

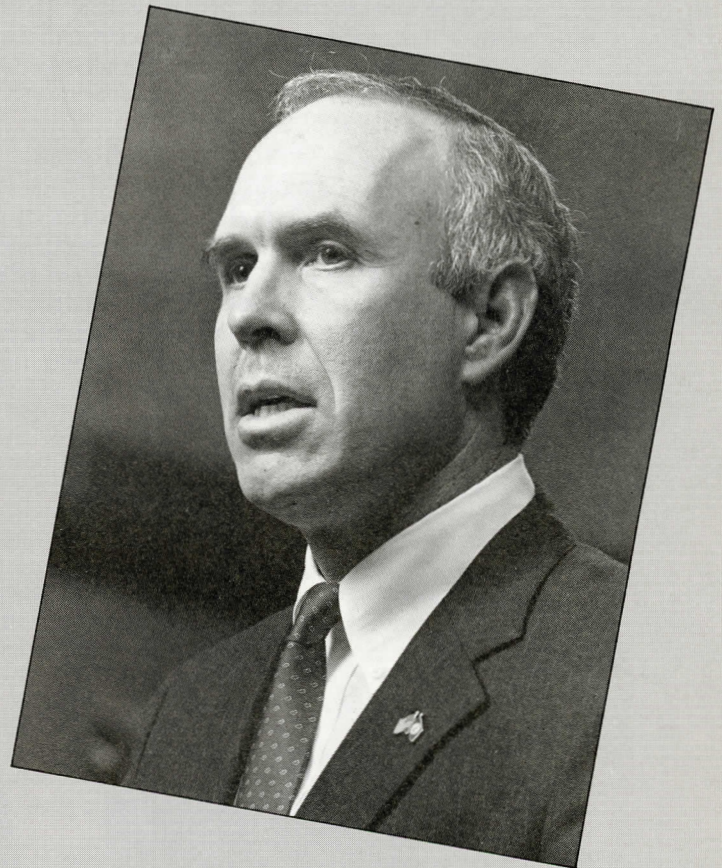
# Virginia Town & City

Volume 20  
Number 10  
October 1985

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## The Candidates Answer VML Questions

Inside:  
JLARC's Update on Fiscal Stress



# HOW A STUDENT WHO COULDN'T LEARN TAUGHT EVERYONE AN IMPORTANT LESSON.

Everyone thought Matthew Francisco was failing school.

But was he really?

You see, Matthew has a learning disability. And no matter what his parents and teachers did, his problem only seemed to worsen. (Matthew even started running away from home to avoid school.)

Finally Matthew's mother, Barbara, did some homework of her own and got in touch with the Minnesota Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, a United Way supported agency.

The Association helped Barbara deal with Matthew at home and his teachers deal with him at school.

Before long Matthew was solving problems in school instead of just being one.

And through her involvement with The Association, Barbara now schools other parents with learning disabled children.

This is just one of thousands of similar stories from all over the country.

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And what makes it all work are generous contributions from people like yourself.

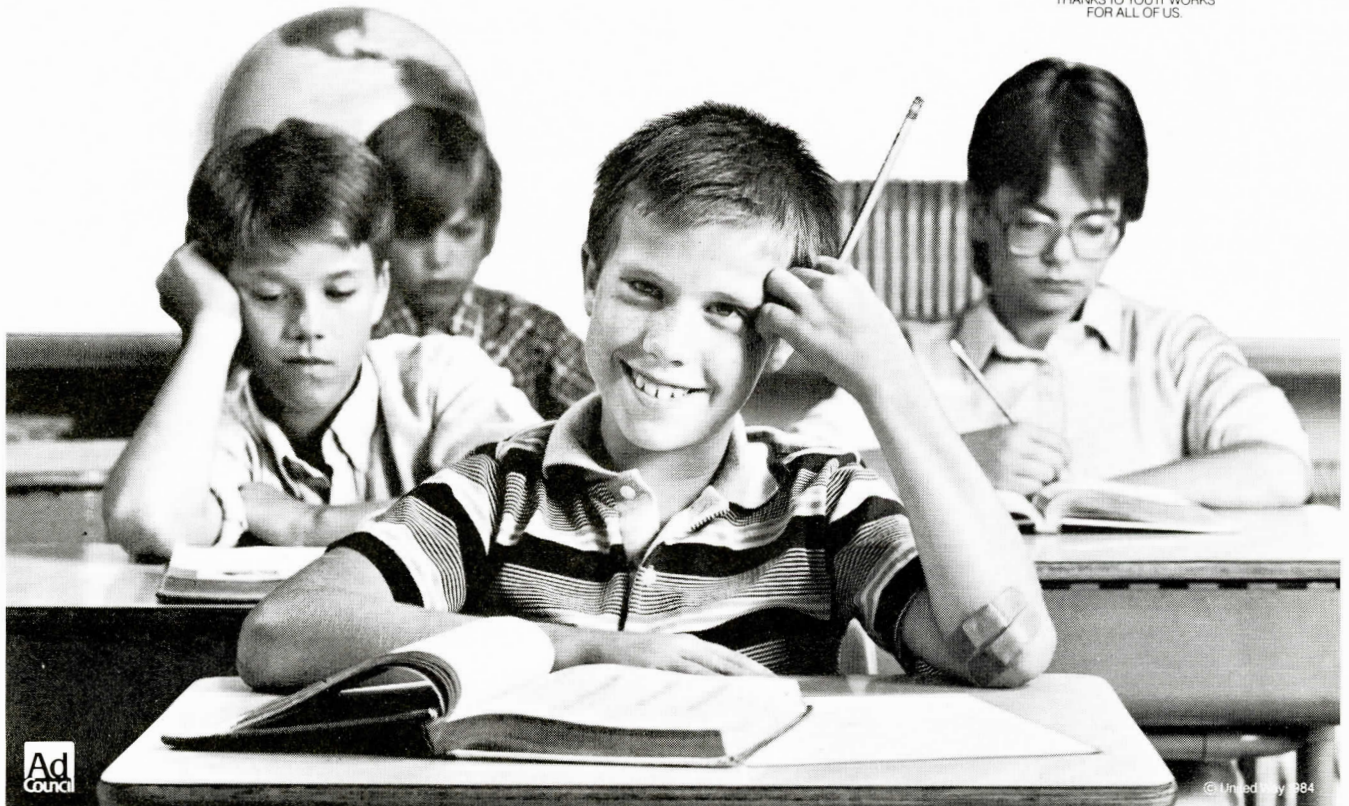
People who realize that without their help, United Way simply cannot exist.

Matthew, his parents and his teachers thank you.

So do we.



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FOR ALL OF US.



**Ad Council**

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# Virginia Town & City

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## On the Cover

One of these men will be Virginia's next governor. In the chief office for four years, the new governor will have tremendous influence on the state's bureaucracy and budget and will set the tone for relationships between the state and local governments. He will largely determine the state's "corporate culture" if you will. Who will you vote for? See page nine in this issue of **Virginia Town & City**.

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## 4 People

## 6 Handling Development Pressures

*Angela H. Moore, AICP, and Allen Webb, CLA, offer some helpful hints for local officials.*

## 9 The Candidates and the Issues

## 16 JLARC's Update on Local Fiscal Stress

*R. Kirk Jonas, division chief of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, interprets this document which no doubt will influence the 1986 General Assembly.*

## 22 Marketplace

## 23 Citizen Participation in the Planning Process

*Commentary by Gary T. Johnson, director of the Center for Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University.*





Ratcliffe

## Mayor Ratcliffe, Past President Dies

**Raymond F. Ratcliffe**, mayor of Pulaski and a past president of the Virginia Municipal League, died Sept. 14, 1985.

A native of Pulaski, he gave more than 19 years of public service to his hometown. He was first elected to the Pulaski Town Council in 1966 and became mayor in 1974. He served as mayor until the time of his death.

In 1974, the members of the Virginia Municipal League elected Ratcliffe to the executive committee as chair of the Town Section. He served two terms as the section's chair and was then elected fourth vice president of the league. He served through the offices, and in 1981 at the league conference in Charlottesville, he became VML president.

Professionally, Ratcliffe was a mechanical engineer. He retired from Hercules Inc. as plant engineer in 1973. He also served as a member of the Peppers Ferry Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority, the New River Airport Commission, the board of trustees of the Pulaski Community Hospital and the Pulaski Centennial Committee. He served in many other civic, religious and charitable organizations as well.

VML passed a resolution honoring Ratcliffe at the recently concluded 1985 annual conference in Roanoke.

## Howell Joins League Staff

**Elsie H. Howell** joined the staff of the Virginia Municipal League in September as assistant administrator of the Virginia Municipal Group Self Insurance Association. She previously worked for an insurance agent with a large national firm. In her new position she will oversee loss control services, handle billing and collection and write a quarterly newsletter for VMGSIA.

A native of Hopewell, Howell has resided in Richmond for approximately 10 years. She also serves as the music director of a local church. Howell is married and the mother of two children ages 9 and 15.

## Cornell Becomes Assistant Editor

**Mary Ann Cornell** of the Virginia Municipal League staff has been promoted to assistant editor and advertising manager.

Cornell joined the league staff in July 1983 through the cooperative education program at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has since worked part time as publications assistant. Her primary responsibility has been to coordinate advertising sales for Virginia Town & City, the official VML magazine.

Cornell is completing her studies at VCU and expects to graduate in December 1985 with a degree in mass communications. In her new position she will assist with many of the league's communication and public relations functions. Cornell is a native of King George County, VA.

## Wexler Appointed Youth Director

**Paul Wexler** has been appointed director of youth services in Alexandria's Department of Human Service. Wexler was the human resources planner/assistant director in the Division of Economic Opportunities. Prior to his last position, he served as senior program supervisor and mental retardation specialist, executive director of Sheltered Homes of Alexandria, and social worker

for the Northern Virginia Training Center. Wexler holds a bachelor's degree in education and economics from Windham College and a master's in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

## Fairfax County Presents Awards

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recently honored seven county employees with the **A. Heath Onthank Award** for outstanding performance. The annual award is named in honor of the first chairman of the Fairfax County Civil Service Commission and is the highest honor the county bestows on its employees.

Selected by a citizen committee to receive the award were the following.

**Floyd Simpson**, supervisor for electronic equipment repair in the school maintenance office, received the award for taking the initiative to be recertified as a cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency care instructor and offering training seminars on his own time to maintenance employees. Thirty-two employees were certified in 1984 and Simpson also personally rendered CPR assistance to three co-workers.

**Bonnie Rocchi**, school bus driver, was honored for her heroism in a school bus accident. Although injured she kicked out a windshield and safely evacuated 22 students from her overturned bus. Her calm and reassuring manner prevented panic and further injuries among the children.

**John Callaghan**, management analyst III in the Office of Human Services, was awarded for his dedication and involvement in sensitive community issues. His skill for facilitating compromise, professional judgement and diplomacy were outstanding in his coordination of the Group Residential Facilities Commission for disabled citizens and the Homeless Shelter Program.

**Charles P. Rose**, battalion chief, Fire and Rescue, was honored for his intensive campaign to persuade the Virginia Highways and Transportation Department to install a guard rail on Columbia Pike at Lake Barcroft Dam. From his work at the nearby fire station he was aware of the numerous accidents and fatalities that have occurred there. He contacted newspapers and television,



Supervisor Davis and Delegate Gwen Cody until the median guard rail was approved.

**Janet (Jody) Douglas**, coordinator, Community Correction Resources Board, was awarded for her outstanding service to the Community Diversion Program which keeps non-violent felons out of prison by providing intensive supervision, counseling, community service and victim restitution.

**Bobby Smith**, engineer II, Division of Solid Waste, was honored for his dedication in an emergency situation during the gas explosion at the Lorton Youth Center. Smith assisted corrections officials and fire and rescue personnel in handling the immediate emergency including evacuation. Days later he persuaded a protester trying to shut down the facility not to endanger himself or anyone else. Smith worked 102 hours of overtime during December and the Christmas holidays to resolve problems connected with this emergency.

**Robert Taylor**, custodian at W. T. Woodson High School, was honored for single-handedly raising the level of custodian services at Woodson High by accepting shifts no one else wanted, by never slowing the pace of his work, by consistently turning out work of high quality and by making up for the mistakes of others and never complaining.

Each award recipient received a plaque and a \$2,000 cash award.

### **Hopewell Assistant Receives Award**

**Douglas A. Heretick**, assistant city manager of Hopewell, has been recognized by the Virginia Jaycees as one of ten Outstanding Young Virginians. The award was given for distinctive service to his community, state and the nation.

### **Edmonds Named GOP Director**

**Don R. Edmonds**, former city manager of Martinsville, has been named the executive director of the Republican Party of Virginia. Edmonds will manage the administrative affairs of the organization.

### **Wells Dies**

**William T. Wells**, 77, retired Richmond city clerk, died in June. Known as "Bunny," he was an assistant city clerk before becoming city clerk in 1940. He served as the city's clerk for 34 years and served the city a total of 48 years. He was a native of Richmond.

### **Price Appointed Service Officer**

**Cpl. Johnny T. Price** has been appointed community services officer for the Vienna Police Department. Price is a 13-year veteran of the department and has had previous assignments on patrol, SWAT team, community services and administrative duties.

He is a recipient of the Vienna Woman's Club Policeman of the Year award and the Vienna Jaycee's Outstanding Young Man award.

### **Leesburg Names Assistant Manager**

**Stephen F. Owen** has been appointed assistant to the town manager of Leesburg. He previously worked as town manager of Berryville and as town manager in Wakefield.

Owen is a graduate of William and Mary and holds a degree in government. Currently, he is pursuing a master's in urban and environmental planning through the University of Virginia.

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# Handling Development Pressures

By Angela H. Moore, AICP  
and Allen Webb, CLA

Can you imagine a day in the life of a local official without discussions about land use? The scope of the subject may vary from a constituent's complaint to a Fortune 500 company proposing a major development that could have substantial effect on the community. Besides elected local officials and members of planning commissions and zoning appeal boards, a variety of other appointed commissions, boards and committees are directly charged with the responsibility of making recommendations and decisions that can significantly affect how land is used or how its use will be changed.

The land use changes occurring in Virginia can be attributed to several causes. First, Virginia is one of the 12 contiguous southern states that have been somewhat densely populated for decades. While these states contain only 15 percent of the country's land area, according to the 1980 Census they contain more than 20 percent of the population. Their combined population increased 81 percent from 1920 to 1980. During that same period density increased to 94 people per square mile from 74 people per square mile.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of their population growth and density, these southern states have become the second best regional retail market in the United States. Since retail sales density positively correlates to population density, retail businesses have been increasingly attracted to Virginia which has experienced a growth rate .9 percent to 3.9 percent above the national rate for the past three decades.

Another important factor affecting land use change from both a regional and a national perspective is a reversal of the past geographic trend of population growth. The population of America's urban areas is decreasing while at the same time the population of surrounding rural areas is growing, often dramatically. During the 1970s the percentage of Americans living in metropolitan areas declined to 75.3 percent in

1980 from 76 percent in 1970. Although the percent of decline appears slight, it nevertheless is viewed as representing the beginning of an unexpected decline in the proportion of American population living in urban areas. Demographers now expect the urban population to drop an additional .5 percent to 74.8 percent by the year 2000. The last time a similar decline occurred was early in the 19th century when the land area of the country was expanding rapidly.<sup>2</sup>

Only the South and the West are expected to maintain high growth rates during the next two decades. This expected growth will increase population and create job opportunities in these areas, including Virginia, more than in other regions. While per capita income also will increase in the cities of the South and the West, the per capita income outside of cities is expected to be below the national average by the year 2000.<sup>3</sup>

Virginia local officials will be seeing these changes firsthand in their communities. As a result, rural and city officials will continue to experience different types of problems.

In December 1984, the Commission on the Future of Virginia presented to Governor Charles S. Robb its report "Toward a New Dominion: Choices for Virginians." The report presents 50 recommendations, and five task force reports. The recommendation that appears to have most affected local governments to date is the suggestion to form and implement an economic development strategy. The increase in funding for the Department of Economic Development and the reorganization of this state activity directly under the leadership of the governor has raised the expectations of most local governments. The increase in state spending for advertising and the increase in staff effort are viewed as creating improved possibilities for attracting new employers and businesses. This major policy change at the state level is yet another factor that is already influencing

changes in land use and development activities in Virginia's localities.

The commonwealth of Virginia is blessed with many buildings, sites and areas of documented historic significance, and the protection of these treasures for the enjoyment of future generations has become generally accepted throughout Virginia. While Virginia has many historic buildings worthy of saving, many old structures have outlived their functional usefulness, their structural materials or the ravages of time. Land use change in this area may be caused by the need to make buildings safe, to provide improved or additional community facilities or to accommodate additional or new retail and residential space. In addition, the opportunity for redevelopment of areas or sites as well as the development of "passed over" property causes many changes in small towns and suburban areas as well as cities.

Significant land use change will continue to occur in Virginia because of the attractiveness of the commonwealth's environment, the population density, population movement, the aging of our communities and the positive actions taken by the commonwealth and by local governments to attract economic development.

If asked, each local official would probably select different examples of the development pressures he has experienced or now faces. The types of concerns that appear to affect land use decisions of officials almost universally include the following:

- retaining existing tax rates;
- reconciling constituents' concerns regarding "growth vs. no-growth" or the "not in my backyard" philosophy with the need for economic growth in changing circumstances;
- protecting the environment (flood plains, steep slopes, aquifers, water quality, air quality, etc.);
- considering the need for adequate affordable housing for the low in-





come, the elderly and the poor, regardless of whether it is financed publicly or privately;

- permitting development within the limitations of and in accordance with the capabilities of public facilities and services;
- protecting prime sites for use and development by optimal economic generators;
- providing local zoning regulations that properly protect the community from the "dumping" of unwanted land uses not allowed by neighboring jurisdictions, sometimes called LULUS - "locally unwanted land uses;"
- complying with land use plans and implementing ordinances (zoning, subdivision, etc.) and
- attracting prime economic development in light of all of the above.

Although frustration accompanies the democratic process, resources and aids are available to assist local officials in making land use decisions. As Dolores Hudson, council member, Warrensburg, MO, said, "Surely, dictatorship takes less time. Gathering data, analyzing the facts, communicating to the people, holding public hearings and, of course, sharing all with the news media is our cross to bear."

A difficult but good decision once made is one of the most satisfying experiences of a local public official. Administrators, managers and local planners also have the same frustrating experiences as each strives to make the process flow smoothly and effectively along the path prescribed by law.

The planning process and planners can provide invaluable assistance to local officials in their evaluation of land use changes whether proposed for immediate implementation or for preparation of long-range plans. Professional land use planners are trained to assist in the comprehensive review of how each specific proposal may enhance or impede the accomplishment of the community's goals and objectives. Planners may be responsible for the consistent interpretation, application and enforcement of land use regulations such as details of subdivisions and site plans to assure provisions for proper and safe public access and needed easements. They can compile demographic and land use data to monitor changing community characteristics and to anticipate future needs to be expressed in the comprehensive plan. Also, they can assist local officials and citizens in the use of the plan to achieve its goals, and many planners serve as a valued re-

source in "selling" the community for economic development.

The Virginia Division of Housing and Community Development staff can provide valuable referral information. Its biannual publication, "The Status of Local Planning in Virginia," is a valuable reference list of planning directors, zoning administrators, subdivision administrators, planning commission chairs and regional planning district executive directors throughout the commonwealth. Often, officials from other localities can be helpful and provide information regarding their methods of dealing with specific land use problems. This reference also identifies those jurisdictions that have comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances and capital improvement programs. Also provided is information regarding staff, the planning commission and membership in the planning district commission. In addition, DHCD in cooperation with the Virginia Citizens Planning Association publishes a series of booklets titled "VCPA Planning Series" which are designed for use by local officials. These booklets are provided to VCPA members and can be requested from either organization.

Several statewide planning-related organizations can provide referrals on

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planning problems. The following may be contacted:

**Virginia Chapter, American Planning Association**

President: Angela H. Moore, AICP  
Business Phone: (804) 747-4484

**Virginia Citizens Planning Association, Incorporated**

President: Dr. C. Dean Allen  
Business Phone: (703) 961-6373

**Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions**

President: Jennings L. Morris  
Business Phone: (703) 885-5174

**Rural Planning Caucus**

President: Larry Jennings  
Business Phone: (703) 434-4455

In addition, the Virginia Polytechnic and State University Extension Service coordinates planning research projects and maintains a list of consulting firms having certified planners on their staff. Certified planners are members of the American Planning Association who have met specified educational and experience qualifications and have successfully passed a nationally administered exam. These planners are permitted to use the initials of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) following their names. In Virginia approximately 200 of the 740 members of the Virginia Chapter are A.I.C.P.

The APA recognizes three schools of planning in Virginia. These accredited schools have passed stringent national requirements and possess faculty that may be used as a planning resource. The three schools and the planning department chairs are as follows:

**University of Virginia**

Chair: Dr. Dave Phillips  
Phone: (804) 924-3715

**Virginia Commonwealth University**

Chair: Dr. Allen Fonoroff  
Phone: (804) 257-1134

**Virginia Polytechnic and State University**

Chair: Dr. Jim Bohland  
Phone: (703) 961-5278

Pressures on the daily lives of local public officials by land developers, citizens involved in the planning process and the news media can place overwhelming demands on an official's time. Officials can be prepared by asking for reference information and training from the local staff.

Officials should know planning members and their telephone numbers so they can request information on a variety of land use questions such as rezoning requests, subdivisions, site plans, road improvements or drainage

problems. The local or regional planning district commission's professional administrator and staff can assist with the land development process and legal requirements.

Knowledge and familiarity with the various types of maps used (tax, zoning, topographic, planimetric, aerial, site plans, surveyor's plats and subdivision plats) can reduce misunderstandings and make evaluating proposals for land use changes easier. An orientation by the staff and copies of the various ordinances and plans that an elected or appointed official is expected to implement usually will prove invaluable.

To assist local officials with decisions on specific changes, the local staff should be requested to prepare and submit background reports. A work session to allow the matter to be discussed in detail prior to the public meeting may also be helpful. The local attorney can advise regarding the legal procedures to be followed. Since planners are advisers, not decision-makers, officials can freely request their assistance as well as specific information and recommendations from them.

In addition to using maps and staff reports to assist in the evaluation of a proposal, a personal visit to the site under consideration is invaluable. It will result in enhanced personal knowledge of the land and the individual proposal. During the term of office the official will gain greater personal familiarity with the people, the land, the roads and the landmarks. This knowledge is extremely valuable when communicating with the citizens of the area.

In brief, officials should do the following:

- familiarize themselves with the various maps used in the community;
- request copies and an orientation program on the various plans and ordinances;
- request a staff referral list;
- insist on background reports and/or work sessions on problem items; and
- visit sites and areas subject to land use changes.

Resources are available to assist officials in discharging their legal responsibilities. The larger the jurisdiction and its staff, the more likely it is that training can be provided by staff regarding such matters as time management, decision making and stress reduction.

Time management is critical for the modern public official who has many responsibilities and usually a very busy schedule. Time management and decision-making techniques include procedures for efficient handling of paperwork and organizing activities. For instance, executive summaries or resumes of all reports and action items

are helpful. A schedule that requires agendas and the necessary accompanying information a specific number of days in advance of a meeting will assure adequate time to prepare for the meeting and render a decision.

It is very important for public officials to know the techniques of conducting a meeting so that it progresses smoothly and quickly and so all parties are treated fairly. The use of reasonable time limits for presentations, rebuttals, etc., is a key item. Training regarding group decision-making techniques is very helpful to assure that negotiation is a shared experience and that the group works as a unit in considering business matters and arrives at a consensus in the most timely yet fair manner. As every public official knows, patience is a vital trait needed to survive the numerous and long meetings required by today's public business.

The public official's role is a key ingredient in efforts to attract private investment in the community. While land development proposals may cause personal stress and community aggravation at times, the public official's skills and smooth handling of the process will in most cases determine the attractiveness of the community and the quality of development. While planners and administrators can implement the procedures and plans that are recommended and approved by public officials, they cannot make decisions. Each needs the other, and all must work together to properly use all available resources while coping with land development pressures and striving to improve our communities at the same time.

<sup>1</sup>Ernest F. Cooke, "Why Most of the Retail Action is East of the Mississippi," *American Demographics*, November 1984, pp. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Holdrich, "Prospects for Metropolitan Growth," *American Demographics*, April 1984, p. 32-33.

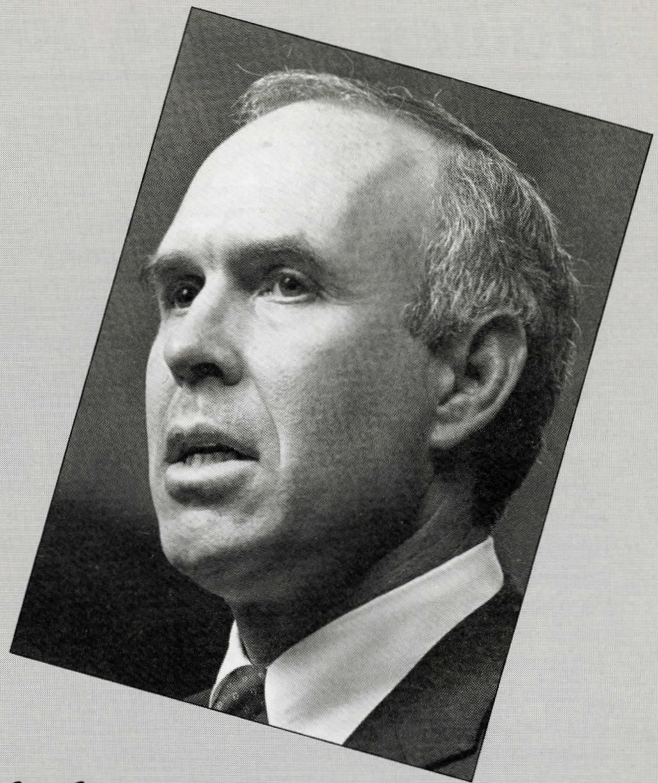
<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 36.

**About the Authors**

Angela H. Moore, AICP, has a master's of planning and urban design from the University of Virginia and 15 years of public planning experience. Currently, she is principal planner, Advance Planning Section, County of Henrico Planning Office. She also serves as the current president of the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Allen Webb, CLA, has a bachelor of science in landscape architecture from Michigan State University and is a registered landscape architect. He has more than 30 years experience in landscape architecture and planning in the private and public sectors. He is principal planner of the Current Planning Section, County of Henrico Planning Office, and serves as treasurer of the Virginia Citizens Planning Association.





## The Candidates and the Issues

*Virginia Town & City asked Republican candidate for governor Wyatt B. Durrette and the Democratic candidate for governor Gerald L. Baliles to respond to the following set of questions posed by the VML staff. Their answers are given on the following pages.*

**1** What is your position on funding the state's percentage of the mandated Standards of Quality for basic educational aid and the categorical programs, and from what sources would you draw funding?

**2** In light of major federal budget cuts to local government programs, what is your position on state aid and/or added flexibility in local revenue generating authority as a means for localities to continue vital services?

**3** What is your position on funding for highways and transit programs, and if supporting increased funding, what sources of funding would you choose?

**4** What is your position regarding the recent recommendation made to the Committee on Deinstitutionalization by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission and the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, specifically including the recommendations (1) that state general fund

dollars for mental health and mental retardation be allocated directly to community service boards, (2) that core program services for the chronically ill be mandated and (3) that local government financial contribution to community service boards be required?

**5** What do you plan to do to alleviate the potentially explosive situation in overcrowded local jails burdened even further by the placement of state felons and other state prisoners in local facilities?

**6** Water is a critical resource in the future of Virginia. It will affect the development of every community in the commonwealth. What are your views on the proposed Virginia Water Withdrawal Act which would mandate a permitting system for the withdrawal of both ground and surface water?

**7** What is your position on uranium mining in Virginia?

**8** What do you perceive as the most pressing problem facing Virginia's local governments, and what plans do you have to resolve that problem?

**9** What special efforts have you made in the past to better understand the needs of Virginia's local governments or to provide assistance for them?



1

During recent debates, the difference on this issue between me and my opponent has become clear. I am committed to full funding of the Standards of Quality for our public schools; my opponent is not. At this point, the state is meeting 90 percent of its mandated responsibility to fund these standards, and I believe that the time has come to reach the 100 percent level during the next administration. This is important not only as a signal of our commitment to education and the future of our children but to build on the progress that has been made and to reflect the consensus of educators, parents and the General Assembly on the need for these standards in our schools.

My opponent has said he would follow his own agenda for spending the estimated \$500 million dollars that would be used to fund these standards—a statement that basically indicates he would substitute his judgment for that consensus and ignore the years of research and review that have brought us so close to the full funding level. The Standards of Quality impact on teaching materials, facilities, curricula and teachers' salaries; a governor who rejects their fundamental importance to local governments could disrupt educational progress for years to come. Funding for education will be a priority in my administration, as it has been during Gov. Robb's term of office. General state revenues have been favorably impacted by a strong economy in recent months, and short-term projections indicate that no tax increase will be needed to pay for funding of the Standards of Quality. Massive federal deficits could weaken this position, but I am confident that my approach to state government management will result in efficiencies and new ideas that can enhance our overall revenue picture.

2

As the Reagan administration continues to reduce federal aid to states and localities, local and state governments are required to shoulder an ever broadening set of fiscal responsibilities. As governor, I will closely monitor the burdens thrown back upon our localities and, in consultation with state and local officials, will consider means by which local governments may be assured of resources adequate to carry out those increased responsibilities.

3

I believe that transportation is one of the fundamental building blocks of Virginia's future. If we can't move people to and from work, if our commerce is hindered by inadequate highways and if our communities are choked by increasing traffic

loads, we cannot make progress in economic development, and our overall quality of life is compromised. The challenge we face now is not to find new ways to divide the transportation funding pie . . . but rather to increase the size of the pie and determine funding needs from the most comprehensive information available about local transportation problems and the statewide transportation systems we use.

As governor, one of my first actions will be to initiate preparation of a comprehensive transportation plan to address short-term needs and the most effective way to meet those needs. I will also bring together a Commission on Virginia's Transportation in the 21st Century to anticipate long-term trends and needs. I would expect to obtain the critical information necessary to make the decisions for transportation projects during the next 15 to 20 years. Funding options for those projects will be developed during that information-gathering process. We know we cannot look solely to the traditional gas tax to produce the total revenues needed. I do not intend to look to new taxes for an immediate or singular solution. Rather, I would promote the innovation and effectiveness that can be measured in cost savings and in better use of resources. "Fast tracking" of construction projects, priorities based on better information and aggressive leadership in seeking federal assistance for maintenance and bridge repair are all avenues of improvements that I will consider.

We can no longer approach Virginia's transportation needs in a piecemeal fashion, assuming that one transportation mode does not impact upon another. In order to make maximum use of our limited resources, we must undertake a sweeping review of all our transportation needs, policies and resources. We must focus our planning and direct our expenditures to enhance Virginia's economic development efforts and the benefits those efforts have for our communities.

4

I have not yet had a chance to examine the specific recommendations of JLARC and DMHMR in regard to funding of the crucial work done by community service boards. In general, I do not believe that the commonwealth should create additional state-mandated programs without identifying or earmarking revenue sources to support those programs. I will study the plan to fund CSBs directly from the General Fund, although I should

*—continued on page 12—*



1

I am committed to seeing that Virginia's state government meets its moral obligation to adequately provide for the education of our children at all levels—elementary, secondary and higher education. My administration will have no higher priority than to couple adequate funding with the basic educational reforms I recently proposed in my 18-point Agenda for Excellence.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission is currently conducting an extensive study to determine the "actual cost" of fully funding the Standards of Quality for public education. The study's findings are expected to be available in December. There is good reason to believe that the funds required to pay the state's share of the Standards of Quality, currently estimated to be \$515 million for the 1986–88 biennium, will be available from additional revenues generated by the commonwealth's private economy. Assuming those estimates are correct, I will make that financial commitment, but I want to ensure that the reforms I have proposed are included.

2

With the vast majority of Virginians, I am deeply concerned about the dangers to our economic well-being represented by continuing huge deficits in the federal budget. Significant reductions in federal spending are urgently required to sustain our economic growth, maintain the creation of jobs in the private sector and hold the rein on inflation.

As Congress cooperates with President Reagan in his efforts to reduce the federal budget, we will have a clearer idea of the potential impact on Virginia regarding governmental programs important to many of our people.

I support the president in his difficult task. As governor, I will welcome the challenge of helping restore a proper balance to the governmental administration of social programs vital to Virginians. I applaud the renewed commitment in Virginia and across the country to fiscal responsibility in Washington and a New Federalism recognizing the importance of the states. As the cutbacks are made, I will work diligently with leaders of the General Assembly to make sure that Virginia responds with care and compassion to the effects of reduced federal spending for key social programs. In many instances, our cities and smaller localities will have an important role to play in determining which federal program expenditures ought to be assumed with state or local resources. Local jurisdictions which desire the opportunity to respond with initiative and innovation to the challenges posed by federal spending reductions will be given every encourage-

ment to do so in keeping with the wishes of their citizens.

3

Virginia is not now adequately meeting its highway and transportation needs. Finding the funds to pay for this enormous obligation will be one of the major challenges facing the next governor. It is essential for expanding our economic base and improving the quality of life of our citizens.

Additional road construction needs throughout the commonwealth will make it necessary to increase the amount of money allocated for construction. As governor, I will ask the General Assembly to relax the ceiling on local county and city road construction bond issues. This will provide greater flexibility for localities to meet their pressing transportation needs. Additional state revenue for roads must also be found. I am convinced that the need for increased revenues for road construction and maintenance is urgent, and, as governor, I will seek to find ways to provide additional state revenue to meet the transportation needs of the commonwealth.

As governor, my staff and I will work closely with members of the Reagan administration, with our senators and congressmen, with local government officials and with businessmen and community leaders to find sensible solutions.

4

Historically, the commonwealth of Virginia has accepted responsibility for the funding and administration of our mental health system. In fact, Virginia has the oldest state-run mental hospital in the country. Following this line of reasoning, I do not feel it is necessary or would be more efficient to delegate our responsibility to the localities by allocating state general fund dollars for mental health and mental retardation directly to community service boards. I am concerned that such delegation would present administrative difficulties that would far outweigh any gains from decentralization. I do feel that core program services for the chronically ill should be mandated because the recipients of care and their families deserve a uniform program and this can only be achieved through a state mandate. Finally, I do not feel that local governments should have to contribute to an effort that has always been an accepted state responsibility. I would also be reluctant to support such a requirement because some areas in Virginia (those with a large number of institutions) would shoulder an uneven portion of the cost of our statewide mental health system.

—continued on page 13—



# Baliles

note that I am wary of any proposal that would reduce the ability of the governor and the executive branch to ensure accountability for the expenditure of state funds.

5

I have recently made public a detailed agenda for corrections entitled "Prisons That Work" that provides specific plans for expansion of the state's prison capacity by 1,650 beds during the next four years. Nine hundred of these beds can be made available within the next few months without any additional capital outlays; an additional 150 beds can be added at relatively minimal cost by upgrading water, sewage and other infrastructure components in correctional field units. Together, these steps will add 1,050 beds to our system at minimal cost. The balance of 600 beds will be met by expansion of about half a dozen existing facilities. In conjunction with recent steps taken by Gov. Robb to alleviate overcrowding problems in urban jails, my plan will provide adequate space to house state prisoners without exceeding the capacity of our local jails—and thus will provide the basis for a safer, more secure corrections system in the 1990s.

6

As I pointed out to the Virginia Water Resources Conference sponsored by the Sierra Club in early September, conservation and management of our water resources may well be the single most pressing resource concern we face during the next administration. Southeastern Virginia in particular will face serious water shortages in the relatively near future. Virginia's riparian water rights doctrine has served us well. However, as competition for water resources intensifies, it has become obvious that this doctrine may become an inadequate mechanism in and of itself for allocation and management of our water resources. Probable demands for interbasin transfers of water must be anticipated, and the complex legal framework within which any such plan would operate fully explored, if we are to be prepared to meet our water needs. The water permitting system contemplated by the proposed Virginia Water Withdrawal Act provides an example of possible water use management techniques that should be considered only as part of a larger, comprehensive approach to water resource problems. I will move expeditiously to resolve certain legal questions regarding water and seek meetings with federal officials and neighboring states to clarify matters of law affecting federal, state and interstate issues.

7

I favor continuation of the current moratorium on uranium mining. Under present technology, the potential for long-term radioactive contamination of

water supplies substantially outweighs the short-term economic benefits that might accrue from uranium mining and milling operations. Absent compelling evidence that this threat can be safely contained, I would not favor lifting that moratorium.

8

The challenges facing local governments today are unprecedented. Federal budget cuts add new demands for local revenues, growing communities need more public services and an improved tax base is increasingly tied to the quality of local schools because of the need for businesses to offer their employees a lifestyle "package" for their families.

If I had to choose one issue on which I base my campaign and my concerns for local government, I would have to say that education is that issue. I fully understand the many other issues that have the attention of city halls across this commonwealth. But the one that cuts across county lines and through city limits is the basic understanding and hope of our citizens to provide opportunities for their children. Beyond this, we see the need for retraining workers for new skills and new jobs, and the need for higher education to provide essential links to research and high technology businesses.

All the local issues that affect us today . . . water and sewer needs, roads and bridges repair and maintenance, human services . . . have as their common denominator the objective of a certain quality of life in our communities. I believe the key to that quality is and will continue to be educational opportunities for all ages, but especially in our public schools. The state's commitment to funding its share of the cost of educational quality is a major factor for local governments to consider as they set their priorities and plan for their growth and development.

9

As attorney general of Virginia during the past three and one-half years, I had the privilege to serve as legal advisor not only to more than 200 state agencies and institutions, but also to the cities, towns and counties in the commonwealth. In fulfillment of that role, I issued dozens of opinions on matters of vital concern to localities, from conflicts of interest to cooperative agreements for regional services.

As attorney general, I also worked to improve law enforcement and public safety in Virginia. Gov. Robb and I sponsored an anti-crime package that toughened penalties for drug pushers, child pornographers and criminals using firearms during the commission of a felony, and improved police officers' abilities to enforce our laws. I sponsored Virginia's first Criminal Justice Forum, which brought together law enforcement officers from across the state to share ideas and recommendations on strengthening public safety efforts.

In other initiatives, I restructured the attorney



general's office, adding specialized units to combat medicaid fraud, consumer fraud and toxic wastes violations. I also developed a wide-ranging series of seminars, conferences and briefings designed to aid local government officials to interpret and apply state law regarding matters of particular concern to localities—including the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the Virginia Comprehensive Conflicts of Interest Act, the Administrative Process Act and the Virginia Public Procurement Act. My office also sponsored Attorney General's Law Conferences on Higher Education and on Agriculture.

## Durrette

5

We must have sufficient prison facilities to house the growing inmate population. Here in Virginia, we've experienced a 91 percent increase in the number of state prisoners in just the last 10 years. Although previous Republican administrations planned and constructed several new prisons, the current administration has not done so, nor has it come up with viable alternatives for housing the inmates. The problem of overcrowding is not going to go away. In fact, it is getting worse, and the next governor must provide the leadership to deal with it.

We need to expand our prison system, and we

have known that for years. We must decide immediately on how to safely house the growing inmate population. I have proposed renovating and expanding existing facilities and using existing state-owned buildings. That may not be enough, however, and if we need to build new prisons, my administration will do so.

What we will not do is allow state inmates to back up in local jails at dangerous levels for prolonged periods. The state will meet its responsibility to safely house convicted felons. We will not only provide facilities; we will also provide the necessary security and support staff to go along with them.

6

Virginia has adequate water supplies overall, but those supplies are not always located in the population centers where the demand for water is greatest. The State Water Commission is currently conducting hearings concerning the best way to avert water shortages in the future. Difficult questions of ownership and possible compensation for water are involved. While I believe the General Assembly ultimately must resolve these questions, I am opposed to the wholesale abandonment of the centuries-old riparian doctrine here in the commonwealth. As governor, I will provide active leadership to bring about sensible solutions for local and regional water problems without imposing on the citizens of our state the burdensome regulatory and permitting system that some have proposed.

—continued on page 14—

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7

As governor, I intend to aggressively pursue opportunities for economic growth throughout Virginia. However, I would support uranium mining and milling only if studies conclusively show that such operations could be conducted without danger to the public health.

8

Virginia's localities face many pressing needs, from education to transportation to economic development to law enforcement and local jail overcrowding. As a former assistant city attorney in Fairfax, I understand the variety of problems and challenges that confront local government leaders. I know also the critical importance of having state government as a full working partner, meeting its responsibilities and assisting local governments in finding effective ways of meeting theirs.

I believe that the governor must provide leadership in searching for innovative solutions to local

problems. My proposals for educational opportunity zones, incentives to encourage private business to get involved in public education, and a local option to elect school boards are some of the ways I would seek to achieve this goal in public education.

I believe also that state government must do a better job of working with local government officials and community leaders to encourage economic development. Too often, opportunities to attract new businesses to communities are missed because local and state industrial recruitment efforts are not well coordinated. That is why I have proposed formation of local industrial recruitment teams consisting of key business, government and community leaders in each locality, which would work closely with a similarly-constituted statewide industrial recruitment team and with state officials with responsibility for economic development.

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# JLARC's Update on Fiscal Stress

By R. Kirk Jonas

Because of widespread interest of the fiscal stress indices of its 1984 report on "State Mandates and Local Financial Resources," the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission decided to update these indices. The result is an abbreviated version of the original report, focusing on the local fiscal stress indices and recent state actions affecting localities.

The update accomplishes a number of objectives. First, it lengthens the period of analysis to seven years (fiscal year 1977 to fiscal year 1983) from five years (fiscal year 1977 to fiscal year 1981). Second, it enabled JLARC to correct a problem relating to personal income data about which it had received questions. Third, it permitted a comparison between the two reports, and fourth, it permitted JLARC to look at some of the potential effects of 1984 and 1985 appropriations. All of the information sought should be helpful to state and local analysts and policy-makers.

Overall, the findings of the 1985 update parallel the original report. However, two positive indicators of local fiscal condition are evident from this update: state aid to localities is up, and local tax effort has moderated.

State aid to localities increased as a percentage of total local revenues, and the state's share of funding education increased dramatically. The degree to which localities tax, after increasing steadily from fiscal year 1977 to fiscal year 1981, decreased slightly in fiscal year 1983.

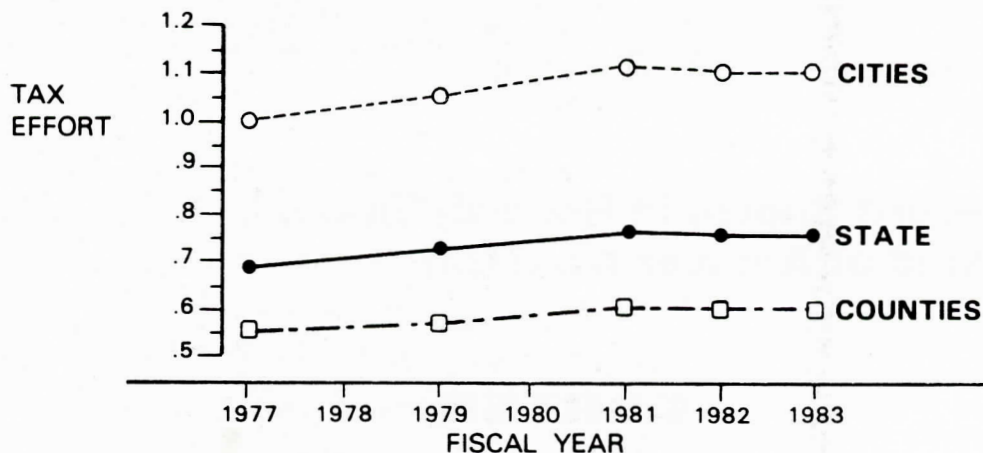
Analysis of the update shows that fiscal stress in localities has not increased. Localities' levels of tax effort stabilized in fiscal year 1982 and fiscal year 1983, and while revenue capacity increased, these increases did not match the increased cost of governmental services. To assess local fiscal stress, JLARC focused on three elements: local revenue capacity, local tax effort and an index of these and other indicators.

## Revenue Capacity

A local government's revenue capacity is defined as its ability to raise revenues to support its public services. More precise, revenue capacity is the potential revenue that would be generated if a locality used statewide average tax rates for each of the major tax instruments. This concept was developed by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) and is often referred to as the "representative tax system."

Local revenue capacity according to the JLARC update grew to an average rate of \$523.98 per capita in 1983 from an average rate of \$483.92 per capita in 1981 or approximately 8 percent. During this same time frame the cost of government services increased by 15 percent. A slowdown in the increase of the true value of real estate during this period accounts for some of the reported lag in revenue capacity. If this trend continues, localities may be forced to consider diversifying their tax bases to decrease their dependence on real property taxes.

## Trends in Tax Effort FY 1977 - 1983



Source: JLARC staff analysis.



## Overall Focus of 1984 Report & 1985 Update

### ISSUE

- (1) To what extent do State mandates impose a burden on localities?
- (2) Is the type and amount of State assistance to localities adequate?
- (3) Do local governments have sufficient financial resources to fund the public services they must provide?

### 1984 FINDING

- (1) Overall, mandates were not regarded as a substantive problem in themselves. Funding was the problem.
- (2) No. While the State spent much, it was proportionately less than in other states; it had declined as a percentage of State spending over time. Three specific programs were under-funded:
  - (a) State share of the SOQ,
  - (b) special education,
  - (c) auxiliary grants.
- (3) Some do; some don't. Cities and rural counties are particularly stressed. All localities experience some fiscal stress.

### 1985 FINDING

- (1) No further research done.
- (2) State assistance to localities is up in numerous areas. Of the three programs specifically cited as being underfunded:
  - (a) The State share of the SOQ has increased dramatically from a low of 76.9% (1981) to 80.3% (1983) and is projected to go to 89.5% (1986)
  - (b) Special education State share continued to fall
  - (c) Auxiliary grant ceiling for State reimbursement raised to 80 per cent. State share increases from 62.5% to 70%
- (3) Overall fiscal stress has not changed. Tax effort, however, has stabilized.

### Tax Effort

A key option available to local officials to increase revenue is to increase the local government's tax effort. Tax effort refers to the degree to which a local government taxes its available revenues.

The measure used to assess tax effort in the JLARC update is also based on ACIR's procedure. A local government's tax effort is equal to its actual local tax revenues divided by its revenue capacity. As with revenue capacity, this measure of tax effort provides a sound basis for examining each locality's tax levels, for assessing how tax levels have changed over time and for comparing localities to each other.

Between fiscal year 1977 and fiscal year 1981 Virginia's local governments steadily increased their tax efforts to .76 percent from .68 percent. In both fiscal year 1982 and fiscal year 1983, the level stabilized at .75 percent. The average change in local tax effort from fiscal year 1981 to fiscal year 1983 was a decline of approximately .01 percent.

The largest disparity in tax effort was between cities and counties. In fiscal year 1983, counties had a tax effort averaging .60 percent while cities had a substantially higher effort at 1.11 percent. All cities but one (Poquoson) had levels of effort higher than the statewide average, while only 17 counties (18 percent) had tax effort levels exceeding the statewide average.

### Levels of Fiscal Stress

Revenue capacity and tax effort are considered two dimensions of fiscal condition. The fiscal stress index developed by JLARC provides a broader and more concrete measure of local financial stress along five dimensions. It is important to note, however, that the stress index is a relative measure. It serves to identify those local governments which are experiencing a high level of fiscal stress compared to other local governments in Virginia. Thus, whether general fiscal conditions are "good" or "bad," roughly half of all localities will have an above average fiscal position and roughly half will have a below average fiscal position.

Significant variations in the levels of stress are experienced by local governments. Some local governments have high levels of stress according to most of the indicators, while others show relatively low levels of stress according to the same indicators. Overall, the majority of cities show a higher level of fiscal stress than counties.

Measures of revenue capacity, tax effort and resident income can provide reliable indicators of a local government's fiscal position. Using these measures, five key symptoms of fiscal stress may be identified:

- relatively low revenue or tax base,
- relatively low growth in tax base,
- relatively high tax effort,
- relatively high increase in tax effort, and

- relatively low resident income.

None of these measures viewed alone is an adequate indicator of fiscal position. However, a local government which shows a pattern of stress across all of these indicators may be considered to have a poor fiscal condition.

Between fiscal year 1981 and fiscal year 1983 no significant change took place in the composite fiscal stress index for the 136 Virginia localities included in JLARC update. In addition, the relative rankings of the localities based on the stress index changed little. This indicates that problems facing localities in the past continued to face them in fiscal year 1983.

Most of the major findings of the original report have held constant. Cities still show more and greater levels of stress than counties; however, it also remains true that few local governments are not stressed to some degree. The relative positions of the local governments surveyed also stayed basically the same.

While all localities were shown to experience stress on at least one dimension, it would be unreasonable to suggest that all localities are severely fiscally stressed. Many localities appear to have the capacity to deal with their own fiscal problems.

Several types, levels or combinations of stress do require our special attention, especially low revenue capacities in conjunction with low capacity growths or high tax efforts. Governments with



these stresses appear to have the least ability or latitude to generate more funds.

The state must be attentive to the range and diversity of all stresses in order to ensure local financial vitality and viability. State aid to localities plays a major role in a locality's fiscal condition, and the increased state aid in recent years should have a positive effect.

## State Aid to Local Governments

In fiscal year 1984, state funds to localities totalled \$1.63 billion. Overall, state financial assistance to localities comprises a stable proportion of local budgets. Indeed, fiscal year 1984 shows the state share of total local funding sources increasing to 32 percent from 31 percent. Since 1978 the state's share has increased from 28 percent, the low point of the period examined.

Driven by a significant increase in state spending for education, state aid to localities is growing. Funding of the state's share of the educational Standards of Quality is at an all-time high. Also, state funding of local health services has improved substantially in recent years, and state funding of local welfare programs has grown.

Generally, the state has kept its historical commitments to localities and is providing funds equal to its level of control. Initiatives in 1985 in the area of auxiliary grants to low-income and disabled persons should help to further stabilize local government expenditures, which grew rapidly from 1978 to 1982 before moderating in 1983 and 1984.

Of the areas examined, the state's share of funding declined only for special education and local health departments. While local funding of special education declined to 71.7 percent (fiscal year 1984) from 72.1 percent (fiscal year 1983) of total funding, this level still exceeds local levels of control. State funding of local health departments declined to 54.7 percent in fiscal year 1984 from 58.1 percent of total funding in fiscal year 1978.

Overall, fiscal year 1983 and fiscal year 1984 showed increasing state assistance for localities. Still, some localities remain severely fiscally stressed. JLARC recommends that state action to aid these localities be considered.

## Addressing Fiscal Stress

While state aid to localities is increasing, problems exist with the current methods of distribution. Shifts have occurred in local tax bases, and dependence on different sources of revenue varies between localities. Some formulas for distributing state aid have gone too long without review, and some have technical problems. Further, in the case of the composite index a key component, personal income, suffers from errors and inconsistencies.

Perhaps reflecting these problems, many local officials reported to JLARC that they felt the key formulas were unfair. The Health Department formula was cited as unfair by 46 percent of the local officials surveyed by JLARC for the 1984 mandates report. Statewide, 40 percent of the local officials felt that the formula for education was unfair. Also in its recent reports on highway allocations, JLARC found significant inequities in the distribution of highway funds.

No single remedy exists for the problems associated with distributing state aid. Decisions to allocate funds represent judgments about need, ability to pay, program effectiveness, availability of funding and a variety of other considerations including political interests.

Changing problem formulas will be difficult, because any revisions will necessarily create "winners and losers" among localities. As existing funding is often scarce, it may be difficult to build a consensus for revising formulas when the effect could be to reduce funding in localities which may already be experiencing fiscal stress.

Reviews of existing formulas should be periodically made in order to promote the most equitable distribution of state funds. Comprehensive measures of local fiscal conditions should be incorporated in these formulas.

While modifications to formulas for distributing existing funds to localities are clearly needed, JLARC's review found that additional state funds are also needed to improve the fiscal position of some localities. One approach to assisting localities would be to increase funding to localities specifically for programs mandated by the state. These funds could flow through already existing programs, such as education, with modification of the funding formulas taken up at a later time. Through funding of these major programs the state would be able to restore its levels of historic commitment.

A second approach would be to funnel new revenue sharing funds to localities through a formula which measures levels of fiscal stress. In addition, some localities, principally counties, would profit from additional taxing authority.

## Funding State Programs

While localities would benefit from state "stress aid," the state's logical first priority would be to fund local programs mandated by the state. This approach would lessen local fiscal stress and fulfill state commitments. Funding priority would probably go to education, auxiliary grants, special education and local health departments. (It should be noted that another JLARC study is currently underway to estimate the costs of fully funding the Standards of Quality for elementary and secondary education.)

## Stress Aid

While priority would likely be given to funding state program commitments, the General Assembly could consider taking additional sums and distributing them on the basis of fiscal stress. Such aid would particularly help high-stress, low-capacity localities which may not have sufficient resources to provide needed programs.

A few localities in Virginia would benefit from the grant of additional taxing authority. Currently, Virginia counties and cities have substantially different taxing authority. At one time, these differences probably reflected clear distinctions between counties and cities. Today, the existence of cities with extremely large geographical areas and the urbanization of some counties softens those differences. Equalizing the taxing authority of Virginia counties and cities could be considered.

## Continued Measurement

The measurement of local fiscal stress helps to focus attention on local fiscal conditions, particularly on the most severely stressed localities. Ongoing preparation of such analyses would be of value to both the state government and local governments. With such analyses, state decision-makers could focus on the distribution of state funds for many purposes. Local decision-makers could also use the analyses in the pursuit of inter-governmental aid and for other purposes.

*continued on page 21*



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# Heffner Wins Wallerstein Scholarship

Alice Susan Heffner of Richmond received the \$5,000 VML Wallerstein Fellowship for the 1985-86 academic year.

Heffner is a native of New York and a social work graduate of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. In September she began her studies at the University of Virginia where she is seeking a master's in public administration.

Citing the challenge of solving human and social problems in a society of shrinking economic resources, shifting political winds and overcrowded organizational agendas, Heffner seeks a role in guiding and influencing governmental organizations and services in a responsive and positive way. She believes her work experiences and academic background will assist her in this role.

Her work experiences include internships with a countywide Head Start program, with an information and referral

service and in coordinating family planning and pregnancy services for a pilot test in Israel. She has also worked for a Washington-based public interest organization which provided her with insight into public policy determination, and she is currently working for the Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation coordinating interdepartmental grants dealing with adolescent pregnancy and drunk driving.

The annual Wallerstein Fellowship is presented by the league in coordination with the Institute of Government, University of Virginia. It honors Morton L. Wallerstein, the first executive director of the league who served in that capacity for 20 years. Wallerstein was also one of the eight persons who organized the American Municipal Association, now the National League of Cities, and he served as its president twice.



—Heffner—

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## JLARC Update

*from page 19*

poses, including the careful examination of their fiscal capacity and tax effort.

Also, the commission on Local Government has expressed an interest in the ongoing generation of this analysis. The commission currently uses the analyses in annexation proceedings and as a part of its local government functions. Consideration could be given to vesting responsibility for the continued assessment of local fiscal conditions with the Commission on Local Government.

### Conclusion

JLARC's update report refocuses legislative attention on commitments to localities and the inability of all localities to fill the gap between the state mandates and state dollars provided to fund mandates. The state has made major strides in recent years to meet its commitments to localities. While much remains to be done, the direction of state aid and priorities is encouraging.

### About the Author

R. Kirk Jonas is a division chief of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission and has directed the JLARC study of "State Mandates and Local Financial Resources" for the past three years.



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## Citizen Participation in the Planning Process

In the words of Sherry Arnstein, "The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach; no one is against it in principle because it is good for you."

Unfortunately, for many planners the palatability of citizen participation seems to diminish as it moves from merely informing the public of planning activities and working with the local planning commission to more meaningful involvement of the public at large in the planning process.

Citizens of the commonwealth currently possess a minimum of four basic mechanisms through which they can exert influence upon the planning process. First and foremost, through the traditional political process citizens can seek elective office or attempt to elect to the local government individuals who possess a vision of the community similar to their own. Second, they can seek appointment to the local planning commission, which serves as an advisory body to the local government. Third, even in the absence of an appointment to the planning commission they can attend meetings of that body which by law must be open to the public. Finally, citizens can participate in public hearings which are conducted on all plans and ordinances prior to their adoption.

While these legally prescribed mechanisms provide some input into the planning process by members of the community, they tend to be underused by all but the most politically astute members of the society. What of the disenfranchised — those individuals within the population at large and our lower income communities in particular, who due to feelings of powerlessness fail to avail themselves of opportunities to participate. If such individuals become involved at all, their involvement is generally activated by a single issue with direct bearing upon their lives. Even this limited involvement frequently ceases as issues evolve. If the attitudes and desires of these individuals are to be reflected within our plans, their views must be more actively solicited.

While the law does not preclude the use of more active mechanisms to either inform the public of planning projects or involve them in the planning process, for the most part planners have done little more than that required of them by law. This lack of further citizen participation activity is shortsighted, and increased levels of citizen involvement are desir-

able on philosophical as well as pragmatic grounds.

Philosophically, more active citizen participation efforts can be viewed as a means of perfecting the democratic process by increasing accessibility to local government. In practical terms, active citizen participation efforts are desirable because they result in both better plans and plans that stand a greater likelihood of implementation.

Plans resulting from active citizen participation tend to be superior because they more accurately reflect the values, attitudes, desires and beliefs of the community at large. By obtaining a more representative understanding of views within the community, the planner is better positioned to develop realistic strategies and plans for the jurisdiction.

Once realistic strategies and plans have been developed through an active citizen involvement program, they are more likely to be implemented for two reasons. First, much of the opposition traditionally faced by planners is due to fear and lack of understanding of what is actually contained within their plans. By actively involving all segments of the community in the planning process, this fear and lack of understanding can be minimized, and much of the resulting opposition can be avoided. Second, individuals who have been involved in the planning process often feel a sense of ownership toward the plans and are less likely to oppose what they regard as their own creation.

Achieving desirable levels of awareness and involvement from the citizenry of a community is not an easy task. Fortunately, planners have a variety of techniques at their disposal with which to accomplish this. To keep the public informed of planning activities, some planning agencies volunteer the services of their professional staffs or commission members for speaking engagements before civic organizations and other groups. Others publish periodic newsletters and/or make extensive use of the news media. One community development agency within the state has gone so far as to publish in the local newspaper a supplemental section devoted entirely to neighborhood and planning issues.

While each of these techniques can be effectively used to inform the public of planning activities, they allow only for one-way communication. To obtain in-

put from local residents, other approaches need to be employed. Towards this end some communities supplement legally mandated open planning commission meetings and public hearings with citizen attitude surveys, citizen advisory committees and periodic meetings with neighborhood councils and special interest groups.

Factors such as staff resources, the size and composition of the community's population, the size of the planning budget and the nature and level of planning activity must all be considered when attempting to determine how best to achieve meaningful citizen involvement in any particular community. Techniques appropriate for one community may not be feasible for another. The important thing is not the process, but the product.

In 1810 when Shawnee Indian Chief Tecumseh was asked to negotiate for his tribe at Vincennes, IN, he stated:

A few chiefs have no right to barter away hunting grounds that belong to all the Indians for a few paltry presents or a keg or two of whiskey. . . . it requires all to make a bargain for all.

Tecumseh's views on the rights of individuals to participate are as appropriate today as they were in 1810. If plans are being developed which will affect the community at large, then all segments of the community should be afforded an opportunity to be meaningfully involved in the planning process. It is incumbent upon local government officials as the holders of the public trust to develop mechanisms whereby such meaningful involvement can be achieved.

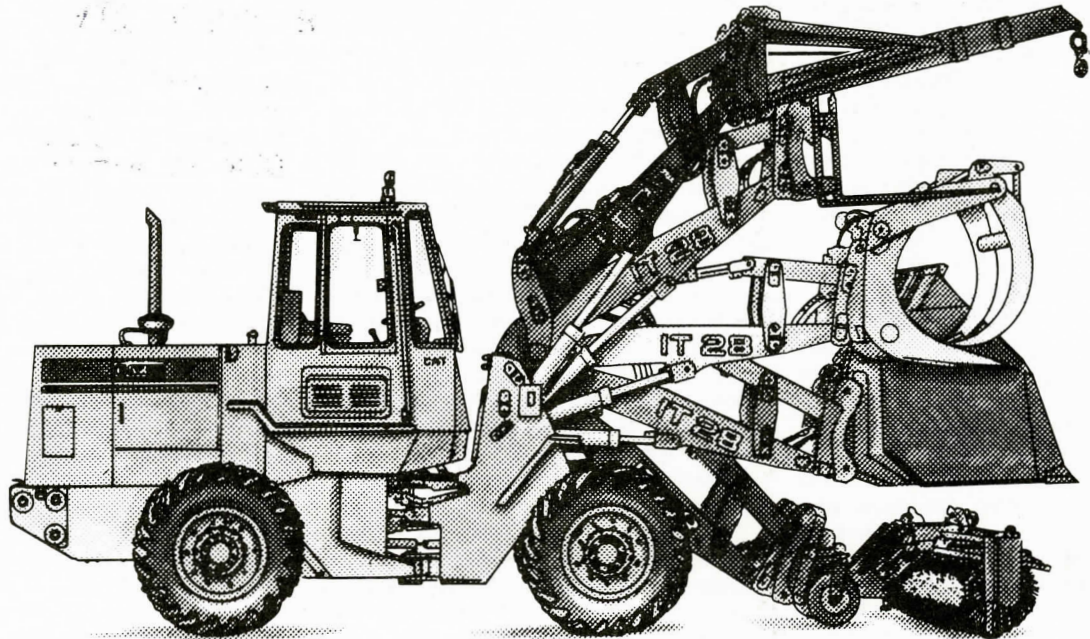
### About the Author

With a faculty appointment in the department of urban studies and planning, Gary Johnson is assistant dean and director of the Center for Public Affairs, School of Community and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University.





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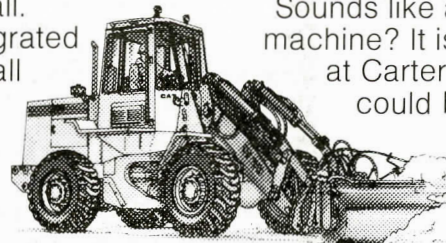
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