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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, State of the County Address, Wednesday, May 22, 2024

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- Official meeting video (county, Granicus): <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7677>
- Agenda (Granicus): https://loudoun.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=73&clip_id=7677

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-19. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:16] I took one look at you, and it was plain to see, you were my destiny. Open wide, pay my pride, sacrifice for you, dedicate my life to you.

[00:00:44] Name my baby, stand by you like a tree, and let anybody touch you.

[00:01:20] I thought I was told that, and it is all that you can.

[00:02:33] Force confidence and calculated promises, solidations.

[00:04:05] Hate people that feelin' tired. Look at me crazy cause I ain't invite you. Oh, you important, you the moral to the story. You endorsing, motherfucker, I don't even like you. Corrupt a man's heart with a gift. That's how you find out who you're dealin' with. It's my percentage who I'm buildin' with.

[00:04:22] I want the credit if I'm losin' or I'm winnin' on my mama, that's the realest shit.

[00:04:29] Call my man, you can depend and never work.

[00:10:47] It was plain to see.

[00:11:10] Insane.

[00:14:28] Congratulations. Recognize your false confidence and calculate it. Promises, all of your conversations Hate people that feel entitled Look at me crazy cause I ain't invite you Oh, you important, you the moral to the story You endorsing, what the fuck, I don't even like you Rub the man's heart with a gift That's how you find out who you're dealing with It's my percentage who I'm building with I want the credit if I'm losing or I'm winning Oh, my mama, that's the realest shit

[00:14:55] Call my name, you can depend and never worry

[00:19:17] It was planned to say

[00:21:53] Domesticization, title

[00:25:05] Look at me crazy cause I didn't invite you Oh, you are boring, you the moral to the story You endure some motherf***** even like you Rub the man's heart with a gift That's how you find out who you're dealing with It's one percentage who I'm building with I want the credit if I'm losing or I'm winning On my moment, that's the realest shit

[00:25:24] That you can depend on

[00:31:27] Patience, I don't even want your congratulations

[00:35:28] Recognize your false confidence and your promises I hate people that feel entitled Look at me crazy cause I ain't invited you Oh, you're a boy and you're the moral to the story You're endorsing, mother fucker, I don't even like you You rubbed a man's heart with a gift That's how you find out who you're dealing with It's my percentage who I'm building with I want the credit if I'm losing or I'm winning On my moment, that's the realest shit

[00:35:54] Good evening, welcome to the chair at large, Phyllis Randall

[00:45:37] 9th Annual State of the County. My name is Angela Mitchell, and I am the President and CEO of Armed Consulting, and I will serve as your mistress ceremony for tonight. Delivering the address in this boardroom for all Loudoners to witness, either in person, on television, online, fulfills a campaign promise then-candidate Randall made to residence of Loudon way back in 2015. At this time,

[00:46:16] I would ask that each of you silence your phone. Thank you. I would like to thank everyone for coming tonight to hear from Chair Randall regarding the state of the county.

[00:46:33] Each and every one of you are very special, but I would like to acknowledge some special guests. Chair Randall has asked to join us here tonight. Melavar Stoney, City of Richmond. Former Loudoun Delegate Randy Minshew.

[00:47:01] Former Delegate Jay Jones. Former Secretary of Education James Dyke. Former Speaker of Virginia House of Delegates, Eileen Fillicorn.

[00:47:26] Former Loudoun County Supervisor, Tony Buffington. Loudoun County Treasurer, Henry Eichelberg.

[00:47:46] Loudoun County Sheriff, Mike Chapman. Senator Jennifer Boisco, who's celebrating her 35th wedding anniversary tonight.

[00:48:06] I'm also celebrating my 25th wedding anniversary tonight. So we'd like to thank our spouses for being very supportive. Senator Suha Supermania. Let me do that one again.

[00:48:23] Senator Suhas Supra Mania. Delegate David Reed. Delegate Michelle Maldonado.

[00:48:43] Here with us from Prince William County tonight. Andrea Bailey. Supervisor Andrea Bailey. Supervisor Victor Angry. Supervisor Margaret Franklin.

[00:49:08] Mayor Kelly Burke Leesburg. Mayor Roger Vance Hillsborough. Mayor Stan Milan Percival. Mayor Derek Woods Dumfries.

[00:49:30] Vice Mayor of Leesburg, Neal Steinberg. Vice Mayor of Percival, Aaron Rayner. Leesburg Council Member, Tom Cimino Johnson.

[00:49:49] Former Chair at Large and Planning Commissioner, Dale Polin Myers. Loudoun County Planning Commissioner, Jim Banks. Representing Loudoun County Public Schools, Dr. Smith.

[00:50:06] School Board Member from Little River District, Dr. Samira Rashid. School Board Member from Broad Run District, Dr. Linda Deans.

[00:50:26] Assistant Fire Chief Travis Proe, Assistant Fire Chief James Williams, President of IAFF Local 3756 John Myers, Representing SEIU 512 Jess Brown and Chrissy Helinski, President

[00:50:59] of Loudoun Education Association Sandy Sullivan, President of ATU Local 689 Raymond Jackson, Representing Delegate Dan Helmer Stephanie Sedgwick, from the Office of Senator Mark Warner, Jackie Marmel, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority,

[00:51:33] Monica Backman, President of the Loudoun Branch of the NAACP, Michelle Thomas, and our 2024 Ms. Cardinals team, Anna Thomas. Of course, Chair Randall saved the best for last. Please join me in welcoming our Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Vice Chair and Algonquian District

[00:52:05] Supervisor Julie Brissman, Ashburn District Supervisor and TLUC Chair Mike Turner, Broadwine District Supervisor and Co-Chair of the Joint School Committee Sylvia Glass, Supervisor from the Sterling District Karan Sains, Supervisor from the Little River District Laura Tocconi,

[00:52:44] County Attorney Leo Rogers, and County Administrator Tim Hemstreet. Gary Higgins, Delegate Hemstreet.

[00:53:05] Thank you. Now it's my pleasure to introduce Indy McKenzie to sing our national anthem.

[00:53:51] So per twilight's last gleaming whose broad stripes and bright stars through our last fight, and the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming, and the rocking

[00:54:23] Red glare, the bombs bursting the night, their flag was still there.

[00:54:51] Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave for the land and the whole...

[00:55:10] I can pose myself for a moment there.

[00:55:28] All right. Next, I'd like to introduce the TDC Dance Studio. Virginia's premier hip-hop-focused dance studio, located in Ashburn, Virginia. TDC Dance Studio provides professional training and foundational training in hip-hop and many street-style dances.

[00:55:52] TDC was founded by Taryn Dixon, a professional dancer, choreographer, teacher, and social media influencer. Taron began his professional dance career at the age of 15 when he booked his first job with Gatorade.

[00:56:10] Shortly after, he began giving back to his community. Throughout his dance career, he has worked with Travis Scott, DaBaby, Roddy Ricch, I hope I got that right, Young Thug, the NBA, Bose, Domino's, Pepsi, and many, many more.

[00:56:28] He is currently booked as a dancer in a future film, something he is eager to share with his current and future students. Taryn's vision is to train people of all ages in commercial dance and teach hip-hop in its truest form. Led by Taryn Dixon, please welcome our talent for tonight, the young people from the TD Dance Studio.

[01:03:30] Ladies and gentlemen, to introduce Chair-at-Large Phyllis Randall is a history maker herself and a dear friend, Ms. Kendra Dionne. Kendra Dion is the owner of Purpose Works and 5011 Wines, and she's the first black winemaker in Loudoun County.

[01:03:50] She serves and inspires business owners and industry professionals daily. Encouraging and empowering others to take the leap into business ownership is one of her core missions in life. She believes it's through our collective experience and willingness to share that we are able to impact generations and contributions and contribute to innovation to the future of the world, of our culture, our community, country, and the world.

[01:04:21] Her commitment to lifelong learning is undeniable. Empowering people is her life's work. Ladies and gentlemen, Ms. Kendra Dionne. I'm feeling like I should be out here dancing with the kids.

[01:04:43] Where do I sign up? Like, the way my ankles work, though, I might not be able to do it. I am super excited to be before you tonight to have the honor and to even be asked to introduce someone who I look at as a mentor from afar, but also a great friend, and as Angela said, a history maker.

[01:05:01] Phyllis Randall was elected Chair-at-Large of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors in November of 2015, and re-elected in November of 2019 and 2023. Her election was historic as she became the first person of color in Virginia's history to be elected as a chair of a county board.

[01:05:23] Can we acknowledge that? As Loudon's chair at large, she represents Loudon on various regional, state, and national bodies, including the chair of the full Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and chair of the NVTAG Governance and Personnel Committee.

[01:05:47] She also currently serves as a member of the National Associations of Counties, Health and Human Resources Committee, founding member of the NACO Economic Mobility Leadership Network, member of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Board of Directors, and D.C. Statehood Subcommittee, the only person I know busier than me. How about that?

[01:06:09] Chair Randall also serves on the Board of Supervisors, Finance, Government, Operations, and Economic Development Committee, and the Transportation and Land Use Committee. She is the founder of the Loudon Coalition on Women and Girls, which is now a community nonprofit.

[01:06:29] Established in 2017, the Loudon Coalition on Women and Girls promotes leadership development and fosters an inclusive community for Loudon's women and girls through education, collaboration, and empowerment. In June of 2018, Chair Randall was selected as one of only 25 women in the country to be included in the 2019 Class of Governing Magazine's Women in Government Leadership Program.

[01:06:58] Can we acknowledge that? That's awesome. In addition, in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021, The citizens of Loudoun County voted Chair Randall favorite public official in honor, which she is most humbled and proud of.

[01:07:21] From 2009 to 2011, Chair Randall served as chair of Virginia's Fair Housing Board under former governors Tim Kaine and Bob McDonnell. From 2014 to June of 2018, she served as the chair of Virginia State's Board of Corrections under Governor Terry McAuliffe.

[01:07:45] Chair Randall is a graduate of the Sorensen Institute at University of Virginia and currently sits on their advisory board. By profession, Chair Randall was a mental health therapist with substance dependence as her emphasis area. She worked with the justice-involved populations both in and out of incarceration settings, a career she enjoyed for over 20 years.

[01:08:09] Mental health awareness and advocacy continued to be her passion. She and her husband, Thaddeus, lived in Loudoun County since 1993 and are the proud parents of two adult sons, Ashawn and Aaron, who are LCPS graduates.

[01:08:25] Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Chair Phyllis Randall. Thank you, everyone.

[01:08:50] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for coming. Please have a seat. Well, first of all, I want to say that I say this every time. People say they save the best for last. I never say that. I think you should do the best first. And for me, that is my family.

[01:09:07] And so I want to thank my husband, Thaddeus, for coming, and my son, Aaron, for coming. And this is my godson, Tylan, who's also a teacher, which is amazing. And all the people over here have been supportive to me and love me and are wonderful human beings.

[01:09:26] And so thank you all. Thank you very much. On February 16th, we, all of us, lost one of our firefighters, Trevor Brown. At that moment, we knew that we would, I would, do something to honor Firefighter Brown at my stay of the county.

[01:09:52] But I had no idea what that would be or what that looked like or what that was. This past Saturday, I was honored to be invited to an event where Firefighter Brown's name was placed in the Memorial for Loudoun County's firefighters.

[01:10:08] There, his wife, Laura, who has joined us here today, said something that I thought was so powerful and kind of gave me focus of what I wanted to say today. It was, Laura, the quote by Winston Churchill. And that quote is, we make a living on what we get.

[01:10:27] We make a life on what we give. I think that was so powerful. And it made me think about Firefighter Brown, truthfully, all our first responders, but Firefighter Brown and his service. The idea that somebody could be a volunteer firefighter, so they do their job in the daytime and then they come home at night and they're a volunteer firefighter and are willing to literally give their lives for others.

[01:10:53] Not to mention, he also volunteered in many other places and ways in the county. I knew right then that I think the focus of what we do in county government, if we are going to honor Firefighter Brown and really all of our first responders, is the word service.

[01:11:12] If we're not here for service, what are we here for? I don't know. When I read Firefighter Brown's history, it was absolutely amazing.

[01:11:29] I don't know if I've ever read of someone who's given himself more in the service to others than that amazing man. And so tonight, this state of the county is dedicated to his life, but it's dedicated to the service of his life.

[01:11:45] and in the hopes that that's what all of us focus on from here on out. And whatever way you do it, you have to serve one another because if we don't, we will perish. If we do not serve, we will perish. Firefighter Brown had a friend who's also the president of the Sterling Volunteer Fire Company, Kareem Michal.

[01:12:07] I asked Mr. Michal, Captain Michal, if he wouldn't mind to come today and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance as an honor to the Stirling Parliamentary Fire Department, the combined fire system as a whole, and especially as an honor to Trevor Brown.

[01:12:24] So, Captain, if you would come up and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, I really appreciate it. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[01:12:51] It is reasonable to say and correct to admit

[01:13:26] that like the rest of the nation and indeed the world, Loudoun County is in the midst of a mental health and behavioral health substance use crisis. The nation is experiencing political division and financial uncertainty. However, it is also correct to note that Loudoun County continues to weather the many storms of the past few years more successfully than almost any other county in the nation. Loudon, tonight we will discuss some of the challenges we face, some of the

[01:14:02] successes we've had in addressing those challenges, and some of the strengths we share as a community that will enable us to achieve our goals going forward. In 2010, our nation began to see a marked increase in anxiety disorders, depression, and even suicidology, especially among our youth.

[01:14:24] Unfortunately, Loudon was not immune to that phenomenon. In the book, *The Anxious Generation*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt put forward hypothesis for the mental health crisis faced by our young people today. Chief among the causes, Dr. Haidt postulates the use of smartphones among our youths have impacted everything from their ability to sleep to their anxiety levels, social preparedness, agitation, and perfectionism. To quote Dr. Height, there was a sudden and very

[01:15:00] large upturn in major depressive disorders beginning around 2012. He went on to say the percentage of U.S. teens who have had at least one major depressive disorder episode increased by approximately 150% since 2010.

[01:15:21] This increase happened across all races and social classes. In short, the extensive use of social media is having a deleterious impact on our nation's youth. For our girls, excessive social media use can promote unrealistic goals for appearance, causing them to have a negative opinion of themselves and unattainable beauty standards.

[01:15:46] For our boys, social media and especially gaming can increase agitation, hostility, social anxiety, and disconnectedness. Loudon, that's the bad news. That's the challenge.

[01:16:05] However, there is some good news, or at least there is a reasonable response to this crisis. Just as it is true for physical health conditions, the answers to mental and behavioral health conditions are not monolithic.

[01:16:21] For some, the answers are long-term and multilayered. For others, especially our youth, a good part of the answer can be routine behavior changes, such as, for a time, putting away their electronic devices, going outside, getting exercise, fresh air, sun, social interaction.

[01:16:46] Although that might sound all too simplistic, the connection between mental health and physical activity is well documented. While no level of government, to include the local level, can or should try to address every issue or impact the rules and practices regarding social media in individual homes.

[01:17:08] We certainly have the ability to address some of the negative impacts of extensive social media use that can harm all of us, but most especially our preteens and teens, just as they are developing their sense of self.

[01:17:26] Obviously, Loudoun's Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Developmental Services continues to grapple with treating the increased mental health conditions resulting from extensive social media use. However, they are not the only county professionals committed to addressing this issue.

[01:17:44] A report from the Mental Health Foundation released in May of 24 details the importance of movement and exercise on mental health. According to the report, the benefits of movement for mental health are improved mood, reduced anxiety, lowered inflammation and stress, improved memory and concentration, increased confidence, improved sleep, and increased social connectedness.

[01:18:13] Thus, it has become clear that although Loudoun's Department of Parks, Rec, and Community Services is not involved in treating mental health issues, ensuring our young people have ample opportunities to engage in physical activity and competition should be included in an overall wellness program. Thus, the staffs of the Parks and Rec Department can have an essential role promoting comprehensive mental health wellness. In Loudoun, our Parks and Rec Department, led by the ever-present Steve Torpy, continues to advocate for more opportunities to increase our green

[01:18:53] and open spaces. Parks and Rec works to ensure Loudoun citizens and visitors enjoy our marvelous county and have unique outdoor experiences. The dedicated members of our Parks and Rec staff are also committed to investing in our future generations by giving them opportunities to have their voices heard. One such initiative created by Parks and Rec is the Pathway to Pages program.

[01:19:19] Parks and Rec invited county students from kindergarten through fifth grade who participate in the county after-school activities or CASA program to create a nature-based story for the Pathways to Pages contest. The students were required to write original stories and create their own illustrations.

[01:19:39] The two winning entries were Rabbit Hole by A.O. N. Rousseau from the Hutchison Farms Elementary School CASA Program and Loudoun County Parks by Braden Satterfeld, who attends the Madison Trust Elementary School CASA Program.

[01:19:56] Rabbit Hole is a wonderful story of animals helping animals and includes many of the animals found in our parks. Loudoun County Parks is an explanation of safety awareness and highlights many of the amenities offered within our parks. By finding creative ways to involve and engage elementary age kids to connect with our parks and open spaces, or to just go outside and be kids, young Eowyn and Braden may not know it, but in their own way, they are on the front lines of battling the nation's mental health crisis.

[01:20:32] Loudon, so much of what we do in county government is to prepare the path for generations to follow. Tonight, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce you to two reasons why I feel our future is in very good hands. A.O. and Rousseau and Brandon Satterfield are here tonight with us along with their parents and families.

[01:20:54] Please welcome them along with Parks and Rec Director Steve Torpy and his staff. Congratulations.

[01:21:17] The challenge of mental health and substance use has been one our entire nation is confronting. Unfortunately, all too often, law enforcement is the first call when a person is having a mental health or substance use crisis. And while law enforcement officers are highly trained professionals, most do not have extensive training in mental health or crisis intervention.

[01:21:41] Having a clearer understanding of mental illness than most law enforcement professionals, Loudoun County Sheriff Mike Chapman set a goal to have 100% of his force equipped with crisis intervention training, or CIT.

[01:21:58] With the exception of new deputies, close to 100% of our share of deputies in Loudoun are CIT trained. The goal of CIT is to train law enforcement officers to recognize people suffering from a mental health crisis. De-escalate the situation reduces injury to the officer and citizen.

[01:22:19] Identifying the appropriate resources to provide the needed services and care to a citizen reduces recidivism and prevents further traumatizing a person who may be having one of the worst moments of their lives. In addition to having his officers trained in CIT, Sheriff Chapman has been a champion of funding and opening a crisis intervention center in Loudoun.

[01:22:44] Currently, when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, a law enforcement officer is required to stay with them in a hospital or urgent care setting. Remaining in a non-clinical setting for hours often further destabilizes a person experiencing a mental health crisis.

[01:23:05] In addition, it takes law enforcement officers off the street, leading to a reduction in personnel available to respond to calls. Those of us who have experienced a physical health emergency understand how hard it would be to sit in pain in an emergency room for an untold amount of time.

[01:23:26] It is no easier for a person experiencing a mental health emergency. After all, mental health is health. A CIC will provide mental and behavioral health short-term care for people who are experiencing a mental health emergency.

[01:23:43] A CIC facility will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Employing a team of multidisciplinary professionals, the CIC officer's comprehensive crisis stabilization determines if a resident will require further treatment or if they can safely return home.

[01:24:01] Loudon, Sheriff Mike Chapman, and Fire Chief Keith Johnson both understand the importance of immediate and proper care for those suffering a mental or behavioral health crisis. This immediate and proper care extends to our first responders as well.

[01:24:20] Although we all understand being a law enforcement officer is a dangerous profession, We were never really prepared when one of our own sheriff deputies finds themselves in a line-of-duty, life-threatening moment. On January 2nd, 2021, Deputy Cameron Gentry sustained a life-threatening injury as a result of a seemingly routine call.

[01:24:45] What I and so many others now realize and what our first responders have always known is this. There is no such thing as a routine call for them, because every call could be their last. That daily knowledge, combined with the stress of choosing a profession with round-the-clock work hours, ongoing exposure to traumatic events, sleep and sleep deprivation, has resulted in our first responders having higher-than-average divorce and depression rates and PTSD that is four times higher than the population.

[01:25:22] Their rates of domestic violence incidents and suicidal ideation are also higher than the general public. Perhaps the most alarming statistic is this. The number of deaths by suicides of our nation's law enforcement is higher than the number of line-of-duty deaths.

[01:25:44] Realizing that our first responders' mental wellness has to be a top priority. In fiscal year 2018, Chief Johnson of our combined fire and rescue system requested the county board approve a behavior health coordinator assigned specifically and exclusively to work with fire and rescue professionals and volunteer staff.

[01:26:07] And now, in fiscal year 25, at the request of Sheriff Chapman, we have approved the position with similar responsibilities for our sheriff's office. If you question whether these positions are necessary, you need only ask Cameron Gentry, the Loudoun County deputy he was severely wounded when answering that seemingly routine call in 2021, or his partner, Deputy Brandon Ewing, who applied the tourniquet that likely saved Deputy Gentry's life.

[01:26:46] While Deputy Gentry has dealt with his physical wounds, both of these deputies continue to deal with and address the long-term mental health ramifications of that experience. And both have shown incredible courage because they discuss the importance of addressing the non-physical trauma of the incident.

[01:27:06] By publicly acknowledging the mental health scars they have obtained, Deputy Gentry and Ewing will reduce the stigma on this issue and encourage other first responders to seek mental and behavioral health support when needed. Loudoun, please join me in honoring all of our first responders by welcoming Sheriff Mike Chapman, Assistant Chiefs James Williams and Travis Perot, and all of the first responders in the room can you please stand so we can show you our appreciation.

[01:27:58] government addresses our corner of the nation's mental health crisis, we do not do it alone. Our community partners have been essential at filling the gaps and meeting the needs the county government can't always address. In Loudoun, we are very fortunate to have Friends of Loudoun Mental Health. Friends of Loudoun Mental Health has been serving our county since 1955. This organization was courageous enough to address the stigma attached to this population, even when this subject was passé and only whispered about in quiet corners.

[01:28:32] Friends of Loudoun Mental Health does not offer treatment, but instead offers support to people suffering from mental illness to help them lead productive, fulfilling lives. Friends of Loudoun Mental Health has educated the public on the importance of mental health and wellness, raise funds to support direct service initiatives, shed light on the intersection between mental Health and Homelessness, raised and dispersed hundreds of thousands of dollars for rental assistance to people whose mental health condition prevents them from working.

[01:29:07] Today, Friends of Loudoun Mental Health is an essential part of our wellness ecosystem, helping to push back the darkness experienced by people suffering from mental health disorders, their families,

and all who love them. For their 68 years of service to our county, please help me thank Katrina Cole and all the volunteers at Friends of Loudoun Mental Health.

[01:29:48] Of course, tackling the mental health challenges Loudoun County faces today takes resources. If we are to continue to meet the financial needs of our behavioral health, parks and rec departments, our first responders, our community nonprofits, and all of our departments while still delivering a broad range of required county service, we must continue the prudent fiscal policies that have sustained us. While property values in Loudoun have risen over the past 10 years, our sound fiscal policies have allowed your county board

[01:30:27] to lower your real property tax rate 42 cents over that same time period. As you know, the Board of supervisors does not determine property assessment. That function is performed exclusively by the Commissioner of Revenue's office, who uses market analysis, comparative values of like homes in the region, and a visual analysis to assess home value. But because the property values of homes in Loudoun has increased so significantly, resulting in greater equity in your home, lowering the real

[01:31:01] property tax rate to the equalized rate has not been fiscally prudent or advised. However, Loudoun, between fiscal years 2016 through 2024, the average home value in Loudoun rose an astonishing 63 percent. However, your average real property taxes have only increased by 23 percent. In addition, over the past two fiscal years, your personal property taxes have decreased from \$4.20 to \$4.15 per \$100 of assessed property value.

[01:31:39] Because of the sound fiscal guidance of County Administrator Tim Hemstreet and Loudoun's finance and procurement team, as well as the incredible work of Walter Buddy Reiser and the full Department of Economic Development, or DED, Loudoun boasted an unemployment rate of just 2.5% in 2023.

[01:32:01] Our office vacancy rate is only 7%, our retail vacancy rate is a low 3.4%, and our flex industrial vacancy rate is an astonishing 1%. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 one-year estimate, Loudoun's median household income is over \$167,000, and our per capita income is almost \$69,000.

[01:32:30] And we continue to maintain our triple AAA bond rating. Allow me to share some of the credit rating agency's comments.

[01:32:48] From Moody's, the AAA rating reflects the county's large and dynamic tax base and very stable financial position and reserves, supported by the county's proactive management and formalized policies. From S&P, the rating reflects county's robust economic profile, supported by proactive management policies and long-term planning.

[01:33:11] The county has a track record of positive financial performance through conservative budgeting. And Fitch noted, Loudoun's financial resilience and strong economic and demographic attributes contribute to its stable outlook.

[01:33:28] Through sound fiscal policies and steady population growth, Loudoun continues to rank at the top in all economic indicators. And, although he never wants to be recognized, I would be remiss if I didn't thank and acknowledge our county administrator, Tim Hemstreet, for his almost 15 years of valuable guidance to the county board and staff.

[01:33:57] He didn't enjoy that.

[01:34:18] So much of our financial success can be attributed to one department and one remarkable man who heads Loudoun's Department of Economic Development. Buddy Reiser joined the Loudoun County team in 2007. Since then, he has completely transformed how we define economic development.

[01:34:40] Those of us who are lucky enough to know and work with Buddy realize he is a virtuoso with exceptional skills and insights about the economic horizon. However, you need not take my word for it. Just reflect on some of Buddy's accolades and awards.

[01:34:58] Named the Tech Titans seven times by Washingtonian Magazine, 2017 through 2023. Named one of the most 50 influential Virginians six times by Virginia Business Magazine, 2018 through 23.

[01:35:15] Named four times a member of Virginia's Power 500, 2020 through 23. named three times to the Washington Business Journal Power 100 of one of the most influential business people in Washington, D.C., 2020, 22, and 2023.

[01:35:30] And just two weeks ago, Buddy was invited to be the keynote speaker at Morgan Stanley Global Financial Services in New York City. That is Buddy Reiser. That was fun.

[01:36:06] While data center revenue accounts for the majority of our commercial tax base, Buddy and his team have been working hard to diversify Loudoun's business tax base by attracting and growing our commercial tax base throughout all parts of Loudoun. From cybersecurity, health IT, and advanced manufacturing in eastern Loudoun, to agriculture, drone operations, and unique housing opportunities in western Loudoun, our DED department has racked up \$9 billion in new commercial investments in 2023.

[01:36:40] DED did all this while supporting small businesses in Loudoun throughout an initiative called Launch Loudoun. Launch Loudoun was developed to support a robust economic ecosystem through small businesses and entrepreneurship programs.

[01:37:01] Today, approximately 77% of our county businesses have fewer than 10 employees and 87% have fewer than 20. and Launch Loudoun assisted 166 small businesses, small minority-owned businesses, to start, scale, and soar.

[01:37:23] An important part of Loudoun's commercial tax base, most importantly our rural and agricultural tax base, includes our tourism and hospitality industry. Every day, the staff at Visit Loudoun, led by the incomparable Beth Erickson, find new and creative ways to tell Loudoun's story.

[01:37:44] According to Virginia tourism, Loudoun leads the Commonwealth of Virginia in visitor spending, topping just over \$4 billion in 2022. Forty years ago, Loudoun's first wine vintage was created.

[01:38:02] Today, Loudoun's wine industry has seen tremendous success. Loudoun is now home to more than 50 wineries that has helped to define and shape our county. In 2022, our wineries and limited breweries welcomed 1 million visitors and Loudoun residents, resulting in over \$48 million in revenue, an increase of 58% since 2018.

[01:38:29] And this contributed significantly to diversifying our economy. Those visitors have also been a boon for Loudoun's lodging industry, whether hotel, bed and breakfast, short-term residential, or commercial whole house rentals.

[01:38:46] Visitors to Loudoun will generate an estimated \$4,790,000 in transit occupancy tax for the fiscal year 25, a year-over-year increase of 8%.

[01:39:01] Beth Erickson and her staff at Visit Loudoun can be credited for not only bringing millions in revenue to Loudoun, but also showcasing the multitude of amenities of our incredible county. From art to ale, restaurants to recreation, wines to weddings, Visit Loudoun continues to make Loudoun D.C.'s wine country.

[01:39:24] Our tourist attractions are the envy of the Commonwealth. Please join me in thanking the brain trust of Loudoun County. Buddy Riser from the Department of Economic Development, and Beth Erickson from Visit Loudon and their amazing staffs.

[01:39:40] Beth Erickson and Buddy Riser do have phenomenal staffs, but the fact is, across the board, Loudoun County staff are some of the most dedicated, effective public servants that can be found in any local government in the nation.

[01:40:16] Although elected officials are often the ones whose names and images appear in the media, it is the professional staff at all levels that do the work that make the trains run on time. In 2007, I'm sorry, in 2017, after past county boards put much of their efforts into building roads, and to be fair, building one of the strongest economies of any county government in the nation, we realized that somewhere along the way, we had failed to keep up with the compensation of comparative municipalities in the area.

[01:40:53] In other words, our employees were underpaid. Knowing that we needed to correct that unintentional error, your county supervisors and staff completed a comprehensive compensation study which brought our employees' pay and benefits in line with their counterparts.

[01:41:12] In addition to participating in the Comp in Class study, several county employees expressed interest in forming a union. Establishing a county employee union is a multifaceted, multi-year process. The Office of County Administrator, the Department of Human Resources, along with county line staff and supervisors spent hundreds of hours over many months writing an ordinance that put in place the legal framework to allow collective bargaining in Loudoun.

[01:41:43] All of this work required the legal expertise of the Office of the County Attorney, led by County Attorney Leo Rogers. Government Supervisor Mike Turner joined me in a marathon meeting that lasted over 15 hours.

[01:42:07] Loudon, I am pleased to report that two weeks ago, the County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to ratify the first collective bargaining agreement in Loudon's history with the Loudon Career Firefighters Association, Local 3756, led by Lieutenant John Myers.

[01:42:27] In addition, the Service Employees International Union, Local 512, led by Juvenile Probation Officer Julius Reynolds, are now in discussions with senior county staff to establish guidelines to form a general government collective bargaining agreement.

[01:42:53] While no employee is required or expected to join a union, every eligible employee is welcome to join. In addition, Loudoun welcomes working with contractors and unionized organizations outside of county government. At this time, I'd like all members of IAFF, SEIU, and all members of any union to stand and be recognized for your dedicated work shaping this county, this commonwealth, and this country.

[01:43:23] We are a unique county for so many reasons.

[01:43:40] Chief among them is the fact that we have four distinct policy areas, each carefully planned with specific development goals, densities, and characteristics. If we are to fulfill our vision for Loudoun, especially the goal of ensuring our rural policy area remains intact, never again can we allow the comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance to languish for almost two decades.

[01:44:07] In 2016, when I started my first term, your county board and staff initiated a rewriting of Loudoun's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is our vision for land use. Included in the Comp Plan is the Countywide Transportation Plan, which is the vision for transportation infrastructure needed to support our land use goals.

[01:44:30] Completed in June of 2019, fully rewriting the Comprehensive Plan took almost four years. In my second year, in my second term, we took on the very heavy task of completing a new zoning ordinance that had not been comprehensively updated since 2003.

[01:44:51] After dozens of meetings and public forums held by county staff, the planning commissioners, then the board of supervisors, a new zoning ordinance primarily addressing zoning in eastern Loudoun County was completed in December of 23.

[01:45:06] And now, in my third term, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and your county staff will focus on a zoning ordinance rewrite for western Loudoun County, as well as a combined comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance amendment for data center locations and performance standards.

[01:45:27] The Department of Planning and Zoning, led by Dan Galindo, is one of the most critical offices in the county. The department touches on every aspect of land use in Loudoun counties. Their duties include administering the regulations that guide all county land use policies and governing every land use application, residential and commercial.

[01:45:51] They must rely on highly technical expertise to make decisions related to special zoning exceptions, zoning applications, zoning enforcement, waiver requests, proper management, and land use inquiries. They also conduct and participate in land-use town halls and public meetings.

[01:46:10] Moreover, the department's subject matter experts routinely advise and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on critical land-use issues. Dan's team does not seek attention. They do not seek fame.

[01:46:28] Their names are not in the news, and their faces are not known by the people that they serve. But make no mistake, the dedicated professionals in the Department of Planning and Zoning are public servants who spend untold hours working on your behalf to create a county where citizens and visitors feel free to live, work, learn, and play.

[01:46:57] The planning staff often must deliver bad news to developers. They frequently must tell members of the public things they would prefer not to know. And when they brief elected officials, they are routinely required to give us answers that we do not want to hear.

[01:47:15] They have hard jobs, and they do them well, and they are long overdue for recognition. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in acknowledging the hard work of the zoning ordinance rewriting and all the planning and zoning staff.

[01:47:42] Loudoun, one of the more difficult issues the Department of Planning and Zoning is required to bring before the board is when and if to approve new housing developments. On the one hand, as elected officials, we routinely hear how much we need workforce housing for firefighters, nurses, teachers, sheriff's deputies, wait staff, and others.

[01:48:05] We often hear how much we need attainable housings for young couples just starting out and single parents trying to raise their child on just one income. And we are regularly told we need housing for the differently-abled community, our seniors, and our veterans.

[01:48:21] We are always told that we need housing. However, we are told that while simultaneously being told by many to not approve one other house. In fact, new housing development applications are almost always strongly objected to by neighboring communities.

[01:48:40] The truth is this. It is imperative that before or in conjunction with board approval of a new housing development, we ensure we have the infrastructure to meet the demands new homes will bring. In my opinion, new home construction should not be exclusively, but should be largely focused in the urban policy area where development can be both dense and vertical.

[01:49:08] We should focus on transit-oriented development, thereby limiting the growth of vehicle traffic, and we should, as one of our highest priorities, protect the rural policy area. To be clear, the nation's housing shortage is reaching crisis levels, and that is especially true in the metropolitan Washington area.

[01:49:37] Loudoun is committed to helping resolve this housing crisis through smart, innovative land use policies. Reflecting that commitment, the county board passed our Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan in 2021, and we have created and staffed the Department of Housing and Community Development as part of that plan.

[01:49:59] This term, the board allocated an amount equal to one-half cents of real property tax revenue to our unmet housing needs strategic plan programs, and the board earmarked another one-half cents for our fund balance discussions later this year.

[01:50:16] Since 2017, Loudoun has approved a total of 1,025 affordable units for families between the 30 to 60 percent area median income range, including 84 accessible units and 36 permanently supporting housing units.

[01:50:38] And by partnering with agencies offering additional funding, Loudoun has secured almost \$290 million of additional investments for attainable housing. Loudoun, to be clear, we will welcome new friends and neighbors to Loudoun County.

[01:50:57] But we will do so in a responsible manner that respects our existing quality of life, protects our rural policy area and open spaces, and incorporates the needs of our infrastructure.

[01:51:18] As Loudoun welcomes new friends and neighbors, we are grateful to have our commissions, committees, and boards that serve as advisory bodies to the Board of Supervisors. These bodies are made up of hundreds of volunteers who offer their time and expertise to make Loudoun what I believe is the best county in the country.

[01:51:39] This term alone, our Community Services Board and Disability Services Board participated in a summit on the need for day treatment options for people with differing abilities aging out of the school

system. Our Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Board grappled with weather, or not, to allow equestrian riding in Panshee Reeks.

[01:52:01] Our Transit Advisory Board has spent the last two years working to increase ridership on Metro and on our local commuter and bus services. One of the newest and most effective advisory bodies is our Environmental Commission, led by one of our most stalwart environmentalists, Jim Bingle.

[01:52:19] The Chair of Loudoun's Environmental Commission is a highly respected, long-serving community leader and an absolutely essential voice as we face the challenges of global climate change and the influx of invasive species here in Loudoun.

[01:52:35] Established in 2021, the Loudoun County Environmental Commission comprises three standing commissions. Its mission is to advise and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on policies and practices dealing with the environment, sustainability, and the management of energy.

[01:52:53] In just three years, working alongside the dedicated General Service Department staff, the Environmental Commission has hosted two energy and land use forums, established a first-ever Environmental Excellence Award, and published a comprehensive update of the Loudoun County Energy Strategy would have laid dormant for far too long.

[01:53:17] Its remarkable success is in very large measure due to the skills, talent, and thoughtful leadership of its chair, Jim Bingo. Please join me in thanking and congratulating Jim for her dedicated work on the Loudoun County Environmental Commission.

[01:53:34] And if you are a member of the commission or if you are a member of the staff that supports the commission, please stand. In addition to our commissions, committees, and boards, we continue to rely on our partners in the nonprofit and faith-based communities.

[01:54:02] We work side-by-side with them to improve the lives of all Loudon residents. I say to our nonprofits and faith-based organizations, you have been a force multiplier for county government. When a person is ready to leave an abusive partner, you show up.

[01:54:23] When a family needs a meal, you show up. When a 20-year-old is not sure whether they're going to sleep that night, you show up. When a newly released person needs support to restart their lives, you show up.

[01:54:39] When a person needs a larger village to lean on, you show up. When our first responders face a crisis, you show up. Or when a young person just needs an outfit for prom, you show up. You show up offering grace, ensuring their dignity, and respecting their privacy.

[01:54:59] You show up. Loudon Cares has proven to be one of our most impactful nonprofit organizations. They have been described as a clearinghouse for nonprofits with the mission of connecting those who serve to those in need.

[01:55:15] Since 2017, Loudon Cares has been blessed to have my friend, Valerie P. Sierra, serve as their executive director. A military spouse who has lived and worked in Japan, Germany, and England, Valerie worked at the European nonprofit America's Working Around the Globe, where she focused on training and connecting volunteers.

[01:55:39] Throughout her years of volunteer service, Valerie has been honored with several awards to include the Department of Army Commander Public Service Award, the United States European

Command Award Certificate of Achievement, the European PTA Volunteer of the Year Award, and she was named the 2022 Nonprofit Executive Leader of the Year by the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce. Even with her extensive global services, her extensive record of service around the world, Valerie said the service she is most

[01:56:14] proud of is her service right here in Northern Virginia, right here in Loudoun County. But Loudoun, we have been the lucky ones because we have all been able to work with and learn from this remarkable woman. After decades of service, my friend Valerie has announced she will take her much-deserved retirement at the end of July. Although we will sorely miss her, please join me

[01:56:48] in congratulating her on a job well done and wish her Godspeed. Loudoun, if there is any doubt what a truly unique and remarkable county we are, we need only review. Aowyn and Brayden, just 11 and 9, wrote and illustrated books to encourage kids to go outside and enjoy our parks. And using a lost

[01:57:27] bunny as a metaphor, taught us about the importance of helping one another. Steve Torpy and his staff work to assure we have open spaces and services that reach thousands of Loudoun residents every day. First responders like Deputy Gentry and Ewing realize that sometimes their strength lies in asking for help and encouraging others to do the same. A finance team who advises the elected body on policies that continue to keep us in excellent financial health and an economy

[01:57:59] that is the envy of most counties in the country. A Buddy Riser who is as brilliant as he is kind And a Beth Erickson, who is as creative as she is dedicated. County staff who are public servants who come in every day to make our county an even better place to live, work, learn, and play.

[01:58:21] A nonprofit and faith-based community that is a force multiplier for county staff. And county staff who answers the call, offering assistance and dignity every single time. and a Valerie P. Sierra who has spent her whole life giving back and who will end her service here in Loudoun.

[01:58:42] Loudoun, this evening has illuminated what a very special county we are and why we are the envy of localities all across the nation. It is you. It is you. It is the people you have met tonight who are the soul of our successes and the reason so many people believe in the possibility of Loudoun County.

[01:59:07] The economy in Loudoun is flourishing. The staff in Loudoun is dedicated. The volunteers in Loudoun are impactful. The youth in Loudoun are thriving. The first responders in Loudoun are heroic.

[01:59:24] The businesses in Loudoun are innovative. The people of Loudoun County are compassionate. And as we continue to do the hard things, Loudoun, together, there is nothing we can't accomplish.

[01:59:40] And together, we have made the state of Loudoun County strong. Thank you, God bless you, and I'll see you next year.

