

the VIRGINIA

Q3 2025 INDEPENDENT NEWS



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Highlights from our Annual Golf Tournament inside!

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THE VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT NEWS
Virginia Independent Automobile
Dealers Association

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Representing Virginia's independent dealers on the course at the VIADA Golf Tournament

FEATURES

7 | Dealer Responsibilities

Learn when and how to renew your Virginia dealer-operator qualification, what the recertification course covers, and why keeping your credentials current is essential for your business.

8 | 2025 Golf Tournament

A day of friendly competition, networking, and fun on the greens with fellow dealers and industry partners!

11 | We're Not in Kansas Anymore, Toto

A reflection on 33 years in the ever-changing used car industry — embracing evolution, adaptation, and the courage, brains, and heart it takes to thrive as an independent dealer today

21 | Virginia Mobile ID

Virginia Mobile ID is built for today's digital world. Virginia Mobile ID puts you in control—without compromising security or simplicity.

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 | Executive Director's Message
- 5 | President's Message
- 18 | Education Schedules

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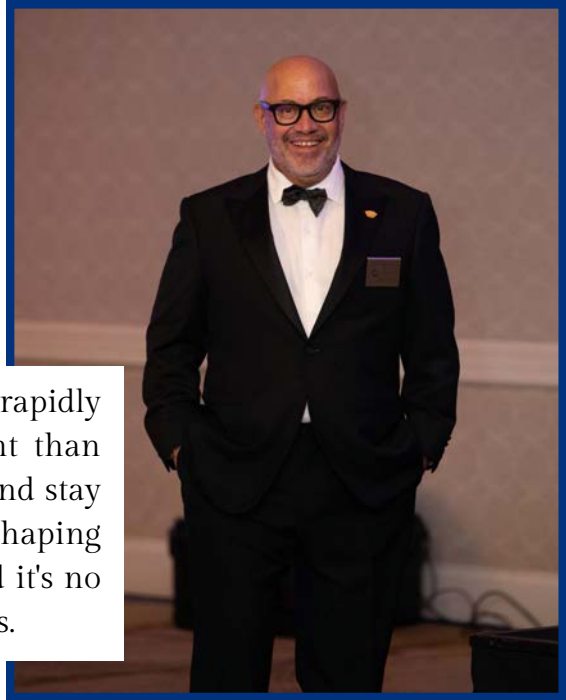
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VIRGINIA'S INDEPENDENT AUTO DEALERS TURN TO AI TO BOOST MARKETING, SALES, AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

By Alvin Melendez CMD

Dear VIADA Members, As we continue navigating a rapidly changing automotive landscape, it is more important than ever for independent dealers to embrace innovation and stay ahead of the curve. One of the most powerful tools reshaping our industry today is Artificial Intelligence (AI) — and it's no longer a luxury reserved for large franchise dealerships.



AI in Marketing: Smarter Campaigns, Better ROI

Traditional marketing is no longer enough. AI allows us to market smarter—not harder. By analyzing customer behavior, search trends, and buyer intent, AI-driven platforms can help independent dealers:

- Target in-market shoppers with precision.
- Automatically create high-performing ads.
- Personalize follow-up messages based on past interest.

Tip: Tools like Google Performance Max and Meta Ads AI can help you stretch your marketing budget and boost visibility online.

Selling More Cars: AI in the Sales Process

Closing more deals starts with engaging the right leads, faster. AI-powered tools can:

- Score leads based on purchase intent.
- Automate follow-ups with the right message at the right time.
- Offer 24/7 chat support via virtual assistants on your website.

Dealers using AI in their CRMs are reporting a 20–30% increase in lead-to-sale conversions. This is a competitive edge worth exploring.

Smarter Inventory Sourcing with AI

Inventory shortages and pricing pressure remain top concerns. AI helps dealers source vehicles that **match demand and move quickly off the lot.** With the right tools, you can:

- Predict which vehicles will sell fastest in your market.
- Monitor auction prices and trends in real-time.
- Identify undervalued trade-ins or private seller opportunities.

Whether you're using VAuto, ACV, or Black Book analytics, AI-backed insights allow you to stock smarter—not just more.

Best Practices for Implementation

Many of our members ask where to begin. Here's what I recommend:

- 1. **Start Small:** Pick one area (marketing, sales, or inventory) and test AI tools.
- 2. **Work with What You Have:** Ensure any new AI solution integrates with your existing CRM or DMS.
- 3. **Train Your Team:** AI is only as good as the people using it. Invest in simple, hands-on training.
- 4. **Track Results:** Monitor your key performance indicators (KPIs) like conversion rate, cost per lead, and average days to sale.

The Bottom Line

Independent dealers are the backbone of Virginia's auto industry. We are resilient, entrepreneurial, and committed to community-based service. By embracing the power of AI, we can continue to lead—not follow—in this next chapter of automotive retail.

At VIADA, we are here to support you every step of the way. If you'd like help evaluating tools or want to attend a training session on digital innovation, please reach out to our office—we're working on a member-exclusive tech workshop this fall.

Let's continue to drive forward, together. Warm Regards,

Alvin
Alvin Melendez, CMD
Executive Director, VIADA



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Symbol of Quality

In the last few months, serving as President of VIADA, I have been honored to lead our association and witness the meaningful progress we've made on behalf of our members.

This period has included significant engagement at both the state and national levels. I had the privilege of attending the NIADA Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., where we joined industry leaders to ensure our voices were heard on critical issues. At the conference, we advocated for several bills to support dealers and consumers, including the Right To Repair Act, which empowers consumers and promotes competition by safeguarding access to vehicle repair and maintenance information, and the PART Act, which addresses catalytic converter theft by requiring VIN numbers on new converters, creating a grant program to VIN-stamp existing converters, improving recordkeeping for used catalytic converter purchases, and codifying these crimes as enforceable offenses. These efforts underscore our commitment to protecting both consumers and the automotive industry.

Closer to home, I have prioritized visiting dealers across the state, connecting directly with members to hear concerns, share updates, and strengthen collaboration. These visits provide invaluable insight into the day-to-day challenges our members face. I am always available to help any member, and I encourage you to reach out whenever assistance is required.



I was also honored to attend the Harrisburg District meeting, where we celebrated Kenny Martin's appointment as District 3 Director. Congratulations to Kenny for stepping up to serve our community with dedication and vision. Finally, I want to recognize that our home office works daily and diligently to serve dealers across Virginia, providing support, resources, and guidance whenever needed.

The last few months have reinforced the importance of unity, advocacy, and proactive engagement. I am proud of what we've accomplished together while serving as President, and I remain committed to advancing the interests of every VIADA member.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

With gratitude,

Joe Anthony
JoeAnthony Ramon
PRESIDENT, VIADA



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DEALER RESPONSIBILITIES: FROM RECERTIFICATION TO REPRESENTATION

By William Childress,
Director of Government Affairs & Lobbying



DEALER OPERATION & RECERTIFICATION

Dealers, it is a good business practice for you to know when the dealer operator qualification for your dealer-operator expires. The Motor Vehicle Dealer Board (MVDB) is the state agency responsible for oversight in this area. The Virginia Code (46.2-1511) requires the dealer-operator to have a certificate of qualification. This certificate of qualification is granted upon successful completion of the two-day dealer-operator course (offered by the VIADA) and passing the applicable dealer-operator exam administered at any full-service Department of Motor Vehicles' Customer Service Center.

This certificate of qualification by law, is required to be recertified every two-years – ideally before the end of the expiration month. The law allows some flexibility in that you are considered compliant with the law if you complete the recertification requirements within 60 days of your expiration date. For example, if your dealer-operator qualification expires in April, you will have until the end of June to successfully complete the dealer-operator recertification course.

The dealer-operator recertification course is a four-hour course. By law, the course curriculum must cover ethical practices, recordkeeping, recent state and federal laws and regulations, review of relevant federal regulations, titling and registration requirements (including the use of dealer license plates), offsite sales, financing, dealer practices, salespersons licenses and advertising. As you can see, this is a lot of information to pack into four hours. This class is required to be instructor-led - to promote questions and share experiences to the benefit of the class, whether the class is in person or via a social media platform (TEAMS, ZOOM, Webex, etc.).

Large dealerships or organizations that have more than 50 licensed salespersons may submit a training program to the Executive Director of the MVDB. If approved, the four-hour instructor-led course is not required.

Large dealerships or organizations that have more than 50 licensed salespersons may submit a training program to the Executive Director of the MVDB. If approved, the four-hour instructor-led course is not required.

As the owner of the dealership, it is important that you are aware of the dealer-operator and dealer-operator recertification requirements, information in addition to your dealership's renewal time frame, your insurance (operations and dealer plates) requirement, your field representative's contact information and ensuring that your dealership(s) maintain their posted hours of operation.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

This is an important election year in Virginia. Virginia will elect its first female governor this fall, either former Congresswoman Abridgail Spanberger or current Lt. Governor Winsome Earle-Sears. In addition to the highly visible governor's race, the Lt. Governor (Hashmi versus Reid) and Attorney General (Jones versus Miyares) races are hotly contested. All 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates are up for election as well as many positions in localities across the Commonwealth. The Virginia Independent Automobile Dealers Association (VIADA) does not endorse or favor a particular party. It is our responsibility to our membership and the independent dealer community to work with public officials, whether they are elected, appointed, or interim.

However, you as an individual and business owner should participate in the voting process and vote according to your beliefs and desires. Your right to vote is a fundamental right you have as a citizen of this country, state and locality. I strongly encourage you to exercise that right. Check with your locality to see who is on the ballot for local offices.

Maybe it is time for you to get more involved in your community and seek public office?...what is holding you back?



SCAN ME

**Scan the QR code to view
our Event Calendar,
explore upcoming Dealer
Operator & Recertification
dates, and secure your
spot today.**

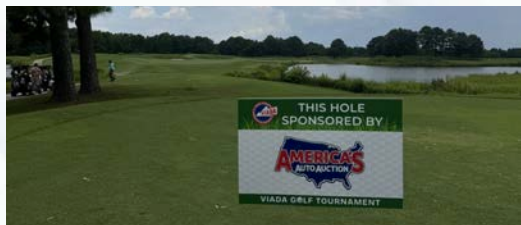


VIADA GOLF *Tournament*

VIRGINIA BEACH NATIONAL GOLF CLUB
MONDAY, JULY 21, 2025

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VIADA GOLF



The VIADA Golf Tournament brought together independent dealers, partners, and industry friends for a day of networking, camaraderie, and competition on the greens. Teams enjoyed a beautiful course, great food, and plenty of laughs while supporting the association's mission to strengthen and advocate for Virginia's independent automobile dealers. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors and participants, the tournament was not only a success on the course but also a win for the dealer community we proudly serve.





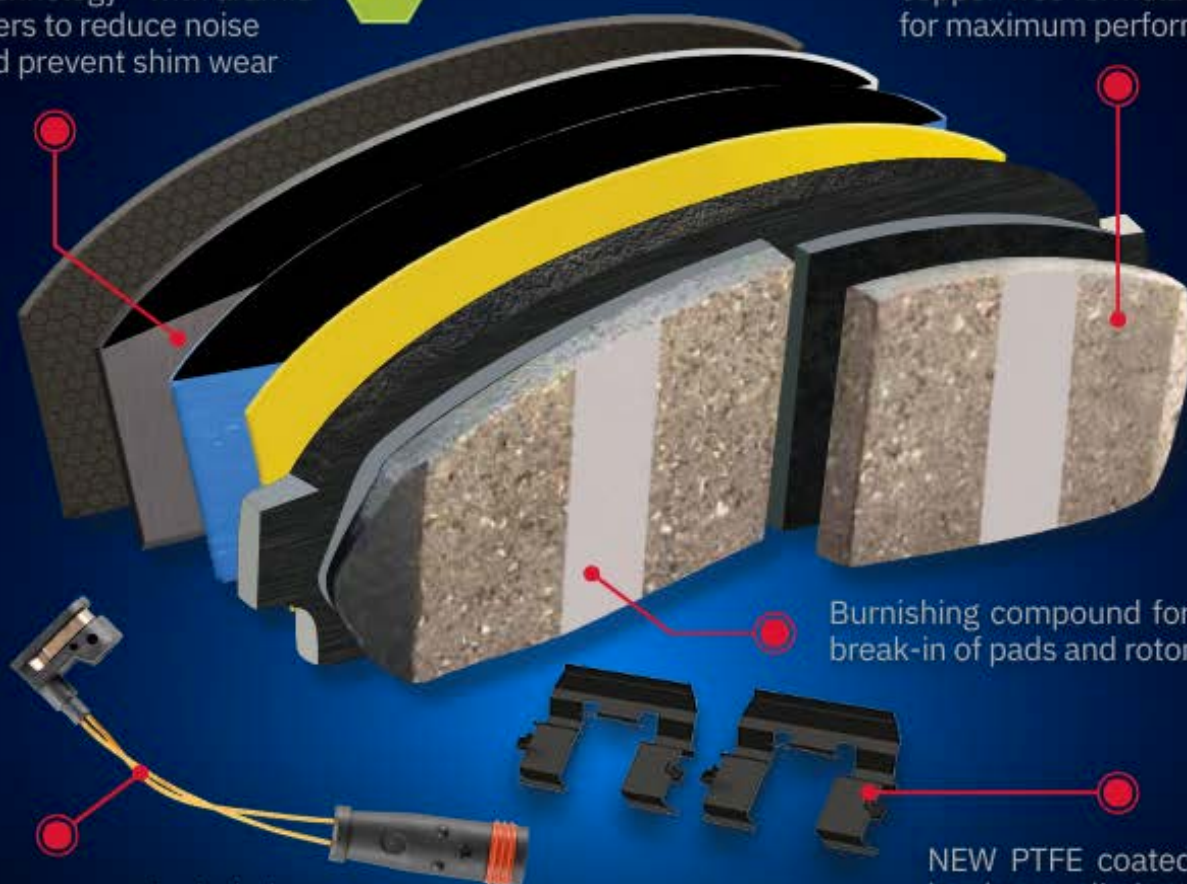
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“We’re Not in Kansas Anymore Toto”



BY: CRAIG AMELUNG
GENERAL MANAGER, MANHEIM
MID-ATLANTIC MARKET

I consider myself very blessed with being in the used car business for the past 33 years. It has provided every opportunity for my children, and eventually my wife and I are looking forward to retiring to spend our days together without endless text, emails, and phone calls. One thing is for certain, between now and the time that I finally call it a day, this business is going to continue to change countless times. I remember when a vehicle over 36k miles was destined for the auction. Now new car stores are finding ways to retail 125k mile vehicles, cutting into the supply that is available for our independent dealerships. Mergers and acquisitions have become an everyday news topic in the new car space but we are seeing some of this activity in the independent space as well.

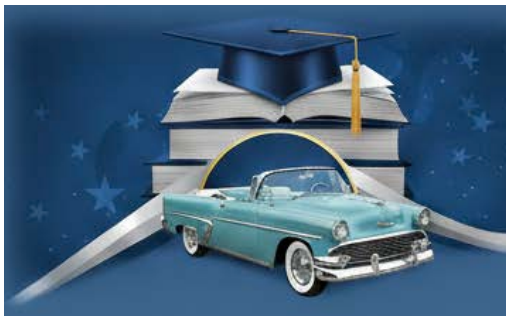
As many of you know, I am on the auction side of the industry, and we are seeing more of the independent auctions being purchased by the larger chains. Manheim just purchased two of the premier independent auctions when we closed on the sale of Belair Auto Auction and Tallahassee Auto Auction in August of this year. I have seen many of you change your approach, whether it be in the inventory you stock, the way you advertise, or the way that you have embraced social media to attract potential retail customers. We are all living in a state of CONSTANT change. I think it is safe to say that anyone who is holding on to the way business was done as early as 2 years ago is probably losing ground in the retail space. I would venture to guess that there is not anything the same as it was when you opened your dealership.

I have been able to learn so much over my career talking with dealers; both independent and new car owners. I am impressed by what you do and for the courage each of you has in using your own capital to build your businesses. What is even more impressive to me is not only are you providing for your families, but you are providing for the families of every person you employ. Many of you prove the real value of being a member of the Virginia Independent Automobile Dealers Association by being selfless and always willing to share what makes you successful with those who are coming behind you. I am impressed by your willingness to help others gain success in this business. I think each of you have the courage of the Lion, the brain of the Scarecrow, and the heart of the Tin Man.



VIAD CHARITY FUND

By: Dale Fisher



Do you have a high school senior with interest in furthering their education? We can help!

The VIAD Charity Fund offers the Shirly Slack Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$3,000, to a child or grandchild of a VIADA dealer in good standing. The scholarship is based on a high school record of scholastic achievement, extracurricular activity, volunteerism, and entrepreneurship, as judged by the Selection Committee.

The application and supporting documentation must be submitted to the VIADA home office by April 3, 2026. The Guidelines and Application Form may be found on the VIADA and VIAD Charity Fund websites.

WWW.VIADA.ORG/VIADCF

VIAD CHARITY FUND

SHIRLY SLACK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

1. A \$3,000 Scholarship may be awarded to a high school senior who is a son, daughter or grandchild of a VIADA Member in good standing. The scholarship is based on a high school record of scholastic achievement, extra-curricular activity, volunteerism, and entrepreneurship, as judged by the Selection Committee.
2. The Selection Committee will be made up of three qualified professionals and will be appointed by the Scholarship Committee of the VIAD Charity Fund.
3. To use the scholarship, recipients may attend any technical training school, four-year accredited college or university or junior college of their choice. They must attend the fall term of the selected institution and take a full-course load leading to graduation. The Scholarship Committee will communicate with recipients to be certain they understand the policy.
4. The following should be completed and received by the VIAD Charity Fund Scholarship Committee Chairman, Carla Boucher on or before **the first Friday in April**:
 - A. VIAD CHARITY FUND APPLICATION FORM
 - B. PHOTOGRAPH (HIGH QUALITY, COLOR, 3 X 5 OR LARGER) C. HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT
 - D. SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST SCORES
 - E. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS, CLERGY, ETC. (MAXIMUM OF FIVE)

Images and some public information may be published in The Virginia Independent News

5. The Scholarship Committee will inform recipients of their selection in an award letter. A runner-up will be announced if the winner declines.
6. Money will be made available to the recipient through the College Registrar, or the Financial Aid Officer, who will administer it in a manner in keeping with each institution's policies.
7. It is the responsibility of the recipient to make all arrangements for college admission, acceptance and enrollment, and for notification to VIAD Charity Fund by the authorized college officer of the recipient's enrollment.
8. The recipient is encouraged to accept the Scholarship Award in person at a VIADA meeting, or if necessary, their parents may accept the award for them at said meeting.

I have read and agree to the terms and requirements listed above.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent _____ Date: _____

The VIAD Charity Fund also sponsors a "Fill-A-Wish" program that grants a unique personal "wish" to a special needs child 18 years old or younger. If you have a family member or know anyone in your area that would qualify for this benefit, refer to the websites for an application.

2025 RECERTIFICATION SCHEDULE

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For more information, please visit www.viada.org/recertification/

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
12 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	14 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	14 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	12 ZOOM 9am - 1pm
16 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	21 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	18 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	16 ZOOM 9am - 1pm
24 In-Person Manheim Fredericksburg 1pm - 5pm	30 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	21 ZOOM 9am - 1pm	30 ZOOM 9am - 1pm

2025 DEALER OPERATOR SCHEDULE

For more information, please visit www.viada.org/pre-license/

SEPTEMBER	2-3	LYNCHBURG
SEPTEMBER	4-5	MIDLOTHIAN
OCTOBER	6-7	CHANTILLY
OCTOBER	8-9	MIDLOTHIAN
NOVEMBER	3-4	HARRISONBURG
NOVEMBER	5-6	MIDLOTHIAN
DECEMBER	1-2	SUFFOLK
DECEMBER	3-4	MIDLOTHIAN

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EDUCATIONAL **\$285** (No certificate, call for code)

** The class registration fee includes a \$50 MVDB fee which will be submitted by VIADA to MVDB

** Does not include \$50 DMV testing fee

TAXING ISSUES

By Todd Ofslager,
VIADA Comptroller



No one wants them, but sometimes they come anyway: IRS Notices and Letters.

When a taxpayer's account shows a discrepancy or imbalance the IRS will issue a notice or letter. These are sent to businesses or individual taxpayers. The initial correspondence is a notice that there is a problem in the account. It could mean either a balance due or overpayment. No one likes to receive these, but they can be handled. Generally, the correspondence will request a response in a certain time period, usually 30 days. The worst thing to do is to ignore the request. This may cause the IRS to become more aggressive in the matter.

There are cases where the IRS has improperly posted a payment. This causes an overpayment in one area and an underpayment in another. One would think the IRS would be able to see the discrepancy and make the adjustment, but this requires the taxpayer to contact the IRS by phone or mail and request the correction. There are times where the IRS has received an overpayment and the correspondence states the case and offers to refund the difference.

Then there are times where taxpayers or businesses have underpaid tax obligations and owe a balance plus penalties or interest. Even if the taxpayer or business can not fully pay the balance they should respond within the 30 days. To ignore it only draws more attention.

- Most of the time the IRS will accept payment plans
- Some penalties can be forgiven
- Interest will not be forgiven

At VIADA we offer a free consultation on business or individual tax matters for our members.

Todd Ofslager is an Enrolled Agent and has a background in resolving IRS problems.

You may contact him at todd@viada.org

UPCOMING DISTRICT DINNERS



District 8

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

Director: J-Bo Lester
Location: Stateline Bar & Grill
Bristol, TN

RSVP: (276) 883-5279

District 7

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Director: Marc Pellerito
Location: Vito's Italian Kitchen
Harrisonburg, VA

RSVP: (540) 254-7327

District 1

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1

Director: JR Kostelich
Location: Aberdeen Steakhouse
Virginia Beach, VA

RSVP: (252) 722-5213

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DAY ON CAPITOL HILL

2025 TALKING POINTS



VIRGINIA DEALERS IN WASHINGTON DC JOIN WITH OTHER STATES TO MAKE THEIR VOICE HEARD.



150 dealers and industry members converged in Washington, D.C., to strengthen the voice of the used vehicle industry during the NIADA Policy Conference.

1 Right To Repair

Recent polling suggests more than 83% of Americans support a national right-to-repair law, ensuring consumers' ability to choose how and where they fix their vehicles. The cost for consumers to repair their vehicles is 184.3% higher in 2025 compared to 1997. Congress needs to pass **H.R. 1566** and **S. 1399**, the **REPAIR Act**, which would give vehicle owners and their designee access to diagnostics and tools for their vehicles to allow work to be completed by more repair providers.

2 Catalytic Converter Theft

Congress should pass **S. 2238** and **H.R. 5221**, the **PART Act**, which would assist law enforcement in combatting catalytic converter theft by marking catalytic converters and creating a more transparent marketplace that disrupts black-market activity. The legislation includes a \$7 million grant program through which consumers and auto dealers can stamp identifiers onto the catalytic converters of vehicles at no cost to vehicle owners.

3 CFPB Reform

- i. The house should pass **H.R. 654**, the **TABS Act**, which would subject the CFPB's budget to the annual appropriations process. This will allow Congress to maintain important checks and balances on the CFPB's day-to-day operations, ensuring fairness in its marketplace supervision, rulemaking activities, and its use of non-binding policy guidance.
- ii. The House should pass **H.R. 1652**, the **Rectifying UDAAP Act**, which establishes clear standards related to unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices under the CFPB's authorities, particularly a durable definition of "abusiveness." The Senate should introduce and pass companion legislation for both bills.



Every year, VIADA members head to the Capitol with excitement and purpose! It's our chance to meet face-to-face with legislators, share our stories, and make sure the voices of Virginia's independent automobile dealers are heard loud and clear. Through the VIADA PAC, we raise funds to support candidates on both sides of the aisle who understand and value our industry. These visits aren't just about politics; they're about building relationships, protecting our businesses, and driving the future of independent auto sales in Virginia. We love what we do, and we're proud to represent dealers across the Commonwealth!





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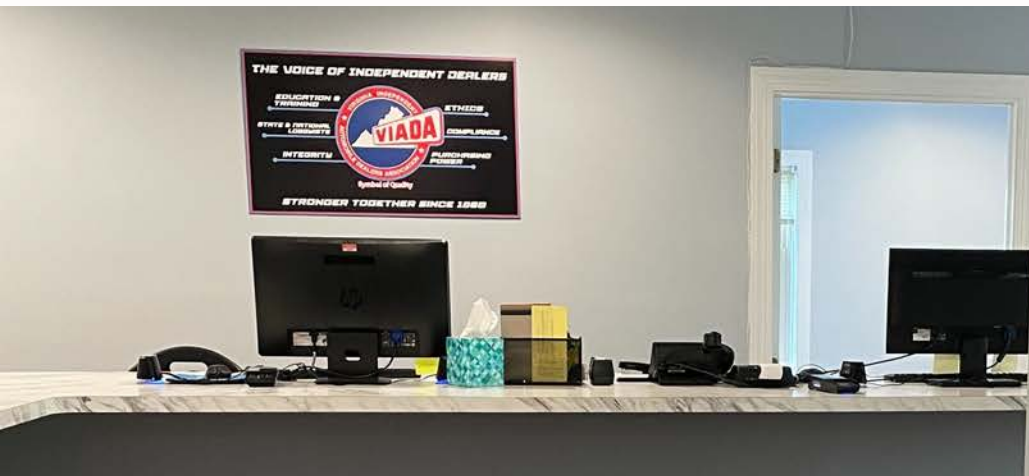


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STAY INFORMED, STAY CONNECTED, AND GROW WITH US.



DMV PROCESSING CENTER

◀◀◀ OPEN TO DEALERS AND CUSTOMERS! ▶▶▶

- Replacement & Substitute Titles
- Title and Registration Transactions
- Original Titles - VA and Out of State
- Supplemental Lien Titles
- Registrations - Original, Renew, Reissue and Transfer
- Lien Release Titles
- Abandoned Vehicle Titles
- Repossessed Titles
- Order Specialty and Personalized Plates



1525 Huguenot Road Suite 202
Midlothian, VA 23113

Want to learn more?
please email: dmv@viada.org



HOURS:

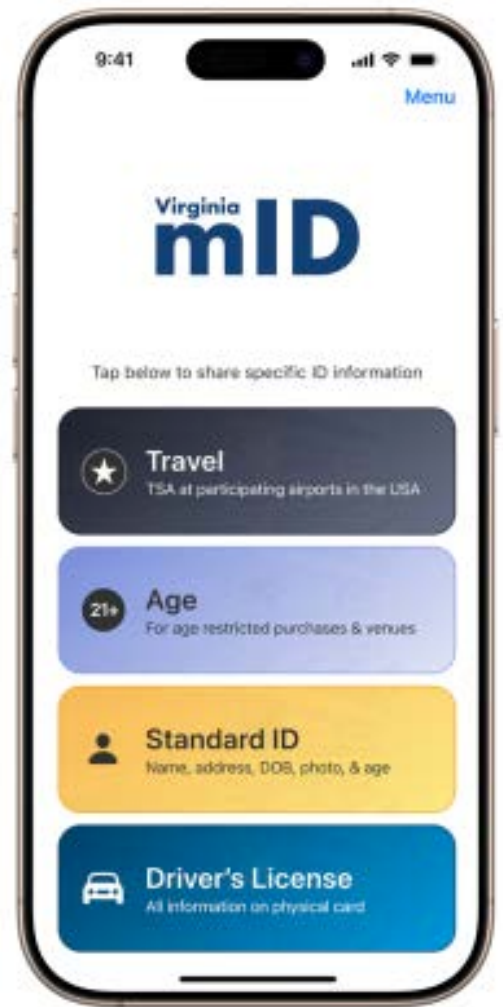
Monday-Friday 11:00AM-5:00PM
Drop-off available in Suite 102:
9:00AM-11:00AM (Mon - Fri)
Saturday 9:00AM-12:00PM
Sunday CLOSED

Virginia is always driving forward. Last year DMV co-founded the national Digital Trust Service, making Virginia's Mobile ID the most secure in the nation. We're also the first state where Mobile ID is accepted at DMV service centers, Virginia ABC stores, and by Virginia State Police—with more public and private partners joining us in the months ahead. Virginia Mobile ID makes everyday life easier—whether at TSA checkpoints or verifying your age—while giving you more control over your personal information. You can confirm you're over 21, for example, without revealing your name or address.

If you have a valid Virginia driver's license or state-issued identification card, then Virginia Mobile ID just made carrying your ID more convenient, more secure and much less stressful. You'll love the peace of mind of always having your ID by your side. Virginia Mobile ID is a digital option of a state-issued driver's license or identification card. It's free to obtain and can be set up with your smartphone. Your Virginia Mobile ID is a companion to your physical ID, and you'll still need to carry a physical ID with you. In many cases, it can stay in your wallet, and your phone can do the work of verifying your identity.

DMV introduces Virginia Mobile ID on Your Smartphone

YOUR FUTURE ID IS HERE



KEY BENEFITS

- Always with you on your phone
- Fast, contactless and easy to use
- Set up in minutes, from anywhere
- Once downloaded, no cell signal needed
- Free, no cost to download or maintain
- Shows your REAL ID status
- Available soon on all digital wallets
- Built-in security to keep your identity safe and prevent fraud
- You choose what information to share
- Your data is not stored, tracked or shared
- Unique encryption means screenshots are rejected
- Your phone stays in your hands

WHERE YOU CAN USE IT

- TSA checkpoints at 230+ U.S. airports, including all major Virginia airports
- Virginia State Police interactions
- Richmond-area ABC stores and DMV service centers
- Afterglow Brewing in Norfolk



SCAN TO GET STARTED!



Virginia Independent Automobile Dealers Association
1525 Huguenot Road, Suite 102
Midlothian, VA 23113
(800) 394-1960 | info@viada.org

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Bel Air, MD 21014



Formerly Belair Auto Auction