

# INSIDE BUSINESS

THE HAMPTON ROADS BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## IB NEWS

### Simulating discussions

#### Growing industry draws conferences to area

[Michael Schwartz](#)

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A lot of people are constantly talking about modeling and simulation. A couple of groups figure the best way to bring those voices together is by organizing conferences.

Two modeling and simulation conferences will be held here in Hampton Roads in the coming weeks. Each has its own agenda, but both move forward with the idea that modeling and simulation is important to the state and the nation and that Hampton Roads is the center of the action.

The first event is the second annual Modeling & Simulation Leadership Summit. Taking place on Feb. 26, at the Chesapeake Conference Center, the event is organized by the National Training and Simulation Association and aims to bring industry leaders together to discuss the future of the industry and the issues facing it in the coming year.

Last year's inaugural event, held in Suffolk, drew about 350 and resulted in the creation of six action items that were taken to Congressman Randy Forbes, R-Chesapeake, chairman of the Congressional M&S Caucus, which in turn could then be ushered to the desk of the president.

The results were a letter to President Bush from Forbes reiterating the findings of the summit.

"The Summit underscored the importance of the modeling and simulation industry to the economic productivity of our nation," Forbes said in the letter.

The letter continued, "Modeling and simulation is the single most powerful tool available to support our nation's international competitiveness in a wide variety of economic sectors."

Organizers of this year's summit expect similar attendance.

Speakers will be figures from government and industry, including Northrop Grumman, SAIC, Joint Forces Command, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Boeing.

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Just days later, on March 1, the Virginia Economic Bridge will host its first-ever Virginia's Linked Workforce Modeling and Simulation Technology Showcase.

The event will be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Portsmouth with the goal of bringing to the forefront the workforce development issues that face this new, high-tech industry.

While much of the M&S action is concentrated in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia, organizers say much more is happening around the state and the future of the industry depends on communication to let people know what companies and jobs are out there.

“As Virginia begins to face workforce shortages and workforce competition, you can have a concentration, but you've got to be able to leverage all of the resources statewide,” said Carl Mitchell, president and CEO of Virginia Economic Bridge Inc., a Radford-based nonprofit that focuses on the state's economic competitiveness through technology. “The purpose is to connect companies from across the commonwealth so that Virginia builds on all of its resources to give it a competitive edge.”

Mitchell said his organization hopes the Linked Workforce Showcase will bring M&S companies from across the state together, to first and foremost let one another know each one exists.

Mitchell said there are now small M&S companies in Blacksburg, Fredericksburg, Northern Virginia, Lynchburg, Danville and of course Hampton Roads.

He said the goal of the event is to get 30 of these companies to be in the same place at the same time.

But he said they anticipate only about 20 participants.

There will be speakers from Hampton Roads-based Joint Forces Command and the Virginia Modeling, Analysis and Simulation Center. The state's secretary of technology, Aneesh Chopra, has also been invited.

Both events also emphasize the fact that Hampton Roads is at least for now, the capital of M&S in Virginia.

“Hampton Roads has been identified as the epicenter for modeling and simulation in Virginia,” Mitchell said.

For more information on the events, visit [www.trainingsystems.org](http://www.trainingsystems.org) and [www.VirginiaEconomicBridge.org](http://www.VirginiaEconomicBridge.org).

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