



— VIRGINIA SOCIETY of —
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

YOUR

association

PRESS

May/June 2026

VSAE Members Connect and Learn in Williamsburg

Over 200 association professionals and industry partners came together in Williamsburg for a successful 2026 VSAE Annual Conference. With more than 50 first-time attendees, the event brought together association professionals from across Virginia to connect, share ideas, and discuss the biggest challenges and opportunities facing our industry. From leadership and governance to AI and member engagement, the conference offered practical education and meaningful networking for professionals at every career stage.

Keynote speaker Sean Bott opened the conference with a powerful message about connection, leadership, and the “simple work we avoid” that often determines organizational success. Janine Stange closed the conference by encouraging attendees to stop waiting for

the “perfect time” and instead move forward with purpose and intention. Thank you to **PK Speakers Bureau** for partnering with VSAE to provide the keynote speakers.

VSAE also celebrated the leadership of outgoing Board President **Abby Tammen**, whose commitment and service helped move the organization forward while continuing to focus on delivering value to members across the Commonwealth.

Thank you to our hosts, **Colonial Williamsburg Resorts** and **Visit Williamsburg**, along with our sponsors, speakers, volunteers, and attendees who helped make the conference possible. We look forward to seeing everyone next year at **Kalahari Resorts & Conventions** Spotsylvania for the 2027 VSAE Annual Conference, May 2–4.

continued on page 4 >

AMC Leaders Gather for Growth and Innovation Summit



AMC SUMMIT

Association management company professionals from across the region will gather **July 13–14** at the **Newport News Marriott at City Center** for a dynamic summit focused on the future of AMC leadership and growth. Designed exclusively for AMC owners, principals, senior leaders, staff focused on business development, and sponsors, the AMC Summit will explore the unique leadership, operational, and strategic challenges facing association management companies, including driving influence with AMC staff and client boards, managing AI implementation across multiple organizations, staffing and perpetuity planning, and peer-to-peer collaboration on shared industry challenges. Through expert-led sessions and peer discussions, attendees will gain practical insights and actionable ideas to help their organizations thrive. Registration includes all educational sessions and lunch.

The AMC Summit is only open to AMC personnel and program sponsors.

Early bird rates end June 12. Register at vsae.org/amc-summit



UPCOMING EVENTS

AI SUMMIT
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3
VSCPA Richmond

AMC SUMMIT
MON, JULY 13–TUES, JULY 14
Newport News Marriott
at City Center

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA
ASSOCIATION EXCHANGE**
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22
Falls Church

SIG-A-PALOOZA
THUR, AUGUST 6–FRI, AUGUST 7
Virtual

FALL CONFERENCE & EXPO
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
Greater Richmond
Convention Center

SEMINAR SERIES W/LUNCH
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9
Four Points Sheraton Richmond

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA
ASSOCIATION EXCHANGE**
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21
Location TBD

SEMINAR SERIES W/LUNCH
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
DoubleTree Richmond
Midlothian

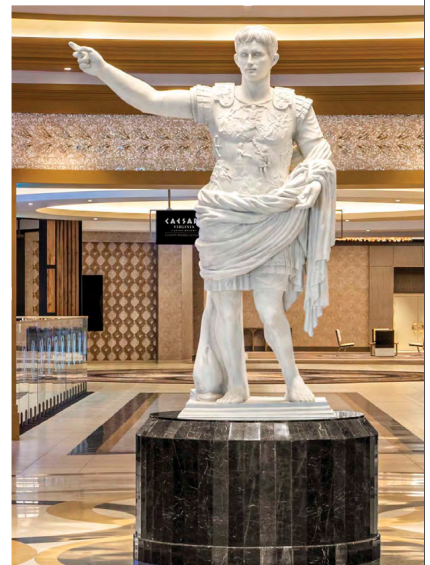
**CEO & SENIOR
STAFF RETREAT**
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16–
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17
Embassy Suites VA Beach
(Cavalier Resort)

**VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS AT
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Lansdowne Resort
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TowneBank
The Virginian Hotel

Leadership reflections



Bruce Whitehurst
VSAE President

“...our service to others and to our organizations can make a lasting and meaningful impact.”

Presence

I was very sorry that a longstanding prior commitment prevented me from attending our recent VSAE Annual Conference, as I believe being present is one of the most important responsibilities of leadership. Abby Tammen certainly demonstrated that throughout her year as VSAE President, and our organization is stronger because of it. I hope to continue the legacy that Abby and those before her have built through both their leadership and their presence at VSAE.

As the son of a United Methodist minister, I remember being confused by the phrase, “our presence, our gifts, and our service.” As a seven- or eight-year-old, I thought it was “our presents, our gifts, and our service,” and I couldn’t understand why we would mention presents and gifts when they seemed like the same thing!

As an adult, I now appreciate the meaning of the phrase much more clearly, and I believe it also offers a valuable lesson in a secular sense. Our presence matters greatly as leaders. Our gifts — our talents and abilities — contribute to the success of others and the organizations we serve. And our service to others and to our organizations can make a lasting and meaningful impact.

I am grateful for the many leaders who bring their presence, their gifts, and their service to VSAE, helping make it the outstanding organization it is today. It is an honor to serve as VSAE President this year, and I pledge to do the same.

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2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



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THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE A SUCCESS!



Quick Hitting Insights

FROM VSAE ANNUAL CONFERENCE EDUCATION

10 ACTIONS FOR ASSOCIATION LEADERS

1 Call at-risk members before invoices go out.

Pull NPS scores of 8 or below. Make the call while it is still a service call, not a collections call. One San Diego association saw retention go to nearly 100%.

Pete Zimek

2 Write and post your AI policy this week.

Approved tools, prohibited data inputs, review cadence. Adapt from Chandler's template. 60% of associations have no AI governance at all.

Brian Chandler

3 Lead your team through the five ethical tests.

Use one real scenario at your next retreat or staff meeting. Legal, fair, front page, member comfort, gut check. Not training; a working practice.

Holly Davis

4 Start daily or weekly standups.

15 minutes. Color-coded status: red, yellow, green on 3 to 5 key metrics. The goal is visibility, not perfection. Start this week.

Kelsey Croston

5 Use Phase 1 delegation for every new task.

Even with senior hires. Direct instruction first, then observe, then handoff. The CEO who assumed his COO already knew nearly lost him.

Christopher Jones

6 Document decision context, not just decisions.

200-word memo: the problem, the options, the assumptions. File it where your successor will find it. Update as assumptions change.

Alison Teitelbaum

7 Ask volunteers what they want from the experience.

Three to five interviews this month. Report findings to your board. Implement one change within 30 days. Volunteer retention predicts member retention.

Michelle Runge/Kelly Gull

8 Schedule 10 minutes daily of something you enjoy.

Not optional. Block it. Protect it. Model it for your team. A medical study showed this drastically reduced burnout rates among physicians.

Maureen Dingus

9 Run a behavioral science AI audit on your website.

Color contrast, competing CTAs, member value proposition in 10 words. Chandler demonstrated this live, producing consultant-quality results instantly.

Brian Chandler

10 Get a crisis plan into your strategic plan.

One-page summary: crisis team, holding statement template, 30-minute decision tree. Board approves by consent agenda. This is governance infrastructure.

Brian Chandler

Thank you to Snapsight for these insights.

For full report, visit vsae.org/2027-annual-conference

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Get to Know Your New President

Bruce Whitehurst

**President and CEO
Virginia Bankers Association**



Bruce with his wife, Genise, and their three children in Barcelona in 2024.

What drew you to the association industry? Initially the appeal came from my interest in lobbying and the legislative process. Once I was at the VBA, I learned that there was so much more to the association business and I thrived on variety and on working with my teammates to support our member banks to the fullest extent. Having been a banker, I knew how important it was to have a vibrant banking industry and have always been honored to support the industry through my work here.

What goals do you have during your presidency of VSAE? I am very pleased with David Walsh's quick start as our new Executive Director and my #1 goal is to support him and our board as we move VSAE forward in an ever changing world.

What are your top three tips for association executives?

1. Listen before talking
2. Observe before assuming
3. View leadership as the most essential supporting role

What are you working on that's new and different? We are two years into our merger with the Maryland Bankers Association through the creation of a new holding company, the Mid-Atlantic Bankers Association. Our integration continues and it's exciting to be the first two states in our peer group to legally combine and build a new business model in the process.

What is your greatest challenge at work? Determining what is the highest and best use of my time.

What success stories do you have about communicating with your membership? We have a terrific communications team and interact with our members in all kinds

of ways. While in-person interactions are the most fulfilling, a particularly meaningful time when we felt very close to our members – and they with us – was in the early days of the Pandemic. We couldn't gather in person, yet we met on Zoom frequently – sometimes daily – as we helped our banks build out the Paycheck Protection Program that saved so many jobs and small businesses. It was a unique and rewarding experience.

What do you enjoy doing in your time away from work? My wife Genise and I love to travel, spend time with our three grown children, stay physically active, and play as much pickleball as possible! I am also an avid reader.

What have been some of your streaming binges? Shrinking, The Pitt, Paradise, The Madison

What's on your music playlist? Thousands of songs that range from jazz to rock to country to classical.

What sports/teams do you root for? My soon to be daughter-in-law works at Yankee

Stadium as an engineer, so definitely the Yankees!

What books have you read lately?
Culpability by Bruce Holsinger
The Correspondent by Virginia Evans
The Dinner List by Rebecca Serle
I Regret Almost Everything by Keith McNally

What is a skill you would like to learn?
I love to write and would like to think I could write a book one day.

What was the last great piece of advice you received? One I practice regularly: live in gratitude.

What is on your bucket list? In retirement, my wife and I want to spend at least one month each year in a different place.

Attend a concert at Red Rocks in Colorado.
A cross-country trip in the U.S.

What are you most proud of? My three kids, hands down.

Welcome To The Board!



**Connie Bruce, CAE
VACEOs**



**Kathy Rabalais, MPA, CAE
VA Water Environment
Association**



In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, AI is reshaping industries worldwide, and the association industry is no exception. The VSAE AI Summit is designed to equip association professionals with the knowledge and tools to harness the power of AI, manage its risks, and ultimately, better serve their members.

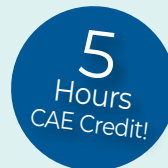
Held at the **VSCPA Learning & Innovation Center**, this one-day immersive experience will delve into the practical applications of AI, from enhancing operational efficiency to driving strategic decision-making. Attendees will gain insights from industry experts who will share their experiences and best practices in leveraging AI to address real-world challenges.

REGISTER

Registration fee includes all educational sessions and lunch.

Member—Basic, Associate, Provisional	\$180
Member—Enhanced	\$165
Non-Member	\$205

SCHEDULE



8:30 – 9:00 am **Coffee and Check-In**

9:00 – 10:00 am **The State of AI: What Association Leaders Need to Know Now** (1.00 CEU)

Nick Serfass, CEO, Richmond Technology Council

Kick off the AI Summit with a candid, big-picture conversation on where AI stands today and where it's headed next. In this fireside chat, Nick Serfass will share insights from across the technology landscape, cutting through the hype to focus on what's real, what's practical, and what's coming.

We'll explore how AI is shaping leadership, operations, and member value, and how associations must stay relevant. This big picture session will set the stage for the tactical and strategic sessions that follow during the rest of the Summit.

10:00 – 11:45 am **From Curiosity to Capability: Building Your AI Strategy, Governance & Internal Policy** (1.75 CEU)

Rick Bawcum, CAE, CISSP, AAiP, CEO / Founder, CimatriSlaven Jesic, Counsel, Whiteford Law

Move beyond AI curiosity and into real organizational capability. This session will guide you through building a practical AI strategy, establishing governance, and creating internal policies that support responsible, effective adoption.

11:45 am–1:15 pm **Lunch and Learn**

Refuel and recharge, as you engage in conversation with your peers, discussing the morning keynote and sessions and sharing your takeaways, as well as your AI experiences, challenges and questions.

1:15 – 2:30 pm **Rooted, Not Rushed: Making Purpose-Driven AI Decisions** (1.25 CEU)

Michelle Wroblewski, Director Industry Growth & Strategy, Wipfli

In a fast-moving AI landscape, it's easy to feel pressure to act quickly. This session explores how to take a more intentional approach—grounding AI decisions in purpose, values, and organizational goals to drive meaningful, sustainable impact.

2:45–3:45 pm **Avoiding the Headlines: Legal Risks, Ethical Pitfalls & Compliance Issues** (1.00 CEU)

Spencer Cox, Partner, Whiteford Law

Artificial intelligence, though undoubtedly a powerful new tool, comes with significant legal, ethical, and compliance risks that can quickly put your organization in the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

This session, presented by Spencer Cox, a partner at Whiteford Law specializing in antitrust, litigation, and commercial law, will equip association executives with a practical understanding of common AI-related risks. Topics include data privacy and confidentiality pitfalls when using generative AI tools, the antitrust risks of AI-driven data aggregation, and intellectual property traps in AI-generated content.

REGISTER AT [VSAE.ORG/AI-SUMMIT](https://vsaе.org/ai-summit)

Online Registration closes Wednesday, May 27 at Noon

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: THE CAVALIER RESORT

BUSINESS AT THE BEACH

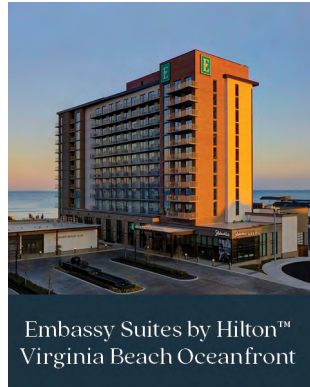
Three Hotels. One Iconic Meeting Destination

Nestled along the Virginia Beach Oceanfront lies the Cavalier Resort, a beacon of sophistication and functionality for associations seeking the ideal event venue. With its unrivaled blend of opulent accommodations, state-of-the-art meeting spaces, and an array of post-conference leisure activities, the Cavalier Resort stands as a testament to seamless integration of business and pleasure. Nowhere else can you find such a diverse range of options for meetings of every size, theme, and complexity.

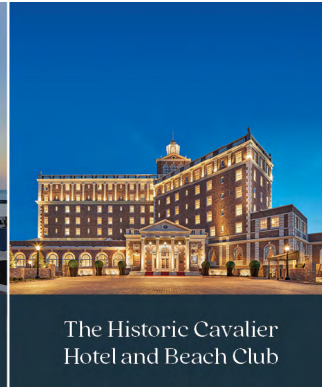
At the heart of the Cavalier Resort's appeal lies its unique campus featuring three distinct hotels, each offering its own blend of charm and sophistication. Whether you prefer the historic elegance of The Historic Cavalier Hotel, the contemporary comfort of the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort, or the spacious suites of the Embassy Suites by Hilton™ Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort, there's a perfect setting for every type of gathering.

What sets the Cavalier Resort apart is its unmatched flexibility. Event planners have the freedom to mix and match accommodations and meeting spaces across the Resort, allowing for endless possibilities in crafting the perfect event experience. Boasting an expansive 70,000 sq.ft. of meeting and event space, including three grand ballrooms, including the oceanfront's largest, and 21 technologically advanced meeting rooms, the Resort caters to associations of all scales. Equipped with cutting-edge audio-visual capabilities, our team ensures that presentations are delivered flawlessly, leaving attendees captivated and engaged.

But it's not just about business at the Cavalier Resort. After a productive day of meetings, attendees can unwind and recharge amidst the resort's wealth of amenities and activities. Attendees can immerse themselves in the breathtaking vistas of the Atlantic Ocean or partake in an array of resort activities, from beach services to beach cruiser rentals. The six indoor and outdoor pools offer a refreshing



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The Historic Cavalier
Hotel and Beach Club



Marriott Resort
Virginia Beach Oceanfront

respite, while SeaHill Spa promises indulgent pampering for those seeking relaxation. For the connoisseurs of fine spirits, a tour of the award-winning Tarnished Truth Distillery presents an opportunity to savor artisanal creations within the historic walls of The Historic Cavalier Hotel. From fine dining experiences to casual beachside fare, there's something to satisfy every palate and preference at one of the Cavalier Resort's nine top-rated restaurants.

About The Cavalier Resort

The Cavalier Resort is a collection of historic and modern hotels boasting 547 guest rooms, a luxury beach club, 9 top-ranked restaurants and bars, over 70,000 sq.ft. of meeting and

event spaces, an on-site distillery, a luxury spa, and private residences offering guests the finest accommodations, signature amenities, and unparalleled views of Coastal Virginia.

CONTACT

Priscilla Monti

Senior Sales Manager, Associations
The Historic Cavalier Hotel & Beach Club,
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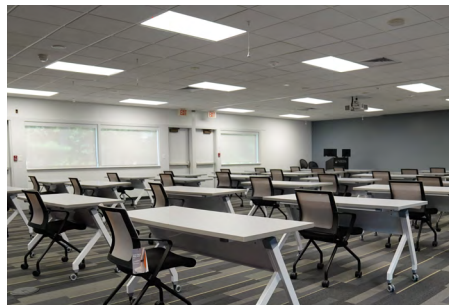
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June 3
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Roundtable and panel discussions to explore the issues unique to owning and working for an Association Management Company.

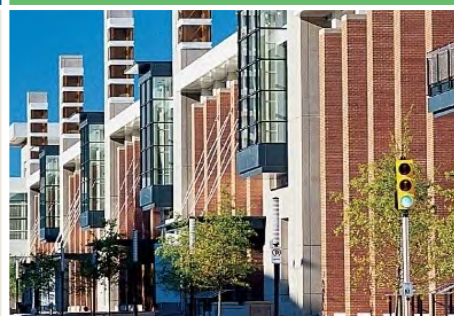
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July 13-14
Newport News Marriott at City Center



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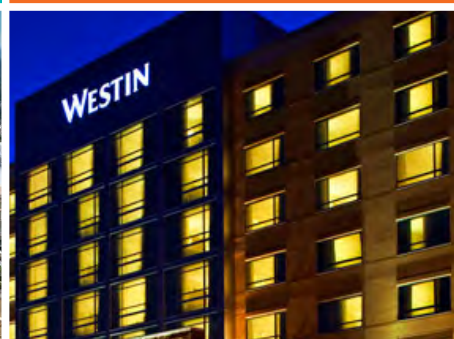
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Groups choosing The Greenbrier benefit first from its remarkable sense of place. The resort's 11,000 acres offer a rare combination of grandeur and serenity, creating an environment that naturally inspires focus, creativity, and connection. Whether attendees are gathering for strategic planning or celebrating a milestone, the setting elevates the experience from the moment they arrive.

The property features 200,000 square feet of flexible meeting and event space, including grand ballrooms, intimate boardrooms, historic venues, and unique outdoor locations. This range allows planners to design events that feel both purposeful and memorable. The Greenbrier's signature Dorothy Draper décor—bold, colorful, and unmistakably vibrant—adds a distinctive backdrop that guests remember long after the event ends.

Accommodations are equally impressive. With more than 650 guest rooms, cottages, and estate homes, groups can stay comfortably on site while enjoying the resort's renowned service. The Greenbrier's culinary program further enhances the experience, offering everything from elegant banquets to casual networking receptions, all crafted with exceptional attention to detail.

One of the resort's greatest strengths is the sheer variety of activities available for team building, relaxation, and entertainment. Attendees can enjoy championship golf, a world class spa, off road adventures, falconry, tennis, horseback riding, and even tours of the famous Cold War era bunker. These experiences create natural opportunities for bonding and help transform a standard meeting into a memorable retreat.



Accessibility is another advantage. Located in White Sulphur Springs, The Greenbrier is conveniently located off Interstate 64 and just a short drive from major regional airports, making travel convenient for attendees coming from across the country.

Above all, what sets The Greenbrier apart is its commitment to hospitality. The resort's experienced event professionals work closely with planners to ensure every detail is executed flawlessly, from audiovisual needs to custom itineraries. Their expertise allows organizers

to focus on their goals while trusting that the guest experience is in exceptional hands.

For groups seeking a destination that blends history, luxury, and unmatched versatility, The Greenbrier offers an event setting unlike any other.

CONTACT

Robin Sweeney

Senior Director of National Sales

(304) 661-2942

robin_sweeney@greenbrier.com



From executive retreats to large conferences, The Greenbrier delivers more than 200,000 square feet of flexible space and world-class service in an unparalleled setting. Our expert team ensures every detail is flawless, so you can focus on what matters most: results.



Robin Sweeney

Senior Director of National Sales

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Kaitie Fisher | Richmond Association of REALTORS | Richmond

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June 30

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