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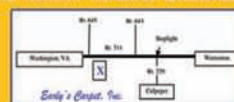
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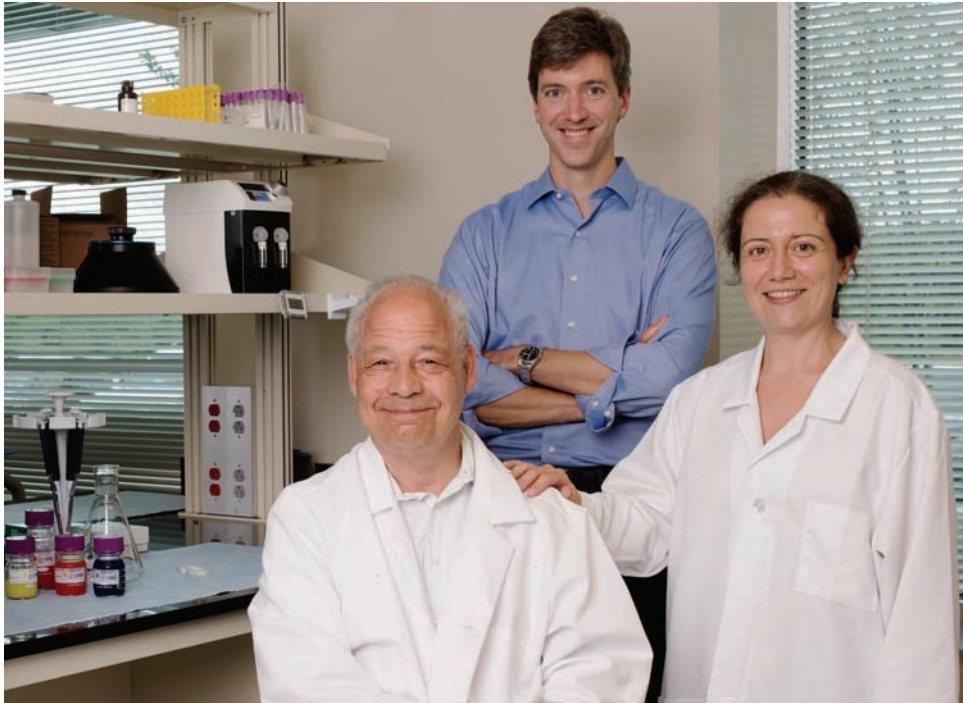


PHOTO BY DOUG STROUD

**Nanoscience:** Dr. Lance Liotta, CEO Ross Dunlap and Dr. Alessandra Luchini are pioneering new ways to detect disease at Manassas-based Ceres Nanosciences, Inc. — *page 44*

In the 'old' days a 24-hour response to v-mail or email was acceptable. Today, it's not.

— **DAVID PREZNUK,**  
**NOKESVILLE BUSINESS**  
**OWNER**

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## FEATURE

**48 Chime Times** — Tightly tucked into a commercial warehouse in Manassas Park, QMT Windchimes plots a strategy to take its melodic products worldwide.

**56 Rocking out in Warrenton** — The Vulcan Materials quarry on Meetze Road supplies one of the main ingredients of Northern Virginia's transportation network—crushed stone.

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## ON THE COVER

Kevin Romine manages the Vulcan Materials plant on Meetze Road in Warrenton.

PHOTO BY ADAM GOINGS



## Piedmont Business Journal marks fifth anniversary



This issue marks the five year anniversary of the *Piedmont Business Journal*.

We launched our quarterly magazine with the 2010 summer issue.

While all of our Virginia News Group newspapers — *Fauquier Times*, *Gainesville Times*, *Loudoun Times Mirror*, and *Prince William Times* — cover business news, we believed the region's dynamic business community deserved a publication that covered business issues and companies in greater depth.

Paging through this issue, you'll notice we redesigned the magazine to have a fresher, more open look and feel.

In terms of content, we've also introduced some new features.

The first section offers what we consider "steal-able ideas." Those include small nuggets of information gleaned from a variety of sources which you may find useful for your own enterprise.

The middle portion of the issue presents articles on topical issues, such as a new Environmental Protection Agency rule that may have a detrimental impact on farming operations, a brief look at the region's real estate market, including a profile of 70-year-old Wright Realty, and an examination of programs to train young people for the trades.

The balance of the issue looks at manufacturing in Prince William and Fauquier counties.

The three companies profiled represent three completely different types of manufacturing from the microscopic with Ceres Nanosciences, to QMT Windchimes and finally to Vulcan Material's foundational crushed-stone products.

We give the last word to sales guru Rick Davis, who offers a fresh look on traditional sales techniques. Stay tuned for the next issue of PBJ where we'll talk with Rick about a book he's writing expanding upon the ideas he discusses here.

And speaking of that next issue, October is National Women's Small Business month. In honor of the month, every fall for the past five years we have profiled some of the top women business professionals in the Piedmont region.

We'll do so again this year and would love to hear from you suggestions of the women business leaders you believe we should include in the issue.

Also, we welcome your feedback on the redesign, content and future direction of PBJ. You can send suggestions to me, Steve Campbell, at [scampbell@virginianewsgroup.com](mailto:scampbell@virginianewsgroup.com).

**Steve Campbell**, *Executive Editor*



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**PUBLISHER & CEO**  
PETER ARUNDEL

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
STEVE CAMPBELL

**PHOTO EDITOR**  
RANDY LITZINGER

**DESIGN**  
STACY TAYLOR,  
MELISSA JANACK, COVER

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# TIMELY TIPS



## Getting your point across and staying on topic

“They are mistaken, and possibly frustrated. You are almost assuredly frustrated.”

— KEVIN EIKENBERRY

Business communications sometimes become garbled, even in face-to-face conversations, and that’s not counting the emotional impact of strong opinions or disagreements.

According to Kevin Eikenberry of BudtoBoss.com, a few simple conversational redirects will make sure you stay on point. In a blog post dealing with interruptions, Eikenberry says introducing a “clarifying comment” will ensure that you don’t stray off topic.

For example, suppose you’re talking with someone who frequently interrupts your remarks with “arguments or comments that dispute (or correct) a point that they assume you are making and their assumption is wrong.”

The conversation has now been redirected, Eikenberry says, away from your original point and forced into a direction the other person assumed you were headed.

“They are mistaken, and possibly frustrated. You are almost assuredly frustrated,” he says.

He calls the “clarifying comment” technique a useful tool to maintain the flow of the conversation in the direction you want it to go. So how does it work in real life?

Suppose, you’ve just been interrupted by a comment that is clearly a wrong assumption about your point or perspective. Eikenberry says to reply with a comment that acknowledges their point and then bridges to yours.

Use phrases such as:

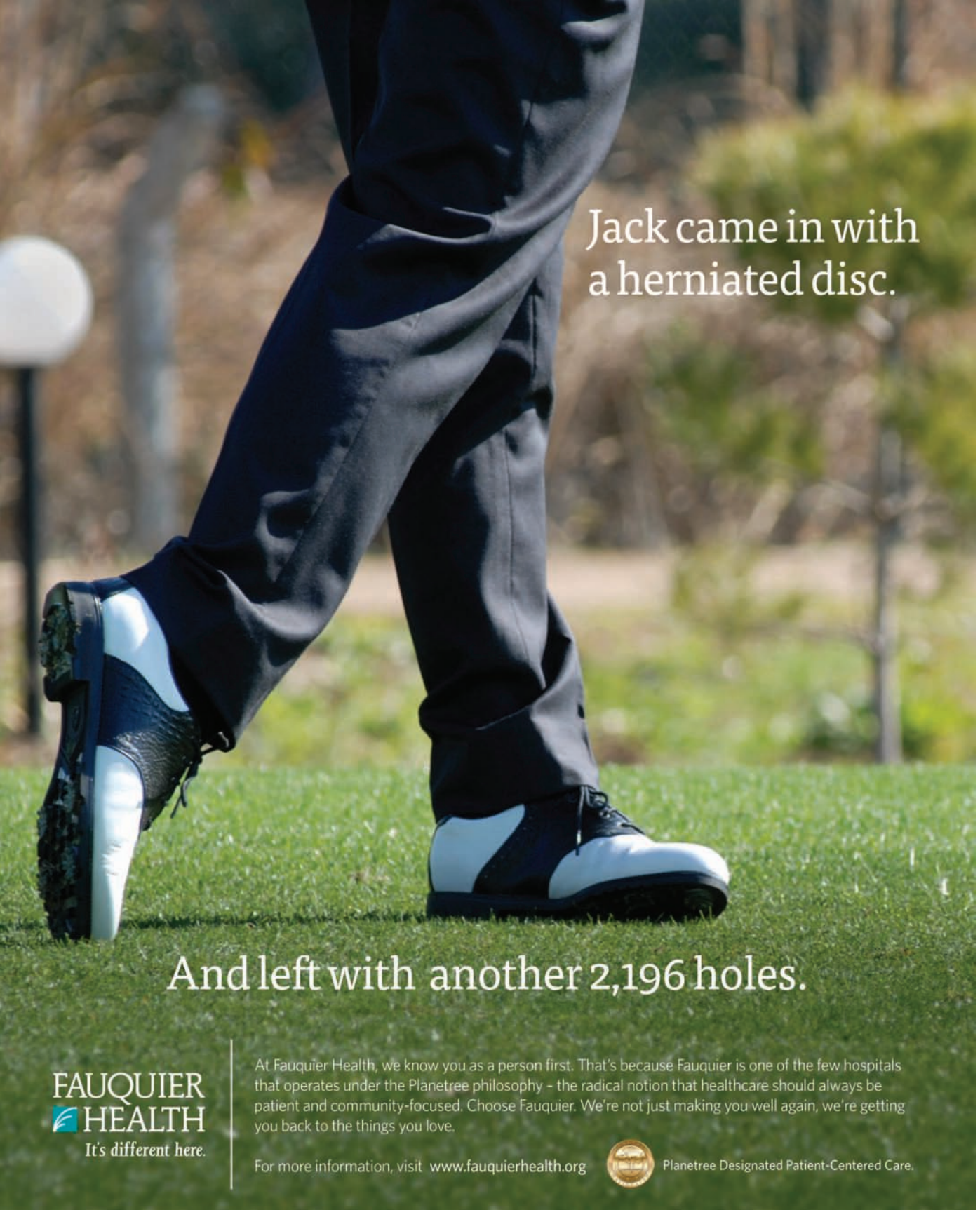
- Yes, that could be true, and I was thinking...
- That’s an interesting point, and I was thinking...
- I hadn’t thought about that. I was thinking...

“The general idea is to first acknowledge and affirm their idea (not necessarily agree with it, just acknowledge they have it without arguing), and then move smoothly to your actual point,” Eikenberry says. “You don’t actually have to use the words ‘Yes’ and ‘and,’ the name of the strategy is just a way to remember the concept.”

He says remember that the “clarifying comment” is just one of many conversational tools you should carry with you to become an effective communicator.

*Check out his blog at [BudtoBoss.com](http://BudtoBoss.com) for more advice.*





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## 15 minutes of fame: Oakview finds success with 'Sam'

Marshall-based Oakview National Bank, like many small businesses, lacks a huge pot of cash to engage in marketing, but also like other firms, wants to share a lot of "news" about its products and services with customers and potential new ones as well.

A couple months ago, the \$171-million community bank launched an extremely low-budget, and surprisingly successful, marketing campaign, employing a stick-figure cartoon character named Sam.

"We have a limited marketing budget and we have a lot of news, a lot of things that we do that we want people to know about," says Oakview President and CEO Mike Ewing.

"We can't afford photographers and all that production stuff, but we wanted something that would get people's attention maybe get them looking for what we're going to do next," he says.

Ewing had three main requirements in mind when crafting a company marketing plan.

The campaign had to be:

- Pervasive, able to appear in a

variety of media from online to print;

- Flexible, easily transferable between various marketing channels; and,
- Adaptable, able to convey any type of message.

The creative team at McKinsey Development in Warrenton came up with the concept of "Sam vs. Life," a simple portrayal of the average bank customer and the challenges he or she faces with day-to-day financial issues.

"They really nailed it," Ewing says.

### Immediate returns

While it's often hard to quantify the return on investment for a marketing plan, Sam yielded almost immediate results for Oakview.

A cartoon asking, "Is your bank still going to be around?" appearing on the front page of a Culpeper newspaper, quickly produced walk-in customer requests for new accounts at Oakview's branch there.

"We put it in the paper on the front page and the next day, and one of the [other banks in town's] customers came in and opened an account," Ewing said.

### Look elsewhere for ideas

For small business looking to get the word out about their companies, Ewing suggests they look outside of their own industry for inspiration.

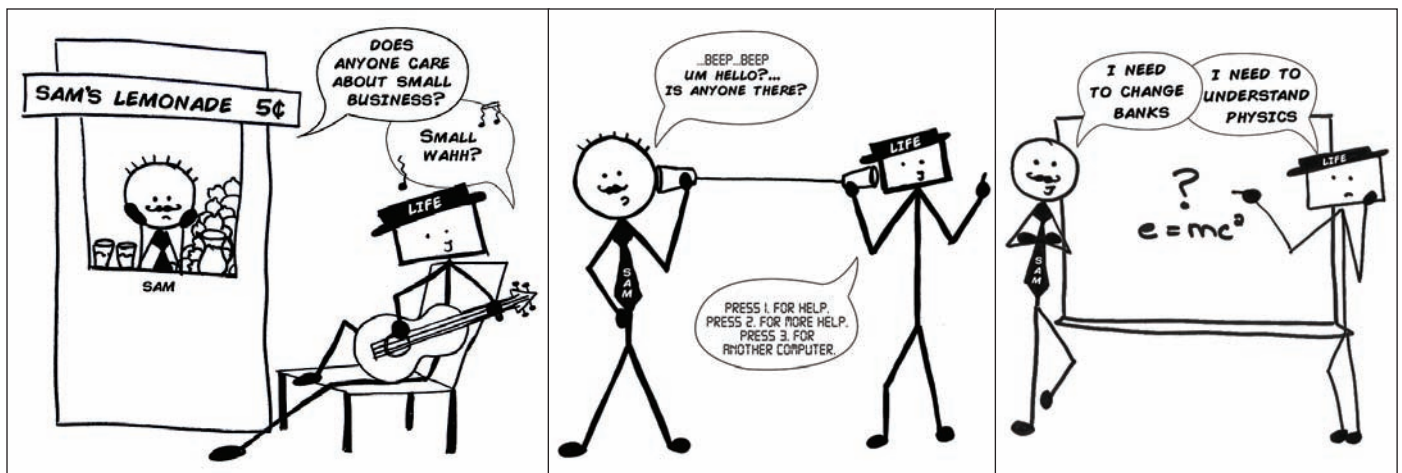
"I was really inspired by the Snow White Grill in Winchester," he says.

The tiny, hole-in-the-wall diner, launched a program where they would take a picture of a customer having lunch. That person's photo then would be placed in a tiny ad in the local newspaper.

"It was a neat thing in Winchester," Ewing says. "Everybody would go there [hoping to get their] picture taken, and then look to see who was in the paper this week."

Sam will likely appear on a variety of give-away items the bank offers, even T-shirts, and baby pajamas. The stick figure is easily transferable to just about any medium, and Ewing hopes Sam's popularity grows.

"We hope that he's going to catch on and will be something that is durable and last for a long time," Ewing says.





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—Wendy N. Thorne, *Doctor of Audiology*

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# TIMELY TIPS

## Staying cool this summer

As the dog days of summer descend on the Piedmont, the hot humid days put a wrinkle in even the most sharply dressed business person's professional image.

We turned to a pair of Fauquier fashion experts for some tips on maintaining a crisp persona even as the thermometer ratchets up in the coming weeks. Menswear expert Lake Lester of Court Clothing and women's clothing retailer Christine Fox remind business men and women that staying cool fashion-wise never goes out of style.

"It's always important to look professional and appropriate in the work place," Lester says. "Important meetings can happen at the drop of a hat, and if you are dressed ill appropriately, it can reflect poorly on you in the work place."

As summer temps rise, dressing for your career is very important no matter what the weather throws at you. Lester offers gentlemen the following tips for maintaining your cool:

- Wear light colors to reflect the heat.
- Chose fabrics like cotton or light-weight wool. Light-weight wool will breathe where polyester will not.
- Be careful not to look

too casual. Wearing a jacket with shorts is a no-no. Remember you want to be taken seriously, whether you're dressing for a job, raise, or a promotion.

Christine Fox, whose shop is at 47 S. Third St. in Warrenton advises ladies to:

- Invest in a classic, neutral shift dress. It is a wardrobe essential that you can both dress up and dress down with jewelry, scarves, blazers and more.

- Linen is a summer staple. Incorporate pieces of it into your everyday work wear, whether as pants or a button-down that will keep you cool all day long.

- Read your tags! Even a fabric as basic as cotton can fluctuate significantly as it blends with other fabrics — for summer, look for rayon, silk, and chiffon to help you beat the heat from 9 to 5.

For more wardrobe advice contact:

Lake Lester, Court Clothing, [courtclimbing@earthlink.net](mailto:courtclimbing@earthlink.net), (703) 943-7193, or [courtclimbingbylake.com](http://courtclimbingbylake.com)

Christine Fox, Inc., [christinefoxinc@gmail.com](mailto:christinefoxinc@gmail.com), 47 S. Third St., Warrenton, Va. 20186, (540) 347-3868, or [christinefox.com](http://christinefox.com)

Check the Fall issue of *Piedmont Business Journal* for fashion tips on transitioning to autumn.





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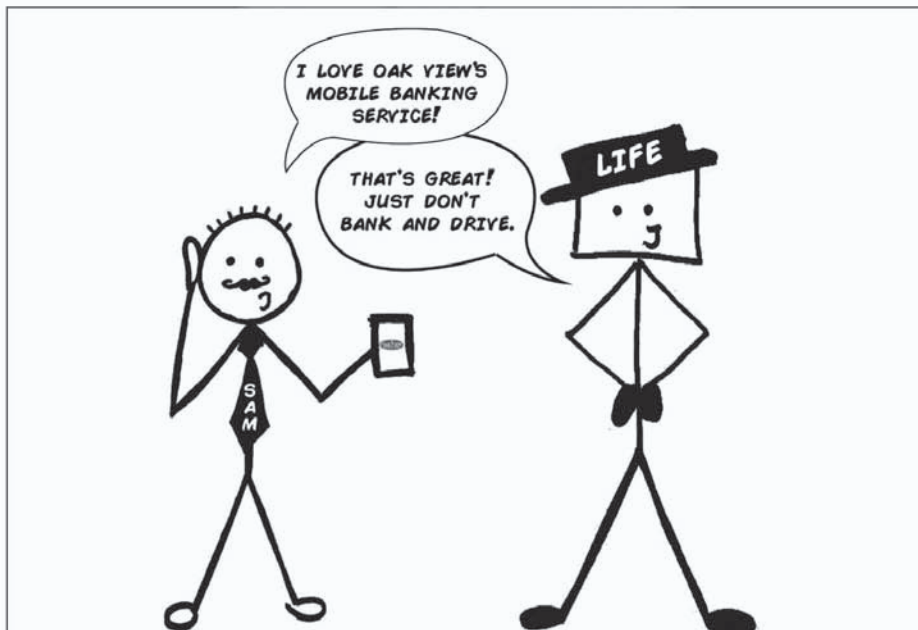
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# TIMELY TIPS

## Think your identity is safe? Think again.

Personal information of up to 18 million federal workers was stolen.

In April, millions of federal government employees, contractors and their families learned of a gigantic data breach of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the government human resources agency.

Then in June, OPM reported that the records of 4 million current and former federal workers, including Department of Defense personnel, had been compromised. Some estimates place that number at as many as 14 million records.

CNN reported on June 23 that up to 18 million employee records were affected by the breach, more than four times the 4.2 million originally acknowledged.

In January of 2015, Anthem Health Keepers reported a major data breach, and in recent years Home Depot, Target, and JP Morgan Chase have all reported data breaches.

All together as many as 80 million Americans may have had their Personal Identifying Information (PII) compromised.

In the OPM case, family and acquaintance information may also have been compromised. The release of anyone's PII, including children, increases the risk of identity theft.

Generally, those whose personal data has been stolen are notified by letter of the loss. Victims are typically offered some service that will allow them to monitor credit bureau records for suspicious activity. These services range from the ability to pull reports from the three credit bureaus to services that actively monitor credit bureau records.

According to Kevin Driscoll, a



Legal Shield associate in Manassas, identity theft is not new issue, but, in fact, has been the number one consumer complaint to the Federal Trade Commission for 15 straight years. Also, there are many types of identity theft, not just financial.

"Some of the most common are social security, driver's license, criminal, income tax, and, in my mind scariest of all, medical identity theft," Driscoll says. "In fact, just this year my wife and I learned someone else had filed an income tax return in our names."

Everyone with a social security number, name, and birth date should have a service that actively monitors the use of their PII, he says.

Even children's identities are being stolen. The trouble is they probably won't find out about it until they apply for college, go to get credit, apply for a security clearance, buy auto insurance, or some other life event.

So how do you protect yourself from identity theft?

First, obtain a free credit report from each of the three national credit reporting agencies through the Annual Credit Report Request Service at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or by calling (877) 322-8228.

"In my opinion, monitoring your credit report once a year is not nearly enough," Driscoll says. "A lot of damage can happen over the course of a year."

He recommends subscribing to a service that monitors activity reported to the credit bureaus about you.

The service should include:

- Counseling with licensed investigators,
- Monitoring for use of your PII across a wide variety of sites including black market sites, and
- Comprehensive identity restoration services.

That last point, comprehensive identity restoration, is critical because restoring your identity can be an extremely time-consuming ordeal.

Many insurance agencies, the credit reporting bureaus, as well as independent companies offer those services.

For more information, contact Kevin or Mary Jane Driscoll at (703) 398-1188, or visit [www.Driscoll42.LegalShieldAssociate.com](http://www.Driscoll42.LegalShieldAssociate.com).

### Get a free credit report

Federal law allows consumers to obtain a free credit every 12 months from the three credit reporting bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — to ensure that information on the reports is correct and up to date.

To obtain a report contact, Annual Credit Report Request Service at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) or by calling (877) 322-8228.



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# PIEDMONT BUSINESS BRIEFS

## Hyson marks 10 year anniversary with Walker Jones



An AV-rated attorney, Mark F. Hyson recently celebrated his 10th year with Walker Jones,

PC located in Warrenton and Washington, Va.

His practice areas include business law, real estate law, estate planning, conservation easements and real property.

Born in Warrenton, Hyson earned a J.D. from Pennsylvania State University and a B.A. from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He was admitted to the Virginia bar in 2002 and is a member of the Fauquier County Bar Association.

Mark Hyson can be reached at mhyson@walker-joneslaw.com or (540) 347-9223.

## Edward Jones moves up FORTUNE 500 list

Financial services firm Edward Jones moved up on the annual FORTUNE 500 list, published by FORTUNE magazine, in its third appearance in three years.

FORTUNE magazine's annual listing ranks the largest U.S. companies by revenue. Edward Jones moved up to 426 on this year's list, up 18 spots from No. 444, with more than \$6.3 billion in revenue for 2014.

"Our success comes from making a sig-

nificant difference to our clients," said Edward Jones Managing Partner Jim Weddle. "Being named a FORTUNE 500 firm is a result of helping meet more clients' financial needs as we deliver an experience our clients need and value."

Edward Jones provides financial services for individual investors in the United States and, through its affiliate, in Canada. Headquartered in St. Louis, the company has offices throughout Virginia, including Haymarket, Gainesville, Manassas, Marshall and Warrenton. For more information, visit [www.edwardjones.com](http://www.edwardjones.com).

## Local business wins contract

Warrenton-based Shenandoah Fleet Maintenance and Management won a multi-year contract with the Brook Army Medical Center's Warrior in Transition Battalion Transportation Section.

Under the contract, the company will trans-

port approximately 300 wounded warriors to and from various activities, appointments and errands.

Shenandoah Fleet takes care of the transportation needs of the wounded warriors using a fleet of about 20 vehicles, which includes ADA-compliant shuttle buses, full-length buses and passenger vans.

## Kapur to manage Cardinal's Gainesville branch



Shalini J. Kapur joined Cardinal Bank as assistant vice president, manager of the Gainesville

office. She will oversee the business development efforts and daily operations of the office located at 7905 Heritage Village Plaza.

Most recently, she served in a similar role for United Bank following the merger of Virginia Commerce Bank, where she advanced to positions of increasing responsibility.

A resident of Prince William County, Kapur holds a Bachelor of Science degree in commerce. She is an active member of the Prince William Chamber of Commerce and the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce. Kapur gives back to the business community through her service in the Manassas Chapter of the Optimist Club.

## Warrenton office park gains new tenants

Warrenton-based technology, media, and professional services center, Blackwell Office Park gained two new tenants, LinQuest Corporation and Dulaney, Lauer & Thomas.

LinQuest's expertise is on the convergence of communications, command and control, and information systems. Dulaney, Lauer & Thomas is an established law firm known for its expert

specialization in insurance law.

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For more information, contact John Lesinski of Colliers International at (540) 754-1618 or email [john.lesinski@colliers.com](mailto:john.lesinski@colliers.com).

## NOVEC HELPS raises \$22,000 for charity

Ninety golfers and dozens of sponsors helped raise more than \$22,000 net for charitable and community groups at the NOVEC HELPS (Hands Engaged in Local Public Service), third annual golf tournament in May 14 at the Stonewall Golf Club in Gainesville.

In the past year, NOVEC HELPS has donated to the American Red Cross, Special Olympics, March of Dimes, Wounded Warrior Project, American Cancer Society, Project Mend-A-House, Northern Virginia Family Service, and other organizations.





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PHOTO BY  
RANDY LITZINGER

# Virtual meetings erase face to face

## Hang up on voice-mail to dial in on productivity

BY BETSY BURKE PARKER

The minute voicemail became widely available in the late 1970s, it swiftly became an essential business tool.

Lately, there's a new king of communication.

Voicemail is out and text is in.

A recent Bloomberg Business article reports that lending giant JPMorgan Chase, the Coca Cola Co. and many other corporations are eliminating voicemail in an effort to trim billions in annual expenses and push up productivity.

The article says personal voicemail boxes cost up to \$10 per line per month. Given that workers increasingly rely on text and email, cutting the cord yields savings.

Many lament the change, but experts wonder if the phone call may be a dying institution anyway.

The number of text messages sent monthly in the U.S. exploded from 14 billion in 2000 to 188 billion in 2010, according to a Pew Institute study. The trend

shows no sign of abating, and more than just millennials are coming online.

When it comes to whether to send a Facebook message, tweet 140 characters or leave a personal message at the beep, zip codes play as much a role as do birth dates.

"I don't like the idea of eliminating any tool of communication, especially at the local business level," says business consultant Nicole Chamblin of

Visions Productivity Solutions in Lake Ridge.

"My viewpoint is that every one of those tools — email, text, face-to-face, and, yes, voicemail — is critical to success," she says.

Each communication method serves a particular need, Chamblin noted. "From a quick text, 'running five minutes late,' to a detailed phone message where your tone of voice comes through, today we have lots of choices," she says.

When I call a colleague and  
get their machine I hang up  
and send an email.

— CASANDRA JOHNSON WITH  
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## A generation lost in space?

Much like the smoke signal, pay phone and pager, voicemail initially lost its appeal because communication was tethered to a physical thing at a given physical location — an actual answering machine plugged into the wall next to an actual telephone.

Chamblin says communications today are not physically anchored to a wire running into a wall.

Most Americans carry a cell phone or a smart phone in their pockets, and being instantly reachable is almost expected. However, smaller businesses don't have budgets to pass out personal devices, and most local companies still have landlines.

Warrenton orthodontist Al Griffin thinks eliminating voicemail wouldn't work for health care. "It will not fly anytime soon," he says. "At least at the practitioner level. Confidentiality requirements apply, ... and, often, doctor discussions are dynamic and email is not practical to get an efficient and comprehensive decision."

"Small businesses already face so many challenges," says consultant Chamblin. "I fear this cost-cutting move will have a negative impact. If an enterprise



moves to strictly text on personal devices, you've lost control of your company."

"Ask Hilary Clinton."

## Cutting the cord

Others, though, think reliance on a landline answering machine is absurd in the modern day.

Retired air-traffic controller Tom Watton of Markham cites "telephone tag" as a good reason to turn to tech.

"From my point of view, working both in government and private industry, voicemail is a waste of time," says Watton. "You call someone and they're not at their desk. You leave a message. They call you back and you're not at your desk."

"I can see why a corporation would want to eliminate voicemail. I find email productive, but of course the best com-

munication is face to face."

Watton keeps good company: Pope Francis admonished his flock to forgo social media in favor of personal conversation.

"The great challenge facing us today is to learn once again how to talk to one another, not simply how to generate and consume information," the pontiff says in his annual World Day of Communications message.

Rappahannock real estate agent Alan Zuschlag says ZIP code plays a role in rural Virginia.

Though buyers can do everything but a final walk-through online, he still prefers telephone to email, and prefers email to texts.

"Texting is for kids," he says. "Not for conveying business information."

"In the country, we don't have the luxury of instant communication at all times," Zuschlag added. "A lot of times I'm in the back field of a farm or a country property and don't get cell signal."

Agent Julie Martin cites another reason for going digital; she appreciates the ability of text or email to save every portion of a "conversation" with clients. Text "allows me to be very responsive instead

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## COMMUNICATION

### NUMBERS:

#### 14 billion

Text messages sent in 2000, according to Pew Institute study.

#### 188 billion

Text messages sent in 2010, according to Pew Institute study.

#### 140

Character limit for a Twitter message

of missing voicemails or not being able to decipher them.”

### Disciples of the digital age

Accountant Nina McKee deals with a range of ages — and addresses, in her clientele. She says she can’t imagine hanging up the phone, and, by extension, voicemail. “Never,” she stressed. “A fair number of my clients don’t ‘do’ text.”

Age may be the great divide. “I rarely leave voicemail because I know, myself, I don’t check my own work messages,” says Casandra Johnson, 32, from Tiffany’s corporate headquarters in New York. “When I call a colleague and get their machine I hang up and send an email.”

Nokesville business owner David Preznuuk, 48, recalls that 25 years ago when he started his professional consulting career, he didn’t have voicemail.

“We had pink paper message

In the ‘old’ days a 24-hour response to v-mail or email was acceptable. Today, it’s not.

— DAVID PREZNUK, A  
NOKESVILLE BUSINESS OWNER

slips we would pick up at the front desk when we returned to the office,” says Preznuuk “We used pagers for rapid access to the people we needed to reach on short notice.”

Today, he relies exclusively on mobile platforms — cell, tablet, laptop — for all work-related correspondence.

“In the ‘old’ days a 24-hour response to v-mail or email was acceptable. Today, it’s not,” Preznuuk says. “Text is [ideal] for quick correspondence, with employees and customers.”

Skyhorse Media editor Steve

Price, 75, isn’t convinced. “I’ve left voice messages asking people to return my call ASAP, but if indeed the calls are returned, it’s at the end of the day when people get around to checking their answering machines.”

“They say, ‘you should have sent me an email.’ They don’t get it when I say that the matter at hand would be more satisfactorily and speedily concluded by a conversation.

“People today are programmed to stare at screens. Easier than connecting their brains to their tongues, I suppose. Sloppy syntax and grammar, abbreviations and emoticons are better left to 12-year-old Taylor Swift fans.”

Loan officer Judy Allen, 62, hopes the phone sticks around. “Call me old-fashioned, behind the times, whatever, I don’t care. I need my voicemail,” she says.

*Betsy Burke Parker has been a writer, photographer and editor for the Fauquier Times since 1990.*

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# CHARTING NEW WATERS

Recent EPA rule may impose costly expanded rules on farmers.

The Environmental Protection Agency in May published long-awaited — and some would say long-dreaded — revisions to rules implementing the 1972 Clean Water Act that critics say seriously erode property rights and may force costly changes to the way farmers deal with run off and damp areas on their farms.

According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, the 300-page final rule issued jointly by the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers redefines “navigable waters” to include virtually any wet spot, ditch or area where water pools.

The EPA says the rule does not apply to “ephemeral streams” or ditches, but given the agency’s history of making rather broad interpretations of its own rules, agriculture officials remain concerned that the vagueness of the rule’s language leaves the door open to a vastly wider array of areas that would come under its jurisdiction.

“Regardless of EPA’s assurances about what the rule will or won’t do, we’ve dealt with enough EPA doubletalk and overzealous enforcement to know that it’s the fine print that really matters,” the AFBF says

in a blog post about the rule.

“[T]he agencies have doubled down on their definition of regulated ‘tributaries’ broadly to include any place on the landscape where rainwater channels and flows enough to leave a mark,” the farm trade group says.

In other words, an area in a cattle pasture that is wet during some period of the year, but not necessarily all year round, could become subject of erosion control and run off mitigation. Also, areas where water pools in fields or ditches, or seasonal streams that flow only during the wetter fall and winter months, could be covered by the regs.

“I think farmers are like others in wonderment at the EPA’s attempt to extend its jurisdiction over ‘navigable’ waters to the lengths contemplated in this set of rule makings and especially peeved that farming seems to be one of the activities that the agency wants to control,” says Ben Cooper with the Fauquier Farm Bureau.

Other industry groups, such as the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), are likewise concerned about the private property implications of the EPA rule. Testifying before a June 4 House Science,



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## AGRICULTURE



Space and Technology Committee hearing, Bob Kerr of Kerr Environmental Services told the committee that “the rule fails to follow the intent of Congress and Supreme Court precedent, and it does not acknowledge the states’ role in regulating their own waters.”

“This rule will increase federal regulatory power over private property and will lead to increased permit requirements, project delays and avoidance and mitigation costs,” said Kerr.

According to NAHB, the rule, which goes into effect mid-August, establishes a broad definition of tributaries which, for the first time, includes ditches. It will also allow federal agencies to regulate adjacent non-wetlands located more than a quarter-mile from a traditional navigable water and isolated ponds located within the 100-year floodplain.

“It certainly is a larger reach than before,” Tim Mize, an agriculture extension agent for the Fauquier Cooperative Extension says. “It looks as if ephemeral streams that aren’t navigable [are included], but are flowing into lakes, basically any water.”

He says the EPA was going to exclude man-made

ponds that farmers use for irrigation, as well as ditches, but then the final rule seems to indicate that any ditch or other wet area taking in rain water would be included.

“That’s where we get the mistrust and the misunderstanding,” Mize says. “The EPA is saying, no, ditches that don’t contain water all the time or most of the time aren’t covered, but [in other sections says] ditches that do drain into ponds or are connected to other streams would be.”

The EPA’s concern is over streams that drain into major water ways. Streams that run only in the winter or for a couple weeks after a major storm may escape scrutiny. “We have a lot of streams that are dry all summer and as soon as the water table rises after leaf fall and through winter, they run water,” Mize says.

For farmers whose families have worked the same piece of land for 100 or more years, the rules make little sense. “They question the need for a rule that suddenly puts part of their operations off limits,” he says.

According to Mize, organizations such as the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District will urge



# AGRICULTURE

The agencies have doubled down on their definition of regulated 'tributaries' broadly to include any place on the landscape where rainwater channels and flows enough to leave a mark.

## — AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

farmers to fence off those wet areas from livestock, an expensive proposition.

He offered three recommendations for area farmers concerned about the impact of the EPA's new rules.

- Get involved with the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District and take advantage of the cost-share program to fence off streams from livestock.

- Work with the Virginia and Fauquier Farm Bureaus which offer farmers a united voice when lobbying regulators and legislators on agriculture issues.

- Contact your state and federal legislators, who Mize says "need to hear from farmers what their concerns are."

The U.S. House passed legislation attempting to force the EPA and the Corps to withdraw the controversial rule. A companion bill in the Senate would, according to NAHB, return the language of the Clean Water Act to a "workable and sound definition of 'waters of the United States.'"

Even though they're stewards of the land, Mize says, "farmers get vilified. They're trying to be environmentalists but they're also trying to be profitable."



## NUMBERS:

**45,900**  
Farms in Virginia

**1,258**  
Farms in Fauquier County

**330**  
Farms in Prince William County

## Virginia Farmers Lose Ground in 2014

According to a report in the Virginia Farm Bureau's monthly magazine, the number of farms in Virginia fell by 100 to 45,900 in 2014.

The number of farms has been steadily decreasing over the past five years, falling by 2.1 percent since the 2009 level of 46,900 farms in the Commonwealth.

Drawing on U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistic Service, the farm bureau says that Virginia had 8.2 million acres devoted to farming in 2014, a decrease of 100,000 acres from 2013. The average farm size was also down to 179 acres, one acre less than in 2013.

Also, the number of farms selling more than \$100,000 in agricultural products increased by 100, while the number selling

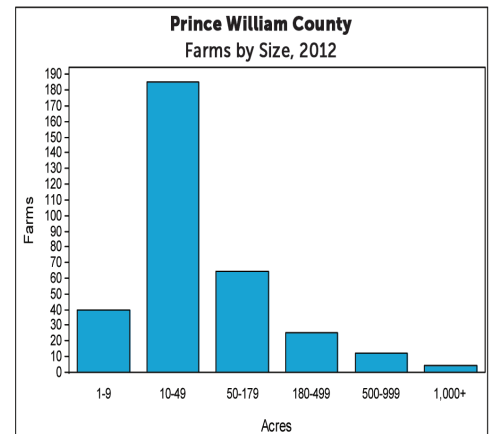
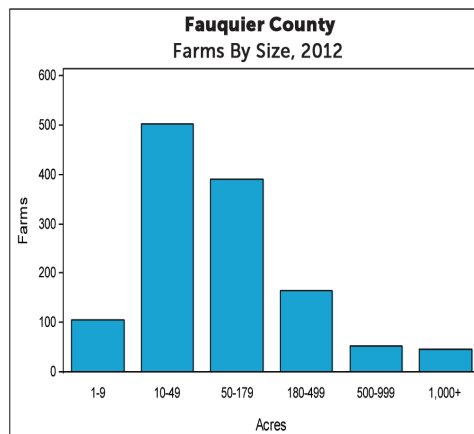
less than \$100,000 fell by 200.

The increase in larger dollar sales was attributed to an increase in farm prices in 2014.

The 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture reported 1,258 farms in Fauquier County and 330 in Prince William.

Fauquier devoted 228,285 acres to agriculture in 2012, compared to 35,638 in Prince William County. The average size of a Fauquier farm was 181 acres compared to 108 acres for Prince William farms.

The average market value of products sold per farm for Fauquier was \$42,884 and \$36,467 in Prince William. Fauquier's farms sold nearly \$54 million in agriculture products in 2012, while Prince William farms sold \$12 million.



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, 2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE



PHOTO BY DOUG STROUD



# A family tradition

## Wright Realty approaches its seventh decade in business

BY ALICE FELTS

In a few months, Wright Realty in Manassas will celebrate 70 years of providing their neighbors with expertise in property appraisals, sales, development, and management.

To say being a realtor is a tradition in the Wright family is putting it mildly.

President Barry Wright is the current patriarch of the family business. His great-grandfather and his grandfather started the business, and later his father joined the firm.

They became very active in the real estate field and established several local realtor associations. Barry's grandfather was a founder of the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors and his father was instrumental in founding the Prince William Association of Realtors.

Warrenton Town Councilman John "Sparky" Lewis has known the Wright family, personally and professionally, for more than 20 years.

"Most real estate companies have combined and consolidated over the years, but Wright Realty has remained independent," Lewis said.

Lewis says, "Barry has been a significant player in real estate for years."

Most recently working with Ed in the areas of property management and sales, Lewis says, "He is a credit to his family business. He has done a yeoman's job for our property in Manassas Park."

### Joining the family business

After Barry joined the firm, two of his four siblings also became realtors.

Later, Barry's wife, Linda, received her real estate license, and as his three children grew, each obtained a real estate license, as well.

With this much involvement in family business, one cannot avoid having a mentor. While Barry didn't know his great-grandfather, his grandfather was a tremendous influence on him.

He taught Barry what society expected of him, and he made certain that his grandson knew his elders expected more. Barry says, "I didn't dare shirk my responsibility."

Wright used the encouraging, but strict advice of his grandfather to stretch himself.

"You can do anything if you set your mind to it. You just may have to break it into chunks."

He also paid great attention to his father's advice given during their lengthy talks. Barry remembers his father as a man of word and integrity. The lesson was "Always tell the truth. Do what you say you're going to do."

Most people would feel fortunate to have just one advisor in their life, but Barry has had a whole community of them.

Named Edward Barron Wright, Jr., the lifelong Virginian was born and raised in Haymarket. While he attributes his family for his own "business, moral, and ethical values," Barry says,

"I had mentors growing up on the farm. There were lots of mountain men. They were good, earthy folks, and they had a profound influence on me. They taught me how to be nice to everybody. You were expected to treat everybody equally. If someone needed help, you helped."

One nearby neighbor in particular sticks out in Wright's mind. Darrell Dawson, distinguished by his long gray hair, lived in a one room shack next to the country store and always carried a gun. Wright spoke of Dawson's simple teaching, "One day Darrell says, 'Who took my bucket? You don't take other people's stuff.'"

As a young boy, Wright spent lots of time playing in the woods, and as little boys often do, he misbehaved on occasion.

He could sometimes be found taking refuge by hiding in the chicken house. But growing up in a community where everyone looked after a child's well-being, Barry knew that if he did something wrong, his parents knew about it before he got home.

## REAL ESTATE

### Well-rounded life

While real estate plays a major role in Barry's life, he also takes time outside the office for leisure. He still gets to spend time in the woods. He particularly likes to go bird hunting with his dogs. And the whole family gets together on occasion to visit the 600 acre family compound in Goshen.

The tree farm has a primitive cabin and nearby streams which are focal points for family recreation. The cabin has three rooms, one of which is a bunk room.

Barry jokes, "It sleeps 18 comfortably, if you can sleep in bunk beds comfortably. The more family and friends that come, the better. The family has one choice — to interact."

Even though the family gathers for big meals and hunting adventures, there are times when Wright likes to be alone.

He particularly likes to be on the 350-plus acre family farm where his brother John and his family live. "I love to work on the farm, being on the tractor, cutting brush, posting fences, repairing things. No job should be beneath your dignity."

Family members have never been "forced" to work for the company. Everyone has first worked elsewhere. Barry had been told by his father to "go out and work for somebody else and then come back."

He did just that and tells his family, "Wright Realty has always been a place to work." But to him, it is important that one pursues his or her own career interests.

"I told the children, you can come and work, but you have to create your own niche," he says.

He uses his brother John, specializing in property management and brokerage, along with son Ed's talents in sales, commercial leasing, and marketing as examples.

Youngest son Stephen heads up residential sales, while daughter Caroline has often joined residential sales efforts.

Barry takes pride in his family's philosophy, "There is no sense in providing service without doing the best you can. We try to service clients, whatever their needs. Somebody needs to do it for the community. It comes back to service—that is what we sell."

One might say that the Wright family takes pride in the company they keep.

*Alice Felts, former education reporter for Fauquier Times, lives in Warrenton and works as freelance writer for several publications including the Chronicle of the Horse in Middleburg.*



PHOTO BY RANDY LITZINGER

### PWC housing market

Real estate professionals sold 655 homes in Prince William County in May, an 11 percent increase over the previous month, but on par with the same month in 2014, according to Long & Foster's May Market Report.

#### ■ MEDIAN SALE PRICE

The median sales price rose a modest 3 percent in May to \$329,000 from \$320,000 a year ago, but fell 2 percent compared to April 2015.

#### ■ INVENTORY

The number of homes available for sale increased by 147 units, or 7 percent, in the month, with the total active inventory weighed in at 2,174 homes compared to 2,027 in

May last year.

May's inventory rose 7 percent over April to 2,040 units.

#### ■ MONTHS OF SUPPLY

In May, there was 3.3 months of supply available in Prince William County, a 7 percent year-over-year increase.

#### ■ DAYS ON MARKET

Also in May, the number of days that homes remained in the market increased to 35, 13 percent increase over the prior-year month's level of 31 months.

#### ■ SALES PRICE/ LIST PRICE RATIO

Finally, the average sales price for a home sold in the county was 98.8 percent of the list price, the same percentage as a year ago.



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## REAL ESTATE

# Home sales post strong showing in May

Housing market weakness still hampers recover, but 'slow-motion rebound' continues

May home sales in Virginia hit the highest level for the month since May 2008, according to the May 2015 Homes Sales Report by the Virginia Association of Realtors.

The report says home sales this year remain well above year-ago sales.

Residential sales rose 14.7 percent from April to May, more than double the March to April increase of 5.72 percent

Homes remained on the market for about 69 days in May, which the report says is typical for the month.

Realtor Tom Campbell with Long & Foster in Warrenton says he seeing a lot of people who are starting to look for homes to buy.

"If you're looking to sell the time is right," Campbell said. "If you're looking to buy, the time right."

Interest rates for 30-year mortgages rose to 3.84 percent. While still low by historical standards, the increase may

propel buyers into the market before further increases.

### National trend

Housing market analysts at Metrostudy in Washington, D.C., note that although June housing starts fell 11.1 percent from the previous month, the decline "was on the heels of an incredibly strong report the previous month."

The company reports that demand for new homes is still slowly recovering, but recovering nonetheless.

"Builders in most markets are confident that this slow-motion rebound will continue," Metrostudy says.

Nationwide, new home supply remains tight, with finished home inventory at 2.5 months of supply, "which is in the historically normal range, but somewhat low for a market that is starting to revive rapidly."

### Closer to home

Chuck Cornwell, of RE/MAX reGENCY in Warrenton reports that the area real estate market remains "in transition."

While homes priced less than \$500,000 move, sales remain flat for higher-priced properties. Cornwell attributes the increase in below \$500,000 home sales to climbing mortgage rates.

The median home sale price in May 2015 increased 4.5 percent since 2014 to \$350,000.

The number of home closings increased almost 40 percent from the previous month and is also up 4.2 percent from 2014.

Over the past month, new listings saw an 11 percent drop, with only 191 homes being placed on the market.

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# BY YOUR LEAVE

## Employee leave sharing: sound idea waiting to blossom

BY JOHN HAGARTY

Federal government employees regularly donate vacation or sick leave to fellow workers who are experiencing medical emergencies and need time off.

While federal law allows government workers to share leave, in the three decades since enactment, the unique employee benefit has been implemented largely by state and local governments, educational and health institutions and non-profits.

However, the private sector has been slow to adopt the benefit, particularly smaller businesses that lack the human resources staff and tools to manage the sometimes complicated process of tracking leave among employees.

### In the beginning

The concept of leave sharing became federal law when President Ronald Reagan signed the Federal Employees Leave Sharing Act of 1988, directing agencies to establish the program.

In 1989, the program was expanded to include the creation of a Sick Leave Bank whereby federal employees could donate leave to an agency bank and request leave from it after exhausting personal accrued leave.

The concept caught traction within state governments and today 19 states offer some form of a "sick leave pool."

In response to a recent inquiry to the Office of Personnel

Management, the agency stated: "According to feedback from Federal agencies, the programs have been successful and they are often used by employees who have short-term personal or family medical emergencies."

Notwithstanding the sanguine view of the federal program, a recent informal survey of private sector businesses in the Piedmont confirms that leave sharing is embedded in few human resources policies.

While companies that do offer leave sharing say it boosts employee morale, they admit that administering such a program is a costly and complicated affair.



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I am continuously amazed at our employees and the number of people who step up to the plate and donate leave.

– **KATY REEVES,**  
**VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN**  
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Either way we looked at it, it was an accounting nightmare.

– **GARY NEWELL, CEO OF**  
**BUCCANEER COMPUTER**  
**SYSTEMS AND SERVICES**

I had exhausted all my leave. So the option was worked out for me because a co-worker extended her leave to me during my time of need.

– **TIANNA WELLS DIRECTOR**  
**OF CLIENT SERVICES AT**  
**EXCELSIOR PAY GROUP**

### Fauquier Health

Fauquier Health, one of the largest firms in the Piedmont region, provides its approximately 1,200 employees a “Paid Time Off Donation” program, according to Human Resources Department Vice President Katy Reeves.

There are no separate vacation or sick leave plans. Rather, the earned leave program “combines a vacation bank, a sick leave bank and a holiday bank. You put all of those days in one bank. Then an employee picks and chooses how they use their combined leave,” says Reeves.

The leave policy is structured so it doesn’t penalize employees who never use sick leave from being able to use it as paid time off for vacation. Moreover, additional flexibility permits each worker to donate leave to a fellow employee under certain conditions.

“For example, Betty can’t draw on John’s leave bank unless John wants to donate his hours to her. And it has to be for some type of hardship; a cancer treatment, car accident, a child or spouse undergoing some type of medical treatment,” Reeves says.

A receiving employee cannot use donated leave to go on vacation and Human Resources must approve all leave donation requests.

The Fauquier Health program has been extremely successful, according to Reeves, but it’s limited to medical emergencies and only used as frequently as needed.

“We always seem to have somebody in need of leave. I am continuously amazed at our employees and the number of people who step up to the plate and donate leave,” Reeves says.

The program in execution reflects the best of its intent. But it comes with a price tag.

“It’s absolutely a cost to Fauquier Health. If you look at why other companies don’t offer this kind of program, I would say the biggest barriers are financial,” Reeves says.

For example, one cost factor involves hours donated by a staff employee being used by a department director. “The leave has been donated at a lower rate of pay but paid out at a higher rate.

“You budget for what you are going to spend. So suddenly, if you planned costs of \$100 for a certain employee but they make a donation to another employee earning more money, the company liability might be \$200. That’s a potential risk for companies with a



PHOTO BY DOUG STROUD

**Katy Reeves, Fauquier Health Human Resources Department Vice President**

paid time off donation program,” Reeves says.

Similar financial issues present themselves in administering the program. For example, determining who is eligible to give and receive hours and tracking the leave exchanges, either manually or in the payroll system. “For us it’s a cost of doing business.”

“If we don’t take care of our employees, they won’t be able to provide for the care of our patients. It’s the complete cycle of making sure we are treating our folks right,” Reeves says.

### Former CEO

Gary Newell is the former owner and CEO of Buccaneer Computer Systems and Services in Vint Hill. He embodies the entrepreneurial spirit that drives successful companies.

In March 2000, he created his small firm and 10 years later had grown it to 700 employees scattered across six states. In September 2010, he sold the company for \$65 million.

The idea for a shared-leave program at Buccaneer arose from the company’s employee suggestion program, according to Newell.

He looked at two concepts in evaluating the proposal. One was for people to donate to a leave pool; the second was for a direct



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## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

employee-to-employee donation.

"Either way we looked at it, it was an accounting nightmare," says Newell. "Especially when you are doing government contracting business. You can be audited anytime by the government.

"If I had an employee making \$200,000 a year who was very sick and another employee making \$50,000 a year who wanted to donate leave to the person, the donated leave is a different dollar value.

"But you can't take a portion equal to giver's salary and donate to the higher paid employee. You would be giving away salary information and that is very confidential.

"The employee could donate four hours of leave but the sick guy could only use one of those hours. It gets very, very messy accounting-wise.

"If you do a direct one-on-one donation, it turns into a popularity contest. When I only had three or four employees, it wouldn't have been a problem. But when you get to 700 employees you can't do individual things for individual people. It leaks out and everybody expects it can be done for them," Newell says.

One downside of the program involves employees who use vacation or sick leave as soon as they earn it. More mature employees build up their leave in case emergencies arise.

"So what you are doing with a shared-leave program is benefiting those people who use their leave the moment they earn it. They know there is a pool of leave waiting for them. Those types of people don't mind spending other people's leave.

"It took about a 30 minute meeting with my human resources and finance managers to decide the juice just ain't worth the squeeze," says Newell.

### Excelsior Pay Group, LLC

Tianna Wells is director of client services at Excelsior Pay Group in Manassas. The firm "helps eliminate administrative burdens of workforce management, accounting and training."

"I do see leave sharing being able to help employees in the near future. The program is gaining in the private sector," Wells says.



**Miles Friedman, Fauquier County Department of Economic Development**

She had a personal experience with the concept. Her husband was injured in a motorcycle accident and "I had exhausted all my leave. So the option was worked out for me because a co-worker extended her leave to me during my time of need."

At the time, the company she worked for did not have a formal leave sharing policy in place but afterward adopted one based largely on her experience. The firm was a subcontractor servicing federal contracts.

"I'm not sure why it isn't being offered as a fringe benefit in the private sector. I assume companies don't want to put pressure on their employees to share the leave they've worked hard for."

Wells could not cite any examples of companies she knew who currently offered the benefit but still sees the likelihood it will expand. "In this day and age a lot of employers are trying to gain significant employees and may feel a need to do as much as they can to entice people to work for them."

However, she thought the option was one that almost always would be exercised on an exception basis.

"While I do see the program growing, I don't see it being part of a company's policy but rather being exercised at the discretion of management," Wells says.

### Fauquier government

Fauquier County employs approximately 600 employees and offers two

forms of leave sharing.

First, there is a leave bank. An employee can gain access to the bank by simply donating 7.5 hours of leave into it. This "deposit" then permits the employee to withdraw up to 60 days of leave a year for medical emergencies or work related injuries. To be eligible, they must have exhausted their own personal leave.

Employees cannot normally donate leave to one another unless for serious medical necessity. But if they have exhausted leave from the bank, they can make a special request for the county to seek donations from all employees on their behalf. The county administrator must approve the exception requests.

Deputy County Administrator, Katie Heritage, says, "The program has been offered for the 20 years I've been here and I'm sure longer than that.

"It's a great program because you give one day of leave and have this wonderful access to a pool of leave. Nobody wants to think they will have to use it. But you never know.

"The exception program shows that county employees are, in my experience, extremely generous with their donations; even if it's not to somebody in the same department. I think it shows a great thing about the county government," Heritage says.

Miles Friedman, director, Fauquier County Department of Economic Development echoed Heritages views. He holds the position after serving for 27 years as head of a nonprofit association in Washington, D.C.

"I think one reason why you see it more in governments and nonprofits is they can't pay the way the private sector does. Nonprofits try very hard to make up in employee benefits what they can't do in salaries," Friedman says.

"It's a different culture in the private sector. You are paid handsomely and receive nice benefits like vacations, nice offices, travel expenses and so forth," Friedman says.

*Freelance writer John Hagarty retired from the federal government and started a second career in the Virginia wine industry. He manages Rapphannock Cellars near Hume.*









PHOTOS BY RANDY LITZINGER

# TRAINING FOR THE TRADES

## Programs prepare grads for blue-collar careers

BY MICHELLE BAKER

College bound students and parents alike use the summer months to visit schools around the county searching for the right institution of higher learning to prepare the young adult for a future career.

But even as rising juniors and seniors ponder which college to attend, a growing number of vocational and technical programs at area high schools and community colleges offer an alternative to the traditional four-year diploma.

For most young adults, a college education remains the primary path to a better job and improved career prospects.

But college comes with some serious disadvantages. Not all po-

tential students fit the college mold and many bail out before graduation. Those that do graduate often face dismal job prospects to say nothing of the groaning weight of huge student loan debt.

Also, those high-paying white collar jobs often remain out of reach for even the highest achieving college grads, and many degree areas leave grads without the requisite skills for any but the most menial positions.

However, throughout Virginia and the nation, blue collar jobs, which pay well and offer lifetime careers with opportunities for advancement, lie fallow with companies struggling to find sufficient skilled young people to replace a retiring older workforce.

The need for jobs in trade fields such as utilities, transportation, construction and various manufacturing industries continues to grow, even in largely white-collar Northern Virginia.

And many of those great jobs don't require a four-year degree, allowing some students to start their future careers while still in high school.

### Blue collar job growth

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Mid-Atlantic Information Office, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. area — representing 81 percent of the Greater Washington region — gained 52,400 jobs between April 2014 and April 2015.





The Silver Spring-Frederick-Rockville, Md., area — representing the remaining 19 percent of area employment — added 13,200 jobs during the same period.

Of those gains, professional and business services represented the largest segment from year to year adding 16,300 jobs.

Three other regional super sectors saw significant job growth in the period.

Education and health services added 15,100 jobs, and government contributed 12,300 positions.

However, the blue collar sector — trade, transportation, and utilities — included 13,300 jobs.

### Many jobs, few workers

Businesses like Micron and Dominion Virginia Power need quality workers so they are working with the Prince William School District Office of Student Learning to ensure students are ready for tomorrow's jobs.

Although the primary focus of higher education isn't job training, colleges and universities like Northern Virginia Community College are forming alliances with businesses and school districts to boost students' chances of success.

The workforce system, which is highly job-specific, creates training pro-

Approximately 25 percent of the workforce will retire in five years.

— JEFF HEFFELMAN, DOMINION VIRGINIA POWER

grams that efficiently connect people to employers.

The Prince William County Schools (PWCS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) program staff works with companies across the area to provide opportunities for students to see blue collar jobs and open their eyes to the possibilities of those good paying jobs. They communicate with parents and students about the connections between programs and careers.

Micron, located in Manassas, turned its attention to the needs of America's youth—specifically, high school students as they (and their parents) struggle to make decisions about careers and college education by offering scholarships for colleges and technical schools.

To prepare tomorrow's students, Micron sponsored the Micron Challenge which allows area middle school students to participate in an individual science research project competition.

The Micron STEM (science, tech-

nology, engineering and math) and CTE Scholarships award \$1,500 to graduating students who intend to pursue a professional certification or a career in STEM fields.

Many CTE courses are available at all high schools. Occupational programs are at limited sites but available to all Prince William County students.

Multiple scholarships are available from both Micron and Lockheed.

### Corporate support

Dominion Virginia Power faces the same challenges as many other companies, an aging workforce.

"Approximately 25 percent of the workforce will retire in five years," said Jeff Heffelman, station director for Dominion Virginia Power.

Dominion donated a welding simulator and mechanical brake (equipment used to cut steel) to the Potomac High School welding program this year.

The company operates a power plant at Possum Point, a 650-acre site that overlooks the Potomac River and the Quantico Creek.

Welding students tour the facility every year to see the operation and operators at work. Dozens of welders and other tradesman are needed to keep the station online and fired up.

"What we are looking for is students

## BLUE COLLAR TRADES



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

willing to work with their hands and have skills and who want to go into trades like mechanics, electrical, and welding,” says Heffelman.

He worked along side PWCS CTE Director Doug Wright and others at the inception of the welding program at Potomac High School.

“We helped get the welding program going at Potomac High School,” says Heffelman, a Garfield High School graduate.

Heffelman talks with parents and students on the importance of finding a field that fits. He even goes to graduating ceremonies for the program to encourage students with their career choices.

“The principal and Doug Wright hired a great instructor,” Heffelman says.

“We do have a very successful partnership with Dominion Virginia Power for our welding program in particular,” said Mary Beth Dobbins, PWCS CTE specialist.

Dominion officials may see the fruits of their labors in the near future as students finish their studies at Northern Virginia Community College, graduate and begin applying for jobs.

“This is the first class going through,” Heffelman says.

“They can make \$30 an hour with benefits. We encourage kids to go into these industries,” he says.

He compares the potential career path of two graduates. One starts out in a trade making \$20 an hour and then moving into a higher paying job in five years. The four-year-college student comes out of college with debt and struggles to find a \$15 an hour job.

“We just recommended Dominion Power as the business partnership for the region,” said Dobbins, “they won for the region.”

“Jeffrey Heffelman of Dominion Power has been a strong supporter for our students and programs,” Dobbins says. “We selected Dominion Power as a CTE Creating Excellence Business Partner this year in recognition of their on-going support.”

“I truly believe this is a great opportunity for our students,” Dobbins says. “We need to take advantage of this so our students can see what careers, not just jobs, are awaiting them after high school.”

*Michelle Baker, a freelance journalist and marketing consultant, began working with the Virginia News Group with the launch of the Gainesville Times.*

We need to take advantage of this so our students can see what careers, not just jobs, are awaiting them after high school.

– MARY BETH DOBBINS, PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

## Other trade high school training opportunities

Northern Virginia Community College and Prince William schools have partnered to create a dual-enrolled program in HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) for rising public school juniors and seniors in academic year 2015-2016.

Upon successful completion of the program, the student is prepared for full-time employment. The occupational objectives include service, maintenance, repair and installation of air conditioning and refrigeration equipment.

The one- to two-year program allows students to graduate with 18 college credits towards a certificate in HVAC. Students take their college course work at NOVA’s Woodbridge campus for two hours each weekday.

They will spend the rest of the school day at their high school completing their high school requirements.

Students can either transfer to Freedom High School, or remain at their base high school, providing their own transport to NOVA Woodbridge campus.

Upon completion of the two-year program, graduating students will only have 14 remaining college credits necessary to complete the certificate.

Cost for participating in the program is covered by the school system for its pilot implementation. All public school students who will be in their junior or senior year of high school during 2015-2016 are eligible.

There are other Dual Enrollment Opportunities for CTE students. Students are able to begin their college studies while still in high school, and they receive weighted credit for their high school courses in recognition of attempting coursework at the college level, according to Mary Beth Dobbins, Prince William County Schools Career and Technical Education specialist.



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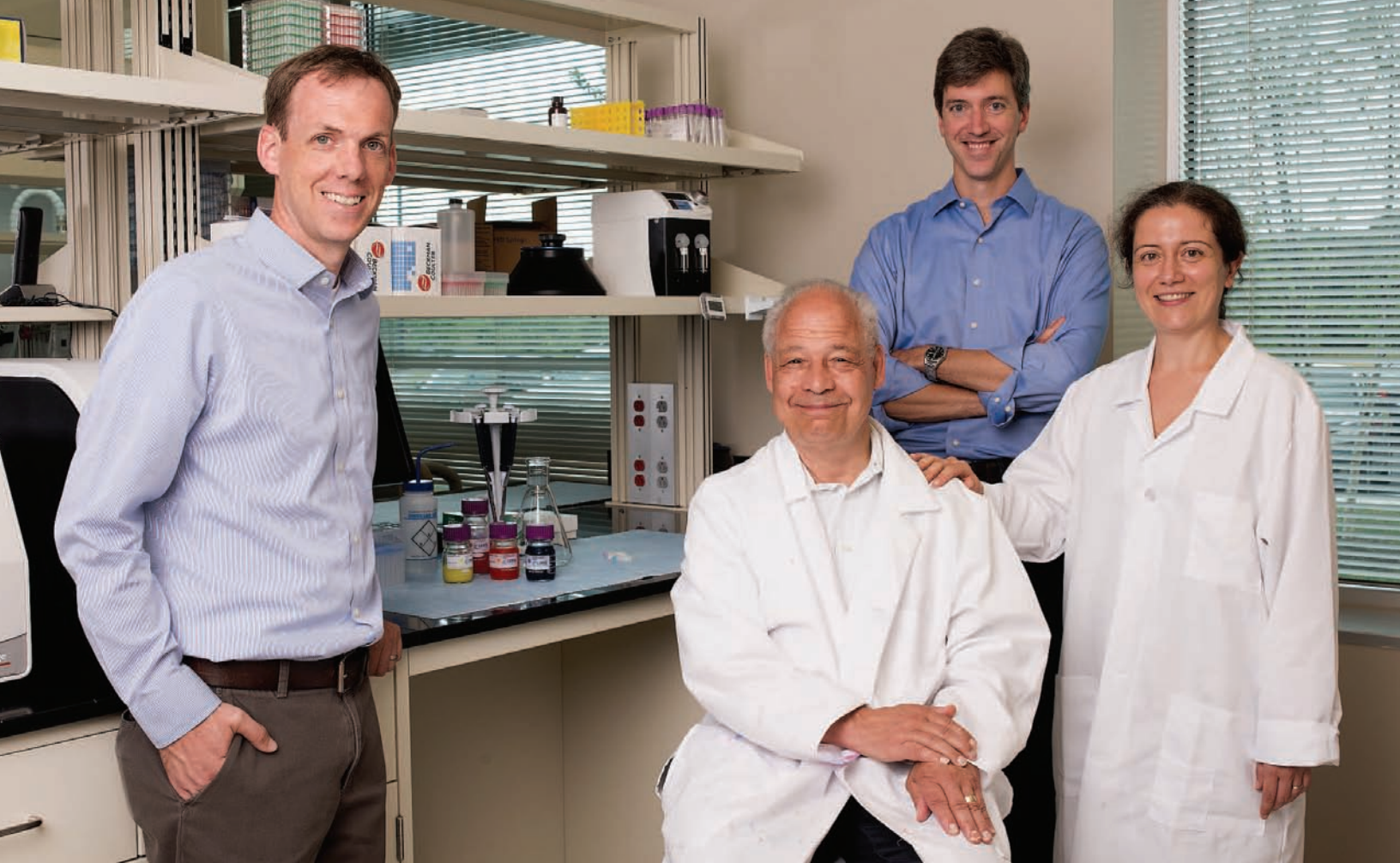


PHOTO BY DOUG STROUD

Ben Lepene COO, Dr. Lance Liotta, Ross Dunlap CEO, and Dr. Alessandra Luchini of Ceres Nanosciences

# THE SCIENCE OF SMALL

Ceres Nanosciences enhances medical diagnostics with nano technology.

BY EVE A. BAKER

With its cutting edge Nanotrap particles, Manassas-based Ceres Nanosciences Inc. is leading the way in medical diagnostic technology.

President and Chief Executive Officer Ross Dunlap says that the company's development of Nanotrap particles "changes the way biofluids are processed."

Ceres Nanosciences is a small but growing biotechnology firm that has collaborated with some big names in the field of microbiological research, including George Mason University (GMU), Johns Hopkins University (JHU), the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGEN), and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID).

GMU scientists now working with Ceres invented the novel particle technology that may very well revo-

lutionize the medical diagnostic industry.

## Nanotraps catch diseases

The Nanotrap particle is Ceres' core product, and if it sounds tiny, that's because it is.

The Nanotrap is a microscopic, hydrogel structure with a porous outer shell surrounding a bait-filled core that attracts the biomarker a physician is looking for.

"The biomarker can be a protein, virus, nucleic acid, drug compound, or other substance that indicates a particular infection, illness, or medical condition," says Dunlap.

Nanotrap particles can be added to a biological sample, such as blood, urine, or saliva, and they will purify, preserve, and concentrate the target biomarker so that it can be detected at a much lower concentration and earlier stage of a disease.



The particles were developed by Drs. Emanuel Petricoin III and Lance Liotta of GMU, who were working under a Innovative Molecular Analysis Technology grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

## Detecting Lyme disease

Using Nanotrap technology, Ceres' scientists recently developed a laboratory test for Lyme disease. Currently, no other tests exist that can detect the Lyme antigen produced by the bacteria that causes the disease.

Existing tests only evaluate the body's response to the bacteria in the form of antibodies, and then only after a sufficient quantity have been produced.

The Nanotrap Lyme Antigen Test is run on a patient's urine sample and can provide a much earlier warning of the presence of an infection, enabling physicians to provide treatment before the more serious side effects begin.

According to Dr. Lance Liotta, one of the inventors of the Nanotrap technology, the Ceres Lyme Antigen Test "is 1,000 times more sensitive than existing tests that look for the presence of antibodies to confirm a diagnosis based on symptoms displayed."

"A clinic in Reston, Internal Medicine of Northern Virginia, has already begun using the test," Dunlap says.

Ceres is working to introduce it to other labs and clinics around the region.

Ceres scientists are also currently researching the application of Nanotrap technology to tests for Ebola, malaria, tuberculosis, cancer, and head trauma.

According to Dunlap, the company's end goal is to get tests to market for patient benefit, through partnership with leading medical diagnostic companies and Ceres' own effort.

## Why Manassas?

Manassas is the ideal location for Ceres Nanosciences to carry out its work, because of the presence of GMU and its world-class research facilities.

"That's where the inventors are," Dunlap says.

For Liotta, the work he "and other scientists do in the GMU labs is a group effort, involving everyone from the principal investigators to graduate and un-

dergraduate students."

Ceres' Northern Virginia location and close proximity to both Dulles and Reagan National airports facilitate collaboration with domestic and international partners, said Dunlap.

In addition to working with GMU, JHU, TGEN and USAMRIID, Ceres Nanosciences has also collaborated with, among others, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), NIH, and the Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases (IIAD).

Global industry partners include Thermo Fisher Scientific and Shimadzu Scientific Instruments.

## Prince William tech hub

Prince William County (PWC) is a hub for life sciences and biotechnology agencies, companies, and education programs.

As detailed on the county website, PWC is home to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science Northern Forensic Laboratory and the Mason Biomedical Research Laboratory. Northern Virginia Community College offers an associate degree in biotechnology.

GMU offers a BA, MA, and PhD in the field at their Life Sciences Campus.

Further, Dunlap says, "the state of Virginia is also providing a lot of support for biotech firms and wants to support the industry's growth throughout the state."

Ceres Nanosciences is on the right track to a highly successful future, and with Dunlap at the helm, there is much potential for the company to do a lot of good for the state of Virginia and the rest of the world.

"Ross is really a tremendous leader. He listens to the scientists and focuses on developing specific efforts," Liotta says.

With Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation support for both the malaria and Ebola test projects, Ceres has a bright future indeed.

More information about the company can be found at [www.ceresnano.com](http://www.ceresnano.com).

*Eve Baker runs her own freelance writing and editing business called Baker Editing Services. She has more than 12 years experience and is also an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.*



## A Nanotrap primer

### ■ What is Nanotrap technology?

Nanotrap particles are microscopic traps for target biomarkers.

They allow only the target biomarkers to enter and exclude larger "junk" proteins and other substances that contaminate biological samples which need to be analyzed.

Each particle consists of a porous shell with a chemical bait that attracts the target substance, thereby isolating the biomarker and purifying, preserving, and concentrating it.

### ■ What can it be used for?

Nanotrap particles are used with existing diagnostic technology and can be added to samples of blood, urine, mucus, saliva, cerebral spinal fluid, tears, and sweat to yield more accurate and earlier results.

### ■ Who is using it?

Ceres Nanosciences Inc. has used the Nanotrap particles in its own Lyme disease test, which is already being used by Internal Medicine of Northern Virginia.

Other institutions, agencies, and companies making use of the particles include George Mason University, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Translational Genomics Research Institute, Johns Hopkins University, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases, Thermo-Fisher Scientific, and Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, to name a few.

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PHOTO BY DOUG STROUD



# THE CHIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

## PWC manufacturer targets European consumers

BY STEVE CAMPBELL

Tucked away in a commercial cluster off Liberia Avenue in Manassas Park, the melodic sound of wind chimes floats on the breeze.

Behind that gentle sound, the industrial buzz of a small manufacturer, QMT Wind-chimes, echos through the tightly packed parking lot.

Inside the 30,000-square-foot building, nearly 100 workers make, package and then ship the company's up-scale wind chimes.

The wind chimes retail at area stores, like Messick's Farm Market and CK Home & Hardware in Bealeton for \$20 to \$400.

Jimmy Messick's store has carried the chimes since opening 14 months ago. He says they sell well.

According to Kris Gibbs, who works at the market, a man bought one of the \$129 models and asked if the store had one in another color.

"A gentleman bought one of the larger ones, \$129. He

asked if we had a green one in the same size. I said, 'you mean instead of that one?' He said, 'no in addition to that one.' So he bought two of them," Gibbs says.

According to Helen Wyckoff, operations manager of CK Home & Hardware, the wind chimes do very well in her store in the Bealeton Village Shopping Center.

"They're one of the stronger brands that I've dealt with in 22 years," Wyckoff says. "I really like their price point. I like their quality and I like dealing with local vendors mainly."

The hardware store sells about a 100 units a year, and typically keeps that many on hand. Wyckoff likes that they're well made and harmonically tuned.

"When I do trade shows or home and garden shows, that's my number one item to bring," she says. "I like to show them off there. They sound wonderful, and they have a look to them that is

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## MANUFACTURING

very attractive and popular and it entices people to come to the booth.”

Patty Baisden, one half of the husband and wife team that owns QMT Windchimes, says their products are found in small and large shops all over the country.

“We were in Elkins, W.Va., and there was a tiny little shop and there were our wind chimes,” Patty says.

“That’s really fun to know that there are high-quality, made-in-the-U.S.A sourced products being sold in small mom and pop stores,” she says. “The shop local [philosophy] is alive and well because of what we’re doing.”

She and husband Jamie Baisden, company president, preside over a \$10 million a year enterprise that produces a wide variety of wind chimes, as well as bird feeders and houses, displays, and redwood planters, all from a crowded commercial building on Euclid Avenue in Manassas Park.

### Born on the road

QMT founder Mike Throne started the company at his home in the early 1980s after years of selling wind chimes at Florida craft shows. He camped in a van, traveling to different shows and selling the chimes.

When the source of his products dried up, he began building his own handmade chimes. In 1986, he moved the operation to a 10-by-20 foot warehouse space, where he made the product during the week and then headed to craft shows to sell them on the weekends.

According to the company’s website, “Mike was determined to offer the buying public a chime that was as beautiful to see as it was to hear.

“And it worked; the demand for his wind chimes soon overwhelmed his ability to make them himself. So he took a deep breath and became a young entrepreneur following the American dream.”

Patty came to work for the company in 1996. Jamie joined in 2005 and a year later he and Patty bought the company.

In the past five years, the Baisdens have expanded the number of wind chime products, sizes and colors. Recently introduced colors include “groovy green” and “blazing blue.”

But Patty says, “Most of our chimes



PHOTO BY RANDY LITZINGER

CK Home & Hardware displays the QMT Windchime models, including the pink Breast Cancer Awareness chime, for sale at the Bealeton store.

Being a manufacturer and a wholesale distributor and marketer gives us a very high level of control over our product.

— JAMIE BAISDEN, PRESIDENT  
QMT WINDCHIMES

now are very neutral or garden-oriented colors, dark green or black or navy.”

The company’s newest brands include “In Loving Memory Windchimes” and “For the Girls Windchimes.” The former are engraved with inspirational verses, while the later were designed to support family members and raise money for cancer research.

“They carry a wide range of different styles,” hardware store owner Wyckoff says. “They have a higher end and a lower end. We carry a few of each.”

### Making wind chimes

The company’s manufacturing facility fairly bursts at the seams in a rabbit

warren of spaces, each with a distinct set of tasks inside.

As the company grew, operations spread from that first 10-by-20 foot bay to gradually occupy the entire building.

“They started in one bay and leased one after the other until they had the whole building, which they bought,” Baisden says.

The manufacturing process starts with the raw materials: rough-cut redwood boards and 30-foot long extruded and powder coated aluminum pipe.

Workers cut, plane and sand the wooden components to size, after which they receive five coats of varnish.

“We buy our redwood a tractor-trailer at a time from California,” Baisden says. “To maximize what we get out of that tractor-trailer load, we buy it rough cut two inches thick.”

“All the wood gets cut up into little pieces by a computer controlled saw,” he says. “When it leaves this room, it’s been ripped, planed, embossed and cut to size.”

In the pipe shop, the long lengths are cut to specific sizes. All of the aluminum tubes are “tuned” to a specific





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## MANUFACTURING

musical key.

"They are all tuned to a chromatic scale in the cutting," Patty says. "Some people buy a chime based on the scale, whether it's F or G or A, because they are musical people. Or they want a couple of them and they want them to go together."

"One of the sales people is a former music teacher and she'll talk to them about chords. Will two different chords go together?"

Then the parts are moved to another area where staff assemble and pack the wind chimes.

At a separate 16,000 sq. ft space a few blocks down the road, shipping crews fill orders and prepare pallets of boxes for shipping.

"Most wholesalers don't ship two days after you place the order," Baisden says.

"We're shipping on a retail time frame wholesale to help our customers."

### U.S. made, globally sold

QMT's growth strategy, according to Baisden, involves increasing the level of support the company offers to its retail customers. As they grow, so the theory holds, so will QMT.

"We help them thrive, and with them thriving, we'll thrive," Baisden says.

That growth strategy also calls for a doubling of sales over the next five years. QMT has no debt, owns its building and dominates its market, all of which confers a high level of flexibility both to withstand market downturns and seize opportunities as they arise.

"It allows us to weather storms very well. It also allows us to be very nimble," says Baisden. He and his wife

They're one of the stronger brands that I've dealt with in 22 years.

**- HELEN WYCKOFF,  
OPERATIONS MANAGER CK  
HOME & HARDWARE**

are sole stockholders in the company and therefore can make fast decisions when needed.

"Being a manufacturer and a wholesale distributor and marketer gives us a very high level of control over our product," Baisden says. "It also requires a depth of knowledge and capability across a wide spectrum."

One of those opportunities takes QMT Windchimes products to the United Kingdom.

Already a prominent supplier of wind chimes in Canada, the company's recent push toward England and Europe creates a new challenge.

European customers, both retail and wholesale, aren't used to the idea of a high-quality and higher-priced wind chime.

It's a tough sale that requires the company to change attitudes of shop owners who've traditionally sold much cheaper wind chimes.

"Wind chimes in the European market aren't the same value proposition [as in the U.S.]," Baisden says. "We're not the cheapest. We're not the most expensive."

Store owners have to be convinced that the product is worth the price and that customers will see that value and buy.

So far, the value proposition is winning with a few stores admitting after they've



## MANUFACTURING

tried the product that it sells, even at a higher price point than English customers typically expect.

"You have to educate the market that's there, both the end user and the store owner," he says.

### Meeting the market

To get their message out and reach potential store owners, the Baisdens and their sales staff attend dozens of home and garden trade shows a year.

The in-house sales team provides a high level of customer service, keeping in touch with stores and helping them market the product.

The company spends roughly 6 percent of its gross revenue on marketing efforts. All catalogs, sales material, packaging and the like are produced by the in-house design team.

"We handle all the customer service. I can take care of you even if I don't see you at a show," he says.

Patty says several years ago, after a devastating flood destroyed several customers' stores in Colorado, Baisden



PHOTO BY RANDY LITZINGER

Joey Buongiorno hangs QMT Windchimes on a display at CK True Value Home & Hardware, one of several local retail outlets that carry them.

called the stores to tell them not to worry about paying QMT Windchimes until they had recovered from the damage.

"He said, 'Your invoices still exist. We're not forgiving them, but the due dates are gone. Don't worry about them,

get your shop back up and running'" Patty says.

Every one of the Colorado customers eventually paid in full and made an effort to stop by the company's booth at a trade show to say thank you.

"Because we deal mainly with small businesses, we sell a high level of customer service," Baisden says.

Wyckoff at CK Home & Hardware in Bealeton agrees. She likes the high level of service, as well as the quality of the products and the fact that they're made close to home.

"It's a good quality product and a nice company. I'm happy to work with them as one of their retailers," Wyckoff says.

For more information, visit QMT Windchimes at [www.qmtwindchimes.com](http://www.qmtwindchimes.com), call (703) 368-7924, or email [sales@qmtwindchimes.com](mailto:sales@qmtwindchimes.com).

For information about CK Home & Hardware visit [www.ckhardware.com](http://www.ckhardware.com), or call (540) 439-5541.

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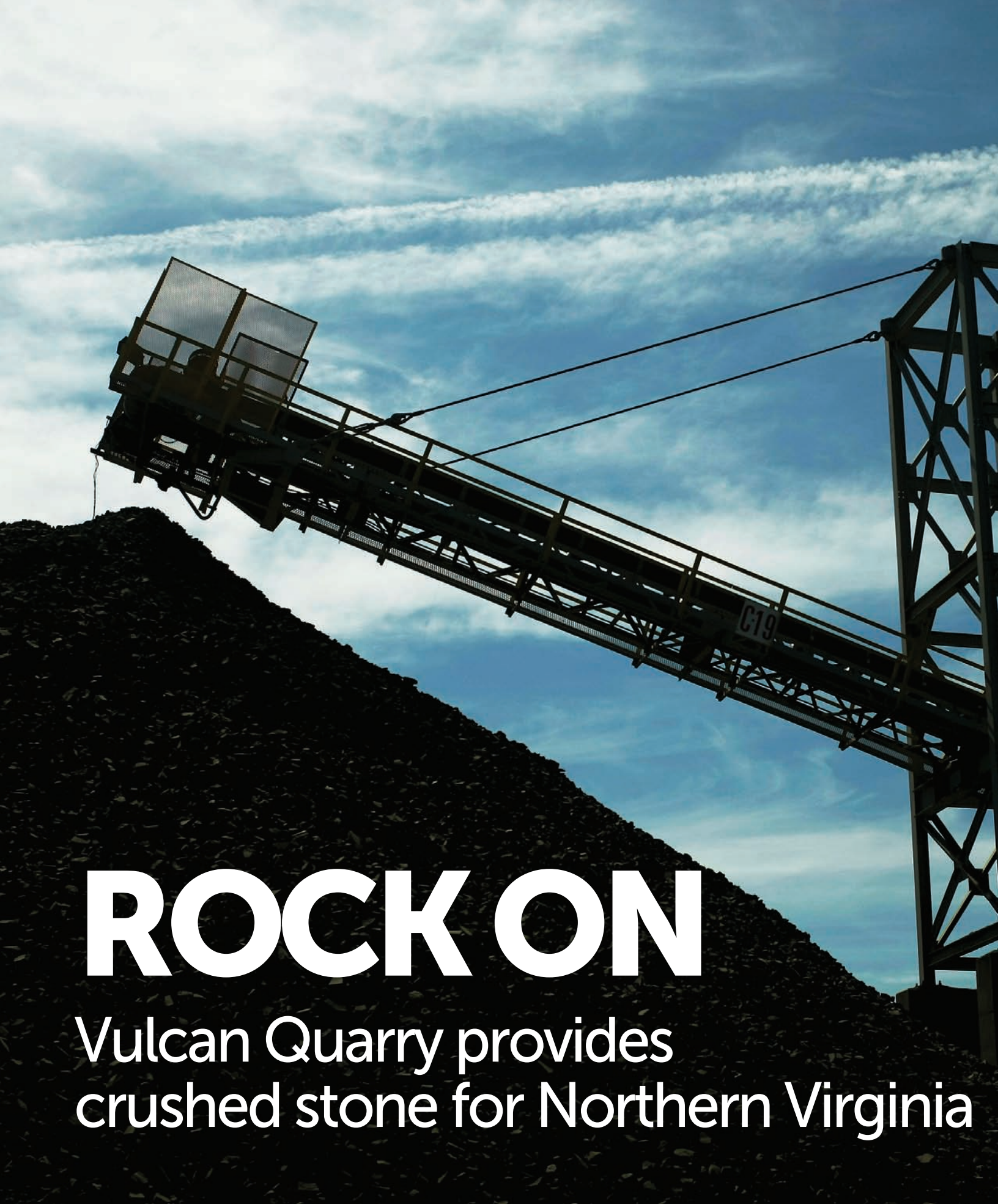


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# ROCK ON

Vulcan Quarry provides  
crushed stone for Northern Virginia





PHOTOS BY ADAM GOINGS

BY ROBIN EARL

Anyone who has lived in central or southern Fauquier for very long will have passed by Vulcan Materials on Meetze Road a thousand times.

Past the big stone sign at its entrance, it's possible to glimpse imposing machinery through the trees, but to most, the quarry remains mysterious.

Kevin Romine, manager of the Vulcan Materials plant south of Warrenton, solves the mystery: "We take big rocks and make them into small rocks."

It's actually a little more complicated than that.

Thirty employees work six days a week to produce thousands of tons a day of crushed stone for use in the local/regional construction industry.

The work involves rock-crushing machinery, huge trucks, explosives and precision technology — all to turn those big rocks into small rocks.

Romine was recruited into a Vulcan training program after graduating from Radford University with a business degree in 2007. "I knew I didn't want to sit in a cubicle, and the idea of playing in the dirt all day appealed to me. Do you remember Tonka toys? Sort of like that."

He trained for two years, learning all the jobs in the plant before moving into management.

"I worked in the pit, drove a truck, and learned all about operations. Everything I needed to know, I learned from these people. Some of our employees are recruited out of college, like me; others are recruited out of the work force."

Although Romine is not an engineer or geologist, he works alongside these experts, who are part of Vulcan's corporate structure.

Romine worked at a Vulcan plant in Lorton, Va., for eight years. He has only been at the Warrenton location few months, but it suits him fine. He lives with his wife and three children just down the road in Midland; his wife is a teacher at Brumfield Elementary.

The 400-acre Warrenton quarry contains several pits — huge holes in the ground where basalt rock has been mined.

## MINING

One pit is not in use anymore, another is filled with water used for washing the crushed rock.

"If we are working a pit and hit sandstone, we will move to another portion of the property to stay in the basalt rock," says Romine.

The pit currently being mined holds several distinct areas. One section hosts piles of rocks 12 inches in diameter or smaller. The rock in this area, once blasted, fell in small enough pieces to move on to the next stage.

In another section, a "rock-breaker" works to break down rocks that fell in larger pieces — mostly several feet wide.

The rock-breaker is a truck-sized machine with a big jackhammer at one end. Called class 1 rip-rap rock, some of these will be left large for various construction purposes, like erosion control on the sides of highways.

Between those two sections, crews prepare to blast in a new section of the pit. Romine explains that explosives will be strategically placed by experts, in holes drilled 50 to 54 feet deep. Each hole containing the explosives will be set off remotely, one at a time but in rapid succession.

Romine says that to the naked eye, they appear to go off all at once, but the individual holes are designed to be separated many milliseconds apart — this ensures safety, and that the energy from the explosive is used to break the rock in a controlled manner.



We take big rocks and make them into small rocks.

— KEVIN ROMINE, VULCAN MATERIALS PLANT MANAGER

The approximately 30 small explosions — all happening in just a few seconds or less — will result in about 40,000 tons of material ready to go to the crushing plant.

Once the rocks are small enough for the next phase, they are carted from the pit in huge trucks to the primary crusher and then onto the conveyor belts leading to other rock-crushing machines and screening equipment, several stories tall.

Here the rocks are sorted, broken down and crushed to one of several sizes. "It sounds like shattering glass," says Romine, when the dense rock lands

on the conveyor belts.

The most popular stones are called "57 stones," a mix of 1-inch, three-quarter-inch and one-half-inch stones. These are used to make up concrete and asphalt.

A fine, sand-like by-product of the crushing and screening process, called manufactured sand, is used to make concrete.

The rocks are sorted into piles according to size, then loaded into Norfolk Suffolk train cars, which run right through the quarry and connect with distribution sites in Northern Virginia.

"A typical order," says Romine, "might be 40 cars of size 57 and 10 cars of manufactured sand. Each train car can carry 100 tons of material."

### Great relationship

Kurt Rodgers, president of S.W. Rodgers, says his company buys several hundred thousand tons of Vulcan stone a year.

The Gainesville-based heavy highway, civil contracting company employs a variety of products from the Warrenton quarry for its projects throughout the Washington Metropolitan region.

"We have a good relationship with Vulcan, great company," Rodgers says.

The contractor uses Vulcan products at the very beginning of a construction project, whether mid-sized aggregates for erosion control, for bedding underneath and on top of utilities, or as an ingredient for cement, or the





stone base for roadways.

"We're pretty precise and tactical about our logistics at Rodgers," he says. "We do a lot of advance planning, but it wouldn't be uncommon for us to buy 10,000 to 20,000 tons a day."

His team works closely with Vulcan's to get gravel and other stone products to job sites in the most efficient way.

"We do a good job of giving them advance notice of what we'll be needing and they do a good job of providing for us," he says.

### Safety First

Only about 30 employees are on-site at the Warrenton plant, responsible for moving tons of rock and maintaining all the trucks, rock-crushers and other machinery.

Romine admits he really loves his work. "The people I work with are fantastic, really

knowledgeable and a great work ethic." But, he adds, "safety always comes first. Part of being successful here is being safe."

Vulcan works hard to eliminate potential for any dust or noise exposure and provides extensive training about workplace safety measures to protect employees.

"I'm the plant manager. I don't want to ever have to call someone's wife or girlfriend to tell them that someone they love has been injured," he says.

"We have a health van that comes twice a year to check everyone's blood pressure, and to conduct hearing tests, lung X-rays and pulmonary screenings."

Vulcan has been recognized nationally for its leadership in employee health, safety and environmental stewardship programs.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration inspects the

plant twice a year. The plant has not had a single safety citation in the last eight inspections.

### Good Neighbors

Quarries like Vulcan operate under regulations from the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and also answer to the Department of Environmental Quality.

As part of an effort to minimize the plant's impact on the environment, Vulcan recycles all the water it uses to wash the dust off its stone. "It's a self-contained system," says Romine. "We don't take water from anywhere else."

The woods surrounding the quarry host deer, duck and other animals, and the quarry is certified as a wildlife site by the Wildlife Habitat Council, the first site in the U.S. to be so designated.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts

### NUMBERS:

**30**

Employees work at the Vulcan Materials Warrenton quarry

**400**

Acres comprise the Warrenton quarry

**7,000**

Vulcan Materials employees

**1 million**

Tons/year of crushed stone produced by Warrenton quarry

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# MINING



PHOTO COURTESY S.W. RODGERS

S.W. Rodgers uses crushed stone from Vulcan Materials' Warrenton quarry at its various highway projects throughout Northern Virginia.

## Historically Speaking

Bruce Smith, Vulcan Materials' area production manager for Northern Virginia, has been with the company for 40 years.

Vulcan is a modern Fortune 500 company with more than 7,000 employees, but its beginnings were rather more humble. He says, "The plant here in Fauquier started as a mom and pop business. There's a lot of history here."

Smith says that the Sanders family bought the quarry from Fauquier County in the 1940s, and for many years provided local construction companies with the raw materials for asphalt and concrete.

Vulcan Materials Co. (founded as Birmingham Slag Co. in 1909) bought the Warrenton quarry in 1987 and produced 200,000 tons of crushed stone that first year.

Now, the plant produces more than 1 million tons a year, servicing Northern Virginia building companies like Superior Paving, S.W. Rogers and W & L Asphalt. Vulcan's crushed stone, sand and gravel are used to build roads, bridges, waterworks and ports, and to construct residential and commercial buildings.

Vulcan operates 342 sites in 19 states. Three of those are located in Northern Virginia — in Manassas, Stafford and Lorton. Vulcan is the nation's foremost producer of construction aggregates.

Vulcan Concrete, another company under the Vulcan umbrella, is also located on the Meetze Road plant site. That plant and 99 other similar locations across the company produce asphalt and ready-mixed concrete. Vulcan Materials is headquartered in Birmingham, Ala.

Our partnership with Vulcan enables us to reach kids on a whole different level, and provides a connection to outdoor learning.

— JEAN TURNEY,  
TEACHER AT GREENVILLE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## School-business partnership a winner

Jean Turney, a teacher at Greenville Elementary School, she says, "Vulcan has supported our outdoor education every step of the way."

"I have had Beth Moore [plant office administrator] from Vulcan come to our school and conduct a class with our third-grade class," she says. "The topic was 'Butterflies and other Pollinators.' She brought models, played a game, and quizzed the kids on different types of pollinators."

Vulcan built a butterfly garden on school grounds and a quarter-mile nature trail through its woods.

"Our partnership with Vulcan enables us to reach kids on a whole different level, and provides a connection to outdoor learning," she says."

*continued from page 59*

use the quarter mile of nature trails that Vulcan created in the woods around Greenville Elementary School, and school groups regularly visit the quarry to learn about natural resources, earth science and geology. Two butterfly gardens are also part of the environmental effort.

"We try to be good neighbors," says Romine. "We have adopted Greenville Elementary School and P.B. Smith through our Adopt-a-School program."

A team from the company recently constructed a 16-by-40 foot pavilion at Greenville, which is used as an outdoor learning center. The project was part of the quarry's Corporate

Lands for Learning certification.

Kevin Romine obviously has an affection for the task of breaking large rocks into small rocks.

He picks up a handful of 57 stones, and then another of a smaller variety, appreciating their consistent size.

He looks up toward one of the conveyor belts dropping finished stones into a truck with a

digital scale on the side; he watches as the scale shows 32 tons, then 33. The stones, wet from being washed, glitter and shine black in the sunlight.

"Yes," he says, "that's beautiful." Robin Earl is the PR specialist for Fauquier Health. In a previous life, she spent 25 years as the editor of community newspapers in New York and Virginia.



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# PARTING SHOT



## For better sales, try these new tactics

Forget about the old ways of conducting sales calls if you want to stand out in an age of sophisticated buyers with information overload.

Rick Davis, a nationally recognized sales consultant and author, offers the following tips for updating your stale sales routine.

### SALES MEETINGS

**Old and busted:** Show up during the normal course of business.

**Newer and better:** "Schedule appointments and watch the quality of your meetings rise and, more importantly, a dramatic increase in the productivity of your time."

### CLIENT CONNECTIONS

**Old and busted:** Schmoose clients by talking about their family,

hobbies and favorite sports teams.

**Newer and better:** "Get right to business. Determine up front how much time your client or prospect has for the meeting and stick to the deadline to end the meeting. If your client instigates casual small talk, then go with the flow. Otherwise, get right to business by sticking to the agenda."

### ASKING QUESTIONS

**Old and busted:** Asking open ended questions about the client's buying practices. What do you like about your current supplier? What problems are you having?

**Newer and better:** "Ask questions about your client's business before learning about purchasing practices. Learn how they get leads and sell. Your primary goal is to help your clients succeed."

### CLOSING THE SALE

**Old and busted:** Asking for an order.

**Newer and better:** "Closing means scheduling the next meeting and the next. Focus on generating ongoing momentum in the sales process by continually seeking the next meeting. This means salespeople should use the first three steps to seek ways they can help clients and prospects succeed."

"The next time people tell you there are no new ideas, ignore them and recognize that new ideas emerge every day. The best salespeople evolve in a state of constant improvement," Davis says.

For more information, contact Rick Davis at [rickdavis@building-leaders.com](mailto:rickdavis@building-leaders.com), call (773) 769-4409 or visit [www.buildingleaders.com](http://www.buildingleaders.com).

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