



2016 Virginia Agritourism Conference

## Agritourism in Virginia's New Economy



# Agritourism in Virginia's New Economy: 2016 Conference

Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 9:15 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
*April 5, 2016 –Farm Tours 2:45 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.*

Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
*April 6, 2016 - Post Conference Workshops 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

All Sessions will be held at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center  
820 Bruce Street, South Boston, VA 24592

## Speakers

### Shirley & Boyd Archer

Bright Meadows Farm Vineyard and Winery [brightmeadowsfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:brightmeadowsfarm@yahoo.com)  
Shirley and Boyd Archer

### Beau Blevins

Virginia Association of Counties

[bblevins@vaco.org](mailto:bblevins@vaco.org)

Beau is the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo). His chief duties include legislative advocacy in the areas of tax, finance, transportation and healthcare.

Beau is also a Distinguished Lecturer in Residence at Emory & Henry College where he teaches courses on Virginia Government, Lobbying and Politics.

Prior to VACo, Beau served as a Senior Budget Advisor at the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget. In this capacity, he worked under both Gov. Kaine's and Gov. McDonnell's administrations where he regularly advised executive officials on financial and policy-related matters.

He has also worked at the local level as an Urban Planner for James City County and at the federal level as a staffer for Congressman Frederick C. "Rick" Boucher's congressional office.

Beau serves on the board of the National Association of County Intergovernmental Relations Officials and is a member of the National Association of Counties' Education and Health Committee. In 2013, he served on Gov. Terry McAuliffe's transportation transition team. Beau graduated from the LEAD VIRGINIA program in 2014.

Beau received his Masters in Public Administration from George Mason University and his B.A. from Emory & Henry College in Political Science.

## **Kellie Boles**

Loudoun County Economic Development

[Kellie.Boles@loudoun.gov](mailto:Kellie.Boles@loudoun.gov)

Kellie S. Boles currently serves as the Agricultural Development Officer for Loudoun County, Virginia, one of the fastest growing and wealthiest counties in the nation. She manages the team responsible for promoting the sustainable economic growth and vitality of Loudoun County's rural economy. Her professional career includes 13 years of state and local experience in implementation and development of new and existing business development and promotional programs assisting specialty food producers and agribusiness groups. She works with the Loudoun Winery Association, Blue Ridge Cattleman's Association, Loudoun Christmas Tree Growers, Loudoun Sheep Producers and the newly organized, Loudoun Equine Alliance. She is managing the implementation of Loudoun's Rural Economy Business Development Strategy and organizes the annual Forum for Rural Innovation.

## **Mark Botkin**

Botkin Rose Law

[mboikin@botkinrose.com](mailto:mboikin@botkinrose.com)

Mark Botkin is a member of the law firm of BotkinRose PLC in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Mr. Botkin serves as general counsel to many closely held businesses and family farms. Having been raised on a farm in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Mr. Botkin enjoys helping farm families preserve their farmland for future generations through proactive succession planning and the use of such techniques as conservation easements. He received his law degree from the University of Richmond School of Law and his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia.

## **Julie Brown, Ph.D.**

2 Witches

[julie.brown@ialr.org](mailto:julie.brown@ialr.org)

Dr. Julie Brown, along with her family, owns 2 Witches Winery and Brewing Company located at 209 Trade Street in Danville, VA. 2 Witches was the first co-located winery and brewery in Virginia. The family also manages 2 Witches Vineyard located in Pittsylvania County. Dr. Brown also serves as the Director of Advanced Learning at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, VA. She is responsible for providing "PreK to Gray" programs that build the region's STEM capacity and create a culture that appreciates the need for lifelong learning. She has twenty years of experience in education, working for a public research university, two community colleges, and regional K-12 districts. Julie earned her bachelor's degree from UVA, her Master's from Longwood University, and her Ph.D. from ODU.

## **Sherry Buttrick**

Virginia Outdoor Foundation

[sbuttrick@vofonline.org](mailto:sbuttrick@vofonline.org)

- Have worked at VOF since 1991 developing and negotiating conservation easements on open-space land in much of VA. VOF, which began in 1966, holds almost 4,000 easements on 780,000 acres of land across VA.
- Chair since its inception in 2000 the Albemarle County Acquisition of Conservation Easements' Program, the county Purchase of Development Rights Program.
- Served on the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Sustainability Council for its 4 years, serving as the co-chair of the Agriculture Sub-committee.
- Member and former chair of Albemarle County's local easement holding authority which receives gifts of easements.

## **Christina Cain**

Staunton Creative Community Fund [christina@stauntonfund.org](mailto:christina@stauntonfund.org)

Christina has been on the front lines empowering people to open businesses by educating them on business planning, navigating the process of getting a business loan, and lending an ear of support and empathy. Upon understanding the impact she could make, Christina earned a Masters of Science in Community Economic Development with a specialization in Nonprofit Management from Southern New Hampshire University.

Christina is the Executive Director Staunton Creative Community Fund, where they help local entrepreneurs navigate the pitfalls, detours, and highs and lows of starting or expanding a small business. The Fund supports dreamers and schemers throughout the entrepreneurial process by providing access to capital, community connections and support.

Her passion for community growth and it's economic impact, Christina was recognized when her clients nominated her for Style Weekly's 2010 Top 40 Under 40 as an emerging leader and when she won the 2015 Dennis Burnett Community Excellence Award from the Greater Augusta Chamber of Commerce. In addition to her small business development work, Christina was a credit analyst for Capital One, implemented anti-poverty strategies for a community development credit union and coordinated community outreach for a domestic violence shelter.

## **Mary Rae Carter**

Special Advisor to Secretary Maurice Jones [MaryRae.Carter@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:MaryRae.Carter@governor.virginia.gov)

Mary Rae Carter grew up in Southern Virginia in the small factory town of Bassett. She attended public schools and graduated from Bassett High School. At the age of 24, she started classes at Patrick Henry Community College at night while working during the day. She received a degree from Averett University graduating Cum Laude at the age of 30 and expecting her third child.

Over the years, Mary Rae has served on a variety of boards and commissions. She has served on the boards of Patrick Henry Community College, the Henry County Public Service Authority, and the Patrick Henry Economic Development Council just to name a few. For 12 years, she served on the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Board of Directors having served four Governors.

In 2010, she was appointed the first Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade for Rural Virginia and last year was reappointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe as Special Advisor for Rural Partnerships. Her role as Special Advisor to Secretary Maurice Jones is to work with Virginia's rural communities to enhance job growth through partnerships with state, local and regional entities.

Prior to her appointment in 2010, Mary Rae worked with the Martinsville Speedway, Medical Facilities of America and other private and governmental entities as a Governmental Affairs specialist through her companies MRC Enterprises and Maxwell-Madison.

## **Wayne Cilimberg**

Assistant Director of Community Development Albemarle County [wcilimb@albemarle.org](mailto:wcilimb@albemarle.org)

After starting with Albemarle County in April, 1986 as Chief of Community Development, Wayne subsequently became the County's Director of Planning and is now serving as Acting Deputy Director of Community Development until his retirement at the end of April. In his current role, he is assisting the Director of Community Development and the Acting Director of Planning with the transition to the new Director of Planning expected to arrive later this summer. As Director of Planning from 1989 through last year, he advised County officials and the community at large regarding planning and development matters and oversaw numerous Comprehensive Plan updates and amendments, assisted in the development of a variety of County development codes and planning for capital projects, and managed the review of new development proposals. Prior experience before coming to Albemarle County included Executive Director of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning District Commission in Culpeper and Assistant Vice President for Virginia First Savings and Loan in Richmond. Wayne has both a B.A., Urban Affairs and a Masters, Urban and Regional Planning, from Virginia Tech. He enjoys traveling to great places and being a Hokie in Charlottesville!

## **Ryan Clouse**

Farm Credit

[rclouse@mafc.com](mailto:rclouse@mafc.com)

## **Talia Clusman**

Babcock House

[babcockhousebnb@aol.com](mailto:babcockhousebnb@aol.com)

Talia Clusman grew up in western Maryland and graduated with a major in Marketing and Business Administration. She met her husband, Charles, while he was bartending at a downtown restaurant in Frederick, MD where he would eventually become the chef. While they were dating, Charles and Talia shared a far-off dream of owning a restaurant or a bed & breakfast in their retirement years. They married in 2012 and welcomed their son the next year. The dream of owning a B&B had never died and eventually Talia's mother, Debbie, became interested in being part of a business as well. With Debbie as their third partner, they were able to make this dream a reality sooner than anyone thought. They started looking at operating bed & breakfasts in central Virginia because they all loved the area. On their first trip together, they stopped to see the Babcock House in Appomattox. It was the only property they had seen with an attached restaurant and because of Charles' experience in the industry, they knew they would be able to make it a success. The home was built in 1884 and lived in by two different families for a short period of time before the Babcocks bought it and added on more rooms. They ran it as a guest house until it was purchased by the Powells who converted to a bed & breakfast. They also added on the restaurant and it was the only place for fine dining in town. After that, Jerry & Sheila Palamar bought the property, added on again and had a successful business for fifteen years before selling in October 2015 to Talia, Charles and Debbie.

## **Tracey Coltrain**

Fields of Gold

[tracey@cspdc.org](mailto:tracey@cspdc.org)

Tracey, her husband and two of their daughters relocated from Richmond, VA to the Shenandoah Valley five years ago in large part due to their passion for the natural beauty, agricultural richness, and outdoor adventure that the Valley has to offer. In their free time you can often find them at one of the area Farmer's Markets or enjoying any one of the many experiences that the local farms have to offer (horseback riding and "pick your own" are family favorites). Tracey appreciates the opportunities she gets through her role with the Fields of Gold to share her love and enjoyment of local farms with the rest of Virginia and beyond.

Prior to joining the Fields of Gold Tracey worked for the Staunton Creative Community Fund as their Director of Business Development where she assisted aspiring and existing small business entrepreneurs in developing their business and marketing plans through one on one counseling and trainings and workshops.

## **Chris Cook**

Virginia Farm Bureau

[Chris.Cook@vafb.com](mailto:Chris.Cook@vafb.com)

**Christopher I. Cook**, is the Assistant Director of Rural Development for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. He acts as the Executive Director for the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation and Rural Sustainability. He is as an agricultural enterprise development advisor with a broad range of planning, business creation and development skills, as well as strategic expertise.

Mr. Cook has 25 years agricultural experience including organizing and developing farmer-owned start-up businesses, with a strong background in facilitating agricultural value added entities through strategic planning. He has completed numerous feasibility studies and business plans in many areas of the agricultural industry including wine production, renewable fuels and meat processing in Virginia. His

work experience covers two continents. He farmed in the United Kingdom and was Managing Director of a 1,000-acre farm producing beef and small grains.

His education includes a post baccalaureate certificate in accounting, the Certified Economic Development Financial Professional designation from the National Development Council, KY, and a Masters Business Administration from the College of William & Mary.

## **Stephen Davis**

Community Investment Collaborative [stephen@cicville.org](mailto:stephen@cicville.org)

Stephen Davis is president of the Community Investment Collaborative (CIC), a micro-enterprise development organization in Charlottesville that provides business education, mentoring, micro-lending and networking services. He brings a decade of experience in organization building, management, consulting and education to the work CIC does to help under-resourced entrepreneurs grow small businesses. In addition to his work with CIC, he serves on the College Board for Piedmont Virginia Community College and the Board of Directors for PVCC Education Foundation and the Shenandoah Valley Educational Technology Corporation (WVPT). He holds a Bachelor's degree in Finance and Master's degree in Education from James Madison University.

## **Dawn DeHart**

Virginia Community Capital, Inc. [ddehart@vccva.org](mailto:ddehart@vccva.org)

Dawn is a senior vice president with Virginia Community Capital, a statewide community development bank which opened in Christiansburg, VA in 2005. VCC's mission in Virginia is to offer loans to businesses that develop affordable housing projects, will have an economic impact in distressed communities, and will promote vital community services. Dawn's primary role with the organization is to make commercial loans that meet the VCC community development mission. She works with small business owners, economic development and government officials, housing authorities, and real estate developers. Dawn has expertise in small business government guaranteed programs, and in the New Markets Tax Credit program which VCC has utilized mainly in medically underserved markets to achieve its economic and community development goals.

Dawn has worked in the banking/finance sector for over 30 years and has worked for Bank of Virginia, Dominion/First Union and Crestar/SunTrust. Prior to joining VCC in 2006, Dawn spent 9 years working as a vice president and lender with Business Finance Group where she made small business loans under the SBA 504 program throughout the state of Virginia. Dawn holds a Finance degree from Virginia Tech, and serves as an advisory board member to The Launch Place Fund, a fund that recruits innovation-based businesses to Danville, Virginia by providing concept and seed stage funding.

## **Scott DeNoon**

Virginia Farm Bureau [Scott.Denoon@vafb.com](mailto:Scott.Denoon@vafb.com)

Scott DeNoon is the Farm Product and Underwriting Manager for the Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance Companies and has over 30 years of experience in the insurance industry. During his career, he has assisted agricultural operations throughout Virginia in the development of insurance, loss control and risk management programs and specializes in the design of programs for agritourism attractions. In his current role, Scott is responsible for developing and executing profitable growth and retention strategies for Virginia Farm Bureau's farm product lines and coordinating product development and marketing initiatives.

Scott is a graduate of James Madison University and holds several insurance designations including Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter, Certified Insurance Counselor, Agribusiness & Farm Insurance Specialist, Associate in Personal Insurance, and Associate in Insurance Services. He is also recognized as a Virginia Insurance Continuing Education Instructor.

Scott is a native of Powhatan, Virginia where he was raised in a dairy farming community. He and his wife, Joy, currently reside in Mechanicsville, Virginia.

### **Joell Eifert**

Virginia Tech

[joell.eifert@vt.edu](mailto:joell.eifert@vt.edu)

Joell Eifert with Virginia Tech's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Department of Food Sciences holds a Masters in Agricultural and Life Sciences (Food Safety) from Virginia Tech and a B.S. in Biology from Virginia Tech.

### **Morgan Epstein**

AmeriCorps VISTA

[Morgan@godsstorehouse.org](mailto:Morgan@godsstorehouse.org)

Morgan graduated from Averett University in Danville, VA May 2015. She was captain of the Averett Women's Tennis Team, founder and president of Kappa Alpha Delta Sorority and a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. Her leadership skills led her to an incredible opportunity to work with God's Storehouse in Danville, VA as an AmeriCorps VISTA. At God's Storehouse, Morgan has used social media to maintain their Facebook page, Instagram account, and website. Along with managing God's Storehouse social media pages, Morgan coordinates fundraising events, as well as researches and writes grant proposals for this organization. This past January, Morgan created a presentation concerning social media and marketing for the Dan River Nonprofit Network.

### **Doug Fabboli**

Fabboli Cellars

[vinofab@aol.com](mailto:vinofab@aol.com)

When Doug Fabboli and his wife Colleen moved their family to Virginia in 1997, Doug already had many years of experience in the wine industry in New York and California. Doug was able to help many wineries and vineyards with the unique challenges facing the wine industry in the Mid Atlantic. In 2001 Doug utilized all his education and experience to open his own family run vineyard and winery. Fabboli Cellars opened their doors as the 113<sup>th</sup> winery in the state and the 13<sup>th</sup> winery in Loudoun County. Currently producing over 4000 cases of wine, Fabboli Cellars is a strong presence on the wine trail as well as in the stores and restaurants. Doug has been instrumental in setting a tone of collaboration in the Virginia wine industry as well as other sectors of the Northern Virginia rural economy.

### **Katie Frazier**

Virginia Agribusiness Council

[katie@va-agribusiness.org](mailto:katie@va-agribusiness.org)

Katie Frazier is the President of the Virginia Agribusiness Council. The Council represents agricultural and forestry producers, suppliers, marketers, processors and commodity associations in the Commonwealth with a unified voice through its government affairs activities. She began her career with the Council in 2004, serving for seven years as the Vice President-Public Affairs until September, 2011. Katie has also managed the Virginia Grain Producers Association and the Virginia Wine Council through her work for the Alliance Group in Richmond. She has spent her career successfully representing the agribusiness industry on state and federal legislative and regulatory issues, including water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Bridgewater, VA native is a 2004 graduate of Virginia Tech, where she double majored in Agricultural and Applied Economics and Political Science. Katie has served on the Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors since 2010. She currently resides in Midlothian, Virginia with her husband, Eric and son Palmer.

## **Donnie & Donna Fults**

1410 Belvedere Drive

[donna@belvedereplantation.com](mailto:donna@belvedereplantation.com)

## **Livvy Gill**

Virginia Cooperative Extension

[livvy16@exchange.vt.edu](mailto:livvy16@exchange.vt.edu)

I grew up in Lancaster, Virginia on a small family farm where we raised small grains. I grew up loving Agriculture and wanted to further my education in the industry. I received my Associates degree in 2011 from Virginia Tech in Agriculture Technology. After graduating from there I then graduated with my Bachelor's in Agriculture Economics from Virginia Tech. I have had several internships in the Agriculture field with extension, Farm Bureau, and the Eastern Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

For the past year I have worked at Tractor Supply as a team lead and now I am working here in Campbell County as an ANR agent with a focus in Agricultural Marketing. I am excited to start this position and get to know everyone in the county as well as VCE! Please contact me with any questions at [livvy16@vt.edu](mailto:livvy16@vt.edu).

## **Paul Greenwood**

Greenwood Vineyards

[paulcgreenwood@hotmail.com](mailto:paulcgreenwood@hotmail.com)

## **Amy Hager**

The Bed and Breakfast Association of Virginia [admin@innvirginia.com](mailto:admin@innvirginia.com)

As the Association Director for StayVA, the Bed and Breakfast Association of Virginia, Amy Hager enjoys working with over 200 members across the Commonwealth. Amy assists aspiring, current and future members of the association and joined the Bed and Breakfast Association of Virginia in 2012. From starting their small lodging business to growing or renovating it, StayVA is the place where members can learn from each other as well as be represented in the larger marketplace. Amy has the pleasure of representing unique small lodging owners at legislative and regulatory meetings, helps connects guests with lodging and is the key day-to-day manager of StayVA. The board is made up of current business owners, supported by committees and individual volunteers. In 2016 the new brand, StayVA was announced as a much more accurate representation of the membership.

## **Joe Harrow**

Historic Virginia Land Conservancy

[jharrow@midpen.net](mailto:jharrow@midpen.net)

Joe has been President of the Middle Peninsula Insurance and Financial Services, Inc., since 1994. He has lived in Williamsburg since 1987 when he began his career at Sun Trust Bank as a private banking lending officer.

Joe has been very active in the Williamsburg community and in the insurance industry for several years. He is the former board chair of the Williamsburg Land Conservancy. He is also past chair of Hospice Support of Williamsburg. He currently serves on the board of the Independent Agents of Virginia and in on the advisory board at the Eastern Virginia Bank.

Lastly Joe served on the James City County Educational Foundation and on the Williamsburg Community Foundation fundraising and distribution committee.

Joe has chaired numerous agency council boards for a number of insurance companies. He is an active speaker in the insurance industry focusing particularly on how to grow your business the right way. He is a 1988 graduate of Randolph Macon College. Joe and his wife, Leanne live in Williamsburg.

## **Leanne DuBois Harrow**

Program Manager, Division of Sales and Market Development

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services [leanne.dubois@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:leanne.dubois@vdacs.virginia.gov)

Leanne Harrow brings with her years of diverse state and local experience in program development, marketing and implementation in the fields of Horticulture and Agriculture. Her experience ranges from serving in AmeriCorp/Vista helping underserved farmers diversify to higher value crops in the rural south, working with Farmland Preservation initiatives in Upstate New York to serving as an Agricultural Extension Agent within both Cornell University and Virginia Tech. Presently she serves as a Program Manager in the Division of Sales and Market Development for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). There her duties include developing marketing programs to facilitate the growth of direct marketing and local food systems for Virginia agricultural producers. Areas of focus include entrepreneurial development, agritourism, farmers markets, farm stands, pick your own, community supported agriculture (CSA), specialty crop and organic production. Her duties also include managing the Virginia Grown marketing program, serving as the state coordinator for the Virginia *Farm to School* program and as the State Representative for the National Farm to School Network. She also serves on a subcommittee of the First Lady of Virginia's Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide to lend expertise in their goal of improving healthy food access.

## **Christine Hasbrouck**

Grey Swan Inn

[info@greyswaninn.com](mailto:info@greyswaninn.com)

Christine Hasbrouck, along with her husband, Jim, is in her 9<sup>th</sup> year as owner and innkeeper of The Grey Swan Inn Bed and Breakfast in Blackstone, VA. They found this property via a web search after visiting many properties in person and online. The Grey Swan Inn Bed and Breakfast has been an inn for over 25 years and continues to provide comfortable lodging for the business and leisure traveler to Blackstone and Nottoway County, Virginia. This property has 5 guest rooms each with en suite bathrooms. Guests may enjoy Jim's fresh roasted coffee and a full breakfast daily. Many dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice. Children are welcome with well-behaved parents. Free wireless internet is available to guests.

The inn's small size allows the innkeepers time to care for the inn and its guests, as well as time to participate in community events. Christine considers herself a community activist with involvement in Madeline's House women's shelter, Blackstone Rotary Club, Southside Area Community Theater, Blackstone Chamber of Commerce, and several networking groups in the Richmond/Chesterfield area and Southside Virginia.

Christine and Jim came to Blackstone on a 10-year plan but have suspended this time frame as they are enjoying their lifestyle business and community activities.

## **Conaway B. Haskins III**

Virginia Community Economic Network Source Link Virginia [chaskins@vcen.org](mailto:chaskins@vcen.org)

Conaway B. Haskins III is the inaugural Executive Director of the Virginia Community Economic Network (VCEN), a statewide nonprofit that promotes innovative strategies for enhancing community economic opportunities. VCEN is a convener, thought leader, and public voice for local entrepreneurship & economic development that spurs sustainable job creation, wealth-building, and community vitality. Conaway is responsible for managing all aspects of the organization.

Prior to joining VCEN, Conaway held a variety of positions in the government and nonprofit sectors at the local, state, and national levels. He was Executive Director for Government & External Affairs at Virginia State University, Project Director-National Fund for Workforce Solutions at the Council on Foundations, State Director for US Senator Jim Webb, Senior Program Officer at the Cameron Foundation, and a Research Associate at the Aspen Institute.



Conaway currently serves on the board of directors of the George Mason University Alumni Association, the Advisory Boards of the Virginia Commonwealth University Minority Political Leadership Institute and George Mason University Honors College, and is a member of the Richmond Folk Festival Programming Committee. He previously served on the board of directors of Communities in Schools of Virginia and the Virginia Public Access Project. From 2011-2012, he served as one of the Virginia Volunteer State Leaders for the White House Office on Public Engagement, and in 2009, he was named one of 51 "People to Know" by Richmond Magazine. He was a 2006 Robert H. Hull Leadership Fellow of the Southeastern Council of Foundations and a 2006 Political Leadership Fellow of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia.

### **The Honorable Todd Haymore**

Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry     [Todd.Haymore@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:Todd.Haymore@governor.virginia.gov)  
Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe

Governor Terry McAuliffe re-appointed Todd Haymore in 2014 to serve as Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry. Haymore became the Commonwealth's second Agriculture & Forestry Secretary in January 2010 when then-Governor Bob McDonnell appointed him to the post. Prior to being named Secretary, Haymore served in a number of leadership posts in the private and public sectors, including: Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS) under Governor Tim Kaine; an executive at both Universal Leaf Tobacco Corporation and DIMON, Inc., two of the world's largest leaf tobacco dealers; and as a legislative assistant and communications director to former U.S. Rep. L.F Payne (5<sup>th</sup> District – Virginia). Haymore holds a Bachelors Degree in Political Science from the University of Richmond and received his Master of Business Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University.

In addition to serving in Governor McAuliffe's Cabinet and his duties as the chief marketing and development officer of the state's two largest industries, Haymore is responsible for two of the state's most well-known agencies, VDACS and the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF). Haymore also works closely with private sector partners, the Governor, the Secretary of Commerce & Trade, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Port Authority, and other state officials and agencies to promote export growth and bring new agriculture and forestry-related businesses into the Commonwealth.

### **Corwin Heatwole**

Founder and CEO of Shenandoah Valley Organic     [corwin@svorganic.com](mailto:corwin@svorganic.com)

Corwin grew up in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley on a dairy and poultry farm. Being a farmer himself, Corwin had a dream to create a company that could partner with the Producers in a way that treated each farmer fairly for their hard work. He used his extensive experience in live poultry production to result in high quality end products. He started live production of organic chickens in the spring of 2012 and opened the processing facility in the spring of 2014. Today SVO employs over 300 people and produces about 150,000 chickens per week. SVO holds multiple animal welfare certifications along with best management practices that show our commitment to our animals and goals for the highest quality and best tasting products available.

## **Julie & Gary Holmes**

Shangrila Guest Ranch [g.holmes@mindspring.com](mailto:g.holmes@mindspring.com) <http://www.shangrilaguestranch.com/about-us/>

*"The world needs dreamers and the world needs doers.*

*But above all, the world needs dreamers who do." — Sarah Ban Breathnach*

This quote is an apt description for Gary and Julie Holmes, the couple behind Shangrila, a guest ranch in South Boston, Virginia. Their first date was also Julie's first horse back ride, and even then, the dream of having a horse business was in the back of Gary's mind. "We really did talk about the idea on our first date," Julie muses.

"We started our plan pretty simply. We didn't come here to run a large guest ranch, or handle a large volume of people. I wanted it at a point where I enjoyed the guests, and enjoyed the life. Because this kind of business, well, it's really more of a life style. While Gary and Julie didn't plan to become large land owners, circumstances changed after they had purchased their first piece of land on their own. The property adjacent to Shangrila was up for auction, one hundred and thirty acres containing large oaks, cedars and other hard woods. "Our main competitor in the auction was a man who made his living purchasing farm land such as this, timbering it, and splitting the property up into subdivisions. Living in another town, he didn't care about destroying the beauty of the land. We'd already fallen in love with the area and didn't want to see that happen. So we out bid our competitors and purchased the plot we now run Shangrila off of," Gary recalls.

Gary is a self-professed tree hugger, the type of man who regretted the need to cut down several live cedar trees while rebuilding a log cabin on his property. Over the next ten years, Gary's family would purchase over eight hundred acres in their effort to preserve the forest for trail riders, hikers and even hunters. "The way I look at a tree, especially these old hardwoods, once you take that tree down, it takes eighty to a hundred years for anyone to see that tree again. That's two to three generations of a family that will never see those trees." With hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of timber on his properties, Gary works hard to preserve the land so that his family, friends and neighbors can appreciate its beauty.

## **Denise & David Hudson**

Hudson Heritage Farms

[HUDSONHERITAGE@aol.com](mailto:HUDSONHERITAGE@aol.com)

Denise and David Hudson operate Hudson Heritage Farms in the Elmo Community of Halifax County. The Hudson's have owned their farm in Halifax County since 1983, but worked outside of the area and didn't farm full-time until retiring in 2009. Hudson Heritage Farms, LLC, is a sustainable pasture based multispecies meat production farm that specializes in Heritage Breeds of livestock. Heritage Breeds currently of interest include the Scottish Highland Cattle, Horned Dorset Sheep, Myotonic Goats and Large Black Hogs. Products produced on the farm are all natural grass fed meats that are directly marketed by the farm to local and Washington DC restaurants and stores, and local farmers' markets. In 2014, due to the Hudson's interests and involvement in the promotion of Agribusiness and Agritourism, the farm expanded into farm-stays and began offering homesteading and farm related classes. The farm recently purchased and renovated a historical property that is adjacent to the main farm with plans to expand into events, farm to table dinners, and weddings. Articles about the accomplishments and practices of Hudson Heritage Farms have recently appeared in Virginia Living Magazine, Farm Bureau publications, and Mother Earth News Grit Magazine.

## **The Honorable Maurice Jones**

Secretary of Commerce & Trade

[commerce.trade@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:commerce.trade@governor.virginia.gov)

### **Virginia's Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Governor Terry McAuliffe**

Maurice Jones was appointed Secretary of Commerce and Trade by Governor Terry McAuliffe in January 2014. The Secretary of Commerce and Trade oversees the economic, community, and workforce development of the Commonwealth, and each of the 13 Commerce and Trade agencies actively contributes to Virginia's economic health and high quality of life.

Jones previously served as Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development from April 2012 through January 2014. As the second most senior official at HUD, Jones managed the Department's day-to-day operations, the annual operating budget of \$40 billion, and the agency's 8,900 employees.

Prior to HUD, Jones was President of Pilot Media, the largest print and digital organization in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Jones also served as Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services and Deputy Chief of Staff to then-Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner. He was Special Assistant to the General Counsel at the U.S. Treasury Department, and he also served as Legal Counsel to the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund and as Director of the Fund during the Clinton Administration. Jones also worked for the law firm of Hunton & Williams in Richmond, Virginia, and he was a Partner at Venture Philanthropy Partners, a firm that invests millions in the Washington, DC metropolitan area to assist low-income children.

Jones received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Hampden-Sydney College and attended Oxford University in England on a Rhodes Scholarship, where he received a Master of Philosophy in International Relations. He later received a Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia. A Kenbridge, Virginia native, Jones currently resides in Norfolk, Virginia with his wife, Lisa, and daughter, Michela.

### **Greg Kamptner**

Deputy County Attorney, Albemarle County [gkamptner@albemarle.org](mailto:gkamptner@albemarle.org)

Greg Kamptner has been an attorney since 1982. He spent the first 8 years of his career practicing law in California. In 1991, he moved with his family to Charlottesville where he has remained ever since. He joined the Albemarle County Attorney's Office in 1995 and currently serves as the Deputy County Attorney. Throughout his career, the primary focus of Greg's practice has been land use and environmental law. He is a regular instructor for a number of professional organizations in Virginia on programs focused on local government and land use law.

### **Carl Knoblock**

Small Business Development Center [carl.b.knoblock@sba.gov](mailto:carl.b.knoblock@sba.gov)

### **Rick Larson**

Natural Capital Investment Fund [rlarson@conservationfund.org](mailto:rlarson@conservationfund.org)

Rick Larson is Senior Vice President for Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF), a Community Development Financial Institution ([www.ncifund.org](http://www.ncifund.org)). NCIF is the green business lending arm of The Conservation Fund, a national non-profit with a dual mission of land and water conservation and economic development. Rick has worked with NCIF since 2007, when he opened the NC operations of NCIF.

Rick has lent to enterprises that meet NCIF's mission of supporting enterprises that are good stewards of natural resources, including: renewable energy; sustainable agriculture; and recycling. He leads NCIF's Farmers of Color Initiative to provide bridge financing to limited resource farmers.

Rick has over 25 years of experience in community development, business finance, and social ventures. Before joining NCIF, he was a Managing Director with SJF Ventures, a \$135 M mission-driven venture capital firm. He also served as Executive Director of REAL Enterprises, a non-profit social enterprise which trains teachers to help rural youth and adult entrepreneurs develop business plans and learn the entrepreneurial process.

He is an adjunct professor at Duke's Fuqua School of Business, where he teaches a course on Impact Investing, and a 2014 – 2016 William C. Friday Fellow.

## **Sharon & Dick Lafferty**

Alpha Farm

[slafferty01@gmail.com](mailto:slafferty01@gmail.com)

Alpha Farm began in 1982 with the purchase of a 47 acre tract of land with only 20 acres open and a 150 year old house with numerous outbuildings in Spotsylvania County, near Lake Anna. Sharon and her husband, Dick, cleaned up the property and began growing grapes in the spring of '83. In 1984, they added vegetable crops with their three children picking the crops and taking the produce to the farmers' market. The dream of building a log home started to grow as well, and the Laffertys decided they wanted to use the home to host guests as a bed and breakfast. They didn't begin building the log home until 2000 when they hired their nephew as the builder. Fourteen years later the house was ready to move into. For the last 5 years, they have been aspiring innkeepers, gathering information and not rushing into anything until they are comfortable with all aspects of running a bed and breakfast. Since Sharon and Dick live on the farm, they hope guests will enjoy experiencing the life of a farmer.

## **Matt Lohr**

Farm Credit

[mlohr@fcvirginias.com](mailto:mlohr@fcvirginias.com)

Matt Lohr joined Farm Credit of the Virginias in December of 2013 as Director of the Knowledge Center. Although he is new to Farm Credit, he has been deeply involved in agriculture his entire life. Raised on a century farm in Rockingham County, he became active in the FFA and served as both a state and national FFA officer. Matt graduated from Virginia Tech in 1995 and has spent time farming, teaching middle school agriscience, serving as a member of the state legislature and most recently serving as Virginia's Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services. He is excited to be a part of the Knowledge Center team and is ready to help serve the needs of the agricultural community.

## **Vincent Magnini**

Hospitality & Tourism Management (0429) 355 Wallace Hall, Virginia Tech

[magnini@vt.edu](mailto:magnini@vt.edu)

Dr. Vince Magnini is a tenured faculty member in Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business. He was recently ranked as one of the top 12 most prolific hospitality researchers worldwide. He has published 6 books and more than 100 articles and reports, and is a U.S. Fulbright Scholar. His recent book titled *Performance Enhancers: Twenty Essential Habits for Service Businesses* appeared on the top 1% of Amazon.com's Best Seller Ranking throughout 2014. Vince has been featured three times on National Public Radio's (NPR) *With Good Reason*, once on NPR's *All Things Considered* and cited in the *New York Times*.

Vince regularly conducts projects for both private sector businesses and state agencies. Such projects often include drafting marketing plans and conducting economic impact studies.

## **The Honorable Danny Marshall**

Virginia House of Delegates, 14<sup>th</sup> District

[DeIDMarshall@house.virginia.gov](mailto:DeIDMarshall@house.virginia.gov)

Delegate Danny Marshall was appointed by the Speaker of the House as Chairman of the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee (ACNR), starting with the 2016 Legislative Session. He has served on the ACNR Committee since 2006 and he chaired the Agriculture Subcommittee from 2011-2015.

Also, at the House of Delegates, Danny Marshall is on the House Commerce and Labor Committee, chairing the Workers Compensation Subcommittee. He serves on the Counties, Cities and Towns full Committee and Subcommittee #2.

Danny is a businessman who is past president of Marshall Concrete Inc, a company that created 180+ jobs in Virginia. He also has a special interest in road racing where he has placed in events such as the *Daytona 24 Hours*. Danny is President of Synergy Racing.

Focusing on jobs, Danny serves on business-related boards and commissions. He chairs the Virginia Housing Commission and serves on the Manufacturing Development Commission, Public-Private Partnership Commission, Virginia Small Business Commission, Tobacco Commission and the New College Institute Board.

Danny Marshall has served in the Virginia House of Delegates representing the 14<sup>th</sup> District since 2002. He served on Danville City Council prior to his election to the House.

## **Sandy & Milt McPherson**

Hunting Creek Vineyards

[sandy@huntingcreekvineyards.com](mailto:sandy@huntingcreekvineyards.com)

Hunting Creek Vineyards started in April 2002 with the planting of 100 Merlot, 100 Petit Verdot and 100 Viognier vines. Directed over the beginning years by superb consultants Eric Capps and Jason Murray, Hunting Creek Vineyards expanded to one acre of Petit Verdot, one acre of Viognier and one-half acre of Merlot grapes.

Our winery started small in 2008, producing 180 cases with our first offerings beginning in the fall 2009. In 2012, we added 1/2 acre of Malbec against the advice of some experts in viticulture. After overcoming initial obstacles, we are excited to be able to add our first harvest of the Malbec to the 2014 Indulgence which will be bottled in the Spring of 2016.

We believe in supporting local growers and our community. All of our wines are made from grapes grown and processed here on our property. We have in the past purchased grapes from other local vineyards and plan to continue to develop relationships with local growers that share our philosophy – that a healthy balanced vine creates the best possibility to make exceptional wine!

## **Lori Merricks**

Danville Regional Foundation

[lmerricks@drfonline.org](mailto:lmerricks@drfonline.org)

A native of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, Lori serves as the director of marketing and communications at Danville Regional Foundation working to develop strategic communication efforts for DRF and its regional partners. She has more than 16 years of experience spanning public relations; event/sponsorship management and marketing; strategic communications planning; and digital and social media project planning, development and implementation. Prior to joining DRF, she held various positions with Birmingham, Alabama-based Luckie & Company, a national full-service marketing and advertising agency. At Luckie, Lori worked on the State of Alabama Tourism Year of Alabama Food, Year of Alabama Art and Year of Alabama Outdoors campaigns. In Danville, Lori assisted the City of Danville Office of Economic Development as a member of the design steering committee for the rebranding of the River District. She is a Cum Laude graduate of Samford University with a major in Journalism/Mass Communications and a minor in Business. She is also certified by the Institute for Crisis Management. Lori is a 2015 graduate of Lead Virginia, a gubernatorial appointee to the Virginia Council on Women and a member of the board of directors for God's Storehouse in Danville.

## **Kim Morgan, Ph.D.**

Virginia Tech [klmorgan@vt.edu](mailto:klmorgan@vt.edu)

Dr. Kimberly Morgan joined the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department at Virginia Tech in July 2013 as an Extension Agricultural Economist and Junior Faculty Fellow for the Kohl Centre. She teaches undergraduate courses including Agricultural Financial Management, Economics of the Food and Fiber System, Food & Agribusiness Marketing, Foundations in Agribusiness and the Kohl Centre Experiential Learning Project Team course. Her extension program goal is to pursue multi-disciplinary, research-based, grant-funded research that serves to drive extension programs, such as Market Ready Training,

Annie's Project, the eXtension All About Blueberries Community of Practice, and the Market Maker portal. Dr. Morgan is passionate about working collaboratively with stakeholders, students, colleagues, and advisors. Kim's research program goals are centered on measurable real-world needs and wants communicated by Virginia's rural, natural resource, and agribusiness owners, managers and consumers. Specific research objectives include: understanding significant factors which influence specialty crop producers to adoption new technologies and/or pursue new marketing channels, determining the physical, behavioral and demographic characteristics of consumers motivated to seek out food and food products sold directly from the farm, and assessing the economic impacts of natural or man-made hazards on the private and public sectors of the state.

Dr. Morgan earned a BS in 1993 in Animal Science, a M.S. in Food & Resource Economics in 1997, and a Ph.D. in Food & Resource Economics in 2007, all from the University of Florida. She worked with the University of Florida's Agricultural Market Research Center as an Economic Analyst from 2000-08. From July 2008-2013, Dr. Morgan was an Extension Agricultural Economist in the Agricultural Economics Department at Mississippi State University. Kim enjoys riding horses and spending time with her three children.

### **Michelle Mosely, Ph.D.**

Virginia State University

[mmosely@vsu.edu](mailto:mmosely@vsu.edu)

Dr. Michelle Y. Mosely has 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry. She has a keen understanding of restaurant management, event management and marketing. After completing a Bachelor's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences with a concentration in Food Management at South Carolina State University, Dr. Mosely had the privilege to work for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts. She currently works at Virginia State University (VSU) as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Hospitality Management. Prior to joining the faculty at VSU, she was a lecturer in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Studies (RPTS) at Indiana University-Bloomington. Dr. Mosely also served as the Assistant Director of the Great Lakes Park Training Institute a division with the Department of RPTS. She also has a Master's degree in Recreation from Indiana University-Bloomington and Associate's degree in Professional Cooking and Baking from Baltimore International College.

### **Theresa Nartea, D.B.A.**

Virginia State University

[tnartea@vsu.edu](mailto:tnartea@vsu.edu)

Since 2008, Dr. Theresa Nartea has served as an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in Marketing & Agribusiness with Virginia State University College of Agriculture-Cooperative Extension. Her primary work goals focus around developing educational programming to train field based extension staff and other stakeholders about unique and sustainable marketing strategies such as: Food Hubs, Community Supported Agriculture, Subscription Farming, Farmers Markets, and e-Commerce. Her goals are to help build mutually beneficial food systems that connect Virginia farms with customers in their communities.

From 1993-1998, Theresa worked with USDA county based programs and Washington State University Cooperative Extension to provide technical support on farm preservation, environmental stewardship and farm profitability issues. She is a formally trained Soil Scientist (NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources-2000-2002), and has served as the Program Director of Education & Marketing of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (NC State University, 2002-2004), she also worked as an Statewide Extension Specialist (Agribusiness & Marketing) with NC Cooperative Extension from 2004-2008.

## **Ashley Nauta**

Virginia Cooperative Extension

[aswolfe@vt.edu](mailto:aswolfe@vt.edu)

Ashley earned a Bachelor's degree in Animal and Poultry Sciences in 2005 from Virginia Tech and is currently pursuing a Master's of Business Administration from Colorado State University. Early in her career, she focused on equine reproduction and held the position of Breeding Manager at Acorn Hill Farm in Madison, VA. Ashley is also an experienced young-horse trainer who owns and trains her own horses in dressage. Along with an animal science background, Ashley also has extensive business experience. As long-time Sales Manager of the elite equine sales program at Iron Spring Farm in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, Ashley gained valuable sales and marketing skills. She is particularly savvy in the area of online marketing strategies and social media platforms. In her current position as Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, her areas of focus are Agricultural Marketing and Development, along with Agritourism.

## **A J Nuckols**

White Fall Farms

[ajnuckols@gmail.com](mailto:ajnuckols@gmail.com)

## **Catherine Olmert**

Watkins Insurance

[catherine@watkinsinsurance.com](mailto:catherine@watkinsinsurance.com)

Catherine Watkins Olmert grew up with insurance and risk management in her blood, which must be why she finds it all fascinating. As president of Watkins Insurance Agency, a 4<sup>th</sup> generation family business, she leads an agency committed to developing insurance solutions for individuals, businesses and farms.

She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and joined Watkins Insurance immediately. She is a Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC) and as leader of a team dedicated to continuing education, she is currently studying for her Agribusiness and Farm Insurance Specialist (AFIS) designation.

She spends her spare time in a futile attempt to balance caring for her family and her clients, too many animals, corporate life, field trips, healthy meals, afterschool sports and an addictive book habit. She never goes anywhere without muck boots in her car, because you just never know when you'll end up standing in the mud.

## **John Peterson**

Kaufman and Canoles

[jmpeterson@kaufcan.com](mailto:jmpeterson@kaufcan.com)

John serves as the firm's point person for assisting clients and public speaking on all aspects of the Affordable Care Act, having delivered more than 150 presentations since joining the firm in late 2012. His deep knowledge of ACA compliance allows John to provide comprehensive legal counsel to organizations, businesses and brokers, responding to ACA challenges both creatively and proactively.

John is a member of the firm's Employee Benefits, Business Tax, Labor & Employment, and Healthcare practice groups. John has 40+ years of experience as both a practicing attorney and CPA in the areas of retirement plans and employee benefits. John also has extensive teaching experience on ERISA matters, 25+ years as an adjunct professor at William and Mary Law School and 15+ years at Old Dominion University's Professional Financial Planning program.

## **Susan Pleasant**

Marceline Vineyard

[wildhorserun1@gmail.com](mailto:wildhorserun1@gmail.com)

Susan Pleasant is a single mother of three adult children, four and a half grandchildren, is employed as a part time PA and is the full time originator, owner, and general manager of Marceline Vineyards LLC. She lives in the heart of the beautiful Shenandoah Valley on her farm near Harrisonburg, Virginia. She moved to the valley in 1997 from Raleigh, North Carolina employed as a health care professional until semi-retiring in 2014, following a 43 year career in the health care industry. Throughout her career, she was also incrementally, subtly, studying and following the wine industry and not-so-secretly fueling a desire to someday become an entrepreneur, own a small family farm and grow wine grapes from her own vineyard. This is the story of her passion, driven by an unshakable faith, a spirited, high energy Irish great-grandmother, a shy and faithful mother, a tenacious and driven work ethic, and a lifetime desire to give back and make a difference. This is the journey of how Marceline Vineyards came to be.

## **Don & Sarah Reese**

Reese's Farm Fresh

[donreese@yahoo.com](mailto:donreese@yahoo.com)

## **Linda Robinson**

Shelah Springs

[ldr920@gmail.com](mailto:ldr920@gmail.com)

Linda Robinson along with her husband Don live on a 126 acre farm they bought in 2010. On their farm they raise "Southdown English 'Babydoll' Sheep" for the sale of their fiber and together with their neighbors raise Charolais Cattle.

This breed is one of the world's finest beef cattle. Their pasture fed beef is sold at Farmers Markets in the area and their vision for the future is to offer a local Beef CSA.

An Orchard of Heirloom Apple trees was planted this spring with future plans to sell apples and produce cider from the cider apples.

A "Flow Hive," a bee hive that allows you to harvest honey right into your jars, has been set up and will allow them to sell honey right from their farm.

They are very involved in Agritourism and use their farm as a Wedding destination. Guest enjoy the beauty of the countryside, the peacefulness of the country, and the view of the sheep in the pasture with the cattle grazing on the hills all while celebrating the wedding of their friends and family.

Long term plans for their farm is that their children, grandchildren, and future generations will love and enjoy farming.

## **Solomon Rose**

Lucketts Mill and Hopworks

[Solomon@OrganarchyHops.com](mailto:Solomon@OrganarchyHops.com)

Solomon Rose is the owner of Organarchy Hops, and has been in the Hops business for 5 years. He has spent his whole life on different ranches across the United States and now has settled on a crop and a location in the Mid-Atlantic.

This previous year, Organarchy has opened its first Hop processing facility in Lucketts, Va. The processing facility provides state of the art processing equipment vital to providing the brewers of the area with a quality local crop. Solomon promotes hop growth in the area by working with new farmers through consultation and management options. Recognition for Organarchy's efforts have come in from NCRS offices to national publications. Organarchy is the rise of Anarchy farming, breaking tradition and promoting innovation to grow.

## **Stephen & Aubrey Rose**

Rosemont Vineyards

[aubrey@rosemontofvirginia.com](mailto:aubrey@rosemontofvirginia.com)



## **Kelli Scott**

Virginia Cooperative Extension

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## **Kerry Scott**

Program Manager for MAS Labor [kscott@maslabor.com](mailto:kscott@maslabor.com)

Kerry is Program Manager for MAS Labor, based in Lovingson, Virginia, the country's largest supplier of H-2A and H-2B legal guest workers. MAS provides H-2 services in 46 states and in virtually every agricultural sector from apiculture to viticulture. Kerry originally made farm calls for MAS; advising clients on how to stay in compliance with the highly regulated H-2A program. Kerry's responsibilities now include business development for MAS, reporting directly to the owners of the company. This work has him exhibiting and speaking to agricultural and horticultural groups all over the country. Recent participants have credited Kerry as being the first speaker to leave them truly understanding the H-2A program.

## **Sarah & Shannon Showalter**

Showalter's Orchard and Greenhouse

[sarah@showaltersorchard.com](mailto:sarah@showaltersorchard.com)

Our family farm is a one-hundred-year-old orchard just outside the tiny town of Timberville in Northern Rockingham County, VA. It bears the "oh- so- clever name Showalter's Orchard and Greenhouse. Our hard cidery, established in 2012 is Old Hill Cider.

Shannon and Sarah were high school sweethearts and both grew up on farms in Rockingham County. Having grown up on the orchard, Shannon knew from birth, that agriculture would be his life. Sarah, at first thought that farming wasn't going to be her "cup of tea".

She became a teacher. In 2010 with the planning and implementing of Old Hill Cider, Sarah resigned from her public school teaching position and began full-time work on the farm. One of their most pressing goals is to keep their farm and business relevant and sustainable. They want their children, Ben, 19 and Ava, 15 to have the option and opportunity to continue their tradition of orcharding and cider making. Agritourism has helped them create a future that looks bright for their kids. They are rejuvenated by the challenge and opportunity that welcoming people to their orchard (their home) and sharing their experience in agriculture with their customers, brings to them They are looking forward to learning from and collaborating with conference attendees.

## **Susan Sink**

Sinkland Farms

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## **Andy Sorrell**

Office of Farmland Preservation

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services [Andrew.Sorrell@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:Andrew.Sorrell@vdacs.virginia.gov)

Andy Sorrell holds a B.S. Degree in Environmental Policy and Planning from Virginia Tech and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the Center for Public Affairs and Policy also at Virginia Tech. He is a member of the American Planning Association having served as Membership Director of the Virginia Chapter from 2010-2014. Mr. Sorrell is also a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and has served as the Chairman of the Rural Planning Caucus of Virginia since 2013 having been a member since 2004. Mr. Sorrell worked as a professional land use planner in Virginia local governments for 10 years – beginning as a planner in Fluvanna County, then as Planning Director in Cumberland County and as a long-range planner in Albemarle County. Throughout his work with rural local governments, Sorrell was involved in rural and agricultural land use issues. In 2007, he developed the first Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program in southern Virginia while in Cumberland County. In Albemarle

County, Mr. Sorrell completed a residential land capacity analysis that demonstrated to local leaders existing growth area boundaries were sufficient to accommodate future population growth without the need to expand growth boundaries into the County's rural areas. Sorrell has served currently as the Coordinator for the Office of Farmland Preservation at VDACS since December 2013 where he manages the state-matching PDR grant program, the Virginia Farm Link program and the Virginia Century Farm program among other duties.

### **Jonathan Staples**

VANISH & Black Hops Farm

[jonathan@blackhopsfarm.com](mailto:jonathan@blackhopsfarm.com)

### **Sandra Tanner**

Virginia Tourism [stanner@virginia.org](mailto:stanner@virginia.org)

Sandra Tanner has worked for Virginia Tourism Corporation for the past 28 years. Currently, she serves as the Tourism Development Specialist for the Southern Virginia Region. As a resident of La Crosse, Virginia, a former member of their Town Council and current Trustee for Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Sandra has a special interest in promoting rural and small communities, safe routes to school, and accessibility travel in Southside Virginia. Her niches for tourism development are Agritourism and Trail Development. She received her Tourism Marketing certification from Southeastern Tourism and North Georgia University in 2010. She works closely with many Southside Virginia Communities and serves various roles in many volunteer organizations. She is currently President of Roanoke River Rails to Trails, Inc.

### **Laurette Tucker**

USDA Rural Development

[Laurette.tucker@va.usda.gov](mailto:Laurette.tucker@va.usda.gov)

Laurette Tucker serves as a Rural Business Specialist in the Rural Business-Cooperative Programs Division of USDA Rural Development.

### **James Wallace**

Virginia Community Capital, Inc, Fresh Food Advisor [jwallace@vccva.org](mailto:jwallace@vccva.org)

Mr. Wallace graduated from Virginia Tech in 2012, with a degree in Environmental Policy and Planning. He created a Sustainable Food System Plan for the Richmond Region, which led to being hired by GrowRVA, a farmers market management company. Mr. Wallace managed multiple farmers markets in the Richmond region, including the state's largest producer only market, South of the James. He helped create a non-profit to accompany the market and encourage people who receive food stamps to shop at the farmers market for healthier, nutrient dense fresh fruits and vegetables. Through fund raising efforts FeedRVA, the non-profit, was able to provide a double dollar match to incentive customers to purchase healthier food with the SNAP/EBT cards. Mr. Wallace joined VCC part-time, early in 2014 as a fresh food project coordinator to expand the Get Fresh Healthy Corner Store Initiative and transitioned to a full-time position as a fresh food advisor, to continue to expand the healthy foods initiative and to provide technical assistance to fresh food businesses across the Commonwealth.

### **Ann Taylor Wright**

The Taylor-Wright Farm

[thetaylorwrightfarmcompany@gmail.com](mailto:thetaylorwrightfarmcompany@gmail.com)

Ann Taylor Wright is a full time farmer on her 150 acre, sixth generation family farm in Brunswick County, VA. She is the owner/operator of The Taylor-Wright Farm Company, LLC. Ann attended East Tennessee State University where she studied Pre-Med. She worked as a paramedic for 12 years before leaving the healthcare industry to raise her children and focus on farming. Ann is a member of South Hills Market Square and Farmers Market Committees. She also devotes herself to educating the community,

especially children, about where their food comes from and the importance of local agriculture. She frequently visits area schools, poultry or livestock in tow. Ann has delivered dozens of presentations on the subject of “local food” and “family farms” to civic organizations and community groups.

On the farm, along with her husband, Allen and their three children, they raise Berkshire hogs, beef cattle, lambs, turkeys, chickens, ducks and laying hens. All of their high quality meat and egg products are direct marketed to consumers from the farm itself and at area farmers markets. Ann is the manager of the daily operations, finances, logistics, scheduling, marketing and every other aspect of the farm business. Through successful marketing and exceptional customer service, The Taylor-Wright Farm Company, LLC has grown steadily over the past three years. In 2014, Ann successfully wrote and was awarded a \$50,000 USDA Value-Added Producer Grant and co-authored an \$80,000 Tobacco Commission grant awarded in January of 2016 for the upcoming Southern Virginia Food Hub.

### **Martha A. Walker**

Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech CALS, Agriculture & Applied Economics [walker53@vt.edu](mailto:walker53@vt.edu)  
Martha A. Walker serves as one of five Community Viability Specialists with Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and is a faculty member in Virginia Tech’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. In her role with Extension, Dr. Walker works with counties and cities throughout Virginia as well as multiple state agencies assessing community needs, facilitating community-based action plans, and identifying resources from Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, and other state and federal agencies. Her work is directly linked to and supported by Extension agents and university faculty. In 2015, Martha received the Virginia Tech Alumni Award for Excellence in Extension (Individual Specialist).

### **Janell Zurschmeide**

Dirt Farm Brewing [janell@dirtfarmbrewing.com](mailto:janell@dirtfarmbrewing.com)

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

### Our Farm Tour Van Drivers:

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