



STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS
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LOUDOUN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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When people who live in other parts of the Commonwealth or the region hear the name Loudoun what do you believe comes to mind? I can tell you as I talk to my colleagues and friends on regional or especially state bodies what I usually hear is....”Loudoun, aren’t you the richest County in the Country?” After explaining the difference between wealth and income, I often attempt to tell them, while Loudoun may not be the richest County in the Country, we are quite simply, the best County in the Country. It is possible that, because the person I’m speaking with is often the leader of some other county, they may not wish to hear me talk for 20 minutes about what a marvelous county Loudoun is. A county with an excellent school system full of caring and committed educators, a remarkably diverse county that offers unique and profitable opportunities to locate a business or company and stands ready to welcome the Metro. A county where 26 dedicated citizens spent two years developing a new and emerging Comprehensive Plan that will guide the county as we go forward... addressing the issues of transportation, land use, infrastructure and housing.

If given the opportunity, I will go on to explain that at its core what makes Loudoun such an extraordinary place to live is its people. People who are willing

to give of their time to assist a neighbor, or even a stranger. A volunteer community that realizes just because our county can boast a high median income, does not mean we don't still have people in need. Our volunteers are caring, committed people who know their help is required when people are at the most vulnerable time of their life, yet often unwilling or unable to seek the assistance they desperately need. Our volunteers serve in every capacity from hunger mitigation, to youth services, domestic violence prevention, environmental causes and the list goes on.

Obviously one of our more important volunteer service areas is the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System. In Loudoun, our Fire and Rescue services include a volunteer force of more than 800 active volunteers that make up more than 60% of the total fire and EMS System. While there are many volunteers who give countless hours of service to Loudoun's citizens, tonight I'd like to highlight the service of three outstanding volunteers who collectively have dedicated tens of thousands of volunteer hours to the citizens of Loudoun County.

At age 48, Charles Grant joined the Sterling Volunteer Fire Company and Sterling Volunteer Rescue Squad. I am told that initially, all Charlie...as he is known, wanted to do was drive the ambulance, but, after just a few calls he decided he

wanted to do even more by becoming a certified EMT. During his 33 years of volunteer service, Charlie gave over 3,000 hours on duty crew and ran 3,900 calls. And, he gave an additional 4,000 hours performing non-emergency duties. At some point while running calls, Charlie felt he had an even higher calling and made the decision to serve as the Company Chaplain. Today Mr. Charlie Grant continues to serve and run calls as the Senior Chaplain to the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System.

On May 14, 1959, Kenny Graham joined the Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department. He was just 14 years old. Kenny says that back then, fighting fires was much different; it was just about putting water on the fires. To quote him, “We didn’t have air packs and safety equipment like they do today, we were simply issued a jacket, boots and a helmet and we went to the fire.” Kenny also mentioned how much he appreciated the Career Staff that were assigned to the station. When I asked various people to describe Kenny, two words were repeated...gracious, and genuine. In over 50 years of volunteer service to Loudoun, Kenny served as a Lieutenant, Captain and Chief of the Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department. Chief Graham has responded to over a thousand calls and devoted immeasurable time and energy to Loudoun’s emergency services. Although he “officially” retired in 2006, Chief Graham, takes time every day to visit the station and chat with the

crew. He continues to serve as the primary liaison between the career staff and his Company.

Based on available records, the Volunteer with the longest history of continuous service in Loudoun is Louis Carter, known to the fire service, friends and family as Buzzy. He joined the Aldie Volunteer Fire Company at the age of 16, on December 1, 1962. His 56 years of uninterrupted service includes 30 consecutive years as Fire Chief. A native of Aldie, Buzzy's family has lived in the county for over two hundred years. In 1955, the Carter family were founding members of the Department; from that date to this, there has always been a member of the Carter family serving the Department. Buzzy has run over 5,500 hours on duty crews and given over 1,300 hours in non-emergency activities. I should note, even though he's been around for a while, finding a picture of Buzzy was virtually impossible. If you add up their active service time, these three gentlemen have collectively given our County over 135 years of service. Loudoun, the rich history and enduring legacy of our county's Fire and EMS System lies in the dedication of people such as Charlie Grant, Kenny Graham and Buzzy Carter. I'd like to ask these gentlemen to stand and allow us to thank them for their time and commitment to Loudoun County.

Our volunteer communities are just part of what makes Loudoun special. Loudoun is also a community of unique and diverse individuals. In Loudoun, we continue to welcome people from all over the country and, in fact, the world who wish to call Loudoun home. To date more than 24% of Loudoun citizens were born in another country. Visit a restaurant at the fabulous “One Loudoun” and you will hear an extraordinary mix of languages and dine with people from across the globe. I am so proud Loudoun is now and will continue to be a welcoming and inclusive community. Our doors, our minds and our hearts are open to all, no matter... where you come from, what you look like, who you worship, or who you love.

For those of you who have not had the pleasure of meeting him, I’d like to introduce you to one of Loudoun’s citizens who was not born in this country but has given so much, not only to Loudoun, but to America. In 1981, Bruce Rahmani arrived in the United States with \$50 in his pocket, a broken arm, and a desire to live the American dream. Like so many who immigrate to America, Bruce did not expect life to be easy, and... he was correct. Believing that America was the country to see his dreams realized, Bruce was willing to do any job that enabled him to earn an honest day’s pay. Working as a taxi driver while also being employed at an HVAC company, Bruce attended college at night and on the

weekends. In 1988, Bruce realized he had gained the skill set, talent and knowledge to not only work at an HVAC business, but own one himself; thus, he founded Falcon Heating and Air Conditioning and thankfully located his new business in Loudoun County. After a lot of early mornings and late nights of dedicated work, Bruce built a successful business, and today Falcon Heating and Air Conditioning employs over 100 people.

A serious business man, Bruce conducts his business like he conducts his life; with integrity, compassion, and a sense of responsibility towards his employees and his community. A husband, father and new grandfather, Bruce sets an example, not only for his family and employees, but for all who believe in the importance of giving back. He seeks out openings to provide employment opportunities for at-risk youth and serves on Loudoun's Multicultural Advisory Committee. Ladies and Gentleman please join me in thanking one of Loudoun's more remarkable citizens, Bruce Rahmani.

Just as we stand ready to welcome new residents to Loudoun, we're also ready to welcome new businesses. Loudoun continues to be a leader in the world of Economic Development or ED. Over the past 5 years, our ED Department has reported more than \$13 billion dollars in new commercial investment and more

than 20 thousand new jobs. The \$6 billion in new commercial investment this year will be more than generated by some states. Some of the great companies we have welcomed this year include: Rockwell Collins, Cuisines Solutions, Google, DC United Soccer, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which, by itself will add almost four thousand new, high-paying jobs to our County.

Loudoun continues to be the world's largest data center market, an industry that contributes more than \$200 million dollars each year in local taxes. We are happy to have with us tonight, Mr. Shannon Kellogg, Director of Amazon Web Services Public Policy-Americas which includes: local, state, central and regional governments. Amazon Web Services has made Northern Virginia its largest cloud market in the world. We thank you for your investment, and Mr. Kellogg, we thank you for joining us tonight.

Of course we are all aware that Amazon's HQ2 search has been THE Economic Development story across the country over the last year. It is the largest ED project anyone can remember, with more than 5 billion dollars in investment and 50,000 new jobs. The question I am asked all the time is, is Amazon coming to Loudoun? And the answer is, "I don't know, no one knows," however, what I do know is that we stand ready to not only welcome Amazon, but also to welcome

other companies who wish to call Loudoun home. In addition, we're also ready to have a forthright conversation and answer citizens' questions about how having one of the world's largest companies locate in Loudoun and Fairfax will impact the region and how we are proactively preparing for those changes. We are very proud we were named to Amazon's short-list, and believe we offer as good, if not better, solutions than any other location. For this project, we have teamed with Fairfax County to present a property that crosses county lines. We were also part of a regional proposal that included the Commonwealth of Virginia, Arlington and Alexandria. Virginia has joined the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia in presenting a united front, because, with a project of this size, if one of us wins, we all win.

These partnerships are great examples of the type of regional cooperation that is important to Northern Virginia's and the National Capital Area's future. To be sure, regional cooperation isn't just about sharing the fruits of success; it's also about working together to meet the needs of our citizens. Affordable housing, traffic, the environment, assisting those less fortunate, these are all regional issues and we will address them by working together and collaboratively. One of the most important insights we have learned in our efforts to land Amazon is the emphasis companies place on affordable and workforce housing. Many of you

have heard me say that ensuring Loudoun can offer diverse housing options is the one issue that keeps me up at night. That's part of the reason this Board has put an emphasis on increasing the number of workforce, affordable, lower income and disability housing units in Loudoun. This past November, your Board of Supervisors held a Housing Summit and heard from the community and stakeholders who are impacted by the lack of a continuum of housing options. Because housing options have a direct impact on the available workforce, we have taken steps to proactively address this looming problem. Loudoun, in addition to the Housing Summit this year, your Board added four positions devoted to housing, including a Workforce Development Specialist in the Department of Economic Development. This strategic position will produce a long-term, competitive advantage for Loudoun and will build partnerships with Northern Virginia Community College, four-year colleges and institutions, and stakeholders to ensure training exists to meet market demands. Most importantly, this position looks to the County's future and its ability to grow and attract world-class talent to Loudoun.

And, when I talk about workforce, I'm not talking just about technology jobs. I'm also talking about the jobs that support our thriving rural economy. I salute Doug Fabboli for his efforts in starting the New Ag School in Loudoun County. The

New Ag School was established to train future leaders who will continue to grow Loudoun County's agri-tourism and agribusiness economy. Loudoun farms sell thirty-seven (\$37) million dollars in farm products annually. And Loudoun County's 1,400 farm businesses are home to a full 51 percent of Northern Virginia's agri-tourism venues. Our mission to save farmland in western Loudoun is working. According to the American Farmland Trust, the U.S. loses more than 40 acres of farm and ranch land every hour. Through our efforts in Loudoun, that number is less than one-tenth of an acre. We are committed to implementing our Rural Economy Business Strategy through initiatives like the Ag Manufacturing Accelerator and the indoor year-round farmers market. These and other enterprises are why Loudoun County ranks third in visitor spending in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Last year, Loudoun welcomed nearly 5 million visitors who spent "one-point-seven" (1.7) billion dollars. That resulted in 45 million dollars in state and local taxes and supported over 17 thousand jobs. The success of our tourism economy is only part of the story. In Loudoun, we understand the economic benefits and the quality of life benefits that come from sharing our county with everyone who wishes to enjoy our 50 wineries, purchase our farm grown products and appreciates our equestrian and outdoor recreation.

Protecting the heritage and culture of our County is of significant importance to me and is equally important to staff and the 26 citizens who serve on the Envision Loudoun Stakeholders Committee. Loudoun, after 16 years we have fully revamped our County's Comprehensive Plan. In January of 2016, this Board instructed staff to write a Comprehensive Plan charter to address every area of County land from the rural, expansive west to our vibrant suburban communities and, of course, to begin long-term land use planning for what will surely become Loudoun's Mixed Use and Urban Policy Area. While revising the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Stakeholders group was further charged with addressing our transportation network, with an emphasis on multi-modal transportation options and creating opportunities for a diverse housing stock. After two years and under the direction of Deputy County Administrator Charles Yudd, Director of Planning and Zoning Ricky Barker and Planning Commission Chair Jeff Salmon the Loudoun 2040 Comprehensive Plan will serve as the "umbrella" document for the County's planning efforts. In addition to addressing planned land uses, and transportation, the Envision Loudoun Stakeholders group reviewed topics such as: environmental sustainability, anticipated future growth, public land and open space, and strengthening targeted business clusters. We even addressed building-design guidelines, all in pursuit of quality development for the future of Loudoun.

In the first quarter of 2020, we look forward to welcoming the Metro to Loudoun. The Metro Silver Line will have three stops in Loudoun with one at Dulles International Airport. The Metro stop in the airport will allow passengers to go from plane, to train to destination. One of our County's largest employers, and a premier Loudoun partner, Washington Dulles is Virginia's only International Hub Airport. A full 85% of international passengers traveling to and from the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Region choose Dulles Airport. Dulles has direct flights to 81 domestic destinations and 57 international destinations. Our airport's location offers unlimited economic opportunity and is the only airport on the East Coast with room for another runway and the capacity for exponential growth. The arrival of the Metro Silver Line with its stop at Dulles International Airport creates optimal conditions for any company or industry to locate in Loudoun County. Companies that wish to locate or re-locate to an area identify a few key factors as they decide where their business and their employees can thrive. Transportation, connectivity, recreational amenities and a high quality of life are noted as important to perspective employers. However, a strong K-12 education system is often the most essential factor as a company is deciding where to locate. In Loudoun, we can boast a public school system with an on time graduation rate of 97%, and... new STEM Coding Immersion classes at the elementary school level. In addition, we eagerly look forward to cutting the ribbon on the Academies of

Loudoun which is set to open in the fall of this year and will serve 2,500 students.

This new state-of-the-art campus comprises three programs under one roof, the

Academy of Science, the Academy of Engineering and Technology and the

Monroe Advanced Technology Academy, the county's vocational programs. We

believe this innovative school will offer our students the opportunity to compete on

the world's stage in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

And...we are all very excited that at long last Loudoun County will be able to offer

Universal Full Day Kindergarten to our youngest little minds. Of course

we know it's not the building but the students and educators that who are the souls

of a school.

In Loudoun we are lucky to have educators who are committed, hardworking,

compassionate individuals who seek to provide our students, your children, with

the best possible educational experience. Of all the ways to give back to one's

community, becoming a teacher is one of the most notable. Now more than ever I

believe a strong public education system is important to our Country,

Commonwealth and County. A solid education offers a young person a life with

options and for so many, education is the one-true-equalizer. Our educators are

everyday heroes who, through their students have an impact on the world far

beyond their years in the classroom. We need and value strong teachers; teachers

such as Denise Corbo, a SEARCH Teacher at Harmony Elementary School, who, in the past has taught and tended to our smallest children in Kindergarten and first grade and who has taught in nine Loudoun County Elementary Schools. I want you all to take a moment and think of the name of that one teacher who you remember because they believed in you, they noticed you, encouraged you and challenged you to go beyond what you believed your limits were. That's who Ms. Denise Corbo has been for so many. The terms past students have used to describe Denise include: role model, a gift, someone who taught us not just our school work but about kindness and sharing, a rare educator, a remarkable person and... a rock star. However the most impactful statement was from a student who said that she herself became a teacher because of Ms. Corbo. Having a student follow her steps to become a teacher herself speaks to the impact Denise and all our educators have on the lives of their students.

Our teachers are sustained by supportive administrative staff, many of whom came up through the teaching ranks themselves. Principals and vice principals who understand that if we are to meet the needs of our students we must first meet the needs of our teachers. Mr. Paul Pack is one such principal. Having taught at the elementary school level, Principal Pack understands the joys and challenges of being in the classroom. As a teacher Mr. Pack made it his goal to learn the names

of not just the students in his class but in surrounding classes so that he could greet those kids by name as they came to school every day. Paul understands and has always understood that a child is so much more than a test score, thus he engages in wrap around learning that encourages children to practice critical thinking skills, to ask questions and take chances. As a principal, Paul has the confidence of his teaching staff who say he actually encourages them to be involved in the decision making process. Paul seeks to hire educators who hold varying teaching philosophies and takes their opinions into consideration. During his career as a principal, Paul has been nominated for and received recognitions and awards at the local, state and national level. While I don't have time to list the many awards Paul has received throughout his teaching and administrative career. I do want to highlight his STEM Excellence Award he received this past year from the Future Education Technology Conference.

I'm not sure if we can pay a good educator what they are worth however, of this I am sure. At all times we can and we should pay them respect and compensate them with appreciation for a job that most of us have neither the skill set, the time nor the patience to do. Tonight we are honored to be joined by the Superintendent of Loudoun Schools. So... Dr. Williams, ladies and gentlemen I want to introduce you to Loudoun's 2018 Teacher of the year, Ms. Denise Corbo and Principal of the

year Mr. Paul Pack.

Educators in Loudoun and, in fact, the entire region will tell you that when we seek to support the visions and goals of our young people, we must not just look at the child standing in front of us, but also realize the great opportunities that stand in front of that child. I will admit I forgot that lesson two years ago when I first heard of a then nine-year-old whose family has lived in Loudoun for six generations. My response when told about Skyler Johnson's ambition to be a fashion designer was, "well that's very cute, good for her." But when I looked not just at her age, but at the potential of now eleven-year-old Sky, I was, quite honestly, simply blown away. Her talent reaffirms my belief that every child has gifts given to them by GOD and it is the responsibility of every caring adult to nurture and encourage those gifts whether they be in a STEM field, a vocation, the arts or in service to our country. In the case of little Ms. Sky, I realized that I would be very blessed indeed to be one of the first people to wear a Sky Johnson original design. So Loudoun, if tonight you ask me "who am I wearing," I'll proudly tell you that eleven-year-old Skyler Johnson, founder of "Sew Fly Sky," envisioned, designed and hand-sewed my outfit for this occasion and if she would please stand I'd like to introduce you to Sky... and to her parents.

Tonight I've introduced you to three Volunteer Fire and Rescue Staff who have a life of service to our county, a remarkable man born in another country but living his American dream, educators who believe in the greatness of our young people, and a young lady who will take the fashion industry by storm.

I've informed you of a county that is completing a new Comprehensive Plan, and a Staff and Board who are working on diverse housing options while maintaining the strong heritage of our west. And oh, by the way, we're doing it all with a triple-A bond rating. Loudoun, we stand ready to welcome new businesses, new industries, the Metro and cut the ribbon on the Academies of Loudoun.

Clearly as measured by the strength of our economy and the compassion and tenacity of our people, it is indeed obvious to me, as I hope it is to all of you, that Loudoun IS the best County in the Country. And I stand before you to proudly and confidently proclaim that the State of Loudoun County IS Strong. May God bless you and my God bless our County.