

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

2010-2014



VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF



Governor

Robert F. McDonnell

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

The following publication provides a short and concise description of Virginia's state and local governments. Specifically, this publication is designed to:

- describe the organization and mission of the various branches of state and local governments;
- outline the duties and responsibilities of major state and local agencies; and
- introduce special purpose districts and authorities that transcend traditional state and/or local jurisdictional lines.



Lieutenant Governor
William T. Bolling

2010 - 2014

This handbook is an informational document on Virginia's state and local governments. Since periodic changes take place in the institutional structure of state and local governments, the handbook is revised once every four years.

Included in this publication are brief sections describing the nature and function of Virginia's legislative and judicial processes. These sections help the reader to understand the interrelationship among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government.



Attorney General
Kenneth T. Cuccinelli, II

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

CONTENTS

State Government	6
The Election System	6
Voter Registration	6
State Board of Elections	7
Electoral Board	7
General Registrar	8
Officers of Election	8
The Election Process	8
The Legislative Department	12
The General Assembly	12
Organization of the House	13
Organization of the Senate	14
The Joint Assembly	14
Legislative Agencies	14
Legislative Commissions	16
The Judicial Department	18
The Supreme Court	18
The Court of Appeals	19
The Circuit Courts	20
The District Courts	20
The Magistrate System	21
The Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission	21
Virginia State Bar	22
Virginia Board of Bar Examiners	22
Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission.....	23
The Executive Department	24
Statewide Elected Officers	24
Governor's Secretaries	25
Independent Agencies	47
Medical College of Virginia Hospitals Authority	47
State Corporation Commission	48
Virginia College Savings Plan	48
Virginia Retirement System	48

Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission 49
 Virginia Lottery Department 49
 Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy 49

Local Government 50

County Government 50
 Forms of County Government 50
 Organization of County Government 54
 Constitutional Officers 56
 Appointed County Officials 58

City and Town Governments 62
 Forms of City and Town Governments 64
 City/Town Organization and Officials 65

Special Districts and Authorities 69

Planning District Commissions 69
 Transportation Districts 70
 Industrial Development Authorities 71
 Public Service Authorities 71
 Soil and Water Conservation Districts 72
 Sanitation Districts 72
 Sanitary Districts 73

Government Facts 74

Questions and Answers on Virginia's Noteworthy
 Matters/Events 74
 Virginia Counties and Cities —
 Past and Present Backgrounds 76
 How a Bill Becomes a Law in Virginia 86
 Capitals of Virginia 88

Acknowledgments 89

STATE GOVERNMENT

Since its adoption in 1776, the Constitution of Virginia has undergone many changes due to the economic, technological, political, and legal developments in the Commonwealth. The Constitution has continued to serve as the political base upon which Virginia's state and local governments are built. The two major components of the Constitution are the provisions for the three separate and distinct branches of state government and the election process for all statewide elected officers, legislators, local governing body members, and local constitutional officers.

The Election System

The Constitution specifies the qualifications and requirements for voter registration, methods of voting, and qualifications for elective office, and requires the appointment of county and city electoral boards, registrars, and officers of election.

Voter Registration

To be eligible to vote, a person must be a native or naturalized citizen of the United States, a resident of the Commonwealth and of the precinct in which he/she offers to vote, and at least 18 years of age by the day of the next ensuing general election. The individual may apply in person at the registrar of his/her county or city, simultaneously when applying for a driver's license at the Department of Motor Vehicles, by mail application, at other designated state agencies or any designated registration site.

Registration is closed 29 days before every primary or general election to allow time for the work

necessary to prepare the registration lists for use in each precinct polling place on election day. Mail applications must be postmarked no later than the last day of registration.

State Board of Elections

www.sbe.virginia.gov

The State Board of Elections supervises and coordinates the work of county and city electoral boards and registrars to obtain uniformity in registration and election proceedings in accordance with the law. The Board also maintains an automated central record-keeping system of all voters registered in the Commonwealth and makes rules and regulations for the proper functioning of local electoral boards and registrars.

The Board is composed of three members appointed by the Governor from the qualified voters of the Commonwealth, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The Governor designates one member as the Secretary. The members are appointed for a term of four years. By law, a majority of the Board Members are from the political party which cast the highest number of votes in the last preceding gubernatorial election.

Electoral Board

The Electoral Board of each county or city is composed of three members, one appointed each year by the Circuit Court for a three-year term. The members represent each of the two political parties whose candidates, at the general election for the next Governor preceding their appointment, received the highest and

the next highest number of votes. The Board elects one of its members Chairman and another, of the opposite political party, Secretary and is responsible for the proper conduct of all elections held in its county or city. The Board also appoints a General Registrar and the officers of election for its county or city.

General Registrar

The General Registrar is appointed by the Electoral Board for a four-year term, may not hold any other elective or appointive office during the term, and must be a qualified voter of the county or city for which he/she is appointed. Duties of the General Registrar include maintaining a public office for the registration of voters and keeping current and accurate records of all persons registered to vote in the county or city.

Officers of Election

Officers of election for each precinct are appointed by the Electoral Board for a one-year term and must be qualified voters. In appointing the officers of election, as equal representation as possible is given to each of the two political parties. The officers conduct the election at their respective polling places and count the votes.

The Election Process

The method of selecting party candidates for each office is determined by the appropriate committee or the party organization. One party may favor a convention, a primary, or each may change its method from time to time.

Any person qualified to hold the office, other than a candidate for a party nomination or a party nominee, may become a candidate in any general or special election by filing notice of his/her candidacy and presenting petitions signed by the number of qualified voters specified by law for the office for which he/she offers. A candidate for any elective office in the Commonwealth must file a statement, under oath, of his/her qualifications to hold the office he/she is seeking and other statements or disclosures required by law.

All candidates for nomination or for election to any office in the Commonwealth must appoint a campaign treasurer, designate a campaign depository, and may designate only one campaign committee to receive all contributions and to make all expenditures for or on behalf of the candidate. Exceptions to this are candidates for United States Congress, any town offices in towns with a population of less than 25,000 and directors of soil and water conservation districts. The candidate and his/her campaign treasurer must keep detailed and accurate accounts and file reports and statements of contributions and expenditures. Candidates for President, Vice President, and the United States Congress must comply with the federal requirements.

The law specifies that for national, state, and county elected officials the general election is held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November and primary elections the second Tuesday in June. For most city and town officials, the general election is held the first Tuesday in May, primaries the first Tuesday in March, though they may follow the June/November schedule. Special elections are sometimes held to fill vacancies created by the resignation, death or disqualification of an elected officer.

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

The polling places are open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on each election day. Before the opening of the polls, the appointed officers of election assemble at each polling place to prepare for the election. Each political party or independent candidate is permitted to send at least one representative to observe the setup, election, and counting and to interpose a challenge if necessary.

Each voter is checked by the officers of election at the polling place to ensure that he/she is registered to vote in the precinct and has presented an ID or signed a statement of identification. After verification, the voter is handed a ballot to mark in secret or, where voting machines are used, the voter enters the machine to cast his/her vote in secret. With the exception of primary elections, a voter may write in for any office the name of a person of his/her choice whose name does not appear on the ballot. However, write-in votes for President and Vice President are only counted for candidates who have filed declarations with the State Board ten days before the election.

Only the voters, persons assisting voters, election officials, news media, and authorized representatives are allowed to come within 40 feet of any entrance to the polling place. A voter may be accompanied into the voting booth by his/her child age 15 or younger. In addition to overseeing the proper conduct of the election, the officers of election are authorized by law to preserve order at the polls.

Voters who are unable to go to the polls on election day may qualify to vote by absentee ballot, either by mail or at the registrar's office. Voted absentee ballots must be received by 7:00 p.m. on election day to be counted. After all the ballots have been counted and the results are determined, the total votes cast for each

candidate are entered on a Statement of Results and signed by all the officers of election. By noon of the second day following the election, the local electoral board meets to ascertain the results for the county or city from the Statement of Results. The total votes cast for each person are then entered on an official abstract which is filed with the State Board of Elections. For November elections, the State Board meets on the 4th Monday of November to canvass the votes and certify the results of the election.

If an election results in a tie, the winner is determined by lot. This is done by the State Board of Elections for national or state officers and by the local electoral board for its respective county, city, or town officers. After the official canvass or lot determination, certificates are issued to the successful candidates who must take and subscribe the oath of office required by the Constitution of Virginia before assuming office.



**Bell Tower
State Capitol Grounds
Richmond, Virginia**

THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

The Legislative Department is composed of the General Assembly and its supporting commissions and divisions.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly, officially the name of the State Legislature, dates from the establishment of the House of Burgesses at Jamestown in 1619. Now, the General Assembly is composed of a Senate and a House of Delegates which has the power to: • *levy taxes* • *enact laws not specifically prohibited by the state or federal constitution* • *confirm the Governor's appointments of state agency heads and board members* • *approve the budget* • *elect State Supreme Court Justices, Court of Appeals, Circuit and District Court Judges and the members of the Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission* • *and elect the Auditor of Public Accounts, the commissioners of the State Corporation Commission, and members of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission.*

The General Assembly meets annually, beginning on the second Wednesday in January, for 60 days in even-numbered years and for 30 days in odd-numbered years, with an option to extend the annual session for a maximum of 30 days.

The present Constitution, which became effective in 1971, provides that the House of Delegates shall contain 90 to 100 members and the Senate shall have 33 to 40 members. Both houses presently have maximum membership. The terms of office are four years for members of the Senate and two years for the House members. All members of the General Assembly are elected by qualified voters within their respective

Senatorial or House of Delegates districts. A member may not hold any other public office and cannot be elected by the General Assembly to any civil office of profits in the state during the term for which he/she was elected. Neither can the members increase their own salaries during the term for which they were elected.

Organization of the House

At the beginning of the General Assembly's session in even-numbered years, the House of Delegates organizes in accordance with the following procedures: • *the Clerk of the House calls the members-elect to order and administers the oath of office to the members* • *the Speaker of the House is elected from the membership and the oath of office is administered by a Justice of the Supreme Court with the Clerk presiding* • *the House, with the Speaker presiding, elects a Clerk whose oath of office is also administered by a Justice of the Supreme Court* • *the House elects a Sergeant-at-Arms whose oath of office is administered by the Clerk* • *the House adopts its Rules of procedure* • *the House appoints additional personnel, pages, and doorkeepers* • *the House informs the Senate, by resolution, that it is organized and ready to proceed with the discharge of its functions* • *the majority and minority parties elect their floor leaders to assist the Speaker in the conduct of the business of the House* • *the Speaker assigns members to the various 14 standing committees* • *and bills and resolutions are referred to the standing committees for discussion and study.*

Organization of the Senate

The procedure of organization of the Senate is similar to that of the House, except that it occurs once every four years. Listed below are some of the significant aspects of organization in the Senate: • *the Lieutenant Governor serves as the President of the Senate* • *the President pro tempore is a senior member elected by the Senate for a four-year term to serve in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor* • *the Clerk of the Senate is elected by the Senate, is custodian of the public seal and shall be in charge of all records and papers of the Senate* • *it is the duty of the Clerk to refer all bills and resolutions to the appropriate standing committee* • *there are 10 standing committees and a Committee on Rules in the Senate composed of 15-17 members each* • *the Senate elects a Sergeant-at-Arms and pages and appoints messengers.*

The Joint Assembly

The Constitution of Virginia requires that at every regular session the Governor report to the General Assembly on the condition of the Commonwealth. Customarily, this is done immediately following the organization of the session at a Joint Assembly of the House and Senate. The General Assembly adopts a joint resolution naming a committee to advise the Governor that the Assembly is organized and ready to receive his message. The Joint Assembly is held in the Chamber of the House of Delegates and is presided over by the Speaker of the House.

Legislative Agencies

Auditor of Public Accounts

In 1927, the Constitution of Virginia established the Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts. In addition

to auditing agencies that handle state funds, this agency: • *approves accounting systems developed for state agencies and institutions for adequacy of audit trails and financial control* • *prescribes systems of accounting for local governmental offices* • *provides specifications to be followed by accounting firms in their audits of counties and cities* • *and prepares annual, comparative costs reports of counties and cities.*

Division of Capitol Police

The Division of Capitol Police was established in 1618 to protect the Governor. In 1890, an Act of the General Assembly added the protection and security of members and staff of the General Assembly to its duties. The Capitol Police operates within Capitol Square and, when assigned, on property owned or controlled by the Commonwealth or its agencies, departments, institutions, or commissions.

Division of Legislative Services

The Division of Legislative Services was created in 1973 to provide general staff services to the General Assembly. The Division is authorized to: • *draft and prepare legislation for introduction into either house of the General Assembly* • *serve as legal, research, and secretarial staff to all legislative study commissions and standing committees.*

Division of Legislative Automated Systems

The Division of Legislative Automated Systems, established by an Act of the General Assembly in 1980, provides data processing operations, systems and programming, photo composition, and publication management services for the General Assembly.

Legislative Commissions

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission

Authority: Title 30, Chapters 7 and 8, Code of Virginia.

Capitol Square Preservation Council

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 28, Code of Virginia.

Chesapeake Bay Commission

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 36, Code of Virginia.

Virginia Code Commission

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 15, Code of Virginia.

Virginia State Crime Commission

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 16, Code of Virginia.

Freedom of Information Advisory Council

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 21, Code of Virginia.

Joint Commission on Health Care

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 18, Code of Virginia.

Joint Commission on Technology and Science

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 11, Code of Virginia.

Commission on Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program

Authority: Title 18.2, Chapter 7, Code of Virginia.

Commission on Youth

Authority: Title 30, Chapter 20, Code of Virginia.

2010 - 2014



**State Capitol Building
Richmond, Virginia
Spring, 2010**

THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

The mission of Virginia's judicial system is to assure that disputes are resolved justly, promptly, and economically. The present judicial system consists of four levels of courts: the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Court of Appeals of Virginia, the circuit courts, and the district courts. In addition, magistrates serve as judicial officers with authority to issue various types of processes. The trial courts are organized into 31 judicial circuits and 32 similar judicial districts.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Virginia is the highest court in the judicial system of the Commonwealth, and one of the oldest continuous judicial bodies in the United States. Although the Supreme Court possesses both original and appellate jurisdiction, its primary function is to review decisions of lower courts, including the Court of Appeals, from which appeals have been allowed. Virginia does not allow an appeal to the Supreme Court as a matter of right except in cases involving the State Corporation Commission, certain disciplinary actions regarding attorneys, and review of the death penalty. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in cases of habeas corpus (ordering one holding custody to produce the detained person before the Court for the purpose of determining whether such custody is proper), mandamus (ordering the holder of an office to perform his duty), prohibition (ordering an action stopped in a lower court), and actual innocence (based on the results of scientific testing of human biological evidence). The Supreme Court also has original jurisdiction in matters filed by the Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission relating to the censure, retirement, and removal of judges.

The Supreme Court consists of seven judges, each of whom has the title of Justice. The Justices are elected by the joint vote of the two houses of the General Assembly for twelve-year terms. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, chosen by a majority vote of the justices for a term of four years, serves as the administrative head of Virginia's Judicial System. Assisting with the administration of the judicial branch is the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court, whose office provides administrative assistance to the courts of the Commonwealth and to Virginia's magistrates.

The Court of Appeals

The Court of Appeals of Virginia was established January 1, 1985. It is an intermediate appellate court, created in order to increase appellate capacity and expedite the appellate process. The Court of Appeals provides appellate review of final decisions of the circuit courts in domestic relations matters, appeals from decisions of administrative agencies, traffic infractions, and criminal cases, except where a sentence of death has been imposed. It also hears appeals of final decisions of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission. While appeals in criminal and traffic infraction cases, final decisions on applications for concealed weapons permits and certain preliminary rulings in felony cases are presented by a petition for appeal, other appeals to the Court of Appeals are a matter of right.

The Court of Appeals consists of eleven judges, elected by the General Assembly for a term of eight years. The court sits in panels of three judges at such locations as the chief judge designates so as to provide convenient access to the various geographic areas of the Commonwealth.

The Circuit Courts

Circuit courts are trial courts of general jurisdiction in Virginia and have authority to try a full range of cases both civil and criminal. In addition, circuit courts have appellate jurisdiction over appeals from the district courts in civil and criminal cases as well as appeals from certain administrative agencies. The Virginia circuit court system is composed of 31 judicial circuits with 120 separate circuit courts, one in every county and city of the Commonwealth. Circuit court judges are elected by the General Assembly for eight-year terms.

The District Courts

In 1973, the unified district court system was created by the General Assembly to replace the municipal and county courts and regional juvenile and domestic relations courts. Within the 32 judicial districts in the Commonwealth, every city and county has a general district court and juvenile and domestic relations district court. District courts are courts not of record and are subordinate to the circuit courts. District court judges are elected by the General Assembly for six-year terms.

General district courts hear cases involving misdemeanors, traffic infractions, and all civil cases involving \$4,500 or less. The general district court has concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit court in claims involving between \$4,500 and \$15,000. Cases are heard by a judge without a jury. General district courts also conduct preliminary hearings for individuals charged with a felony.

Juvenile and domestic relations district courts hear cases involving child abuse and neglect, delinquency, crimes by one family or household member

against another, and civil cases involving families in general, including protective orders, custody, visitation, and support. Juvenile and domestic relations district courts differ from other courts in their duty to protect the confidentiality and privacy of juveniles and their families who have legal matters before the court.

The Magistrate System

In 1974, the General Assembly established the magistrate system to succeed the justice of the peace system. The principal function of the office of magistrate is to provide an independent, unbiased review of complaints brought to the office by law enforcement and citizens. Magistrates are judicial officers vested with the authority to issue arrest warrants, summonses, search warrants and subpoenas; to admit to bail or commit to jail all persons charged with offenses; to issue short-term custody and detention orders in medical and mental health cases; to order pretrial levy or seizure of property in civil cases; and to administer oaths and take acknowledgments. The Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia appoints magistrates and provides administrative supervision and training to them. Magistrate offices are located throughout Virginia, including at least one in each of Virginia's 32 judicial districts.

The Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission

The Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission is established by the Constitution of Virginia to investigate allegations of judicial misconduct or the serious mental or physical disability of a judge. The Commission is authorized to investigate the justices of the Supreme Court and all judges of the Commonwealth as well as members of the State Corporation Commission, the

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission, special justices, substitute judges, and retired judges who have been recalled to service. The Commission may file a formal complaint with the Supreme Court against judges for violations of any canon of judicial conduct, failure to perform their judicial duties, or misconduct in office.

The Commission is comprised of seven members who are elected by the General Assembly and serve four-year terms: one circuit court judge, one general district court judge, one juvenile and domestic relations district court judge, two lawyers, and two members of the public who are not lawyers.

Virginia State Bar

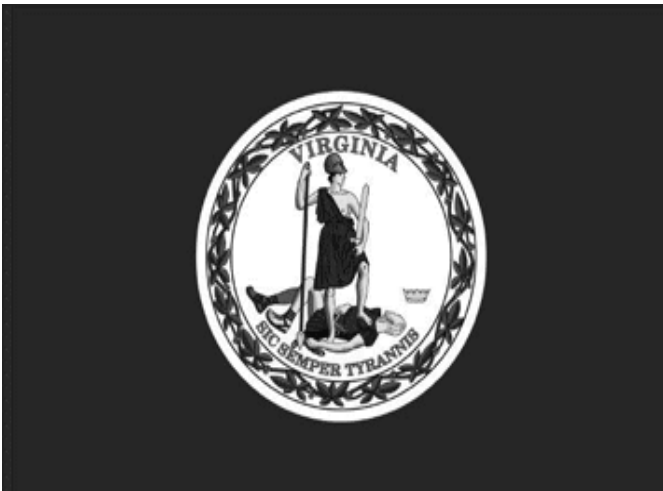
In 1938, the Virginia State Bar was established by the General Assembly as an administrative agency of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The mission of the Virginia State Bar is to regulate the legal profession of Virginia; to advance the availability and quality of legal services provided to the people of Virginia; and to assist in improving the legal profession and the judicial system. All persons licensed to practice law in Virginia are required to be members of, and are regulated by, the Virginia State Bar.

Virginia Board of Bar Examiners

In 1919, the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners was created by the General Assembly to examine applicants for admission to the Virginia State Bar. The Board is composed of five attorneys who are residents of the Commonwealth, each appointed for a five-year term by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

In 1994, the General Assembly created the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission within the judicial branch as an agency of the Supreme Court of Virginia to ensure the imposition of appropriate and just criminal penalties. The Commission assists the judiciary in the imposition of sentences by establishing a system of discretionary guidelines. The Commission is composed of 17 members: six judges or justices who regularly hear criminal cases and one person who is not an active member of the judiciary appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia; the chairmen of the House and Senate Committees for Courts of Justice; two persons appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; one person appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; four persons appointed by the Governor; and the Attorney General of the Commonwealth.



Virginia Flag

THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

The Executive Department is composed of statewide elected officers, Governor's Secretaries, and state agencies. Each state agency in the Executive Department is assigned to and reports through a Secretary.

Statewide Elected Officers

The Governor

The Governor is the chief executive officer in Virginia. Under the Constitution, he/she is elected for a four-year term, cannot serve two consecutive terms, and must be a citizen of the United States, a resident of and a registered voter in the Commonwealth for five years immediately preceding his/her election, at least 30 years of age, and a resident in Richmond during his/her term of office. Among his/her responsibilities and duties, the Governor is responsible for the execution of state laws, for the preparation of the biennial budget, and for the appointment of executive agency heads and members of over 300 boards, commissions, and advisory councils. He/she may recommend legislation to the General Assembly and veto any bill approved by the legislature. He/ she may also grant reprieves and pardons to persons convicted of crimes.

The Lieutenant Governor

The Lieutenant Governor is elected at the same time and for the same term as the Governor. In addition to being the President of the Senate, he/she succeeds to the Office of the Governor in case of the Governor's death, failure to qualify, resignation, removal, or inability to serve. The Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate and may only vote to break a tie. No limit is placed on the terms of the Lieutenant Governor.

The Attorney General

The Attorney General, serving as the chief executive of the Department of Law, is elected to represent the state or any of its agencies in civil or criminal cases before the courts. He/she also provides official opinions on the application or provisions of state laws upon the written request of the Governor, legislators, judges, and certain elected or appointed state or local officials. His/her four-year term runs concurrently with that of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor and no restriction is placed on successive terms.

Governor's Secretaries

Due to the size and complexity of state government, the General Assembly, in 1972, created the Office of the Governor's Secretaries to assist the Governor in managing the operations of 139 agencies.

Currently, there are 11 Secretaries. Each Secretary is responsible for providing overall supervision and direction to the agencies which report to him/her. By law, they also have the power to resolve conflicts between their agencies, direct preparation of their budgets, and hold heads of agencies under their direction accountable for effective and efficient performance. They hold their offices at the pleasure of the Governor for a term coincident with his/hers, or until such time as the next Governor may appoint his/her successors. The following sections give brief descriptions of major executive branch agencies by Secretarial areas.

Secretary of Administration

The **Department of Charitable Gaming** is vested with the control of most charitable gaming in the Commonwealth with plenary power to prescribe

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

regulations and conditions under which such gaming shall be conducted and to ensure that it is conducted in a manner consistent with the purpose for which it is permitted.

The **Compensation Board** reviews and approves the annual budgets submitted by constitutional officers and reimburses localities, in accordance with statutes, for the state's share of authorized salaries and expenses of constitutional officers and their employees.

The **Council on Human Rights** enforces the policies of the Commonwealth in safeguarding individuals from unlawful discrimination and unfounded charges of unlawful discrimination.

The **Department of Employment Dispute Resolution** provides assistance to employees in the resolution of problems, concerns, and grievances; assures compliance with the formal state grievance procedure; and makes recommendations for the improvement of management-employee relations in state government.

The **Department of General Services** provides support services to other state agencies and local political subdivisions, where appropriate, assists in the administration of the capital outlay budget, and provides for the efficient management of the Commonwealth's fixed assets.

The **Department of Human Resource Management** establishes and maintains a personnel management system for state government, performs state recruitment activities, administers the merit system, and evaluates personnel management in state agencies.

The **State Board of Elections** coordinates and supervises the work of local electoral boards, registrars, and election officials to obtain uniformity in practices and proceedings in all elections.

The **Department of Minority Business Enterprise** assists in business development for minority entrepreneurs through the initiation of new programs, and encourages, enlists, and institutes greater minority utilization in our free enterprise system by developing, coordinating, and utilizing the resources in state government.

The **Virginia Public Broadcasting Board** serves as a conduit for state financial support for public television and radio stations, including the radio reading service. It provides grants and contracts with stations to implement instructional television programming for K-12 schools and community interest related programs.

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

The **Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** promotes the broad economic development of Virginia's agricultural industry and administers laws for the protection and needs of all consumers.

The **Department of Forestry** supervises and directs all forest interests and matters pertaining to forestry within the Commonwealth.

Secretary of Commerce and Trade

The **Board of Accountancy** regulates businesses and individuals who practice public accountancy or who provide assurances about Financial Statements, which can only be provided by Certified Public Accountants. The 2001 General Assembly passed legislation granting the Board of Accountancy autonomy from the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation.

The **Department of Business Assistance** serves as the liaison between the Commonwealth's existing business and state government in order to promote the development of Virginia's economy. The department

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

provides for the training and retraining of individuals for specific employment opportunities at new or expanding business facilities and develops and implements programs to assist small businesses in the Commonwealth.

The **Virginia Economic Development Partnership** was created by the General Assembly in 1995 to encourage, stimulate, and support the development and expansion of the economy of the Commonwealth by marketing Virginia as a location for new and expanded basic employment and capital investment, as well as a source for goods and services for export.

The **Virginia Employment Commission** assists all members of the labor force to become gainfully and productively employed, provides testing and counseling, compiles labor market information, and administers training programs. The commission also administers the unemployment insurance benefit program for the Commonwealth.

The **Department of Housing and Community Development** provides community services assistance, policy analysis and research in the fields of community planning and management and housing and economic development and provides for building and fire safety regulations.

The **Virginia Housing Development Authority** provides low and moderate income persons and families with financing and other assistance for safe and sanitary housing and energy saving improvements.

The **Department of Labor and Industry** provides for the safety, health, and welfare of employees in the state in both the public and private sectors.

The **Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy** provides interpretation and enforcement of federal and state laws governing extraction of coal, oil,

and other minerals and enhances the development and conservation of energy and mineral resources.

The **Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation** protects the public health, safety, and welfare through the enforcement of standards of conduct and practice in business and the professions in compliance with the Governor's program for balanced regulation.

The **Virginia Racing Commission** controls horse racing in the Commonwealth and issues regulations under which such racing and pari-mutuel wagering are to occur.

The **Virginia Resources Authority** encourages the investment of both public and private funds and makes loans available to local governments to finance water and sewer projects.

The **Virginia Tourism Corporation** markets and supports the expansion of the Commonwealth's domestic and international tourism economy. The VTC also supports and promotes the Commonwealth's growing film and video production industry.

The **Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission** is a 31-member body created by the 1999 General Assembly. The Commission makes payments to farmers to compensate for the decline of tobacco quotas and to promote economic growth and development in tobacco-dependent communities.

Secretary of the Commonwealth

The **Secretary of the Commonwealth** is the administrative office of the Office of the Governor. It recommends and processes gubernatorial appointments to over 4,000 positions in the executive branch. It facilitates pardons granted by the Governor, extraditions, restorations of rights and service of process for civil

litigation. It administers the laws governing disclosure of economic interests of public officials and regulates lobbyists. It appoints notaries public and serves as the custodian of official documents and as the official keeper of the seals of the Commonwealth. The Secretary of the Commonwealth compiles and publishes an annual report containing the names of the members of all state agencies, boards and commissions, local governments and the judicial branch and other important information about Virginia.

Secretary of Education

The **Virginia Commission for the Arts** encourages interest and supports excellence in the arts and humanities.

The **Virginia Community College System** controls, administers, and supervises twenty-three community colleges established by the state in selected communities throughout the Commonwealth and has primary responsibility for workforce training at the post-secondary to associate degree levels.

The **Department of Education** provides technical assistance to school divisions, distributes funds appropriated by the General Assembly, and administers laws and regulations governing the operation of public schools in the Commonwealth.

The **Gunston Hall Board of Regents** maintains Gunston Hall as a memorial to George Mason and manages the estate in order to make it accessible to the public.

The **State Council of Higher Education for Virginia** functions as a coordinating agency for all state-supported institutions of higher education and serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor, General Assembly, and state institutions.

The **Higher Education Centers and Institutes** is composed of the following:

Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center coordinates and delivers in the western region of Virginia undergraduate and graduate courses and degree programs offered by the University of Virginia College at Wise, the University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Old Dominion University, and other institutions of higher education.

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (HEC) provides comprehensive training to all sectors of the community and the Southside region of Virginia through partnerships with 10 colleges and universities. Programs are offered on site in South Boston, Virginia. Colleges and universities represented at the Center include: Danville Community College, Central Virginia Community College, Southside Virginia Community College, Longwood University, Old Dominion University, Virginia Tech, Ferrum College, Mary Baldwin College, Cambridge College and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Programmatic offerings range from GED training to Ph.D. level instruction.

New College Institute was established by the 2006 Virginia General Assembly to provide academic degrees beyond the associate degree level in the Martinsville-Henry County area. The Institute will contract with public and independent colleges and universities to offer the degrees.

Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) is a regional research, technology, and education center whose role as a catalyst for economic and community transformation is accomplished through strategic research, advanced learning programs, advanced networking and technology, commercial opportunity development, and community outreach.

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Central to this goal of transformation is research and education. The four strategic research centers, led by Virginia Tech, are the Institute for Sustainable and Renewable Resources (ISRR), Advanced and Applied Polymer Processing Institute (AAPPI), Joint Unmanned Systems Testing, Experimentation, and Research Site (JOUSTER), and the Virginia Institute for Performance Engineering and Research (VIPER). From these centers will grow academic programs in both the undergraduate and graduate levels through the IALR's academic partners, Virginia Tech, Averett University, Danville Community College, Old Dominion University, Longwood University, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, and other Virginia colleges and universities. Through these efforts, the Institute is fostering the development of a new economic base, attracting and developing an innovation economy workforce, leveraging leading edge information technology, and promoting Southside as a destination location.

Roanoke Higher Education Authority is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, formed in 1998 to stimulate economic development in the Greater Roanoke region by expanding access to higher education and workforce training. The Authority operates the Roanoke Higher Education Center in which seventeen (17) member colleges, universities and workforce training organizations offer a wide range of adult and continuing education and degree-granting programs, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, through partnerships with the Commonwealth's public and private institutions, agencies and the business community. In 2001, the Virginia General Assembly designated the Roanoke Higher Education Authority an educational institution, placing it under the purview of the Commonwealth's Secretary of Education.

The **Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation** administers, develops, and maintains Jamestown Festival Park and the Yorktown Victory Center as permanent commemorative shrines.

The Library of Virginia serves as a general reference and research library for the general public, houses the archives of Virginia, supervises the state public library program, and administers state and federal funds for the public library program.

The **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** acquires and displays art objects; develops and delivers art instruction programs; and delivers professional theatrical performances.

The **Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia** is maintained as an outdoor museum in order to commemorate the contributions made by the pioneers and colonial frontiersmen and women of the 18th and 19th centuries to the creation and development of the United States of America.

The **Science Museum of Virginia** preserves, promotes, and exhibits the natural and man-made resources of the Commonwealth in order to stimulate interest and develop a better understanding of the sciences among Virginia's citizens.

The State Universities and Colleges - The state supports 15 four-year universities and colleges and one two-year college in Virginia. These institutions provide a variety of graduate and undergraduate education programs:

Christopher Newport University
Eastern Virginia Medical School
University of Virginia College at Wise
George Mason University
James Madison University
Longwood University
University of Mary Washington

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Norfolk State University
Old Dominion University
Radford University
Southeastern Universities Research Association
University of Virginia
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Virginia Military Institute
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Virginia State University
The College of William and Mary
Richard Bland College (two-year) – affiliate of The
College of William and Mary

Secretary of Finance

The **Department of Accounts** audits expenditures and issues warrants for disbursement of all state funds, maintains the general accounting records for the Commonwealth, maintains a unified financial accounting and control system of all state agencies, and provides technical data processing assistance to all state agencies.

The **Department of Planning and Budget** provides advice and analytical services in planning, budgeting, evaluating, and developing policy for the Governor, Secretaries, and other governmental officials.

The **Department of Taxation** administers the tax program of the state which includes income, sales, and miscellaneous excise taxes; supervises state tax collection activities of counties and cities; and assists with local reassessment and mapping programs upon request.

The **Department of the Treasury** receives, maintains custody of, and disburses all funds of state government and invests general obligation bonds of the state.

The **Treasury Board** supervises the investment of all state funds; controls and manages sinking funds; advises the Governor and State Treasurer on state financing issues; and acts as the issuing, sales, and paying agent on bonds.

Secretary of Health and Human Resources

The **Department for the Aging** fosters the independence, security, and dignity of older Virginians by promoting partnerships with families and communities. The department receives funding under the federal Older Americans Act and from the Virginia General Assembly, funds programs for older Virginians and their families through a network of 25 local Area Agencies on Aging, monitors the provision of these services, studies the needs of Virginia's aging citizens, and advises the Governor and the General Assembly about these needs.

The **Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired** assists blind and visually impaired individuals to achieve their maximum level of employment, education, and personal independence. The department provides vocational rehabilitation services and independent living training for the blind; operates a rehabilitation center, a library, and a resource center; and provides employment opportunities through the Virginia Industries for the Blind.

The **Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** provides a variety of programs, primarily focused on reducing communication barriers. Specifically, the department offers the following: Interpreter Services Program, providing a Directory of Qualified Interpreters and interpreter services coordination for state agencies and courts and a program of Quality Assurance Screening; Technology Assistance Program, providing qualified applicants with assistive

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

technology; Outreach Services program, providing training and technical assistance statewide; a lending library; and oversight of Virginia Relay, ensuring telecommunications access for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired.

The **Virginia Board for People With Disabilities** enriches the lives of Virginians with disabilities by providing a voice for their concerns. The board promotes a vision of communities that welcome people with disabilities; conducts outreach to individuals, families, and advocates; fosters innovation through grant projects and sponsored programs; collaborates with providers of disability services; and educates policymakers on disability issues.

The **Department of Health** protects the health and environment of citizens by preventing and controlling the spread of diseases; conducts health inspection programs including septic systems, wells, and restaurants; offers family health services including maternal and child health and family planning; assures the quality of hospital and nursing home care; ensures safe and adequate drinking water supplies; safeguards the public against bioterrorism; training and certifying emergency medical services; provides medical examiner services; and supplies health statistics and vital records for the Commonwealth.

The **Department of Health Professions** provides administrative and investigative support for the 13 health regulatory boards that have responsibility for licensing, regulating, and disciplining health care practitioners.

The **Department of Medical Assistance Services** provides financing through the Medicaid program for comprehensive medical care and mental health services provided to low-income mothers, children, and individuals who are aged, blind, or

disabled. The department also administers a number of other state health programs, including the Family Access to Medical Insurance Security program, the State and Local Hospitalization program, and the Indigent Health Care Trust Fund.

The **Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services** provides leadership in policy implementation and service development and funds, regulates, evaluates, and oversees an integrated system of state facilities and community mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services. This involves the direct operation of nine state mental health facilities, five mental retardation training centers, and one medical center; the allocation of state and federal resources to 40 community services boards; the licensing of public and private service providers; and the administration of a statewide program that protects the human rights of all individuals receiving services provided, funded, or licensed by the department.

The **Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)** offers assistance to persons with physical, emotional, and mental disabilities in order to increase their employability, independence, and quality of life. Many of the services provided by DRS are in collaboration with Virginia's network of Centers for Independent Living and Employment Services Organizations.

The **Department of Social Services (DSS)** is the centerpiece in Virginia's delivery system for human services to low-income and vulnerable citizens. In addition to financial assistance such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, Energy Assistance, and Child Care, DSS provides services to at-risk individuals including adoption, foster care, and child and adult protective services.

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Benefits and services are delivered through 121 local departments of social services. Services are also delivered through grants to the community action agency network and to community-based organizations. DSS is responsible for the collection and distribution of child support, including the establishment of administrative child support orders. DSS licenses nonmedical facilities and programs for children and elderly and disabled adults. DSS also operates the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program.

The **Office of Comprehensive Services for At-Risk Youth and Families** serves as the Commonwealth's administrative entity for a collaborative system of services and funding to address the strengths and needs of certain emotionally and behaviorally troubled children and their families. In addition to developing and recommending policies and procedures, the office is responsible for program monitoring/compliance, provision of training and technical assistance to localities, and networking with state agencies that participate in the Comprehensive Services Act's child-centered, family-focused and community-based system of care.

The **Office of Inspector General** provides information directly to the Governor regarding conditions within the State Mental Hospitals and State Mental Retardation Institutions. The Inspector General conducts unannounced inspections of these institutions to assure that conditions are humane and therapeutic.

The **Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation** is responsible for leading a statewide effort to reduce and prevent the use of tobacco products by youth in Virginia. The foundation receives its funds from the Master Settlement Agreement. The foundation is not a state agency but a political subdivision.

Secretary of Natural Resources

The **Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation** interprets agricultural products, renovates antique farm equipment, and educates the public on the history and evolution of agricultural production and rural community life.

The **Virginia Council on Indians** advises the Governor on issues related to American Indians. The council acts as the liaison between local organizations and state agencies to promote programs that benefit the needs and culture of the American Indian population living in Virginia through research and education. The council provides information on the indigenous tribes in Virginia and receives special funds from the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

The **Department of Conservation and Recreation** operates regional watershed offices and protects the use of soil and water resources through nonpoint source pollution control, floodplain management, erosion and sediment control, and storm water management; operates State Parks and historic sites that reflect the state's diverse landscapes and cultural resources; develops and implements the Virginia Outdoors Plan and State Park master plans; inventories the Commonwealth's natural heritage resources and protects and manages the State Natural Area Preserve System; operates an Office of Land Conservation, maintains the state's protected lands data layers, and provides support to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation; and operates a certification program for all dams in the Commonwealth which meet minimum size specifications.

The **Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** implements programs designed to enhance and protect the environment. Major areas include permitting and regulating programs for air and water quality

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

protection and waste management; environmental policy, program, and issue analysis; public involvement, communication, and environmental education; intergovernmental program coordination (including Chesapeake Bay restoration); and others. DEQ was created in April 1993 by consolidating the former State Water Control Board, the Department of Air Pollution Control, the Department of Waste Management, and the Council on the Environment.

The **Department of Game and Inland Fisheries** manages all game and terrestrial forms of wildlife in Virginia and all freshwater fish resources; maintains optimum populations of all species; and is charged with promoting safety for persons and property in connection with boating, fishing, and hunting.

The **Department of Historic Resources** conserves, develops, promotes, and protects the Commonwealth's significant historical and archaeological resources.

The **Marine Resources Commission** manages, regulates, and develops marine fishery resources and protects and preserves the marine habitat (wetlands, state-owned bottomlands, and coastal primary sand dunes) through a project review permit.

The **Virginia Museum of Natural History** conducts and promotes research in natural history; collects, catalogues, cares for natural history collections primarily of Virginia origin; and disseminates information about natural history to scientists and the general public.

Secretary of Public Safety

The **Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control** regulates and controls the manufacture, sale, delivery, possession, transportation, and advertising of alcoholic beverages in the Commonwealth. The agency

is responsible for the sale of lottery tickets in its retail stores, and its profits are important sources of revenue for state and local governments. The Department's Bureau of Law Enforcement is responsible for the enforcement of youth access to tobacco products.

The **Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council** ensures the upgrading of criminal justice administration by providing and coordinating training, education, and services for the Commonwealth's Attorneys and their assistants, and by providing and maintaining a case management software used in Commonwealth's Attorney Offices.

The **Department of Correctional Education** provides academic and vocational training to juveniles and adults confined in the state's correctional institutions and field units. The **Department of Corrections** operates correctional institutions for adult offenders, provides an array of inmate programming and training, and supervises adult offenders after release through probation and parole services.

The **Department of Criminal Justice Services** provides forensic laboratory services for law enforcement and prosecutors statewide; distributes federal and state grant funding to support projects in law enforcement, prosecution, crime and delinquency prevention, school safety, juvenile justice, crime victims' services, corrections, and information systems; establishes and enforces minimum training standards for law enforcement, criminal justice and private security personnel; licenses and regulates the private security industry in Virginia; provides training, technical assistance, and program development services to all segments of the criminal justice system; conducts research and evaluations; and distributes state law enforcement formula funding ("599") to cities, counties, and towns with police departments.

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

The **Department of Emergency Management** protects the lives and property of Virginia's citizens from emergencies and disasters by coordinating the state's emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts.

The **Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP)** is responsible for state fire administration. VDFP works to protect life, property, and the environment against the devastating effects of fire, man-made and natural disasters. VDFP delivers statewide technical fire response, assistance, and state response readiness, funding for local fire service operations, state certified training, fire and life safety education programs, prevention, and fire incident research to Virginia citizens and the state's more than 770 fire departments, including municipal, industrial, airport, and military fire departments.

The **Department of Forensic Science (DFS)** is a nationally accredited forensic laboratory system serving all state and local law enforcement agencies, medical examiners, and Commonwealth's Attorneys in Virginia. The department's examiners provide technical assistance and training, evaluate and analyze evidence, interpret results, and provide expert testimony related to the full spectrum of physical evidence recovered from crime scenes.

The **Department of Juvenile Justice** provides services to delinquent youth and their families. The department protects public safety by assisting the courts in holding juveniles accountable for their actions by providing probation and parole supervision; custody and care for committed juveniles; and prevention, diversion, and restitution programs in the community.

The **Department of Military Affairs** provides trained and equipped units to augment the active Army and Air Force during times of war, national emergency,

or Presidential Selected Reserve Call-up, and on order of the Governor, provides units to assist civil authorities in protecting life and property and preserving peace, order, and public safety during periods of natural or man-made disaster. The **Virginia Parole Board** makes determinations concerning the parole or release of inmates and parole violations and makes arrangements on clemency petitions filed with the Governor.

The **Department of State Police** provides the Commonwealth with a responsive, coordinated, composite statewide police department, independent yet supportive of other law enforcement agencies. The department is responsible for patrolling over 64,000 miles of state roadways and interstate highways throughout Virginia for the purpose of providing both traffic enforcement and criminal law enforcement; aggressively enforcing Virginia's narcotics and substance abuse laws; managing the Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Program; enforcing motor carrier and commercial vehicle safety regulations; providing aircraft for search, rescue, law enforcement, and medical evacuation; and operating critical criminal justice information systems, such as the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN), the Central Criminal Records Exchange (CCRE), the Sex Offender Registry, the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), the Virginia Firearms Transaction Program, and the Virginia Criminal Intelligence Center. In addition, the department is responsible for providing the following specialized assistance to local law enforcement agencies: arson investigators, bomb and explosive technicians, crime scene examiners, insurance fraud investigators, SCUBA teams, tactical teams, canine teams (narcotic detection, explosive/weapons detection, and accelerant detection), auto theft investigators, and computer evidence technicians.

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

The **Department of Veterans' Affairs** ensures that veterans of the United States armed forces and their Virginia domiciled surviving spouses, orphans, and dependents obtain the benefits of their rights and privileges under federal, state, and local laws.

The **Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) Board of Trustees** was established to govern and oversee the administration of the VVCC's 240-bed long-term health care facility, which provides 60 adult home and 180 nursing home beds for Virginia residents who are veterans of the armed forces of the United States.

Secretary of Technology

The Secretary of Technology advises the Governor regarding the growth of information technology to enhance the position of Virginia businesses and the efficient and effective use of information technology in state government so that our citizens reap the benefits of the global digital economy.

The **Center for Innovative Technology**, established in 1984 through the Innovative Technology Authority Act, is a nonprofit corporation created to foster economic growth in the Commonwealth by linking business with technology assistance resources and university research.

The Virginia Information Technologies

Agency develops a blueprint for state government information technology planning and decision-making; provides, manages, and coordinates services related to management analysis, ADP systems development, management information systems, computer and systems programming services and systems engineering assistance and telecommunications; and operates state computer services and plans, policies, and standards. Agency activities support plans and programs for strengthening the technology resources of the

Commonwealth's high technology industry sectors as well as the effective utilization of information technology in support of state agencies and institutions of higher education.

Secretary of Transportation

The **Department of Aviation** promotes aviation within the Commonwealth by administering and enforcing state aviation laws; planning and implementation of a statewide aviation system; licensing aircraft, airports, and landing areas; collecting fees; and advocating aviation at the state and national levels.

The **Department of Motor Vehicles** collects motor vehicle taxes and develops and administers the Commonwealth's motor vehicle titling and licensing laws, the driver licensing laws, the transportation safety laws, and other driver improvement and safety programs.

The **Department of Rail and Public Transportation** advocates and funds freight rail, passenger rail, transit rail services, local and regional bus operations, para-transit services, ride sharing services, and passenger ferries.

The **Department of Transportation** administers the state's transportation system; establishes, locates, classifies, names, constructs, and maintains state highways; and plans for future transportation needs in a multi-modal environment.

The **Motor Vehicle Dealers Board** is responsible for the licensing, regulation, and oversight of Virginia's new and used motor vehicle dealers and salespersons. The Board promotes the best interests of both the automotive consumer and dealer body.

The **Virginia Port Authority** is the state's lead agency for international transportation and maritime commerce, charged with operating and marketing the marine terminal facilities through which the shipping

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

trade takes place. The agency owns four general cargo terminals - Norfolk International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal, and the Virginia Inland Port in Front Royal - which are operated by its affiliate, Virginia International Terminals, Inc.

Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness

The **Assistant to the Governor** serves in the cabinet level position and heads the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness. The mission of the office is to work with and through others, including the private sector, to promote security and preparedness measures. The office assures proper coordination and resource allocation between agencies of state government with responsibilities for security. This office will serve as a direct liaison between the Governor and Virginia's local governments and first responders on issues of emergency preparedness. It will help to educate the public on homeland security issues and respond to inquiries for support and guidance. The office is the point of contact in Virginia with the White House Office of Homeland Security.

The Senior Advisor to the Governor for Workforce

The Governor's Senior Advisor for Workforce develops a strategic plan for the statewide delivery of workforce development and training programs. The Workforce Office also ensures that program efforts are implemented in a coordinated and efficient manner across state government. A key partner is the Governor's Workforce Council, which helps coordinate the Virginia Workforce Network.

Virginia Liaison Office

The **Virginia Liaison Office** monitors and tracks the development of federal legislation of interest to the state, keeps the state congressional delegation informed about the Governor's priorities, and influences the making of federal agency rules and regulations by keeping federal officials informed of the Commonwealth's position.

INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

Between 1902 and 1918, two independent agencies were created in the state government: the State Corporation Commission and the Virginia Industrial Commission (subsequently renamed the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission). Since that time the General Assembly established the following independent agencies: the Virginia Retirement System, Virginia Lottery Department, the Virginia College Savings Plan and the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy. By law, these agencies exercise legislative, judicial, and executive powers.

Medical College of Virginia Hospitals Authority

The Authority was established by an Act of the General Assembly in 1996 to:

- *provide, promote, support, and sponsor education, public knowledge, and scientific research in medicine, public health, and related fields*
- *administer programs in the delivery of medical and related services to the citizens of the Commonwealth and others*
- *to participate in and administer federal, state, and local programs affecting, supporting, or carrying out any of its purposes*
- *and to undertake the operation of teaching hospitals and related facilities.*

State Corporation Commission

Established by the 1902 Constitution of Virginia, the **State Corporation Commission** is vested with regulatory authority over many business and economic interests in Virginia. The Commission's authority ranges from setting rates charged by large investor-owned utilities to serving as the central filing agency for corporations in Virginia.

First established to oversee railroad and telephone industries in Virginia, the SCC's jurisdiction now includes utilities, insurance, state-chartered financial institutions, securities and retail franchising, as well as rail service and track safety. It is the state's central filing office for corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, general partnerships, and Uniform Commercial Code liens.

The three-member Commission acts as a court of record, holds formal hearings when warranted, and conducts investigations relating to enforcement of certain laws and Commission regulations.

Virginia College Savings Plan

The Board of the **Virginia College Savings Plan** was created to enhance the accessibility and affordability of higher education for all citizens of the Commonwealth. The board shall administer the fund and shall develop and implement a program for the prepayment of undergraduate tuition at a fixed, guaranteed level for application at a two-year or four-year public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Virginia Retirement System

The **Virginia Retirement System** administers the Virginia Retirement System, State Police Officers' Retirement System, Group Life Insurance Program, and

the federal- state agreement for Social Security coverage for state and local public employees in the Commonwealth.

Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission

In 1918, the General Assembly passed the Workmens' Compensation Act and authorized the establishment of the Commission to administer the act. The primary task of the Commission is to hear and investigate compensation claims of victims of industrial injuries and violent crimes. The Commission also determines the amounts of compensation to be awarded to accident/crime victims.

Virginia Lottery Department

In 1987, the General Assembly approved the State Lottery Law, which provided for the operation of a state lottery and the creation of a **Virginia Lottery Department**. This legislation became effective on December 1, 1987, based upon approval of a majority of the voters in a referendum held on November 3, 1987. The major activity of the Virginia Lottery Department is to operate and administer a state lottery involving the sale of lottery tickets to the citizens of the state.

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy

The former Department for Rights of Virginians with Disabilities ceased to exist as an executive branch State agency in 2002, and was replaced by a newly created independent State agency, the **Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA)**. The agency operates under the authority of both Federal and State statutes. It helps with disability-related problems like abuse, neglect, and discrimination and also helps people with disabilities obtain services and treatment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Virginia has 39 independent cities, 95 counties and 190 incorporated towns. Those local governments vary as to type or form of organization and responsibilities. A brief description of each of these forms of government follows.

County Government

The Commonwealth's 95 counties have two distinct governmental capacities. As units of local government, they adopt and enforce local ordinances and provide services for their residents. As political subdivisions of the state, they assist in the local implementation of state laws and programs.

Forms of County Government

Virginia counties are permitted to establish one of several forms of government for the conduct of their affairs. Those various forms of county government are as follows:

Traditional Form

The type of county government utilized by most Virginia counties throughout this century is commonly referred to as the "traditional form" of county government. Under this form of government, an elected Board of Supervisors is responsible generally for the legislative and administrative affairs of the county. Under this form of county government, however, the voters also elect five other officers who are responsible for the conduct and administration of various aspects of the county's affairs. Since these officers – Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commonwealth's Attorney and Sheriff - are identified

by title in Virginia's Constitution, they are commonly referred to as "constitutional officers." Due to the expanding activities of county government in recent decades, virtually all Virginia county Boards of Supervisors still operating under the traditional form now appoint a County Administrator to assist in the daily administration of county affairs.

County Executive Form

In an endeavor to permit the State's more rapidly developing counties to adopt a form of government better suited for their needs, the General Assembly enacted in 1932 the Optional Forms Act which permitted counties to adopt, by referendum, one of two new forms of government. One of the options permitted by the 1932 enactment was the establishment of the County Executive Form. Under this form of government, the appointed position of County Executive is established and given an increased administrative authority. A major feature of this form of government involves the abolition of the offices of Commissioner of the Revenue and Treasurer, with the duties of those offices placed upon a Director of Finance who serves under the administrative management of the County Executive. Also, under this form of government the County Executive is statutorily directed to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for persons to head the major administrative departments which he/she oversees. At the current time, only two counties (Albemarle and Prince William) are organized under the County Executive Form.

County Manager Form

The County Manager Form was the second alternative form of county government authorized by the Optional Forms Act of 1932. While this form is quite similar to the County Executive Form, the County

Manager is given stronger administrative authority. In particular, the appointed County Manager has the statutory authority to appoint all of the department heads who serve in his/her administration. Also, under the County Manager Form, the offices of Commissioner of the Revenue and Treasurer are abolished, with their duties being transferred to a Director of Finance who is appointed by the County Manager. Only Henrico County utilizes this form of government.

County Board Form

The 1940 Session of the General Assembly authorized Virginia counties to adopt, by referendum, an organization of county government known as the County Board Form. This type of county government closely parallels the traditional form. Unlike the traditional form, however, the County Board Form requires the county's appointment of a County Administrator. The County Board Form also calls for one member of the Board of Supervisors to be elected at large, with the other members elected from various election districts of the county. Four counties (Carroll, *Grayson*, Russell, and Scott) currently utilize the County Board Form alternative.

Urban County Executive Form

In response to the continued development and urbanization of some Virginia counties, the 1960 Session of the General Assembly authorized certain counties in the state, by referendum, to establish a type of county governmental organization known as the Urban County Executive Form. In order to adopt the appointed Urban County Executive Form, a county is required to have a population of more than 90,000. While this form of government is similar to the County Executive Form, it is intended specifically to meet the needs of heavily

populated and urbanized areas. This form of government is designed to facilitate the provisions of varying levels of urban services throughout different portions of the county. In addition, no new municipalities may be established within the jurisdiction of any county having adopted the Urban County Executive Form. Some of the other major characteristics of this form of county government are as follows:

- Towns located within the county are permitted to abandon their charters and be administered by the county on the same basis as the unincorporated areas of the county, depending on the choice of the town residents;
- The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors is elected at large by the county voters;
- The Director of Finance is appointed to perform the duties of the Commissioner of the Revenue and Treasurer;
- Constitutional officers, such as the Sheriff, County Clerk, and Commonwealth's Attorney continue to be elected by the voters.

Only Fairfax County is currently organized under the Urban County Executive Form.

County Manager Plan

In 1930 the General Assembly authorized qualifying counties to adopt, by referendum, the County Manager Plan. This type of government, which should not be confused with the County Manager Form, was made available only to a county with a population density of at least 500 persons per square mile. This governmental form is specifically intended for densely populated and small counties. Counties adopting the County Manager Plan are exempt from annexation by adjacent cities unless the annexation of the entire county

is approved by referendum of the county voters. This government is similar to the County Manager Form. Only Arlington County utilizes the County Manager Plan.

County Charters

As a result of legislation enacted in 1985, any county in Virginia is statutorily authorized to seek a county charter which would establish a form of government specifically tailored to that locality's needs. Under the 1985 legislation, county charters may contain any of the powers set forth in the Code of Virginia for inclusion in city or town charters. County charters may be requested from the General Assembly pursuant to a referendum by the county electorate or subsequent to a public hearing by the Board of Supervisors on the issue. Only three counties (Chesterfield, Roanoke, and James City) currently function under charters.

Organization of County Government

Virginia's 95 counties are governed by Boards of Supervisors, constitutional officers, and various appointed officials. A brief description of the responsibilities of the major officials follows.

The Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors constitutes the governing body of each Virginia County. In this capacity, the elected members of a Board of Supervisors are responsible for establishing local public policy, raising local resources for the support of public programs, and acting through its appointed administrative officials to oversee the conduct of the county affairs. Under general law, the number of supervisors in Virginia's counties may vary between 3

and 11. Members of the Boards of Supervisors may be elected from the county at large, from single member districts, or from a combination of such arrangements. Unless a separate form of government provides otherwise, the Board of Supervisors of each county selects one of its members as chair at its first meeting each new year.

The Code of Virginia states that the county Board of Supervisors shall have power to:

- prepare and approve the county budget;
- levy taxes and appropriate funds;
- audit claims against the county;
- issue warrants in settlement of all claims and accounts;
- construct and maintain county buildings;
- approve and enforce the county's comprehensive plan and land use control ordinances;
- make and enforce ordinances for the health, safety, and welfare of county residents, as authorized by law;
- and
- provide for the care and treatment of indigent and physically handicapped county citizens.

In the majority of instances where a county has an appointed chief executive including a County Administrator, a County Executive, or a County Manager, such officials are responsible for assisting the Board of Supervisors in its planning for the conduct of these activities and for implementing the Board's policies and decisions regarding them.

Tie Breaker

The Board of Supervisors may appoint a Tie Breaker whose duty is to cast the deciding vote in case of a tie vote among members of the Board of Supervisors. The Tie Breaker, at the discretion of the

Board of Supervisors, may be appointed by the Circuit Court Judge, is elected by the county voters *to serve the same term as a member of Board of Supervisors.* , or selected by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors is also permitted by law to abolish the office of a Tie Breaker. In such instances, a tie vote would defeat the motion, resolution, or issue voted upon by the board.

Constitutional Officers

As the name implies, Virginia's Constitution makes certain offices responsible for overseeing particular statutory responsibilities.

Clerk of the Circuit Court

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is elected by the qualified voters in the county for an eight-year term and serves as the chief administrative officer of court operations. The Clerk is responsible for managing and keeping records of court proceedings; collecting fines; recording and keeping land records and transfer of land ownership records such as deeds and mortgages; the custody of subdivision plats and land tract maps; the sale of hunting, fishing, and marriage licenses; and administering oaths and keeping disclosure statements.

County Treasurer

The County Treasurer is elected by the qualified voters in the county for a four-year term and is responsible for the collection, custody, and disbursement of county funds. This official is also responsible for the custody of certain state funds which flow through the county offices. Under several optional forms of government, the Treasurer is replaced by an appointed Director of Finance.

Commissioner of the Revenue

The Commissioner of the Revenue is elected by the qualified voters in the county for a four-year term and is charged with assessing local taxes including the preparation of the real estate and personal property tax books and tax bills. For example, the Commissioner may also assess taxes on merchant capital, business, and professional occupation license and certain machinery and tools. Under several optional forms of government the Commissioner of the Revenue is replaced by an appointed Director of Finance.

Commonwealth's Attorneys

The Commonwealth's Attorney is elected by the qualified voters in the county for a four-year term and is the state's attorney for the prosecution of local criminal offenses. The Board of Supervisors may employ a County Attorney to represent the Board in civil cases and to prosecute violations of county ordinances.

Sheriff

The Sheriff is elected by the qualified voters in the county for a four-year term. He/She and the deputies are responsible for the protection of the lives and property of county residents. The Sheriff serves all warrants of arrest and summonses for witnesses and jurors, acts as bailiff at sessions of the Circuit and District Court, maintains order at meetings of the Board of Supervisors, and supervises the county jail and its inmates. It should be noted that the Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer in counties which do not have police departments. He is relieved of law enforcement activities in counties where police departments have been established. As of 2010, 86 of 95 county Sheriffs serve as the chief local law enforcement officer (only nine counties maintain police departments).

Appointed County Officials

In addition to the chief executive or county administrator, a number of appointed officials, boards, commissions, and advisory agencies serve each county. A brief description of a selected set of these entities follows. County administrators are appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

County School Board and School Superintendent

Public education in Virginia is provided through geographic districts known as school divisions which, with a few exceptions, coincide with the boundaries of the state's counties and cities. Counties, cities and two towns, West Point and Colonial Beach, support school districts. The Constitution of Virginia places the responsibility for the supervision of schools in each school division with a School Board. Prior to 1994 in counties operating under the traditional form of government, School Boards were either chosen by a School Board Selection Commission, appointed by the Circuit Court of the County, or, if authorized by county voters in a referendum, by the Board of Supervisors. In all instances where counties functioned under one of the other forms of county government, School Board members were appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

As a result of legislation adopted by the General Assembly in 1992, counties were authorized to establish, by referendum, a process whereby School Board members would be elected by the voters. A majority of counties have approved such an arrangement, with the first election of School Boards held in 1994. The number of School Board members varies with each school division. The School Board is responsible for the appointment of a division School Superintendent from a list of persons certified to be eligible for such a position

by the State Board of Education. The School Superintendent is responsible for a variety of administrative and instructional functions, including the employment of teachers and the supervision of educational programs. All school divisions in Virginia are expected to meet certain standards of educational quality which are established biennially by the State Board of Education, subject to review and approval by the General Assembly.

Planning Commission

Every county in Virginia is required to have a Planning Commission advising the Board of Supervisors about its physical development including land use planning. The Commission consists of between 5 and 15 members and are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. One member of the Commission may be a member of the Board of Supervisors, and one member may be an official serving in the administrative branch of county government. At least one half of the members of a Planning Commission must be property owners. Members of Planning Commissions serve four-year terms. Among the duties statutorily assigned to local Planning Commissions are those requiring the preparation of a comprehensive plan and a subdivision ordinance for review and approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Every county which enacts a zoning ordinance for purposes of regulating its physical development is required to have a Board of Zoning Appeals comprised of five or seven residents of the county. The members of the Board of Zoning Appeals, who serve five-year terms, typically are appointed by the Circuit Court of the county. A few Boards of Supervisors appoint the

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

members of the local Board of Zoning Appeals. The Board of Zoning Appeals is required to hear and decide appeals made by the county residents from decisions of county officials (e.g., zoning administrators) enforcing the terms of zoning ordinances. In instances where the Board of Zoning Appeals decides that the strict application of the terms of a zoning ordinance will result in unnecessary hardship, it may grant a variance to the property owner.

Board of Social Services

Every county in Virginia is required to have a Board of Social Services (which may be entitled the Board of Public Welfare) whose members are designated by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Social Services is responsible for the administration of various public welfare programs conducted within the county. The Board of Social Services may be comprised, at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors, of three or more county residents. Alternatively, under the Urban County Executive Form, the Board of Supervisors may designate the officer in charge of the administration of social service programs in the county as the “Board of Social Services.” Where this is done, the Board of Supervisors is required to appoint a committee to serve in an advisory capacity to that officer. Under the County Manager Plan, the Board of Supervisors is permitted to abolish the Board of Social Services and delegate its duties, authority, and powers to the county manager or any other officer of the county.

Board of Assessors

The determination of the value of real property in counties is generally undertaken by the Commissioner of the Revenue, by a professional assessor, or a Board of Assessors appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Assessors is also authorized to review requests

by property owners for reconsideration of the assessed value assigned to their property. Many localities also maintain Boards of Equalization. Boards of Equalization consider taxpayer appeals. Depending upon the locality, Boards of Equalization are appointed by the Board of Supervisors or the Circuit Court.

The reassessment of property for local tax purposes is Constitutionally mandated and may be accomplished annually or less frequently in accordance with the law. For example, Counties having a population of 50,000 or less may conduct general reassessments of their real property at five or six-year intervals.

Medical Examiner

The Chief Medical Examiner for the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to appoint one or more medical examiners for service in each county. The local medical examiners must be licensed to practice medicine and must be selected from a list of nominees prepared by the medical society of the county in which the officer will serve. A county medical examiner is responsible for investigating the cause of death in instances where the cause is suspected of being other than natural. The determination of the county medical examiner in each case is presented to the State's Chief Medical Examiner and to the Commonwealth's Attorney in the county.

Extension Agents

Extension Agents are assigned to counties. The Agents are appointed by the Cooperative Extension Service of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University typically in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors. They provide the county residents with information and practical methods in the areas of agriculture, business, industry, home economics, and resource development.

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Game Wardens

State Game Wardens, appointed by the state's Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, are charged with enforcing the state's game, inland fishing, and boating laws. They are authorized to arrest persons who are in the act of violating the state game laws and to search for game taken unlawfully.

In addition, the County Board of Supervisors may enact local animal ordinances and appoint an Animal Warden to enforce the requirements.

Transportation and Public Works

The state is responsible for maintaining local county roads, however, counties may elect to maintain their local roads. To date, only two counties maintain their local roads (Arlington and Henrico). Unlike counties, cities and specific towns maintain their local roads.

Public water and sewer service are available in most counties, either provided directly by county government or through a public service authority.

Circuit and District Judges and Magistrates

These officials and their duties are described in the Judicial Department section.

CITY AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS

The Commonwealth of Virginia has 39 cities and 190 towns, giving the state a total of 229 municipalities. These municipalities, like their counterparts in other states, were established essentially to provide urban services to densely populated areas in need of such. Virginia cities, however, are distinct from cities in other states in that they are independent governmental entities. No county authority or taxing power extends within the

boundaries of a Virginia city. Due to this situation, cities in Virginia are also required to serve like counties as administrative subdivisions of the state for the implementation of state programs and policies. Virginia towns, on the other hand, are governmentally part of the county in which they are located. Thus, towns exist primarily for the provision of urban services to their residents and do not have, in general, responsibility for the administration of state programs. The current Virginia Constitution, which became effective in 1971, while recognizing as “towns” all communities previously incorporated as such, requires that all new towns must have a minimum population of 1,000 persons and become a town through the process established by law. The Constitution, while recognizing as “cities” all communities previously incorporated as such, requires that all new cities must have a population of at least 5,000 persons and become a city in the manner provided by law. The Constitution, however, authorizes the General Assembly to increase by general law the population minimum required for town or city status. The Constitution also explicitly recognizes Virginia’s distinct system of city-county separation by defining a city as an “independent incorporated community.” Virginia law permits towns that reach a population of 5,000 persons to seek city status. The process by which a town becomes a city requires judicial review of the fiscal capacity of the municipality, the impact of the proposed transition on the affected county, and other state concerns. The transition of a town to city status also requires approval by the town electorate in a referendum. The laws of the Commonwealth do not mandate that a town must become a city when it attains the population of 5,000 persons. Many Virginia towns have populations well in excess of that threshold.

While all Virginia municipalities have charters which give them distinct governmental attributes, the

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

two principal forms of government used by Virginia towns and cities are listed here. The City of Richmond is the only city in the state that has adopted a strong mayor form of government, in which an elected mayor is also the chief administrative officer responsible for the day-to-day activities of city government. The other cities operate under the council-manager form of government. Many of the larger towns operate under the council-manager form of government as well.

Forms of City and Town Governments

Council-Manager Form

This form of government was first adopted by the City of Staunton, Virginia, in 1908 and has since been widely adopted by many cities and towns in the nation. Under this form, a council is elected either by wards or at-large. The Council then appoints a professional manager to handle the day-to-day affairs of the city or town. In about half of the cities the Council also elects one of its members as the presiding officer (generally known as the Mayor), whose position is primarily ceremonial in nature. The Mayor serves as the official head of the city or town and generally has the same legislative power and duties as other council members. In about half of the cities, the mayor is elected directly by the voters. The mayor in most towns is elected at large, regardless of whether the town is organized under the council-manager or the mayor-council form of government.

Mayor-Council Form

The Mayor-Council form is used by many of Virginia's small towns. Under this form, Council members are elected by the people, and the Mayor is

directly elected by the people. In addition to those legislative powers which he/she shares with members of Council, the Mayor has certain executive and administrative authorities. Under this form of municipal government, the Mayor may be granted the power to appoint and dismiss certain town officers and may veto ordinances and resolutions approved by the Council. Many of the towns that are organized under the mayor-council form of government also appoint a town manager to serve as the chief administrative officer.

City/Town Organization and Officials

City/Town Council

The City/Town Council may be elected at large or composed of one council member from each ward or a combination of both in accordance with individual charter provisions. The Council is the local legislative body and has the power to act for the common good of the people in regard to such areas as police protection, fire protection, water supply, sewage disposal, and street lights. Also, it can, by ordinances or resolutions, set business license rates and levy taxes and fees for covering the expenses of the governmental operations.

City/Town Manager

The City/Town Manager, appointed by the City/Town Council, is the chief administrative officer of his/her locality and performs a variety of duties, which include:

- faithful implementation of all laws and ordinances;
- employment of certain city/town officials as needed to assist in the handling of the day-to-day affairs;
- reporting to the Council on the affairs of the city/town;

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

- keeping the Council fully advised of the city's/town's financial condition and its future financial needs;
- preparing an annual budget for review and approval by the Council;
- attending all Council meetings and performing such other duties as may be prescribed by the Council.

City/Town Attorney

The City/Town Attorney serves as the chief legal advisor to the Council and is responsible for the drafting of local ordinances. In most municipalities, the city/town attorney is appointed by the City/Town Council. In some municipalities the attorney is appointed by the manager. Many municipalities retain an attorney in private practice to serve as the chief legal counsel.

City/Town Treasurer

The Town Council is authorized to employ a Town Treasurer to collect all town taxes. Under most of the current city charters, the tax collection and assessment functions are performed by the Commissioner of the Revenue and the City Treasurer or by the Finance Director.

Director of Planning

The Director of Planning serves as the head of the Planning Department and is responsible for preparing various long-range plans in the areas of land use, transportation, and public facilities for consideration and adoption by the City/Town Council.

Director of Purchasing

The Director of Purchasing, as head of the Purchasing Department, is charged with maintaining a central storehouse of materials and supplies for the

locality and with purchasing, by means of competitive bidding, items that are needed for governmental operations.

Director of Personnel

The Director of Personnel is responsible for recruiting and hiring personnel, as well as administering pay, classification, and merit plans. This official is also charged with preparing and implementing a personnel plan for his/her locality.

Director of Public Works

The Director of Public Works serves as the head of the Department of Public Works and is generally responsible for such projects as road and street construction and maintenance, solid waste collection and disposal, and street cleaning.

Chief of Police

The Chief of Police has the responsibility to maintain law and order in his/her community. In some Virginia cities, the Department of Police has been merged with the Fire Department into a Department of Public Safety.

Municipal Judges and Courts

In 1973, the General Assembly replaced Municipal Courts and their judges with a system of General District Courts. Thus, matters pertaining to the enforcement of city or town ordinances, fines, and penalties were consolidated into various District Courts throughout the state.

Constitutional Officers

Virginia cities are generally required to elect the following constitutional officers: Court Clerk, Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, Sheriff, and

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Commonwealth's Attorney. However, some city charters permit the deletion of some constitutional officers. Generally, the duties and responsibilities of the constitutional officers are the same in counties and cities. A description of the duties and responsibilities of the county's constitutional officers appears under the County Government section.

School Boards and School Superintendents

Most of Virginia's cities also constitute school divisions, with those entities being served by School Boards and School Superintendents in the same manner as county school divisions. Prior to 1994, all the School Boards serving city school divisions were appointed by city council. However, as a result of the previously cited 1992 legislation, most of Virginia's cities have established, by referendum, a process for the election of such officials by the voters. The initial election of city School Boards occurred in 1994. In addition, two towns (Colonial Beach and West Point) constitute school divisions.



Dogwood
Virginia State Flower

SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND AUTHORITIES

Special districts and authorities are mostly political subdivisions of the state and are created under special authorization of the General Assembly. Nearly all of these districts and authorities serve one or more special functions such as planning, transportation, and water and sewer. Examples of the state's special districts and authorities are described below:

Planning District Commissions

Under the Regional Cooperation Act, formerly known as the Virginia Area Development Act of 1968, local governments are authorized to organize planning district commissions within boundaries established by the Department of Housing and Community Development. A planning district commission is a regional planning agency with the general powers of such institutions, including the right to adopt a common seal; sue and be sued; adopt bylaws; make and enter into contracts or agreements; apply for and accept grants and loans from private, state, and federal agencies; employ personnel; and implement other duties as prescribed by the Code of Virginia. Each planning district commission is authorized to prepare plans and programs that will promote orderly physical, social, and economic development within the defined boundaries. Any action taken by a planning district commission, however, may not affect the powers and duties of local planning commissions. While initially established to function solely as regional planning entities, the planning district commissions are now authorized to undertake and implement programs on behalf of their member jurisdictions.

Counties, cities, and most towns within each planning district are eligible for commission membership. The composition of the membership of the

commission is established by agreement among the participating governmental subdivisions.

Transportation Districts

A transportation district is designed to facilitate the planning and development of the needed transportation facilities on a regional basis. Under the Virginia Transportation District Act of 1964, as amended, a transportation district may be created by ordinance adopted by any two or more counties or cities or combinations thereof. In addition, any county or city may constitute itself a transportation district if no contiguous county or city wishes to join.

By law, a transportation district is managed by a commission which consists of such a number of members as the component governments shall from time to time agree upon. Members of a transportation district commission are appointed by the governing body of each participating county or city, except for the chairman of the Commonwealth Transportation Board or his/her designee who shall be an ex officio member of the commission.

After its formation, a transportation district is authorized to:

- prepare a district transportation plan;
- operate transit facilities, including buses and terminals, within the district; and
- acquire land by purchase, lease, gift, condemnation, or otherwise for the construction of mass transit and/or parking facilities in connection with any transportation service or an adopted mass transit plan.

However, a transportation district commission may not prepare a transportation plan nor construct nor

operate transit facilities if it is located in a metropolitan area that includes all or a portion of a state or states contiguous to Virginia.

Industrial Development Authorities

Under the Virginia Development and Revenue Bond Act, as amended, counties, cities, and towns are authorized to form nonprofit industrial development authorities to acquire, own, lease, and dispose of properties for the purpose of inducing new industrial, commercial, and institutional developments within their jurisdictional boundaries. In addition, these authorities have the power to issue revenue bonds from time to time to cover the cost of developing and/or operating their facilities.

An industrial development authority, by law, is governed by a board of seven directors who are appointed by the local governing body. These directors must be local residents who, except in certain instances, are neither officers nor employees of the locality.

Public Service Authorities

The Virginia Water and Waste Authorities Act permits the governing body of any county, city, or town, or the governing bodies of two or more such localities, to create, by ordinance, resolution, or agreement a water authority, a sewer authority, a sewage disposal authority, a storm water control authority, refuse collection and disposal authority, or any combination thereof. These authorities are considered as corporate entities and must be registered with the State Corporation Commission. After their incorporation, these authorities are authorized to acquire, purchase, lease, construct, improve, operate, and maintain any storm water control system or water or waste system, or any combination of such systems

within or outside one or more of the participating localities. These authorities also may fix and collect fees, borrow money, issue revenue bonds, and acquire property through the exercise of the right of eminent domain.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

In order to conserve soil resources and control and prevent soil erosion and sediment damages, the General Assembly enacted the Soil Conservation District Law to allow the creation of soil and water conservation districts throughout the Commonwealth. A soil and water conservation district may be composed of one or more counties and cities. By law, a soil and water conservation district has the power to:

- conduct surveys, investigations, and research relating to the character of soil erosion and sediment damages;
- implement preventative and control measures concerning soil erosion and sediment damages;
- develop soil erosion and sediment control programs and plans;
- administer soil conservation, flood prevention, drainage, irrigation, erosion prevention, and agricultural and nonagricultural water management projects.

Sanitation Districts

As stated in the Virginia Sanitation District Act of 1938, as amended, the purpose of a sanitation district is to eliminate pollution and contamination from the tidal waters of the Commonwealth caused by raw sewage and industrial wastes. A sanitation district can be created when 200 or more qualified voters of the proposed

district petition the circuit court to hold an election of the district's formation and when the court-ordered election is approved by a majority of the voters in the proposed district.

A sanitation district is authorized to construct, maintain, operate, and use such trunk and intercepting sewers, conduits, pipes, pumping and ventilating stations, and treatment plants or works necessary to provide an effective and efficient water pollution control service to its users.

In 1948, the General Assembly passed a law similar to the Virginia Sanitation District Act of 1938, as amended, which permits the creation of a sanitation district in the non-tidal water portion of the state.

Sanitary Districts

There may be created within counties, cities, or towns, by court order upon petition of at least 50 qualified voters, special taxing districts known as sanitary districts. The governing body of the locality serves as the governing body of the sanitary district. These districts are, in actuality, special service districts managed by the local governing body. Districts may construct and operate a variety of public facilities, among which are water and sewer, garbage collection and disposal, parking, recreational, and drainage facilities. To finance these activities, districts may impose user fees, levy taxes on property within the district, and issue bonds (under certain limitations). In counties operating under the Urban County Executive Form of government, sanitary districts can be created only by an act of the Board of Supervisors.

GOVERNMENT FACTS

This chapter contains some basic facts and figures for the state and its local governments. Items of special interest to the reader include questions and answers on some of the state's notable events and matters, dates of formation of Virginia counties, dates of incorporation of Virginia cities, how a bill becomes a law in Virginia, and the capitals of Virginia.

Questions

1. For whom was Virginia named?
2. When and where was Virginia founded?
3. Why is Virginia called The Old Dominion?
4. What is a Commonwealth?
5. When was the title Commonwealth of Virginia adopted?
6. Why is Virginia called Mother of States?
7. What is the state motto?
8. What are emblems of the Commonwealth of Virginia?
9. Where is the capital of Virginia located?
10. What is the total area of Virginia?
11. Where is the geographical center of Virginia?
12. Where is the highest point in Virginia?
13. What is the mean altitude of Virginia?

Answers

1. Virginia was named after Queen Elizabeth I of England (the Virgin Queen).
2. Virginia was founded at Jamestown on May 13, 1607.
3. Virginia was called The Old Dominion by King Charles, II because of the Colony's loyalty to the Crown.
4. A Commonwealth is a state in which all authority is vested in its people. The United States has four commonwealths: Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

5. The title Commonwealth of Virginia was adopted June 29, 1776.
6. Virginia is called Mother of States because its territory once included the present states of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota.
7. The state motto is Sic Semper Tyrannis (Thus Always to Tyrants).
8. The emblems are:
 - Bat - Virginia Big-Eared Bat
 - Beverage - Milk
 - Bird - Northern Cardinal
 - Boat - Chesapeake Bay Deadrise
 - Dog - American Foxhound
 - Fish - Brook Trout
 - Flower - American Dogwood
 - Folk dance - Square Dancing
 - Fossil - Chesapeake Jeffersonius
 - Insect - Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly
 - Shell - Oyster Shell
 - Tree - Dogwood
9. The City of Richmond is the capital of Virginia.
10. The total area of Virginia is 40,766.63 square miles. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, State/County Area Measurement, 1980).
11. The geographical center of Virginia is located in Buckingham County, a short distance from Mount. Rush.
12. The highest point, Mt. Rogers (about 5,720 feet above sea level), is located in Smyth and Grayson Counties.
13. The mean altitude of Virginia is 950 feet above sea level.

Virginia Counties and Cities

Past and Present Backgrounds

1617: By this time, the settlements of the Jamestown Colony were organized under the four incorporations and parishes of James City, Charles City, Henrico, and Kikotan (Elizabeth City).

1619: Two delegates or Burgesses from each of eleven settlements or boroughs met at Jamestown and established the General Assembly on June 20th - the first state representative legislative authority in the United States.

1621: Local justice-of-the-peace courts were authorized for the communities of political subdivisions.

1634: The increase and spread of population, extension of court services and need of definite boundaries of governmental responsibility led to the establishment of eight shires, later counties: Accomack, Charles City, Charles River, Elizabeth City, Henrico, James City, Warrosquyoake, and Warwick River. Northumberland, the "original county" and the Indian district of Chickacoan, was organized as a county in 1648.

Counties Established by the General Assembly of Virginia (172) Extinct (18)

Accawmack (old), Charles River, Dunmore, Fincastle, Illinois, Kentucky, Lower Norfolk, New Norfolk, Norfolk (1963), Rappahannock (old), Upper Norfolk, Warrosquyoake, Warwick River, Elizabeth City (1952), Princess Anne (1963), Warwick (1958), Yohogania, Nansemond (1972).

In Kentucky (9)

Bourbon, Fayette, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Mason, Mercer, Nelson, Woodford.

In West Virginia (50)

Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Logan, McDowell, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Mercer, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, Wyoming.

In Virginia (95)

Accomack	Formed: 1632-42 - Original shire Named for: Indian word meaning other-side-place
Albemarle	Formed: 1744 from Goochland Named for: Earl of Albemarle
Alleghany	Formed: 1822 from Bath, Botetourt and Monroe (W. Va.) Named for: Indian word meaning endless
Amelia	Formed: 1735 from Prince George and Brunswick Named for: Daughter of George II
Amherst	Formed: 1761 from Albemarle Named for: Sir Jeffrey Amherst
Appomattox	Formed: 1845 from Buckingham, Prince Edward, Charlotte, Campbell Named for: Appamatuck Indian Village
Arlington	Formed: 1847 from Former Alexandria County Named for: Custis Estate
Augusta	Formed: 1738 from Orange Named for: Mother of George III
Bath	Formed: 1791 from Augusta, Botetourt and Greenbrier, WV Named for: Medicinal springs
Bedford	Formed: 1754 from Lunenburg and Albemarle Named for: Duke of Bedford
Bland	Formed: 1861 from Giles, Wythe and Tazewell Named for: Richard Bland
Botetourt	Formed: 1770 from August and Rockbridge Named for: Lord Botetourt (Berkeley)
Brunswick	Formed: 1720 from Surry, Isle of Wight, and Prince George Named for: German Duchy

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Buchanan	Formed: 1858 from Tazewell and Russell Named for: James Buchanan, U.S. President
Buckingham	Formed: 1761 from Albemarle Named for: Duke of Buckingham
Campbell	Formed: 1782 from Bedford Named for: General William Campbell
Caroline	Formed: 1727 from Essex, King William and King and Queen Named for: Wife of George II
Carroll	Formed: 1842 from Grayson Named for: Carroll of Carrollton
Charles City	Formed: 1634 from Original shire Named for: Prince Charles (Charles I)
Charlotte	Formed: 1765 from Lunenburg Named for: Wife of George II
Chesterfield	Formed: 1749 from Henrico Named for: Lord Chesterfield
Clarke	Formed: 1836 from Frederick Named for: George Rogers Clarke
Craig	Formed: 1851 from Botetourt, Giles, Alleghany, Roanoke, Montgomery, and Monroe, WV Named for: Robert Craig, House Delegate of VA
Culpeper	Formed: 1749 from Orange Named for: Lord Culpeper, Governor of VA
Cumberland	Formed: 1749 from Goochland Named for: Duke of Cumberland
Dickenson	Formed: 1880 from Russell, Wise, Buchanan Named for: William J. Dickenson
Dinwiddie	Formed: 1752 from Prince George Named for: Lord Dinwiddie, Lt. Governor of VA

2010 - 2014

Essex	Formed: 1692 from Rappahannock (old) Named for: English County or Earl of Essex
Fairfax	Formed: 1742 from Prince William Named for: Lord Fairfax
Fauquier	Formed: 1759 from Prince William Named for: Francis Fauquier, Lt. Governor of VA
Floyd	Formed: 1831 from Montgomery Named for: John Floyd, Governor of VA
Fluvanna	Formed: 1777 from Albemarle Named for: Queen Anne
Franklin	Formed: 1786 from Bedford and Henry Named for: Benjamin Franklin
Frederick	Formed: 1738 from Orange Named for: Son of George II
Giles	Formed: 1806 from Montgomery, Tazewell And Monroe-WV Named for: William B. Giles, Governor of VA
Gloucester	Formed: 1651 from York Named for: Duke of Gloucester
Goochland	Formed: 1728 from Henrico Named for: William Gooch, Lt. Governor of VA
Grayson	Formed: 1793 from Wythe Named for: William Grayson, U.S. Senator
Greene	Formed: 1838 from Orange Named for: General Nathanael Greene
Greensville	Formed: 1781 from Brunswick Named for: General Greene or Granville
Halifax	Formed: 1752 from Lunenburg Named for: Earl of Halifax

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Hanover	Formed: 1721 from New Kent Named for: George I, Duke of Hanover
Henrico	Formed: 1634 - Original shire Named for: Henry, son of James I
Henry	Formed: 1777 from Pittsylvania Named for: Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia
Highland	Formed: 1847 from Bath and Pendleton, WV Named for: the topography
Isle of Wight	Formed: 1634 - Original shire formerly Warrosquyoake Named for: Isle of Wight, England
James City	Formed: 1634 - Original shire Named for: James I
King George	Formed: 1721 from Richmond Named for: George I
King and Queen	Formed: 1691 from New Kent Named for: William and Mary
King William	Formed: 1702 from King and Queen Named for: King William
Lancaster	Formed: 1652 from York and Northumberland Named for: English county
Lee	Formed: 1793 from Russell Named for: Henry Lee, Governor of VA
Loudoun	Formed: 1757 from Fairfax Named for: Earl of Loudoun
Louisa	Formed: 1742 from Hanover Named for: Daughter of George II
Lunenburg	Formed: 1746 from Brunswick Named for: Lunenburg

2010 - 2014

Madison	Formed: 1793 from Culpeper Named for: James Madison, U.S. President
Mathews	Formed: 1791 from Gloucester Named for: Thomas Mathews
Mecklenburg	Formed: 1765 from Lunenburg Named for: Charlotte, Wife of George II
Middlesex	Formed: 1668-69 from Lancaster Named for: English county
Montgomery	Formed: 1777 from formerly Fincastle Named for: General Richard Montgomery
Nelson	Formed: 1808 from Amherst Named for: Thomas Nelson, Jr., Governor of VA
New Kent	Formed: 1654 from York Named for: English Kent or Kent Island
Northampton	Formed: 1634 - Original shire, formerly Accomack Named for: English county
Northumberland	Formed: 1648 - Original County Named for: English county
Nottoway	Formed: 1789 from Amelia Named for: Nadowa Indian tribe
Orange	Formed: 1734 from Spotsylvania Named for: William, Prince of Orange
Page	Formed: 1831 from Rockingham, Shenandoah Named for: John Page, Governor of VA
Patrick	Formed: 1791 from Henry Named for: Patrick Henry, Governor of VA
Pittsylvania	Formed: 1767 from Halifax Named for: William Pitt, Earl of Chatham

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Powhatan	Formed: 1777 from Cumberland Named for: Indian Chief Powhatan
Prince Edward	Formed: 1754 from Amelia Named for: Prince Edward Augustus
Prince George	Formed: 1703 - Original shire, formerly Charles City; Named for: George of Denmark, husband of Queen Anne
Prince William	Formed: 1731 from Stafford, King George Named for: William, Duke of Cumberland
Pulaski	Formed: 1839 from Montgomery and Wythe Named for: General Pulaski
Rappahannock	Formed: 1833 from Culpeper Named for: Indian word meaning river of quick rising water
Richmond	Formed: 1692 from Rappahannock (old) Named for: English county or Duke of Richmond
Roanoke	Formed: 1838 from Botetourt and Montgomery Named for: Rawrenoc—Indian currency
Rockbridge	Formed: 1778 from Augusta and Botetourt Named for: the natural rock bridge
Rockingham	Formed: 1778 from Augusta Named for: Rockingham, British Prime Minister
Russell	Formed: 1786 from Washington Named for: General William Russell
Scott	Formed: 1814 from Washington, Lee, Russell Named for: General Wingfield Scott
Shenandoah	Formed: 1772 from Frederick (Dunmore) Named for: Indian word meaning daughter of the stars

2010 - 2014

Smyth	Formed: 1832 from Wythe and Washington Named for: General Alexander Smyth
Southampton	Formed: 1749 from Isle of Wight Named for: Earl of Southampton
Spotsylvania	Formed: 1721 from Essex, King William, and King and Queen Named for: Alexander Spotswood, Lt. Gov., VA
Stafford	Formed: 1664 from Westmoreland Named for: English county
Surry	Formed: 1652 from James City Named for: English county
Sussex	Formed: 1754 from Surry Named for: English county
Tazewell	Formed: 1800 from Wythe and Russell Named for: Henry Tazewell, U.S. Senator
Warren	Formed: 1836 from Frederick and Shenandoah Named for: General Joseph Warren
Washington	Formed: 1777 from formerly Fincastle Named for: George Washington, U.S. President
Westmoreland	Formed: 1653 from Northumberland Named for: English county
Wise	Formed: 1856 from Lee, Scott and Russell Named for: Henry A. Wise, Governor of VA
Wythe	Formed: 1790 from Montgomery Named for: George Wythe, Virginia Lawyer
York	Formed: 1634 - Original shire (Charles City) Named for: Duke of York

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Dates of Incorporation of Virginia Cities

City	Incorporated as a Town (a)	Incorporated as a City (a)	City of 2nd Class	City of 1st Class
Alexandria	1779	1852	-	1902
Bedford (Liberty)	1912(1812)	1968	1968	-
Bristol	1856	1890	1902	1942
Buena Vista	1890	1892	1902	-
Charlottesville	1801	1888	1902	1916
Chesapeake	-	1963(b)	-	1963(b)
Colonial Heights	1926	1948	1948	1960
Covington	1833	1954	1954	-
Danville	1830	1890	-	1902
Emporia	1887	1967	1967	-
Fairfax	1874	1961	1961	-
Falls Church	1875	1948	1948	-
Franklin	1876	1961	1961	-
Fredericksburg	1782	1879	1902	1941
Galax	1906	1954	1954	-
Hampton	1849	1908	1908	1952(c)
Harrisonburg	1849	1916	1916	-
Hopewell	-	1916(d)	-	1916(d)
Lexington	1874	1965	1965	-
Lynchburg	1805	1852	-	1902
Manassas	1873	1975	1975	-
Manassas Park	1957	1975	1975	-
Martinsville	1873	1928	1928	-
Newport News	1880	1896	-	1902
Norfolk	1736(e)	1845	-	1902
Norton	1894	1954	1954	-
Petersburg	1784	1850	-	1902
Poquoson	1952	1975	1975	-
Portsmouth	1836	1858	-	1902
Radford	1887	1892	1902	1946
Richmond	1782	1842	-	1902
Roanoke	1874	1884	1902	-
Salem	1806	1968	-	1968
Staunton	1801	1871	1902	1906
Suffolk	1808	1910	1910	1944(f)
Virginia Beach	1906	1952	1952	1963(g)
Waynesboro	1834	1948	-	1948
Williamsburg	-	1884	1902	-
Winchester	1779	1874	1902	1932

Notes

- (a) The year of incorporation, not of establishment.
- (b) Created by the consolidation of the former City of South Norfolk and Norfolk County, effective January 1, 1963, Virginia Acts 1962, ch. 211, pp. 301-16; South Norfolk, first incorporated in 1919, became a city of the second class in 1921 and a city of the first class in 1952.
- (c) So classified when the County of Elizabeth City, the City of Hampton and the Town of Phoebus consolidated as the City of Hampton, effective July 1, 1952, Virginia Acts 1950, Chapter 583.
- (d) Incorporated as a city of the first class from unincorporated territory, effective July 1, 1916, Virginia Acts 1916, Chapter 65,
- (e) Incorporated as the Borough of Norfolk.
- (f) Merged with the former City of Nansemond, January 1, 1974.
- (g) So classified when the County of Princess Anne and the City of Virginia Beach combined as the City of Virginia Beach, effective January 1, 1963, Virginia Acts 1962, Chapter 147.

Sources

1. Chester W. Bain, *A Body Incorporate: the Evolution of City/County Separation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia; published for the Institute of Government, University of Virginia, 1967).
2. Secretary of the Commonwealth, Commonwealth of Virginia, *Report of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1980-81* (Richmond: The Author, 1981).
3. Devereux Weeks, *Dates of Origin of Counties and Municipalities* (Charlottesville: Institute of Government, University of Virginia, 1967).
4. Virginia State Library, *A Hornbook of Virginia History* (Richmond: The Author, 1965).

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN VIRGINIA

The following steps depict the normal procedure whereby a non-controversial bill becomes a law. Bills may originate in either house of the General Assembly.

- A Senator or Delegate has an idea for legislation or receives requests for legislation from constituents, state agencies organizations or the business community.
- He or she presents the idea to the Division of Legislative Services and requests that it be drafted into a bill. The bill is assigned by the patron, introduced, and printed.
- The bill is referred to an appropriate committee. The members of the committee consider the bill and decide what action to take. At this time the public may speak.
- First Reading: The bill title is printed in the Calendar or is read by the Clerk, and the bill advances to second reading.
- Second Reading: The next day the bill title appears in the printed Calendar on second reading. Bills are considered in the order in which they appear on the Calendar. The Clerk reads the title of the bill a second time. A bill on second reading is amendable and debatable. A bill that has passed second reading with or without an amendment is engrossed. If an amendment is adopted, the bill is reprinted in its final form for passage.
- Third Reading: The next day, the engrossed bill title appears in the Calendar on third reading. The title is read a third time by the Clerk. By recorded vote, the bill passes or fails.
- Communication: When passed, the bill is sent to the other body, either by the Clerk in a written communication or by a member in person, informing the other body that the bill has passed.

- **In the other body:** The bill goes through essentially the same procedure as it did in the house of origin. The bill title is printed in the Calendar or is read by the Clerk. The bill is referred to a standing committee, considered, and reported by the committee. The title is read a second and a third time before passage.
- **Committee of Conference:** If the House amends a Senate bill, or the Senate amends a House bill, and the house of origin disagrees with the amendment, a conference committee, usually three members from each legislative body, may be formed to resolve differences.
- **Enrollment:** After being passed by both houses of the General Assembly, the bill is printed as an enrolled bill, examined, and signed by the presiding officer of each chamber.
- **Governor:** The bill is then sent to the Governor for his approval. After being signed by the Governor, the bill is sent to the Clerk of the House (Keeper of the Rolls of the Commonwealth) and is assigned a chapter number. All chapters of a session are compiled and bound as the Acts of Assembly.
- **Bills that become law at a regular session (or the reconvened session that follows) are effective the first day of July following adjournment of the regular session unless otherwise specified.**
- **Bills enacted at a Special Session (Reconvened Session) are effective the first day of the fourth month following the adjournment of the Special Session, unless another date is specified.**
The General Appropriations Act is usually effective July 1st and Emergency Acts become effective when signed by the Governor.

CAPITALS OF VIRGINIA

Jamestown 1607-1699

Although four public buildings and a private residence are historically identified as onetime seats of the colonial government, none is portrayed in any known contemporaneous picture, etching or painting. The third state house, built about 1660, was burned in 1676 in Bacon's Rebellion.

Williamsburg 1699-1780

The restored Capitol at Williamsburg, rebuilt on its original foundations, marks great events in Virginia and American history - the introduction of Virginia's Declaration of Rights, Patrick Henry's Stamp Act speech, lowering of the British flag in favor of that of the American colonies, and other stirring colonial and Revolutionary actions.

Richmond 1780-present

The central section of the Virginia State Capitol, at Richmond, was designed by Thomas Jefferson after the Maison Carre at Nimes, France, when Jefferson was Minister to France. The cornerstone was laid in 1785, and the building was sufficiently completed for occupancy in 1788. Here meets the oldest representative legislative assembly in the New World — an assembly which met first at Jamestown in 1619, and later at Williamsburg when it was the Colonial Capital of Virginia. Here met, during the War Between the States, the Congress of the Confederate States of America. In the Rotunda is the famous Houdon statue of George Washington, life-size, the only statue for which the First President posed. Surrounding that statue are busts of the other seven Virginia-born Presidents: Thomas Jefferson; James Madison; James Monroe; William Henry Harrison; John Tyler; Zachary Taylor; and Woodrow Wilson. Also, the Houdon a bust of the Marquis de Lafayette, Virginia's first honorary citizen, occupies a niche.

2010 - 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this publication, the Clerks' Offices of the Senate of Virginia and the House of Delegates wish to thank the staffs of the Office of the Governor, Supreme Court Clerk's Office, the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League for providing valuable advice and source materials.

For copies of Virginia Government In Brief, please contact the Senate or House Clerk's Office.

Bruce F. Jamerson, Clerk
House of Delegates
P.O. Box 406
Richmond, VA 23218
804-698-1500
888-394-FACT

Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, VA 23218
804-698-7410
888-892-6948

hinformation@house.virginia.gov information@senate.virginia.gov



Commonwealth of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia
May 2010

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

NOTES

2010 - 2014

NOTES

VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

NOTES