

VALCV NEWS



Volume 4, Issue 3

Fall 2004

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov. 2—Election Day - VOTE!

**Legislative Contact Team
Legislative Forum Schedule**
(5:30 - 7:30 PM)

Nov. 3 — Roanoke
Nov. 4 — Staunton
Nov. 8 — Fredericksburg
Nov. 16 — Richmond
Nov. 17 — Arlington
Nov. 30 — Norfolk

**Dec. 4 — Virginia Conservation
Network Legislative Workshop**
(Richmond)

Dec. 8 — VALCV Board Meeting
(The Plains)

***“A road solution
is not the best solution.”***

— Lt. Gov. Tim Kaine

*Transportation Taxing
for Citizens and Elected Leaders*

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

Page 2 — VALCV Board Updates
Page 2 — VALCV Strategic Plan
Page 2 — New Online Donations
Page 3 — Transportation Taxing
Page 3 — New Partnership for
Smarter Growth
Page 4 — CAV Program
Page 4 — Online Donations Website

FALL VALCV BOARD UPDATES

VALCV welcomes two new members who joined our Board in September.

Nancy West, our 2004 Legislative Recognition Dinner Dance coordinator, has been active in land conservation and preservation efforts since she located to Loudoun County in 1996. She is currently the Loudoun County Chair of the Goose Creek Association, has been active with Voters to Stop Sprawl-Loudoun, and has served on the Board of the Land Trust of Virginia.

Martha Wingfield, serves as the current President of the Board of The Virginia Conservation Network. Active in land use planning and rural conservation for over 15 years, she and her husband, Lynn, founded the Hanover Conservation Voters which conducted a county-wide poll on conservation issues and — *Continued on Page 2*

TRANSPORTATION TAXING FOR CITIZENS AND ELECTED LEADERS

Just like the traffic gridlock that plagues much of our commonwealth, transportation funding is a dilemma that has no easy solution. The final budget bill that was approved late last spring provided no relief for transportation funding. With the additional road maintenance required due to damages from summer natural disasters, elected officials are already scrambling to find politically acceptable solutions.

Virginia's conservation community, under the banner of the Virginia Conservation Network of 109 conservation organizations, has recently issued a seven-point program for ensuring that any proposed increase in transportation-related funding results in wise use of public funds. In letters to Governor Warner, Speaker William Howell, and Senator John Chichester, the VCN said — *Continued on Page 3*

NO VOTE? NO VOICE. VOTE NOV 2!

Wondering how to cast an absentee ballot? Has your polling place changed? Do you know what identification you'll need at the polls?



Find answers to these and many other questions about voting this Nov. 2 Election Day, by going to the Virginia Organizing Project website at:

http://www.virginia-organizing.org/voter_guide.pdf

If you have any questions about your voter registration status or about elections in your locality, please contact your local voter registration office.

If you feel your voting rights have been violated or that you have witnessed an election law being broken, contact the State Board of Elections at 1-800-552-9745 or via email at info@sbe.virginia.gov.

— *VALCV Board Updates continued from Page 1*

successfully endorsed and helped to elect a majority of candidates in the last two local elections. Martha is also a founding member of new Partnership for Smarter Growth that includes representatives from the city of Richmond and six neighboring counties. Martha has been active for years with the Garden Club of Virginia and the Hanover County Historical Commission.

VALCV STRATEGIC PLAN

After a Board retreat in June that was facilitated by consultant Joel Bradshaw, the Board finalized its three-year strategic plan and adopted it at the last Board meeting on September 27.

The plan's "Lay of the Land" identifies Virginia's past decision-making, the current political pulse, and the outlook for the future. Included in this segment are the assumptions describing the "Old Dominion" as a fiercely conservative state that is not conserving its environment. It was noted that political influence is shifting as the state's population shifts and that it was essential for VALCV to work with both political parties. Voters have not focused specifically on environmental concerns so we need to connect priority issues to the environment through quality of life issues including health, safety, the economy, fiscal conservatism, traffic, time with family, and schools.

The conservation community has had to spend more time playing defense than offense in the General Assembly but that has begun to change. We have become more organized and successful over the past four years because we held legislators accountable for their votes and because of an increase in political advocacy at the state and local levels. We have also built stronger alliances with each other within the conservation community and have built coalitions with non-traditional allies.



"We have become more organized and successful over the past four years because we held legislators accountable for their votes and because of an increase in political advocacy at the state and local levels."

Our strategy in moving forward is to have sufficient financial resources to fulfill our political program goals, to expand and strengthen the Board of Directors and staff, to use our participation in the 2005 elections to establish and deepen relationships with the Governor-elect, his staff, and key legislators, and to build capacity for conservation utilizing "hard-edged" advocacy. Our rigorous candidate screening and endorsement process will begin in early spring 2005 when VALCV will send questionnaires to both gubernatorial candidates.



ONLINE DONATIONS ACCEPTED!

Both VALCV and our 501(c)(3) sister organization, The Virginia League of Conservation Voters — Education Fund, have signed up with an improved online merchant system. You may now pay with any major credit card: VISA, Mastercard, American Express or Discover. Either new or renewing members can give online through the VALCV or VALCV-EF sites. VALCV members can also choose a number of categories, including giving to the new Partnership for Smarter Growth. (See PSG article on Page 3.)

"Become a Sustainable Donor"

A new donation page setup also allows members to become "Sustainable Donors" through a monthly giving option. Log on and take advantage of our new donation site! Conservation efforts in Virginia need your help! VALCV and VALCV-EF thank you for your contribution to our work!

www.valcv.org — www.valcv.org/ef

CONTRIBUTE AT FOOD LION!

You can support the Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund when you shop at any Food Lion store, anywhere in the United States. By registering your MVP card and selecting Virginia League of Conservation Voters as the beneficiary, Food Lion will make a donation to us based on the total amount spent at their stores. (We could receive up to \$1,400 annually.) You can register your card online at:

https://www.dzasecure.com/secure/ss_multiple_mvp.asp

Remember to select Richmond as the location of the organization. Or you can call 1-704-633-8250; ext. 3810, Monday — Friday, 9:00-8:00 pm ET. Please have your card ready to register when you place the call. Thanks for your support!



— *Transportation Taxing continued from Page 1*

additional funding should be contingent upon strong action by state and local government to curb inefficient land use commonly referred to as suburban sprawl and to identify performance measures that emphasize reducing the growth in driving demand.

Martha Wingfield, VALCV Board member and President of VCN, remarked on scattered, low-density development as the root cause of the steady increase in traffic congestion seen across Virginia. She stated to the press, "While positive changes have occurred at VDOT with its operating policies, Virginia continues to pursue an outdated approach to funding that focuses on road construction as the solution to virtually every transportation problem and largely ignores the link between transportation and land use. This approach is extremely costly to taxpayers, destroys natural and rural areas, spurs sprawl development, increases air and water pollution, limits people's transportation choices, and increases energy dependence, while doing little to relieve congestion in the long term."



These observations fit within the vision of the "Reconnecting Virginia" plan presented by Hank Dittmar of Reconnecting America to the Annual Meeting of PEC/VCN on September

18th. The "Reconnecting Virginia" plan offers a new set of options that can accommodate the mix of agricultural, commuter and local uses by expanding the range of transportation choices available and investing in more efficient use of our existing rail infrastructure.

Lt. Governor Tim Kaine, at this same meeting, addressed the crowd saying, "A road solution is not the best solution." He added "Virginia will have to better mesh its land-use and transportation planning in order to clear the traffic clogging its roadways." He then acknowledged the challenge saying any solution would probably have to focus on turning more power over to localities who would be in a better position to fairly balance road-construction and public-transit allocations.

In preparation for the 2005 General Assembly session, VALCV will be working with other partner organizations to initiate legislation that will:

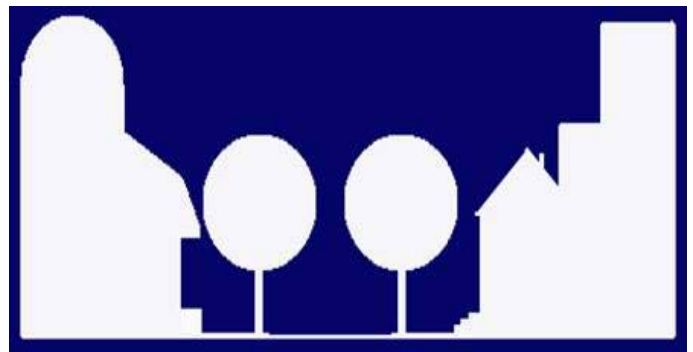
- tie state transportation funding to measurable performance criteria that reduce the growth in driving and the demand on the state's roadways;
- provide for build-out analyses along critical corridors and communities;
- launch a comprehensive study of the Public-Private Transportation Act. ✓

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SMARTER GROWTH

Much attention has been given to the runaway growth in Northern Virginia over the past decade but now Central Virginia is rapidly catching up in leap-frog development. In recent years the Richmond region has consumed more land at a faster rate than any major metropolitan area in the state. If development continues at this rate, we can expect more land to develop in 20 years than it had in the previous 400.

In response to these alarming facts and to the interest in the business community in New Urbanist development, the Partnership for Smarter Growth (PSG) was formed this summer. PSG is a grassroots effort to disseminate information, promote advocacy, and provide an educational forum to address issues of growth and development, land use patterns, and transportation issues in Central Virginia.

PSG is an effort sponsored by committed individuals from the Richmond region who are concerned about the current patterns of growth occurring in the region and the impacts that these pat-



terns will have on the future quality of life for citizens in the City of Richmond and six surrounding counties.

With the Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, our 501(c)(3) organization, serving as the fiscal agent, PSG is now seeking the resources necessary to hire a full-time Regional Coordinator who will develop a smart growth education plan for activists, elected officials, and the public.

To get involved or for more information on the Partnership for Smarter Growth, go to PSG's website at:

<http://www.partnershipforsmartergrowth.org> or email at psgoffice@aol.com. ✓

CONSERVATION E-ACTION VIRGINIA



Want to know how just a few minutes of your time can make a powerful impact on Virginia's environment?

SIGN UP for Conservation e-Action Virginia! Alerts

Conservation e-Action Virginia (CAV) is a collaborative effort among environmental and conservation organizations throughout the state to educate and mobilize their members by using a state-of-the-art electronic action alert system. The CAV system provides partner organizations a powerful means for getting a collaborative action message out to concerned citizens like YOU! Participating citizens are then asked to contact their elected officials, administrative decision makers, and leaders in industry and big business.

Participation in this email alert system is fast, free of charge and completely voluntary. You need to opt yourself into the program by enrolling online. Once you are enrolled, you will receive an average of ten alerts per year regarding pressing conservation issues. The alerts provide you with a sample message that can be sent instantly to the targeted decision-makers with just a click of

a mouse. Approximately one half of these alerts will be sent during the upcoming 2005 General Assembly session. Thus far in 2004, the CAV system has been used by concerned Virginians to send over 1,000 emails to legislators and state officials. This year legislators considered bills about land use, smart growth, water and air quality, and natural resources funding. By responding to our CAV alerts, Virginia citizens helped to influence critical conservation decisions by demonstrating that Virginians truly care about the future of our commonwealth.

Just a few seconds of your time can help us make a significant difference. To learn more about the CAV program or to sign up to become a CAV member, please go to the website of our sponsor organization, the Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. www.valcv.org/cav.htm (If you can't remember if you've already signed up, don't worry about getting duplicate messages. The system will recognize you if you are already in the system!) ✓

ONLINE DONATIONS ACCEPTED !

<http://www.valcv.org>

Become a "Sustainable Donor" with our monthly giving option! Check our website or see article inside for more info.



VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

