

**40 Years of Regional Innovation**



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## **Virginia's PDCs: Offering Innovative Regional Solutions for the Commonwealth**

*VAPDC Celebrates 40 years of regional innovation by  
highlighting PDC initiatives in emergency  
management services*

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA - As part of the year-long celebration of forty years of regional innovation by Virginia's Planning District Commissions (PDCs), the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions is highlighting specific initiatives carried out by PDCs across the Commonwealth that demonstrate the high level of value Virginia receives by its regions working together. In Hampton Roads, Virginia, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) has put in place the Hampton Roads Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), a program provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Administration's Grant Program Directorate. UASI addresses the unique multi-disciplinary planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density urban areas, and assists them in building and sustaining capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from threats or acts of terrorism. Hampton Roads became eligible to apply for UASI funds in Fiscal Year 2007, beginning with the region's five core cities and expanding to include all sixteen jurisdictions of Hampton Roads. The HRPDC was tasked with program management for the UASI

grant. In addition to providing overall UASI grant management, the HRPDC implements initiatives on behalf of the UASI for the Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee (REMTAC) and other regional committees. The HRPDC, through the UASI, is also working with the Hampton Roads Area Maritime Security Committee on an initiative to enhance security in the Port of Hampton Roads. Other UASI projects being implemented by the HRPDC include connecting a law enforcement information exchange system between Hampton Roads, Baltimore and the National Capital Region, a regional capabilities assessment with the Central Virginia UASI, providing pet sheltering and evacuation equipment, expanding and enhancing interoperable communications, a regional bomb squad initiative, and the development of a regional incident management team.

Moving west to the Richmond region, the Richmond Regional PDC and the Crater PDC are about to launch an emergency management planning program which will serve 20 jurisdictions in the Richmond and Crater Regions and a few other surrounding jurisdictions. The program will be funded through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program. The purpose of this program is to provide assistance to emergency management coordinators in the local jurisdictions and promote regional coordination in emergency management planning and response efforts.

A bit further west highlights the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) and their award-winning disaster preparedness project in impact-flood mitigation. The CSPDC has sponsored close to 100 mitigation projects in eight localities to ensure citizens and their homes are safer in potential flood situations. Almost \$9 million in grant funding was used to flood-proof, elevate, relocate or acquire homes through the Shenandoah Valley Project Impact-Flood Mitigation Project.

Additional outreach efforts to special populations such as the disabled, elderly and non-speaking communities resulted in a successful evacuation adjacent to a flood-prone river in Waynesboro, VA on the eve of Hurricane Isabel.

Numerous examples of regional cooperation and innovation can be found throughout the Commonwealth amongst Virginia's 21 PDCs. PDCs have the unique ability to take national, state, and local funding and leverage the money to do the most good for the region. The return on the dollar is more than \$17 of added value.

Planning District Commissions and Regional Commissions were established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1969. Every city, town and county in Virginia is located in one of the 21 planning district or regional commissions in Virginia. The mission of VAPDC is to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing problems of greater than local significance on a regional basis. For more information about VAPDC visit [www.vapdc.org](http://www.vapdc.org) or call 757-412-2664.

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