2011 – 2013

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

VIRGINIA ASIAN ADVISORY BOARD

TO

GOVERNOR ROBERT F. MCDONNELL

June 30, 2013

VIRGINIA ASIAN ADVISORY BOARD

1111 East Broad Street, 4th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
www.vaab.virginia.gov
TABLE OF CONTENTS
Letter to the Governor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is fifth annual report of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board (VAAB). The VAAB serves as a formal liaison between the government of Virginia and the Asian Pacific Islander communities in the Commonwealth. The board’s purpose is to advise the Governor on ways to improve economic and cultural links between the Commonwealth and Asian nations.
The VAAB is made up of 17 citizen members and an ex-officio member – the Honorable Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Mr. Jimmy Rhee.

The VAAB convened six (6) full board meetings and twenty nine (29) planning/working sessions for the period beginning July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

VAAB determined that it would channel its focus on the following four areas: Education, Workforce Development, Small Business and International Trade & Investment. Accordingly, the board’s activities for the duration were centered on the four areas.

VAAB’s outreach to the citizens in the Commonwealth has been multi-channeled, allowing board members to better engage with the citizens on topics of interest to them. From hosting a Town Hall, leading several business-centric discussions and working with state and international entities, the board’s reach and impact has been multi-faceted. VAAB is especially proud of its role in hosting the first ever Global Network Expo in the Commonwealth, partnering with the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Department of Minority Business Enterprise and the Virginia Latino Advisory Board.

Through its slate of diverse activities during this period, VAAB believes it has valuable insights and recommendations to share with the Governor and his Administration.

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Asian Advisory Board (“VAAB” or “Board”) was created by Executive Order in 2001 to build better business relations and advise the Governor regarding issues affecting the Asian community. The Virginia Asian Advisory Board was signed into law and codified two years later on June 12, 2003. Asian Pacific Islanders constitute 5.8% (or 475,000) of the population of Virginia. VAAB serves as a formal liaison between the Commonwealth government and the diverse and fast growing Asian Pacific Islander communities in the Commonwealth.
Pursuant to Section 2.2-2450 of the Code of Virginia, the Board is pleased to submit to Governor Robert F. McDonnell this Annual Report as a summary of its activities from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013. This is the second report VAAB has submitted to Governor McDonnell and the fifth report of its kind.

The current Board comprises 17 citizen members and an ex-officio member the Honorable Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Mr. Jimmy Rhee. Mr. Rhee also serves as our liaison to the Governor’s office.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

The following members currently serve on the Board:

- **Ms. Angela Chiang (Seat 1)** of Chesterfield is Director of Operations at the Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise
- **Ms. Chun Elmejjad (Seat 2)** of Centerville is President of the Millennium Wealth Management Group & Retirement Planning Specialist
- **Mr. Chandrashekar Challa (Seat 3)** of Henrico is Chief Operating Officer of Challa Law
- **Mr. Michael Liew (Seat 4)** of Salem is a retired businessman
- **Mr. Tony Pham (Seat 5)** of Henrico is General Counsel with the Richmond Sheriff’s Office
- **Ms. Shewling Moy (Seat 6)** of Virginia Beach is a Realtor with Coldwell Banker
- **Dr. Binh Nguyen (Seat 7)** of McLean is a Physician and Assistant Professor at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
- **Ms. Suwattana Sugg (Seat 8)** of Henrico is Education Coordinator with Commonwealth Catholic Charities
- **Mr. Felix Wang (Seat 9)** of Harrisonburg is Director of Study Abroad at James Madison University
- **Ms. Victoria Mirandah (Seat 10)** of Henrico is Sr. Director of Risk Management at Capital One
- **Mr. Sal Hundal (Seat 11)** of Vienna is President and Chief Technology Officer of Soltec One Inc.
- **Mr. Ray Obispo (Seat 12)** of Norfolk is an Educator with Virginia Beach City Public Schools
- **Dr. Dilip Sarkar (Seat 13)** of Norfolk is a retired Vascular Surgeon
- **Mr. Eric Lin (Seat 14)** of Chesterfield is the Principal with The VIE Group
- **Mr. Andrew Ko (Seat 15)** of Ashburn is General Manager of Partners in Learning with Microsoft
- **Mr. Jose Montano Jr (Seat 16)** of Falls Church is Regional Representative with the Office of US Senator Tim Kaine

*(Seat 17 is currently vacant)*

- **Ms. Kim Oanh Cook (Seat 18)** of Fairfax County is Executive Director of Vietnamese Resettlement Association
PURPOSE/MISSION:
The Virginia Asian Advisory Board’s purpose is to advise the Governor on ways to improve economic and cultural links between the Commonwealth and Asian nations with a focus on areas of commerce and trade, art and education, and general government as well as issues effecting the Asian community and Commonwealth.

BUSINESS MEETINGS
During the period of July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 the Board convened six (6) full board meetings and a subset of Board members met twenty nine (29) times for various planning and working session purposes. Details of the thirty five (35) meetings can be found in the appendix section of this report. The Board also held elections for its Executive Committee positions. The former and current executive board members are:

May 21, 2010 through Dec 6, 2012
- Chair – Dr. Binh Nguyen
- Vice-Chair – Mr. Sal Hundal
- Secretary – Mr. Eric Lin
- Treasurer – Ms. Angela Chiang

Dec 7, 2012 to present
- Chair – Ms. Vicki Mirandah
- Vice-Chair – Mr. Tony Pham
- Secretary – Mr. Eric Lin
- Treasurer – Ms. Angela Chiang

Board member Ms. Margarita (Marj) Mohta (Seat 17) resigned from the board in December 2010.

FOCUS AREAS
With excellent guidance and discussion with our liaison Mr. Jimmy Rhee, the VAAB decided on 4 areas of focus:
1. Education
2. Workforce Development
3. Small Business
4. International Trade and Investment

WHAT WE DID
Thus the VAAB agreed that their activities, findings and recommendations should specifically focus on the said four areas. Accordingly, the board engaged in the following activities for the duration specified in this report:

2011-2012
- 8th Annual Asian Pacific American Legislative Policy & Resource Forum (partnership with Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia or CAPAVA) – Jan 17, 2012

2013 - YTD
WHAT WE LEARNED (FINDINGS)

- **Asian Pacific American Legislative Policy & Resource Forums**
  Although the VAAB is a politically non-partisan board, it supports advocacy efforts of issues impacting Asian Pacific Islanders in Virginia. The board does not take any formal positions on pending legislation at the Policy & Resource Forums. Participation in the 2012 and 2013 Policy & Resource Forums allowed VAAB board members an opportunity to meet with legislators and broadly educate them on issues that are most important to their Asian Pacific Islander constituents. Board members underscored the following points:
  - The Asian Pacific Islander demographic is one of the fastest growing populations in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
  - Matters of Education, Economy, Jobs and Public Safety are the most important issues for Asian Pacific Islanders.
  - The Asian Pacific Islander population wants to be heard and understood by their elected officials.

- **Small Business Lab Panel Discussion**
  This session was opened to the public and small business owners in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The goal of the Lab was to provide an opportunity for existing and small business owners to better develop their capabilities to weather and prosper in the changing business landscape. The panelists comprised Ms. Ida McPherson, Director of the Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise, Ms. Angie Leung Williams, SVP – Bank of America and Mr. Jimmy Rhee, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

  Approximately fifty members of the public were in attendance. Ms. McPherson shared relevant statistics about small businesses in the Commonwealth, the SWAM Certification process and guidance regarding access to capital and doing business with the Commonwealth. Ms. Williams shared her perspective on corporate competencies that small business owners need to hone when seeking to do business with corporations, interpreting and understanding requirements and how to successfully research and apply for capital. Mr. Rhee touched on why small businesses are important to the Commonwealth, probing whether Asian American and other minority businesses are properly positioned to take advantage of existing opportunities, understand the scope of work and business practices.

- **Asian Pacific Islander Voter Debrief Insights**
  Mr. Glenn Magpantay, Director of the Democracy Program at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund shared a presentation on their findings from the 2012 Presidential Election. Approximately 950 Asian American voters were polled and highlights include the following data:
  - 24% of Asian Pacific Islander voters in the Commonwealth were first time voters.
  - Economy and Jobs are the top 2 issues among APIA voters.
  - Democratic supporters were concerned with Economy, Job, Health Care, Civil Rights, Immigration and Education issues.
  - Republican supporters were primarily concerned with Economy and Jobs with Healthcare coming in a distant third.
Ms. Christine Chen, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) Vote also presented their findings during the 2012 Presidential Election. Highlights include the following:

- The Commonwealth of Virginia had an 88% APIA voter turnout compared to 79% at the national level.
- Nationally, the APIA community had the lowest registration rate among minority groups.
- Nationally, the APIA voters are under sampled and under reported. Most surveys and polling are not specifically targeting the APIA voters unlike other minority groups.
- Nationally, the APIA voters are the largest untapped voting bloc and surveys show that many APIA voters are undecided until close to the election. 61% of APIA voters in the Commonwealth were contacted by at least one political party in the 2012 election compared to 31% at the national level.
- APIA voters polled indicated that they were most concerned with the Economy, Education and Health Care (in that order).
- APIA voter influence is coming of age. The Senate race in Virginia was decided by a 186,000 vote margin. There are 227,000 registered APIA voters in the Commonwealth.
- More APIA organizations are pushing for voter empowerment, recognition and building upon accomplishments:
  - Sustaining and increasing civic engagement beyond voting
  - Increasing resources for these purposes
  - Developing healthy pipelines to organize for action
  - Building infrastructure
  - Changing APIA behavior to where voting is the norm rather than the exception

- **Central Virginia Public Safety Education and Discussion**
  Richmond Sheriff C.T. Woody and Chief Deputy Allman presented information on public safety as it pertained to the Asian Pacific Islander community in Central Virginia.
  - Within the APIA community, the highest incidents of crime are burglary, robbery and assault.
  - Major issues in dealing with the APIA community include the following:
    - Language/cultural barriers
    - Inherent distrust of law enforcement
    - Concerns about immigration issues
  - Proactive measures for the community to interact effectively with law enforcement include communication, participation, staying informed and keeping law enforcement apprised.
  - Sheriff Woody underscored the following:
    - reminded the attendees that the police and his office are there to serve and work for the community
    - that they must earn the community’s trust
    - must have mutual belief in each other
    - must be proactive rather than reactive

- **Tidewater Town Hall**
  Town Halls afford the VAAB a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the APIA community and to share the information gleaned with the Governor. On March 28, the VAAB hosted a Town Hall in Virginia Beach. Special appreciation to the sponsors who helped host the event and provide refreshments; Philippines Cultural Center, Asian Pacific American Heritage Organization, Asian Business Association of Hampton Roads, Indian Palace, Susan’s Kitchenette, The Council of Filipino Organizations of Tidewater, The Filipino American National Historical Society and the Young Filipino Professionals. VAAB members Mr. Ray Obispo, Ms. Shewling Moy and Dr. Dilip Sarkar took the lead in organizing the event. Additional VAAB members in attendance included Ms. Angela Chiang, Mr. Eric Lin, Ms. Vicki Miranda and Mr. Jimmy Rhee.
Approximately 75 members of the public attended the event. VAAB Chair, Vicki Miranda, provided an overview of the board and its mandate. 3 topics were highlighted for presentation and discussion:
  o Heath Care Reform
  o Small Business
  o International Bi-Lateral Trade

**Health Care Reform:** Ms. Claudia Dodge, Vice President of BB&T Insurance Services presented on the topic. Highlights of her presentation included the following:
  o Based on the Affordable Health Care Act, by January 2014, all individuals are required to have qualified health insurance. Coverage must be purchased individually or through employers.
  o Employers with 50 or more employees are required to provide a minimum level of coverage by the implementation date.
  o There will be a graduated schedule of penalties assigned for individuals and employers who do not comply with mandated requirements.
  o Virginia has not authorized its own insurance exchange and will therefore default to the federal exchange.
  o Questions from the public included a query as to whether state/private Medicaid exchanges will drive down health care costs.

**Small Business:** Ms. Angela Chiang, Director of Operations of the Department of Minority Business Enterprise shared information about the Department of Minority Business Enterprise. She shared the history, purpose and current statistics about DMBE. Audience members had questions about the definition of “Small Business”, the SWAM certification process and the goals of the organization.

**International Bi-Lateral Trade:** Mr. Jimmy Rhee shared that the focus of his Administration has been on Job Creation, Economic Development and International Trade. He encouraged small businesses to consider exporting goods and services where they excelled and import what others can do better and more cost effectively. He advised small business owners to focus on picking the right niche for their business. Audience members asked Mr. Rhee about the potential of Norfolk as a greater leverage for shipping businesses due to the future development plans for the Panama Canal.

- **Global Network Exposition**
  The inaugural Global Network Exposition held on May 3, 2013 was a fine example of partnership and leveraging mutual interests to help further business and trade in the Commonwealth. The consortium of the Department of Minority Business Enterprise, Virginia Asian Advisory Board and Virginia Latino Advisory Board successfully hosted the day long event. Approximately 250 participants attended the event held at the Marriott in Richmond, VA. The intent of the exposition was to focus on bi-lateral trade opportunities between Asian and Latino countries and the Commonwealth, inviting attendees across the full demographic spectrum in Virginia to explore the opportunities. Participants were invited to attend the two major cultural events the next day; the 11th Annual Que Pasa Festival and the 16th Annual Asian American Festival.

The following countries were represented by their Embassies or Consular Trade Offices at the Global Network Exposition: Bangladesh, Columbia, People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, India, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

The Exposition allowed attendees to:
  o Interact with business and consular officials from key Asian and Latino countries
  o Participate in small group break out sessions on various topics of interest
  o Explore business opportunities and resources in Virginia
Engage in Business match-making and Networking opportunities

The Global Network Exposition was exceptionally well received by attendees who shared that they would like to see the event grow and hosted again next year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The VAAB is pleased with the slate of activities it undertook during this period in the 4 focus areas. The recommendations below are the result of our outreach and community efforts.

**International Trade** – Asian countries continue to be the biggest economic and trade opportunities both globally and locally. The Global Network Expo was ground-breaking in that it demonstrated the power of strong partnerships easily developed with existing resources. Working with the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, DMBE and VLAB, VAAB was able to highlight how international business and culture work in tandem to create successful business opportunities.

- The VAAB strongly recommends continuing to work with VLAB and other entities to support hosting the Global Network Expo next year and beyond.
- The VAAB recommends developing stronger partnerships with agencies such as the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to leverage local and international contacts to help the VEDP achieve its goals and mission. Agencies and trade representatives that engage in bi-lateral trade discussions would benefit from developing better understanding of Asian cultural and business practices to facilitate connections and foster international commerce.
- VAAB strongly recommends the State leverage the resources and international connections it has in the Asian community. Not only are there numerous commerce and international business groups in existence in the Commonwealth, there are specific groups and individuals that are in regular contact with business and trade groups in their home countries. Identifying and developing them as “trade scouts” for the Commonwealth is an effective and low-cost way to augment current outreach efforts.

**Education & Workforce Development** – The growing Asian Pacific Islander population comprises a high percentage of professionals and work-ready skilled individuals that are needed in technology, biotechnology and manufacturing fields.

- VAAB recommends the Administration continue its push for Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) education. Based on statistics (2012 study by Chmura Economics & Analytics) STEM industries will grow faster than all other industries. The expected growth plus the expected retirement of employees in these fields suggest that there will be a significant demand for STEM workers in the near future. The Asian community produces a high percentage of students who excel in these areas. It is vital that the K-12 programs continue to highlight the bright career opportunities in these areas. Additionally, continued recruitment of higher education students locally and globally who can fill these needs are a must.
- VAAB recommends the Commonwealth’s two and four year post-secondary education institutions develop more work-ready skill programs. The technology and manufacturing fields are critical to the success of domestic and international companies that have invested in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is fortunate to be home to many institutions of higher education – thus the ability to produce an abundant and competent workforce for potential commerce partners.
- VAAB recommends the Administration pursue policies that will help retain workforce for the Commonwealth to remain competitive. Where possible, immigration policies and incentives should be in place to help retain talent that will add value to the workforce and community.
  - Asian students on student visas should be enticed to join the workforce, post completion of their degrees.
  - It’s been observed that the Commonwealth is losing talented young Asian professionals to other states. This is in part due to employer supported relocation, but a larger part is attributed to lack of opportunities in Virginia and a desire to keep the family unit intact. The Asian household/unit is often multi-generational. The dearth of public services for elderly Asians in the Commonwealth is a contributing factor of attrition of young professionals and
their extended families. They seek to re-settle in other states that are more conducive to their multi-generational family needs.

**Small Business** – The entrepreneurial spirit is often characteristic of any new immigrant population. This entrepreneurial spirit transcends generations in the Asian Pacific Islander community. The drive to achieve the American Dream through hard work and business ownership is the hallmark of the Asian community.

- VAAB recommends the continued support of the SWaM Dashboard with increased importance to the reporting of procurement goals of SWaM certified businesses.
- VAAB recommends that state SWaM program be expanded to include participation by local governments.
- VAAB recommends creation of a micro-business category in the certification program.
- VAAB recommends changing the definition of “Small Business” to a business that has 250 or fewer employees AND has average gross receipts of $10 million or less over the previous 3 years. The current definition is extremely broad. Those meeting the current definitions are actually large in their respective industries. True “small business” entities cannot compete with the larger “small businesses” in the current procurement environment of the Commonwealth.

**Issues Important to Asian Pacific Islanders** – The top issues that matter to Asian Pacific Islanders in the Commonwealth are not that different from issues important to other citizens. The economy, jobs, small business opportunities, education and safe communities are top concerns. Issues that are more germane to the Asian Pacific Islander community include cultural and language sensitivity of social and medical services. These issues were highlighted in the previous two VAAB annual reports. VAAB recommends that the Commonwealth improve the cultural and language sensitivity of social and medical services for its Asian constituents. VAAB also recommends the Administration broadly share progress being made in areas mentioned above.

**CONCLUSION**

VAAB hopes this report will encourage the Governor and the government of the Commonwealth to continue to pursue good public policy goals and find ways to incorporate some of the findings and recommendations shared in this report.

The VAAB would also like to take this opportunity to thank Governor McDonnell for his support of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board and the activities undertaken during this period.

Finally, VAAB would also like to acknowledge the excellent support received from our liaison, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade Mr. Jimmy Rhee. He has generously given VAAB much of his time to advise and attend the various events held throughout the Commonwealth. VAAB would be remiss if it didn’t also acknowledge the strong support received from the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Mr. Jim Cheng and his office.

Thank you.
## APPENDIX

### VAAB Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting Purpose</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-1-2011</td>
<td>Full Board Meeting</td>
<td>Shekar Challa, Angela Chiang, Chun Elmejjad, Sal Hundal, Andrew Ko, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Binh Nguyen, Ray Obispo, Tony Pham, Suwattana Sugg, Felix Wang, Shewling Moy, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-24-2011</td>
<td>Full Board Meeting</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Kim Cook, Sal Hundal, Andrew Ko, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Joe Montano, Binh Nguyen, Dilip Sarkar, Shewling Moy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-17-2012</td>
<td>Full Board Meeting &amp; 8th Annual APA Legislative Mtg</td>
<td>Shekar Challa, Angela Chiang, Kim Cook, Sal Hundal, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Joe Montano, Binh Nguyen, Tony Pham, Dilip Sarkar, Suwattana Sugg, Shewling Moy, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-7-2012</td>
<td>Full Board Meeting &amp; VAAB Elections</td>
<td>Shekar Challa, Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Joe Montano, Ray Obispo, Tony Pham, Suwattana Sugg, Felix Wang, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17-2012</td>
<td>VAAB &amp; CAPAVA Planning Meeting re: 9th APA Legislative Mtg</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Joe Montano, Ray Obispo, Tony Pham, Suwattana Sugg, Felix Wang, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-19-2012</td>
<td>Meeting w/VLAB</td>
<td>Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4-2013</td>
<td>VAAB Executive Committee (EC) Meeting</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Tony Pham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-8-2013</td>
<td>VAAB Small Business Lab Discussion</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2013</td>
<td>ALITS discussion</td>
<td>Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-20-2013</td>
<td>VAAB EC Prep Call</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Tony Pham &amp; Vicki Mirandah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-22-2013</td>
<td>Full Board Meeting &amp; 9th Annual APA Legislative Mtg</td>
<td>Shekar Challa, Angela Chiang, Kim Cook, Sal Hundal, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Joe Montano, Tony Pham, Suwattana Sugg, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3-2013</td>
<td>VAAB EC Prep Call</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4-2013</td>
<td>VAAB &amp; VLAB Working Mtg</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Jimmy Rhee, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-11-2013</td>
<td>Global Network Expo (VAAB, VLAB &amp; DMBE) Planning Meeting</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2013</td>
<td>GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-22-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-8-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Attendees</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>3-10-2013</td>
<td>Tidewater TownHall Prep Mtg</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Ray Obispo, Tony Pham, Joe Montano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-15-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-17-2013</td>
<td>2nd Tidewater TownHall Prep Mtg</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Ray Obispo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-22-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-24-2014</td>
<td>GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
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<td>3-28-2013</td>
<td>Tidewater Town Hall</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Ray Obispo, Shewling Moy, Vicki Mirandah, Dilip Sarkar &amp; Jimmy Rhee</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-29-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1-2013</td>
<td>GNE Conference Call</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Tony Pham, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8-2013</td>
<td>GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10-2013</td>
<td>GNE Conference Call</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-17-2013</td>
<td>GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Michel Zajur</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-22-2013</td>
<td>GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Michel Zajur</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-24-2013</td>
<td>GNE Conference Call</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-29-2013</td>
<td>GNE Conference Call</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-30-2013</td>
<td>Weekly GNE Working Session</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah &amp; Michel Zajur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-3-2013</td>
<td>Global Network Exposition</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Shekar Challa, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Suwattana Sugg, Tony Pham, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-19-2013</td>
<td>Full VAAB Board Meeting</td>
<td>Angela Chiang, Shekar Challa, Eric Lin, Vicki Mirandah, Jimmy Rhee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>