

NEWS & INFORMATION

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New lane markings promote safety, encourage alternative transportation

Shared-lane bicycle pavement markings, sometimes called "sharrows," have been installed on Drillfield Drive. It's part of Virginia Tech's effort to make campus safe for multiple modes of travel, encourage healthy lifestyles, and advocate for environmentally friendly transportation.

The markings are stencils of a bicycle with two chevron symbols above that occupy the center of the lane. They are used to remind motorists that bicyclists are permitted to use the full lane. Even where there are no sharrows or bike lanes, motorists should always share the road.

Sharrows are just one of the bike friendly initiatives in place to encourage students, employees, and community members to consider alternative methods of transportation.

Nearly 13 percent of students, faculty, and staff report that they ride a bike to and from work. The national average is below 3 percent, according to the 2014 American Commuter Survey.

Bicyclists

Sharing the road means bicyclists should:

- Ride predictably
- Follow the rules of the road
- Watch for motorists when making lane changes and turns
- Ride in the correct direction of travel at all times

Motorists

Sharing the road means motorists should:

- Drive predictably
- Follow the rules of the road
- Watch for bicyclists when making lane changes and turns
- When parked, check for bicyclists before opening vehicle doors
- Be respectful of both bicyclists and pedestrians
- Be aware that bicyclists are vulnerable to different hazards than drivers (e.g. minor pot holes and debris), so give them space to maneuver.

In 2013, Virginia Tech was designated a Bicycle Friendly University by the League of American Bicyclists. Each year since 2010, the university has been awarded gold in Best Workplaces for Commuters Race to Excellence. In 2014, the university was also recognized in the "Best of" categories for universities in the Best Workplaces for Commuters Race to Excellence.

For more information about alternative transportation contact Mackenzie Jarvis at 540-231 2701.

Virginia Cooperative Extension launches interpretation service

Virginia Cooperative Extension has initiated a free language interpretation service in order to better serve Virginia's increasingly diverse population. The service provides telephone-based interpretation by a human operator in 200 different languages.

The new translation service is aligned with Extension's

mandate to serve underrepresented populations and meet civil rights compliance laws.

Nearly 500,000 Virginians have limited English proficiency.

"If you have limited English skills, there is no reason to let that stop you from visiting an Extension office," said Joe Hunnings, director of planning and reporting, professional development and civil rights compliance. "Virginia Cooperative Extension can serve you by connecting you to one of our Extension agents through a telephone-based interpreter. This service is free to our clients."

In order to use the service, staff members first determine the language that needs to be interpreted. Staff members then call the interpretation service which connects the necessary interpreter on the phone.

This interpretation service is available for clients that need the information, advice, or services of Virginia Cooperative Extension.

For more information on the Virginia Cooperative Extension visit www.ext.vt.edu/.

Virginia Tech MOVES smartphone app assists bicyclists and pedestrians

Community members who walk and/or ride a bike to and from campus are asked to provide feedback via the new Virginia Tech MOVES app.

The free app uses iPhone and Android GPS support to track users' bicycle and walking routes. It's anonymous and simple to use.

Feedback will be used to develop the university's new Parking and Transportation Master Plan.

iPhone users can download the app through the App Store, and Android users through Google Play.

Community members can also share their opinions about parking and transportation at Virginia Tech by:

- Submitting comments via the online comment form.
- Liking the Parking and Transportation Master Plan Facebook page and sharing opinions there.
- Participating in a town hall meeting in October (details forthcoming).

The Parking and Transportation Master Plan project is expected to wrap up in spring 2016, with the publication of a plan that addresses traffic service and parking conditions and recommends a phased approach for establishing a campus that fully integrates and accommodates the needs of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.

For more information about the app visit www.vt-ptmp.com/app.asp or contact Steve Mouras, director of transportation planning and sustainability at 540-231-7912.

Voluntary contributions crucial to Hybrid Retirement Plan

Employees enrolled in the Hybrid Retirement Plan who would like to increase their voluntary contribution must do so by Dec. 15. Participants are only permitted to change

contributions quarterly.

The Department of Human Resources strongly encourages employees to participate in the voluntary contribution portion of the plan in order to be fully prepared for retirement.

In addition to the plan's required contributions, employees have the option to contribute up to an additional 4% (in .5% increments) into the defined contribution portion of their retirement account. Virginia Tech will match the first 1% of voluntary contributions with a corresponding contribution of 1% of the employee's annual creditable compensation. For each additional voluntary .5% contribution, Virginia Tech will match at a contribution rate of .25%.

For more information call the Human Resources Service Center at 540-231-9331 or send an email to hrrservicecenter@vt.edu.

Hokie Wellness Supervisor Spotlight Award nominations being accepted

The Supervisor Spotlight Award, sponsored by Hokie Wellness, recognizes Virginia Tech faculty and staff supervisors who promote work/life harmony through consistent recognition of and responsiveness to their employees' professional and personal lives, incorporating important job demands along with customer and team needs.

The award is open to all faculty and staff who hold a supervisory position managing at least two employees. Nominees should demonstrate the following qualities on a daily basis:

- Work/life harmony
- Positive management practices
- Leadership style
- Workplace wellness

Nominations must be submitted electronically by 5 p.m., Friday, October 31. Two nominators are required to complete the nomination form, which can be found at virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_40IP0gnVYLwi2dD.

For more information visit Hokie Wellness at www.hokiewellness.hr.vt.edu/, send an email to hokiewellness@vt.edu, or call 540-231-9331.

VRS member benefit profiles available for VRS Plan 1 and 2 participants

Employee's Member Benefit Profiles are now available online for Virginia Retirement System Plan 1 and Plan 2 participants. The profile is an online benefits statement that provides important information about employee's retirement and other benefits as of June 30. It is available by logging into myVRS at varetire.org/myVRS/.

For more information call the Human Resources Service Center at 540-231-9331 or send an email to hrrservicecenter@vt.edu.

ADHD support groups available to students and employees

Hokie Wellness and the Virginia Tech Psychological Services Center are partnering to offer Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) support groups for employees and students.

The ADHD support groups are designed to educate group members on ADHD-specific strategies, assist in navigating community support systems, and provide resources for available services. Additionally, the groups are meant to foster an environment where participants can openly discuss their experiences with ADHD, and receive support from other group members and leaders. Registration is not required.

Group #1: Parents or caregivers of children with ADHD

- Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2 (first Wednesday of the month)
- 12 - 1 p.m.
- North End Center, room 2200

Group #2: Adults with ADHD

- Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 8 (second Tuesday of the month)
 - 12 - 1 p.m.
 - North End Center, room locations will vary
- For more information, contact Hokie Wellness at 540-231-9331 or send an email to hokiewellness@vt.edu.

Hokie Wellness to host Weight Watchers Open House

Hokie Wellness invites employees looking for a healthy way to lose weight to attend the Weight Watchers Open House on Wednesday, October 14.

Virginia Tech employees who participated in the Weight Watchers at Work program last academic year lost more than 401 pounds.

The Open House is from 11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. in room 3600 at the North End Center. In addition to an informational meeting, the event will include door prizes and the opportunity to stay for the regular Weight Watchers meeting that will follow at 12:15 p.m.

The Weight Watchers program offers a reduced monthly rate to employees and holds a weekly lunchtime meeting on campus in the North End Center. Students are welcome to attend if they have purchased a Weight Watchers pass. Ample parking is available in the attached parking garage for employees with a valid parking permit. Employees who are eligible to enroll in a state health plan, such as COVA Care, are eligible for the 50 percent reimbursement as long as participation criteria are met.

For more information visit Hokie Wellness at www.hokiewellness.hr.vt.edu/, send an email to hokiewellness@vt.edu, or call 540-231-9331.

Virginia Tech remains on top for best college food

For the second year in a row, Virginia Tech Dining has earned the No. 1 ranking for Best College Food, according to Niche. The rankings provide a comprehensive report and assessment of the quality and cost of on-campus dining options at more than 1,000 colleges and universities across the United States.

Receiving the top ranking and an A+ rating in both 2015 and 2016, Virginia Tech is recognized for value for price paid, campus options, student satisfaction, and overall quality.

The publication points to having 11 dining halls to choose from and hundreds of different dishes as a reason thousands of off-campus student residents also purchase dining plans.

Director of Dining Services Ted Faulkner credits the work and commitment by the entire Dining Services team for providing the high level of service to the campus community.

Dining Services, run by more than 2,000 team members, boasts a list of accolades for its innovative approach to food, atmosphere, and sustainability. In addition to Niche, the Princeton Review and Active Times have recently recognized Virginia Tech for its leadership in the category of campus food and healthy lifestyles.

For more information, contact Bill Foy at fwill55@vt.edu or 540-231-5258.

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