



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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School Counselors Receive Tools to Promote Maritime Careers

The Virginia Maritime Association (VMA) provides school counselors and career and technical education coaches tools to inform students about entry-level and advanced career opportunities in maritime and supply chain logistics.

NORFOLK, VA | More than 80 school counselors and career and technical education coaches attended a panel discussion and received the new VMA [Maritime Career Guide](#) during four outreach sessions hosted April 9-12 in Newport News and Norfolk by the Virginia Maritime Association's Education and Training Committee. This effort by the VMA was designed to develop meaningful partnerships with area educators and counselors so they can share the vast array of opportunities available in the maritime and supply chain logistics industry with their students and families.



Industry leaders from several VMA member businesses participated in the panel sessions to share information about career opportunities in marine terminal operations, shipbuilding and ship repair, vessel operations, offshore wind, freight forwarding, customs brokerage, trucking, warehousing and distribution, as well as with the U.S. Coast Guard and Virginia Port Authority. The message from these leaders was clear: they need employees and offer the opportunities to earn a good living.

Deborah Gholson, VMA Board Member and Gas Business Development Manager for Berkshire Hathaway Energy GT&S, chaired this effort stating, "The maritime industry faces significant workforce challenges in the Hampton Roads region and throughout the Commonwealth. School counselors, students and parents are hungry to find rewarding career opportunities regardless of whether a student wants to attend college. The VMA believes it is immensely important to connect educational resources with maritime businesses to grow and retain a talented workforce in Virginia. This is why we are working to build a program designed to develop and nurture positive partnerships for the success of all Virginia students and the maritime industry. Each session created amazing energy and excitement, and we look forward to working together in the future to achieve our shared goals."



VIRGINIA MARITIME ASSOCIATION



A recent study by the Mason School of Business at William and Mary reveals that one in five jobs in Virginia are linked to maritime and supply chain logistics. Since 2013, the number of skilled workers handling cargo was up 54% and industry paychecks far exceed median wages for all of Virginia. While some jobs in the industry require a 4-year college degree and above, the industry has a wide variety of job opportunities that have much shorter training and education requirements and offer on-the-job training, which allows employees to earn income while pursuing educational opportunities.

“Hampton Roads is actually an ocean of opportunity for our youth, veterans, and career switchers. Check the want ads. There are a multitude of openings in maritime and logistics industries, and educational institutions are scaling up certification and degree granting programs,” says David White, Executive Director of Virginia Maritime Association. “For our youth, it all starts with creating the awareness about the opportunities that exist in their own backyard. This is why we were so happy to hear the questions and see the level of interest from the school counselors and career and technical education coaches who attended. They do such important work with students and parents, and we look forward to building on this relationship with them.”



To provide easy access to this vast array of opportunities to School Counselors, students, and parents, the VMA developed a [Maritime Career Guide](#), which offers introductory information on the maritime and supply chain logistics industry as well as detailed information on career pathways and educational opportunities available in the sector. In addition, the VMA created company profiles included in the Guide with direct links and information about entry-level positions available now and in the near future from its members. [The Guide](#) is available at [VAmaritime.com](#) under the resources tab and will be updated regularly.

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About Virginia Maritime Association:

For over a century, the Virginia Maritime Association (VMA) is a recognized leader known for its effective approach to enhancing competitiveness and promoting commerce through Virginia's ports. With over 450 member companies from maritime and supply chain sectors, employing tens of thousands of Virginians, the VMA is widely acknowledged as "The Voice of Port Industries."

As a premier business organization, the VMA advocates for its members, ensuring they are Better Connected, Better Informed, and Better Represented. Through its proactive initiatives, the VMA continues to play a vital role in shaping and advancing the interests of associated industries and supply chains at local, national, and global levels.

For more information about the Virginia Maritime Association, please visit [VAmaritime.com](#).