

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JULY 11, 2024

MEDIA CONTACT: HANNAH EMERSON H.EMERSON@VACHAMBER.COM



STATEMENT OF VIRGINIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT & CEO ON VIRGINIA’S POSITION AS CNBC’S TOP STATE FOR BUSINESS RANKING

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA – Barry DuVal, President and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, issued the following statement regarding Virginia’s recognition as “America’s Top State for Business” by CNBC.

“Virginia’s ranking as the Top State for Business reaffirms our conviction that Virginia is the premier state for business. It highlights our strong education system, availability of business-ready sites, and Virginia's commitment to economic development and a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. This recognition also supports our strategic approach to grow Virginia's position as the leading state for business through our targeted policy recommendations in *Blueprint Virginia 2030*.”

“As we celebrate Virginia being named the Top State for Business, it is important that we continue our work to keep Virginia the best state for business. The Chamber looks forward to continuing to work with business leaders around the Commonwealth to advocate for policies that grow Virginia as we begin our work on our next iteration of *Blueprint Virginia - Blueprint Virginia 2035*.”

“I would like to thank the Chamber’s Board of Directors and Industry Council Executive Committee members for their continued support of the ideas and focus areas promoted in *Blueprint Virginia*.”

This is the sixth time CNBC has named Virginia the Top State for Business, the most of any state since the rankings began in 2007. This is also Virginia's third win in the past five years, following first place results in 2019 and 2021.

CNBC's methodology incorporated 128 metrics across ten categories. This year, the categories of "Infrastructure," "Workforce," and "Economy" were given the most weight in the study. Virginia finished in the top half or better in each of the study's ten categories, including 1st in Education, 3rd in Infrastructure, and 5th in Business Friendliness. The full methodology can be found [here](#).

The full ranking list can be found [here](#).

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About the Virginia Chamber of Commerce:

The Virginia Chamber of Commerce is the largest business advocacy organization in the Commonwealth, with more than 31,000 members. The Chamber is a non-partisan, business advocacy organization that works in the legislative, regulatory, and political arenas to act as the catalyst for positive change in all areas of economic development and competitiveness for Virginia. In December 2021, the Chamber released its new statewide strategic economic development plan, **Blueprint Virginia 2030**, which has engaged over 7,000 business, economic development, workforce, education, housing, and other community leaders to lay out a plan to ensure Virginia remains at the top of national business climate rankings. Learn more at www.blueprintvirginia.org.



CHAMBER BRIEFINGS

JUNE 28, 2024



VIRGINIA
CHAMBER
THE VOICE OF BUSINESS



SAVE THE DATE!

September 18, 2024 *Forum on Infrastructure and Its Impact on Economic Development*

October 3, 2024 *Virginia Veterans & Military Affairs Conference*

October 23, 2024 *Virginia Education and Workforce Conference*

Member Leadership & Personnel Announcements

:

Accenture Names Managing Director for D.C. Market

Augusta Health Names New President of Augusta Medical Group

President's Message



I am pleased to share that *Business Facilities* named Virginia the top state for Customized Workforce Training in their 20th Annual Rankings Report, thanks to the success of the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program led by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). Virginia also

ranked 3rd in *Business Facilities* Best Business Climate rankings.

Business Facilities' full rankings list will be published in the July/August issue of the magazine. Other state business climate rankings are due to be announced in the coming weeks and months, beginning with CNBC's "Top States for Business" on July 11th.

On June 18th, Virginians across the Commonwealth voted in primary elections for six of the 11 U.S. Congressional Districts, as well as the Republican Senate primary. On November 5th, Virginians will elect their U.S. Representatives and a Senator. Please find the full primary elections results below.

Earlier this month, Governor Youngkin announced, following an opinion from Virginia's Attorney General Jason Miyares, that Virginia would not be adopting the California Air Resources Board's Advanced Clean Cars II regulations set to take effect on January 1, 2025. I

[George Mason University Announces James Soto Antony as New Provost and Executive Vice President](#)

[Kaufman & Canoles Names Williamsburg Managing Partner](#)

[VCU Names New Dean of Health Professions College](#)

Member News:

[Amazon Adds \\$1.4 billion to Affordable Housing Fund for Regions Where it Has Corporate Offices](#)

[ARC, Dickenson County Receive \\$1.7 million to Fund Wildwood Health & Wellness Center](#)

[Booz Allen Bolsters Defense Capabilities with \\$95 million Acquisition](#)

[Boys Home of Virginia Receives Grant from People's Bank Foundation Inc. for Facilities Campaign](#)

[Branch Group Expands in North Carolina Through](#)

was pleased to write an [Op-Ed](#) in the Richmond Times-Dispatch in support of Governor Youngkin's decision. As I wrote in the Op-Ed, this action promotes free enterprise and consumer choice in Virginia while protecting Virginia's business climate.

Finally, on June 5th we were pleased to host our 14th annual Virginia Health Care Conference at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. The conference theme was "Healthy Communities, Strong Economy: Using Collaboration and Innovation to Grow a Community." Attendees heard from a variety of policymakers and industry leaders on the importance of collaboration and innovation to address the complex challenges of modern health care.

With our spring schedule of events now complete, the Virginia Chamber will transition to focus on our fall events schedule. Our first fall event, the **Virginia Forum on Infrastructure and Its Impact on Economic Development**, will be held on September 18th. Please stay tuned for more information about this event and our other fall events.

Best Regards,

Barry DuVal

President & CEO
Virginia Chamber of Commerce

U.S. Congressional and Senate Primary Elections

House of Representatives

CD1: Leslie Mehta defeated Herb Jones in the Democratic primary with over 60% of the vote.

CD2: Missy Cotter Smasal won the Democratic nomination in Congressional District 2. Cotter Smasal defeated Jake Denton with 70% of the vote.

CD5: There were primaries for both the Democratic and Republican nominations in Congressional District 5. Gloria Tinsley Witt defeated two others for the

[Young & McQueen Acquisition](#)

[Celebrate Our Heroes: Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce 8th Annual First Responders Appreciation Breakfast Features Keynote Speaker, Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares](#)

[Clark Nexsen Contributes to SEALs D-Day Monument](#)

[Comcast, U.S. Conference of Mayors Announce Ten Cities Receiving Grants in Digital Equity Challenge](#)

[Danville Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce Announces the REV Up Winners at Annual Awards Ceremony](#)

[Forvis Mazars Shakes Up Professional Services Industry With its New \\$5 billion Global Network](#)

[Get Ahead of the Competition with GovCon Industry Benchmarks & Insights!](#)

Democratic nomination. Current state Senator, John McGuire, appears to have defeated the sitting Representative, Bob Good, for the Republican nomination, by a slim margin.

CD7: Eugene Vindman defeated six others for the Democratic nomination in Congressional District 7. Derrick Anderson won the Republican primary with 45% of the vote.

CD10: Current state Senator, Suhas Subramanyan, won the Democratic primary with 30% of the vote. Mike Clancy defeated three other primary candidates to secure the Republican nomination.

CD11: Representative Gerry Connolly defeated primary challenger, Ahsan Nasar, with 85% of the vote in the Democratic primary.

Senate

Hung Cao won the Republican primary with over 60% of the vote against four other candidates. He will now challenge Senator Tim Kaine in the November election.

All election results will be officially certified by the State Board of Elections on July 2.

Federal Trade Commission: Noncompete Agreements Banned

At the end of April, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) **announced a final rule** that prohibits any new noncompete agreements in employment contracts. It also voids any existing noncompete agreements, apart from those involving senior executives, which the rule has defined as an employee “earning more than \$151,164 annually and those who are in policy-making positions.” The FTC also requires employers to notify employees that any qualifying existing noncompete clauses are no longer enforceable, though they are not required to legally modify the contracts. The final rule is effective on September 4, 2024.

[Inova Health System takes over defunct university's Woodbridge campus](#)

[Mary Washington Healthcare Holds Stroke & Trauma Awareness Expo / Community Education Event](#)

[Partnerships Needed to Strengthen Dental Workforce](#)

[REC Awards \\$20,000 in Scholarships to 17 Students](#)

[Sentara Boosts Halifax Hospital Investment to \\$107 million](#)

[Strongwell Signs Multi-State Utility Rep Agreement with NTS](#)

[Suffolk-based TowneBank Celebrates 25 Years of Growth to \\$16.9 billion in Assets](#)

[Tabernacle United Methodist Church Receives Local Grant in Support of Spotsylvania Imagination Library](#)

[Virginia Natural Gas Fuels Workforce Development with](#)

The ADVANCE Act & Other Nuclear News

On June 18th, the U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy (ADVANCE) Act. The legislation is expected to be signed into law by President Biden, as it previously passed the House with bipartisan support on May 8th. The ADVANCE Act is the first major nuclear energy legislation to pass Congress since 2019 and is intended to promote the development and deployment of U.S. nuclear technology in the United States and overseas.

Much of the ADVANCE Act is dedicated to strengthening the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) which is responsible for approving and regulating commercial nuclear energy across the United States. Among other measures, the legislation requires the NRC to develop procedures to enable the licensing of small reactors at brownfield and retired fossil-fuel energy generation sites. The NRC is further directed to establish an accelerated licensing review process for the siting and construction of new reactors at existing nuclear sites; to establish a licensing structure providing an efficient, timely, and predictable regulatory review; and to streamline its environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Finally, the legislation seeks to incentivize nuclear innovation by establishing prizes to be awarded to entities who develop and deploy an advanced nuclear reactor, as defined in the bill. The full text of the legislation can be found [here](#), beginning on page 4.

Additionally, on June 17th the U.S. Department of Energy issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to fund up to \$900 million to support the initial deployment of next generation light-water small modular reactors (SMRs). Up to \$800 million in funding will support up to two “first-mover teams” committed to deploying a first reactor, while also facilitating a multi-reactor order. Up to \$100 million will be provided to promote additional SMR deployments by addressing gaps including design, licensing, supplier development, and site preparation. Application deadlines have not yet been announced; more information about the NOI can be found [here](#).

[\\$620,000 Investment](#)

[Virginia Tobacco Commission Approves \\$500,000 for Southern Virginia Megasite at Berry Hill](#)

[Virginia 500 Spotlight June 2024: J.D. Myers II](#)

[Volkswagen to invest up to \\$5B into EV maker Rivian](#)

Virginia Permit Transparency Website Expands

This month, the Virginia Permit Transparency (VPT) website, Permits.Virginia.gov, expanded to include permits from the Department of Health, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. These agencies are in addition to those previously included on the website—the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Energy, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

The VPT site allows any interested party to track the timeline and status of any permit application submitted to, or approved by, one of the agencies listed above. Users can search for any permit by application number, applicant name, agency, locality, date, program, or permit type. For example, a business could use the website to easily check and follow the status of every permit application submitted by the business, potentially saving many hours of staff time.

While other states and the federal government may have websites to track permit applications, the VPT website stands out by offering a convenient, user-friendly, and accessible platform with clear and predictable timelines for permit decisions. Advancing timeliness and certainty in permitting decisions is a key recommendation of *Blueprint Virginia 2030*, and the Virginia Chamber is pleased to support efforts such as VPT which strengthen our overall business climate.



VA Workforce Development Ecosystem Survey

Virginia Works, the Commonwealth's new workforce development agency, is conducting an employer survey to gather insights on the workforce system's strengths and opportunities for improvement with

servicing individuals and employers in every region of the state. As an employer, providing insights around how you access the skills and talent you need is critical to help Virginia Works provide effective services to you, today and in the future.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your feedback will be invaluable in capturing a comprehensive view of the current workforce landscape and will help Virginia Works develop strategies to meet employer needs today and in the future. **Please complete the survey by Friday, July 5.**

You can access the survey [here](#).



Is your company or organization interested in creating or expanding your internship program? Internships are an excellent way to discover new talent and build a successful talent pipeline for your organization. The Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership, or V-TOP for short, is here to help you!

V-TOP is a partnership between the Virginia Chamber Foundation, the Virginia Business Higher Education Council (VBHEC), and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to advocate, support, and expand internship opportunities in the Commonwealth.

V-TOP has hosted informational webinars with local chambers of commerce and employers to share resources like the toolkit, staffing agency services, and the matching funds program. You can learn more about these resources on the V-TOP website or by **attending the monthly V-TOP information session**. If you don't see an information session that works for your schedule, please reach out to **Emily Webb** or **Eleni Poulos** to coordinate one for you and your HR team.

[VISIT THE V-TOP WEBSITE](#)



Blueprint 2030 Implementation

The Chamber's schedule of spring Executive Committee meetings concluded this month.

The Chamber hosted the Corporate Sustainability and Environmental Executive Committee at the offices of McGuireWoods. Attendees heard updates regarding the 2024 General Assembly Session from Andrea Wortzel, Partner, at Troutman Pepper. Matt Wells, Director of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), provided remarks concerning the protection of Virginia's natural habitats, open space, clean water, and safe infrastructure.

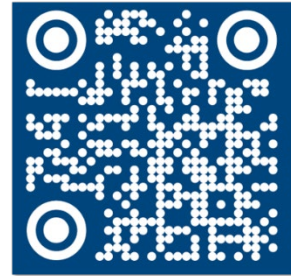
The Legal and Regulatory Reform Institute also convened in late June. Members heard from Attorney General Jason Miyares on Virginia's legal climate. Rachelle Mortimer, the Director of Legislative Affairs at the U.S. Chamber's Institute for Legal Reform, also joined the committee to share how Virginia's legal climate compares to our competitors. Her presentation focused on the rise of tort costs in the Commonwealth and the growing demand for a business court docket to efficiently and adequately respond to complex business-related cases. Ms. Mortimer also highlighted concerns with an increase in third party litigation funding and business liability. The meeting concluded with a panel discussion titled *Pardon the Interruption: A Panel on Hot Topics Impacting Virginia's Legal Climate*, where the panelists and members had the opportunity to discuss class action lawsuits and summary judgment, the use of a business court docket in the Commonwealth, and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the legal field and for business.

Rounding out the spring Executive Committee schedule, the Infrastructure Executive Committee met on June 26. Virginia's Secretary of Transportation, Shep Miller, joined the committee to discuss ongoing transportation projects in Virginia and the importance of local and

regional collaboration in completing infrastructure projects. Meeting attendees also received a presentation from Katharine Bond with Dominion Energy on the energy infrastructure landscape and the need for businesses to speak and educate policymakers about their energy needs. The meeting also featured a legislative update from the 2024 General Assembly session and concluded with a member-led roundtable discussion on Virginia's infrastructure and potential *Blueprint Virginia* recommendations.

We look forward to convening additional Executive Committee meetings this fall and thank our members for their continued participation.

**Scan the QR
code or click the
button below to
view the
*Blueprint
Virginia*
2030 website!**



Blueprint Virginia 2030 is a plan of action to ensure the Commonwealth strengthens and secures its position as a leader in the global economy and is the best state in the nation for business. The Virginia Chamber collected input by bringing together leaders in business, economic development, workforce, education, housing, and other community representatives to ensure statewide representation of priorities for Virginia's economic prosperity.

[Click here to view the *Blueprint Virginia 2030* website](#)

**International Trade Resources and
Webinars**

Virginia's International Trade Team Recognized with Nation's Top Export Award for Second Time

VEDP - International Trade recently received the "E Star" Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the highest honor U.S. exporters and export service providers can receive from the federal government, for the second time. The "E Star" Award is presented to companies and organizations that have made significant contributions over the past four years to expand U.S. business in international markets. The team previously won the "E Star" Award in 2007, and the International Trade team's recognition in 2024 is a milestone achievement.

Upcoming Events for Virginia Businesses

Registration is Open for VMA's International Trade Symposium, Oct. 8 - 10 in Norfolk

The Virginia Maritime Association's International Trade Symposium, Oct. 8 - 10, 2024, in Norfolk, is the east coast's premier conference for ports, logistics, and trade, and the International Bulk Conference focuses on challenges and opportunities in bulk trade. VMA24 features 35+ expert speakers and three full days of industry discussion and networking events. For a limited time, businesses exporting products from Virginia can take advantage of a heavily discounted ticket of \$200 (select the Symposium Cargo Owner option when registering).

Trade Mission to Czech Republic and Bulgaria - October 14 - 18, 2024

The economies of most Central and Eastern European countries have been impacted by Russia's war in Ukraine, and many have seen increased trade with the United States and other NATO nations as the block attempts to shore-up its eastern border countries. The objective of this trade mission is to arrange and conduct quality meetings between Virginia businesses and potential sales partners (agents, representatives, or distributors) and/or customers in Bulgaria and Czech Republic. The deadline to register is August 16, 2024.

Medica - November 11 - 14, 2024

In addition to being the largest medical trade fair in the world, Medica attracts several thousand exhibitors from more than 50 countries. An extensive exhibition and an



ambitious program, which together represent the entire spectrum of innovations for outpatient and clinical care, are available at this trade show. Virginia businesses can join VEDP's booth to exhibit their products and services at Medica 2024 in Germany. The deadline to register is August 30, 2024.