This is Old Dominion University’s 19th annual State of the Region report. While it represents the work of many people connected in various ways to the university, the report does not constitute an official viewpoint of Old Dominion, its president, John R. Broderick, the Board of Visitors, the Strome College of Business or the generous donors who support the activities of the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy.

The report maintains the goal of stimulating thought and discussion that will ultimately make Hampton Roads an even better place to live. We are proud of our region’s many successes and the key role we play in national security. We also realize that it is possible to improve our performance. To do so, we must have accurate, objective information about “where we stand” so we can move to “where we want to be.”

The 2018 State of the Region report is divided into seven parts:

**Is It Morning Again in Hampton Roads?**
The three pillars of our regional economy (defense, the port and tourism) have improved and prospects for growth are looking up. We ask whether Hampton Roads has finally emerged from a “lost decade” and if the future is bright.

**A Complicated Subject: The Impact of Medicaid Expansion on Hampton Roads**
Virginia will expand Medicaid, a health insurance program for low-income adults and children, on Jan. 1, 2019. Medicaid expansion will reduce the number of uninsured in Hampton Roads, but future costs remain uncertain.

**Craft Brewing in Hampton Roads**
The number of craft breweries in Hampton Roads has increased dramatically in recent years. We trace the development of this trend and explore the impact of craft brewing on our regional economy.

**Too Much of a Good Thing? Multifamily Housing in Hampton Roads**
Over the past decade, Hampton Roads has seen an increase in the construction of multifamily units, leading some to question whether there are too many apartments. Vacancy rates have started to decline and rent increases remain moderate, especially compared to many other cities in the United States.

**Welcome to Your New Home: International Migration and Hampton Roads**
Most new international migrants to Hampton Roads are educated, married and gainfully employed. We examine the impact of international migration and look at how immigrants are contributing to economic growth in our region.

**Hampton City Schools: The Next Generation of Learning in Hampton Roads**
Hampton Roads needs skilled workers. With unemployment approaching historical lows and the demand for a skilled workforce increasing, Hampton City Schools is engaging in an experiment to transform high school education. We delve into this effort and its potential benefit for our region.

**Hampton Roads: In Search of a Social Media Identity**
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. These platforms define the lives of many Americans. We inquire to what degree Hampton Roads has an identity on social media and discuss the potential benefits of a social media brand.
The Strome College of Business and Old Dominion University continue to provide support for the State of the Region report. However, it would not appear without the vital backing of the private donors whose names appear below. They believe in Hampton Roads and the power of rational discussion to improve our circumstances, but are not responsible for the views expressed in the report.

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All 19 State of the Region reports are available at www.ceapodu.com. If you have comments or suggestions, please email us at rmcnab@odu.edu. Individual copies of the 2018 report may be purchased for $25 each.

Sincerely,

Robert M. McNab

Director, Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy  
Professor of Economics, Department of Economics  
Strome College of Business
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