

## **ARTICLES OF INTEREST**

10/15/10

# Va. is No. 2 state for business

After four years, Virginia falls from top spot to second in Forbes ranking, behind Utah

**BY CAROL HAZARD**  
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

Virginia came off its pedestal this year in the Forbes magazine ranking of the best states for business and careers. But it didn't fall far.

After four years in the spotlight at No. 1, Virginia came in second behind Utah, which was ranked third last year.

"Virginia still boasts a very favorable business climate, with an educated labor supply and solid economic growth," according to a Forbes article published Wednesday. "But Virginia's business costs, namely labor and en-

ergy, have crept up, which allowed Utah to leapfrog it."

Also in the top five were No. 3 North Carolina, No. 4 Colorado and No. 5 Washington. Utah was singled out for its low energy costs and for reducing its corporate tax rate to one of the lowest in the nation, as well as for having growing employment and surging household incomes.

In a July survey by financial news cable network CNBC, Virginia fell to second place, behind Texas, this year from first last year, as the best state in the nation in which to do business.

Virginia was ranked best in 2007 and 2009 and second in 2008.

Virginia's ranking as one of the top two states in the nation in separate rankings is a testament to the state's pro-job-creation climate, said J. Tucker Martin, a spokesman for

Gov. Bob McDonnell.

"However, we understand that other states and countries are increasingly competitive and aggressive in the global marketplace," he said.

"That's why the governor recently sought and gained a host of new tools to help Virginia better compete going forward. The governor won't be satisfied until Virginia is known as the undisputed best place in the nation, and the world, for private-sector job creation and economic investment and growth."

The Forbes ranking measures costs, labor supply, regulatory environment, economic climate, growth prospects and quality of life. Business costs, which include labor, energy and taxes, are weighted the most heavily.

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• Staff writer Olympia Meola contributed to this report.

10/4/2010

# Navy interested in Franklin airport

## It is negotiating with the city to use the runway as a practice landing field

The Virginian-Pilot

FRANKLIN — During World War II, Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Franklin was a busy place, a stopover for hundreds of planes just off the assembly line to be rigged up before assignment to an aircraft carrier.

Today, its successor, Franklin Municipal Airport, sees only about 14 takeoffs, landings or other operations a day — or about 5,000 each year.

That is likely to change. Navy officials announced Friday that they're in negotiations with the city to use the airport's asphalt runway for Norfolk-based propeller planes to practice carrier landing maneuvers.

The expected 40,000 annual operations would mostly involve touch-and-go maneuvers, and Navy officials explained that a single practice session for one of the planes could account for as

many as 12 operations.

Two types of planes would practice at Franklin: the E-2C Hawkeye, a surveillance plane with a large radar dome above its fuselage, and the C-2 Greyhound, which moves personnel and mail to and from carriers at sea.

The arrangement, which the Navy hopes will be in place by January 2012, would reduce congestion at its auxiliary landing field in Chesapeake and eliminate the cost of sending Hawkeye and Greyhound crews to Jacksonville, Fla., for training.

The Franklin airport, home to 24 planes, would continue to operate as a public field. But the Navy would pay an undetermined sum to use the space, providing a boost to a city reeling from the shutdown of the International Paper plant.

Mayor James P. Council III described the informal agreement with the Navy as "almost like Santa Claus."

"It certainly isn't going to replace [International Paper], but it will be a nice piece to help us in our recovery," he said.

Unlike the F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets based at Oceana Naval Air Sta-

tion in Virginia Beach, Hawkeyes and Greyhounds are relatively quiet.

Franklin is adjacent to Southampton County, one of three Virginia counties the Navy is eyeing for an outlying landing field to be used by the jets. Officials say they need to build a practice field in a dark, rural place to sharpen jet pilots' landing skills.

That outlying landing field proposal, which would require the Navy to purchase thousands of acres of farmland or forests, has generated widespread opposition in the communities that would be affected.

Currently, Oceana's jets practice at Fentress Auxiliary Landing Field in Chesapeake, which has been surrounded by the lights of development. Fentress is also a busy place, especially when several squadrons of jets are ramping up for deployment, and is sometimes used late into the night.

In Franklin, Council said, "there's not going to be jets, or jet noise. It's not an outlying landing field."

He cautioned that the City Council has yet to approve the Navy's use of the airport. But he doesn't think there will be serious opposition.

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# Governor: Pay raise unlikely

State workers shouldn't expect increase after bonus in Dec., McDonnell says

**BY TYLER WHITLEY**  
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

State employees should not expect a pay raise for some time after the 3 percent one-time bonus they will receive in December, Gov. Bob McDonnell said yesterday.

"We are still in tough financial times," he said on the "Ask the Governor" radio show on WRVA (1140 AM). "I don't see any long-term pay raise in the near future."

Because the state finished the two-year fiscal period that ended June 30 with a budget surplus of \$400 million, McDonnell said it would grant a one-time, 3 percent bonus to state employees. It's called a bonus, so the money will not go in the salary scale and contribute to future pension payments.

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The bonus will cost the state about \$82 million. State employees have not received a pay raise since November 2007.

On the monthly radio show, McDonnell again criticized the management of the Virginia Department of Transportation. An audit commissioned by McDonnell found that the highway-building agency was sitting on about \$1.4 billion in maintenance and construction funds while pleading hard times.

The process of granting contracts is "much too slow; it takes too long," he said.

McDonnell said the money in reserve will be decreased from about six months' to two months' time.

McDonnell said the fact that VDOT has so much money should not discourage legislators from adopting his liquor-store privatization plan, which is designed to raise about \$500 million for transportation through the auction of licenses.

Rather, McDonnell said, the audit should reassure legislators that the privatization money "is going to be spent well."

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