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A Message from the President

Greetings all!

On this day — **October 27** — we celebrate the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt, a leader who believed deeply in building the frameworks and connections that allow communities to thrive. As we move into one of the busiest seasons in the business world, that spirit is exactly what we need: infrastructure for success, connections that facilitate growth, and collaboration that multiplies impact.

Here in our region, our calendar is filled with important initiatives and events:

October 28, 9 am-2 pm: the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Forum on Infrastructure and its impact on Economic Development at the Chesapeake Conference Center.

October 29, 3 pm-6 pm: the rollout of the HR Investment Playbook by the Hampton Roads Alliance at the Sandler Center.

October 31, 1 pm-3 pm: our own conversation with Rob Wittman, U.S. Congressman — free event, open to all.

November 18, 8 am-4 pm: Convergence 2025 at the W&M Alumni House — mark your calendars!

If you would like more info on any of these events, feel free to drop me an email or give me a call. With so much activity, it's easy to get caught up in the rhythm of events. But our role at the Chamber is more than simply busy-ness. We are a

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resources, champion our region’s strengths, and collaborate to turn plans into action.

I invite you – during this hectic season – to pause and ask: How can I collaborate more deeply? Which event or initiative will I partner on? Which contacts will I bring together? Which urgent challenge can we tackle better by working in sync rather than solo?

The coming weeks offer tremendous momentum. Let’s align it. Let’s connect. Let’s collaborate.

Looking forward to what we’ll build together!



Bob McKenna
President/CEO,
[Virginia Peninsula Chamber](#)



VIRGINIA
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *news*

By Bob McKenna, [Virginia Peninsula Chamber](#)

1. \$400 Million Navy Housing Development Approved

In August 2025, the **Newport News City Council** approved a \$400 million investment from the Navy to develop a new unaccompanied housing complex in downtown Newport News. This project is a public-private partnership between the **Navy and Hunt Military Communities**, designed to enhance the quality of life for sailors stationed at Newport News



Shipbuilding. The development will be situated between Huntington Avenue and Warwick Boulevard, encompassing 29th and 32nd Streets.

The project includes the construction of 750 apartment units for sailors, replacing existing facilities such as Huntington Hall. Additionally, it will feature 10,000 square feet of retail space to attract new businesses to the area. Construction is expected to commence in the spring or summer of 2026, with completion anticipated by 2031. The development will proceed in two phases:

- **Phase 1:** Construction of a 555-unit apartment complex featuring two 17-story towers, 6,090 square feet of retail space, and a four-story parking garage with 1,050 spaces.
- **Phase 2:** Development of the remaining 195 apartment units, an additional 4,000 square feet of retail space, and a 30,000-square-foot building dedicated to Navy programming.

This project is part of a broader effort to revitalize downtown Newport News, bringing both economic growth and improved living conditions for sailors. City officials view it as a catalyst for further development and a significant step toward enhancing the well-being of service members in the region.

2. Newport News EDGE Summit: A Vision for Transformative Growth

On October 1–2, the City of Newport News hosted its inaugural **Newport News Economic Development Growth and Expansion (NN EDGE) Summit** at the Marriott City Center. This exclusive, invitation-only event brought together developers, city leaders, and stakeholders to explore redevelopment opportunities across 12 high-priority sites. Discussions centered on potential projects such as a data center near Fort Eustis, relocating City Hall, and revitalizing downtown areas. The summit underscored the city's commitment to equitable and transformative development, aiming to attract investment and foster public-private partnership.



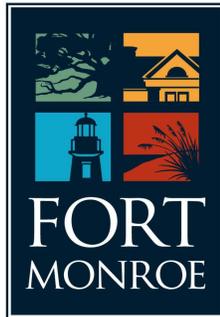
3. Regional Recognition for Economic Collaboration

On August 21, 2025, the cities of **Newport News** and **Hampton** were



Economic Development

Council (IEDC). This honor was presented in the “Regional or Cross-Border Partnership” category, acknowledging their collaborative efforts in supporting the expansion of **Liebherr Mining Equipment Newport News Co.** The expansion, which involves a \$72.3 million investment, aims to meet increasing international demand and supports the company's transition to battery-powered mining trucks. Given the unique location of the facility spanning both cities, close coordination was essential to facilitate this project.



4. Fort Monroe Forward: Global Designers Explore Vision for Historic Site

Fort Monroe in Hampton is embarking on a “**once-in-a-century**” **master planning effort** to honor its rich history and guide future development. On October 23, four world-renowned landscape architecture firms—Field Operations, West 8, Hargreaves Jones, and OLIN Studio—presented TED-style talks sharing their design philosophies. The project will incorporate public input to ensure new housing, office space, and recreation complement the fort’s historic, ecological, and cultural significance. The initiative aims to transform Fort Monroe into a national destination while supporting local investment and community engagement.

LEGISLATIVE *update*



By Chris Davidson, Government Relations Consultant

On October 14th, more than 500 leaders from business, education, and politics gathered at the Greater Richmond Convention Center for the Virginia Chamber's annual Workforce Conference. The event underscored the partnerships among employers, educators, and policymakers that drive Virginia's economy and talent pipeline. Two of the day's most closely watched moments came from the morning and afternoon keynotes, which were delivered, respectively, by Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger and Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears, both candidates for Governor in 2025. Each spoke about the future of Virginia's workforce, economy, and competitiveness, and while their approaches diverged, both emphasized that Virginia's strength lies in its people.

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BUSINESS *tips*

AI for Small Business: Quick Wins!

By SCORE Williamsburg

Artificial Intelligence is transforming how small businesses operate—making it easier to serve customers, streamline operations, and grow efficiently.

- **24/7 Customer Support:** Chatbots can now handle routine inquiries, freeing owners to focus on complex issues.
- **Targeted Marketing:** AI tools personalize campaigns and optimize ads for better reach and engagement.
- **Streamlined Operations:** Automate everyday tasks like inventory management, scheduling, and bookkeeping.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Predict trends and customer behavior with advanced analytics for smarter decisions.
- **Effortless Content Creation:** Generate engaging social media posts, blogs, and website content in seconds.

For updates and free expert guidance on navigating these and other small business challenges, visit SCORE at <https://www.score.org/williamsburg>.



LEAD HIGHER *recap*



Effective Networking & Engaging Across Cultures Session

By Jaime Parrish, [Virginia Peninsula Chamber](#)

On October 7th the LEAD Higher Class of 2025 gathered at the Virginia Peninsula Chamber for a session focused on Effective Networking and Engaging Across Cultures. This session was co-facilitated by a dynamic husband and wife duo - Dr. Bob Colvin, Senior Counselor to the President, Christopher Newport University and Dr. Qingyan Tian, Department of Leadership and American Studies, Christopher Newport University. The session also featured guest speakers Dr. Alvean Lyons, CEO, A.L. Inc and The Elden Group and Bob McKenna, President/CEO, Virginia Peninsula Chamber.

Dr. Colvin kicked off the session by sharing his personal list of networking “dos and don’ts,” offering valuable guidance for both in-person and digital interactions. Dr. Tian followed with a thoughtful exploration of interconnectivity in a globalized world, skillfully blending theoretical concepts with real-world insights drawn from her cross-cultural experiences. The session concluded with Dr. Lyons and Mr. McKenna facilitating a structured, practice-oriented exercise designed to reinforce effective networking strategies.

“People will forget what you say, but they won’t forget how you made them feel.” – Maya Angelou

Program Session Sponsor: [W. M. Jordan Company](#)

LEAD PENINSULA *recap*



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By Jaime Parrish, [Virginia Peninsula Chamber](#)

On Thursday, October 2nd the LEAD Peninsula Class of 2026 held their Public Safety Day. This day highlighted the wonderful public servants from the Newport News Fire and Police Departments. The day began at the Newport News Police Department with a warm welcome from Police Chief Steve Drew. While at headquarters, the class viewed the Real-Time Crime Center and learned how it, among other technologies, is helping NNPD officers better serve the community.

The remainder of the day was spent at the Newport News Fire Department Training Center. Fire Chief Wesley Rogers (LEAD Peninsula Class of 2018) provided a brief overview of the Newport News Fire Department; while debunking some common misconceptions about what firefighters do and don't do. John Northon (LEAD Peninsula Class of 2025) spoke on Emergency Management before the class transitioned to their rotational display stations. The rotational display stations included (1) a lively demonstration from the NNPD K9 Unit, (2) the landing and take-off of the Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance, (3) the use of thermal imaging in the NNFD burn building, (4) the NNFD Technical Rescue Team rappelling from a tower and dismantling a car, (5) the NNPD Drone Response Unit capturing aerial images, (6) an explosive demonstration from the NNFD EOD (Bomb Team) - with a surprise visit from Lumi, the new NNFD Bomb Detection Dog, (7) a glimpse into SWOT response with the NNPD Special Operations Command Bus and Armored Rescue Vehicle, (8-11) engaging conversations and visual displays from Assistant Fire Marshal Gary Wilks, the NNFD Hazardous Materials Team, the NNFD Marine Incident Response Team, and the NNFD Swift Water Rescue Team.

Thank you to our Public Safety Day Sponsors:

- Exclusive Transportation Sponsor - [Oleta Coach Lines, Inc.](#)
- Breakfast Sponsor - [Newport News Police Department](#)
- Lunch Sponsor - [Newport News Fire Department](#)

LEAD ALUMNI *news*

Attention LAN members—your next exclusive workshop is here! Registration is open for our "**AI in Action: How Artificial Intelligence is Transforming Work**" workshop. This event will be held in-person on Monday, November 3, 2025 from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at the Virginia Peninsula Chamber's Regional Conference Center. Individuals must be paid LAN members to attend this free event; therefore, the registration link has been emailed directly to qualifying individuals. Not a member yet? Join today at <https://bit.ly/LPAN25-26>.

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hype to explain what AI really is, how it's being used in business and government today, and where it's headed next. Participants will learn how to spot opportunities for adoption, evaluate risks, and walk away with actionable strategies for integrating AI into their own work. Learning Objectives: Participants will gain an understanding of how AI is shaping business and government operations, learn to recognize opportunities for responsible adoption, and leave with actionable ideas for leveraging AI to improve efficiency, decision-making, and service delivery.

At this event, we will be collecting donations for [An Achievable Dream](#). A list of items that are in high need at their schools right now can be found on the event registration page.

Save the Dates for upcoming Alumni events:

- **Annual Holiday Party** | December 2, 2025 | 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM | Alumni and Current Participants Only
- **State of Poverty Simulation - Volunteer Opportunity** | January 8, 2026 | 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM | Alumni Only
- **VTOP Training Session** | February 26, 2026 | 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM | Open to the Public

UPCOMING *events*

[November 4, 2025](#)

Coffee Connection

[November 12, 2025](#)

LinkedIn Seminar

[November 5, 2025](#)

Start, Grow, Thrive

[November 18, 2025](#)

Strategies, Purpose, Progress

[November 6, 2025](#)

Pink Bag Lunch

[November 20, 2025](#)

Business Connection After Hours

[November 8, 2025](#)

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



NEW MEMBER *spotlight*

Singleton Media

Singleton Media LLC is a Virginia Beach-based video production company that combines military precision with creative storytelling to deliver impactful, results-driven video content. We are committed to helping businesses—from small startups to industry giants—connect, engage, and grow through the power of video.



With services extending from Virginia Beach to key cities like Atlanta, Charlotte, D.C., and Dallas, we bring professionalism, reliability, and an uncompromising dedication to excellence to each project.

LEARN MORE >

Please join us in welcoming the following new members - our future CHAMPIONS - to the Virginia Peninsula Chamber!

- [Kyro Builders LLC](#)
- [Seaford Transfer, Inc](#)
- [FF Financial Focus LLC](#)
- [Empowered Path Counseling and Consulting](#)
- [Singleton Media LLC](#)
- [Primrose School of Yorktown](#)
- [Uncommon Influence](#)
- [MEDTemps](#)
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VIRGINIA PENINSULA CHAMBER'S 2025 ANNUAL PARTNERS



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