



# Commonwealth of Virginia

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

RICHMOND

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## ***Virginia General Assembly Unveils Bold, New Permanent Exhibit: “People. Building. Democracy.”***

\* A Dynamic, Hands-On Introduction to Virginia’s Capitol, its History & Purpose \*

\*\* Image Gallery of Exhibit – <https://vga.virginia.gov/visitor-experience/> \*\*

**RICHMOND, Va.** — The Clerks of the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate of Virginia are excited to announce the debut of **“PEOPLE. BUILDING. DEMOCRACY,”** a creative, immersive, high-energy exploration of the Capitol’s history, its architecture, and the living process of democracy. This new, lively, and interactive experience has transformed the Capitol Visitor Center into an opportunity to much more fully engage with the history of the Capitol and the process for crafting and passing legislation in the Commonwealth.

The innovative exhibit marks the final milestone in a series of major initiatives designed to increase public access, modernize the visitor experience, and improve Virginians’ active engagement with the General Assembly and the State Capitol. In collaboration with C&G Partners – a premier museum design firm in New York – the exhibit is an exceptional foundation for the overall visitor experience. The exhibit will be in place in a permanent capacity.

“We set out to give the Virginia State Capitol the museum-quality visitor experience it deserves – and I believe we’ve exceeded that goal,” said **G. Paul Nardo**, Clerk of the Virginia House of Delegates. “Seeing this seven-year effort come to life is truly gratifying because we are not only a working place of government, but also a popular historic destination.” “Virginia’s Capitol welcomes thousands of visitors each month, from students to national and international tourists to lifelong Virginians,” said **Susan Clarke Schaar**, Clerk of the Senate. “This new exhibit offers a state-of-the-art, unforgettable welcome into our Capitol and Capitol Square for visitors of all ages.”

“The new State Capitol experience is a unique reflection of people, a building, and democracy. It’s also a must-see – a kinetic audio sculpture symbolizing the legislative process, a 3D-printed LED animated model of Capitol Square that’s the first-of-its-kind anywhere, and all surrounded by nearly 250 handmade watercolor portraits,” said **Jonathan Alger**, Managing Partner at C&G Partners.

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Visitors to the Virginia State Capitol now will experience:

- **PEOPLE:** This is a captivating gallery of nearly 250 custom-commissioned digital watercolors of some of the individuals who shaped and enriched the story of the Capitol. Here, visitors learn about the Capitol and the Commonwealth, from the earliest chapters to those still being written. Kiosks on the South walls invite visitors to learn more about the varied people and their “Capitol Connection.”
- **BUILDING:** This diorama is the first of its kind – a translucent 3D-printed scale model that uses a large LED surface as its base. Visitors learn the history of Capitol Square over the centuries and its neighbors through a unique projected video documentary built from maps and satellite views.
- **DEMOCRACY:** A large ball machine that teaches visitors the journey of a bill through the legislative process with motion, momentum, and movement. The machine stands eight feet tall and aptly depicts the key steps in Virginia’s legislative process. A kiosk near the machine on the East wall allows visitors to explore the details of how a bill becomes law in Virginia.

Adding to the excitement of an enhanced visitor experience, a new architectural exhibit featuring a dollhouse-style model of the State Capitol built from nearly 50,000 LEGO bricks is the center of a new architectural exhibit. Designed and built by Benjamin Edlavitch, a fourth-year architecture student at the University of Virginia, this intricate model is an instant must-see for visitors of all ages. The LEGO model is surrounded by architectural drawings and a reproduction of the original model of the Capitol by Jean-Pierre Fouquet.

“Building the LEGO model became a way to read and share anew the architectural narrative of the Virginia State Capitol. I’m walking away from this project with a new appreciation for the creativity that has gone into this building over the last 200 years,” said **Benjamin Edlavitch**.

In recognition of this historic inaugural year, the Clerks also collaborated with the Library of Virginia which curated a special exhibit entitled “*Taking Office*” about the history of inaugurations in Virginia, adding another element of discovery for visitors. Virginia’s inaugurations, quadrennial events traditionally held on the Saturday immediately following the commencement of the Regular Session in January, are an official function of the state legislature sitting as a Joint Assembly.

In addition, visitors who are unable to experience the Capitol in person now are encouraged to use a state-of-the-art virtual tour, created by Matterport and announced by the Clerks in October 2025. The new virtual tour is accessible at <https://vga.virginia.gov/visit/guided-virtual-tours/virtual-tour/> and already had been incorporated into the recently redesigned Virginia General Assembly website, the first available initiative of this enhanced visitor experience. The new and engaging virtual experience brings Capitol architecture, artwork, and other elements of the historic Virginia State Capitol to users anywhere in the Commonwealth, across the nation, or around the world.

**MORE**

Finally, for more technical information about the Capitol's bold, new permanent exhibit "*People. Building. Democracy.*," the following are contact details for those with whom the two Clerks Offices collaborated and partnered on this very special project:

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To learn more about the Virginia General Assembly, the historic State Capitol, or visiting, engaging as well as understanding in greater detail the workings of the seat of Virginia state government in Richmond, go to [www.vga.virginia.gov](http://www.vga.virginia.gov).

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