

June 17, 2020



VAHMRS Members, Partners, and Hazmat Conference attendees,

Our Association Board of Trustees, Officers, and VA Hazmat Conference Committee have been working diligently since September 2019 to develop the best conference yet in Norfolk this September. When the potential impacts of COVID-19 began to surface earlier this year we decided to continue our conference planning efforts in hopes that by September the situation would be improved and we could once again gather for training and networking. We all had very high hopes of being able to convene.

We have been actively monitoring the COVID-19 restrictions and recommendations being put forth by the CDC, WHO, Governor Northam's Executive Order #65, and the VDH Order of Public Health Emergency Four. We are also sensitive to the limitations on travel, local budget impacts, and the financial stress on our sponsors and exhibitors. As such we are forced to make the very difficult decision to cancel our 2020 conference. I would like to thank Paul Mauger and our conference committee for their leadership and steadfast dedication to exhaust every effort to make the conference happen.

The mission of our association, primarily through our annual conference, is to provide top-level training for hazardous materials responders. Our response industry is in the midst of many changing threats and evolving technologies. It is paramount that we strengthen our engagement as an association and dedication to our membership. With the conference cancellation we will be developing an alternative training strategy to be delivered to our membership virtually, as well as face-to-face regional training when the restrictions are lifted. Our hope is to have online training workshops and to deliver open training programs in each of the VDEM regions when it is approved to do so. As these plans evolve the information will be shared through our website and social media platforms.

We look forward to our 2021 VA Hazmat Conference to be held in Newport News at the City Center Marriott. This site is located a short distance from the York County/VDEM state hazmat training center and will allow us to take advantage of the incredible hands-on training opportunities there. We thank you all for your continued support and hope to see you soon!

Respectfully,

*Wade*

Wade Collins, VAHMRS President