

2026 EXECUTIVE RETREAT

August 27 & 28

SHENANDOAH CROSSING RESORT
GORDONSVILLE, VA

HOSTED BY: LOUISA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



2026 EXECUTIVE RETREAT AGENDA

Please note that **The Lodge** is where you will go to check in for your guest room.
The **Freedom Hall Pavilion** is where the conference meetings will take place,
and it is located at a different location on the property. We will provide a map for all attendees.

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 – Optional Evening

11:30am – 3:00pm	VACCE BOARD RETREAT VACCE Board Members only	Wolfrey Room – The Lodge (upstairs)
1:00pm - 3:00pm	EARLY REGISTRATION OPENS Please note that guest rooms may not be available until 4:00pm.	Freedom Hall Pavilion
3:00pm	*PRIOR REGISTRATION REQUIRED* WELCOME RECEPTION & SUNSET CRUISE Welcome Reception at Cutalong followed by a Sunset Cruise on Lake Anna with Dominion Energy, offering a relaxed, relationship-focused experience with light networking and scenic views to kick off the conference. You MUST register for this activity.	Cutalong & Lake Anna Docks

Thursday, August 27, 2026 – Shenandoah Crossing Resort

6:00 – 7:00am	Optional “Walk & Talk” Session Start your day with fresh air and great conversation! Join fellow attendees for an optional morning Walk & Talk—an easy, informal way to connect, share ideas, and enjoy the resort before the day’s sessions begin!	Meet at The Lodge
8:00am	Optional Devotional Time Breakfast this morning is available at The Lodge but is not part of the conference attendee fee.	The Lodge
9:30am	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS Please note that guest rooms may not be available until 4:00pm.	Freedom Hall Pavilion
10:00am	OFFICIAL CONFERENCE WELCOME <i>Courtney Thompson, Greater Augusta Regional Chamber, 2026-27 VACCE Board Chair</i> <i>Tracy Hale-Clark, Louisa County Chamber, 2026 Retreat Host</i>	Freedom Hall Pavilion
10:15 – 10:45am	SESSION 1 Understanding Virginia’s Expanding Data Industry As Virginia’s data industry continues to grow at an unprecedented pace, communities across the state are experiencing both new opportunities and complex challenges. This presentation will examine the industry’s impact on economic development, infrastructure, energy usage, workforce needs, and regional planning while offering chamber professionals valuable perspective on one of the Commonwealth’s most influential and evolving sectors. <i>Elizabeth Rafferty & Michael Kelly, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP</i>	Freedom Hall Pavilion

10:45 – 11:15am	SESSION 2 Powering the Future: Energy Trends Impacting Our Communities As our communities in Virginia experience rapid growth and increased energy demand, understanding the changing energy landscape has never been more important. This session will examine key topics including nuclear energy, solar power, battery storage, and electric infrastructure, while highlighting how these developments impact economic growth, workforce needs, and community planning. Chamber leaders will leave with a broader understanding of the role energy plays in supporting thriving business communities. <i>Emil Avram, Senior Vice President- Generation Development, Dominion Energy</i> <i>John Hewa, President & CEO, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative</i> <i>Andrew Vehorn, Senior Vice President of Member Engagement, Old Dominion Electric Coop</i>	Freedom Hall Pavilion
11:15 – 11:45am	SPOTLIGHT OUR SPONSORS SESSION Speed networking session with our sponsors. You must be present to win prizes!	Freedom Hall Pavilion
11:45am – 1:00pm	NETWORKING LUNCHEON Sponsored by: The Bill of Rights Institute	Freedom Hall Pavilion
1:15 – 2:30pm	SESSION 3 A Once-in-a-Generation Healthcare Challenge: What Virginia's Business Community Needs to Know Healthcare affordability has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges facing Virginia employers, affecting workforce health, business investment, and economic competitiveness. Drawing on insights from a series of healthcare affordability roundtables convened across the Commonwealth, Monica Schmude, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, will share what business leaders, providers, policymakers, and community organizations are saying—and, more importantly, where consensus is emerging. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of the challenges ahead and the opportunities for chambers to help employers navigate this changing landscape. <i>Monica Schmude, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Virginia</i> Sponsored by: RetirePath Virginia	Freedom Hall Pavilion
3:00pm	Leave for Afternoon Activity & Reception – VIRGINIA SCENIC RAILWAY Step aboard the Virginia Scenic Railway for a relaxed Thursday afternoon excursion featuring scenic countryside views, light refreshments, networking, and a chance to experience one of the Commonwealth's newest tourism attractions. Reception sponsored by: Lumin Strategies	
7:00pm	AWARDS DINNER Join us for a fun evening as we honor VACCE members during our Awards Dinner.	Freedom Hall Pavilion

Friday, August 28, 2026 – The Lodge – Shenandoah Crossing Resort

6:00 – 7:00am	Optional “Walk & Talk” Session Start your day with fresh air and great conversation! Join fellow attendees for an optional morning Walk & Talk—an easy, informal way to connect, share ideas, and enjoy the resort before the day's sessions begin!	Meet at The Lodge
8:00 – 9:00am	BREAKFAST BUFFET No program so that you can network with your peers. Be sure to check out of your room prior to 10am. Sponsored by: Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy	Freedom Hall Pavilion
9:00 – 9:30am	SESSION 4 Lead with Credibility. Advocate with Confidence. Today's Chamber leaders are expected to champion business interests while maintaining the trust of members with diverse political perspectives. Join us as we unpack the 2026 ACCE Government Relations Toolkit , which explores how Chambers navigate nonpartisan advocacy without falling into the trap of silent neutrality. We will break down a Chamber's four core advocacy roles (Educator, Collaborator, Unifier, and Advocate) and share strategies for building long-term credibility with members, elected officials, and the public. <i>Eric Sichau, Roanoke Regional Chamber</i> <i>Bryan Fox, Lumin Strategies</i> Sponsored by: Two Capitols Consulting	Freedom Hall Pavilion
9:30am	BREAK	Sponsor Area

9:45 – 11:00am

SESSION 5

Freedom Hall Pavilion

The Power of the Chamber Network: How Advocacy Is Stronger Together

Join us for a conversation exploring how local, regional, and statewide chambers can work together to amplify the voice of Virginia's business community. The discussion will highlight why advocacy is most effective when chambers speak with one voice, how local priorities help shape statewide policy, and how collaboration across Virginia's chamber network strengthens the Commonwealth's long-term economic competitiveness. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for building stronger partnerships, advancing shared priorities, and increasing their collective impact. Discussion topics will include:

- Why advocacy begins at the local level
- Connecting local priorities to statewide policy
- Building a stronger, unified voice for Virginia's business community
- Leveraging the strengths of local, regional, and statewide chambers
- Opportunities for deeper collaboration and greater impact moving forward

Brad Hall, Virginia Chamber

Bryan Fox, Lumin Strategies

Eric Sichau, Roanoke Regional Chamber

11:00am

CONFERENCE ADJOURNS