On September 26, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council hosted its 2018 Annual Meeting and Workforce Innovation Awards Ceremony, which highlighted the organization’s workforce development programs, services, and accomplishments over the past year.

The Annual Meeting served as an unveiling and announcement of the Workforce Development Board's new regional and statewide brands — Hampton Roads Workforce Council and Virginia Career Works Hampton Roads Region. As important, the Workforce Council announced the development of the Southeastern Regional Workforce Collaborative — a new partnership with the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board, formerly the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development.

The meeting closed on a celebratory note with the 2018 Workforce Innovation Awards ceremony — recognizing businesses, community organizations, educational institutions, and individuals for their longstanding commitment to workforce development and impact on the Hampton Roads economy.

2018 Workforce Innovation Award Recipients

- Community – The Chesapeake Department of Human Services Division of Community Programs
- Education – Isle of Wight County Schools
- Business – Bank of America
- Innovator - Virginia Natural Gas
- Elected Official – Chris Stolle, Virginia House of Delegates, 83rd District
- Workforce Champion of the Year – Bill Crow, President, Virginia Ship Repair Association
The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (Opportunity Inc.) launched the NextGen Regional Internship Program this summer to provide internship opportunities for youth and young adults in Hampton Roads. The nine-week paid internship program supported 48 residents of Portsmouth and Chesapeake — ages 16 to 21. Participants gained valuable experience in a variety of industries throughout the summer. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council plans to expand the program in other localities in the coming year.

To better communicate Opportunity Inc.'s role as the regional convener of workforce development, the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board will no longer conduct operations as Opportunity Inc. The organization will retire the existing name - operating as the Hampton Roads Workforce Council.

Our One Stop Workforce Center and affiliate sites will also transition to a new statewide brand Virginia Career Works. Each locality will have a local identifier as part of the Virginia Career Works Hampton Roads Region. This new brand and the services it represents is a commitment to building a stronger workforce in Virginia.

Greetings!

We are excited to share the first issue of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council Newsletter as part of our new statewide and regional rebrand initiative. We have taken great effort to ensure that our new organizational name reflects the work that we do every day to support businesses, job seekers, and veterans in our region; and encourage you to visit our new website — www.vcwhamptonroads.org — to learn more about the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and Virginia Career Works brands.

In this issue, you will read about several updates, programs, and awards that underscore our commitment to strengthening our regional workforce and building a vibrant economy where business thrive, and people desire to live and work.

For the last couple of years, collaboration has been at the forefront of our efforts to create meaningful employment opportunities and provide comprehensive services for existing and prospective employers. We continued this momentum through the announcement of a resolution supporting the Southeastern Virginia Regional Workforce Collaborative — adopted by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and the Greater Peninsula Workforce Development Board. Through this newly formed partnership, both organizations will work to address the needs of area employers through a collaborative, regional approach that focuses upon business engagement strategies, continuous communication and outreach efforts, program development and support, provision of labor market intelligence, veteran transition support and services, and emerging workforce initiatives to keep pace with new technologies and career pathways.

The “road to regionalism” has been a longstanding hot topic in Hampton Roads, in terms of the promise it holds to improve tourism, regional competitiveness, and economic growth. We believe it is also especially valuable to workforce development initiatives as we look to tackle persisting challenges, such as building a solid talent pipeline of skilled workers and attracting new businesses, that require a more regional, collaborative approach.

Statewide & Regional Workforce Rebrand Initiative

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**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

"Participating in the NextGen Internship Program and working at SimIS helped to shape my career path. I’ve recently decided to change my major to engineering with a focus on robotics, and I would encourage anyone to consider this program."

Ruben Todd is a 2018 NextGen Internship Program Participant and Freshman at Norfolk State University.

**VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS SPOTLIGHT**

After being laid off from his job of 17 years, Joseph Hood connected with Virginia Career Works Norfolk Center for Individualized Career Services. He received a Career Coach who helped him navigate the employment search process and provided resume development assistance. Mr. Hood credits Virginia Career Works for his new position with Tidewater Finance Company — where he is now employed as a 90+ TMC Recovery Supervisor. He recently received a pay increase and remains optimistic about the future. Congratulations Mr. Hood!

**SPOTLIGHT: Meet Anayah**

Anayah Wiggins, a senior at Franklin High School, participated in the Hampton Roads Workforce Council’s Success II Program. She recently received an early acceptance into Radford University and plans to pursue a degree in Nursing and a minor in Forensic Science. Anayah is extremely focused on continuing her education and credits the Hampton Roads Workforce Council for helping her discover and pursue her passion.

“[The Hampton Roads Workforce Council] helped me expand my knowledge and exposed me to different colleges and the different opportunities they each offer.”
Announcements and Awards

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Names Hampton Roads a Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone

On October 10, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Hiring Our Heroes and the Hampton Roads Workforce Council announced Hampton Roads as the nation’s newest Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone (MSEEZ) at the Hampton Roads Veterans Employment Center. A collaborative effort among the local business, civic, and military communities to address the economic impact of military spouse unemployment and underemployment on 21st century military families, MSEEZs establish geographically-focused employment networks to connect military spouses to local career opportunities.

This effort will further support programs and services offered through the Hampton Roads Veterans Employment Center for Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, and Military Families. For more information about the Military Economic Empowerment Zone initiative, please visit hiringourheroes.org.

The Workforce Council Continues to “LIGHT THE WAY”

SunTrust Foundation recently awarded the Hampton Roads Workforce Council with the 2018 Light the Way Award, which recognizes nonprofit organizations that strengthen their local communities through programs that help people better their circumstances and gain financial confidence. As part of this award, the Workforce Council received a $75,000 grant to support programs and services aimed at improving workforce development efforts throughout Hampton Roads.

Congratulations to Our 2018 Workforce Professionals Academy AWARD WINNERS!

Desiree Key, Youth Program Contractor for the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, received the award for Outstanding Achievement in Workforce Development by an Individual.

The Hampton Roads Veterans Employment Center, led by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, received the award for Outstanding Achievement in Workforce Development by a Team.

ABOUT THE HAMPTON ROADS WORKFORCE COUNCIL
Established by the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board, the Hampton Roads Workforce Council (formerly Opportunity Inc.) oversees federally funded workforce development programs for South and Western Hampton Roads. The Hampton Roads Workforce Council provides strategic workforce development solutions designed to assist businesses in accessing qualified workers and jobseekers in search of suitable job openings and training opportunities to bolster their earning potential.