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Richmond Area Municipal Contractors Association

RAMCA INITIATES IMPORTANT CHANGES IN HENRICO AND CHESTERFIELD COUNTIES

One of the services that separates RAMCA from the larger, statewide construction-related associations is our ability to effectively represent the interests of our members at the local level. Under the leadership of Monty Gatewood (Shoosmith Bros.) as chairman of the RAMCA Technical Cooperative Committee, 2004 has been an exceptionally busy year.

At RAMCA's request, Chesterfield County continues the process of revising their subdivision ordinance by creating a two-tiered paving approach designed to produce a better end product for the County, its citizens, and VDOT. As with most local government ordinance changes, the process is long and involved. Last month RAMCA attended a meeting of the County Planning Committee, where our proposal was initially reviewed. On November 16th a Planning Commission Public Hearing was held to receive input from any interested party on the RAMCA proposal. As a result of proposed changes offered by the Homebuilders Assoc. of Richmond, the Planning Commission deferred action and will discuss this matter further at their December 13th work session. RAMCA continues to work with the County in an effort to seek approval for these changes, and will keep you apprized of final action on this matter.

Concurrently, Technical Cooperative Committee members met with representatives of Henrico County's Utility Department to discuss a broad range of issues. The County's agenda included the need to revise the way construction water meters are issued, maintained and billed. In addition, the County wanted RAMCA feedback on the County's growing application of fixed price contracts. (RAMCA suggested a number of reasons why area contractors may be more inclined to obtain unit price work.) With regard to the water meter issue, RAMCA continues to work with the County to change the water meter program in ways that better reflect actual costs. Revisions in this area are certain to contain some nominal increase in the rental fees associated with the use of construction water meters, which will probably be upgraded to a unit better suited for fire hydrant pressures and construction usages.

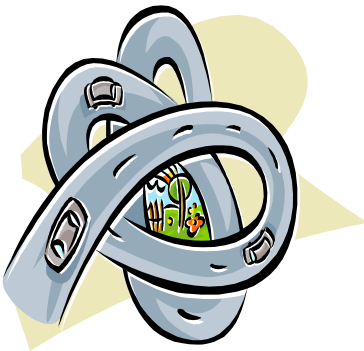
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At RAMCA's request, the County created a one-page report that will be provided to contractors when inspections are performed on water and sewer projects in the County. In the past there was no written record of these inspection results, leaving contractors to argue with developers, owners and other site contractors about damages that may have occurred post inspection. In addition, the County has created a new sewer and water cut sheet document to help standardize and maintain accurate records regarding utility installations. Finally, RAMCA urged the County to better enforce their local standard requiring design professionals to accurately reflect the location of underground utilities on proposed plans for new construction coming before the County for approval. The County also provided RAMCA with a proposed bid schedule for a number of major utility construction projects scheduled for the next two years.

Contractors members will find, attached to this newsletter, a copy of that schedule, along with the new cut sheet form and the water and sewer inspection reports.

VIRGINIANS FOR BETTER TRANSPORTATION LAUNCHED



RAMCA is participating in a new, grassroots organization called *Virginians for Better Transportation* (VBT). The main purpose of VBT is to educate the public about the state's looming transportation funding crisis, in an effort to influence public opinion and most importantly, the views of state legislators regarding the need to create a reliable, stable, and sufficient funding stream for state transportation projects. RAMCA, as well as a number of RAMCA members, have made a substantial financial commitment towards this effort. More names of individual companies need to be listed as participating in the coalition.

VBT has hired the public relations firm of Charles Ryan and Associates to oversee this public awareness campaign. It is a serious effort, with a budget of well over a half million dollars. VBT is planning on rolling out its website on December 1st, and preliminary indications are that it will be very impressive. The database of the organization is now nearly one thousand names, with thousands more anticipated before year's end. VBT's Board of Directors is currently being formulated, and candidates include some very well known representatives of business, industry, travel/tourism, local government, public safety and the military. RAMCA staff serves on the Steering Committee of VBT.

There are a number of ways RAMCA members can support this very important effort. First, review the enclosed "It's Time" fact sheet. Second, consider making a financial contribution to VBT. Third, sign and return the attached Statement of Support. RAMCA encourages you to do all three! A partial list of supporting businesses and organizations is also enclosed for your information. Should you have questions about the mission of VBT, or your involvement in this effort, contact the RAMCA office.

THE COST OF CONGESTION

A new report from The Road Information Program (TRIP) estimates that Virginia's congested and deteriorating roads is costing Virginians more than \$4 billion a year when factors such as fuel cost, lost time, more accidents, and increased auto repair bills are considered. It is no surprise that costs are higher in the northern Virginia/D.C. area, followed by Hampton Roads and then Richmond. Congestion costs for Richmond averaged about \$1000 per driver.

The TRIP report looks at the percentage of bridges that are judged inadequate, the percentage of roadways in poor condition, and the most recent information on travel congestion and delays. Certainly there can be much debate about how these costs were determined, but there should be very little discussion on the fact that Virginia's crumbling transportation infrastructure is having serious consequences on the economic vitality of the state, and quality of life of its citizens. It is also interesting to note that the state was recently forced to chop \$1 billion from VDOT's 2005-10 road construction plan, based on the fact that no new money was allocated to transportation at the 2004 Virginia General Assembly. VDOT will be forced to spend the vast majority of its resources on maintenance, without an influx of new money in the very near future.

Average Annual Costs Per Driver Caused by Virginia's Inadequate Roads

Source: The Road Information Project

Cost Per Driver	Washington DC Metro	Richmond	Roanoke	Hampton Roads	Other Virginia Urban Areas
Safety	\$500	\$336.	\$336	\$336	\$336
Congestion	\$1278	\$281	\$248	\$546	\$100
Vehicle Operating Costs	\$353	\$415	\$290	\$408	\$248
TOTAL	\$2131	\$1032	\$874	\$1290	\$684

SCC TASK FORCE PRODUCES LITTLE AGREEMENT

After eleven meetings and over seventy hours of discussion, a Task Force created by the General Assembly and overseen by the State Corporation Commission has produced little tangible results. The Task Force was charged with reviewing and evaluating two existing areas in the state's Miss Utility laws. First, should the use of Designer Tickets (requiring design professionals to show existing underground utilities on their plans for sizeable projects) be changed from an option to a requirement? RAMCA felt it should, representatives of Virginia's major utilities felt no substantive changes were needed. Second, should utilities be required to notify excavators if they believe that abandoned lines may exist in the area of a Miss Utility ticket? RAMCA argued that not only should this information be mandated, but in addition the utilities should share whatever information they have regarding an abandoned line in order to minimize damage to underground utility lines, reduce down time associated with either damage or relocation of underground lines, and protect excavator's crews. The utilities agreed to notify excavators (through a sub code on a Miss Utility ticket) of their belief that an abandoned line may exist in the proximity of an excavation ticket. They refused, however, to agree to the requirement of providing any additional information they might have relative to the abandoned line.

Because utility representatives on the Task Force controlled a majority of votes on the Task Force, both RAMCA initiatives were defeated. The Commission is now in the process of drafting a final report on the conclusions of the Task Force, which will be delivered to the 2005 session of the Virginia General Assembly. There is a reasonable probability that legislation will flow from the work of this Task Force, perhaps at the 2005 session. Members interested in obtaining a copy of the SCC report should contact the RAMCA office.

RAMCA ACTIVITIES UPDATE

After two cancellations due inclement weather, the Annual Jack Bargamin Memorial Golf Event was finally held on October 20th at Lake Chesdin Golf Club. As hard as it was to believe, it rained! The show did go on and despite a higher than normal number of no shows, a good time was had by all attendees. RAMCA would like to thank our many hole and raffle sponsors for helping to defray costs associated with this event (see attached list). A special thanks to Draper Aden Associates and James River Equipment of VA for sponsoring the beverage carts. RAMCA would also like to recognize and thank Carter Machinery for delivering and storing all signage associated with this event. RAMCA golfers are already looking forward to next year's two association-sponsored events: May 19th at Royal New Kent and September 15 at Hunting Hawk.



The October 14th General Membership Dinner Meeting featured two presentations on underground and overhead utility damage prevention. Representatives from Dominion Virginia Power presented a memorable visual presentation on the potential for death, injury and property damage associated with working around both overhead and underground electric lines. A safety representative from Columbia Gas reviewed the major components of the state's Miss Utility law and discussed ways to work around gas lines to avoid damages. Dominion's safety handout is included with this newsletter to our contractor members.

On November 18th your association held its Annual Business Meeting and Election of Officers. All committee chairman, as well as the President, Treasurer, and Executive Director presented reports. In addition, only one slot on the Board of Directors was open for election, and Mr. Ben Steele (Martin Marietta) was re-elected to another two-year term on the RAMCA Board.



The next RAMCA event will be the much-anticipated Annual Installation of Officers Banquet, which will be held January 15th at the Marriott West in Innsbrook. As usual, this will be the RAMCA social event of the year. Expect the usual great band, outstanding live entertainment and fine meal, as well as the opportunity to see many of your RAMCA friends. Invitations and sponsorship requests will be mailed in mid-December.

Finally, RAMCA members are asked to watch their mail in early January for program and registration information regarding the 2005 RAMCA Management Conference, scheduled for late March of next year. The programs are going to be exceptional, and President Bush stayed in our hotel during his last visit to Phoenix. (This is no ordinary hotel!)

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F.G. Pruitt, Inc.

Vice President

Bill Howard
G. L. Howard, Inc.

Secretary/Treasurer

J. Michael Todd
*Keiter, Stephens, Hurst, Gary &
 Shreaves*

Immediate Past President

Monty Gatewood
Shoosmith Bros., Inc.

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Sovereign Paving, Inc.
 James H. Martin, Jr.
J.H. Martin & Sons Contractors, Inc.
 Johnnie Barr

Ward & Stancil, Inc.

Associates:

Ben Steele
Martin Marietta Aggregates
 Keith Frazier
ACF Environmental

Executive Director:

Mark I. Singer
 Office Manager
 Judy Frederick

NUCA SAFETY FORUM TO BE HELD IN VIRGINIA

The National Utility Contractors Association is holding its annual Safety Directors Forum in Arlington, Virginia on December 6th and 7th. Contractors serious about safety should consider sending their safety personnel to this one and a half day session featuring the head of OSHA, a number of breakout sessions of interest to utility contractors, and a roundtable discussion allowing participants to raise safety issues and share experiences. Additional information is being enclosed to contractor members.

2005 MEMBER INVESTMENT INVOICES GOING OUT

It is that time of year again. Time to renew your investment in RAMCA. Dues invoices for 2005 will be mailed early in December and provide for a discount for early remittance. RAMCA is only as strong as the members we endeavor to represent. Your renewed commitment to what many regard as the best regional construction association in the state is most appreciated. Your Board of Directors and staff thank you in advance for your continued support of RAMCA.

**TWO BIG CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATIONS
 NOW ONE REALLY BIG CONSTRUCTION
 ASSOCIATION**

Two of Virginia's largest construction-related trade associations have recently announced their merger. The Virginia Road and Transportation Builders Association and the Virginia Aggregates Association have become the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance. Effective 1/1/05 the VTCA will become the state's largest transportation construction organization.



Richmond Area Municipal Contractors Association

One Strong Voice

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

