

October 2011

Dear Reader:

This is Old Dominion University's 12th annual State of the Region report. While it represents the work of many people connected in various ways to the university, the report does not constitute an official viewpoint of Old Dominion, or its president, John R. Broderick. The State of the Region reports maintain the goal of stimulating thought and discussion that ultimately will make Hampton Roads an even better place to live. We are proud of our region's many successes, but realize it is possible to improve our performance. In order to do so, we must have accurate information about "where we are" and a sound understanding of the policy options available to us.

The 2011 report is divided into eight parts:

Putt, Putting Along: Our Regional Economy: We're doing better than the nation, but seem to be stuck in neutral. The port, regional tourism and residential housing have yet to regain the ground they lost during the recession and the outlook for defense spending is uncertain.

Apartment Housing in Hampton Roads: Vacancy rates have fallen as home ownership rates have declined. Monthly rents are among the highest in the southeast region of the country. These conditions may lead to an upsurge in apartment construction.

A Simple Guide to Transportation Needs and Planning in Hampton Roads: What transportation needs do we have, how are they prioritized, and is there any hope that the region and the commonwealth will have sufficient revenue available to address them?

The Economic Plight of African American Men in Hampton Roads: The worldwide recession significantly worsened the economic condition of African American men. There are multiple reasons why this was so and credible solutions often are controversial.

WHRO Marks Its 50th Anniversary: Virginia's first educational, noncommercial television station has become a multimedia leader. Like most major media, however, WHRO lives in a rapidly evolving environment that could challenge its existence.

The Concrete Connection: Economic Growth for Virginia's Eastern Shore? The economic impact of dredging the Cape Charles Harbor exceeds \$3.2 billion if it results in that site being used to produce concrete for new bridges, tunnels and wind turbines.

K-12 Independent Education on Virginia's Peninsula: Thirty-five private (independent) K-12 schools exist on the Peninsula. Because commonwealth regulation of their activities is minimal, there is great variation in their goals, operations and transparency.

If It Bleeds, Does It Still Lead? Local Television Evening News in Hampton Roads: The evening news broadcasts of the four major stations in the region continue to feature frequent reporting of violent crimes, especially by members of minority groups. WAVY featured the most crime coverage and WVEC the least.

Old Dominion University continues to provide support for this report. However, it would not appear without the vital backing of the private donors whose names appear below. They believe in Hampton Roads and in the power of rational discussion to improve our circumstances, but are not responsible for the views expressed in the report.

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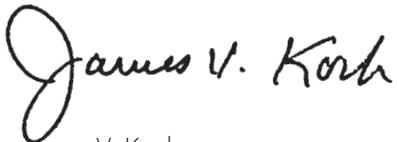
Vinod Agarwal	Susan Hughes	Janet Molinaro	Ayush Toolsidass
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Vicky Curtis	Feng Lian	Jim Sylvester	Gilbert Yochum
Steve Daniel	Sharon Lomax		

Special recognition is due Vinod Agarwal and Gilbert Yochum of the Old Dominion University Economic Forecasting Project, which Professor Agarwal now directs. Their penetrating analyses of the regional and commonwealth economies are by consensus the baseline by which numerous economic activities are measured.

My hope is that you, the reader, will be stimulated by the report and will use it as a vehicle to promote productive discussions about our future. Please contact me at jkoch@odu.edu or 757-683-3458 should you have questions.

All 12 of the State of the Region reports may be found at www.odu.edu/forecasting and www.jamesvkoch.com. Single paper copies may be purchased for \$25.

Sincerely,



James V. Koch

Board of Visitors Professor of Economics
and President Emeritus