

# TELLING THE VIRGINIA STORY

Tools for Telling Your Story

VEDA Fall Conference



Wednesday, September 18 – Friday, September 20, 2019  
Richmond, Virginia

## Conference Agenda OMNI RICHMOND HOTEL

*Virginia is well-positioned to tell the story of our strong business climate, thriving communities, and enviable lifestyle assets found throughout the state. Each one of our communities – no matter the size – has a story to tell. Determining how to tell your story, and what marketing tools are available for telling your story is key. VEDA's Fall Conference will provide you and your community leaders with practical, doable, and attainable marketing tools that you can put into action today to elevate and refine your community's place in the Virginia story!*

### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 – DAY 1

**8:00 am – 5:00 pm**

#### **Professional Development Training**

##### **Optional Activity/Additional Fee**

*McGuireWoods, Gateway Plaza, 800 East Canal Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219*

**10:00 am-Golf Registration/11:00 am-Golf Shotgun Start**

#### **VEDA Fall Conference Golf Tournament**

##### **Optional Activity/Additional Fee**

*Royal New Kent Golf Club • 10100 Kent Field Road • Providence Forge, VA 23140 • Phone 804.966.7023 • [www.royalnewkent.com](http://www.royalnewkent.com)*

**2:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

#### **VEDP Local Economic Development Organization Meeting**

##### ***This meeting is open only to staff of local economic development organizations***

*15<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Williams Mullen*

**4:30 pm**

#### **Conference Registration Opens**

*Wine Room, Magnolia Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**5:15–6:00 pm**

#### **New Member Meet & Greet**

##### **Invite-Only Event**

*Shenandoah Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**6:00-7:30 pm**

#### **Conference Opening Reception**

*Magnolia Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**7:30 pm**

**Dinner on Your Own**

**Young Professionals Dinner (Age 40 and under)**

**Head count required. Let us know you're coming when you register for the conference.**

*Southern Railway Taphouse, 100 S 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, <http://srtaphouse.com/>*

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019 – DAY 2**

**7:30 am - 4:00 pm**

*James River Ballroom Pre-Function, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Registration/Sponsor Exhibits**

**7:30 - 8:45 am**

*James River Ballroom Pre-Function, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Continental Breakfast**

**7:30 am - 8:30 am**

*Canal Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**VEDA Program Committee Meeting**

**8:45 am - 9:00 am**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Welcome & Opening Remarks/Conference Overview**

- Jennifer Wakefield, Greater Richmond Partnership, VEDA Fall Conference Co-Chair
- Keith Boswell, Virginia's Gateway Region, VEDA Fall Conference Co-Chair

**THURSDAY'S PROGRAM FACILITATED BY**

Julie Curtin, President Economic Development, DCI

Steve Duncan, Vice President, Digital Lead Generation, DCI

Susan Brake, Vice President, Digital Strategy, DCI

**9:00 am - 9:20am**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Introductions & Kick Off to Telling Your Community Story**

**9:20am - 9:45am**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Telling Your Story to Your Target Audiences: Corporate Executives and Site Selection Consultants**

*We'll kick off the day by sharing the results of a survey of more than 300 corporate executives and location advisors as to how they get their information about a place. DCI's tri-annual report, **Winning Strategies in Economic Development Marketing**, reveals core insights on telling your story to corporate executives.*

**9:45 am - 10:15 am**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Tool #1: Let Local Execs Tell Your Community Story**

*Fireside chat with executives about their location decisions, the decision factors, their perception of Virginia and how (and why) it evolved during the process based on peer input and discussions.*

**10:15 am - 11:00 am**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Tool #2: Define a Brand that is Authentic When Telling Your Story**

*To build a brand, focus on what others say about your community (not what you say about yourself). Starting with research and a candid look at a community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, this session will cover how a community determines its value proposition, key messages, visual assets and implementation plan that authentically represent the brand of the community.*

### **11:00 am - 11:30 am**

James River Ballroom Pre-Function, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

### **Networking Break/Room to be Set for Lunch**

### **11:30 am - 1:00 pm**

James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

### **Interactive Learning Lunch**

### **Report out on Learning Lunch**

### **1:00 pm - 1:30 pm**

James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

### **Tool #3: Design the Economic Development Website of the Future**

Your website is one of your most critical marketing and business development tools. Too often we find that economic development organizations aren't using their website to its full potential. We are here to help change that! From design aesthetic to usability and interactivity, and storytelling to data visualizations, we have five predictions and real-world examples of EDOs already mastering these techniques to leave you inspired. In addition, we will bring two lucky EDOs up for a live audit of their website and provide tips they can take home immediately to improve their experience moving forward.

### **1:30 pm – 2:30 pm**

James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

### **Tools #4 and #5: Engage the Media: Proactively and Reactively**

This session will provide tips, tools, and best practices when it comes to working with the media, and preparing for an interview whether it be broadcast, print, or podcast. We'll provide a list of "do's" and "don'ts" as they relate to telling your story, and will put a special emphasis on talking to the local media at times of both celebration (a relocation or expansion) as well as crisis (political, financial, environmental).

### **2:30 pm – 3:00 pm**

James River Ballroom Pre-Function, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

### **Networking Break**

### **3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**

James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

### **Tool #6: Manage Your Online Reputation**

A quick Google search of your own community can be disheartening. The content and visuals are often not the best representation of your community and its assets. This session will teach you how to evaluate your current online reputation holistically, as well as provide insight into using strategic SEO to start improving the results that populate when your community is searched.

### **Tool #7: Pragmatic Digital Tools for Community Story Telling**

While Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are among the latest digital trending tools, there is a strong case for ensuring that you have the basic and foundational digital tools in place prior to spending resources on the "next big thing." This session will cover the pragmatic digital tools that all communities should have in place when telling their story digitally.

### **Tool #8: Embrace a Content Strategy That Tells Your Story**

Story telling starts and ends with data. Your content strategy should feature the data that best tells your story and engages your audience. Your community's data should give you a personalized voice that is unique from your competitors and allows you to stand out from the pack. This session will give you tools and steps to capture and position that data.

### **Tool #9: Amplify Your Message Through Paid Search**

High competition on search engines can make it difficult for EDO websites to rank well organically for keywords related to business and talent location decision research. This session will highlight the power of using paid search to engage users researching topics relevant to your community's brand and offerings and provide some tips for getting started.

**4:30 pm – 4:45 pm**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**Fall Conference Day 1 Wrap-Up**

**6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

**VEDA Conference Celebration**

*The American Civil War Museum, 500 Tredegar St, Richmond, VA 23219*

**9:00 pm – 11:00 pm**

**Dominion Hospitality Suite**

*Kabana Rooftop Bar, 700 East Main Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, Richmond, Virginia*

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 – DAY 3**

**7:30-11:00 am**

**Registration/Sponsor Exhibits**

*James River Ballroom Pre-Function, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**7:30-8:45 am**

**Breakfast**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**7:30-8:30 am**

**Member Engagement Orientation**

*Shenandoah Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

*If you're new to VEDA, we want to extend our warmest welcome, learn more about you, and provide you with a thorough knowledge of the resources that are now yours as a VEDA member. Or if you've been a member for a while and just want to learn more and get involved, we hope to see you too! Join us for breakfast at 7:30 on Friday to learn about our history, goals, governance, and opportunities for you to engage in the organization.*

**8:45-9:00 am**

**Remarks/Announcements**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

**9:00-9:30 am**

**VEDA Public Policy Update**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

*You won't want to miss this twice-a-year update from VEDA's Public Policy Chair Chris Lloyd and VEDA's Public Policy Liaison as they cover lingering issues from the 2019 General Assembly session; provide some election season forecasting; and discuss what economic developers need to know for the 2020 General Assembly session.*

- Christopher Lloyd, Senior Vice President and Director, Infrastructure & Economic Development, McGuireWoods Consulting LLC
- Michael Woods, Senior Manager, Troutman Sanders Strategies

**9:30 am – 10:00 am**

**VEDP Update**

*James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel*

*Virginia Economic Development Partnership President & CEO Stephen Moret joins us on Friday morning to provide an update on the activities in the Commonwealth's economic development initiatives and what's on the horizon!*

- Stephen Moret, President & CEO, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

## **10:00-11:00 am**

### **Using Marketing Materials and Websites to Tell Your Story**

James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

*IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships and marketing materials. These awards honor organizations and individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, and rural communities and Virginia is a frequent winner! Hear real-world examples of some of the State's award-winning entries and how these winners are telling their community's story.*

## **11:00-11:30 am**

### **Break/Hotel Check-out**

James River Ballroom Pre-Function, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

## **11:30-1:15 pm**

### **Lunch with Keynote Speaker/Cardinal Award Presentation**

James River Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

11:30 am      **Opening Remarks**

11:35 am      **Lunch**

12:00 pm      **Cardinal Awards Presentation**

- Gary McLaren, VEDA Cardinal Council Chair

12:15 pm      **Keynote Presentation: *Creating Vibrant Communities through Tourism Development***

*Now, more than ever, Virginia localities use tourism research, planning, investment and development to sustain and thrive as creative and vibrant communities. Join Virginia Tourism Corporation's Caitlin Johnson and Wirt Confroy as they share VTC's Drive Tourism 2.0 state tourism development plans and product development efforts to attract and grow visitors and economic development.*

- Wirt Confroy, Director of Business Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Caitlin Johnson, Director of Operations & Industry Initiatives, Virginia Tourism Corporation

## **1:30 pm – 5:00 pm**

### **VEDP Regional Economic Development Organization Meeting**

Shenandoah Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Omni Richmond Hotel

***This meeting is open only to staff of regional economic development organizations***