



## VAPDC 2019 Summer Conference & Annual Meeting *Speaker Profiles*

### **Rita McClenny President and CEO Virginia Tourism Corporation**

Rita D. McClenny serves as president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, a state agency charged with marketing the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination and film location. The mission of VTC is to expand domestic and international in-bound travel and motion picture production to generate revenue and employment in Virginia.

A native Virginian, Ms. McClenny received a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from Fisk University. She was born and raised in Southampton County and presently resides in the City of Richmond.

As president and CEO, Ms. McClenny serves on the governing boards of the U.S. Travel Association, the National Council of State Tourism Directors, the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association, and the Aerospace Advisory Council and the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation. In addition, Ms. McClenny serves on the board of directors for the Virginia Film Festival and is involved in volunteer outreach and community organizing serving the Commonwealth.

Tourism and film are instant revenue generators for Virginia. In 2017, tourism in Virginia generated \$25 billion in revenue, supported 232,000 jobs and over \$1.73 billion in state and local taxes. Tourism is the 5th largest private employer in Virginia. In 2016, the film and motion picture industry's overall contribution to the state's economy totaled \$696.8 million, and created 4,287 jobs, and generated \$27.1 million in state and local tax revenue.



### **Joe Hines Economic Development Lead Timmons Group**

Joe Hines, PE, MBA specializes in Economic Development and Infrastructure and currently leads Timmons Group Economic Development Practice. He has over two decades of experience in all phases of project delivery for site selection and analysis, prospect recruitment, infrastructure and site development. During his tenure, the Economic Development practice has helped land over \$3 billion in announced investment with over 6,500 jobs created from national and international companies. Key projects include Rolls-Royce, Amazon.com and The Vitamin Shoppe among others.

Joe possesses an in-depth understanding of site identification, selection and evaluation as well as infrastructure development and how they all intertwine to make Economic Development projects successful. He was the developer of a site selection and TG Tier System<sup>SM</sup> process for objectively evaluating sites and utilizes technology such as Geographic Information Systems to help better deliver project results for our clients. Joe routinely presents to state and regional groups, as well as IDA's, EDA's and local governments about what it takes to be successful in Economic Development.

He is a former Board Member of the Virginia Economic Developers Association and a member of the International Economic Development Council and Southern Economic Development Council. In addition, Joe is a graduate of LEAD Virginia and Leadership Farmville and currently is a member of the Duke Fuqua School of Business Alumni Council as well as a member of NC State's Civil Construction and Environmental Engineering (CCEE) Industry Advisory Board.



**Matt Smith**  
**Senior Regional Planner**  
**Hampton Roads Planning District Commission**

Matt Smith joined the HRPDC staff as a Senior Regional Planner in September 2017. He will be working in the areas of strategic, environmental, and economic development planning, and will provide planning support to member localities.

Prior to joining the HRPDC, Matt worked in the City of Hampton's Community Development Department, where he held the positions of City Planner and most recently, Deputy Zoning Administrator. While in Hampton, Matt helped lead the City's resilience planning efforts and adoption of the Fort Monroe Land Use Plan. As Deputy Zoning Administrator, Matt shared responsibility for administration of Hampton's zoning ordinance, including flood zone and Chesapeake Bay Act regulations.

Matt has a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning and a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has a B.A. in American History from Washington and Lee University. During graduate school, Matt worked at the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization providing GIS support for TPO projects.



**Steve Herbert**  
**Interim President and CEO**  
**Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance**

Steve Herbert joined the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance as Interim President & CEO in January of 2019. Herbert oversees the staff of business development, business intelligence and marketing professionals and leads the operations of the region's economic development organization that represents 11 municipalities and over 50 private sector investors. Herbert and the entire Alliance staff work closely with the state and local governments and the private sector to assist international and domestic companies with investment projects, expansions and relocations.

Formerly, Steve has worked as a City Administrator, Economic Development professional, City Planner, and Naval Officer. He most recently served as Deputy City Manager for the City of Virginia Beach. Prior to that he held positions as: Interim City Manager for the City of Hopewell; City Manager for the City of Suffolk; Chief Plans and Policy Officer and Assistant Director of Economic Development for the City of Portsmouth; and Assistant Director of Economic Development for the City of Norfolk. Herbert has also worked in the private sector as a business development manager and defense contractor for the firms of Booz Allen Hamilton and SAIC. Herbert served as an officer in the United States Navy, retiring from the Naval Reserve in 1999 with the rank of Captain. On active duty he served in Vietnam and on warships in the Pacific and Atlantic.

He is a graduate of the University of Virginia and holds a Bachelor of City Planning degree. He also earned an MS degree in Administration from George Washington University. He is an alumnus of the CIVIC Leadership Institute in Norfolk and the Senior Executive Institute (SEI) at UVA in Charlottesville. Herbert is married to Sally Newton Herbert and they have two grown sons.



**Evan Feinman**  
**Executive Director, Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission**  
**Governor's Chief Broadband Advisor**  
**Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor**

Evan Feinman is both the Executive Director of the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and Governor Northam's Chief Broadband Advisor. He was previously Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, Deputy Policy Director for the Governor McAuliffe's transition team, and the McAuliffe campaign's policy director. Evan has worked on multiple campaigns at the state and federal level, and at the Commonwealth Institute, a budget and fiscal policy think tank in Richmond.

He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, spent two years on a fellowship focused on energy and transportation policy, and then received his law degree from Washington and Lee University School of Law.



**Courtney Dozier**  
**Chief Deputy**  
**Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development**

Courtney Dozier was appointed in 2018 by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam as the Chief Deputy for the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development where she serves as the Governor's Deputy Broadband Advisor. Before joining the administration, Courtney was the Director of the State Strategy Group (SSG) at the Pew Charitable Trusts. SSG supported existing projects and new initiatives in advancing policies in states by providing advice to identify priority states, developing and executing advocacy plans, supporting implementation, and managing in-state consultants and pollsters. Prior to Pew, Courtney worked on political campaigns from the state to federal level- making 9 moves in 7 years to 7 states. Her last campaign was for now Senator Mark Warner in her native Virginia where she served as political director for his Senate campaign before joining him on the Hill.



She is a graduate of George Mason University and currently lives in Richmond, VA.

**Michele Mixner DeWitt, CEcD, AICP**  
**Williamsburg Economic Development Director**  
**City of Williamsburg, Virginia**

Michele grew up in Virginia Beach and received her undergraduate degree from the Architecture School at the University of Virginia.

While managing economic development programs at the state level, she received her Masters degree in Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Prior to Williamsburg, Michele's public sector career has included work on the Middle Peninsula, West Point, and for the Commonwealth of Virginia. In Middlesex, she was the first environmental planner in a locality with 135 miles of shoreline. At the state, Michele started as the manager of a new economic development program called the Regional Competitiveness Program and managed several other economic development programs as she advanced there. She was West Point's first economic development director.



In 2005, Michele joined the City of Williamsburg as its first Economic Development Director. The department now includes three staff, provides concierge services to existing and new businesses, manages the \$5 million City Tourism Development Fund, serves as landlord of the Triangle Building, and staffs the Economic Development Authority. Michele serves as the Director of this busy and highly productive department.

Michele lives in downtown Williamsburg with her husband Chris and 15-year old son Anderson. Her community involvement includes volunteering with Housing Partnerships (where she is a former Chairman of the Board) and sitting on the Williamsburg James City County Superintendent's Advisory Committee and the Williamsburg Farmers Market Board. She is an active member of the Williamsburg Garden Club and serves on the Finance Committee of the Garden Club of Virginia. Additionally, Michele is a Past President of the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA).

**Ann Jennings**  
**Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources for the Chesapeake Bay**  
**Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor**

Ann Jennings is the Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources for the Chesapeake Bay under Secretary of Natural Resources Matt Strickler in the office of Governor Ralph Northam. Prior to her current position, she was the Virginia Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative commission created to advise the General Assemblies of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia on matters of Bay-wide concern.

Prior to the Commission, Ann served as the Virginia Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Ann's career also includes work as a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Originally from Virginia Beach, Ann received a bachelor's degree in biology from Virginia Tech and a master's degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences from Texas A&M University. Ann is a graduate of the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute and the Sorensen Institute's Political Leaders Program.



**Jutta Schneider**  
**Water Planning Division Director**  
**Virginia Department of Environmental Quality**

Jutta Schneider is Director of DEQ's Water Planning Division and is responsible for water quality standards, monitoring and assessment, Total Maximum Daily Load and Nonpoint Source Management programs, water supply planning, water withdrawal permitting and compliance, as well as Chesapeake Bay-related programs. Ms. Schneider began her public service with the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1998, working as an analyst at the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). From 1999 to 2007, she served at DCR and then the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as project manager and program coordinator for the Total Maximum Daily Load program. She also worked for eight years in DEQ's Land Protection and Revitalization Division, serving in several coordinator and management roles.

**Denise Nelson, P.E., CFM, ENV SP, LEED AP**  
**Environmental Engineer**  
**The Berkley Group**

Denise Nelson is a Civil Environmental Engineer, Certified Floodplain Manager, Envision Sustainability Professional, and a LEED AP. She has sixteen years' experience in design and application of best practices for water, wastewater, and stormwater systems and sustainable development. Her experience includes large and small firms in the US and New Zealand, and she is currently an Environmental Engineer at The Berkley Group.



Mrs. Nelson received her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech and her Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Cincinnati. She is active on sustainability committees for the American Society of Civil Engineers and local chapters of the American Public Works Association, the Water Environment Federation, and the American Water Works Association.

**Martha Moore**  
**Vice President Governmental Relations**  
**Virginia Farm Bureau**

Martha Moore is Vice President of Governmental Relations for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Martha has been with Virginia Farm Bureau for 27 years. Her responsibilities include managing Farm Bureau's overall lobbying efforts at the local, state and national level; handling the issues regarding budget, environmental, and education issues.



She currently serves on Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Leadership Council. She has served on Governors Warner's, Kaine's and McAuliffe's Agriculture and Forestry Transition Teams. She co-chaired Governor McDonnell's Agriculture and Forestry Transition Team. Governor McDonnell appointed her in 2013 to the Rural Jobs Taskforce.

In 2008, she was selected to become a member of Omicron Delta Kappa, the national leadership honor society. In 2004 and again in 2013, she was honored with the Virginia Honorary State FFA Degree by the Virginia Chapter of National FFA Organization. In 2013, she was recognized by the Virginia Association of Agriculture Educators for her work on the agriculture education strategic review. In 2003, Martha was recognized by Virginia Tech's Chapter of Sigma Alpha as their Agriculture Woman of the Year.

Martha grew up on a farm in Pittsylvania County. She holds a B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Agricultural Economics from Virginia Tech. She lives with her husband and two girls in Louisa County.

**Ann C. Phillips**  
**Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection**  
**Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor**

Ann C. Phillips is the Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Prior to joining the Northam Administration, she worked to address sea level rise and climate change impact on national security at the regional, national and international level, and chaired the Infrastructure Working Group for the Old Dominion University-convened Hampton Roads Sea Level Rise Preparedness and Resilience Intergovernmental Pilot Planning Project.

Prior to her work on climate change impact and sea level rise, Ann served nearly 31 years on active duty. She had the honor to commission and command USS MUSTIN (DDG 89) and to command Destroyer Squadron 28. Her final Flag command was as Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group TWO, including all the Amphibious Expeditionary Forces on the East Coast of the United States.

Ann earned a Master's in Business Administration from The College of William and Mary - Mason School of Business in 2016. She is a 1983 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition, she is a certified Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional, Level 2.



**Andria McClellan**  
**Vice Chair Hampton Roads Planning District Commission**  
**Norfolk City Council**

Andria McClellan was elected to Norfolk City Council on May 3, 2016 to serve [Superward 6](#).

Andria was raised in Hampton Roads and educated in Virginia Beach Public Schools, graduating in 1987 from Green Run High School. She received her bachelor's degree in 1991 from the University of Virginia, after which she began her career in sales/marketing, working for two Fortune 500 companies. Following that, Ms. McClellan graduated from the Wharton Management Program at the University of Pennsylvania in 1996 and then ran two small businesses before returning to Hampton Roads to focus on raising her growing family. She has resided with her family in Norfolk since 2002.

Andria currently serves on the following boards: WHRO; Norfolk Public Schools, Open Campus, Advisory Board; CIVIC Leadership Foundation, Executive Board; OneVirginia2021, Regional Advisory Board; and Local Government Advisory Council, Chesapeake Bay Advisory Committee.

She previously served on the following boards and commissions: Norfolk Planning Commission; Norfolk Commission on Arts & Humanities; The Up Center, Board Chair; Samaritan House; ACCESS College Foundation; Nauticus Foundation; Chrysler Museum, Development Committee; Governor's School for the Arts, Capital Campaign Chair; Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Falletta 20th Anniversary Chair; The Williams School; University of Virginia, College of Arts & Sciences Benefactors' Society; Virginia Family & Children's Trust Fund (appointed by Governor McAuliffe); Virginia Small Business Advisory Board (appointed by Governor Warner); Hampton Roads Technology Council; Tidewater Venture Mentors (co-founder); and Virginia Coastal Coalition.

Andria has received the following recognitions: 2015 Outstanding Emerging Philanthropic Leader for Hampton Roads by the Association of Fundraising Professionals; 2012 "Famous Former" for the Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast; 2011 "Woman of Distinction" by the YWCA in 2011; 2010 Bank of American "Local Hero"; and 2003 "Top 40 Under 40" by Inside Business.

Andria is a graduate of the Sorensen Institute's Political Leadership Program at the University of Virginia, the CIVIC Leadership Executive Program, and EMERGE Virginia. With her three sons and husband Mike, Ms. McClellan resides in Ghent, where she is a member of the Ghent Neighborhood League and Christ & St. Luke's Episcopal Church.



**Michael Betz**  
**Assistant Professor, Department of Human Sciences**  
**The Ohio State University**

Dr. Michael Betz is an assistant professor in the Department of Human Sciences and an FCS state specialist at The Ohio State University. Professor Betz's research focuses on how local economic conditions impact a wide range of individual, family, and community wellbeing indicators and is particularly interested in the differences between rural and urban areas. He is currently investigating questions examining the connection between local economic factors and the opioid crisis and engaged in research on the economic and social impacts of natural resource extraction on the communities in which it occurs. He has published in journals such as Energy Economics, The American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Rural Studies, Papers in Regional Science, and International Regional Science Review. He has received funding for his research from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Agency (SAMHSA), the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, and The Appalachian Research Initiative for Environmental Science, the Ohio Department of Health, and The Ohio State University Institute for Population Research. He is currently the president for the USDA multi-state research project NE1749: Enhancing Rural Economic Opportunities, Community Resilience, and Entrepreneurship.



Dr. Betz's research interests include regional and urban economics, poverty, community influences on household poverty, and family relationships and poverty. His current research examines the effects of natural resource extraction on economic outcomes across the income distribution and how natural resource extraction affects other areas of the economy. He is also currently studying which metropolitan-level factors influence migration of highly skilled workers and how this affects regional economic growth.

**Kimley Blanks**  
**Co-Founder**  
**Industrial Hemp Summit**

Kimley is a Co-Founder of the Industrial Hemp Summit in Danville, VA. The second summit (February 2019) was a sell-out with attendees from eighteen states and two countries. The Summit's goal is to bring together the influencers in this emerging industry to discuss the building of America's hemp industry.

In her role, Kimley has partnered with numerous agencies and organizations, most recently including Virginia Agriculture Development Officers, Halifax County Soil and Water Conservation District, Institute of Advanced Learning and Research, Virginia Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

She is a native Virginian and her family agrarian roots can be traced back several generations in Halifax County. She earned her Master of Business Administration degree from Old Dominion University and her Bachelor of Science degree from Christopher Newport University.

A graduate of Leadership Halifax County, Kimley has volunteered with the Historic Noland Country Fair Day Committee and the Virginia Cantaloupe Festival Committee. She is a member of the South Boston Rotary Club and the Halifax Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs group. Additionally, she is a graduate Fellow of the Virginia Agriculture Leaders Obtaining Results (VALOR) Program.



**Debbie Custer**  
**CEO/Founder, Women in Hemp**  
**CEO/Founder, Coeus Research**

Debbie Custer is a 30-year food and beverage product development veteran, with a focus on plant-based nutraceuticals. She has launched several companies bringing "good for you" brands to a national and international marketplace. Debbie has worked in all aspects of the beverage and food industry to include product, brand and package development, developing products with patented benefits to deliver specific benefit to the consumer.

Focusing on plant-based foods with an adaptogen element, she began working with hemp in early 2000. Navigating legal forays, a formulation was developed (patent pending) utilizing a European method of concentrating the hemp oil. Debbie founded Women in Hemp, a 501(c)3 organization to empower and educate women in the field.

