation funding on Northern Virginia, adding that Fairfax County's annual road maintenance allocation from the Commonwealth has gone from \$28 million to



just \$240,000 in the past six years.

Luke Torian (D-52nd) serves as the Pastor of First Mount Zion Baptist Church in Dumfries and was one of only 50 leaders who participated in John Maxwell's special leadership institute. He has served as a mentor for troubled teens. Torian helped found Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE), an organization that represents 120,000 people from 40 congregations in the Northern Virginia area. VOICE works to gain access to affordable housing, strengthen education for people who want to learn English, and to provide affordable dental care.



Ron Villanueva (R-21st), who narrowly defeated incumbent Bobby Mathieson by only a 16 vote margin (*pending recount*) is a Virginia Beach native who served as legislative aide for Frank Wagner during his time in the House of Delegates. In 2002, Villanueva won an at-large seat of the Virginia Beach City Council, where he has been a leader in holding the line on taxes and promoting economic growth, such as attracting international businesses to the area. From 1997-2005 he owned and operated a marine ship repair and industrial service firm and he currently is co-principal for SEK Solutions, a provider of tactical and special operations equipment for

Virginia's Budget Pain Has Only Begun

excerpted from James Bacon's October 20, 2009 blog post

The latest edition of The Virginia Newsletter includes public finance expert Jim Regimbald's essay: "Virginia's State Budget—A Train Wreck About to Happen." In the next biennial budget, writes Regimbald, "Virginia's budget will experience the full force of the worst economic downturn since the 30s. Even more painful changes to state government are forthcoming."

The Kaine administration used up all the one-time budget-balancing tricks, like delaying state contributions to VRS. Writes Regimbald: "Over 60% of the current budget reductions were accomplished through use of one-time sources of funding. This means the state operating budget is not yet 'right-sized.'"

Don't count on long-term borrowing to bail us out. The Debt Advisory Committee calculated earlier this year that Virginia has the ability to borrow no more than \$125 million in new tax-supported debt in 2010 and 2011 and meet the goal of keeping debt under 5% of blended revenues. And that was before the latest round of reduced revenue projections.

Want more bad news? Regimbald notes: "The reality is that the 2010-12 current services operating budget is at least \$3 billion above forecasted available revenues. Virginia's Medicaid budget alone will require the additional \$2 billion in general fund revenues available in 2010-12 to keep the same eligibility and provider reimbursement policies we now have in place."

The new age of fiscal austerity is upon us. Virginia is feeling the bite before federal government does because the commonwealth is required by the state constitution to balance the budget. The federal government will continue on its merry way, spending "stimulus" money and adding new entitlements like health reform as long as it can continue borrowing. It's only a matter of time before Uncle Sam can't borrow anymore. Then things will get really ugly. Let's hope Virginia stays solvent when the federal government cannot. □