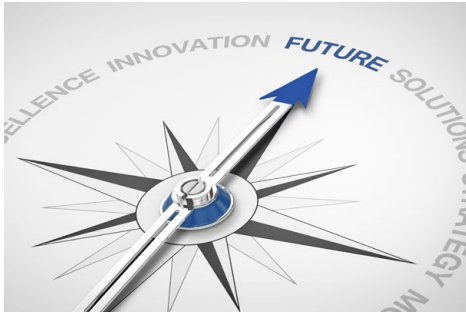


The Future May Not Be What You Think

by Crystal Washington, Annual Conference Keynote Speaker



"It's time for things to go back to normal!" Those words seem to be the rallying cry of association executives around the globe. But what is normal? Are we returning to business as it was in February 2020?

It's been a challenging two years for associations, many of which saw resources stretched beyond belief. They battled to maintain member engagement and deliver value in a virtual/hybrid world. During this same time, association teams rose to the challenge of learning how to collaborate remotely.

In 2022, leaders find that with decreased restrictions, all team members and association members are not ready to come back to the office or attend in-person meetings. What once seemed temporary—remote work and virtual meetings—seems to have taken root with a segment of our internal and external customers. There is a reason.

Humans Have Changed

The workplace is changing because humans themselves have changed. While expanded technology use over the last 24 months has dramatically impacted how we think and interact with others, increased isolation has caused deep reflection. Three noticeable shifts in behavior include:

- Our members make more strategic decisions in doing business with organizations representing their values.
- People are more protective of their time and are less willing to endure long commutes or in-person meetups without clearly stated goals.
- Employees have higher expectations of employer support.

Technology Adoption Has Increased Dramatically

Perhaps you've noticed that the coworker who proudly proclaimed the title of Luddite, saying that they were incapable of using the simplest of technology, is now the "Queen of Zoom" and leverages three different delivery apps. What happened? When forced to adapt, most of us are quite capable of learning new skills.

continued on page 4 >

NEXT EVENT



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MAY 1-3, 2022
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Sunday, May 1

- ▶ Pre-Conference Activities
- ▶ First-Time Attendee/New Member Mixer (*invitation only*)
- ▶ Opening Reception
- ▶ Dinner on your own

Monday, May 2

- ▶ Yoga Wake Up
- ▶ Breakfast & Opening Keynote
- ▶ Morning Breakout Sessions
- ▶ Lunch, Board Installation, CAE Recognitions
- ▶ Luncheon Keynote
- ▶ Afternoon Breakout Sessions
- ▶ Shared Interest Group (SIG) meetings
- ▶ President's Reception (*invitation only*)
- ▶ Reception, Dinner & Entertainment

Tuesday, May 3

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Closing Keynote
- ▶ General Session
- ▶ Closing Remarks

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Join Crystal Washington at the Annual Conference for her opening keynote, "The Future May Not Be What You Think." Learn what you can do right now to proactively move your organization toward your desired future.

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The Virginian Hotel
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

Leadership reflections



Maureen Dingus, CAE
VSAE President

As I wrap up my time as VSAE President, I'm reflecting on my years on the Board. Each year was unique, filled with great colleagues and important work. All that work has built up to a point where I can honestly say we are pointed toward the future.

Through the hard work of our members, we are making an impact in several places.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

VSAE's new task force was charged with looking at how we can move forward in service of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The volunteer opportunity sparked an interest in members who had never been engaged. The group developed a vision, values, and practical next steps. The vision is to build and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive association that sets the example for affirmation, access, recognition, and respect of various groups, identities, and cultures to positively impact Virginia's association community. Please keep your eye out for how you can engage in our future activities and opportunities.

Association Leadership Virginia

In March, our Board reaffirmed our commitment to Association Leadership Virginia (ALV). Our goal is to provide a best-in-class leadership program that meets the needs of our membership. This year we will have four ALV graduates on our Board showing that we are in fact building the association's leadership pipeline. We are continuing our relationship with Catch Your Limit and look forward to kicking off a new cohort at the Fall Conference. If you are considering participating or have someone on your team who may benefit, don't hesitate to reach out to one of our ALV evangelists. They are passionate about the program and the impact it has had on their career.

CAE Study Group

This program has exploded in popularity. VSAE is serving many more future CAEs thanks

VSAE's Future is in Good Hands

Each year
(on the Board)
was unique,
filled with great
colleagues and
important work.

to our great reputation and track record, but also the use of technology to spread our reach across the Commonwealth and even to other states. This is a great example of how we built on something we were good at and have taken it to the next level.

Partner Leadership

Our partners have stayed by our side through tough times. Even with the rough road they've been on, they are very future-focused. In a recent partner call, I was excited to hear our hospitality leaders talk about their focus on sustainability and impact on the environment. There was real passion about how the actions of our hospitality friends and association leaders can collectively work to make our communities and beyond better places.

Management Team

VSAE's future is in good hands. Our team, led by Terry Monroe and Zach Eisenman, is looking at all we do with fresh eyes. They are challenging the status quo and doing their best to equip our association to grow and serve our evolving needs.

I hope to see you all at the Annual Conference at Lansdowne Resort to talk about all the great things we have to look forward to this coming year and beyond.

> **Future**, continued from page 1

In addition to the need to shift with the times for work, some of us genuinely enjoyed the efficiencies provided by apps that, before COVID-19, we may not have utilized. We've seen industries leverage virtual reality to provide employee training and tours for potential job recruits. While once slightly taboo, industries are lauded for replacing unfilled human positions with machine "workers."

The New Era of Work

We now have a society of fairly tech-savvy people who are more protective of their time, have higher expectations from employers, and require organizations with which they affiliate to hold similar values to their own.

As an association professional, your challenge is to create a new era of work actively. We are playing the game as the rules are being written.

Is the future of work for your organization's team remote collaboration or a hybrid approach of revolving days of the week, or will all hands

be on deck back in the office? As you decide, it's essential to know some of the trends impacting each selection.

Is the future of your organization's members more online resources and hybrid meetings? Or are you returning full throttle to in-person events? Either way, you'll want to be aware of trends affecting revenue opportunities in both approaches.

To understand these trends and find out what you can do right now to proactively move your organization toward your desired future, be sure to attend Crystal Washington's opening keynote address on Monday, May 2 at the VSAE Annual Conference.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Crystal Washington is a technology strategist and futurist who works with organizations that want to leverage technology for profits and productivity.

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Get To Know VSAE's Incoming President

Steven Williams, CAE, Partner at Hardiman-Williams

What drew you to the association industry?

My first job out of college was a temporary position at the Association for Investment Management and Research processing event registrations and stuffing badges. I previously didn't know associations even existed and was amazed by the entire operation at AIMR, which had hundreds of staff globally and about 60,000 members. I joined AIMR full-time and learned invaluable lessons about member service, governance, teamwork, branding, and operations. Two years later, I took a job for a small association—the Modular Building Institute—with just two staff and 100 members. Like many association professionals, I wore many hats and worked long hours. I applied a lot of what I learned at AIMR to MBI, which is now an internationally recognized authority on commercial construction—managed by the association management company I own with my business partner Tom Hardiman.

What goals do you have during your presidency of VSAE?

I hope to engage more association professionals outside of Richmond—specifically Charlottesville and westward—with in-person and digital networking and professional development. There are association professionals located all over our beautiful Commonwealth, including deep into Southwest Virginia. I am happy to be an advocate for VSAE on-the-road when traveling interstates 64 and 81 to Abingdon to visit my daughter—and soon my son—in college.

What are your top three tips for association executives?

I have four. Be kind, serve others, be humble, and outperform your colleagues and staff. In other words, let others see what an association executive is at every possible level, all the time.

What are you working on that's new and different?

Ha! My aching body! Seems every day it's new and different. Let's just call it a "work in progress." Seriously though, the most new and different thing at my association management company is transitioning all of our clients to a new website/database system—a separate installation of the system for each client. Our staff will gain efficiencies using the same system regardless of the client and by automating tasks. Our clients will gain the latest technology in websites including mobile apps, personal data protection, credit card security, and ADA accessibility compliance.

What is your greatest challenge at work?

Same as everyone else—finding time to get everything done.

What success stories do you have about communicating with your membership?

Our largest client is an international trade association, but because our staff is relatively small, we try to be smart about how we use automation while maintaining personal connections. Our new database system recognizes member involvement and



knows when to send personalized emails. It also sends prompts to staff about tasks and goals. Our biggest communications successes, however, come from simply using the telephone to build relationships. Members enjoy hearing from association professionals without being asked to buy or volunteer for something. Members—regardless of status or longevity—also like having their phone calls answered. Our follow-you-anywhere phone system allows staff to take calls regardless of physical location. Of course, strong relationships with members is often what accounts for a more active membership.

What do you enjoy doing in your time away from work?

Chilling in the backyard, cheering on my kids' games, doing DIY projects, trying new brews

continued on page 6 >

An advertisement for Visit Norfolk. The top half features a photograph of the USS Intrepid (CVR-12) docked at a pier in Norfolk, Virginia, with the city skyline in the background. Overlaid on the image is the text "TIME FOR A CHANGE OF VENUE" in a bold, sans-serif font. The bottom half of the advertisement has a solid orange background. On the left, it says "VISIT Norfolk" with the "Norfolk" in a script font. On the right, it says "CHANGE COURSE" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a yellow button below it that says "BOOK NOW >>>".

The Great Restructure: How Office Leases Are Being Renegotiated

With many organizations moving to completely remote work, commercial real estate occupancy has significantly dropped, and landlords are willing to make big concessions. This means associations can adopt a new real estate strategy to fit their workforce plans.

Current office real estate markets are soft and favor occupiers, presenting associations with a unique opportunity to significantly reduce their real estate expenses. For the first time in years, landlords are entertaining creative lease restructures and have a renewed appreciation for their tenants.

Before embarking on a restructure, it is critical to understand what your organization's future footprint will look like. As more associations embrace remote work and a hybrid workforce, they are hiring staff who work at home and who will infrequently, if ever, be in the office. Staff reluctance to return full time to the office is another consideration that is affecting the decision. A choice to restructure must consider these factors, as well as predict the use, need, and purpose of the office post-pandemic.

Workforce Strategy Influences Real Estate Decisions

As associations contemplate the future of work, many still see the value in having a physical space to connect and collaborate with colleagues, donors, members, and volunteers. The rise of remote work also means most associations will likely adopt a hybrid work model.

Two key steps should be taken prior to developing a real estate strategy. First, understand your workforce strategy. Create a plan that attracts, enables, and ignites your workforce irrespective of their location. Leaders will need to make decisions about who works in the office, including the frequency. Organizations must also consider their staff's personal concerns and reluctance about returning to the physical office. Once leadership reflects on these issues, a workplace strategy will emerge that addresses the future office and the physical design it takes.

Second, the association will need to decide on the purpose of the office going forward: a return to normal where employees are working and meeting, an office that provides flexible opportunities, or

continued on page 10 >

> **President**, continued from page 7

and wines around Charlottesville, doing anything at the beach, having a cocktail at the Greenbrier Casino, or kayaking Carter's Creek at the Tides Inn.

What have been some of your streaming binges?

I don't watch a lot of "TV," although somehow my family seems to have subscriptions to every available streaming platform! I'm looking forward to the new entirely-too-short season of *Endeavour* on PBS' Masterpiece Theatre.

What's on your music playlist?

Hackensaw Boys, Allman Betts, Shane & Shane, Paul Zach, Eagles, Beatles, Esperanza Spalding, The Tragically Hip, Low Cut Connie, Garrison Keillor monologues, almost anything old or recorded live.

What sports/teams do you root for?

Just the two that really matter to me. Emory & Henry College Women's Soccer and Albemarle County High School Varsity Baseball—the teams that my daughter and son play for!

What books have you read lately?

The Conviction to Lead by Albert Mohler.

What was the last great piece of advice you received?

"Sometimes the good you do does you no good." I don't know its origins, other than I heard it on a rerun of *Law & Order* the other day.

What are three things on your bucket list?

Camp overnight on a Caribbean beach, go to a New Orleans jazz festival, and cruise the Mediterranean—the latter of which is planned for this October with my wife on Viking.

What are you most proud of?

"Proud" is a tough word for me. But I'm "honored" to be the husband of Stephanie and father of Grace and Garrett.



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LET'S RECAP

NOVA Seminar

On March 10, VSAE held its first NOVA Seminar Series event of 2022 at the **DoubleTree by Hilton McLean Tysons**. This was VSAE's first in-person Northern Virginia event in over two years, as the initiative had been put on pause during the pandemic. The 19 attendees, which included existing VSAE members and NOVA-based prospects, enjoyed a morning of coffee, catching-up, and honest conversation.

The morning session, "Unpacking and Addressing Your Big Issues" was facilitated by VSAE board member **Christina Lewellen, MBA, CAE**, Executive Director for the **Association for Technology Leaders in Independent Schools**. Topics of discussion included challenges with remote employees, how to address volunteer burnout, and strategies to manage work life balance. There was lively discussion amongst the group, with attendees sharing best practices, industry trends, and tips and lessons learned over the past two years.

The event highlighted the gap that VSAE hopes to fill within the Northern Virginia association community—connecting NOVA-based association professionals and providing high-quality and cost-efficient VSAE programming in that region. VSAE's next NOVA Seminar Series event is scheduled for Thursday, June 9 at the offices of Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP in Falls Church. We hope you'll join us then!

Communications & Marketing SIG

The VSAE Communications & Marketing SIG met on Thursday, March 10 to brainstorm session ideas for 2022. The group discussed potential guest speakers and topic ideas including social media campaigns, streamlining communications, member engagement, and a sharing session where each attendee would present their favorite marketing and/or communications piece.

The Communications & Marketing SIG will meet next in-person at the VSAE Annual Convention, May 1-3 at Lansdowne Resort.



Meeting Planner Summit

On March 24-25, meeting planners, sponsors, and guests gathered at the **Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel** for the 2022 Meeting Planner Summit. We talked contracts, fine-tuned our networking skills at the disco, and applied our meeting planning skills with sponsors. We took a tour and snacked on local popcorn. We talked shop on current challenges, explored the importance of data, and finished the day listening to our fellow attendees share their wisdom and insights.

Thank you to those who stepped up to lead a session or participate on a panel, including Meeting Planner SIG members **Rebecca Butler, Pamela Flynn, Rhea George, Jordan Vallerga, and Megan Williams**, and Meeting Planner Summit sponsors **Niesha Brown, Michele Catalla, Lori Leib, and Rita Matthews**.

The **Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel** was a wonderful host. A special thank you to **Denise Creasman** for putting everything together. We had a lively property tour with fun snacks and a little bubbly. The reception showcased Virginia oysters from a local farmer who shared his knowledge and passion for this delicious delicacy, followed by a curated wine dinner. The presenting sommelier provided excellent pairings for our selected entrees. The Sea Shanty Singers and their repertoire of bawdy tavern tunes was the perfect end to the evening.

We had many new faces this year and it was wonderful to meet those who joined us. We invite all of you to mark your calendars for March 2023 and the next amazing Meeting Planner Summit!

CEO SIG

Jennifer Thomas led her last CEO SIG on March 23. We are grateful for her leadership guiding this SIG. The well attended virtual meeting explored association life after COVID, including topics of virtual work, the great resignation, and the enthusiasm for in-person events. The next CEO SIG meeting will be at the Annual Conference at Lansdowne Resort, led by new CEO SIG leader **Randy Grumbine**.

April Monthly Seminar

On April 1, **Jeremy Wall**, CEO of **GoalMakers** presented, "What Master Managers Do: Creating Your System of Management."

Jeremy reviewed the importance of goal setting and walked attendees thorough the seven principles of setting "good goals": mission consistent, measurable, specific and clearly stated, results oriented, due date driven, controllable, challenging but reasonable. Attendees then participated in practicing these seven principles.

Jeremy also discussed three types of company goals—financial, customer and employee—and how to measure each one. He concluded by explaining the difference between employee satisfaction and employee engagement and providing attendees with tools for measuring engagement. As he described it, "you're not managing if you're not measuring."

Association Leadership Virginia Returns this October!



Interested in developing your leadership skills
and advancing your association career?

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Program Orientation & Kick-off:

VSAE Fall Conference,
October 5, 2022, Richmond

Session 1:

November 16, 2022, Richmond

Session 2:

January 4, 2023,
Northern Virginia

Session 3:

February 15, 2023, Richmond

Session 4:

March 29, 2023, Richmond

Program Wrap-up & Graduation:

VSAE Annual Conference,
May 5, 2023, Hampton

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\$1,945 for non-members

Tuition includes:

- All six sessions with lunch
- Registration for the 2022 VSAE Fall Conference & Expo
- Registration for the 2023 VSAE Annual Conference
- Registration for two VSAE Seminar Series events

Travel and lodging are not included.

Registration opens this May for the 2022-2023 cohort of Association Leadership Virginia (ALV).

ALV is the only program of its kind offering both leadership development and association management skills for Virginia's association community.

ALV graduates earn 30+ CAE-approved credit hours at a fraction of the cost of other leadership development and association management programs.

In addition to valuable leadership and association management skills, participants build professional and personal relationships with colleagues from across the Commonwealth and map out a plan to achieve individual goals, regardless of career stage.

ALV also supports employee recruitment and retention initiatives, teaching critical leadership skills and developing the decision-making capacity and confidence of work teams.

"The 30+ (CAE) credits, the quality of the program, and the personal relationships developed make the price a no-brainer. I cannot recommend this program enough."

Jerry Layne, CAE, ALV graduate

REGISTRATION OPENS IN MAY

For more information, contact:

Terry Monroe, VSAE Executive Director



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> **Leases**, continued from page 6

a place to only meet and collaborate. Each of these will require a different amount of space, perhaps as little as 90 to 125 square feet per person compared to the 200 to 300 square feet or more most association models used pre-pandemic.

A new workplace strategy will lead to unique office design and layout. Staff will need to become comfortable with different office paradigms where space is no longer owned but shared using concepts such as free addressing and hoteling. Whatever purpose is determined, the association will want to create an office environment that encourages staff to return. Only then, when your workforce and workplace strategies are clearly defined, can a plan for negotiating a lease restructure with your landlord occur.

Lease Restructure Opportunities Abound

Many organizations need a real estate strategy that will take advantage of today's market. Prior to office shutdowns in early 2020, association real estate transactions were typically triggered by an event: a lease expiration, early termination option, or a change in space requirement. Historically, landlords often agreed to restructure the lease if the association was growing—regardless of the lease termination date—but they were less interested in re-evaluating the lease mid-term if the occupier's footprint was shrinking.

Today's rising vacancy rates shifted office market dynamics, prompting landlords to be more

"Today, landlords are willing to restructure leases with five years or more left on the term. Some even provide rental abatement, reduced rent, or will absorb your excess space in exchange for a lease extension of as little as one to two years."

flexible. As occupiers reimagine the workplace and develop new occupancy strategies to support a hybrid work model, many aim to shed space and reduce costs. In the past, a lease restructure required the occupier to extend the lease term five to ten years beyond the existing expiration, a transaction referred to as "a blend and extend." Landlords were hesitant to entertain this option unless the occupier was within three years of the lease expiration. This window of time was often shorter if the tenant had a termination option.

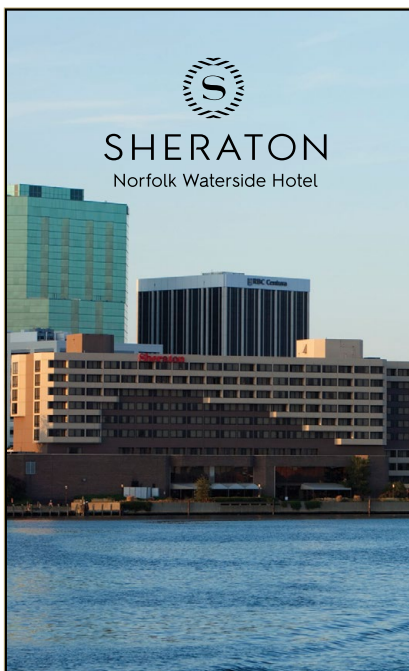
Today, landlords are willing to restructure leases with five years or more left on the term. Some even provide rental abatement or reduced rent, or will absorb your excess space in exchange for a lease extension of as little as one to two years. Your landlord may even consider a buyout of your early lease termination option without requiring an extension of your lease term. Instead, they may be willing to accept other lease concessions, such as your cash allowance and/or free rent. As part of these restructured leases, many landlords are offering large tenant improvement allowances that will fund some—or all—of your new and reimagined office.

Organizations Have Time to Make Choices

There is no one size fits all. Associations that do advocacy work for their members are tending to want employees back in the office. Associations whose members are not planning on going back to their offices are getting pressure from their members to drastically downsize their footprints. Some executive directors and CEOs feel their employees are just as productive at home and want to reduce overhead. Some think the association will thrive if everyone is in the office collaborating.

There is not a right or wrong answer. It is best to understand what is needed to continue to serve your members and maintain and attract the best talent while keeping costs within industry standards. Time is on your side to figure this out. We expect the market to remain soft, creating opportunity for successful restructures through 2023.

This article originally appeared on asaecenter.org on February 14, 2022. Printed with permission from the authors.



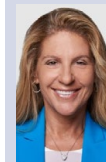
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PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

The Mid-Atlantic's Newest Contemporary Oceanside Resort Hotels

The new Marriott Resort Virginia Beach Oceanfront, a 305-room, \$12 million hotel, is the second addition of the acclaimed Cavalier Resort, which includes the Historic Cavalier Hotel and Beach Club, and February 2023 opening of the Embassy Suites Resort Virginia Beach Oceanfront – the third and final addition to the Cavalier Resort. The new Marriott features two chef-driven signature restaurants, 25,000 sq. ft. of modern meeting and event space, expansive oceanside outdoor social spaces, and sweeping views of Virginia's pristine coastline.

While the Historic Cavalier Hotel blends classic southern charm with rich vibrant colors and elevated services and amenities, the new Marriott exudes comfortable luxury and a contemporary aesthetic inspired by its prominent beachfront location. The modern 24-story glass high-rise utilizes a fresh, natural color palette, with voluminous interior spaces that feature polished concrete, blackened steel, natural rough woods, and greenery throughout softening its modern lines. The design seamlessly blends interior and exterior spaces including the hotel's main pool with oversized doors that allow the Atlantic Ocean breezes to flow throughout the property.

A Planner's Delight

The Marriott offers the largest ballroom and more meeting and event space than any other hotel on the Virginia Beach oceanfront. The ballroom's adjoining outdoor Private Event Terrace, nine individual breakout rooms with high ceilings and natural light, and captivating oceanfront lawns make this event venue unlike any other in the Mid-Atlantic.

Relax in Contemporary Accommodations

Each of the 305 guest rooms embrace design elements found in the hotel's public spaces. Guest rooms blend neutral tones, textures, and splashes of color that echo the area's stunning landscape and feature unrivaled views of the pristine Virginia



coastline. Design elements include curated custom art, modern furnishings, and greenery throughout.

Experience the Food and Drink

Orion's Roof, the hotel's sophisticated rooftop dining experience, features an elite Asian-fusion menu courtesy of world-renowned culinary talents and influence. At 24 stories high, Orion's Roof provides guests with dynamic cuisine inspired by its seaside location, and an unobstructed, virtually 360-degree view of Virginia Beach and its acclaimed oceanfront.

Executive Chef Paul Newman leads the team at Tulu Seaside Bar & Grill offering locals and hotel guests a taste of scratch cooking with an emphasis on healthy, mindful eating, in a relaxed oceanfront environment. Enjoy selections for every taste and diet from breakfast to late-night bar fare.

Complete with patio seating and an oceanfront lawn surrounded by built-in sofas and private fire pits, Tulu is the perfect place for taking in the salty sea breezes and fantastic water views.

About The Cavalier Resort

The Cavalier Resort is a collection of historic and modern hotels, a luxury beach club, farm-to-fork restaurants and bars, an onsite distillery, a luxury spa, and private residences offering guests the finest accommodations, signature amenities, and unparalleled views of Coastal Virginia.

Want More Info?

Monal Patel Thiele, Assistant Director of Sales
The Historic Cavalier Hotel & Beach Club
Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront
(757) 937.4217, cavalierresortvb.com
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AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

Dean Miller, National Sales Manager at **Visit Fairfax**, announced that Crystal View, a new meeting and event facility in Fairfax, VA, opened on Saturday, April 2, 2022. The facility features more than 10,000 square feet of sparkling function and event space. Learn more at crystalviewva.com.



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