



Supervisor John T. Stirrup
Gainesville District

THE GAINESVILLE EXPRESS

Sudley North Government Center
7873 Ashton Avenue
Manassas, VA 20109
(703) 792-6195 Fax: (703) 792-7664
Email: Gainesville@pwcgov.org
www.gainessvillesupervisor.com



January 2005
Volume 4

Dear Gainesville Resident,

Well, its tax season again, and I would like to take this opportunity to cut through some of the political rhetoric, resulting from the upcoming state election. As you all know, your tax bill has been steadily increasing over the years. It has also been publicized that for several years, the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) has been able to lower the tax rate. With this in mind, some of you may be wondering how your tax bill is increasing, yet the tax rate is decreasing. This happens because the assessed value of your property has increased more than the tax rate has decreased. In order to explain the issue and my position on them I have included a brief discussion of how your tax bill is calculated and how the assessed value of property affects the total tax bill.

The equation used to calculate your tax bill is very simple. It consists of two values; the assessed value of your property, determined according to state guidelines, and the tax rate, which is set by the BOCS. This tax rate is usually described as a dollar amount per \$100 of assessed value. So to calculate your bill, you would divide the assessed value of your property by 100, and then multiply the result by the tax rate. The answer will be your property tax bill.

Let me demonstrate how the assessed value of your property affects your tax bill. If the assessed value of your property last year was \$100,000 and the tax rate last year was \$1.00 per \$100, your tax bill would be \$1,000. Now suppose this year's property assessment was \$110,000, an increase of \$10,000. If the property tax rate did not change, your tax bill this year would be \$1,100, an increase of \$100 over last year (a 10 percent increase). Now suppose that the BOCS voted to decrease this year's tax rate in lieu of the appreciation on property values, and vote to lower the tax rate by 5 percent, or \$0.05, making the new tax rate \$0.95 per \$100. Then this year's tax bill with a property valued at \$110,000 would be \$1,045, an increase of \$45 over last year (a 4.5 percent increase). While some members of the BOCS may declare victory touting a tax cut, overall tax revenues have actually increased.

The budget process in Prince William County is a comprehensive approach where the BOCS identifies needs in the community and funds policy to address these problems. If we achieve these goals and still enjoy a surplus at the end of the year, I believe that surplus should be returned to the taxpayers. As responsible government, the BOCS must strive for efficiency in providing services to the community. In recent years, growth has been higher than expected, resulting in a budget surplus. Efficient government is important now because we must balance the needs of the community with a fair and affordable tax bill for our citizens. We cannot count on the explosive growth this County has experienced to fund ever-growing

budgets. The BOCS needs to create efficient budgets, which will survive when we settle into a steady growth pattern.

During my campaign in 2003, I pledged to hold the line on spending and taxation and voted against the budget last year. As it turned out, we had a significant surplus and could have lowered the real estate tax rate even further and still had ample funds to meet the County's obligations. I believe it is important for government, at all levels, to take the same approach to spending that families must, and that is to live within our means. I remain committed to protecting the hardworking, taxpaying families of Prince William County and will continue working to ensure that government does not grow disproportionately.

Sincerely,

John T. Stirrup



Taxpayers Alliance President, Rick Hendrix, presents Supervisor Stirrup with 2004 Friend of the Taxpayer Award. On Saturday, Jan. 8, at a ceremony attended by former Governor Jim Gilmore and several other elected officials, Supervisor Stirrup was awarded the "Friend of the Taxpayer Award-2004" by the Prince William Taxpayers Alliance. Also receiving the award, from the Board of County Supervisors, were Supervisors Wally Covington and Corey Stewart.

Next Town Hall Meeting:

The First Quarterly Gainesville District Town Hall Meeting of 2005 will be held on March 10, 2005, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in the cafeteria of Bull Run Middle School located at 6308 Catharpin Road in Gainesville. The topic of this meeting is the Prince William County proposed FY2006 budget. An overview of the budget will be presented; and attendees will have the opportunity to have their questions answered and their views heard. The proposed budget will be available for review on Feb. 22, 2005, on Prince William County's Web site at <http://www.pwcgov.org/accountability>.

Summary of Last Town Hall Meeting:

Homeland Security was the topic of the last Town Hall Meeting held on Dec. 2, 2004, at Battlefield High School. The guest speakers were Thomas Lockwood, Director of the Office of National Capital Region Coordination with the United States Department of Homeland Security; George Foresman, Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness with the Virginia Office of Commonwealth Preparedness; and Patrick Collins, Emergency Services Coordinator with the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue. These speakers represented every level of government, explaining how each prepares for emergency situations. Also discussed was what individual residents of the County can do to prepare for these various scenarios including natural disasters, as well as terrorist attacks.

Mr. Lockwood's discussion focused on the cooperation between Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, citing roadside communication signs as an informative way to alert motorists of any hazardous situations and provide rerouting information to improve evacuation efforts. Mr. Foresman highlighted the communication and cooperation between local counties. Since resources are scarce, it is not feasible for each county to prepare for every possible emergency. In response to this problem regional jurisdictions such as Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Loudoun County, Arlington County, and our own Prince William County have partnered so each will specialize in a particular type of emergency and make their services available to the other counties. Mr. Collins provided detailed information on our County's emergency response plan, as well as a County program to help residents become more prepared. This program is called the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program. You can get more information on the CERT program by contacting Mike O'Brien with Prince William County Fire and Rescue at 703-792-4474.

While each speaker focused on governmental emergency response plans at different levels, they all stressed one important point concerning individual residents of the County: be prepared now, before the emergency occurs. First, have a family plan for various scenarios and make sure that each member of your family knows what to do. For example, do your children know where to go if the emergency occurs during non-school hours and you are still at work? Secondly, practice this plan. Many omissions in your plan can be exposed with practice. Thirdly, follow the federal "shelter-in-place" emergency preparedness program. This program suggests that you plan to take refuge at your present location in the event of an emergency. In most cases, it is safer to stay put since it is not likely that you will be in direct danger during an emergency. You should wait for emergency responders to find you if evacuation is needed. This shelter should have an emergency kit complete with a battery-powered weather radio, duct tape and plastic (to seal a shelter), at least a 72-hour stock of canned food with a non-electric can opener, and water. These items are important because it may take emergency responders several days to reach you, depending on the nature of the emergency. You should have copies of important documents, such as insurance information and proof of identity, etc., that may be necessary after the emergency subsides. A more complete description of the "shelter-in-place" program can be viewed at <http://www.redcross.org> under "Services" and "Be Prepared."

Police Chief Charlie Deane and Fire and Rescue Chief Mary Beth Michos joined the panel of speakers for the question and answer period. One question addressed the Gainesville Interchange at Rte. 29 and I66, which was among the worst evacuation choke points during September 11, 2001. Mr. Lockwood acknowledged the problem and assured solutions are being drafted. Chief Deane asked residents to be aware of their surroundings. If something looks suspicious, notify the authorities. When asked about the County's emergency equipment, such as chemical or bomb detection devices, Chief Michos explained that the County does not own equipment like this, but other nearby jurisdictions in the area have made them available to us. Chief Deane also explained how the County could inform residents in the event of an emergency. Beyond radio and television news, the police have the ability to call every resident in a

geographic area with a recorded message, which will explain the emergency and what a resident should do to protect themselves.

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Traffic signals under study and design:

1. Sudley Road and Gum Springs Road
2. Lomond Drive and Victoria Road
3. Washington Street and Jefferson Street (Construction underway)

Linton Hall Road from Route 29 to Devlin Road: Linton Hall Road will be widened from four lanes to six lanes between Route 29 and Glenkirk Road, and from two lanes to four lanes between Glenkirk Road and Devlin Road. Right-of-way acquisition for this project is complete and utility relocation is underway. Construction is scheduled to begin in Spring 2005. Only one bid was received by the Sept. 22, 2004, deadline, which was substantially higher than the estimate. VDOT has recommended the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) reject the lone bid. The CTB re-advertised the project in December 2004 with a contract award planned for February 2005. If the contract is awarded in February 2005, the anticipated completion date is fall 2007.

Status on Route 55/Catharpin Road: Funds to install the light at Route 55 and Catharpin Road have been secured. The funds for the necessary turn lanes are not available at this time. The engineering phase has begun by our County Transportation Department, and a developer has proffered funds for the turn lanes. However, per the proffer agreement, these funds will not be available until they break ground on their project. In an effort to expedite this project, a request to qualify this intersection for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Hazard Elimination Safety Program was filed. The projects selected for 2006 will be shown in VDOT's tentative Six Year Interstate/Primary Six Year Program, which is due in the March/April timeframe. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will then adopt the program in May/June.

I-66 Widening: The Commonwealth Transportation Board awarded a \$37.1 million contract to widen I-66 to eight lanes for 3.8 miles from Route 234 Business in Manassas to Route 234 Bypass/Prince William Parkway. Two lanes will be added to I-66 in each direction, one regular and one HOV lane. The inside lane will be reserved for two-person carpools during peak periods. The median will be preserved to accommodate future barrier-separated HOV lanes or transit. Construction will be sequenced to minimize disruption to motorists. No lane closures will be permitted during Nissan Pavilion events or during rush hours and holidays. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on Aug. 30, 2004. VDOT expects the widening to be completed in October 2006.

Wellington Road: Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2005 to widen Wellington Road from Limestone Drive to Balls Ford Road. The intersection at Wellington Road, Devlin Road and Balls Ford Road will be realigned.

Wellington Road Extension: Wellington Road will be extended and adjusted to intersect with Linton Hall Road by the developer of Virginia Gateway. Construction is underway.

East/West Connector: (Phase I – Gainesville Interchange) Construction of a four-lane road over I-66, from Route 29 to Wellington Road. Construction has begun. The anticipated completion date is fall 2006.

Sudley Manor Drive Extension

1. The Sudley Manor Drive extension between Linton Hall Road and the Prince William Parkway is scheduled to be completed in August 2006.
2. The Sudley Manor Drive extension between the Prince William Parkway and Chatsworth Drive is scheduled to be completed in October 2006 and will extend Sudley Manor Drive south from its current dead-end at Chatsworth Drive to the Victory Lakes development.

Manassas Battlefield Route 29/234 Relocation

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the National Park Service have selected alternative D as the preferred alternative. Although Alternative D has been identified as the Preferred Alternative, revisions to the Preferred Alternative may be incorporated following the public review period and coordination efforts with federal, state and local agencies for this Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS). In addition, measures to minimize impacts will be incorporated into the design phase of this project.

The public will have an opportunity to comment at a public hearing planned for February/March 2005. For more information or to send you comments, contact: FHWA Project Director Jack Van Dop 703-404-6282 or jack.j.vandop@fhwa.dot.gov. For more information, visit <http://www.battlefieldbypass.com/default.htm>.

Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)

PRTC Offers bus services for commuters. The route starts at the Virginia Gateway Shopping Center at Linton Hall Road and Route 29, then continues along Linton Hall Road, Devlin Road, Balls Ford Road, the Route 234 Bypass and I-66 before arriving at its last stop – the West Falls Church Metrorail Station. The reverse route is in effect in the afternoon. For more information, call 703-730-6664 or visit their Web site at <http://www.prtctransit.org/omniride/metrodirect.php>.

LAND USE UPDATE:

Land Use Cases before the BOCS:

Heard on January 18th, 2005:

SUP PLN2004-00382

Manassas Car Wash

GPIN: 7696-77-0467

Currently Zoned: B-1, Purpose: To allow a commercial carwash; (B-1/GC)

Location: Approximately 200 ft North of Irongate Way and Sudley Road

Approved

CPA PLN2004-00299

I66/Route 29 Sector Plan Amendment

GPIN: 7397-43-6111, 7397-43-8731, 7397-43-9847

Currently Zoned: M-1, Purpose: Change land use designation of three parcels from CEC & SRL to CEC and change the boundary of I66/Route 29 sector plan.

Location: To include all portions of these three parcels; 14221, 14219 and 14215 Lee Highway

Denied

Scheduled for February 2, 2005:

OSA PLN2005-00027

Perrymont Links LLC (Bull Run Country Club)

GPIN: 7200-74-0853

Currently Zoned: A-1, Purpose: The Partial withdrawal of land (Approx.78 acres) from the open space use agreements dated 3-19-99

Location: 3600 James Madison Highway

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

County Board of Supervisors Endorse Legislation to Honor President Reagan

The board unanimously approved Supervisor Stirrup's motion to endorse Delegate Scott Lingamfelter's House Bill No. 1656, which designates a portion of the Route 234 Bypass as the "Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Highway."

Legislative Day

On Feb. 3, Supervisor Stirrup, along with other Supervisors and staff, will travel to the State Capitol in Richmond to meet with members of the Prince William Delegation, as well as other members of the General Assembly, to discuss Prince William County's legislative priorities.

A Call for Resumes

The Gainesville District has a position open on our Boards, Committees and Commissions' Weapons Control Committee. This committee studies requests of the Board of County Supervisor and Citizens relevant to the Weapons Control Ordinance. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please fax your resume to the attention of Nancy McDonnell at 703-792-7664.

USPS Facility in Gainesville, 20169

An informational meeting will be held on Feb. 7, 2005, at 7 p.m. in the Bull Run Middle School cafeteria, 6308 Catharpin Road, Gainesville. This meeting, hosted by the United States Postal Service, is solely for the discussion of a new facility to accommodate Gainesville (20169).

Newsletter Subscribe/Unsubscribe

Please let your friends and neighbors know they can subscribe to this newsletter by sending e-mail to my communications director Karen Ulrich at kulrich@pwcgov.org. Please include the word "subscribe" in the subject line. If you are receiving this newsletter and would like to be taken off the list, please include the word "unsubscribe."