



MONITOR

TECHNICAL BRIEF

Summer 2004

Inside this issue

Fostering Partnerships for Small Business

3

VMS Joins National Register of Historic Places Online Travel Itineraries

5

People, Places & Happenings

6

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Main Street Program provides downtown revitalization technical assistance to Virginia communities, using the National Main Street Center's Four Point Approach™ (Organization, Promotion, Design & Economic Restructuring) to comprehensive preservation-based revitalization of historic commercial districts.



Department of Housing and Community Development

Welcome to Main Street! Harrisonburg, Luray and South Boston Announced as Designated Communities

Governor Mark Warner recently announced the designation of Harrisonburg, Luray and South Boston as Virginia's newest Main Street communities. "I am pleased to welcome these communities to the Virginia Main Street program," said Governor Warner. "I am a strong advocate of the need to revitalize our traditional downtown commercial districts. The Main Street program has achieved great success in bringing new life to our downtowns and making them excellent places for people to again live, work, and do business," the Governor stated.



Top, Luray; Center, South Boston; Bottom, Harrisonburg.

conomic development model that is making great things happen in Virginia's historic downtowns. It's a pleasure to welcome Harrisonburg, Luray, and South Boston to the Main Street program. I know the communities will take full advantage of the program's resources as they work to achieve their individual revitalization goals."

In **Harrisonburg**, there have been a number of past efforts to revitalize the historic commercial core. In the 1960s, the city followed a national trend of demolishing vacant or older

They join the 17 existing Main Street communities as part of a network of downtowns across the Commonwealth aggressively revitalizing their central business districts. They also become eligible for intensive assistance from Virginia Main Street and the National Main Street Center in the Four Point Main Street Approach™ (design, promotion, economic restructuring and organization). Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Michael J. Schewel, noted, "The Virginia Main Street program is a successful eco-

structures to make way for new buildings. Over the last 30 years, several revitalization initiatives were undertaken by citizens' groups or the city. Each effort had some success, however the work was not sustained due to the all-volunteer effort and lack of sufficient funding. With the organization of Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance in 2003, there is new optimism that downtown revitalization will continue to be a public and private priority. Harrisonburg has one of the fastest rising population rates in the

(continued on page 2)

Welcome to Main Street!
(continued from page 1)

Commonwealth. With growing commercial development on the outskirts of the city, a strategy needs to be developed for downtown to attract quality retailers and retain those retailers that are already located downtown. Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance also has the opportunity to promote compatible, mixed-use, in-fill construction that will complement existing downtown buildings. Virginia Main Street will focus on developing a market analysis for the downtown and developing a comprehensive design strategy for downtown that will address not only rehabilitation, but mixed-use, in-fill construction as well.



Harrisonburg

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Luray is best known for its famous caverns that attract thousands of visitors per year. However, downtown Luray has not benefited from the influx of tourists into the area due, in large part, to the Route 211 by-pass that diverts travelers around the town. Poor signage to the downtown from the by-pass, and the arrival of large national retailers to the west of town have also contributed to the languishing of downtown Luray. However, efforts are underway to change this situation. Several buildings have been rehabilitated, including the train station, the former Cave's Hardware Store and the former Graves Motor Company, into new retail spaces. The Luray-Hawksbill Greenway, recently completed, provides a fitness and walking trail for visitors and residents. In 2003, Luray received a Certified Development Block grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development to assist in making physical improvements to the downtown. In 2004, the Luray Downtown Initiative, Inc. was formed to lead the downtown revitalization efforts. Virginia Main Street will assist the Downtown Luray Initiative, Inc. in developing a comprehensive strategy that will enhance and revitalize the downtown district and entice visitors downtown during their visits to Luray Caverns and the Shenandoah National Park. Development of a market analysis will identify target markets and viable business categories. Design assistance and organizational development assistance will also be provided to the recently formed Downtown Luray Initiative, Inc.



Luray



The Prizery in South Boston

South Boston saw a decline in its downtown beginning in the 1950s with the onset of suburban growth, the decline of the tobacco industry and the improvement of transportation infrastructure. Currently a revitalization effort, led by Destination Downtown South Boston, is underway: an active Enterprise Zone is in place; the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center is now in operation in a rehabbed tobacco warehouse; and the Prizery is being converted into a state of the art theater and gallery. However, with these assets, South Boston also needs help in addressing some of its problems, including a large number of vacant and deteriorating tobacco warehouses, a high percentage of upper story vacancies, and a lack of activity downtown after 5:00 pm and on the weekends. Virginia Main Street will assist Destination Downtown South Boston by funding a market analysis that will identify target markets and viable business categories. Design assistance, promotion and marketing strategy development and organizational development assistance will also be key areas of service provided to this downtown organization.

Representatives of the three newly designated communities will take part in an intensive training on the Four Points to be held in Rocky Mount in September. Virginia and National Main Street staff will conduct resource team visits starting in August, 2004 and through the summer of 2005. These team visits will focus on areas such as work planning, board training, design activities, and market analyses. ■

Fostering Partnerships for Small Business Development



Round Hill is the first stop on the Loudoun Road Show. From left to right: Martha Mason Semmes, Coordinator of Main Street Loudoun; Wally Johnson of Round Hill Design Studio; and Georgeanna Emery, Economic Development Specialist with SBA's Washington Metropolitan Area District Office.

By Courtney Anderson

Transforming the economy of downtown often requires providing assistance to the small independent merchants who make downtown special. When the Main Street board and staff are looking for additional resources necessary to help downtown businesses with specific needs, they can cultivate some valuable partnerships to increase their outreach and service areas. This article focuses on two of those partners—Small Business Development Centers and the District Offices of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Small Business Development Centers—They are Everywhere!

Virginia's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) assist economic development initia-

tives, like Virginia Main Street programs, throughout the Commonwealth. The Virginia network of 29 local SBDCs provide professional business counseling, as well as training and information resources, to help grow and strengthen small local businesses. The network is a strategic alliance between the U.S. Small Business Administration, George Mason University and local sponsors throughout Virginia. These vital partners include universities, community colleges, chambers of commerce, municipalities, economic development organizations and private companies.

In 2003, over 4,600 business owners and managers received one-on-one counseling and more than 7,200 attended a training program offered by a local SBDC. SBDC professionals assist with business planning, marketing, financial analysis, access to capital, business start-up and other specialized services as requested. And companies report successes and positive impacts as a result of their SBDC relationship—over \$35.8 million in loans obtained, \$62 million in total capital formation, 3,100 jobs created or retained, and an increase in sales of \$59.6 million was reported in 2003.

Examples of SBDC involvement with economic development organizations include:

- Timely and affordable management training seminars for business owners;
- Support for local business retention and attraction programs;
- Professional management consulting for expanding and new businesses;
- Insightful participation on economic development advisory committees and boards;
- Valuable resource for business incubators.

Like other economic development organizations, Virginia Main Street communities and Affiliate communities have developed productive partnerships with their local SBDCs.

(continued on page 4)

Developing Partnerships...

(continued from page 3)

Going to the NxLevel in Marion

As reported in the Virginia Main Street Monitor in September 2000, the Marion Downtown Revitalization Association (MDRA) successfully teamed with the SBDC of Wytheville Community College to provide NxLevel classes to downtown merchants and entrepreneurs as part of the Main Street Economic Restructuring plan. NxLevel programs offer several training options, including modules for business start-ups and for entrepreneurs. The overall NxLevel concept is to teach the skills needed to create and strengthen successful business ventures. The program combines interactive classroom education, special guest speakers, one-on-one counseling, and networking to tailor the approach to businesspersons on all levels—from idea stage entrepreneurs to struggling business owners to successful company executives seeking to incorporate new ideas.

Through the partnership with the SBDC, MDRA Executive Director Ken Heath was certified as an NxLevel instructor. "It brought a whole new dimension to teaching small business," said Heath. Instead of being "textbook oriented.... This program offers a structured environment where different learning tools, group projects, and guest speakers serve to introduce and solidify the concepts offered in each class session. It truly is a class where someone can very literally use the information the next day to start improving their business."

U.S. Small Business Administration District Offices

Every state has at least one U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) district office, with multiple resource programs to support the needs of the small business community. The Richmond District SBA office is responsible for the delivery of SBA

programs and services to most of the communities in Virginia, while the Washington Metro Area District office works with six municipalities in Northern Virginia, including: Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church Cities; and Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. Both SBA offices serving Virginia offer a wide range of services and programs to assist small businesses from business training and one-on-one counseling to financing and disaster assistance. In fiscal year 2003, the two offices serving Virginia approved 995 loans totaling over \$207 million, while the Richmond District Office alone assisted more than 18,980 people through training, counseling and business-development programs. Based on fiscal year 2004 loan data for Northern Virginia, deal flow seems to be picking up and many more businesses will be participating in SBA loan programs than the previous year.

Small Business Road Show in Loudoun

This summer a DHCD Commercial District Affiliate, Main Street Loudoun, is partnering with the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office to offer a business assistance road show through the County. Martha Mason Semmes, coordinator of Main Street Loudoun, and Georgeanna Emery, Economic Development Specialist with SBA, planned an ambitious schedule of visits to several towns within the County to acquaint Loudoun's citizens and small businesses with the many business assistance services available through these organizations.

Recently Emery and her staff have expanded their focus on lending and are assisting small businesses in job creation. To quickly start their efforts and achieve optimal results, Emery looked for a partner with existing relationships and resources. The Main Street Loudoun initiative proved to be the perfect partner for this county-wide campaign.

(continued on page 7)

SNAPSHOT OF SBA LENDING PROGRAMS

The SBA offers numerous loan programs to assist small businesses, including those below. It is important to note, however, that the SBA is primarily a guarantor of loans made by private and other institutions. For a definition of a "small business" go to: www.sba.gov/financing/preparation/eligibility.html

1. PROGRAM: Basic 7(a) Loan Guaranty

FUNCTION: Serves as the SBA's primary business loan program to help qualified small businesses obtain financing when they might not be eligible for business loans through normal lending channels.

CUSTOMER: Start-up and existing small businesses, commercial lending institutions

DELIVERED THROUGH: Commercial lending institutions

www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/7a.htm

SBA offers multiple variations of the basic 7(a) loan program to accommodate targeted needs.

2. PROGRAM: Certified Development Company (CDC), a 504 Loan Program

FUNCTION: Provides long-term, fixed-rate financing to small businesses to acquire real estate or machinery or equipment for expansion or modernization.

CUSTOMER: Small businesses requiring "bricks and mortar" financing

DELIVERED THROUGH: Certified development companies (private, nonprofit corporations set up to contribute to the economic development of their communities or regions).

www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/cdc504.htm

3. PROGRAM: Microloan, a 7(m) Loan Program

FUNCTION: Provides short-term loans of up to \$35,000 to small businesses and not-for-profit child-care centers for working capital or the purchase of inventory, supplies, furniture, fixtures, machinery and/or equipment.

CUSTOMER: Small businesses and not-for-profit child-care centers needing small-scale financing and technical assistance for start-up or expansion

DELIVERED THROUGH: Specially designated intermediary lenders (nonprofit organizations with experience in lending and in technical assistance)

www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/microloans.htm

4. PROGRAM: Loan Prequalification

FUNCTION: Allows business applicants to have their loan applications for \$250,000 or less analyzed and potentially sanctioned by the SBA before they are taken to lenders for consideration.

CUSTOMER: Designated small businesses

DELIVERED THROUGH: Nonprofit intermediaries such as small business development centers and certified development companies operating in specific geographic areas.

www.sba.gov/financing/sbaloan/prequalification.htm

Virginia Main Street Joins National Register of Historic Places Online Travel Itineraries

Secretary Schewel and Secretary Murphy emphasize economic and historic preservation benefits of downtown revitalization

On May 3, Secretary of Commerce and Trade Michael J. Schewel and Secretary of Natural Resources Tayloe M. Murphy, joined federal, state, and local officials to unveil the Virginia Main Street online travel itinerary. Carol D. Shull, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, showcased the features of the online itinerary, which is a new addition to the National Register of Historic Places Web site. The event, hosted by Historic Manassas, Inc. at the Hopkins Candy Factory building, marked the beginning of National Preservation Week and emphasized the economic and historic preservation benefits of downtown revitalization.

"It's an honor for Virginia's Main Street communities to be featured as one of the National Register of Historic Places travel itineraries," Governor Mark Warner states on the itineraries Welcome page. "This new initiative is a direct result of successful state and local revitalization efforts that are working to bring jobs, businesses, and tourists back to our historic downtown areas."

The online travel itinerary is a virtual tour of 17 of Virginia's designated Main Street communities. The three new Main Street communities, Harrisonburg, Luray and South Boston, will soon be added to the itinerary. Created in partnership with Virginia Main Street and the Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Main Street travel itiner-



From left to right: Secretary of Commerce & Trade, Michael J. Schewel; Virginia Main Street Program Manager, Amy Yarcich; Director of the Department of Housing & Community Development, Bill Shelton; Executive Director of Historic Manassas, Inc., Tricia Davis; Keeper of the National Register, Carol Shull; Director of the Resource Information Center at the Department of Historic Resources, Catherine Slusser; and Secretary of Natural Resources, Tayloe M. Murphy.

ary is the 32nd to be added to the National Register of Historic Places Web site. The online tour features a welcome message from Governor Mark Warner, a map of Virginia's designated Main Streets, color photos of significant attractions, and descriptions of each of the communities, with detailed information about shopping, special events, historic and natural attractions, lodging, and dining.

The National Register partners with local preservation organizations, historical societies, and local and state governments to create online travel itineraries about historic places. The mission of its travel itinerary series is: to help revitalize communities through increased heritage tourism; to link well-known historic sites to other less-visited places; to enhance awareness within commu-

nities of important historic properties and the value of preserving them; and to provide a valuable source for students, researchers and the general public searching for information about significant historic places across America.

Secretary of Commerce and Trade Michael J. Schewel spoke at the Web site unveiling ceremony and lauded the new initiative's potential for supporting tourism in Virginia. "The revitalization of Virginia's historic downtowns is essential to increasing their tourism appeal," said Secretary Schewel. "This online itinerary will highlight Virginia's historic Main Street communities to a global audience and encourage tourists to visit these communities in person. This will result in increased tourism dollars for the state and local economies."

Secretary of Natural Resources Tayloe M. Murphy applauded the collaborative effort behind the Virginia Main Street itinerary and highlighted the importance of downtown revitalization to historic preservation. "The Main Street travel itinerary is a tangible example of integrating historic preservation with education, tourism, and economic development to produce outstanding and long-lasting results for these communities and the entire commonwealth," said Secretary Murphy. ■

To start your virtual visit of Virginia's Main Street Communities, go to: www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/VMainstreet.

Main Street 101: Organization and Economic Restructuring

Mark your calendars! On September 29 and 30, Virginia Main Street will hold its Main Street 101 training in Rocky Mount. The training this year will cover two of the Four Points, Organization and Economic Restructuring, in depth. **Carol Weisman**, an internationally known speaker, author, trainer and consultant who specializes in volunteerism, fund raising and governance, will be our instructor for the Organizational sessions. Because of the rare opportunity of having Ms. Weisman in Rocky Mount, the Community Partnership for Revitalization, Inc., the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and the Virginia Main Street Program have asked her to also give a keynote speech the evening before the VMS training that will be **free** and open to the entire community and region. The first day of the training, Ms. Weisman will share her passion and energy for fund raising, recruiting volunteers and board members, and the roles and responsibilities of board and staff. **Josh Bloom** of the National Trust for Historic Preservation will conduct a series of training sessions on Economic Restructuring topics the second day. A former Main Street executive director from New Jersey, Mr. Bloom specializes in developing market analyses for traditional business districts. Mr. Bloom has been with the Trust for nearly ten years and provides technical services to New Jersey and New Hampshire Main Street towns, as well as several commercial districts and designated Neighborhood Main Street communities in the City of Boston. ✍

Governor Warner Designates Downtown Lynchburg and Danville as Virginia Enterprise Zones

On June 21, Governor Mark Warner announced the designation of enterprise zones in downtown **Danville** and downtown **Lynchburg**, along with other zones in Newport News, Roanoke, and a shared designation



With Delegate Bryant and Mayor Hutcherson looking on, Governor Warner announces Enterprise Zones on June 21.

for the Town of Saltville and Smyth County. The designations allow tax and financial incentives to attract new businesses, encourage the expansion of existing businesses, and support overall economic growth. Governor Warner was joined by Secretary of Commerce and Trade Michael J. Schewel and Delegate L. Preston Bryant, Jr. at the announcement event in downtown Lynchburg. Mayor Carl B. Hutcherson, Jr. welcomed the dignitaries to Lynchburg.

"One of my administration's top priorities has been to make Virginia the location of choice for new and expanding businesses," said Governor Warner. "Our coveted Triple-A bond rating, our reputation for fiscal integrity, and incentives like those offered through the Virginia Enterprise Zone program make the Commonwealth an excellent place to do business. I am pleased to announce these five enterprise zones to support new business opportunities and job creation."

Five of Virginia's first zones, designated in 1984 for a period of 20 years, expired in 2004. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) received 20

applications representing 29 localities for the five available zones. After a competitive application review process, the Commonwealth awarded the designations announced by the Governor. Zones are designated for a twenty-year period.

The program attracts new and supports existing businesses by providing state and local incentives such as tax relief, workforce training, job grants, and fee waivers to businesses located in enterprise zones. "Virginia's enterprise zones have proven successful

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resources & news
you can use ✍

in attracting new and expanding businesses to Virginia's economically distressed communities," said Secretary Schewel. "The program has supported \$450 million in investment and the creation of 23,500 jobs for Virginians through 500 new or expanding businesses in the last decade alone."

Governor Warner's announcement of the five designations maintains the total number of Virginia enterprise zones at 57. The Enterprise Zone Act, created by the General Assembly in 1982, allows for up to 60 zones, three of which remain reserved for significant economic development opportunities to be named by the Governor. For more information about the VEZ program call 804/371-7030 or email EZONE@dhcd.virginia.gov. ✍

Memorial Flag Displayed in Downtown Lynchburg

A 60x35 foot American flag, honoring more than 3,800 Americans killed during acts of terrorism around the world since 1970, was displayed at Lynchburg's Batteau Festival on June 19. The flag is the final result of the Memorial Flag Project, begun in the wake of the September 11th attacks. The Memorial Flag contains almost 3,800 cross-stitched squares that contain the names of persons killed, dates and events, and patriotic symbols. Over 1,300 men, women and children across the world hand-stitched the squares, which were then sewn together by a team of stitchers. The flag was displayed in rows so that people could walk between the stripes to view the names.

The Lynchburg Batteau Festival display marked the last chance for the public to view the flag in this form. After the Batteau Festival display, the flag travelled back to Oklahoma City to take up permanent residence in the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism's (MIPT) new office space on the fourth and fifth floor of the Journal Record Building. The *Journal Record* Building is adjacent to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and currently houses the Memorial Museum Center. ☞

Marion's Lincoln Theatre Opens

In Marion, an open house was held on May 1 for the public to view the newly restored Lincoln Theatre, which is now open for business as a multi-purpose community arts center. The building is one of only three extant Mayan Revival theatres in America, and is the only one east of the Mississippi River. In 1988, a group of concerned citizens raised \$20,000 to buy the vacant, neglected building. Over the years, volunteers have made small repairs to the building and developed a plan to renovate and reopen the theatre that included substantial fundraising. For more information about the Lincoln Theatre, visit: www.the-lincoln-theatre.org ☞

New DHCD Commercial District Affiliates

Welcome to the following new Virginia Main Street Affiliate communities who have joined the fold in recent months:

- Kilmarnock
- Purcellville

To find out how your community can become an Affiliate and have access to Main Street quarterly trainings, check out our website at www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet

People

Downtown **Danville** Association has named **Liz Sater** as its new executive director. Sater has a diverse background that includes being a downtown retailer and the Interim Executive Director for DDA.

Winchester's Old Town Development Board has named **Karen Helm** as its Interim Executive Director as **Tina Combs** moves on to a position with the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce in West Virginia. Karen comes to OTDB from the City of Winchester's Office of Economic Development. **Lisa Barker** of the **Martinsville** Uptown Revitalization Association left her position as Executive Director at the end of June. Lisa has relocated to Gastonia, North Carolina, with her husband and family. Virginia Main Street welcomes its summer intern, **Matt Dugan**. Matt is an urban and regional planning graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia's contact at the National Main Street Center, **Valecia Crisafulli**, has moved to another position at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. We will still see Valecia from time to time in her new role as Associate Director of State and Local Partnerships. Director of the National Main Street Center for almost 20 years, **Kennedy Lawson Smith** has created a private consulting practice, Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE) Group and she has been appointed executive director for the League of Historic American Theatres. **Doug Loescher** will act as the Interim Director until September 30, 2004. ■

Fostering Partnerships...

(continued from page 4)

Emery and Semmes' schedule included a series of walking tours of Loudoun commercial centers to bring this important information directly to the doorstep of Loudoun's small businesses. The walking tours outlined management and technical assistance, as well as information necessary for small businesses to gain access to capital. The tours also offered advice for individuals seeking to start new businesses or to create home-based business ventures.

During their first stop of the road show in Round Hill, Semmes and Emery met with a dozen local small businesses. "It was raining outside," says Semmes, "but we were pleased to close the day with three businesses interested in possibly using SBA loan funds for renovations or expansions." Wally Johnson's Round Hill Design Studio designs kitchens and Johnson was one of the businesses that expressed an interest in the SBA's 504 loan program. Semmes noted that, "As a result of our tour, Wally sees SBA as a possible source of funding for rehabbing the historic building that now houses his wood-working shop and the Round Hill Arts Center."

For more information

To find the SBDC nearest to you or to find out more about local SBDC programs and services, go to www.virginiasbdc.org.

To find out more about the Virginia SBA Office go to www.sba.gov/va. All localities in Virginia are served by the Richmond SBA District Office except for Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church Cities; and Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. If your business is located in one of these six municipalities, go to www.sba.gov/dc. ■

Special thanks to the Middleburg Eccentric for sharing its June 17 article by Lisa Leonard about the Loudoun County road shows.



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

501 North Second Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Downtown Development Calendar

August '04

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- 16 Smart Growth: The Smart Money is on Smart Growth, Washington, DC (National Building Museum, www.nbm.org or 202/272-2448)
- 23 Downtown Revitalization and Historic Preservation: Creating More Livable Cities for the 21st Century, Washington, D.C. (National Building Museum, www.nbm.org or 202/272-2448)

September '04

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- 1-4 Community Action Annual Convention, Washington, DC (Community Action Partnership, www.communityactionpartnership.com/events/conference)
- 8-10 America's Town Meeting, Washington, DC (National Center for Small Communities (www.smallcommunities.org/ncsc or 202/624-3556)
- 9 **Virginia Main Street Field Trip: Property Acquisition and Leveraging, Kingwood, WV** (designated VMS communities only)
- 9 Plant Health Care for Urban Trees, Waynesboro, VA (Trees Virginia, Becky Woodson, 434/977-1375 x3324 or woodson@dof.state.va.us)
- 19-22 Economic Development Through Exploration and Discovery, Washington, D.C. (International Economic Development Council Annual Conference, www.iedconline.org or 202/223-7800)
- 29-30 **Virginia Main Street 101: Organization and Economic Restructuring, Rocky Mount, VA** (Virginia Main Street, mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov/mainstreet or 804/371-7030)
- 28-Oct 3 Restore America: Communities at a Crossroads, Louisville, KY (National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nthpconference.org)

October '04 - Virginia Archeology Month

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- 2-5 50th Annual Conference, Vancouver, BC (International Downtown Association, 202/393-6801 or question@ida-downtown.org)
- 3-5 99th Annual Conference, Alexandria, VA (Virginia Municipal League, 804/649-8471 or jterry@vml.org)

November '04

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- 3-4 **Virginia Main Street Managers' Retreat** (designated VMS communities only)