

# Virginia Town & City

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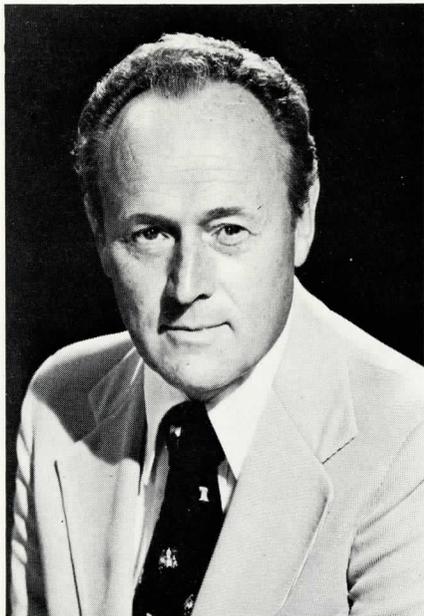


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# Editorial

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## GRS FACES A STIFF TEST

Supporters of the federal government's general revenue sharing program face a stiff test next year in extending the life of the program beyond its current September 30, 1980 expiration date. Several recent developments highlight the skepticism about general revenue sharing which has arisen both within the Congress and the Carter Administration. First, the House of Representatives, as part of its fiscal year 1980 budget resolution, voted 195-190 to eliminate \$2.3 billion in revenue sharing funds slated for the states. Although this House vote was essentially symbolic—further Congressional action, considered highly unlikely, would be required to eliminate the FY 1980 revenue sharing entitlements for the states—it does represent a severe erosion of support for general revenue sharing within the Congress. Furthermore, Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal recently testified that the Carter Administration is giving serious consideration to recommending the elimination of the states' portion of revenue sharing funds. Finally, Congressman Jack Brooks, who is in a key position to influence the future of general revenue sharing as Chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, has been outspoken in his opposition to the program.

Why has such stiff opposition arisen to a program on which 39,000 state and local governments have come to rely so heavily? To be sure, some of the opposition is partisan and even petty. Democrats now control both the White House and Congress, and they have a natural antipathy to a program widely perceived to be a Republican initiative. Moreover, because general revenue sharing was enacted as an en-

titlement program, with funds flowing automatically to the states and localities, members of Congress have been denied one of our favorite pastimes—announcing grants to our districts. There is also some resentment over the demand by 30 states for a Convention to amend the Constitution to require a balanced federal budget. House Budget Committee Chairman Bob Giaino characterized the attitude of the states this way: "You profligate federal government, get your house in order and cut spending and balance your budget. P. S. Do not forget to send us our revenue sharing money."

There is, however, a more serious objection to general revenue sharing based on the relative financial health of the federal and state governments. The federal government has run huge deficits in every year since the inception of the revenue sharing program in 1972. During this same period, the fiscal condition of many states has improved considerably, with several states actually enjoying sizeable surpluses this year.

What this argument ignores, of course, is that the \$7 billion revenue sharing program is a relatively minor portion of the more than \$80 billion which the federal government sends to the states and localities each year. If cuts must be made, I would much prefer to reduce or eliminate some of the 500 categorical grant programs, many of which produce excessive red tape, impose undue financial burdens on state and local governments, increase federal intrusion into state, local, and private affairs, and—above all else—just don't work.

By contrast, the general revenue sharing program has allowed state and local officials to spend some federal dollars as they saw fit, rather than as Washington officials ordered. Only a small corps of bureaucrats in Washington has been required to administer revenue sharing. While administrative costs of categorical grant programs have gone up 14 percent annually since 1972, the increase has been one-tenth of 1 percent for the revenue sharing program.

The general revenue sharing program has been almost the sole exception to the trend of the past half century to centralize power in Washington. If revenue sharing is defeated or seriously weakened, efforts to decentralize government authority will be stymied for years to come and the American people will find their lives controlled to an ever-increasing degree by the distant bureaucrats in Washington.

*G. William Whitehurst*

G. William Whitehurst  
Member, United States Congress

# Virginia & Town & City

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# WHO MAKES LOCAL POLICY?

BY ROBERT J. AUSTIN

The original council-manager form of government gave little attention to policy and political leadership. The notion was that the consensus of the community guided local decision-makers to make the correct decision. The manager was to be purely an administrator taking policy direction from council; the mayor, heretofore the political leader, was to be an equal member of council with ceremonial executive duties. Not clearly taken into account were the necessary steps to formal decisions—identification of a problem, development of alternatives and determining the choice; nor was there much concern with the political requirement of building support for policies.

## Local government has become "politicized."

Local manager government, however, has become "politicized", not in the partisan sense but in fundamental differences over basic goals. The benefits and costs of local policy increasingly are believed by many citizens to be shared unequally, and it can be argued that the people in many communities are taking a more self-interested view of local politics. This is simply because the political climate has changed. The governmental "crisis of confidence" and cynicism towards institutions and officials which has afflicted the nation over the last decade has not spared local government. Further, although the numbers of people who vote have not necessarily increased, there is much more diversity of participation in community decision making. In states such as Virginia, legal steps taken during the 1960's and 1970's have entitled black citizens to an active role. Another phenomenon across the country and in Virginia has been the rise of neighborhood and civic association activism which usually focuses upon less than the municipal allocation of costs and benefits. The taxpayer revolt also has renewed a traditional source of opposition to the prevailing government direction in many localities. Still further, the rise of public employee activism has been a significant development which pits the government against itself. Finally, federal and state policies and programs are increasingly a factor in local policy making and are received differently by various segments of the community.

The need for more direction in local government clearly can be seen within this politicized environ-

ment. Indications are that the council-manager plan is adapting to the acceptance of the manager as a policy leader and the changing role of the mayor under such a plan. Two recent studies indicate that this is occurring in most Virginia localities.

Five years ago the International City Management Association surveyed managers throughout the United States. Michaux Wilkinson, writing in the April, 1976 *University of Virginia Newsletter*, reported on the specific responses of 57 city and town managers in Virginia to that survey. Rather than being limited to a purely "administrative" role, almost all Virginia managers acknowledged that they commonly participated in local policy making. Further, 7 to 10 managers claimed to be frequent *initiators* of policy, and almost all acknowledged some policy initiation. About the same number ascribed to themselves a *leading* role in policy making, while more than one-fourth said they *always* were the primary leaders.

## The manager's role is not limited to council.

Finally, the managers indicated that their role is not limited to dealing with council. More than half the managers said that it was common for them to address controversial local issues in public speeches to community groups and that they sought the support of leading community influentials for their policies (only one in five denied ever taking such steps to build support). In general, the typical Virginia manager is an aggressive salesman for policies which he either initiates or plays a leading role in formulating.

The manager hence fills part of the leadership void in council-manager theory. The reasons need not be covered in detail here, but the person who prepares and manages the budget, appoints and supervises the administration and provides full-time monitoring of the municipality becomes a major switchgate in the policy process and goes a long way towards setting the agenda for council. Most managers today indeed find such an opportunity one of the chief attractions of the job and no longer avoid the label "policy manager." Nor do they deny the appropriateness of the label "politician," a subject of some debate within the profession up through the 1950's. Any manager who does not seek to build support for his policies while at the same time reading the "art of the possible" into the mood of council and community is not likely to last long.

As a counterbalance to the development of the "policy" as well as "administrative" manager, the mayor in most localities emerges as the chief elected official and an individual whose responsibilities and opportunities for influence far exceed the original ceremonial role accorded him or her. Thus, Nelson Wikstrom, in the January, 1979 *University of Virginia Newsletter* reported on his in-depth study of Virginia mayors. The mayors claimed for themselves the role of the policy leader for council. Their reasons for doing so were twofold: most said that council looks to them for advice on policy; and a majority gave policy leadership reasons either for initially seeking or for wishing to be reelected as mayor. The mayors also ascribe to themselves the task of exercising much of

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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council's supervision of the manager. A majority of them said that they had the primary council responsibility to do so, and most of them indicated that they meet at least daily with the manager. It is interesting to note that a majority of the mayors said the managers had only an administrative role, in conflict with the managers' own definitions above. The two parties do seem to have different perspectives on this relationship.

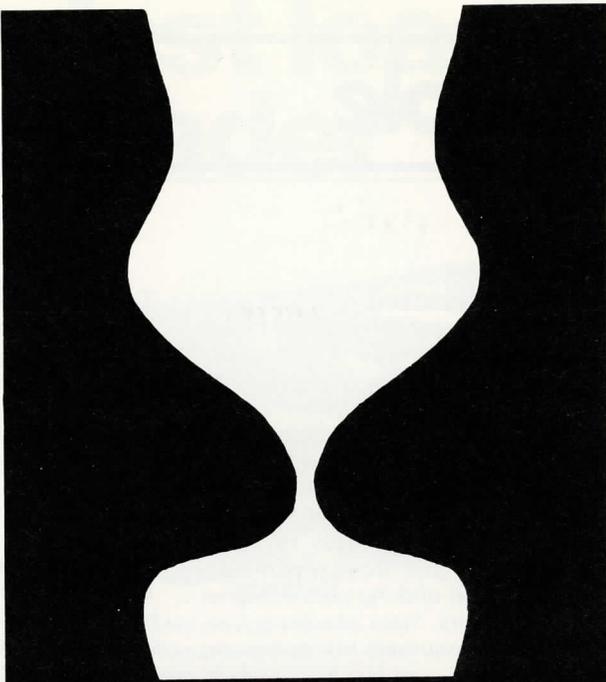
Finally, the mayors indicated a policy role when dealing with the broader public. A solid majority of them claim that they have gone directly to the public to win support for policies which presumably they identify as their own. A majority of the mayors said that a considerable amount of time in what is supposed to be a part-time job is given over to serving as a focal point for citizen complaints and comments about the government.

A more active mayor is the result of several factors. One factor is the continuing association in the public mind of the role of "mayor" as being of some importance in the local political system. This fact probably is increasingly true because of population mobility and the influx of people who are not familiar with the manager form of government and are accustomed to looking to the mayor. Also, a factor is that the national media centers upon mayors, not managers, as the key local operatives. The local media also enhances the position because the mayor is "newsworthy." His ceremonial duties and the media's need for "symbolic" news increases his public platform.

Another reason is the increasing opportunity for the mayor in the intergovernmental arena. Federal programs demand that the mayor execute certain responsibilities and also represent the city or town in dealing with political authorities from national, state and other local entities. On a local level, intergovernmental contacts increasingly demand visible elected leadership.

Finally, as councils become more factionalized, the mayor, normally picked by council under the prevailing Virginia practice, increasingly is identified as the chief of the majority faction. In a political environment, he inevitably is identified as the leader of one group with a particular view of policy needs.

The current view is that a manager-mayor "team" has developed in many municipalities which gives the manager plan considerably more political and policy leadership than the form of government originally proposed. What has been presented will not shock those in the field, nor did it happen overnight. Any time during the history of manager government, and not just recently, the leadership model described here could have applied to some localities. These developments, after all, are not the end of the manager plan, as some have feared. Some readers will be familiar with the writings of the last decade that question whether the manager plan provides leadership and doubting the applicability or utility of the plan for local government. What the Virginia experience shows is that the manager plan does have more flexibility than often thought, and that this flexibility can allow the plan to adapt to changed circumstances without damaging the fundamental purpose of the plan.



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# People

## Lynch Appointed

Richmond city manager Manuel Deese has appointed **DANIEL A. LYNCH** as the City's new director of public utilities. Lynch previously served as the manager of the southern division for New Jersey Natural Gas Company for nine years. Lynch is a licensed planner and a licensed professional engineer in New York and New Jersey. He holds a graduate degree from Monmouth College and an undergraduate degree from New York State Maritime College. Lynch assumed his duties on May 21, 1979.

## Council Names

The Alexandria City Council has named **ROGER MACHANIC**, vice president of trade development for the Chamber of Commerce and president of Development Resources, Inc., to be the president pro tem of the new Private Industry Council (PIC). Council approved the creation of the Private Industry Council to administer the new program of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) which increases the involvement of business and industry in the CETA program and redirects its activities to private sector jobs for the economically disadvantaged.

## Dawson Recognized

The Norton Redevelopment and Housing Authority recognized outgoing executive director **WRIGHT DAWSON** at a dinner held in April. Dawson remains with the City of Norton in the capacity of community development program administrator.

## Chief Drass Dies

**JOHN E. DRASS**, Falls Church's chief of police and a 20-year veteran of the Metropolitan Police Department, died May 13. Chief Drass began his career as a patrol officer for the Metropolitan Police Department in 1953 and was promoted through the ranks to captain in 1972. He retired in December, 1973 and was appointed Fall Church's chief of police in January, 1974. The Virginia Municipal League and the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police extend their sincere sympathy to the family of Chief Drass and to the City of Falls Church.

## Taylor Retires

**JAMES H. TAYLOR** has retired as chief surveyor for the Roanoke City Engineering Department. He worked with the City for more than 23 years, beginning in 1956 as a survey party chief. He was promoted to chief surveyor in 1966.

## Hanbury Resigns

**BURTON B. HANBURY, JR.** resigned his position as deputy city attorney for the City of Alexandria to become an associate with the law firm of Wrape, Hernly, Booker & Swersky, located in Alexandria. **MASTON T. JACKS** succeeds Hanbury as deputy city attorney.

## Burke Honored

**Mrs. LOUISE BURKE**, chairman of the Richmond City Planning Commission, received the Citizen Award from the Virginia Citizens Planning Association. The highest award of VCPA is given to persons considered to have made "notable and constructive contributions to the harmonious and orderly development of their community or region." Mrs. Burke, executive director of the Conservation Council of the Virginia Foundation, has authored numerous articles on environmental subjects and has campaigned for nature preservation throughout the state.

## Miller Appointed

**RONALD H. MILLER**, town manager of Vinton, was appointed to the Board of Trustees of Ferrum College. He was also elected to the Executive Committee of the Virginia Section, International City Management Association.

## Authority Elects Two

The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority has reelected **GERALD W. HOPKINS** as its chairman and **CARL COAN, JR.**, vice chairman. Hopkins was first appointed to the Authority in January 1972 and was elected chairman in October 1972. Coan has served on the FCRHA for three years and has also served as chairman of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection and Public Utilities Commission.

## CORRECTION

In the "Handbook for Virginia Mayors and Councilmembers", published by the Virginia Municipal League and the Institute of Government, University of Virginia, Chapter 1, Paragraph 1 should read "... a long term public debt of nearly \$1.3 billion."



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# OBSERVATIONS OF CHINA

by Jessie M. Rattley

*Editor's Note: The VML's President, Jessie Rattley, recently returned from a trip to China where she led a delegation of thirty-five municipal, state and other officials in a goodwill tour of the People's Republic of China. President Carter asked her to make a report of her observations during the trip.*

I am pleased to submit the following report on the recent trip to the People's Republic of China by a delegation representing the National League of Cities. The cities visited were Canton, Shanghai, Hangchow and Peking.

The usual practice in recounting foreign travel is to tire one's audience with the vicissitudes and details of the accommodations (which in our case were elegant), the public transportation (which was inexorably punctual), the food (about which I confess some misgivings) and unexpected changes in plans and arrangements (which were a test of administrative skill).

I ask your indulgence to dispense with the usual formalities and to focus instead on the substance of what we learned and experienced: the spirit, values and structure of a developing communist or "socialist" society.

## ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

The basic decisions of how China's productive capacity is allocated and invested in agriculture, housing, consumer goods, industries and other sectors, of course, are made by the national government rather than by the interrelated operation of private markets, governmental monetary and fiscal policy to which we are accustomed.

The extent to which the Chinese government can alter the national economy has limitations which one would expect in a developing country. The Chinese economy is primarily devoted to providing the food, housing, clothing and other goods and services necessary to maintain a basic standard of living. Defense accounts for 10 percent of the PRC's gross national product, by State Department estimates. We observed in Canton, for example, that virtually every inch of land available for growing vegetables or raising animals for food was in active use.

At the local level, economic life is organized into communes and production groups with goals based on targets set by the national government. Each production team sells its goods or harvest to the government and then distributes the income among its members. The official principle of income distribution is "from each according to his ability; to each according to his work; more income for those who work more". The official literature claims the political cadres are paid "in the same way as ordinary commune members", i.e., on the basis of work points for their "public duties". The commune reserves part of its income to pay for the purchase of new equipment and for construction of projects such as hydroelectric

plants and irrigation works, and part to provide education and health services for its members. The commune also pays a tax to the national government said to be 5 to 7 percent. Government officials in Peking exhibited keen interest in discussing business alliances with representatives of American industry, and responded quickly to an offer from one of our delegates to follow the initial contact with a visit to the American factory.

The political life of the Chinese people is dominated by the slogans of the national government. Two constantly repeated themes are that everything has improved since the revolution established the communist state in 1949 and that everything associated with the "Gang of Four" is inferior or obstructive. For example, about 800 graduate teachers in the University at Shanghai who received their degrees in the "Gang of Four" period are taking additional courses to bring their qualifications up to par.

Political training in the principles and values of socialism and Maoist thought is an early part of education in the People's Republic, and the inculcation appears to have been highly successful.

## VALUES AND PERSONALITY OF THE PEOPLE

The people of Communist China appear to have internalized to a high degree the socialist values of egalitarianism and group effort. There was no sense of suppression or hidden dissent at least among the working people, with government policies.

Although the impressions of a touring group are always suspect, it is fair to say that the Chinese people seemed to be highly motivated and to be working hard to achieve their groups' production goals. This was evident in both the factories and agricultural communes we visited. Both men and women performed hard physical labor in the agricultural commune at Canton; each month the men have four days off and the women have six days off. There was a pervasive sense of equality among the people we saw and met, although we also noticed deference to a party official who had an administrative role at a medicine factory.

The people were friendly and somewhat curious about us. When we arrived in Shanghai, they came out to shake hands with us as we walked from the plane into the airport.

When we left a workers' residential area in Shanghai, the people had gathered to say goodbye as we walked through a courtyard. In Peking, however, the people seemed more indifferent and businesslike and we attracted less attention. During the entire trip, there was no indication that the people felt any mistreatment or animosity toward us as Americans.

Two striking qualities of the people were their quietness in public, which is perhaps a necessity in a society of China's density; and the uniformity of their dress. Almost everyone wore "Mao" jackets and pants, usually in blue.

The children were cheerful and proud. We saw none who appeared to be shy or subdued.

The artistry and craftsmanship of the people in the ivory, silk and carpet industries were most impressive. These items are produced for export and sale to tour-

ists. We could only speculate about whether these and other luxuries are available to ranking officials.

#### QUALITY OF LIFE

Life in China is austere, especially in the rural areas where the people seemed to be struggling to maintain a minimum standard of living. Most of the people live in two-bedroom apartments with common kitchen and bathroom facilities. Single-family residences with yards are nonexistent. In Shanghai, the average housing space is only 16 square feet per person.

Public bus and rail systems are heavily used, and bicycles and motorized carts are numerous. The few automobiles found in the cities are taxis for tourists, and cars for government officials.

In rural areas, the roads are made of packed dirt and are usually narrow.

Medical facilities are cold and unsanitary and do not have modern equipment. The use of acupuncture for anesthetic purposes in operations is a source of pride.

Education is provided through the age of 13 in agricultural areas and through age 16 in the cities, but China's literacy rate is still low among adults. Students take competitive examinations for entrance to University study. Before beginning advance education, a student must work for at least two years in a commune or production group.

The electricity available to residences and hotels is of low voltage and is used for the limited number of appliances such as clocks, radios, and small televisions. Telephones are scarce, and none were seen in residences. Hospitals, schools and other public facilities seemed to be unheated south of Shanghai, although tourist hotels had steam heat.

Cinemas, ballet, concerts and operas were extremely popular. The theme of those we saw carried the moral content of party thought, extolling the value of "clean" living, honesty and frugality.

There was no evidence of practice of religion, although temples and shrines are maintained for tourists. The Chinese people mingled with foreigners here and displayed great interest and friendliness to Americans.

#### SUMMARY

The focus of life for the people of China is a work ethic centered on the common good. The people are highly motivated and industrious; no sense of fear or suppression is apparent. Although the standard of living is austere in the cities and primitive in the rural areas by American standards, it is evident that the people are committed to the economic and political system of which they are a part. Through their great industry and unity of purpose, the Chinese people seem destined to an expanding future both at home and in the world.

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# WEIGHTS & MEASURES

1979 SCHOOL AND CONFERENCE

## Virginia Weights And Measures Association

*Program Highlights*

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

4:00 p.m. Registration  
6:00 p.m. President's Reception and Barbeque

### MONDAY, AUGUST 6

8:00 a.m. Registration  
9:00 a.m. Opening & Morning Sessions  
10:00 a.m. Ladies' Tour  
2:00 p.m. Afternoon Sessions  
6:00 p.m. Open House  
7:00 p.m. Banquet  
8:00 p.m. Address  
9:00 p.m. Dance

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 7

8:30 a.m. Morning Sessions  
10:00 a.m. Ladies' Brunch & Show  
11:00 a.m. Business Session  
12:00 Noon Adjournment

The Virginia Weights and Measures Association will hold its 44th Annual School and Conference on August 5-7 at the Sheraton-Fredericksburg Motor Inn. G. W. Diggs, III, Inspector, Weights and Measures Section, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Richmond and President of the Association, will preside over the Conference. Other officers include M. P. Gleason, Bureau of Weights and Measures, Richmond, First Vice-President; J. B. Haun, Inspector, Weights and Measures Section, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Staunton, Second Vice-President; and Robert H. Britt, Jr., Sealer of Weights and Measures, Norfolk, Third Vice-President. Executive Committeemen are J. F. Lyles, Supervisor, Weights and Measures Section, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Richmond; J. G. Sanders, Inspector, Weights and Measures Section, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Richmond, and Joseph F. Hortert, Inspector-Investigator, Office of Consumer Affairs, Newport News. The Virginia Weights and Measures Association is an affiliate organization of the Virginia Municipal League.

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### TWO COUNTIES AWARDED

Fairfax County and Frederick County have been selected to receive a NaCo New County U.S.A. Achievement Award. The National Association of Counties (NaCo) honors those counties that improve a government service for its citizens. Fairfax County was recognized for significantly revising the budget process, including the published budget document, during the past six years. The changes were brought about by a directive from the Board of Supervisors to develop a more understandable program budget which would be more useful to the Board and individual agency managers in program and policy decision making. Frederick County developed and reorganized its inspection program. The program allows for construction at the least possible cost consistent with good engineering practices. Aggressive educational and public relations programs helped to accomplish the goals set forth by the reorganization plan.

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# Legal Guidelines

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LABOR STANDARDS?

By Howard W. Dobbins, General Counsel

A recent decision of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has pointed out what may be a defect in Virginia's right to work law. Section 40.1-61 of the Code of Virginia prohibits an employer from requiring an employee to abstain or refrain from membership in any labor union or labor organization as a condition of employment. This statute has been cited for the proposition that a Virginia locality has no authority to require even supervisory employees to refrain from membership in the union. *York County Fire Fighters Association v. County of York*, F. 2d (C.C.A. 4th decided December 26, 1978).

This case arose under the following facts. Members of the York County Fire Department made contact with the International Association of Fire Fighters and as a result thereof established a local union known as York County Fire Fighters Association, Local 2498. Thereafter, the County made certain changes in the management of its fire department, including the promotion of three members to the position of fire captain. It was apparently intended by the County that such fire fighters would function on behalf of the County in a supervisory capacity. The Board of Supervisors also passed resolutions which prohibited persons in a supervisory capacity from belonging to unions. This was administratively interpreted to restrict membership only in the same union in which rank and file firemen belonged. The three promoted fire captains tendered their resignations from the Fire Fighters Association under protest and instituted suit in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia contending that the resolutions prohibiting membership of supervisors in the same union with rank and file fire fighters deprived the fire captains of freedom of association and was also contrary to the Virginia right to work law. The matter was heard on affidavits by the District Court which made a finding that the limitation on membership in rank and file unions was a reasonable limitation necessary for the orderly operation of both the

fire department and the County and, accordingly, dismissed the captains' complaint. The case was appealed to the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit which decided (opinion by Circuit Judge Winter) that whereas the County could validly prohibit supervisory personnel in the Fire Department from belonging to a union in which rank and file fire fighters are members, the District Court had made an improper determination that the captains were in fact supervisors and remanded the case to the District Court for a factual determination on whether they were in fact supervisors.

In respect to the issue in which the District Court was upheld, the appellate court stated that there was justification for "determining the meaning of an enactment from the administrative gloss which has been placed upon it, at least in the absence of any suggestion either that the enactment was applied differently or that the breadth of the language in the enactment, unrestricted by its gloss, has a chilling effect on the first amendment rights of others who are not litigants before us."

Thus, the fact that the County, acting on the advice of the County attorney, had enforced the prohibitory resolutions only with respect to membership in the same union to which rank and file employees belong was evidence of administrative gloss and was determinative of the intent of the supervisors notwithstanding the specific language of the resolution prohibiting membership of the supervisory employees in any union. The appellate court opined that as so administratively construed, the resolutions were valid limitations of the first amendment right of supervisory employees of the Fire Department saying:

"An efficient fire department is a legitimate and substantial state interest because of the need of fire fighters to act quickly and effectively to prevent loss of life and property, and the limitation on membership of supervisory personnel in a union of rank and file members is necessary in order to forestall a division of the supervisors' loyalties

between the union and their employer. Barring membership in such a union is the least restrictive way of achieving the objective when membership in another union, not having rank and file fire department employees, is not prohibited."

In response to the plaintiffs' argument that §60.1-61 of the Code of Virginia prohibited York County from requiring the plaintiffs to refrain from union membership, the appeals court stated that this argument had no bearing on the plaintiffs' constitutional claim of a violation of their first amendment rights and that the contention should be asserted in the state courts of Virginia because the question has never been entertained by the Virginia courts. However, at issue before the District Court on remand will be a determination of what labor standards may be applied by the local government to labor unions. Unquestionably, the question of whether those labor standards are affected by the Virginia right to work law must ultimately be decided, whether in this case or in a subsequent case initiated in the state courts.

# Places

**FAIRFAX COUNTY**—The \$2.6 million Reston Community Center was formally dedicated on May 20 in a ceremony at the Hunter's Wood Village Center in Reston. Remarks were made by Fairfax Supervisor Martha Pennino and Robert E. Simon, the founder of Reston. The dedication marks the public opening of the new Center which was begun in 1972 by a task force of interested citizens. Pennino and Simon provided much of the guidance for creating the Center. Construction and basic operating costs of the facility are being financed through a special tax district which includes Reston and several adjacent residential areas.

Also, Fairfax County has received a \$500,000 community development block grant for the County's innovative single family home purchase program. It will provide second trust financing under the moderate income direct sales (MIDS) program for families of low and moderate income who currently live or work in Fairfax County but cannot afford to purchase homes under conventional financing.

**COLONIAL BEACH**—The resort town received a \$1 million federal Housing and Urban Development grant which will be administered by the Colonial Beach Housing Authority. The money is to be used for public improvement projects such as renovation of dilapidated homes, water and sewer improvements, road repair and erosion control. Most of the work, to be done over a two year period, will be concentrated in low and moderate income areas of the town and a third of the grant is earmarked for a housing rehabilitation loan and grant program.

**MARION**—The Town has been awarded a \$600,000 Department of Housing and Urban Development grant to construct a senior citizen center for Marion and the surrounding area. The project, known as "The Mayor's Project", will provide numerous services for senior citizens. When completed, the Center will have meeting rooms for use by senior citizens and also rooms for local and federal agencies to use to provide counseling and other services for senior citizens. The project was named in honor of Mayor W. W. Scott who has been a key figure in supporting the Center.

**SALTVILLE**—Environmentalists, concerned citizens and councilmembers met to determine how to preserve rare plants and other life forms in the well fields area while completing the recreation development planned for that area. Plans to build a recreational park in the well fields met with criticism when it was discovered that plants, rare to areas other than seashores, existed in the well fields because of the salt water there. Other living creatures which depend on those plants were also found. The Town conducted a tour so that the objectives of both the park developers and the environmentalists could be met.

**POQUOSON**—City Manager George Dickenson announced that the City has received a \$400,000 State grant for outdoor recreation. Poquoson plans to build a public swimming pool, tennis courts, baseball fields and parking

facilities. An existing recreational area will also be further developed with grant funds.

**MIDDLETOWN**—Town Council voted to convert a room on the second floor of the Town Hall into a community center. The center, to be used primarily by Middletown teenagers, will be funded by unallocated revenue sharing funds.

**GALAX**—Council and the park commission met to discuss plans for the development of the recreational facilities at Felts Park. A comprehensive plan includes lights for the baseball field, concession and restroom facilities, a running track, a paved court and a swimming pool. Future improvements will add other dimensions to the existing park.



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# Commentary

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## REAL ESTATE TAX RATES

By Bruce Ranson, Institute of Government, University of Virginia

In the aftermath of Proposition 13, taxpayer associations and individuals in the Old Dominion have tried to persuade policymakers to limit and reduce taxes. (Statutory and constitutional proposals cannot be put on the ballot by citizen initiative in Virginia, unlike the procedure provided in some states.) The tax limitation activity in the Commonwealth has ranged from the request by the Virginia Taxpayers Association that the Virginia General Assembly pass measures to limit taxes and cut spending to efforts by the Norfolk Tea Party and the Petersburg Taxpayers Association to reduce the tax rates in their respective cities. The furor over real estate taxes raises many questions. Two of the most important are whether tax rates on real estate in Virginia are rising or falling and whether Virginia's real estate tax rates are higher or lower than rates in other states.

These questions are answered in the 1978 edition of *Tax Rates in Virginia Cities and Selected Counties*, published jointly by the Institute of Government and the Virginia Municipal League (VML). *Tax Rates* includes an examination of the trends in the average real property tax rates in categories of localities for even-numbered years from 1970 to 1978. The study analyzes real estate (exclusive of public service corporation property) tax rates in cities and seven of the counties with membership in VML by classifying the localities into five categories: (1) cities, (2) counties (Arlington, Fairfax, Frederick, Goochland, Henrico, Prince George, and York), (3) urban counties (Arlington, Fairfax, Henrico, and York), (4) metropolitan localities (VML members located in a Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1977), and (5) central cities (thirteen major metropolitan cities and Arlington County, as designated by the Tayloe Murphy Institute).

Tax rates in those categories are examined by two measures. Because of variations in fractional assessments prior to the implementation of the 1977 state law requiring assessments

thereafter to be made at 100 percent of value, the comparison of real property tax rates required the computation of an *effective tax rate*; that is, the product derived from multiplying the nominal tax rate by the assessment ratio. Significantly, effective tax rates in Virginia localities declined from 1970 to 1978. On the average, the effective tax rate in cities, metropolitan localities, and central cities was about 10 percent lower in 1978 than in 1970. In both county categories, effective tax rates declined by about 3 percent. Interestingly, the variation *among categories* was not great. For example, in 1978 the seven counties had the lowest *mean effective tax rate* (\$1.06), and central cities had the highest (\$1.44). The mean effective tax rate for the four most urban counties was identical to that of metropolitan localities (\$1.33). The rate in cities was \$1.23.

Because local appraisals do not necessarily reflect the full value of property, the effective tax rate does not always yield a valid base for comparison of real estate tax rates. Thus, the study examines a second measure, which is computed by multiplying the "assessment/sales ratio," as determined by the State Department of Taxation, by the nominal tax rate reported to the Institute of Government by each locality. The "assessment/sales ratio" is the ratio of the assessed value of real estate to its full (true) value. Computing the ratio requires obtaining data on the actual sales price of a sample of property. Although the 1978 assessment/sales ratio figures from the Department of Taxation are not yet available, those for the 1970 to 1976 period reveal evidence of declining tax rates. The average true tax rate was 10 percent lower in 1976 than in 1970 in both cities and metropolitan localities. The decline is somewhat higher in the other categories: urban counties, 11 percent; central cities, 12 percent; and counties, 14 percent.

Further, the true tax rate expresses the property tax as a percentage of full real estate values. Average true tax rates in 1976 varied among the categories from 0.8 percent in the seven counties to 1.2 percent in central cities, a range very close to the 1 percent maximum rate established by California's Proposition 13. Nationally in 1976, in cities with populations of at least 50,000, for example, the *median* true tax rate was 1.8 percent for all real

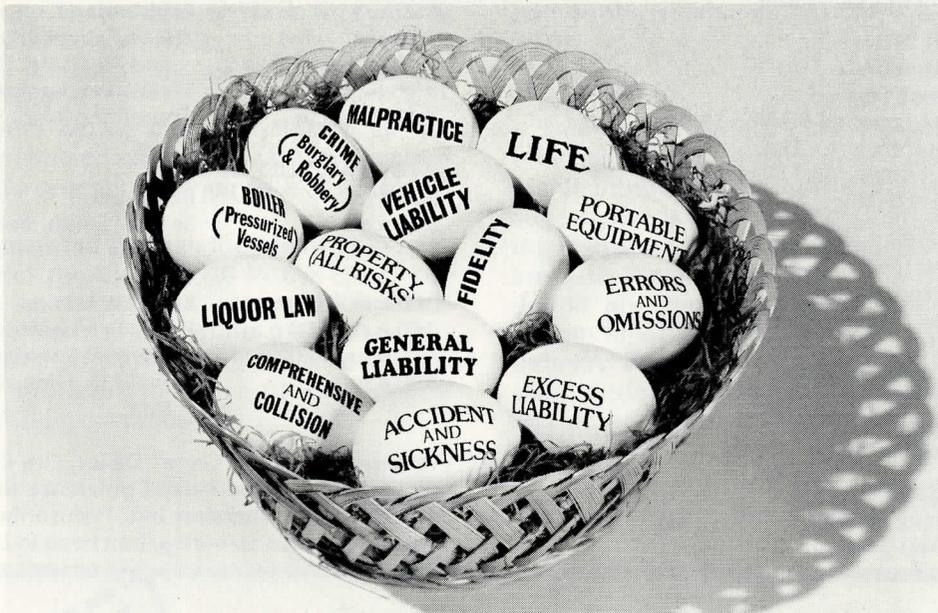
property.

In comparison with the true tax rates range in urban areas nationally, real estate tax rates in Virginia are low. Indeed, the trend in Virginia is toward lower, not higher, tax rates. Regardless of the measure, a modest decline in tax rates has been taking place. In a period when real estate values have risen sharply, local decision makers have lowered tax rates. Although these decisions may not prevent some increase in annual property tax bills, they do restrict the real estate tax revenue growth rate.

Notably, real estate revenue remains the principal source of locally raised revenue. In recent years real estate tax revenue as a percentage of locally raised revenue in Virginia localities has changed only slightly. In fiscal year 1977, real estate revenues were a higher percentage of locally raised revenue than in fiscal year 1970 in twenty-five jurisdictions; lower in eighteen localities; and the same in two others (towns that changed status in 1976 are omitted). The increase was at least five percent in fourteen localities and higher than 10 percent in four jurisdictions (12 percent is the highest). Decreases were five percent or more in only four jurisdictions (again, 12 percent is the highest).

In conclusion, the analysis of real estate tax rates indicates that local officials are responding to pressures to restrict the growth of the real estate tax rate. These efforts in some cases are offset by the need to produce greater revenues for expanding or maintaining services. Significantly, in a period when real estate values has risen sharply, local government officials have been able both to maintain stable growth in real estate revenues and to reduce tax rates.

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This year's program will focus on Police Personnel Issues

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 26**

4:00 p.m. Registration  
 6:30 p.m. President's Reception

**MONDAY, AUGUST 27**

8:30 a.m. Registration  
 9:00 a.m. Morning Session  
 10:30 a.m. Ladies Tour and Fashion Show  
 12:00 p.m. Adjournment for Day  
 2:00 p.m. "Spirit of Norfolk" Harbor Cruise  
 7:00 p.m. Fish Fry/Picnic

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28**

8:30 a.m. Registration  
 9:00 a.m. Morning Session  
 9:30 a.m. Ladies Tour of Norfolk Historic Area  
 12:00 p.m. Lunch  
 2:00 p.m. Afternoon Session  
 6:00 p.m. Open House  
 7:00 p.m. Banquet  
 9:00 p.m. Entertainment

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29**

9:00 a.m. Morning Session  
 10:30 p.m. Business Session  
 12:00 p.m. Adjournment

The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police Conference Program will focus on "Police Personnel Issues." We will have noted speakers on such subjects as Police Labor Relations, Civil Liability, Discipline and Psychological Testing and Stress. These include Thomas J. Savage, Counsel at Law from New Jersey and Frank Carrington with Americans for Effective Law Enforcement. Hopefully, we will again welcome Glen Murphy from the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The program will be one of interest for Police Chiefs and their spouses.

# FIRE CHIEFS TO MEET

49TH Annual Conference, July 12-14, 1979

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 11**

5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Early Registration  
 Evening Free

**THURSDAY, JULY 12**

8:00 a.m. Registration  
 10:00 a.m. Memorial Service/Opening Session  
 1:00 p.m. "Burn Care", Melanie Kowal  
 6:00 p.m. Reception

**FRIDAY, JULY 13**

8:00 a.m. Registration  
 9:00 a.m. "Heart/Lung Bill", Charles G. James and Michael S. Shelton  
 10:15-12:00 Noon Session on Innovative Equipment  
 1:30-3:30 p.m. Committee Work Sessions

**SATURDAY, JULY 14**

8:30 a.m. Registration  
 9:00 a.m. Selwyn Smith, Secretary for Public Safety, Commonwealth of Virginia  
 10:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon Business Session  
 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Public Safety Afternoon  
 6:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m. Evening of Entertainment  
 8:15 p.m. Donald D. Flinn, General Manager, IAFC

President Harold E. "Gene" Dailey, Fire Chief, Winchester, will preside over the 3-day Conference to be held July 12-14, 1979 at the Sheraton Inn, Harrisonburg. The spouses program includes an outing/luncheon to Luray Caverns and a fashion show.

## VA SECTION, ICMA

Wendell L. Seldon, City Manager, Winchester and former president of the Section and Wendell White, City Manager, Hampton were appointed to serve on the Virginia Professional Development Committee. William J. Paxton, City Manager, Salem chose not to serve another term, after his service of 15 years. Julian F. Hirst, City Manager, Norfolk was appointed chairman of the subcommittee for the Center on Local Government.

The ICMA Distinguished Service Award (posthumous) to T. Edward Temple will be presented to his son, T. Edward Temple, on Monday, September 24 at 7:30 a.m. during the VA Section Breakfast Meeting at the Virginia Municipal League Annual Conference. The meeting will be held at the Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia.

The Annual Conference of the International City Management Association will be held on October 21-25, Phoenix, Arizona. For information write to: ICMA, 1140 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Members of the Municipal Electric Power Association and supporters of Senate Bill 163 (joint action legislation) surround Governor John N. Dalton as he signed the bill into law on March 26, 1979. Front row, from left to right: R. L. DeCair, Charlotte Kingery, Robert Pietrowski, Ralph Gillis, Sandra Harmon and Walter W. Craigie, Jr. Back row: Turner T. Smith, Robert I. Corekin, R.A. Oliver, John T.S. Kerns and Ronald Waller.

## SQUARE DEDICATED

A nine-block area of eastern Newport News was dedicated as "Rattley Square" by the city and residents of the area, honoring "the many contributions to the community" by Councilwoman Jessie M. Rattley. The area is the 600 block section of 26th through 35th streets.

"I'm very proud," Mrs. Rattley said in accepting the certificate from the city designating the area "Rattley Square." She called on the members of the community to clean the area and after that, there would be an opportunity to secure funds to continue development of the "Rattley Square" area, selected as a focal point to rebuild downtown Newport News by the Greater Southeast Development Corporation, a neighborhood non-profit corporation working in cooperation with the City.

Mrs. Rattley has been a member of City Council since 1970 and was vice mayor from 1976 to 1978. She is President of the Virginia Municipal League and is first Vice President of the National League of Cities.

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# Ideas

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VIENNA, VIRGINIA (18,293), has reactivated its carpool system, which the Town established during the 1973-74 gasoline crisis. Carpool participation cards are distributed through the Town's newsletter and residents return the cards to Town Hall. A color coded tag is hung on the work destination board. The coded tag indicates whether the participants "want riders" or wish to "ride and share expenses." The Town's planning department then attempts to match respondents. (Contact the Planning Department, Town Hall, 127 Center Street, Vienna, Virginia 22180.)

CULPEPER, VIRGINIA (7,849), offers a new service that allows citizens to pay their utility bills at three local banks. The agreement between the Town and the banks included the following guidelines: the bill must be presented with the payment; partial payments will not be accepted; there will be a penalty charged on payments made after the 10th of each month; and penalties not collected at the bank will be on the next bill. (Contact Ronald Waller, Town Manager, 118 Davis Street, Culpeper, Virginia 22701.)

NEDERLAND, TEXAS (18,500), has developed a method for tapping the water main under a street without digging up the street. Iron rods are punched under the street with a backhoe unit enabling taps to be made faster and eliminating the need for street repair. (Contact the Water and Wastewater Superintendent, P.O. Box 967, Nederland, Texas 77627.)

NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS (31,000), has experimented using electric "citicars" for municipal employees. Purchase price is \$2,400 per vehicle. Although the vehicles are not totally satisfactory (mileage is limited to 20-30 miles per charge), they do show promise for specific applications, such as utility and parking meter reading. (Contact the Community Service Officer, 175 W. Jackson Avenue, Naperville, Illinois 60540.)

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, ILLINOIS (24,516), has established a social service section within the police department to provide early intervention and treatment for offenders to prevent further criminal activity. With the social

service program located in the police station, counseling services can be introduced at the earliest point of conflict with the law. (Contact the Village Manager, 901 Wellington Avenue, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007.)

DAVIS, CALIFORNIA (33,000), has instituted a Life Enrichment Program for handicapped children which includes the use of playgrounds as well as transportation to these playgrounds. (Contact the City Manager, City Hall, Davis, California 95616.)

CARSON, CALIFORNIA (79,000), has created a job clearinghouse to register unemployed residents and employers. The clearinghouse takes job orders and acts as a referral agency. After 6 months, 22 percent of the businesses are registered, 21 percent of the unemployed residents are registered and 15 percent of those registered have been employed. (Contact the Personnel Analyst, 21919 South Avalon Boulevard, Carson, California 90745.)

LAWDALE, CALIFORNIA (24,800), has entered into an agreement with the United Way to provide the latter with three city-owned bungalows rent free in exchange for expanded social and human resource services. Services now being provided include: Meals on Wheels; marriage, family and child counseling; single parent counseling; and adoption assistance. During the first year of operation, the United Way provided \$33,000 worth of services for a cost of \$3,000 to the City. (Contact the Director of Social Services, P.O. Box 98, Lawndale, California 90260.)

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA (455,000), has implemented an employee carpool program which provides computerized match-up by area and arrival/departure time. Carpool vehicles also receive preferential parking. (Contact the Office of Research and Statistics, 4100 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.)

DELAWARE, OHIO (15,000), has coordinated 16 signalized intersections, and has installed new signal heads and solid state controllers as well as additional pavement markings. Anticipated results include reductions in energy consumption, time, pollution and accidents. (Contact the City

Engineer, 13 South Sanduskey Street, Delaware, Ohio 43013.)

HELENA, MONTANA (22,700), has converted its bus system to Dial-A-Ride service. Two 25-passenger buses have been traded for two 17-passenger vans. Even though the daily hours of service have been reduced from 11 to 8, ridership and revenues have increased and operating costs have substantially decreased. (Contact the City Manager, Civic Center Building, Helena, Montana 59601.)

CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA (68,000), has instituted a single permit system in its building and housing department. The general contractor, owner, or agent may take out all the permits necessary for his or her job. (Contact the Director of Building and Housing, City of Chula Vista, Chula Vista, California 92010.)

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## Marketplace

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### Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk

Culpeper, Virginia, Administrative Assistant—Town Clerk. \$10,295. Performs management improvement studies. Keeps Council minutes and all official records. Administers: cemetery, business licenses, solid waste contracts and insurance programs. Culpeper has 7,800 people and is 75 miles from Washington, D.C. Require BA, prefer MPA. Send resume to Ronald L. Waller, Town Manager, 118 W. Davis Street, Culpeper, Virginia 22701.

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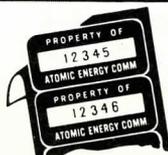
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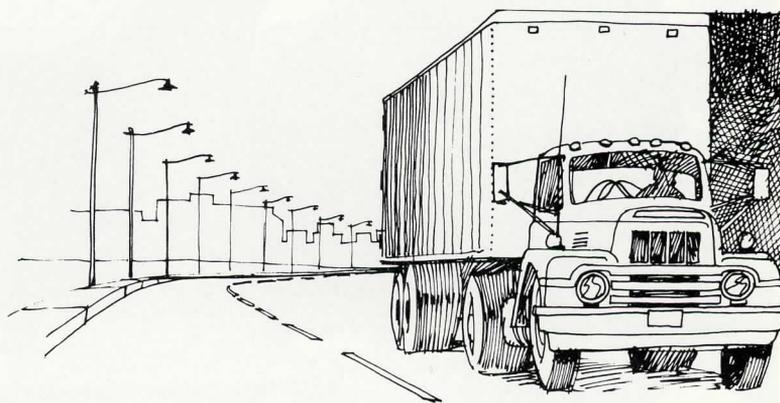
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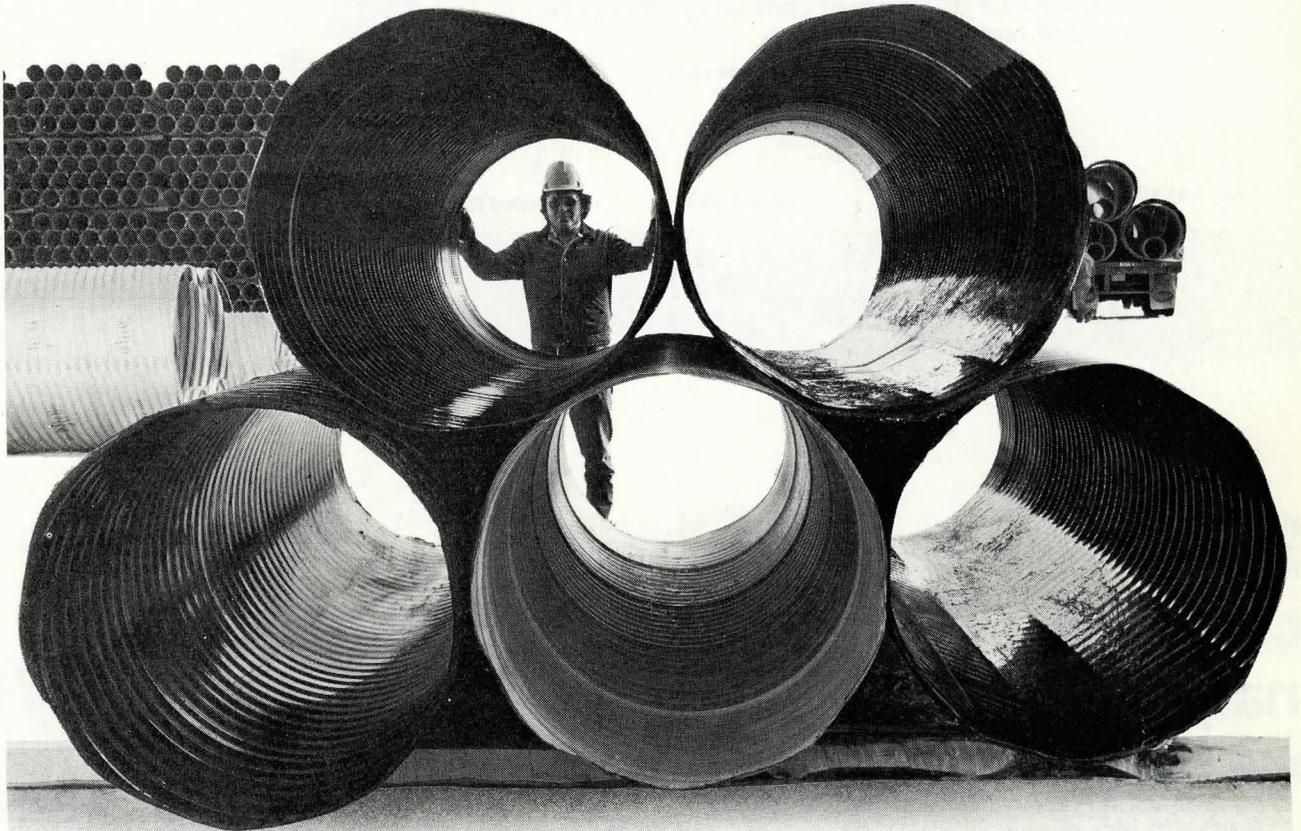
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