

FORESIGHT



PO Box 1086
Midlothian, Virginia 23113

(804) 355-3120
Toll Free (877) 302-7146
Fax (804) 379-0958
www.vgea.org
Email: info@vgea.org

Issue 1 — 2019

NonProfit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
Richmond, Va
Permit #3022



FORESIGHT

Virginia Governmental
Employees Association
Newsletter

Issue 1 — 2019

Virginia legislative session wrap-up

Employees net salary increase, elevated profile at the Capitol

A group of more than a dozen VGEA members visited state lawmakers on Feb. 18 to thank them for their work during the Virginia General Assembly session.

And, indeed, it was a fruitful session for the nonprofit.

"We were able to enhance our relationships with lawmakers as they addressed our priorities," said Rick Fowler, the VGEA's chief lobbyist. "Not only did we have a successful 2018 session but we set the stage for an even more receptive audience during next year's session."

In November, the VGEA set out with four main goals: to reinvigorate VGEA's presence before the Legislature; secure 2 percent raises for current employees; increase health insurance credits for retirees; and make working for the Commonwealth of Virginia more appealing to millennials.

"Working closely with our lobbying group — KVCF Solutions— we were successful in securing up to 5 percent salary increases and in obtaining a recurring Department of Human Resources Management review of state employee recruitment-and-retention trends as compared to similar private-sector positions," Fowler said.

Although measures to address the rising cost of health insurance benefits for retirees failed to garner support, Fowler said, this was not surprising given that 2019 was a non-budget session. But the prospect for future success is bright. Between two separate lobby days, the VGEA was able to target members of the Senate Finance

and the House Appropriations committees. And each lawmaker was receptive and sympathetic to the cause.

Regarding fiscal year 2020 salary adjustments for governmental employees: Lawmakers passed an across-the-board raise of up to 2.75 percent; up to a 3 percent raise for university faculty and state supported local employees; and up to 2.25 percent state employee merit increase for those with at least three years of service.



On Feb. 19, Del. Steven Landes posted this photo and caption on his Facebook page: Yesterday I had the honor to meet with representatives from the Virginia Governmental Employees Association, led by board member Lori Epik. Our state employees provide great service to our citizens.

Also, House Bill 2055 became law. It requires the Department of Human Resource Management to perform an annual review of recruitment-and-retention trends and certain statuses related to classified job roles across state agencies.

(continued on pg. 3)

Photo: Marian Violaris



FORESIGHT
Virginia Governmental
Employees Association
Newsletter
Issue 1 — 2019

VGEA is
Stronger
With You!

Issue 1 — 2019

FORESIGHT 1

▶ Virginia Beach man wins scholarship to commemoration event



Reggie McCoy, a probation and parole officer with the Department of Corrections, has been a VGEA member for 10 years.

A deputy chief probation and parole officer for the Department of Corrections is the recipient of the VGEA's \$500 scholarship to the Global Pathfinder Summit in Charlottesville.

Reginald "Reggie" McCoy, who lives and works in Virginia Beach, will join some 150 emerging young leaders from around the world at the summit in May.

"Attending this event will help me gain more experience in leading from a global perspective," said McCoy. "It will give me a chance look and learn and talk to leaders from outside of where I sit. It should be a good balance because I'll be able to share my own experiences as I absorb knowledge from other leaders."

The Global Pathfinder Summit is part of the American Evolution commemoration, a celebration of the 400th anniversary of key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 — a pivotal year in the establishment of the first permanent English colony in North America. The Charlottesville gathering is scheduled from May 20-24 on the University of Virginia campus. Fifty Virginians and 100 international leaders will spend five days discussing leadership development and global networking.

The scholarship was open to all members considered "millennials," that is, those born between the years 1981-1996. McCoy, 34, has been a member since he was hired by the state 10 years ago. Topics at the summit include the impact of youth movements on global challenges, civic education, and the state of global democracy today.

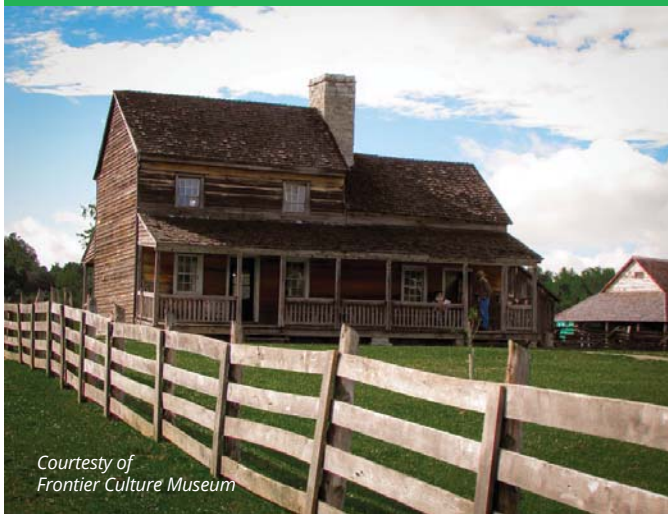
"The conference is designed to equip a generation of emerging leaders with the perspectives, strategies, and tools necessary to create sustainable change in their local and global communities," said Marshall Terry, executive director of the VGEA. "We were impressed with Reggie's application and are confident he will be a great addition to the summit."



Those who wish to attend the weeklong event can still apply. For information, visit globalpathfindersummit.org or contact Lindsey Horner at Lindsey.Horner@jyf.virginia.gov or 757-253-5154.

FORESIGHT is a publication of the Virginia Governmental Employees Association.

Editor Tom Kazas — tomk8736@gmail.com
 Graphic Designer Theresa Stenger — theresa@stengerdesign.com
 Executive Director J. Marshall Terry — jmarshallterry@vgea.org
 President Gale E. Grant — galegrant@vgea.org



Courtesy of Frontier Culture Museum

Calendar

VGEA meetings & events

Each year, VGEA's local chapters meet to discuss business and welcome new members. The following is a 2019 calendar of the meetings around the state. **All meetings begin at 6 p.m.**

Northern Regional Meeting — April 15

The Electric Palm Restaurant | 703-492-7256
12745 Sea Ray Lane in Woodbridge

Southwest VA Regional Meeting — April 25

Riverfront Cafe | 276-646-2233
154 E. Lee Highway in Chilhowie

Far Southwest VA Regional Meeting — May 16

Fishtales | 276- 679-1651
696 U.S.-58 Alt in Norton

Roanoke Regional Meeting — June 3

Jersey Lily's Roadhouse | 540-387-9061
1650 Braeburn Drive in Salem

Southside Regional — July 18

Mary's Diner | 434 836-0132
1201 Piney Forest Road, in Danville

Peninsula Regional — August 1

Schooners Grill | 757-599-4144
12567 Warwick Boulevard in Newport News

Shenandoah Regional — August 15

Frontier Culture Museum | (540) 332-7850
1290 Richmond Avenue in Staunton



Annual Meeting & Tournament

September 13 and 14

VGEA Golf Tournament — September 13

VGEA Annual Meeting — September 14, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Wyndham Virginia Crossing Hotel and Conference Center
1000 Virginia Center Parkway in Glen Allen
804-727-1400

All members are invited and encouraged to participate.

Tidewater Regional — October 24

Pop's Diner Co. | 757-502-8220
1432 Greenbrier Parkway in Chesapeake

MARK BARON, ATTORNEY AT LAW | www.markbaron-law.com

Dedicated to protecting careers of Virginia state and local government employees all across Virginia for 25+ years. Providing personalized legal representation in non-dismissal or dismissal grievance cases, including unfair employee evaluations. Do not be misled. These cases are not easy. They do involve legal procedures and principles. When possible, it is wise to consult with an independent legal professional before filing any grievance case, and even at the first sign of any serious trouble at work. But in any event, it is always best to have competent, experienced legal representation in preparing for and going through the stages of a grievance case. Your career is worth it!

Also offering advice and counsel with regard to the best exercise of anti-retaliation rights as well as anti-discrimination rights, including rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Author of unique books on winning strategies and real cases in state and local government grievance procedures. See amazon.com. (Search books under "Mark Baron.")

Free Initial Phone Call (804) 662-5761 (After Hours (804) 740-7073) Reasonable Rates



Retiring soon? Remember the VGEA

As you begin thinking about and preparing for retirement, please keep VGEA in your plans.

"Healthcare costs and a solvent retirement system are ongoing issues along with pay raises for active employees, which increase the contributions to the Virginia Retirement System," says **Walt Pulliam Jr.**, past president Richmond retirees' chapter. "It requires that we voice our concerns frequently and steadily. Our organization is the 'voice' of state employees. We want the largest possible choir."

To be effective, he adds, requires financial support to get our messages out, engaging the attention of policy makers and keeping our members informed.

When a state employee retires, payroll deduction for VGEA membership dues is no longer an option.

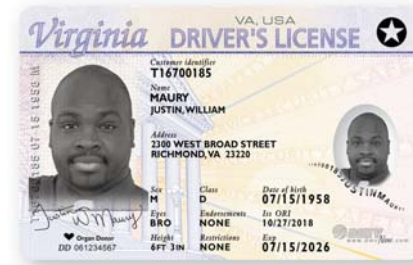
But retirees can use their credit card or pay their dues by check. **The annual dues are cut in half for retirees — to \$48. If there is a second state employee retiree in the same household, the dues are \$24 for the second retiree.**

Membership year runs from April 1 through March 31.

"Also, please consider staying involved with a VGEA chapter," Pulliam says. "We have nine chapters around the state. One is the Richmond Retirees Chapter, which serves metropolitan Richmond. It meets the second Monday of each month from September through April at 11:30 a.m. Currently, our chapter convenes at the Red Lobster restaurant at 8900 W. Broad Street."

For information, see page 7 or visit VGEA.org and click "Membership." Or, you can call 1-877-302-7146.

Federal compliant ID cards are here



Virginians now have a choice of the type of identification card they can get from the Department of Motor Vehicles. They can get a standard driver's license or ID card, or upgrade to a federally approved card to comply with the REAL ID Act of 2005.

"REAL ID is a federal law that sets requirements for identification used for federal purposes," says DMV spokesperson, Brandy Brubaker. "Things like boarding a domestic flight or entering a secure federal facility like a military base or some federal offices."

A standard driver's license can be used to drive. In addition, a driver's license or identification card can be used to vote, cash a check, apply for government benefits, or conduct everyday local business.

However, because of the REAL ID law, beginning Oct. 1, 2020, a standard license will not allow Virginians to board a domestic flight or to access secure federal facilities. To do that, they will need a REAL ID compliant driver's license or identification card, U.S. Passport or another form of approved identification.

A REAL ID credential looks the same as a standard license. The difference is that in the upper right-hand corner it displays a star within a circle, whereas in the same space a standard ID has the words "federal limits apply."

For more information, visit dmvNOW.com/REALID or call (804) 497-7100.



Take time for a financial wellness checkup

The Virginia Retirement System offers free educational sessions to help improve financial management skills. During Financial Literacy Month in April, VRS plans a variety of sessions.

Visit www.varetire.org/members/education for more details. VRS also offers a variety of educational presentations and resources related to retirement planning and financial literacy.

In addition, VRS members who log into their myVRS accounts (myvrs.varetire.org) have access to recommended content based on career-stage and retirement-plan type, through the myVRS Financial Wellness program (varetire.org/Financial-Wellness).

WEBINARS

- Social Security Benefits
- Raising a Money-Smart Kid (a recording will be available following the live event).

SEMINARS

- Estate Planning — Essential Documents (Wills, Trusts, Directives)
- Rebuilding After a Financial Crisis
- The "Sandwich Generation" (Caring for aging parents while raising children)
- Are You Financially Healthy?

(Legislative ... continued from pg. 1)

The law also directs the agency to submit a biennial report to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees on three issues: classified job roles that should receive higher salary increases; the appropriate amount by which the salary of such classified job roles should be increased; and cost estimates for funding any salary increases.

Senate Bill 1581, now law, codifies the policy of providing up to eight weeks of paid leave to state employees following the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child under age 18. The leave is available to each parent if each is a state employee.

"With but one exception," Fowler said, "we were effective in meeting our goals — a true testament to VGEA's laudable diligence and hard work."



Del. Betsy Carr, who represents portions of Richmond City and Chesterfield County, greets VGEA members on Legislative Day.

Quotes from members who participated in Legislative Day ...

"It's been a difficult time for higher-ed, but I'm hopeful for the future. Our visit to the legislature restored my faith in government. I was very impressed with the senators and delegates we spoke with because they were knowledgeable and seemed to care about our issues."

— John F. Gibbemeyer, facilities commissioning engineer at George Mason University

"Not only did I find the meetings very informative, I personally learned more about how our government works. I wish more Commonwealth of Virginia employees would get involved. VGEA does make a difference for all commonwealth employees, and our delegates and senators do listen to us."

— Ed Pease, chief information officer, Blue Ridge Community College

Insurance company offers free benefit to VGEA members

Recently, American Income Life Insurance Co. sent a letter to all VGEA members explaining its accidental death & dismemberment benefit policy. In the letter, the company encouraged participants to name a policy beneficiary. The policy is free to VGEA members. In short, all members are entitled to a \$4,000 AD&D benefit that, when redeemed, would be paid in full to a named beneficiary. If a beneficiary is not named, the funds go into the member's estate and may be taxable. *So, name a beneficiary!*

The insurance company included a card in its mailing. It asks the VGEA member to fill out the card and return it to American Life. After the company receives the card, it will arrange for a representative to visit your home to witness your beneficiary designation, deliver a certificate of coverage and no-cost benefits, and review other supplemental insurance benefits that may be available to you and your family.

Free health services discount card

Those who return the card also will receive — at no cost — a health services discount card good for the entire family. The card provides household discounts up to 60 percent on prescriptions, hearing care and vision care products, and chiropractic care. Optional discount dental care is available, too.

The member also can receive — again, at no cost — **Child Safe Kits** for children and grandchildren. The kits help gather vital data, photos and fingerprints to be used by authorities in the event of an emergency.



If you have questions, please call American Income Life Insurance Company at 1-800-495-1213 or Vivian Dwyer with American Insurance Life at 804-347-4175. Dwyer also can be reached at vudwyer@comcast.net.



60th Annual Meeting and Golf Tournament

September 13-14, 2019

Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center
1000 Virginia Center Parkway, Glen Allen



The Joan Pond Invitational (Captain's Choice) Golf Tournament starts at noon on Friday, Sept. 13. A \$55 per player fee includes the greens fee, a cart, practice balls and a light lunch. There will be four players to a team. Players or companies also can sponsor a hole for a \$100 donation.

To get a registration form, call Roy Floyd at (540) 324-8146 or the VGEA office at (804) 355-3120. You also can send an email to Roy at spanner@lumos.net or to Ann Winslow at awinslow@vgea.org. **Please send your email by August 30.**

Registration for the annual meeting runs the next day from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. and runs until noon. Lunch is served at noon.

VGEA is accepting sponsors of the meeting at the following levels:

Platinum at \$1,000 includes:

- Two complimentary dinner registrations,
- Two complimentary registration fees; includes lunch,
- A listing on the sponsor board the day of the annual meeting,
- Acknowledgement on the VGEA website, and
- Acknowledgement in the *Foresight* newsletter.

Gold at \$500 includes:

- Two complimentary registration fees; includes lunch,
- A listing on sponsor board the day of the annual meeting, and
- Acknowledgement on the VGEA website.

Silver at \$200 includes:

- One complimentary registration fee; includes lunch, and
- A listing on sponsor board the day of the annual meeting,

Bronze at \$100

- Listing on sponsor board the day of the annual meeting.

Please reserve your sponsorship on or before Friday, August 30. Return your registration form and payment to:
VGEA Golf Tournament, P. O. Box 2110, Chesterfield, Va., 23832.



We goofed!

Actually, the 60-year-old VGEA is now entering its seventh decade, not the sixth as stated in our previous *Foresight*. Thanks to Virginia Carpenter for catching the error.