

*The Council on Virginia's Future continues an active agenda in 2011. This update highlights activities across the range of the Council's areas of focus.*

### Special Issues

The Council, together with its partners, continues to focus on important long-term outcomes and to make progress on implementing an enhanced performance leadership and accountability system for state government. The emphasis has been on improving results through enhanced performance leadership and accountability; implementing a new performance budgeting system; continuing the development of Virginia Performs; and supporting high-level commissions and study groups. For example, beginning in 2008, the Council undertook an extensive review of educational attainment in Virginia and framed the discussion on the need to generate an additional 100,000 degrees by 2025.

The Council's ongoing support of the Governor's commissions and ongoing focus on key issues led to the development of new reports:

- *Virginia Performs: A Regional Perspective*: This report provides a high-level analytic summary of regional performance based on selected data from Virginia Performs. Regional economic, education, and other key indicators were reviewed, along with trend analyses for a selected set of indicators for each of the Council's eight regions.
- *Government Funding and Service Relationships*: As part of the work produced above, Council staff undertook an extensive review of regional issues in Virginia. This review highlighted the complexity of intergovernmental funding and service delivery relationships and helped clarify a need to focus more deeply on economic growth. This report was created to help illuminate the complexity involved in influencing outcomes across different levels of government.
- *Critical Outcomes in Virginia Education*: Education, perhaps more than any other single factor, is a direct determinant of the well-being, prosperity, and quality of life for individuals and families, communities, and the state as a whole. This report continues the Council's focus on education attainment and follows the earlier publication, *Educational Attainment in Virginia*. The report complements information presented in Virginia Performs and presents a high-level assessment of progress on key measures of educational quality and attainment in Virginia.

Council staff has also been working with the Governor's Office and Cabinet to develop Enterprise Level Priorities. The purpose of this initiative is to provide a view of the top priorities to inform the biennial strategic planning and budget process.

### Futures Forums and Issue-oriented Dialogue

Council staff regularly brings together small groups of thought leaders to help deepen our understanding of the drivers of key outcomes. Three examples are described here:

**Customer Service Forum:** This forum, conducted in collaboration with the Governor's Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring, brought together representatives from the public and private sectors

to address best practices for gauging and improving customer satisfaction with government services. The forum was structured to review successful customer service initiatives in public- and private-sector settings and to explore the opportunities and issues related to enhancing customer service in Virginia state government.

**Regional Issues:** Government operations, by their nature, are multi-layered and complex. During 2010-2011, the Council worked with internal and external thought leaders to better understand the issues and opportunities surrounding efficiency and effectiveness in government service delivery, especially within the context of the roles and responsibilities of state and local government. As a result of this work and the production of the reports mentioned above, it became clear that the most appropriate role for the Council was to conduct a high-level review of the Commonwealth's long-term approach to promoting economic growth.

**Economic Growth:** Virginia's commitment to economic growth is evidenced by recent successes in new business investments and job growth. It is also well-recognized that significant challenges – pressures on federal spending, an uncertain global economy, and increasing competition – mean that Virginia cannot take its future success for granted. As one example, Governor McDonnell recently appointed a high-level commission and set aside \$30 million to help Virginia's economy respond to negative changes in federal spending in Virginia. Still, long-term questions remain. Given the rapid shifts in technology and the sources of competitive advantage, in the capabilities of global competitors, and in government policy, are our current methods and approaches to economic growth sufficient to meet future challenges and opportunities? Council staff brought together a small group of state and national experts in July 2011 to begin the process of exploring this vital question.

## Information and Education

Presentations and contacts with key public- and private-sector audiences about the Council on Virginia's Future, performance leadership and accountability, and Virginia Performs are ongoing. Highlights of recent engagements include:

### Presentations

- Virginia Workforce Council
- Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions
- *LEAD Virginia*
- Virginia's Information Technology Advisory Committee
- Commonwealth Managers Association
- American Association for Budget and Program Analysis
- Sorensen Institute Political Leaders Program
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Governor McDonnell's Higher Education Advisory Commission
- Visiting Delegation from Indonesia

## Research and Information Requests

Virginia Performs continues to be seen as a model for other states and nations. For example, the federal Government Accountability Office profiled Virginia Performs in its recent report on key indicator systems around the world and Government Technology Magazine included Virginia Performs in a feature article about effective state performance systems. Other entities requesting more information about Virginia Performs included:

- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
- California State Controller's Office
- Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration
- North Carolina State Auditor's Office and Department of Commerce
- Delaware State Office of Management and Budget
- Massachusetts Office of Administration and Finance
- Nebraska State Office of Legislative Research
- Ohio Public Utilities Commission
- New York Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission

## Publications

The latest issue of the Council's **e-newsletter** was published in August and included updates from the most recent edition of the Virginia Report and the redesigned Virginia Performs site, recent changes to the Scorecard at a Glance, and an update on the recently completed first phase implementation of the Commonwealth's new Performance Budgeting System.

**Customized snapshots** of locality data from Virginia Performs were developed for legislators during the 2011 legislative session.

An **updated profile** that highlights important economic information and population trends in Virginia was posted on Virginia Performs.