



**Supervisor John T. Stirrup**  
**Gainesville District**

# THE GAINESVILLE EXPRESS

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**January 2009**  
*Volume 23*

Dear Gainesville Resident,

As you are all aware, the County is facing challenging financial times. As the County goes into the budget season, there will likely be many hard decisions which have to be made. Prince William County is fortunate in the fact that the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) began shrinking the budget last year. As a result, the budget shortfall this year has not been as dramatic as surrounding jurisdictions. With tightened budgets, County spending is down \$7 million for the first few months of the current fiscal year.

In response to the anticipated prolonged economic conditions, the BOCS has committed to reducing the County budget to make up for future shortfalls instead of tax increases for this fiscal year. This decision is based on the discrepancies between commercial and residential property values. While residential properties have seen great declines in value, commercial properties have appreciated in value over the year. There is a concern that increasing the tax rate in order to make up lost revenues caused by declining home values will cause many already struggling businesses to fail due to the large increase in their tax burden. Due to the commitment of the BOCS to decrease spending, there will need to be significant reductions to address the declining revenue caused by the decreases in residential property values.

In order to meet its budgetary obligations, the BOCS has requested that the County Executive prepare analyses of several hypothetical tax rates to determine the impact on residents and businesses. These rates were \$0.97, \$1.132, \$1.212, and 1.386 per one hundred dollars of assessed value. *(There are two types of residential tax bills used in the descriptions below, the “average” residential property which has seen a large decline in value, and properties which have only seen modest declines in value. If your property declined by a smaller percentage than the “average” property, your reduction in tax bill will not be as large as the “average” property. Please feel free to contact my office if you would like a more detailed explanation of how this can occur.)*

- A \$0.97 tax rate would hold the tax rate from the previous fiscal year and would decrease “average” residential tax bills by 30 percent and a decrease “average” commercial tax bills by 10 percent. This rate would result in a \$50 million shortfall from the projected revenue adopted in the fiscal year 2009 (FY09) budget.
- A \$1.132 tax rate would decrease all residential tax bills by at least 6 percent with the “average” residential tax bill decreasing by 18.3 percent, and the “average” commercial tax bill would increase by 5 percent. This rate would provide an extra \$28 million over a flat tax rate of \$0.97, but will be \$22 million short from the adopted FY09 budget.

- A rate of \$1.212 would reflect an “average” residential tax reduction of 12.5 percent; however, those properties that have declined the least over the year will see the same bill they received last year. Commercial tax rates would increase by an average of 12.5%.
- The final tax rate considered was \$1.386 which would hold the “average” residential tax bill constant, however, those properties that did not decline in value as much as the “average” property could face as much as a 14.3 percent increase in their tax bill, with an average increase of commercial tax bills of 28.6 percent.

The BOCS has asked the County Executive to prepare the budget based on the \$1.132 tax rate. This is not the adopted rate, only the basis which determines the proposed budget. This rate can and usually does change over the course of the budget debates.

Additionally, the BOCS has also asked each agency to describe what would have to be removed from the budget if they received a 10 percent, 20 percent or 30 percent budget reductions. The agencies have already submitted their impact analysis to the BOCS and this information is now being reviewed by my budget committee. It is likely that there will be several budget reductions incorporated into the next budget and a great deal of effort will be focused on which services will be impacted. Furthermore, there will be an ongoing effort to find cost saving practices such as the new County policy to turn off computers at night which might help save some services.

This is a difficult time but I am confident that the BOCS has the will and determination to see the County through this economic downturn and ensure that the County is intact when the economy recovers. Please feel free to contact my office by phone at (703) 792-6195 or by email at [gainesville@pwcgov.org](mailto:gainesville@pwcgov.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John T. Stirrup  
Supervisor  
Gainesville District

### **Town Hall Meeting Recap**

The topic of my last Town Hall Meeting was transportation. Representative from federal, state and local government were present to inform residents the role each level plays. The speakers included Quintin Kendall, Chief of Staff of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT); Avtar Singh, Area Construction Engineer of the Manassas Residency of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); and Tom Blaser, Director of the Prince William County Department of Transportation. Additionally, Jeff Brown, Energy Economist, gave a brief update on the transmission line issue.

Quintin Kendall addressed the crowd first stating that the USDOT was originally created to build the Eisenhower Interstate system. This is now complete and without clear direction the USDOT more resembles a pot of money looking for a problem. Given this lack of focus, many USDOT policies are contradictory and very complex. This creates difficulties for state and local governments when pursuing transportation projects using federal dollars. Environmental studies alone can add five years to a project. Earmarks are another problem with current policy. Often, legislators are successful in securing a small amount of funding for transportation projects in their districts. Frequently, these funds are insufficient to fully fund any particular project so the funds must sit and wait until more funds are secured to move forward with a project.

After describing some the problems with current policy, Mr. Kendall described some of the enhancements his office is currently seeking. First, he suggested restricting earmarks, and then adopting criteria to prioritize projects. He remarked that reducing congestion in major metropolitan areas is currently not a priority which might surprise many people. Having criteria aimed at reducing congestion would likely funnel money towards these types of projects. Next, he mentioned the institution of cost-benefit analysis and performance measures are needed to evaluate projects. These measures will help identify the most needed projects as well as develop a system to evaluate the effectiveness of projects. He concluded his presentation by describing funding challenges currently faced by USDOT. Up to this point, the USDOT received its funding through gas taxes. As vehicles become more fuel efficient, the USDOT is not receiving the necessary funds for its projects. As a result, they have pointed out the need for new funding sources. The USDOT has also begun to investigate public-private partnerships which might be able to complete projects at a lower cost.

Mr. Kendall provided the following website [www.fightgridlocknow.gov](http://www.fightgridlocknow.gov) for residents to investigate if they would like any further information on the proposed changes to the USDOT.

Avtar Singh was the next speaker and provided information regarding the Gainesville Interchange. This is a VDOT project and has been subdivided into several phases. The current phase includes widening I-66 to eight lanes from Route 234 Bypass to shortly after Route 29 and upgrading the interchange itself, building several new bridges, on ramps and off ramps.

The final phase of the project will include the Linton Hall Interchange. This phase is currently in design and right-of way acquisition. Demolition should be complete in December 2010. Construction is anticipated to begin in March 2011 and be complete in March 2015. The total cost of the project is \$223.2 million.

Next, Tom Blaser explained the role of the Prince William County Transportation Department, who works with VDOT to facilitate the construction of road projects in the County. The Transportation Department also has a regulatory responsibility for developer built roads. In this way, they ensure that these roads are designed and built to VDOT specifications so they can be accepted into the VDOT system. Mr. Blaser also briefly mentioned the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) more commonly know as the Road Bond projects. In the past, the County has taken on the responsibility of building selected road segments for VDOT to improve transportation in the County. With the downturn in the economy, the County is no longer able to build all of the segments originally identified. Those projects which have been designed and contracted will still go forward but the remaining projects have been placed on hold.

Route 15 is an example of a CIP project. This project is being constructed as a public-private partnership which will decrease construction time by two to three years. The intersection of Route 234 and Waterfall Road has already been completed as well as Heathcote Boulevard. The next phase of the project will rebuild Old Carolina Road, which requires a six month closure of the road. The Route 15 project is anticipated to be completed by December 2009.

The last speaker was Jeff Brown who relayed that the preferred alignment of the Meadowbrook to Loudoun line was approved by the State Corporation Commission. Shortly after the Town Hall Meeting occurred, Pennsylvania approved their portion of the line which was the last impediment to the project. There is still an appeals process, but it is less likely that an effort to halt the construction will be successful. While this is discouraging news, I will continue to resist these transmission lines until all resources have been exhausted.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### **\$11 Million Savings on 11th High School to Open in 2011**

The Prince William County School Board on Wednesday, January 7, 2009, awarded a construction contract of \$70.7 million to Hess Construction to build the School Division's 11th high school. The vote was 7-0, with one member absent. Due to current market conditions and other factors, the winning bid came in \$11.3 million under the projected costs. The School Division's approved Capital Improvements Plan allowed for \$95.4 million for the overall project, with \$82 million of this amount projected for the construction award. The project will be paid for with bonds over the next 20 years with the impact on next year's budget being \$1.4 million.

The new high school will be built near the intersection of Kettle Run and Vint Hill Roads in the Linton Hall area. The building will provide much needed classroom relief to high schools in the western area of the county, several of which have student enrollments over their current building capacity.

Hess Construction is not unfamiliar with PWCS, having built Freedom High School, which opened in 2004. Construction is scheduled to begin in February and the building will take 26 months to complete. The facility will open to students for the 2011-12 school year.

### **View Planning Cases on County Mapper**

Visitors to the County's Web site can now use the County Mapper to find information about pending Planning cases such as Rezoning or Special Use Permits. The County Mapper is available at <http://www.pwcgov.org/CountyMapper>.

The County Mapper's search drop-down menu now contains an option to locate a pending Planning case by choosing its case number. Simply click on the case number to see a map of the property, and to view information about the case.

Alternately, a user can input an address or nearby intersection, or the GPIN (Grid Parcel Identification Number), and turn on the Pending Planning Cases layer. Information and links to the Planning Office's staff report or the development application schedule are then available to the user by clicking the Identify Feature icon.

The County Mapper uses the Geographic Information System (GIS), a computer-based mapping tool that takes information from a database about a location, such as streets, buildings, water features, and terrain, and turns it into visual layers. That gives planners, analysts, and others a better understanding of a particular location, enabling them to make informed decisions about their communities.

For more information on the County's Planning office, visit <http://www.pwcgov.org/planning>, or call 703-792-6830. For help using the County Mapper, please call 703-792-6840 or e-mail [PWCMaps@pwcgov.org](mailto:PWCMaps@pwcgov.org).

### **2009 State of the County Remarks of Chairman Corey A. Stewart**

You can read Chairman Stewart's State of the County remarks at: <http://www.pwcgov.org/default.aspx?topic=040086003790005357>

### **Commonwealth of Virginia Budget Site**

This new page is intended to be a portal site to the most current budget information for the Commonwealth of Virginia at [www.dpb.virginia.gov/budget/vabudget.cfm](http://www.dpb.virginia.gov/budget/vabudget.cfm)

## **Tips and Information on Residential Burglaries**

Tips for vacationers:

- If possible keep a car parked in your driveway.
- Have your home looking “lived in” while you are away. This can be done with the use of timers on lights inside the home.
- Have a trusted neighbor/friend/relative pick up your mail and newspapers daily and remove all flyers, circulars, doorknob hangers and packages that may have been left at your door. Ask this person to conduct a periodic inspection of the perimeter of your home.
- Leave a contact number with this trusted neighbor/friend/relative should they need to call you while you are out of town.

Remember:

- Keep all doors and windows locked, even if at home.
- Keep your front and rear porch lights on, use motion sensors.
- If you hear something, do not investigate. Go to a safe room in your home, call the police (911) and stay on the line.
- Be on the lookout for suspicious persons or activity during the day as well as during evening hours.
- REPORT all suspicious persons or activity to the police.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Emergency: 9-1-1

Non-Emergency: 703-792-6500

## **Protect Your Pooch: Dog Licenses Due by Jan. 31, 2009**

Prince William County dog licenses are now on sale for the coming year and should be purchased and on your pet by Jan. 31. The license fee is \$5 per dog, and a current rabies vaccination certificate must be shown for each dog to be licensed. Dog licenses are required by law for all dogs four months of age or older. If your dog is unlicensed, you can be cited and fined.

Even indoor-only dogs and those confined to fenced yards can get loose. Licenses help assure that you can be reunited with your pet. Be sure to have your license tag on your dog's collar at all times to ensure quick return should he or she be found.

The license application is available on the County's Web site at <http://www.pwcgov.org>, under “Residents - Animals & Pets - Licenses.” Licenses may be purchased by mail, at the Animal Shelter or from any Taxpayer Services Office.

Animal Control Bureau  
14807 Bristow Road  
Manassas, VA 20112

Dr. A.J. Ferlazzo Building  
15948 Donald Curtis Drive  
Woodbridge, VA 22191

James J. McCoart Administration Building  
1 County Complex Court  
Prince William, VA 22192

Sudley North Government Center  
7987 Ashton Avenue  
Manassas, VA 20109

For questions about dog licenses, call 703-792-6710 or send a question by e-mail to [Taxpayer\\_Services@pwcgov.org](mailto:Taxpayer_Services@pwcgov.org). For all other animal law and control questions, call the Animal Shelter at 703-792-6465 or 703-792-6500 after 5 p.m.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### **Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) Meetings**

The [BOCS](#) will hold meetings on January 13<sup>th</sup> and February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> starting at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Chambers at the McCoart Building located at 1 County Complex Court in Woodbridge. Meetings are broadcast live on Comcast Cable Channel 23, and then re-broadcast in their entirety at 7:30 p.m. on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday following the Tuesday Board meeting and at 10 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. To view the current agenda, visit: [PWC - Board Of County Supervisors \(BOCS\)](#). You can also visit the County website to view video of past BOCS meetings using the following link: <http://www.pwcgov.org/MeetingRoom.aspx>.

### **Commonwealth Transportation Board Sets Public Hearings**

Mid-Year Revision Planned to Address Downturn in Revenues, Further Reductions Will Be Necessary Based on Economic Conditions

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has scheduled public hearings to be held around the state in January so that citizens may review potential revisions to the Six-Year Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2009-2014. This mid-year revision of the fiscal year 2009-2014 program is in response to transportation revenue reductions of more than \$2.6 billion resulting from the downturn in the economy. CTB members will host the hearings, and representatives of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will be present to provide information and answer questions.

“We are holding this unusual mid-year revision of the six-year program because of the significant changes in the official transportation revenue estimate,” said Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer. “While this revised plan cuts \$1.2 billion from our six-year program, we know that additional cuts of approximately \$400 million will be necessary before this plan is brought before the CTB in January.” These reductions are a result of reductions in the official state transportation revenues and in addition to \$1.1 billion in cuts made last June with the six-year plan was approved. All transportation agencies are making other reductions in the programs and services they provide. Lists of specific projects and changes from the current program will be available at each public hearing, on VDOT and DRPT’s Web sites at [www.VDOT.Virginia.gov](http://www.VDOT.Virginia.gov) and [www.DRPT.Virginia.gov](http://www.DRPT.Virginia.gov), and at VDOT district and residency offices prior to the hearing.

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009, 7 p.m.  
Fairfax County Board Room  
12000 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Verbal and written comments will be accepted throughout the hearings. During the comment period, individuals may speak for up to three minutes. Groups and organizations each should designate one member to speak. Those who cannot attend can mail comments to the addresses listed below. However, comments must be received by Jan. 14, 2009 for consideration.

Public Information Office  
Virginia Department of Rail and Public  
Transportation  
1313 E. Main St., Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[DRPTPR@DRPT.Virginia.gov](mailto:DRPTPR@DRPT.Virginia.gov)

Programming Director  
Virginia Department of Transportation  
1401 E. Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

### **Inauguration 2009 - Information & Tips**

Inauguration events will take place in Washington, DC during the weekend of Jan. 17-20, 2009. Even if you do not plan to attend the events in DC, all area residents can expect heavy traffic and increased visitors throughout the DC Metro area.

For official information about the events surrounding the 56th Presidential Inauguration, including lodging information, transportation, security measures and closures, visit the official [2009 Presidential Inauguration Web site for Washington, DC](#). Please visit this site and sign up for [mobile alerts](#) if you are planning to attend or be in the northern Virginia area during the inaugural events.

The Transportation Plan has been released for regional road restrictions surrounded the event: view the Jan. 7, 2009 news release [here](#). For Virginia-specific transportation information, please visit the [Virginia State Police Web site](#).

### **“Start Up” Small Business Workshops**

Saturday, January 17, 2009

Saturday, February 28, 2009

Saturday, March 28, 2009

Saturday, April 25, 2009

The Flory Small Business Center, Inc.  
10311 Sudley Manor Dr.  
Manassas, Virginia 20109

9:00a.m. until 1:00p.m.  
(Coffee served at 8:30a.m.)

#### **Topics Include:**

- 1) Are You An Entrepreneur?
- 2) How to Write a Business Plan
- 3) Record Keeping
- 4) Business Entity
- 5) Financing

Followed by: Questions & Answers

#### **Funded By:**

Prince William County  
The Prince William County Industrial Development Authority  
The City of Manassas Park  
The Manassas Park Industrial Development Authority  
The City of Manassas  
The U.S. Small Business Administration

There is no charge to you; however, Pre-Registration is required, to receive a pre-registration form contact The Flory Small Business Center, Inc. at 703-335-2500 or email [florycenter@attglobal.net](mailto:florycenter@attglobal.net)

### **American Riflemen in the Revolutionary War**

On Thursday, January 22, historian Michael Cecere will discuss the role that Virginians played during the American Revolution. The free program runs from 7 to 9 PM at the Old Manassas Courthouse, 9248 Lee Avenue in Manassas. This event is the first in a series of history lectures presented by the Prince William County Historic Preservation Division. Call 703-499-9812 for more information.

### **Neighborhood Conference Focuses on Economy**

Foreclosures, a slow housing market and the economic recession have created tough challenges for neighborhoods. Vacant properties are neglected and the regular maintenance of occupied homes is postponed until money is not as tight. At the same time, government resources to combat neighborhood deterioration are decreasing. Now more than ever, residents need the knowledge and skills to protect property values and to increase the feeling of community.

A neighborhood conference scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 7 seeks to provide needed knowledge and skills. The conference is a joint effort by Prince William County, the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park. It will be held in Prince William County buildings from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. A nominal fee will be charged to cover expenses.

The conference offers sessions for individuals interested in neighborhood improvement and for those seeking information on the reaction of homeowner and condominium associations to the current economy and recent legislation. Session tracks have been designed for each interest, but participants are welcome to attend the individual classes of their choice. Opportunities for networking are built into the conference schedule. Refreshments, a box lunch and conference materials are included in the registration fee. For more information or to register call 703-792-7018 or e-mail [nsd@pwcgov.org](mailto:nsd@pwcgov.org).

### **“Dining with Diabetes” Course**

Food shopping, cooking for your family and eating out are especially challenging when you have diabetes. Learn to make healthy choices in the course, “*Dining with Diabetes: A Program for People with Diabetes and their Families*”.

This Prince William County Cooperative Extension program is a lifestyle program that focuses on the consequences of high blood sugar and how to improve lifestyle behaviors: exercise, correctly taking medications, and monitoring your eyes, feet, and kidneys. The fee covers four sessions and a follow-up meeting three months later, and an A1c test at the first class and at the follow-up class for persons with diabetes. The class will also demonstrate healthy cooking techniques and include a light meal.

The series of four Monday evening sessions will be held at the McCoart Administration Center in Prince William from 6-8 p.m. on February 23, March 2, 9, and 16. Course fees are \$40 for the person with diabetes and \$15 for the spouse, family member, caseworker or caregiver, and include a notebook of information and recipes. The registration deadline is Tuesday, February 17, 2009. For more information, contact the Virginia Cooperative Extension: (703) 792-6287 or visit <http://www.pwcgov.org/vce>.

## Recent Happenings in Gainesville



*Supervisor Stirrup with Chairman Stewart  
Heathcote Boulevard Opening, December 19, 2008*

The Heathcote Boulevard project connects two existing sections of Heathcote Boulevard between Old Carolina Road and Route 15. This new section of Heathcote Boulevard will provide a direct access for residents from Route 15, relieving congestion on Old Carolina Road. This was a CIP (Road Bond) project and a part of the larger Route 15 project.



*Supervisor Stirrup with United States Department of Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters  
U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington D.C.  
December 17, 2008*

**Newsletter Subscribe/Unsubscribe**

Please let your friends and neighbors know they can subscribe to this newsletter by sending an e-mail to my Communications Director, Karen Ulrich, at [Kulrich@pwcgov.org](mailto: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.”

*Happy New Year*