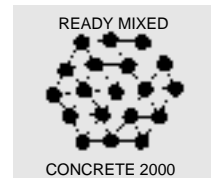


The

# READY-MIXER

## Virginia Ready-Mixed Concrete Association

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SEPTEMBER 2003

## State Tax Code, TEA-21, HOS Measures Warrant VRMCA Scrutiny

### State

The Study Commission charged with reforming Virginia's tax code has held several hearings, but no decisions have been made. There is great opposition to a proposed sales tax on services and there is concern about revising the tax code in a revenue-neutral mode. No clear-cut proposal to solve highway funding problems has surfaced.

### Federal

Congressman Goode, VRMCA legislative chairman Clarron Render,

### Legislative / Regulatory Update

former board member Boo Twohy, W&L Construction's Ken Taylor, Washington lobbyist John Dudinsky, and VRMCA Executive Director Peter Easter continue to advocate the 60,000 pound gross vehicle weight (GVW) three axle and 70,000 pound GVW four axle mixed weight limits on Virginia's interstates.

A major initiative concerns getting Virginia's congressmen to sign a letter from Congressman Goode in support of the measure. At this point, we still need the following congressmen to sign the letter:

Bobby Scott – Newport News  
James Moran – Alexandria  
Thomas Davis – Annandale

If you have contacts with any of these congressmen, please phone Peter Easter at once (434-977-3716).

The matter is also being complicated by Congress's slowness in approving **Reauthorization of TEA 21**, the six-year transportation funding program for the states. On Friday, September 26, both the House and Senate passed a temporary continuance of TEA-21 (HR3087), effective for five months. President Bush is signing the bill. This stop-gap measure provides \$14 billion for highways, \$3 billion for transit, and keeps our nation's federal surface transportation program operating until March 1, 2004, thereby giving the House and Senate authorizing committees additional time to prepare a long-term, comprehensive TEA-21 reauthorization bill.

VRMCA supports the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee's six-year, \$375 billion reauthorization plan and will continue to advocate for its adoption. The Senate Environmental and Public Works (EPW) Committee's plan calls for \$311 billion over six years, while the Bush Administration wants a six-year, \$247 billion authorization bill.

**Hours of Service Regulations**, effective January 4, 2003, that reduce the on-duty hours are also of grave concern to the VRMCA board of directors and staff. The staff has asked the Virginia State Police for a more favorable ruling and this is now under advisement. Short-haul drivers, such as mixer drivers, are not subject to falling asleep at the wheel, which is a problem with long-haul drivers.

### Wintergreen Meeting a Success

What a great Virginia Ready-Mixed Concrete Association conference at Wintergreen! All attendees enjoyed the speakers and the subjects they spoke about.

The conference started with the Virginia Ready-Mixed Concrete Advisory Council approving and recommending the 2004 Budget to the VRMCA Board of Directors.

Also during the meeting we heard from the individual Council chairmen and the field consultants on the projects happening in their area.

A special thanks to all of our Chairmen who attended—we know it is a busy time and we appreciate all the work you do for the Council and the Association.

The VRMCA Board met after the Council meeting and approved the Association's 2004 Budget and accepted the Council's recommendation in approving the VRMCAC Budget.

The Board also discussed the United States Department of Transportation's new hours of service rules. VRMCA Executive Director Peter Easter told the meeting that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration had denied eight petitions seeking reconsideration of the regulations.

Also discussed was the dire need for more transportation funding throughout the Commonwealth. The Board discussed a number of options and instructed the staff to work with Virginia Highway Construction Council to work on funding plans for the future.

On the Monday of the meeting, we heard presentations on Virginia's economic forecast; implementing a successful value-added concrete program; aggregate supply and demand outlook; and recent developments in wage, hour, and other employment requirements.

Tuesday's agenda was highlighted by seminars on architectural concrete; transportation policy for Virginia; the National Ready-Mixed Concrete Association's promotional strategy; and the outlook for the U.S. cement market.

Thanks to Matt MCGlone, of Master Builders, Inc., our Meeting Chair, for coordinating a very successful fall convention.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 2004 Spring Meeting, scheduled for May 16-18 at the Homestead.

## **Richmond Council Initiates Virginia's First 'Team Concrete' Project**

*By Keith Beazley  
VRMCA Eastern Region*

The "Team Concrete" project is an initiative of the cement and concrete industries to build better communities with concrete and is coordinated by the Portland Cement Association (PCA). Team Concrete focuses on bringing the many advantages of high-quality concrete homes to affordable housing initiatives in the communities nationwide. This concept generates recognition for the expertise, enthusiasm, and commitment that our industry partners bring to affordable housing.

This project has recognized and will feature the program that has been so successful with the Tri-Cities Habitat for Humanity. This chapter is breaking ground for their fifth ICF habitat house in the middle of September. The Richmond Council has been a sponsor of each of these houses, with the development of plans, expertise in the construction of the walls, and the development of a relationship that has been a very positive and rewarding experience.

The Habitat chapter has plans for the building of six additional houses with ICF walls and concrete flooring systems. These projects have been used for training and demonstration of the ICF systems; a number of houses and other projects other than Habitat have been built as a result. Some of the projects have even included stamped porches and walks as demonstration models.

PCA will feature these projects in literature and on its Web site. Promotional materials also will be furnished for the chapter and the workers on the site. The projects have been published in newspaper articles and have been featured on television news. Jim Niehoff, PCA Residential Promotion Manager, is coordinating this effort with the Richmond Council.

The Richmond Council built the first Habitat for Humanity project in Virginia in the summer of 1998 building a complete exterior (foundation, ICF walls, windows, doors, exterior siding, roof,

porch and walks) of a house in seven working days with Richmond Habitat for Humanity. Habitat volunteers completed the interior of the home. Since this project, additional projects have been built in Virginia Beach, Hopewell, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Fredericksburg, Winchester, and Bridgewater. The Hampton Roads Council is planning a second Habitat project with the Hamp-

ton Habitat Chapter in the next few months.

These projects benefit our industry through a contribution to the community and individuals who have the opportunity to live in an ICF house with the benefits of energy savings features that have real meaning to a low-income family.

## **New Concrete Turning Lane in Use in Caroline County**

The Route 207 concrete turning lane in Caroline County is complete and is the newest addition to the concrete turning lane program that was started some years ago in the Richmond area. This intersection is one of the largest truck usage intersections in the state with three large truck stops located on Interstate 95 in an area that is convenient for trucks to use. A concrete turning lane devoted for truck use has been installed and a new traffic pattern developed. VDOT officials are very interested in this project and are considering other locations as a result of the success of the project. Marie Derby, Essroc Cement, worked with the Fredericksburg VDOT District office, and Bob Long, ACPA, worked with the specifications and inspection on the project and supervised the construction of the turning lane. Without the efforts of these two

individuals, the project would not have come to completion and have been so successful.

This new intersection has been photographed and will be featured in the new Concrete Intersection Manual being developed by Keith Beazley, Bob Nablo, and Bob Long. The manual will be a notebook with sections on the existing concrete turning lanes and intersections with pictures and descriptions, specifications for lanes, constructions methods, traffic control, cost estimate methods. Sections and information may be added, as it is available. ACPA is furnishing information about intersection and turning lane publications in Iowa and Washington State. This technical notebook will be made available to VDOT officials and local city and county engineers.

## **Virginia's Tax Amnesty Program in Effect Through April 2004**

The Virginia Department of Taxation launched a 63-day Tax Amnesty Program September 2, offering an opportunity for qualified individuals and businesses to catch up on their state taxes.

The program waives all penalties and half of the accrued interest on most back taxes paid during the amnesty period. Delinquent taxpayers who do not take advantage of the amnesty will be assessed an additional 20 percent penalty on any unpaid tax balance.

Proposed by Governor Mark R. Warner and authorized earlier this year by the Virginia General Assembly, the tax amnesty is designed to provide an incentive to business and individual taxpayers who have fallen behind on their state taxes.

The program, the first in the Commonwealth since a total of \$32 million was collected in 1990, is expected to generate an estimated \$48 million in revenue.

## Amnesty

*Continued from page 3*

Individuals and businesses can participate in tax amnesty to clear tax bills that are at least 90 days old as of Sept. 2, 2003. Taxpayers also can take advantage of tax amnesty to file individual and corporate income tax returns for taxable years 2001 and earlier, and other business tax returns for periods through April 2003.

Most taxpayers eligible for amnesty will receive notifications by mail; many will also receive telephone calls from the amnesty call center. An amnesty web site ([www.VaTaxAmnesty.com](http://www.VaTaxAmnesty.com)), and a toll-free hotline (1-877-VATAX77) are also available to provide additional information.

To qualify for amnesty, payment for outstanding tax bills must be made by November 3. Eligible delinquent returns also must be filed by that date. Officials at the Department of Taxation caution, however, that waiting until the final days to take part in the amnesty could jeopardize a taxpayer's participation.

"We encourage taxpayers interested in amnesty to call us or their tax professional as soon as possible," said Kenneth W. Thorson, Tax Commissioner. "We recognize that people may be inclined to wait until the final days of the amnesty program to begin the payment process, but doing so runs the risk that the window of opportunity may close before these taxpayers are able to complete the amnesty process."

Thorson also issued warning to delinquent taxpayers who fail to take advantage of the amnesty. Along with an additional penalty of 20 percent that will be assessed on all amnesty-eligible, unpaid tax bills, the Department of Taxation is stepping up enforcement efforts through a variety of means, including hiring more than 110 new auditors, collectors and other tax employees.

*Visit the VRMCA  
Website at  
[http://  
www.vrmca.com](http://www.vrmca.com)*

## HRAC Promotes Alternative Uses of Concrete

*By Keith Beazley  
VRMCA Eastern Region*

The Hampton Roads Advisory Council (HRAC) has been working on a project that is out of the realm and scope of the normal everyday use of concrete. Jim Simmons of Capital Concrete and Marie Derby of Essroc Cement represent the HRAC on this project of the creation of artificial reefs using concrete balls called reef balls to promote the attraction of fish and marine growth to benefit the environment. This project has depended on the knowledge and expertise of the members for mix designs and advice on pouring and the usage of concrete.

The *Virginian-Pilot* recently published an article by Scoot Harper about the project and the usage of memorial reef balls to honor the deceased in the Hampton Roads area. An Eastern Shore fisherman and conservationist, John Grayson Rodgers, became the first *Virginian* to be poured into a round mold and made into an "eternal reef ball" with his cremated ashes. When the gray slurry of the reef ball hardens, the 1,600-pound sphere resembling a giant Wiffle ball will be dropped to the bottom of the Chesapeake Bay. It will become part of an existing artificial reef near Nassawadox, where Rodgers lived most of his 76 years, and will attract fish, marine growth, and scuba divers.

Eternal reef balls are a modern alternative to cemeteries with a green twist. They are favored mostly by avid divers, fisherman, and outdoor enthusiasts who

want to be "buried at sea" and contribute something to the marine environment they loved. An Atlanta-based company, Eternal Reefs, started mixing human ashes and environmentally friendly cement in 1998. About 125 memorial balls have been created since then.

"We're giving people something that's living, that's growing, that the family can come and visit," said company president Don Brawley. The balls cost between \$850 and \$3,200 depending on the size.

Reef balls were invented about 10 years ago as a way to restore coral reefs disappearing around the globe. The Reef Ball Development Group was launched in Florida and has since sunk nearly 500,000 spheres in oceans and freshwaters in 40 countries.

Fran and Josh Loney founded Sea Search of Virginia, which is the only outlet certified to make and sell reef balls in the state. They have constructed over 50 balls for state projects so far.

Jim Simmons and Marie Derby of the HRAC are passionate about this environmentally friendly use of concrete and plan to use the reef ball project to educate school children on the environmental aspects of concrete. Plans are in the works to build reef balls of different sizes at the Virginia Institute for Marine Science when funds and a location are available.

*Scott Harper of the The Virginian-Pilot contributed to this article.*

### ***Northern Virginia Cooperative Day***

**The Northern Virginia  
Ready-Mixed Concrete  
Advisory Council will be  
held Thursday, November  
13, 2003, at Noon at the  
Holiday Inn in Manassas,  
Virginia.**

### **GOT NEWS?**

The VRMCA is interested in your company and/or organization's news, including company/organization **awards** and **anniversaries**; employee **promotions**, awards, and special recognitions; **upcoming events** open to all association members; and past **event results**. Send your news to *Ready-Mixer*, c/o Emily Hoar, Communications Coordinator, 630 Country Green Lane, Charlottesville, VA 22902-6478. Email: [emily@easterassociates.com](mailto:emily@easterassociates.com). FAX: 434-979-2439.



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The Smart Road bridge, at 175 feet tall, is Virginia's tallest bridge. Approximately 9,647 cubic yards of high-strength concrete were used to construct the 2,000-foot long bridge.

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