

The Virginia
Department of Human
Resource Management
Introduces...

Fall 2019 Issue



The Commonwealth Advantage

The Ultimate Way Commonwealth Employees Stay Up-To-Date



The Importance of Employee Recognition

In this Issue:

Message
from
Director
Emily Elliott
p. 2



Governor's
Honor
Award
Winners
p. 3-8



Other News
and Feedback
Opportunities
p. 11-12



Director's Word

A few days ago, I opened a USPS first class package that had been delivered to the office addressed to my attention. It was a rather thick envelope with the words Do Not Bend in bold red. I wondered what was enclosed as oftentimes the documents I receive are legal notices, health care claim appeals or simply marketing materials from a vendor hoping to do business with the Department.



I tugged and pulled open the tab and to my surprise, I found my certificate from having renewed my certification as a Senior Certified Professional in Human Resources (SHRM) through the Society of Human Resources Management. The certificate read that I had met the experience, education and demonstrated Human Resources competency and knowledge requirements established by SHRM. The certificate came with a nicely written letter from the SHRM President and emphasized that this accomplishment spoke to commitment and dedication.

While I have received many certificates like this over the course of my professional career, this certificate was different. I took a moment to reflect on the referenced commitment and dedication. It did in fact take a lot of effort and many hours of continuous learning to obtain recertification and I was proud of the ability to juggle recertification requirements with other professional priorities and family commitments. It was nice to be recognized.

Recognition. Reconocimiento. ការ​រູ້​ຈໍ​។ 인​식. Riconoscimento. Reconnaissance. 識別.

No matter the language, recognition serves to attract, motivate and retain talent in the workforce. Recognition inspires us to go above and beyond whether it is for personal satisfaction or public praise. Being recognized for a success or job well done simply makes us feel better.

With this in mind, I am pleased to introduce *The Commonwealth Advantage*, a digital magazine for the Commonwealth's state employees. Our inaugural edition is all about employee recognition. Inside you will read about the Governor's Honor Award Program and learn more about how recognition impacts employee engagement. You don't have to have a fancy title or be in a supervisory position to recognize someone. Keep reading and you will soon have some new ideas for making recognition a part of your daily routine so that you too can make someone's day a little better. You might just feel a little bit better yourself in return.

Emily S. Elliott

Director Department of Human Resource Management

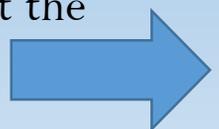
The Stars Shine Bright at the 2019 Governor's Honor Awards

While it is always a good day to acknowledge the amazing employees who are a part of the Commonwealth, September 18th provided the perfect setting for a grand celebration. Held at the Executive Mansion in Richmond, the event recognized 26 employees for their remarkable contributions to the people of Virginia. Governor Northam presented the awards to the recipients and memorialized the moment in pictures. For the next few pages, join us in celebrating their accomplishments and the stories they tell.



All photos courtesy of Tom Saunders

Read About the
Honorees



Enhancing the Prosperity and Quality of Life in Rural Virginia:

Yvonne Frazier
James Madison University



Yvonne has provided exemplary leadership as the Program Manager for Healthy Families, Page and Shenandoah Counties. Her stellar administrative skills have ensured that rural, low-income parents have the tools they need to guide and care for their children, to improve their education and employment status and to ensure that their children are healthy and prepared for school. Yvonne's creativity, innovation and fearlessness have spawned numerous public private partnerships resulting in a new child care center, expanded rural family access to Baby Boxes, safe sleep practice training and countless learning opportunities for JMU students from a variety of disciplines.

Diversification of Energy Sources:

Infrastructure and Environmental Management Unit
Department of Corrections



This team completed installation of a 852.72 kW solar photovoltaic system at Haynesville Correctional Center. This exemplifies VADOC's dedication to piloting a solar electric generation project that is one of only three state projects granted funding by the US. Department of Energy Office of Efficiency and Renewable Energy through the VA Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy. These solar projects will help VADOC reduce its energy cost while transitioning toward more renewable energy deployment, which is in alignment with Governor Northam's 2018 Energy Plan that includes a 16 percent renewable energy procurement target by the end of 2022.

Personal and Professional Excellence:

Tracy Lee

Department of Education

Tracy provided leadership and guidance in development of the Critical Decision Points for Families of Students with Disabilities document and associated training curriculum. An informational resource for parents of students with disabilities, the document includes a printed guide, web-based training modules, in-person training for families, and an in-person “train the trainer” program for school personnel and other stakeholders who work with families of students with educational disabilities. Through Tracy’s efforts to ensure dissemination of this information, DOE has significantly expanded its outreach across the Commonwealth regarding special education processes, including the underserved areas of rural Virginia, our military families and parents of students entering pre-school.



Administration Excellence:

Chief Daniel Dusseau

Northern Virginia

Community College

The chief’s successes at NVCC have inspired law enforcement as well as academic administrative professionals at the local, state and national levels to improve personal and campus safety, advance the quality of the overall academic experience and enhance the recognition of law enforcement officers as valuable members of society. Among the numerous changes he implemented were establishing a state-of-the-art 24/7 dispatch center, which increased police responsiveness, expedited service to the community and centralized police operations for NVCC’s six campuses. Chief Dusseau established a successful community outreach program and promulgated over 130 new General Orders in 2018 to improve and standardize police operations.



Heroism:

Officer Tyler

Thornsberry

Department of

Corrections:

In the course of a critical incident at Red Onion State Prison, Officer Thornsberry acted selflessly by coming to the aid of a fellow officer which saved the officer’s life.

Ensuring Access to Skilled Workers through Workforce Development Programs:

Great Opportunities in Technology & Engineering Careers (GO TEC) Project Department of Housing and Community Development



The GOTEC team assembled an incredible collaboration of school divisions, higher education institutions, economic developers, employers and the GO Virginia program to create a pipeline of skilled workers in advanced manufacturing, specifically robotics and mechatronics, precision machining and metrology, welding and advanced materials. GOTEC will expose youth to advanced manufacturing tools and techniques in middle and high schools as well as the careers associated with these fields, increasing the talent pipeline of workers throughout Southside and Southwest Virginia.

Support Service:

Stanley J. Christian Department of Military Affairs:



As the sole HVAC mechanic, Stanley has been diligent in continuously operating, upgrading and repairing the agency's aging HVAC systems, saving the unit up to \$45,000 in contractor costs. Using the training received on complex propriety control systems, he has single-handedly attempted to troubleshoot and remedy previous oversights, and locate uninstalled or improperly installed components that have degraded facilities and wasted both energy and dollars. In addition, his knowledge has identified requirements that would dramatically improve system trouble identification and operational effectiveness. By arduously monitoring, compiling and analyzing systems trends, as well as performing over \$65,000 of preventative and repair work orders, he has been a key player in the design and planning of a much-needed, modernized system.

Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach:

Paula Saylor-Robinson Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

In just over three years, Paula Saylor-Robinson, Director of Audience Development and Community Engagement, has contributed significantly to the VMFA's strategic plan by leading a variety of outreach initiatives with the primary goal of attracting broader, more diverse audiences to the museum.

Paula participates in numerous community events including the 2nd Street Festival in Jackson Ward, Richmond Symphony Orchestra Big Tent Festivals in Jackson Ward and Southside, and the St. Elizabeth Jazz Festival. Paula also hosts the VMFA After Hours, which is targeted to the African American community and has brought in over 2,700 total guests across the past four events. In addition, Paula is heavily involved in the planning of "Ascend and Lead: A Women's Empowerment Forum" taking place at the VMFA. The forum will highlight career stories from women of color and their respective journeys of leadership, in hopes of inspiring the next generation.



Creative Customer Service:

Virginia Tax Refund Fraud Prevention Team Department of Taxation



The Virginia Tax Refund Fraud Prevention Team tackles one of the most critical issues facing state tax agencies every day – protecting taxpayers and the Commonwealth from a variety of threats, including income tax refund fraud and identity theft. So far in 2019, the team's work has resulted in the denial of more than \$28 million in fraudulent refund returns. Through the development of Online Refund Verification, Online Submission of Documents and an Automated Return Release Process, the Refund Fraud Prevention Team protects the bottom line for taxpayers, Virginia Tax and the Commonwealth. The team's ideas have helped deny more fraudulent refunds, streamline processes for efficiency, reduce taxpayer processing times and dissatisfaction, and increase the agency's ability to scrutinize more suspicious returns.

Public Service AND Commonwealth: Building a Stronger Virginia:

Deputy Comptroller Chanel Hobbs State Corporation Commission

Diagnosed with ALS, a progressive neuromuscular disease, in 2008, Chanel can no longer perform basic life functions without assistance. Paralyzed and on a ventilator, she works fulltime from home, is active in her church and volunteers with her family to raise money and advocate for Virginians living with ALS. Her efforts have raised more than \$350,000 for ALS education and research. Chanel has advocated for ALS funding on Capitol Hill, openly shares her own experience with new ALS patients and others, and participates in ALS-related clinical trials and studies. Hundreds of employees are impacted by her work as Deputy Comptroller at the SCC and thousands more members of the public benefit from her fundraising and advocacy efforts. Chanel's professionalism and advocacy for people living with ALS demonstrates her outward focus to serving the commission, her coworkers, her community, and the Commonwealth.



Public-Private Partnerships:

Driven to Protect Program Department of Motor Vehicles

Driven to Protect is advancing state-of-the-art technology that will help eliminate injuries and deaths caused by drunk driving. Through this initiative, piloted by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, in partnership with James River Transportation and the Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS) Program, engineers have gathered real-world data on the accuracy and precision of breath-based sensors that passively detect a driver's BAC level, while boosting awareness of this technology among the public. The feedback received is not only helping improve the alcohol detection system's performance, but it is building consumer demand for making this technology available as an optional safety feature in vehicles.



Employee Programs Take New Direction

Vilma Alejandro

Director of the Office of Employee Programs at DHRM

If you have noticed a change in how some programs for employees are provided or communicated, there's a good reason! The Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Office of Employee Programs has worked hard under new leadership to create a working environment in which employees across the Commonwealth are engaged physically, as well as emotionally and cognitively.

As you can see from information elsewhere in this issue, recognition is a large part of our focus. While events like the Governor Honor Awards and the [Jewell Service Awards](#) are very

significant, recognition comes in many forms, including peer-to-peer "thank you" notes, team awards, and annual service award programs. For this reason, the Commonwealth also recently introduced some service awards this year to employees with one and three years of service. Recognition should not be delayed until an employee has worked for five years! Regardless of the method, there is always a way to recognize the hard work someone has done. It lets them know that they are appreciated, and it demonstrates to others how important they are to the Commonwealth and its workers.



V Alejandro

We hope that our focus will assist in enhancing the credibility of all of our programs, increasing their visibility with employees and help in creating a consistent and growing culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and overall transparency.



CommonHealth Champion Award Winners

The CommonHealth Wellness Champion Award is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways that we work together to create healthier workplaces. In 2019, CommonHealth received over 100 inspirational stories about how individuals are making a positive difference in the wellness of others in state government. CommonHealth Wellness Champions have personally made significant changes in health behaviors, motivated others to make health improvements, or implemented a policy, practice, or activity to help create a positive wellness culture for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This year's winners are:

- **Donna Cox** of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- **Trasean Boatwright** of the Virginia Department of Health Professions
- **Beth Dickens** of Thomas Nelson Community College
- **Rachel Shelton** of the Department of General Services

Read more about these Champions and former winners on the [CommonHealth website](#) to inspire your own efforts to create a healthier workplace. Congratulations 2019 CommonHealth Wellness Champions!

Recognition/Engagement Highlights

Improving the employee experience is a major goal of the Commonwealth. In just the past year, much was accomplished, including:

- Implementation of one of the most generous parental leave programs in the nation.
- In conjunction with the Department of General Service, expansion of the *OnTheSquareVA* and *OnTheSquareAnywhere* programs, which continue to be popular and well-attended.
- Compensation tools aimed at reducing student debt and helping employees save for their children's college education.
- Providing employees the opportunity to earn cash rewards when they shop for better-value health care services and lab tests at certain facilities using the *SmartShopper* program, and assisting the plan in reducing health care costs.
- Introduction of a new Employee Recognition/Engagement Policy and Program, expanding service award categories and increasing the value of recognition bonus awards.



Click this link to learn more, or follow *OnTheSquare* on social media



Jewell Service Awards 2019, click the image to learn more!

smartshopper[®]

Learn more about becoming a *SmartShopper*!

Other News you Should Know

- **Happy Premium Holiday!** If you are enrolled in a state plan, you'll get your health benefits at no cost during the month of October. All eligible state employees will pay no health benefits premium, and for most, the premium holiday will occur on October 16 and November. [Click here for more information.](#)
- Be on the look out for the Employee Programs Magazine *The CommonVibE* coming later this year!
- Stay up to date with what is coming soon *OnTheSquare*
- Sign up to receive immediate notifications of emergency office closings in the Richmond-Metro Area by following DHRM on Twitter! [@VirginiaDHRM](#)



DHRM Calendar

October 14
Columbus Day & Yorktown
Victory Day
November 11
Veterans Day
November 27
4 hours additional holiday time
November 28
Thanksgiving
November 29
Day After Thanksgiving
December 24
8 hours additional holiday time
December 25
Christmas

Please note: In some agencies, the holiday and payday schedule may vary from what is shown here. If you have questions, see your agency human resources officer.

Denotes Payday

Denotes Holiday

Denotes Additional Time Off 8 hrs 4 hrs

Denotes Payday on Holiday or Time Off

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October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

View 2020 Pay and Holiday Calendar!

Tell Us What You Think!

- How can we improve this newsletter? Take [this short, anonymous survey](#) and let us know!
- This issue was all about Employee Recognition, and we want to keep that going in future issues! If you or a coworker have an interesting occupation, backstory, side gig, or hobby, [let us know here](#) and you may be featured in a future Commonwealth Advantage issue!

Follow DHRM on social media to get current updates on emergency closings, upcoming events, and more!



@VirginiaDHRM



CommonHealthVA



@DHRMVA



Virginia Department of Human
Resource Management

Look out for our next
issue in the spring.
Thank you for reading
and sharing!


The Commonwealth Advantage