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Chamber of Commerce

State of the Region

LEAD Hampton Roads, a program of the Hampton Roads Chamber presented its 16th annual State of the Region Address on Tuesday, October 6th. This highly-anticipated event featured keynote speakers Dr. James V. Koch, Dr. Vinod Agarwal and Dr. Timothy Komarek of the Economics Department of Old Dominion University. Dr. Koch began the economic overview stating the region’s economy is “basically running in place.” The regional GDP shrank by 0.1% in 2014. It is only expected to grow by 1.10% in 2015, as compared to the national average of slightly over 2%.

Hampton Roads is dependent on Department of Defense (DOD) spending, but the region is down 26,900 active duty military personnel. This is a loss of 23.7% from its peak of 113,400 in 2003 to 86,500 today.

The Port of Virginia is fortunate to have a deep channel and no air restrictions. New York is currently spending $1.5 billion to raise the Bayonne Bridge to prepare for larger ships. Virginia now has a window of opportunity to bring new business to the Port. The universal message from all three speakers was the region needs to diversify its industry in order to compete nationally and internationally.

7th District Debate

Anticipation bugged as the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce hosted the State Senate 7th District Debate in Virginia Beach. The 7th District race was one of the most closely watched in Virginia and garnered national interest as well. Senator Frank Wagner and challenger Gary McCollum went toe to toe as they rallied back and forth with questions from the event moderator, Dr. Bob Holsworth. They addressed issues including early childhood education, transportation, the environment and much more.

Senator Frank Wagner of Virginia Beach has served in his position as Virginia’s State Senator for 24 years. During his remarks, he said, “It’s not government that creates jobs, it’s the people sitting at this table today.” He emphasized that he wants to create win-win scenarios to help the economy and do more for education. Gary McCollum is no stranger to the business community. He most recently served as the Senior Vice President and General Manager of Cox Communications Virginia. I’m a business leader, a husband, father, a community leader, I’m a former Army Ranger and even though I’ve been very successful in business and in the military, my life did not start off that way.” His debate themes focused on McCollum being a leader rather than a politician and that it was time for new leadership. Those in attendance were enlightened on the candidates points of view and areas of interest. Thom Prevette, Director of Advocacy and Community Affairs for Bon Secours Virginia Health System commented, “I think they addressed the important issues and that the moderator did a great job of keeping them on task. I appreciate the ability to listen to other opinions and policy statements and the communication to not be so negative.”

The debate ended in respectful acknowledgment and handshakes from both opponents and brief congratulations from the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce President & CEO, Bryan K. Stephens.

The Chamber wishes to thank Bon Secours Virginia Health System and Sinclair Media for their sponsorship of this event.
Welcome New Members

Chesapeake
- SFC Consulting
- Advocate Independent Distributor/Woody Gibson
- Comfort Inn & Suites
- On Point, LLC
- Say Yes To Your Dreams, LLC
- Snap Fitness Chesapeake
- Sutherland Global Services
- Tidewater Home Staging

Franklin
- Franklin Southampton Economic Development
- The Rabii Law Firm
- Glenn Allen
- Lumen Network
- Golden
- HomeAdvisor

Hampton
- Jali Lindsay Lowe

Newport News
- Odyssey Community Services, Inc.

Norfolk
- AECOM
- AT&T Sales Office
- Coldwell Banker Professional Realties
- Costco
- Delphi Commercial Capital
- Farmers Insurance - The Hicks Hawkins Insurance Agency
- GOV2COM
- Kelly Services, Inc.
- Lodgian
- Warren Insurance
- Negre Pavement Products
- Pioneer Services Division MidCountry Bank
- Signature Printing and Graphic
- Tidewater Home Care Inc
- Virginia Symphony Orchestra
- Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC

Pittsburg, NC
- Talent Curve

Portsmouth
- Coi Styles, LLC
- Culligan of Greater Virginia
- Integrity Security Services
- Service Solutions for IT
- Shelli Miller
- Trows
- Lynn Jewellery

Richmond
- Allied Barton Security Services
- Capital Results

Suffolk
- Space Hampton Roads, Inc.
- Virginia Beach
- Adele Diamond
- Asian Community Service Center
- Beauty Skin Deep LLC
- Bollem Low Firm
- Carrabba’s Italian Grill
- Covered Image Solutions
- Diasonic Swamp Art Festival
- Equilibrio Home Health of Virginia, Inc.
- Escape Room Virginia Beach
- Fort Story/Balfour Beauty Communities
- Gumbarick Plastic Surgery
- Haynes Furniture Co., Inc.
- Hertz Equipment Rental
- Levin Contracting Inc.
- Mainstream Merchant Services
- Mr. Handymen of Virginia Beach
- Patricia Almond
- Pragmatic Innovations
- Real Property Management
- Route274 Foundation Inc.
- Sandybridge Family Dental Care
- Scott Small Business Accounting, LLC
- Second Act Communities
- Service Link
- Seventh Point Advertising
- Team Re-Empowerment
- The Crossings at Independence
- The Z Team
- Transact Capital Partners
- Ultra Benyan Grove
- Valor Property, LLC
- Virginia Beach Project Lifesaver
- World Financial Group
- Zupa

Williamsburg
- Branscome Incorporated
- Smartec, LLC

Woodland, NC
- Perfectly Posh with Ashley Migelle

Yorktown
- Papa John’s of Hampton Roads

In the Spotlight

Mark Johnson Wins National Award

Mark Johnson, Vice President & Community Development Manager at SunTrust Bank and a 2004 graduate of LEAD Hampton Roads was awarded the Distinguished Leader Award from the National Association of Leadership Programs (ALP). Johnson was one of 15 people in the country to receive this award in 2015. LEAD Hampton Roads nominated Johnson and presented the award to him during the 2015 State of the Region Address on October 6, 2015. When asked about his award Johnson stated, “As professionals, we bring so many talents and resources to the table and I think LEAD is that one vehicle that we are able to deploy those talents equally and in a unified fashion across the region.”

Hampton Roads Sports Commission Awarded Gift

The Hampton Roads Sports Commission (HRSC), an affiliate of the Chamber was awarded a $5,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Marketing Leverage Program on November 2, 2015. The Program is designed to stimulate new tourism marketing programs and to extend the “Virginia is for Lovers” campaign. The objective is to leverage limited marketing dollars, resulting in increased visitor spending, revenue, and jobs.

When asked about the award, Lauren Bland, HRSC Director, said, “As a small organization, these dollars will help us do big things for the Hampton Roads region. We are proud and grateful to receive a VTC award. Virginia is not just for lovers, it’s for sports lovers too!”

Military Citizen of the Year

Samuel T. Northington was a local businessman who devoted his life to strengthening the relationship between the local community and the military. Since 1951, an annual award has been given to recognize the military citizen who has made the most significant contribution in the community. This year the award was presented to Staff Sergeant Tracey Evans of Air Combat Command. Detachment 4. Evans was among 32 nominees for this award.

When asked about her award Evans stated, “I would like to thank Technical Sergeant Burasri for nominating me for the ‘State Star’ award. I am truly humbled and forever grateful for being added to a list of other great military citizens who have previously been awarded this great honor.”

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Anniversaries

35 Years
- Chesapeake Regional Medical Center

30 Years
- Chesapeake Economic Development Dept.
- W. E. Curling, Inc.
- Gordon Paper Company
- Pembroke Mall
- Harbor Group International

25 Years
- Usui International Corp.
- Sanitary Linen Service, Inc.

20 Years
- Canon ITS Inc.
- Brooks Transfer & Storage Co., Inc.

15 Years
- INIT Innovations in Transportation Inc.
- Sam’s Club

Norfolk Development Department

10 Years
- Eastern Virginia Medical School
- Flowers Baking Co. of Norfolk
- Crane Tech Solutions
- Anthem Inc.
- Homewood Suites by Hilton
- IMAGE SERVICES Staffing (CSG, Inc. dba)
- R & D Training & Technical Services, Inc.

Support Services of Virginia Inc.
- Tower Benefit Consultants, Inc.

5 Years
- AMPMOR Electric Corp.
- BFPE International Fire, Safety & Security
- Greenbrier Comfort Suites Chesapeake
- Mr. Robert G. Bogley
- Koring & Company, LLC
- DLL OMNI Engineering LLC
- Issues & Answers Network Inc.
- Mid Atlantic Benefit Solutions

Noah Enterprises, Inc.
- Snydylsts, Inc.

The Virginia Beach Field House
tHRive Reaches Over 1,000 Members in Four Months

The Hampton Roads Chamber is thrilled with the energy and momentum its young professionals program, tHRive, has received since its launch in July. Now over 1,000 members strong, we constantly hear from young professionals looking to be involved. The Chamber has not only recognized the need for the program, but also its success by creating a Vice Chair of Young Professionals position on the Chamber’s Executive Committee as well as a position on the Regional Board so that the voice of young professionals is heard. tHRive’s current goals for expansion and growth include polling its membership on key regional issues, presenting data to decision makers, expanding their charitable reach, increasing membership, and increasing sponsorships to secure success in the coming year.

Membership is free and open to Chamber members and non-members ages 21-39. Visit www.YPtHRive.org to learn more and join this elite group of young professionals.

Chamber Hosts Annual U.S. Congressional Forum

The Chamber hosted its annual U.S. Congressional Forum featuring Congressmen Robert Wittman (1st District), Scott Rigell (2nd District), Bobby Scott (3rd District) and Randy Forbes (4th District) on October 14th.

After brief introductions and opening remarks, the congressional panel fielded questions from the audience, including inquiries about the Department of Labor’s proposed fiduciary standard for retirement account advisors, and the Iran nuclear deal. Chamber members in attendance submitted numerous questions. The main areas of concern were the U.S. military and international security, education reform, labor and energy, the national budget and changes in Congress.

Congressman Forbes passionately emphasized the importance of maintaining core principles and declared that all four congressmen were proud to work together as a team despite differing opinions on some issues. One issue all four agreed on was the negative impact a BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure Commission) would have on the Hampton Roads area, and their united efforts to prevent the closures of important military bases and installations throughout the region. Congressmen Rigell, Chairman of a subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee which oversees military readiness, training, logistics, installations and the BRAC process, spoke of his commitment to preventing another BRAC, and has previously spoken about the apparent lack of savings resulting from the 2005 BRAC.

A hot-button issue was the Iran nuclear deal. An energetic discussion began after an audience member posed a question regarding the soundness of the deal. Congressman Forbes stated that the deal showed a lack of American leadership in the world snubbing one of America’s greatest allies and supplying billions of dollars in assets to one of America’s greatest enemies. Congressmen Wittman and Rigell agreed with Forbes on this issue and offered comments to the same effect, while Congressman Scott disagreed, stating that a deal was necessary in what he viewed as a ‘deal or no deal’ situation. Supporters of the deal, Scott said, believe that Iran would receive the funding through some means, and thought it best to impose some sanctions even if it required unfavorable negotiation.

Congressman Rigell spoke directly to local business leaders, encouraging them to utilize their influence for innovation and progress in the region.

President & CEO Bryan K. Stephens said, “The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce was honored again this year to host our four U.S. Congressmen. We thank our U.S. Congressmen for their substantive discussion of the issues impacting the Nation, the Commonwealth and our region and their candid answers to our member’s questions. As always, we thank our many sponsors for this amazing event.”

Refer a member in 2016 and receive $100 in Chamber bucks

www.hamptonroadschamber.com/page/member-referral-program
Chamber Remix

Remix 1: Department of Defense Forum

The Hampton Roads Chamber hosted a forum on the 2016 U.S. defense budget on September 29th. It was hosted in partnership with the Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance and The Roosevelt Group, a bipartisan government relations consulting firm.

Chamber President & CEO Bryan K. Stephens opened the event with remarks on the importance of defense spending in Hampton Roads which accounts for 42% of the region’s economy. Stephens stressed the need to understand the Department of Defense budget and its impact on Hampton Roads so that, collectively and individually, Chamber members can make informed decisions and develop sound business plans.

John Simmons, founder of the Roosevelt Group, provided a summary of the current state of the national defense budget, which is affected by legislative priorities and congressional leadership changes. John C. Harvey Jr., Admiral, U.S. Navy (ret), Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs spoke about the importance of the numerous military installations throughout the Commonwealth and the many opportunities for growth in Hampton Roads. Harvey shared the importance of resources for Veterans in Virginia, which has the fastest-growing number in the U.S. He also discussed the National Defense Education Program’s partnership with the College of William and Mary which advocates for a new Virginia economy that starts with a talented and cohesive workforce.

Newport News Mayor McKinley L. Price attended the briefing, and stated that he was encouraged by the event. “We saw the possibility of the future, seeing how the economics of the military will change and our potential position in that area. I’m more uplifted about the future knowing what the possibilities are if we all, as Admiral Harvey said, do our part.”

Remix 2: Patriots Crossing Forum

Transportation is, perhaps, the most important infrastructure challenge impacting business in Hampton Roads today. On September 18th, the Hampton Roads Chamber was pleased to bring together transportation, business and government leaders from across the Commonwealth to discuss our critical transportation needs and to consider how a third crossing could benefit our area.

We learned a lot during the forum about State statutory processes, but our position on this issue remains the same. The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce re-endorses the Third Crossing / Patriots Crossing as the priority harbor crossing improvement program strategy and recognizes it as the best alternative for relieving congestion across Hampton Roads and the best for facilitating economic growth and vitality in the region. This solution should be pursued as quickly as possible.

Remix 3: The Offshore Energy Option

The Hampton Roads economy relies on the three-legged stool of the Department of Defense, the Port of Virginia, and Tourism for a majority of its revenue. Unfortunately, all three legs are declining or constrained in today’s environment. The Hampton Roads Chamber is exploring many ways to diversify and grow our economy. On September 21st, we were pleased to welcome industry experts and community leaders from Louisiana and Alabama where they have both a mature oil industry and robust waterfront tourism.

The Chamber looks forward to continuing the dialogue on the possibilities of adding offshore energy as a major economic driver here in Hampton Roads.

Stay tuned, much more to follow on this dynamic subject!

Thank you Strategic Partners

Capital One is much more than just a credit card company. Capital One is committed to the well-being of Hampton Roads and its residents, and our partnership with the Chamber has helped heighten awareness in the community that Capital One is the state’s largest private employers and one of the 10 largest banks in the country.

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What services/goods does your business provide?

Our team is committed to working together to deliver an exceptional client experience.

What is the core mission of your business?

What services/goods does your business provide?

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