



DANA DICKENS, PRESIDENT/CEO of the HAMPTON ROADS PARTNERSHIP –

Speech on VISION HAMPTON ROADS Regional Day

Thursday, May 6, 2010

What is Hampton Roads? It is a region of interdependent communities: Beaches and boats. Forts and families. Roller coasters and rivers. Planes and performers. Agriculture and arts. History and innovation. The power of interdependence with a strong sense of community and diversity. It is all of these things and more.

And, what do we mean by “VISION”? **Vision** is a clear concept, a foresight, an ideal to strive for, a common direction.

I’m reminded today of a great quote from Albert Einstein: *“The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them.”*

What brings us here today is a new **Vision** for Hampton Roads, a different level of thinking - **and doing** - that will help us resolve issues and solve problems in a very different way, in a more interdependent way. A different way that we sorely need in today’s new economy, where commerce is indifferent to municipal boundaries.

What brings us here today is a new **Vision** for Hampton Roads, a different level of thinking - **and doing** - that will help us resolve issues and solve problems in a very different way, in a more interdependent way. A different way that we so sorely need in today’s new economy, where municipal boundaries do not apply in the same way.

Vision is about putting our region’s collective assets together – in the best way possible and to their best use – in order to expand and diversify our economy.

Vision is about taking advantage of these assets to compete, not with each other, not within our region’s borders, and in many respects not even within the borders of the United States, but to be the international economic presence that is the destiny of Hampton Roads.

Our competition is Charlotte, and Shanghai. Raleigh, and Rio. Jacksonville, and Jakarta. Memphis, and Mumbai.

Vision is about imaging our future and engineering actions to make it happen. Walt Disney called this “Imagineering,” and he was fairly successful.

Hampton Roads is doing just fine ... but has potential for greatness. To reach our potential, we must do some “Imagineering” ... imagine our future and engineer actions. Leadership – both public and private sector – must be united WITH the same mindshare and with support of citizens and civic groups to help move forward a regional agenda. We must align our assets.

John Fernandez is the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. He emphasizes regions rather than states as the competitive economic units of the country. The administration believes America’s economic recovery will be led by a collection of regions around the U.S.

According to Fernandez ... and I quote: “We can’t make people collaborate. It’s going to be up to the civic leadership at the state and local level.”

Robert Puentes, with the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program, spoke recently in Hampton. He said, and I quote: “Hampton Roads needs to continue to think about the kind of investments and develop the kinds of policies necessary to compete globally, maintain their innovative edge, grow an educated and skilled workforce and build and maintain state of the art infrastructure so they can move people, goods, ideas, and energy efficiently and effectively.” End quote. **Vision Hampton Roads** is the blueprint to do just that.

Puentes recommends the region’s cluster strategies as laid out by the **Hampton Roads Partnership** in **Vision Hampton Roads**. Promising clusters in modeling & simulation, bio-science, and transportation are clearly related to the region’s specializations and traditional strengths in defense, maritime, and equipment manufacturing.

Again, quoting Puentes, he said, “The task will be to align Hampton Roads around a cohesive regional identity. Since no one jurisdiction, corporation, nonprofit, or

university can tackle the range of challenges for moving to the next economy on its own, such a vision is essential.” End quote.

I submit to you that there are no downsides to collaboration, only benefits. For example, all over the world, public services within regions are coming together. In the U.S., and to a great degree in Hampton Roads, we see cooperative purchasing, shared facilities, vehicles, public safety services, information and technology and administrative support functions. We see our communities, more and more, acting **inter**-dependently, not independently.

According to Bob O’Neill, Executive Director of the International City/County Management Association, the public and private sectors are collaborating in more ways than ever before. These are all common sense ways to cut spending while protecting essential services during this downturn in our economy.

So, what is ***Vision Hampton Roads***?

On each of your tables, we’ve provided a one-sheet, 30,000-foot view of what Vision is.

I also encourage you to visit the website, [VISIONHAMPTONROADS .COM](http://VISIONHAMPTONROADS.COM) to download the executive summary or for a full picture, download the complete document.

Over 150 people around the region participated in the research and planning process. Nearly 500 responses were submitted by citizens, and you can track how their comments impacted the final document.

In short, this started as a process mandated by the federal government’s Economic Development Administration required for our localities to request funding through economic development grants. It developed into much more: a **blueprint to transform** the region into a collective, interdependent **vision** for our future, positioning Hampton Roads to be more competitive in the global economy.

We studied the three main DRIVERS of our economy: the sectors of **Federal** and military, **Port** and maritime, and **Tourism**, including arts and culture.

According to regional economists, these three drivers represent almost 75% of our regional economy. Everyone in this room is impacted by these economic drivers ... one way or another.

75% of your economy in three drivers has served the region well in this economic downturn but also leaves us vulnerable. To work on balancing our economy, we added a fourth driver to the process: Opportunities.

The Opportunities Task Force developed important strategies around Coastal Energy; Health and Life Sciences; and Technology-based Business Innovation such as Modeling & Simulation, Robotics and Sensors.

At that point, issues that cut across each of these four drivers were recognized. Education and Workforce Development; Environmental and Energy issues; Infrastructure, Land Use and Technology; and finally Quality of Life.

We recognized that on a much larger level, the Brookings Institution had identified those assets required for a truly successful region, and they matched exactly with our cross-cutting issues. Thus, the plan for our course of work extended to include: Innovation, Infrastructure, Intellectual & Human Capital and Sense of Place.

The ability for Hampton roads to speak from one agenda and with one voice is important, thus was created a category labeled Public / Government Awareness & Policy.

The one overall **Vision** goal for the region became: With proper foresight, continuous planning and dynamic economic development, Hampton Roads will be recognized internationally as a region fueled by Innovation, Intellectual and Human Capital, Infrastructure and a Sense of Place.

Public comment added the word “internationally” to the goal.

What happens now is an alignment of organizations and industries and then implementation.

Let me help you visualize what we mean by alignment. There are numerous organizations interested in Coastal Energy, all suffering from the 9-year permitting period. These groups have different knowledge, different perspectives and different assets but with a common goal. Success is more likely by aligning their efforts thus shortening the permitting process.

Innovation in the technology industry requires a specialized workforce. So educators know from the blueprint that is ***Vision Hampton Roads*** what our needs will be and can develop a complimentary curriculum.

Think about fragmentation of files in your computer. Files are spread across the hard drive slowing everything down. You defrag your computer to align files for more efficient use. Think of “defragging” the region.

Lead organizations have been identified, and action-oriented Task Forces are now forming. For maximum efficiency, there was no need to create new entities, but, rather, to leverage the expertise of existing groups to tackle issues.

This is not just a Hampton Roads Partnership plan. The alignment of many other regional organizations is the lubricant needed to keep this engine, this ***Vision***, running smoothly and moving Hampton Roads forward.

Key organizations include the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, our partner in developing the economic development strategy, Workforce Investment Boards, the Chambers of Commerce, the Transportation Planning Organization, the Military & Federal Facilities Alliance, the Southeastern Virginia Tourism Alliance and Virginia Arts Festival, and the Virginia Port Authority, Ship Repair and Maritime Associations and others.

And at least one existing organization will morph into a new structure to better deal with an economic driver like Innovation, namely the Hampton Roads Research Partnership.

Performance matters, too. ***Vision*** has initial performance measures attached to it. These measures can be monitored in real time on the region’s website:

HAMPTON ROADS PERFORMS .ORG and by the annual ***Vision Dashboard***, a copy of which you'll also find at your table.

Today's Regional Day serves as the first community-wide roll-out of ***Vision***. Annually, we'll report back to the region on how we're doing. And, remember, this ***Vision***, just like life, is not a sprint but a marathon.

Each of you is important to the ***Vision***'s success.

Bob Gittler, our region's representative from the Dept. of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, has joined us today. Bob recently shared with us that *Vision Hampton Roads* is considered a model of how this process is best accomplished.

For EDA officials around the country who need advice to develop their own strategy, his office is pointing to ***Vision Hampton Roads*** as an example of "how to do it right." He's even sent a video clip of the Virginia Beach City Council work session presentation to EDA offices across the country.

From Bob, we look forward to hearing very soon that Hampton Roads has been awarded its first region-wide *Federal Economic Development District Designation* making federal economic development grants now available to us. Thank you, Bob, for joining us today.

And, now, we'll move to the part of today's program which reinforces the key principles and themes of the regional ***Vision***.

A little history:

On April 26, 2006, Hampton Roads' elected officials gathered at historic Fort Story and signed a proclamation which launched the Year of Regional Citizenship. This event set into motion a better understanding of what our region's unique competitive advantage is and how to capitalize on it.

Hampton Roads is unlike any other region of the United States.

While most regions have a center city, or perhaps two cities or even tri-cities, there is no other region that can boast having SEVEN diverse, distinct, interdependent cities, like Hampton Roads.

TEN, when including the outer cities of Franklin, Poquoson and Williamsburg.

After the 2006 Year of Regional Citizenship celebration, the newspapers said the event “might not compare to the **Declaration of Independence**” but it did “declare unity” for the region. Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim was quoted as saying: “What happens in one community affects every other community in the region. It’s time to set aside our political differences and work together as one people in one region.” Clearly, we can maintain individual identities and recognize we win or lose as a region.

However, we have no government structure that causes us to come together, and so it must be voluntary. This is our opportunity to celebrate our differences and diversity, highlight our past successes and move our community of communities forward. And, Hampton Roads is ready.

During a visit last week by *Patchwork Nation’s* Project Director and the Online Editor of PBS NewsHour, we were told: For regionalism to work, a region’s differences must be acknowledged and taken advantage of and that Hampton Roads is a “**perfect region**” due to its wealth of diversity.

And, so, today’s ratification of Hampton Roads first “**Declaration of Interdependence**” takes us all one step further toward our first region-wide comprehensive ***Vision***.

This “Declaration of Interdependence” is a Regional Compact, a pledge of elected officials from all corners of the region that they will continue working together to address the key issues facing our citizens with the understanding that ***we can dramatically improve everyone’s future.***

On the back of your Program, you will see the Preamble and the articles’ headings. We invite you to download the complete Declaration at VISIONHAMPTONROADS.COM

At this time, we will have our “regional crier” request the roll-call vote:

**ERIC PRICE, REGIONAL “CRIER” –
DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE ROLL-CALL VOTE**

Governor Bob McDonnell speaks

DANA DICKENS – CALL TO ACTION

Hampton Roads has a proud heritage ... and rightfully so for we are America’s First Region. Brookings Institute ranks us among the nation’s top 20 strongest performing regions, but we cannot rest on our laurels.

Historically, our region was home to America’s First Innovators. We’re a region of “firsts.” Our nation’s military defense and public education began here. The first law school and our system of justice and the first legislative assembly were built here. This is where Africans first became African-Americans. Space travel took its first small step here with the nation’s first civilian aeronautics lab where the original seven astronauts trained.

First successful medical advances happened here, such as in vitro fertilization. The first continuous English-speaking community was established here in Hampton.

From advancing space exploration to retail development and tourism, from transportation infrastructure to academic research, people and institutions in Hampton Roads have accomplished many firsts over the centuries.

We’ve done well, and we must do even better. We must focus on our “innovative” culture again. To become truly competitive in the global economy, this has to happen. And, **Vision** is the vehicle of that change, of that transformation.

We must do, not more with less, but more with more. And, we can achieve this by aligning our resources, marshalling our talents and focusing on our common **Vision**.

I invite you to visit the website VISIONHAMPTONROADS.COM to learn more. More about the people who worked on *Vision* and the outcomes, including the specific strategies and actions.

The world has changed more in the last 20 years than it has in the last 200 years ... and we haven't seen anything yet.

The world truly is flat. A rapidly changing global economy presents challenges ... and we must meet those challenges. *Vision Hampton Roads* is our roadmap.

For years, the HR economy has been insulated by military spending. We became complacent. We must change our region's culture to be innovators again, to take our rightful place in the global economy.

And, if it is to be, it is up to thee!!!!

You can leave here today as we do from most meetings and do nothing. Or you can take action. Here is what you can do:

- Hitch your horse to the *Vision Hampton Roads* wagon and join in achieving goals to improve the economy to the benefit of all 1.7 million citizens of Hampton Roads.
- Encourage every organization you are in to do the same.
- Gather the leadership where you work. Get them involved.
- In every meeting you attend, remember: we are stronger when we collaborate. In every decision, think collaboration.
- And, lastly, as we leave here today, I invite you to use the **blue AND green** cards on your tables and get involved by staking your claim in the future. Write down your name, email address and personal interest with *Vision*. Leave them on the table. We'll gather them and contact you.

It's important for each of you to:

Educate yourself;

Engage in the process; and

Enlighten others.

Every one of us is a citizen of a neighborhood, a community (whether city or county) and the greater Hampton Roads region. It is in ALL of our best interests and the interests of our future generations to take a stand, now. Remember, Task Force participants are not tied to geography or process or an organization, but rather by their expertise and their passion to make an impact.

The 70s was the first time we heard the reference “the Decade of ME” and that single-minded focus stayed with us for decades. With Hampton Roads practicing collaboration and cooperation, I’m declaring this as the “Decade of WE.” (*now that’s spelled W-E, not W-i-i like the game*)

Collaboration is king. Collaboration is transformational. Collaboration reinforces the understanding that strong global forces affect us all, and we must build on our local assets accordingly.

If you’re interested in making a good living and living a good life in Hampton Roads, then please spread the **Vision** and get involved.

Join a Task Force. Volunteer your time. Share the message. Let’s all continue on our path forward as we **Think, Live and Act Regionally**.

And, please visit our Regional Day Displays outside as you leave today. Drive safely.

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Contact@HRP.org

430 World Trade Center
Norfolk, VA 23510
(757) 625-4696



ERIC PRICE, "REGIONAL CRIER" –

Speech on VISION HAMPTON ROADS Regional Day

Thursday, May 6, 2010

Oh, Yea!

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

As Regional Crier and an ardent patriot and citizen of the great Commonwealth of Virginia, it is a high honor indeed to be with you today for this region's Declaration of Interdependence.

Bright minds with broad vision make this day possible as they did on July 4th 1776. What is right, what is prudent and what is just, today becomes formally enacted. This Declaration of Interdependence officially begins an expedition for a greater good for all who reside in this region.

Great men and women of vision, trust and leadership throughout all of Hampton Roads declare a simple enduring truth...Hampton Roads is all for one while being one for all!

Celebrate a new day, a new era and a renewed passion for growth and opportunity.

May it be recorded that on this day, May the sixth of two thousand and ten, that self interest has been replaced by the greater good.

That, heretofore, competitive communities are united and committed to pursuing competitive opportunities and jobs.

That safety and education are regional priorities of shared concern.

And, that regional transportation solutions are at the core of these resolutions. Henceforth we speak together as one region, and we will act together as one region. Together, we ensure a wonderful future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, How do you vote?

Franklin City – “In 39 years, from town to city, Franklin is a friendly community, a place where life is gentle, fun and prosperous.” What say you, The Honorable James P. Councill, III of Franklin?

Hampton City – “Home of Emancipation Oak, where President Abraham Lincoln read the Emancipation Proclamation – a community with abundant waterfront, successful business clusters, unique housing and retail development.” What say you, The Honorable George E. Wallace of Hampton?

Newport News City – “Selected as the premier site by the region’s two federal laboratories and the Commonwealth’s largest private employer. A Boom Town, fast-growing, changing and diversifying city of opportunity.” What say you, The Honorable Joe S. Frank of Newport News?

Norfolk City – “Home to the world’s largest naval station, a vibrant downtown, thriving arts scene, renown museums and beautiful neighborhoods.” What say you, The Honorable Anthony L. Burfoot of Norfolk?

Poquoson City – “A suburban delight with 84 miles of shoreline on the Chesapeake Bay, formerly a fishing village that remains well known for its incredible seafood.” What say you, The Honorable Carey Freeman of Poquoson?

Portsmouth City – “Steeped in maritime history, home to the U.S. Navy’s oldest naval shipyard and the largest privately owned port/marine terminal in North America.” What say you, The Honorable James W. Holley III of Portsmouth?

Suffolk City – “A land of many pleasant choices, from high-tech to low-stress lifestyle; known as home to Mr. Peanut and the first massive processing plant of The Planters Nut and Chocolate Company.” What say you, The Honorable Charles D. Parr of Suffolk?

Virginia Beach City – “Virginia’s most populous city and longest pleasure beach in the world with a history dating back 403 years when the English Colonists made their first landing at Cape Henry.” What say you, The Honorable Louis R. Jones of Virginia Beach?

Williamsburg City – “Colonial Capital of Virginia and home to The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg was called by President Roosevelt, *the most historic avenue in America* and is considered the country’s premier outdoor living museum today.” What say you, The Honorable Jeanne Zeidler of Williamsburg?

Gloucester County – “The birthplace of U.S. Army Physician Walter Reed, Gloucester combines beauty and business in a lush and picturesque setting.” What say you, The Honorable Louise D. Theberge of Gloucester?

Isle of Wight County – “A natural beauty, thriving economy and high standard of living come together to make Isle of Wight Virginia’s *promised land*, successfully blending business with good clean living.” What say you, The Honorable Phillip A. Bradshaw of Isle of Wight?

James City County – “Founded by The Virginia Company in 1607 as America’s first business venture James City County continues to establish, nurture and pursue profitable enterprises.” What say you, The Honorable Bruce C. Goodson of James City?

Southampton County – “With a rich economic heritage built around agriculture and forestry and its people with high quality work standards, dedication and commitment to the land. Home to one of Virginia’s recognized Indian Tribes.” What say you, The Honorable Anita Felts of Southampton?

Surry County – “Historic Surry County, a montage of rolling farmlands, blossoming woods, water-front panoramas, quaint lifestyles.” What say you, The Honorable Tyrone W. Franklin of Surry?

York County – “Known for abundant green space and 200 miles of coastline along the York River and its tributaries is where national history resides – with the surrender of General Cornwallis to General Washington, ending the Revolutionary War.” What say you, The Honorable George S. Hrichak of York?

Smithfield Township – “Whose life and growth have been conditioned by the Pagan River. And, celebrated 250 years by creating the world’s largest ham biscuit containing 500 lbs. of famous Smithfield Ham.” What say you, The Honorable David M. Hare of Smithfield?

Chesapeake City – “The famous Battle of Great Bridge marked the effective end of British rule in Virginia and today, in Chesapeake, we mark the beginning of our Declaration of Interdependence.” What say you, The Honorable Alan P. Krasnoff of Chesapeake?

Let it be known that the communities present have agreed. The Declaration is passed with unanimous consent!

We would now like to invite His Excellency, the Honorable Robert McDonnell, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, to sign the Declaration of Interdependence.

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