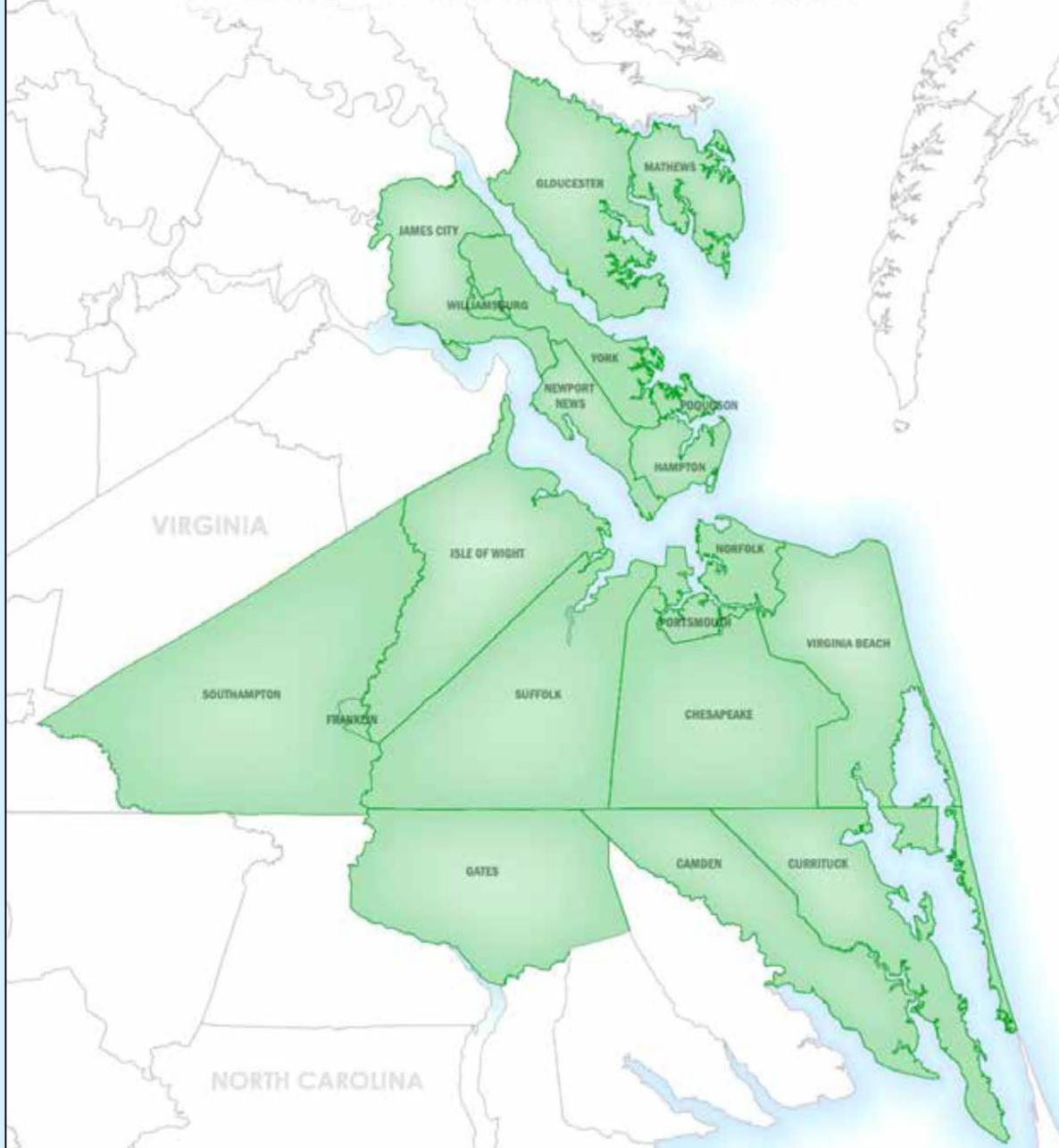




The State of the Region

HAMPTON ROADS 2021

**VIRGINIA BEACH-NORFOLK-NEWPORT NEWS, VA-NC
METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA**



October 2021

Dear Reader:

This is Old Dominion University's 22nd 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, Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., 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.

Over the past year, we have endured the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of vaccines and a return to a semblance of normality in Hampton Roads. Even as the economy recovers in the region, Virginia and the nation, we cannot forget that some have been left behind. Invigorating growth that raises the fortunes of all is the challenge that lies before us. This task will involve difficult discussions about how to diversify our economy in the coming years.

Hampton Roads plays a significant role in national security, provides college education to thousands of Virginians and is culturally diverse. Given these realities and the fact that many residents live in one community and work in another, solutions to our regional challenges will require conversations and policies that span jurisdictional boundaries. If there is an overarching lesson to be learned from the pandemic, it is simply that we are all in this together.

The 2021 State of the Region Report is divided into seven chapters:

Shock and Awe? COVID-19, Vaccines and the Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the Hampton Roads economy. One in 10 workers were unemployed at the height of the pandemic, 4 in 10 small businesses were forced to reduce hours and thousands of residents left the labor force entirely. Yet, in the midst of the pandemic, housing prices and trade volumes through the Port of Virginia continued to rise. We explore the economic recovery and discuss whether Hampton Roads can rely on defense spending in the coming decade.

Bounce Back? The Pandemic and Tourism in Hampton Roads

Nearly 1 in 5 workers in the Hampton Roads hospitality and leisure sector lost their jobs in 2020. Even as the sector started to recover, employers found themselves in need of employees to fill available positions. Now, with tourists returning to the region, we look at how traditional hotels and short-term rentals fared over the last 18 months.

Earn While You Learn:

The Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding

The Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding is not only one of the nation's premier schools for educating and training workers, but it also stands as

an example of how 21st-century learning can occur in the region. In this chapter, we look at the apprenticeship model and delve into the unique aspects of The Apprentice School that have made it successful.

All In: Casinos, Online Betting and the Future of Gambling in Hampton Roads

In 1987, Virginia voters approved the state lottery, bringing legalized gambling to the Commonwealth. Fast forward to 2021: Virginians can now buy lottery tickets online, place sports bets on their phones and wager in historical horse racing parlors. Now, with casinos opening soon in Norfolk and Portsmouth, as well as Bristol, Danville and, likely, Richmond, we discuss the benefits and costs of casinos in Hampton Roads.

Whither Old Dominion University?

The University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and College of William & Mary historically have played important roles in the Commonwealth. They have set impressive records in admitting and graduating talented students who (predictably) do well after they leave these campuses. Nevertheless, the future viability and cohesion of the Commonwealth in this century will more likely be determined on campuses like Old Dominion University, for it is there that the

critical social mobility challenge is being addressed in a meaningful way. We explore what the future may hold for ODU.

Bad News: The Decline of Local Journalism

Local journalism is in peril. Newspapers all over the country are reducing coverage, cutting staff, abandoning physical newsrooms or shuttering operations altogether. The United States has lost fully one-fourth of its newspapers since 2004, including 70 dailies and more than 2,000 weeklies and other nondaily papers. Hampton Roads has not escaped these cutbacks. We discuss the future of local journalism in Hampton Roads.

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 22 State of the Region Reports are available at www.ceapodu.com. A limited number of printed copies of the 2021 report are available for purchase for \$50 each. If you have comments or suggestions, please email us at rmcnab@odu.edu.

Sincerely,



Robert M. McNab

Director of the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy

Securing Release: Cash Bail in Hampton Roads

On any given day in 2019, on average, there were more pretrial inmates per 100,000 residents in Hampton Roads than in Virginia or the United States. To secure their release from jail, many inmates must provide collateral in the form of a secured bond. Now, with momentum building for reducing or eliminating cash bail in the Commonwealth, we estimate the costs and benefits of cash bail reform for cities and counties in Hampton Roads.

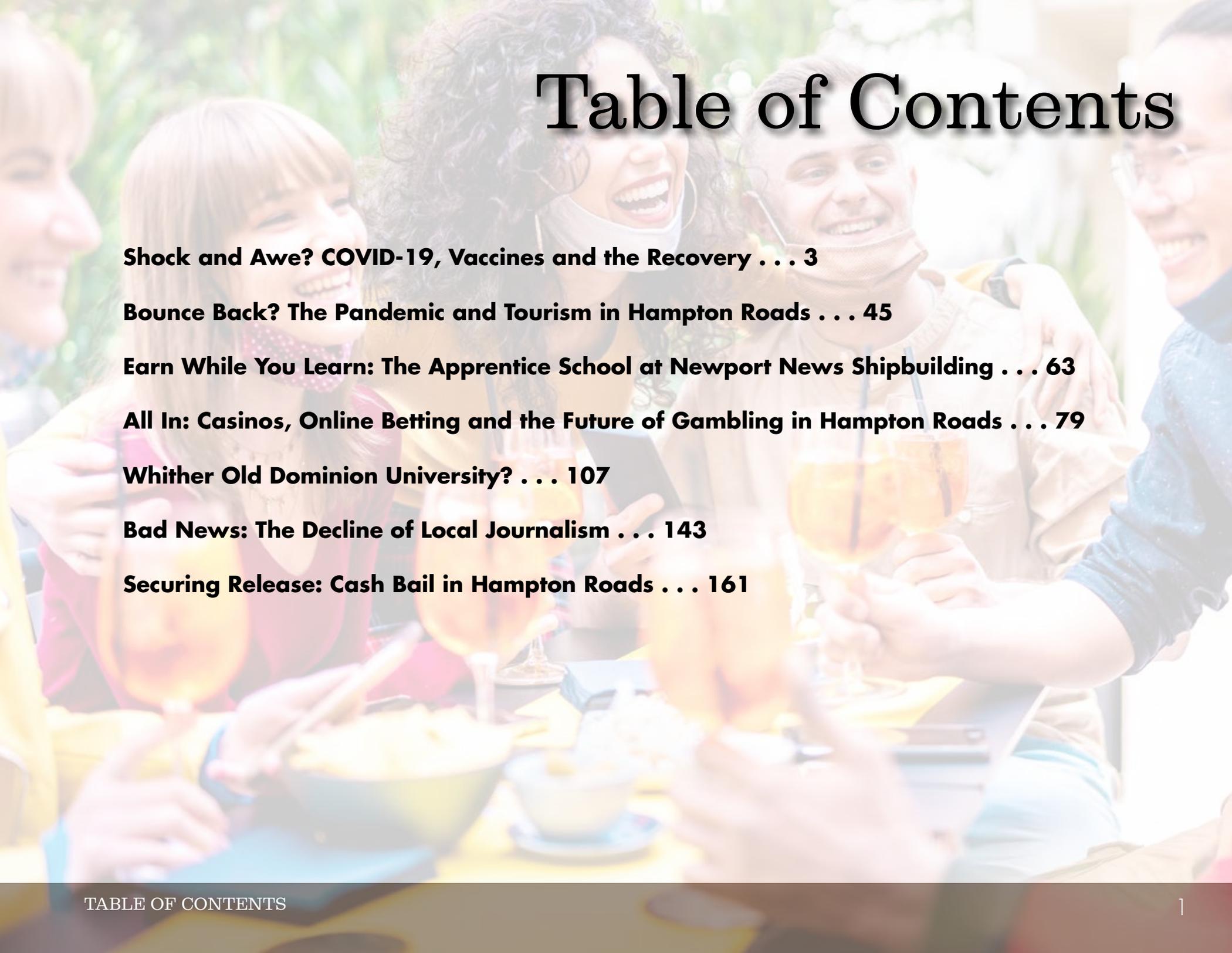


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