



A PROGRAM OF VEDA AND VEDP

VEDA/VEDP *impactED*
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Speaker Bios

Understanding Virginia's New Cannabis Legislation



John A. Conrad
Attorney
TheConradFirm, P.C.

John Conrad has practiced law as a civil litigator for over 44 years and for the last 21 years his firm has specialized in representation of local governments.

John brings an unusual amount of experience in local government and economic development matters to his legal assignments as the former Vice-Mayor and Member of Richmond City Council (1994 – 2000); former Founding

Director & Chairman of Greater Richmond Partnership; and former Rector & Member of Board of Visitors of Christopher Newport University.

VDACS' New AFID Infrastructure Grant Program



Stephen Versen
Manager
Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

As Manager of the Office of Agriculture & Forestry Development at the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Stephen Versen serves as the Agency's primary contact for economic development projects and oversees its farmland preservation efforts and the new Virginia Food Access Investment Fund. His office administers the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) fund, an incentive grant program for attracting new and expanding agriculture- and forestry-based business to Virginia. In addition to more than thirteen years of experience at VDACS, Stephen's work experiences include the City of Staunton's Department of Economic Development and the Virginia Main Street program, where he assisted communities with their downtown revitalization efforts.

Stephen graduated from James Madison University with a Bachelors of Business Administration (Economics & History Majors) and received his Masters of Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University. He lives in Richmond with his wife and three children.

VEDP Update



Stephen Moret
President & CEO
Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Stephen Moret is President and CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.

Before joining VEDP in January 2017, Moret served as chief executive of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber and Louisiana Dept. of Economic Development, as well as the LSU Foundation and its real-estate development arm.

At VEDP, he has collaborated with state, regional, and local partners to craft an ambitious vision focused on transformational goals, including accelerating employment growth; enabling every region to grow; and moving back to the top of national business climate rankings. He led Virginia's successful state-and-local team bid for Amazon's HQ2 and is launching a world-class, custom workforce program along with the Virginia Community College System.

For seven years, Moret served as secretary of LED, transforming it into one of America's top state economic development agencies. While there, he led business development efforts and built higher ed partnerships that helped secure a variety of projects in urban and rural areas, including software/IT centers (e.g., CGI, CSC, GE, IBM), food/agricultural processing facilities, and a few of the largest FDI projects in U.S. history. Collectively these projects totaled more than \$62 billion in capital investment. He also established LED FastStart, which *The Economist* called "probably the most notable statewide workforce-development initiative [in America]." During his tenure, Louisiana rose to its highest-ever position in every national business climate ranking.

Prior to LED, Moret was CEO of BRAC, which he and his team transformed into a nationally competitive, regional EDO. He also served as a consultant with McKinsey & Company; a public policy fellow with the Public Affairs Research Council of La.; and a consultant to Harvard Business School.

Moret received a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from Louisiana State University; a MBA from Harvard Business School, and an Ed.D. degree in Higher Education Management from the University of Pennsylvania.