



Chair Phyllis J. Randall

Newsletter



Neighbors of Loudoun County:

State of the County Address

Last month, it was my honor to deliver the annual State of the County Address to the residents of Loudoun. I went over the many 'hard things' that were achieved in Loudoun County over this past year, and I highlighted some of the important work we still have left to do. Whether you were able to attend in person, or you watched from the comfort of your home, thank you to all who tuned into this year's Address.

If you missed this year's State of the County Address, you can watch it [HERE](#).



Sister County Agreements

This past year, Loudoun established Sister Counties in two different continents. These Sister County agreements are international partnerships which are designed to promote economic opportunities, cultural understanding, as well as education through student exchange programs. In March, Loudoun County officially partnered with Canelones, Uruguay. Since our agreement, we have already seen the impact as multiple Uruguayan businesses have settled in Loudoun County. This new agreement will allow opportunities for many different businesses to grow and thrive in Loudoun.

The second of the Sister County agreements was reached with Tema, Ghana. In June, I led a delegation to Ghana with Vice Chair Saines and Supervisor Glass to formally meet with Ghanaian leaders to discuss the details of our Sister County agreement. It was our great pleasure to meet with our friends in Ghana and look forward to collaborating with them in the areas of business, tourism, education, and culture.





Ryan Bartel Foundation "Heart for Humanity" Awards

Today, in our society, we've seen a rise in anxiety and depression, most notably in our youth. But I am more concerned when anxiety and depression lead to hopelessness. The Ryan Bartel Foundation scholarship is awarded to graduating high school seniors who have gone out of their way to support their peers struggling with mental health and hopelessness. The kindness and selflessness of these students are essential to creating a community at LCPS that is accepting and receptive to those who may be battling mental illness.

In my State of the County Address, I had the great honor of highlighting the two Ryan Bartel Foundation Award recipients this year: Gabby Guambo and Katelyn Lanham. The impact these young women have had on their respective communities has been monumental.

Believing that no other young person should feel alone and hopeless, Gabby channeled her grief into a cause that she feels is "bigger than

herself,” and started the “Live For Lane” club at Dominion. According to Gabby, she founded the club to “remember and honor Lane's legacy of kindness and to ensure that students understand the importance of mental health so that no one struggles in silence.” The club is a place where students connect with peers to receive support and hopefully end the stigma for people who suffer from mental illness.

Katelyn was nominated for the “Heart of Humanity” Award by a peer who has chosen to remain anonymous, but who described her declining mental health condition that ultimately resulted in a night when she was contemplating suicide. Her peer sent Katelyn a text, and Katelyn then left a party to come to the aid of this friend. That selfless act changed the life of Katelyn’s friend who now says: “I truly know in my heart that if Katelyn wasn’t there that night, I would've done some things I would've forever regretted. I cannot be more grateful for her because she is a blessing to me and all those whose life she touches.”



Gabby Guambo, Dominion H.S.



Katelyn Lanham, Loudoun County H.S.

The Ryan Bartel Foundation provides upstream programs to prevent youth suicide and empower families with acceptance, connection, resiliency and hope. Visit their website [HERE](#).

Loudoun County Spotlight

This year I highlighted the work of 3 amazing men who have served Loudoun County as dedicated public servants for a collective 67 years. County Treasurer Roger Zurn, Deputy County Administrator Charles Yudd, and Supervisor Tony Buffington have all put in countless hours of hard work to help make this county flourish and thrive. We unfortunately must say goodbye to these 3 men as they all retire from their positions later this year, but as they move beyond county government and administration, it's important to see just how much they accomplished while serving our community.



Treasurer Roger Zurn

Serving as Loudoun County Treasurer for 27 years, Mr. Zurn first entered county government when he ran for the Sterling district seat in a special election in 1990. He ran for countywide office 6 years later for the treasurer's office seat, which he has held ever since. Treasurer Zurn has led the county through economic downturns and the Great Recession. Working closely with my office, Mr. Zurn also helped secure not one, but two minority-owned brokerage firms to assist in managing a portion of Loudoun's portfolio, which marked the first time in history Loudoun County engaged minority-owned banks or brokers.

Deputy County Administrator Charles Yudd

Mr. Yudd joined county government in 1997 as the Land Use Review Division Manager in the Department of Planning Services. He moved up to the Office of County Administration in 1999. Having overlooked nearly all areas under the purview of County Administration, Mr. Yudd has assisted, or served as liaison for *several* county departments during his time as Deputy County Administrator. He also served as manager of countless transportation and land-use projects. Mr. Yudd's expertise and experience will be dearly missed when he retires later this year.



Supervisor Tony Buffington

Supervisor Buffington has represented the Blue Ridge District on the Board of Supervisors since he was elected in 2015. Since being elected, Supervisor Buffington has continually fought for western Loudoun County to maintain its rural character, voting against allowing even one new home to be built there. Before being elected to public office, Supervisor Buffington served in the United States Marine Corps, receiving an honorable discharge in 2002, at the rank of sergeant. He then spent 20 years as a federal law enforcement official in the Washington, D.C., area.

Collective Bargaining Discussions Begin

I've said many times, and I will say it again: I believe Loudoun has the best staff in the country. It is for this reason that I, along with the majority of the

Loudoun Board of Supervisors, agreed to allow our public-sector employees to have the option to unionize.

Unions are today, and have been for many decades, the voice of workers. They advocate not just for fair wages and benefits, but also, for reasonable working conditions. Loudoun, at this time, the Loudoun Career Fire Fighters Association, IAFF Local-3756, led by President John Myers, has begun the process of collective bargaining. Our Service Employees International Union, SEIU Virginia 512, led by Chair Dr. Julius Reynolds, has now gathered enough signatures to file for certification, which we expect will lead to collective bargaining discussions to begin within the coming year.



Economic Opportunities in Loudoun

We need only look back a couple of years in this Board's term to see one of the most significant challenges of our time. Last month, the World Health Organization and the federal government declared an end to the public health emergency for COVID-19. Through this great challenge, while mourning the loss of loved ones and facing economic obstacles, Loudoun weathered the storm with strategic calmness and sound economic policies that allowed our county to remain strong, and even flourish. Loudoun

County government added 680 jobs, we had more than four hundred economic development wins, and in Loudoun County we welcomed over 20,000 new residents.

Working collaboratively with Tony Howard and the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce, your County Board, through DED, approved multiple rounds of grant funding to support small businesses in Loudoun. In total, twenty-one million dollars were allocated to Loudoun businesses to help them weather the impacts of the pandemic. That proactive decision helped to fuel one of the strongest local economies in the country. However, we recognize we have the opportunity to do more.

In Loudoun we will continue to build on the strengths of our workforce by providing them with opportunities to “upskill” or “reskill” their talents. We seek to create a diversified and resilient economy built to withstand any downturns and to leverage our location as an international hub to attract businesses from all over the world. Toward these goals, last year, the Board of Supervisors funded two new positions in DED to support small and minority-owned businesses. As a result of those positions, we have proudly started a program we are calling “Launch Loudoun.”



From rural businesses in the Catoctin District, to retail businesses in Sterling; from restaurants in Algonkian, to IT start-ups in Dulles; from our main streets in our towns to our manufacturing businesses in Ashburn, Launch Loudoun will have something for everyone.

Additionally, we will now have a dedicated resource to support minority-owned businesses in Loudoun. According to a study conducted by the U.S. Small Business Administration, during the pandemic, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses faced unique challenges including— but not limited to—a lack of relationships with the banking industry resulting in less financial capital, continued discrimination in the lending industry, and outsized negative impacts of COVID on minority communities. The programming and education provided by Launch Loudoun will address these issues and allow these businesses to start, scale, and soar.

Launch Loudoun is dedicated to recruiting new business, growing Loudoun's existing industries and improving our county's business climate. Visit their website [HERE](#).

[Contact Us](#)

Sincerely,

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