

## Virginia Peninsula Chamber Update

The Virginia Peninsula Chamber continues to advance its mission of strengthening regional competitiveness through leadership development, neighborhood engagement, and convening around the issues that matter most to our economy.

A cornerstone of our work is our suite of leadership programs, which together create a continuum of talent development across the Peninsula.

**LEAD Peninsula** remains our flagship civic immersion program for emerging leaders. Designed to provide a behind-the-scenes understanding of the systems that drive our regional economy, participants engage directly with the institutions and industries that define the Peninsula, military and defense, advanced manufacturing, transportation, education and workforce development, tourism, and more. The program also fosters relationships and civic awareness that last well beyond the cohort year.

Building on that foundation, **LEAD Higher**, delivered in partnership with Christopher Newport University, serves as our advanced leadership development experience. This program is designed for experienced professionals seeking to increase their leadership capacity while strengthening their connection to regional priorities, networks, and long-term civic engagement.

We are also launching a new pilot this summer: **LEAD for Interns**. This program is being developed as a talent retention and attraction strategy aimed at summer interns working across the Peninsula. Modeled loosely on LEAD Peninsula, it will introduce participants to the full breadth of regional opportunity while also encouraging them to return after graduation to build their careers and lives here on the Peninsula.

In addition to leadership development, we are launching a new community engagement initiative: **Spotlight on the Neighborhood**, debuting in May with an inaugural event focused on Newport News' Yard District. This program is designed to elevate positive momentum in Peninsula neighborhoods through four key lenses: neighborhood revitalization, economic development, people and quality of life, and education/workforce development. Three Peninsula neighborhoods will be highlighted throughout the year, showcasing progress and strengthening the narrative of community growth and opportunity.

Finally, the Chamber will host the **Annual Newport News State of the City** on April 13 at the Ferguson Center. This long-standing Chamber event serves as an important civic and business forum, bringing together regional leaders, stakeholders, and members of the business community. It provides a dedicated venue for the Mayor to address the business community directly, sharing updates on progress to date, outlining current priorities, and presenting plans and vision for the future of the City of Newport News. The event reflects the Chamber's core

role as a convener, creating space for transparent communication, alignment, and collaboration between public leadership and the private sector on issues that shape the city's economic future..