

Mary Weaver

From: Farrell, Robert <rob.farrell@dof.virginia.gov> on behalf of Farrell, Robert
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"Change is the only constant in life." - Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher

Maybe every generation feels this way, but it seems to me that the pace and scale of change are both increasing these days. The effects of climate change are increasingly being felt in our daily weather. In the last twenty years we have achieved nearly instant and universal access to information - and misinformation. In less than 2 years, COVID-19 has impacted almost every facet of public life all over the world. The pandemic may be fundamentally changing how we view work and the jobs we do. Here in Virginia we are looking at our collective history with a new, broader perspective. Last week in this message I shared that the VDOF lost 577 years of institutional knowledge through retirement in just the past year-and-a-half.

With this extreme degree and pace of change, I am surprised and maybe a little concerned about how few questions Agency Leadership receive about agency initiatives, new positions, or changes in policies at the agency and the state level. One reason this concerns me is that when questions go unasked, and thus unanswered, human tendency is we make up our own answers based on what we know or think we know. This is a terrible way to approach changes or anything "new" because all of our experience is based on the past. Research has shown that human beings put far more emphasis on potential negative outcomes than on possible positive outcomes. Again, it is just human nature to assume the worst.

Change is inevitable, the best thing you can do is to prepare yourself so that you can make the best of it. And that starts with asking questions and learning as much as you can from reliable sources. I, along with Ed, John, Terry, Hector, and Michelle welcome questions and stand ready to do our best to effectively respond to those inquiries, concerns, and suggestions for improvements, but it is hard to do so unless we hear them. While I encourage you to pose those questions through the chain-of-command, if you have concerns about them reaching the Executive Team, you are always free to send them to me or another member of the team directly.

Have a good week everyone.

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