

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

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The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League



Wytheville trail system makes new use of green space

Also inside:

VML Achievement Awards call for entries





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The magazine of the Virginia Municipal League



About the cover

Using nets from an aquatic discovery station, children discover some of the numerous aquatic creatures that call Crystal Springs in Wytheville home. Photo by Wytheville Director of Parks & Recreation Rick Showalter.

Features

8

Wytheville trail system makes most of green space

When Wytheville purchased a 1,800-acre wooded tract on the outskirts of the town in 1928, the intent was to protect a vital watershed. More than 80 years later, the town is making use of the lush green space to carefully construct a network of hiking trails and amenities that will provide residents and visitors with one more way to enjoy the outdoors.

By Rosa Lee Jude



13

Norfolk's 'Neighbors Building Neighborhoods' approach has lofty goals

Norfolk's new revitalization initiative that stresses the positive attributes of neighborhoods includes an important set of goals that provides essential guidance.

By Kristen Helgeson



16

Call for entries: 2012 VML Achievement Awards

The VML Achievement Awards program is an important forum for sharing some of the very best public service ideas in Virginia, a competition in which local government leaders can learn. By sharing winning entries with the public, the league demonstrates that Virginia's local governments are imaginative, highly professional and cost effective.

Departments

PEOPLE 2
NEWS & NOTES 6
THE CORPORATE PAGE 18
MARKETPLACE 19
PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY 20
THE BACK PAGE 21

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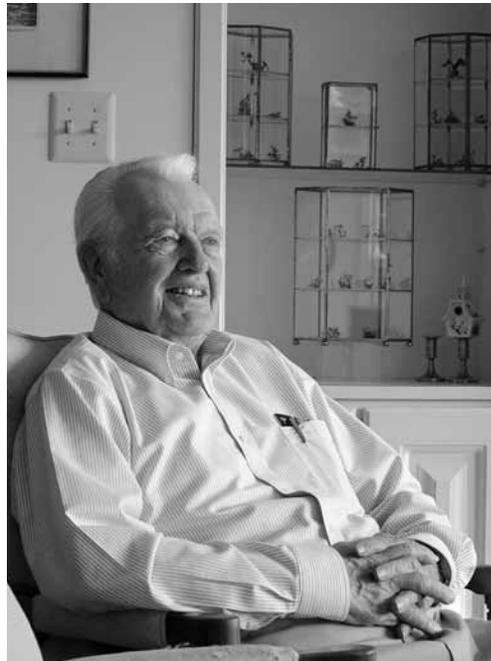
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Bill Lineweaver dies; served Warrenton, VML

FORMER LONGTIME WARRENTON Mayor **J. Willard Lineweaver**, a former president of VML, died Feb. 15. He was 89.

Mr. Lineweaver served on Warrenton Town Council for 39 years, the last 24 as mayor. He stepped down from office in 1998.

As an Army sergeant, he earned the Bronze Star during the Battle of the Bulge in late 1944.



WARRENTON LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

- J. Willard Lineweaver -

After World War II, he operated a furniture store for decades on Main Street in Warrenton.

Fittingly, Mr.

Lineweaver's funeral procession was routed down Main Street. Town police officers saluted from every intersection and a large American flag was unfurled from a Warrenton Volunteer Fire Department hook and ladder truck at the cemetery. The entrance to town hall was draped in black. Per the former mayor's wishes, a New Orleans jazz band played "When the Saints Go Marching In" at the cemetery.

Mr. Lineweaver served as president of VML in 1988-1989. He was a fixture at VML conferences, committee meetings and workshops. Mr. Lineweaver was the father of Beth MacDonald Knapp, the former director of marketing for VML.

At the funeral, Mrs. Knapp read from a letter that her father wrote for the occasion. "I had 39 years of representing the greatest locality and its people in the world," the letter said. "God has been so very kind to us all. I thank all of my councils, town workers, and everyone for all the great help from you I received. Because of you we have the greatest place to live in the Commonwealth."

Petersburg fills 6 key positions



- Hicks -

The City of Petersburg has filled six senior positions in its administration in recent months.

Steven W. Hicks, who served as development

management manager for James City County, is the

city's new director of public works. In James City, Hicks was responsible for the offices of Building Safety and Permits, Engineering and Resource Protection, Planning, Transportation and Zoning. He also served as acting assistant county administrator, senior assistant to the county administrator and general services manager. Prior to his tenure with the county, Hicks held positions with the Virginia Department of Transportation, including Williamsburg resident engineer.



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Sharon D. Williams, AICP, director of planning and zoning in Prince George County for the past three years, is the new director of planning. Williams, who has 14 years

of local government experience, has served as the director of planning for Mathews County and as a senior land use planner for the City of Richmond.



Irvin M. Carter Jr., who served most recently as budget director for the Sheriff's Office in the City of Richmond, was named director of finance.



Darryl Walker, a civil engineer, was selected as stormwater manager. He was a civil site design engineer for a Richmond engineering services firm.

Curtis S. Finney Jr. was chosen as assistant finance director. Finney has more than 20 years of government accounting experience. In addition, he has worked with non-profits and Fortune 500 companies.



He served previously as director of finance and budget for Charles City County Public Schools.

James Sved is a preservationist, conservationist and historic architect who began his career serving the Town of Palm Beach Landmarks Commission in 1989. He previously restored Main Street Station for the City of Richmond, managed a major renovation of the Science Museum of Virginia, and oversaw the conversion of the Old Glen Allen School in Henrico

County into the Cultural Arts Center of Glen Allen.

Portsmouth hires finance director

Carol Swindell, former finance director of Santa Monica, Calif., began work March 14 as the chief financial officer for Portsmouth.

Before serving in Santa Monica, Swindell served as director of administrative services for the City of Walnut Creek, Calif. Before that, she was director of financial services and chief financial officer for the City of Oceanside, Calif. From 1995 to 2001, according to newspaper accounts, Swindell was assistant manager for financial and management services for James City County. She also served as director of finance in Poquoson from 1988 to 1995.

Harrell leaves Chesapeake for transportation post

The Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads selected **William E. Harrell** as the new president and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit effective April 2.

Harrell, the city manager of Chesapeake since 2007, replaced **Philip A. Shucet**, who was hired in early 2010 to help complete construction of The Tide light rail. Harrell also has served as chief administrative officer and deputy city manager of Richmond, assistant city manager of Greensboro, N.C., and as assistant city manager of Suffolk.

Moran named Mathews administrator



Melinda Moran, town manager of Clarksville for the past 18 years, was appointed county administrator in Mathews effective April 16.

While in Clarksville, Moran helped preside over a town adjusting to the shift from a

traditional agricultural and manufacturing-based economy to a tourism and service-based economy.

Manassas names city manager



John A. Budesky began work March 5 as the new city manager of Manassas.

Budesky has served as a local government administrator in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia for more than 16 years. Most recently, however, he served as the executive director of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission.

His local government experience includes serving as county administrator in New Kent and as assistant city administrator for Hagerstown, Md. He replaced longtime city manager **Larry Hughes**, who retired.

Herndon appoints chief of police



The Town of Herndon named **Maggie A. DeBoard** as chief of police effective March 5.

DeBoard is a veteran of the Fairfax County Police Department, where she served for more than 25 years in positions of increasing responsibility, including most recently as a deputy chief overseeing investigations and operations support. While in Fairfax she also served as commander of the Helicopter Division, commander of the Special Operations Division, captain of the Franconia District Station, and as major of the Division II Patrol Bureau. She began her career with the county in 1986 as a patrol officer. DeBoard succeeded **Col. Toussaint E. Summers Jr.**, who retired.

Hampton mayor speaks at White House confab



Hampton Mayor **Molly Ward** addressed the White House Conference on Conservation on March 2. Hosted by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the event highlighted

community-driven conservation efforts that have taken root across the country, including efforts to preserve Fort Monroe.

The conference, Growing America's Outdoor Heritage and Economy, explored the link between conservation and strong local economies through tourism, outdoor recreation, and healthy lands, waters and wildlife.

Charlottesville names assistant manager



David Ellis was named assistant city manager of Charlottesville recently.

Since 1990, Ellis worked for Fairfax County, including the past eight years as the assistant to

the county executive. He provided leadership for many of the county's community engagement initiatives, including the Neighborhood Enhancement Partnership Program, Neighborhood College and Leadership Institute, and the development of a County-Community Partnership for Gang Prevention. In addition, Ellis served as coordinator for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Long takes over as VRA chief

A Richmond attorney with broad public finance experience is the new executive director of the Virginia Resources Authority.

Suzanne S. Long was appointed by Gov. Bob McDonnell, confirmed by the General Assembly, and took over the position on March 1. She

replaced **Stephanie Hamlett**.

Long worked most recently as an associate with the McGuire Woods law firm in Richmond. Her public finance practice included a major emphasis on municipal bond and securities law. She has an extensive background in governmental bond financings and has served as bond counsel and underwriter's counsel with general obligation, revenue and "subject to appropriation" financings for public projects across the state, much of it associated with VRA.

Long also has been associated with Christian & Barton, LLP and Hirschler Fleischer. She is a graduate of the College of William & Mary and the University of Richmond School of Law.

Vienna fills public works post



Michael Gallagher was promoted to deputy director of public works in the Town of Vienna effective Feb. 8. Gallagher, 36, has more than 12 years of experience in the engineering field

and has worked for the town as a civil engineer since 2010.

Gallagher will focus on water quality regulatory requirements, as well as track regional issues and progress in the public works field. Prior to his employment with Vienna, he worked in the private sector as an associate engineer and as a land developer field manager.

Chesapeake hires Parks & Rec chief



Michael D. Barber is Chesapeake's new director of Parks and Recreation.

Barber, who served as the assistant director of parks, recreation and tourism in Newport News since 2004, began work in

Chesapeake April 2. He has more than 30 years of municipal service.

Williamsburg's DeWitt earns CECD recognition



Michele Mixner DeWitt, economic development director for the City of Williamsburg, has earned the designation of Certified Economic Developer (CECD).

The national recognition denotes a mastery of principal skills in economic development, professional attainment and a commitment to personal and professional growth. The CECD exam is administered by the International Economic Development Council.

Suffolk fire chief set to retire



Suffolk Fire Chief **Mark Outlaw** announced that he will retire April 1 after 34 years with the city. Outlaw joined the Department of Fire and Rescue in 1977

and worked his way through the ranks before being appointed chief in 1994. At the time of his appointment, he was the youngest fire chief in Virginia, according to a press release from the city.

During his career, Outlaw oversaw the modernization of most every aspect of the department. In addition, he received distinguished service awards from the city, as well as two city manager commendations.

Have news about personnel in your city, town or county government? Send information to David Parsons via e-mail at dparsons@vml.org.

Alexandria launches mobile website

Alexandria has launched a new mobile-friendly design that makes it easier to browse the city's website on a smartphone. About 20 percent of all visitors to the website access the web from a mobile device, and that percentage is expected to rise as more people access online data on the go.

The new mobile website has been streamlined for speed, ease of use and readability on smaller screens, while retaining all of the content and functionality of the traditional full site. In addition, there are no separate URLs to remember, or duplicate pages for mobile versions of content. Visiting alexandriava.gov will seamlessly display the format that works best for the user's device, and will offer the ability to set and remember a preference for mobile vs. desktop view.

The mobile design makes popular elements of the city's website easy to find and interact with, including the homepage news features, citywide events calendar, social media connections, online services, site search and emergency news.

To access the new mobile website, visit alexandriava.gov on your smartphone or mobile device.

NLC honors Arlington multicultural outreach

The National League of Cities awarded Arlington County its first place 2012 Cultural Diversity Award recently in the population category of 100,001-400,000 for the county's Multicultural Outreach Program.

The NLC awards program showcases examples of how cities achieve excellence in diversity, promotes the positive results of "total community collaboration" and honors community leadership in developing creative and effective programs to improve cultural diversity.

Arlington's Multicultural Outreach Program spans all county departments. It works with residents of all backgrounds to ensure that they have knowledge of, and access to, community services and educational pro-

grams. Some features of the program include: a comprehensive Spanish language website, citizenship classes and workshops through the Department of Human Services, English classes provided by the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) and job readiness training through the Arlington Employment Center.

Manassas adds EV charging stations

The City of Manassas Public Works and Utilities Department recently unveiled four new ChargePoint America Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations in Old Town Manassas. The city joined the Electric Vehicle Charging Station pilot project because it sees a need to provide the stations away from homes. Electric vehicles have a limited range of use from 40 miles to 100 miles per charge. The city also wants to encourage the use of electric vehicles by offering charging stations in public parking spaces.

ChargePoint America is providing the stations, valued at \$5,000, to the city at no cost. Manassas pays about \$5,000 per station for installation only. The city must approve a two-year master service agreement with ChargePoint America. A driver's cost, paid at the time of the charge with a credit card, is \$5 per session.

Urban League opens Hampton location

The Urban League of Hampton Roads is opening its first site on the Peninsula at Y.H. Thomas Community Center in Hampton to offer programs focused on housing, jobs and youth development.

The opening represents a new way of doing things in Hampton – providing community services through public/non-profit partnerships. The city provides the facility space, and the Urban League manages the program. The Urban League of Hampton Roads, founded in 1978, assists people in achieving social and economic equality. The agency provides a variety of services

from budget counseling to health workshops.

Vienna launches new TV channel

The Town of Vienna launched its new cable channel, Town of Vienna Community Network (TVCN), on Jan. 31. The channel consists of bulletin information related to town activities, events, upcoming meetings and policies.

By the end of the year, citizens will be able to view Town Council meetings live on the channel. Future programming featuring town programs, events and activities is also planned. Also, during times of emergency, residents will be able to tune into TVCN for town-related emergency information and updates.

Henrico recognized for supplier diversity

For the second consecutive year, the Henrico County Division of Purchasing and Support Services has been recognized as a local-government leader in promoting supplier diversity. The Division of Purchasing and Support Services and its supplier relations manager, Marvis W. Marshall, received awards from the Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council for its efforts to help small, women-owned and minority-owned (SWAM) businesses participate in the county's procurement process.

The division, which is part of the Department of General Services, received the Raising the Bar Award in recognition of program enhancements made since the previous year, as well as its ongoing commitment to supplier development. The division established a process for vendors to provide feedback on their dealings with the county and has continued to organize monthly supplier orientation sessions and quarterly training for new procurement staff members. The division had received the Best New Public Program Award from the Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council in 2010. Marshall received the 2011 Advocate of the Year Award

for her work promoting entrepreneurship and assisting SWAM vendors that are seeking to do business with the county.

ELSEWHERE ...

Hampton is conducting an exploratory bid process for select city services to determine if the private sector can provide those services at a lower cost than the city. Services include trash, recycling and bulk waste collection; street sweeping; before/after school care; and additional landscaping work. ... **Herndon** Town Council has adopted an amendment to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan that outlines a vision for transit-oriented development adjacent to the future stop on Metrorail's Silver Line, slated for completion in 2017. ... **Alexandria** has begun a pilot parking adjudication program enhancement. In addition to the standard in person and by mail options for contesting citations, vehicle owners will be offered a

variety of online adjudication options, including video web conferencing and teleconferencing. ... **Hampton** has launched a low interest loan program to help residents protect their homes from flooding. Residents can apply for loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000. The city has allocated \$2.5 million to the program from its fund balance.

Falls Church has issued a Request for Expressions of Interest, seeking input from qualified utility entities that may have an interest in entering into an agreement for the purchase of its utility assets. City Council is evaluating options for the future of city water and sewer systems, with the goal of providing the best possible stewardship of utility assets on behalf of taxpayers and customers. ... The Town of **Colonial Beach** received a Virginia Department of Transportation 2012 Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Project grant worth \$482,053. The money will be used

to build and improve sidewalks, as well as improving bicycle routes and pedestrian crossings. ... For the 13th consecutive year, Standard & Poor's, Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investor Services have given **Arlington County's** debt the highest rating: AAA / AAA / Aaa.

Have news about your city, town or county government? Send submissions to David Parsons, editor of Virginia Town & City, at dparsons@vml.org.



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More than 80 years ago, it was the abundance of water at Crystal Springs that prompted Wytheville Town Council to purchase and preserve it as a watershed area. All photos courtesy of Town of Wytheville.

Crystal Springs Recreation Area

Wytheville trail system makes most of green space

WHEN WYTHEVILLE purchased a 1,800-acre wooded tract on the outskirts of the town in 1928, the intent was to protect a vital watershed. Crystal Springs had been the source of the town's water since the late 1800s. Little did the town fathers know that their successors, some 80 years later, would create a cooperative effort and turn preservation into recreation.

"The Town of Wytheville had great foresight in 1928," said current Wytheville Mayor Trent Crewe. "They saw the value of Crystal Springs as a water source. But considering the amount of landmass they purchased with it, there must have been a vision that this land could have a different use in the future."

Interestingly, in 2004, the 7,500 acres encircling it would become one of the Virginia's largest wildlife management areas the – Big Survey. While the Big Survey is still in its earliest stages of development, there is already an abundance of opportunities for hunting, hiking, birding and other nature study activities.

The Town of Wytheville saw the Big Survey's purchase as an excellent time to pursue the development of its acreage for citizen and visitor use. A system of hiking trails was designed as the main component. The focal point of the trail system is an old reservoir built in the 1800's as Wytheville's water source. This connection to water would play a role in its new use through the name given it, Crystal

Springs Recreation Area.

The first cooperative opportunity for increased use of Crystal Springs began in 2009 when it was learned that the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation

had begun an initiative called Kids in Parks TRACK Trails program. The purpose of the program was to increase physical activity for children and their families, improve their nutritional choices, and get them outdoors. The TRACK Trails are designed to help kids explore nature through the use of self-guided brochures. The first TRACK trail was implemented in Asheville, N.C., by then first director, and now CEO of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Dr. Carolyn Ward. Since Ward is a native of Wytheville, it seemed like an ideal fit to make this town the first Virginia location of the program.

By ROSA LEE JUDE



Many guided hikes are scheduled throughout the year for groups of all ages.

Finding funding partners

Creating a trail system would take many hours of planning and even more hours of labor to build the pathways. Where would the funding come from? An ideal partner was found in a local community organization, the Wythe-Bland Foundation. The foundation's mission is to improve the health, education and welfare of the citizens of the Wythe and Bland communities, with an emphasis on health care needs. This mission aligned perfectly with the goals of the Kids in Parks program. In the summer of 2009, with the encouragement from the Wythe-Bland Foundation, the Town of Wytheville Department of Parks and Recreation applied for a \$66,000 grant to implement the

Kids in Parks program. The grant was awarded that fall with \$27,000 designated to pay the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's Kids in Parks program to implement the TRACK Trail component, and the remaining \$39,000 to fund the building of the trails and supporting infrastructure.

As work began on the design and construction of the trails, several things were kept in mind. Extreme efforts were made to preserve the natural look of this pristine mountain hideaway. Crews carefully carved out trails using removed trees as bridges over small streams, and crafted elegant but rustic restrooms along the trails. All of the construction work was done by the Town of Wytheville Public Works Department. This maintained quality and curbed spending on the project.

The trails opened to the public in July, 2010. During the first six months, more than 1,300 people signed the guest log located at the trail head. Since then, the documented use of the recreation area has more than doubled with many local and regional citizens using it regularly without signing in on each visit. With increased marketing, it is expected that the number of users will bring a new level of growth.

Six trails are part of the current system, ranging in length from a half-mile to two miles. Two campsites are available, as well as picnic areas and restroom facilities. A grant application with the Recreational Trails Program will develop the next phase consisting of a nine-mile loop or boundary trail. This segment will allow for better access for advanced mountain biking, backpacking, fishing and rock climbing.

"Our vision for this project was to provide citizens with a green space that was abundant in recreational opportunities," said Deana Blevins, recreation supervisor/grant project manager with the Town of Wytheville Department of Parks & Recreation. "We wanted to see individuals and families getting back outside having fun, as well as understanding and

Kids in Parks program encourages children, families to increase physical activity

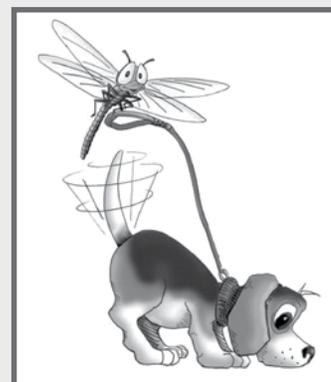
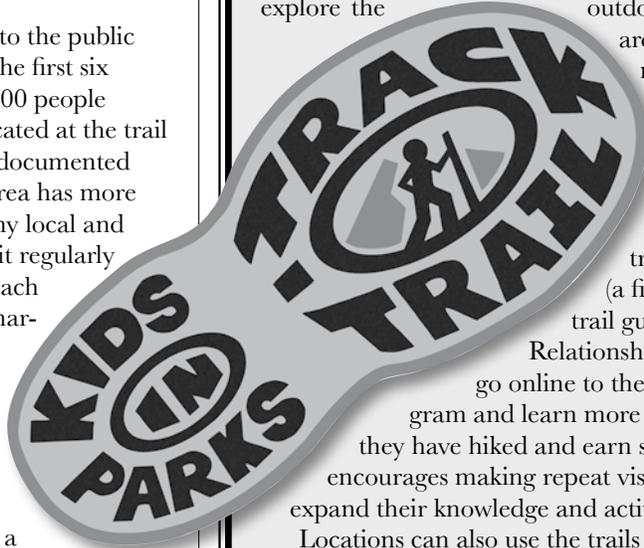
ENCOURAGING CHILDREN to be physically active and engaging families in outdoor adventures is the foundation of the Kids in Parks program. Begun in North Carolina in 2009 as a partner initiative of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, the program is growing and has crossed state lines with several sites in Virginia.

The goal of Kids in Parks is to build a network of TRACK (Trails Ridges and Active Caring Kids) Trails that encourage children and their families to increase physical activity and their connection to the cultural heritage and natural resources of an area through hiking and walking. The program gives families educational and inspirational reasons to explore the outdoors and learn about the natural world around them. Each trail has multiple thematic adventures grouped around three main topic areas: plants, animals, and culture. A series of self-guided brochures turn an ordinary hike into a fun-filled, discovery-packed experience. The brochures feature trail mascots, TRACK (a dog) and KIP (a firefly), who lead the experience. The trail guides highlight such topics as Nature's Relationships and Fern Identification. Kids can go online to the web based components of the program and learn more information, as well as track the trails they have hiked and earn several levels of prizes. The program encourages making repeat visits to the trails and visiting new ones to expand their knowledge and activity.

Locations can also use the trails as an opportunity to host guided trail hikes for kids, families, senior citizens, school groups and civic organizations. The experience becomes multi-generational and encourages interaction among participants.

Crystal Springs Recreation Area in Wytheville was the first Virginia location of TRACK Trails. Other Virginia sites now include Claytor Lake State Park in Dublin and Mountain Meadow Farm Corn Maze in Meadows of Dan, but several additional sites are in the works. "We are working to bring more trails to Virginia, and already have several grand openings, Hungry Mother State Park and Grayson Highlands State Park, scheduled soon. We are also working on a trail in Nelson County," said Jason Urroz, Kids in Parks director for the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation.

For more information about the Kids in Parks TRACK Trails program or to nominate a trail in your community, visit their web site at www.kidsinparks.com.





At the opening festivities, Wytheville Town Council thanked town departments and local and regional organizations for their contributions in making Crystal Springs Recreation Area possible.

enjoying the natural world. The new nine-mile boundary trail project will encourage that relationship with nature for years to come and help our citizens and visitors live a healthier

mind and body lifestyle.”

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration

(FHWA) and funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund. This program is designed to help areas develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. This recently-approved grant will provide \$93,000 in funding for the new trail construction to include the nine-mile loop, a play park for mountain bikers, and a bike wash station at the trail entrance. Additional matching funds of \$25,000 have already

a healthier lifestyle for our Wythe and Bland residents,” said Gail S. Catron, executive director of the Wythe-Bland Foundation.

While the majority of the use of Crystal Springs is by individuals, families and small groups, the Town of Wytheville Parks & Recreation Department conducts a variety of planned activities, including guided hikes for children, adults and senior adults. Future plans include more kids programs and the possibility of working with schools and scouting groups for organized activities. “We are so pleased with the progress that has been made at Crystal Springs,” said Wytheville Vice Mayor Jackie King. “It’s providing a great new area for people of all ages to exercise and enjoy the great outdoors.”

As another example of the power of partnerships, this cooperative effort has merged the efforts of local government with the help of non-profit foundations and state and federal agencies to enhance conservation and preservation, increase tourism, and create additional recreational opportunities for a wide range of citizens and visitors. 

About the author

Rose Lee Jude is director of the Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Great care was taken to carve out trails and create bridges that would least disturb the beauty and natural habitat.

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Norfolk's 'Neighbors Building Neighborhoods' approach has lofty goals



Neighbors Building Neighborhoods

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is the second in a series of articles tracking the success of the City of Norfolk's new Neighbors Building Neighborhoods program.

THE CITY OF Norfolk's Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) program, although still in its infancy, is proving that the real power of the initiative lies with residents. It's also apparent that city residents were ready to take on more responsibility for the future of their neighborhoods.

Now that the word is out and neighbors are talking, the paramount task at hand is to channel the enthusiasm by focusing on the five goals that guide the NBN approach. Six pilot community action plan (CAP)

neighborhoods are working directly with the city to achieve these goals. They've been tasked with specific projects that will lead each neighborhood to the final product – a community action plan.

By KRISTEN HELGESON

Resident capacity

The first NBN goal is building resident capacity. The NBN Academy provides traditional capacity building workshops, such as leadership building, but takes on a newer stance as well. Instead of just providing training on how to lead, organize and facilitate meetings, the NBN Academy also focuses on visioning neighborhood change. Training includes neighborhood data collection and analysis and the steps to create a neighborhood action plan. One new training tool even looks at how

residents brand and market their neighborhood.

Starting this spring, the academy will offer core training modules, but individual training will continue to be offered.

"We want to be able to work directly with neighborhoods and their specific needs while also providing basics in capacity building," said Vanessa Seals, a senior neighborhood development specialist.

Relationships

Goal 2 is building strong neighborhood connections – relationships. It's a fundamental part of NBN. From promoting the Good Neighbors Guide to recruiting new members to the NBN steering committees, residents have shown tremendous vigor in accomplishing this goal. NBN steering

committee members of Campostella Heights have hit the pavement to spread the word about NBN and to encourage participation. Wearing "We are Neighbors Building Neighborhoods" pins and using a document that is specific to their neighborhood, committee members have met with hundreds of their neighbors.

"I was amazed at the positive reception I received," said Trudy Gaba of Campostella Heights, who serves on her neighborhood's NBN steering committee. "Nearly every neighbor that I visited invited me into their home."



A homeowner in the Berkley neighborhood spruces up her landscape, showing pride through curb appeal, part of one of the five NBN goals.



Bettye Potts (left), Campostella Heights NBN steering committee president, and Keela Boose, Campostella Heights Civic League president and NBN member, recruit and spread the word on the new city initiative.

Neighborhood images

Goal 3 – building a positive neighborhood images – is founded on the idea that neighborhoods with high standards project their neighborhood as a desirable place to live. Alongside training on marketing and promoting neighborhoods, the new Block-by-Block Neighborhood Pride Improvement Grant program is providing funding to help neighborhoods improve their image, whether it's a visible project or large event. Norfolk's first neighborhood improvement grant program, its objective is more than just the improvement itself. It emphasizes how visible improvements create pride, build neighborly relationships and signal to the outside community that residents care about their neighborhood. The application process is underway and awards will be announced in April.

These first three goals seem straightforward, but the neighborhoods are not necessarily working through them linearly. As residents move forward there is discourse that arises. Although residents like what they have heard about NBN, each comes to the table with different backgrounds, histories and agendas. There are new players and ones who have been on the scene for years, even decades.

While residents may show distrust, displeasure and frustration at times, what is evident is that they've chosen to engage. Residents want to be involved. Their passion and concern take on many forms but they are willing to spend the energy. Although

uncomfortable at times, it is part of the journey – a journey with side trips along the way. When looking at issues such as creating neighborhood standards, what project will be most beneficial to the neighborhood and deciding who will lead can take neighbors in many directions.

“The key is to keep the conversation going and focused on the common goals,” said Bob Batcher, director of communications for the city. “Sometimes what looks like going off course can actually be good. We

discover more and ultimately end up in a better place.” 

About the author

Kristen Helgeson is a public information specialist for the City of Norfolk. Next month's article chronicling Norfolk's new approach to strengthening neighborhoods will cover goals No. 4 and No. 5, building a viable and competitive real estate market and building attractive and quality property improvements. More information on the goals and other NBN topics can be found at: www.norfolk.gov/NBN.



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Local Government Day

MORE THAN 500 LOCAL government officials participated in Local Government Day at the General Assembly on Feb. 9 in Richmond. Sponsored by the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, the event included a comprehensive staff briefing on important issues before the 2012 session of the General Assembly and visits to the Capitol. The event was held at the Richmond Marriott in downtown Richmond.



VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The 2012 Virginia Municipal League Achievement Awards encourage and recognize the accomplishments of member local governments in meeting the challenge of operating vibrant cities, towns and counties. Innovative problem-solving, excellence in management, increasing citizen participation, and reaching toward higher service levels are all daily occurrences in Virginia local governments, and they deserve public recognition. This awards program seeks out the best of these programs. It is through this public recognition that all Virginia local governments can share and learn from these achievements.

POPULATION AWARDS

The VML Achievement Awards competition includes five categories based on population so that local governments compete with other local governments of comparable size. The population categories are: (1) under 5,000; (2) 5,000-10,000; (3) 10,001-35,000; (4) 35,001-90,000; and (5) more than 90,000.

A local government may submit up to three entries in its population category. One winner will be selected from each population category to receive an Achievement Award. The winner of the President's Award – the entry that does the best job of fulfilling the criteria set forth below – will be chosen from the five population category winners.

Entries in the five population categories will be evaluated on the following criteria, which emphasize innovation, efficiency and entrepreneurship:

- Generally speaking, accomplishing projects and implementing programs that enhance the vitality and quality of life in cities, towns or counties;
- developing more innovative ways of delivering government services;
- implementing new or improved approaches in addressing a significant community need, or significantly improving an existing program;
- reflecting excellence in management;
- increasing citizen participation;
- striving toward higher service levels;
- possessing ideas and approaches that make a project or program relevant to other local governments;
- having a long-term value to the community; and
- showing a documented record of effectiveness that illustrates how a project or program has achieved its goals.

NOTE: All submittals in a population category must list one of the five population brackets on the cover page of the entry. For entries that represent significant improvements to existing programs, the improvements must have been made between Jan. 1, 2011 and May 1, 2012.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The winner of the President's Award – the entry that does the best job of fulfilling the criteria set forth on the facing page – will be chosen from the five population category winners. The winning entry will, in effect, be the equivalent of a best-in-show selection.



COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

The Communications Award recognizes the best in local government communications programs. Local governments of all sizes may submit one entry for this award.

Projects may include publications, audio-visual productions, special events, speeches, crisis plans, Web sites, social media initiatives, etc. CDs and DVDs also may be submitted.

NOTE: All submittals in this category must list the entry as "Communications Award" on the cover page of the entry.

THE JUDGING

Entries will be screened by the VML staff and judged by a panel selected for its expertise in local government.

THE WINNERS

All winning entries will be featured in the September issue of *Virginia Town & City*. The Population Category winners, the winner of the President's Award and the winner of the Communications Award will be recognized and presented with their awards at the 2012 VML Annual Conference in Williamsburg on Sept. 25.

DEADLINE & ADDRESS

All entries must be postmarked by May 25, 2012 and mailed to:

VML Achievement Awards
P.O. Box 12164
Richmond, VA 23241

or shipped (UPS, FedEx, etc.) to:

VML Achievement Awards
13 E. Franklin St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Entries will not be returned. If you have any questions, contact David Parsons at dparsons@vml.org or by telephone at 804/523-8527.

RULES FOR ENTERING

Detailed rules on how to prepare and submit an entry were mailed to all VML member local governments in early March. The rules also are posted on the VML Web site at: <http://www.vml.org/WNEW/Achieve12.html>.

Residential and cultural arts Business, community blended for vibrant living

COMBINING RESIDENTIAL redevelopment with cultural arts is changing the face of community revitalization in older neighborhoods across Virginia. The Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) is backing these local efforts with financing and technical assistance that make it possible for communities to maximize their affordable housing options. The Jackson Ward community in Richmond is one example of how innovative thinking, combined with stakeholder partnerships, is successfully revitalizing Virginia's economically impacted communities.

A predominately African American community since the segregated early 20th century, Jackson Ward saw The Hippodrome open in 1914 as a vaudeville and movie theater. Following a fire in 1945, it was rebuilt and again used as a movie theater and then as a church, but was seldom used after 1982. The adjoining Taylor Mansion, when it was built in 1907 for the Rev. W.L. Taylor, was considered to be the largest home of an African American in the United States. Decades later it was used as an Elks Lodge.

Today these two important cultural icons have been merged into a \$12 million complex that includes a theater, two restaurants, retail space and 31 apartments that are home to residents with varying income levels. The result is renewed vitality for a historic neighborhood that had experienced economic decline and physical deterioration.

Furthermore, this project will serve as a catalyst to generate additional revitalization in a community that's a strategically located economic gateway in downtown Richmond. In addition, the city estimates the mixed-use/mixed-income (MUMI) complex will



A unique blend of resources, including VHDA financing, helped make revitalization of The Hippodrome Theatre and Taylor Mansion in Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood a reality.

generate some \$300,000 annually in real estate and business taxes.

Stakeholder partnerships

Mixed-use/mixed-income revitalization is becoming increasingly desirable for its efficient use of real estate, economic development potential and the way it brings communities together. The story of The Hippodrome's mixed-used transformation began when Richmond developer Ronald Stallings, who inherited the property from his father, secured a variety of financing for the project in October 2009. Construction took a year and was completed in February 2011.

Stakeholder partnerships that provided a unique combination of financing options were crucial in breathing new life into this historic landmark. The City of Richmond contributed an economic development grant, as well as HOME Investment Partnership funds.

The remaining development costs were financed with capital from private investors, state and federal tax credits and a VHDA permanent loan that blended REACH Virginia subsidy funds with taxable bonds to provide a lower interest rate than the standard bond rate.

To learn more about this and other innovative revitalization projects throughout Virginia, as well as other housing finance solutions, contact Costa Canavos, VHDA community housing officer, at 804-343-5735 or costa.canavos@vhda.com. 

VHDA, a sustaining VML member, is a self-supporting, not-for-profit organization created by the state in 1972 to help Virginians attain quality, affordable housing. Our mortgages are funded by bonds we issue, not state taxpayer dollars, and are available primarily for first-time homebuyers and developers of quality rental housing. We also teach free

homeownership classes, and help people with disabilities and the elderly make their homes more livable. For more information, visit vhda.com.



Celebrating 40 years of helping Virginians attain quality, affordable housing

Longer version of job ads posted at www.vml.org

Because of the number of requests it receives to publish job advertisements, VML reduces the length of the position descriptions in Update. A full version of the entire job listings published here for the past two months appears on VML's Web site at www.vml.org. Visit the VML site and click on "Marketplace" to read the complete descriptions.

Systems Engineer II (Information Technology), Staunton

SALARY: \$37,930 - \$50,000 hiring range (+) benefits. Join team responsible for the "care and feeding" of servers, desktops, networks and telephony; provide quality customer support, systems maintenance, implementation and coordination with vendors and remainder of IT team. Reqs. educ. and exper. equiv. to bachelor's degree in computer science or related discipline. City's infrastructure is primarily Microsoft Windows Server, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SQL server, Enterasys networks and Nortel telephony. Exper. in these areas highly desired. Apply at www.staunton.va.us. Deadline: April 22. EOE.

Chief Utility Plant Operator, Berryville

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Chief operator of town's water and wastewater facilities. Must have Va. Class II or higher water and wastewater licenses, 5 yrs. supervisory exper. at water/wastewater facilities and ability to perform basic maintenance. MBR exper. a plus. Applicants with Va. Class II or higher license in only water or wastewater, but who have ability to obtain the licensure they lack within 5 yrs. of hire, will be considered. Submit cover letter, resume, town application and current DMV driving record to: Desi Moreland, Town of Berryville, 101 Chalmers Court, Suite A, Berryville, VA 22611. Application forms available at www.berryvilleva.gov. Open until filled. EOE.

Superintendent, Northwestern Regional Jail Authority

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits, including VRS. Manage Adult Detention Center located on 33-acre campus just northwest of Winchester in Frederick County. Complex consists of a main jail, an annex housing unit, and a community corrections center. It is a 760 general purpose bed, direct supervision corrections facility that also provides related pre-trial defendant and post trial offender probation monitoring services in support of 4 participating political jurisdictions. Reqs. bachelor's degree

(master's preferred) in corrections, criminal justice, sociology, government or similar field; min. 3 yrs. exper. as a superintendent or law enforcement executive responsible for correctional activities. More info and application at www.co.frederick.va.us/human_resources/vacancies.aspx Open until filled. EOE.

Emergency Communications Center Manager, Isle of Wight County

SALARY: \$56,823-\$72,450 start range. Manage all budget, personnel and equipment critical to the support of public safety and operation of the county's communication center; along with 2 towns. Reqs. 5-8 yrs mngmnt exper., BA/BS degree or equiv. educ. and training, plus VCIN Level A/B Instructor; DCJS Certifications: Basic Dispatch and General Instructor, and EMD Instructor. Submit county application, resume and current (within 30 days) DMV record: Human Resources, P.O. Box 80, Isle of Wight, VA 23397. Visit www.iwus.net or call 757-365-6263. Deadline: April 16. EOE.

Director of Human Resources, Fredericksburg

SALARY: \$74,033-\$88,840 hiring range DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree and min. 5 yrs. progressively responsible exper. in managing HR activities in a comparably sized organization. Prefer master's degree in public / human resources administration, organizational development or related area along with management of a major human resources function in a govt. setting. Submit letter of application, detailed resume with salary history and 5 work-related references to: John A. Anzivino, Senior Vice President, Springsted Incorporated, 1564 E. Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23228; Fax (804) 726-9752 or e-mail Richmond@springsted.com. Complete community / position profile at www.springsted.com. Deadline: April 20. EOE.

Executive Director, Staunton Creative Community Fund, Inc.

SALARY: DOQ/DOE (+) benefits. Nonprofit community development organization serves Staunton region by supporting funding and inspiring local entrepreneurs, and is the hub for entrepreneurial innovation that brings together the talent, creativity, information, funding and resources to grow a vibrant economy. SCCF's programs include lending to start-up and expanding small businesses, virtual nonprofit incubation, community and entrepreneur networking events, educational programming, business and nonprofit consulting, as well as economic development initiatives. Send cover letter,

resume and salary requirements and history to: William Hamilton, President, Staunton Creative Community Fund, 10 Byers St., Staunton, VA 24401. Contact: HamiltonBW@ci.staunton.va.us. Open until filled. EOE.

Chief of Police, Halifax

SALARY: Up to \$42,000 DOQ/DOE (+) benefits, including VRS. (pop. 1,308) Responsible for day-to-day operation and administration of the Police Department (\$249,052 FY11-12 bdgt.) with additional 3 FT sworn police officers and compliment of certified PT officers. Prefer BS/BA in criminal justice, police administration, or related field and applicable exper. with GED/H.S. diploma; current Va. DCJS certification req'd; min. 3 yrs. senior administrative exper. with min. 7 yrs. uniformed police exper. also req'd. Submit confidential letter of interest, resume, salary history and references by regular post or e-mail only: Carl Espy IV, Town Manager, 70 S. Main St., P.O. Box 627, Halifax, VA 24558; front@townofhalifax.com, Subject "Chief of Police Position." Direct questions to town manager at 434-476-2343. Deadline: April 27. Open until filled. EOE.

Assessor, Gloucester County

SALARY: \$64,062-\$96,093 (+) benefits. Manage the Real Estate Assessment Department, planning and directing the assessment and reassessment of all real property, overseeing appeals process, and supervising personnel. Reqs. relevant bachelor's degree and 7-10 yrs. exper. in assessment and appraisal, including 3 yrs. supervisory exper., or any equiv. comb. of educ. and exper. thorough knowledge of CAMA software. Prefer designation as an assessor from a recognized organization such as IAAO or AI; must possess designation as a Certified General Appraiser from Va. Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. Submit cover letter and resume, including salary history, with the online application at. List at least 3 professional references on application. For a complete description and to apply on-line, visit www.gloucesterva.jobs. Questions? Contact 804-693-5690, 804-693-1660 or hrdept@gloucesterva.info. Position #356-02. Open until filled. EOE.

Submit ads via e-mail to David Parsons at dparsons@vml.org. VML publishes job advertisements at no cost to its local government members. Non-members are charged a flat rate of \$25 per ad per issue, which includes posting on VML's Web site and publication in the Update newsletter and Virginia Town & City (deadlines permitting). VML edits position descriptions in printed publications because of space limitations.

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Some people are more equal than others

A GOOD NATIONAL conversation about inequality would be useful.

The prospects may seem poor because the current federal election campaigns are shaping up as more wild and desperate than informed and thoughtful. That's a shame and a lost opportunity, especially because government policy often helps create and perpetuate inequality and because too much inequality is not good for either economic performance or for politics.

Contradictory views

Last year, 66 percent of Americans said there are "strong conflicts" between rich and poor people in the United States. That percentage, from a Pew Research Center survey, increased from 47 percent in 2009. In contrast, a majority said, in a 2011 Gallup poll, that the nation is not divided into "haves" and "have nots." A few years earlier, a majority said that the nation is divided.

Robert Rector, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, says that the Pew survey trend is not meaningful "other than that the topic has been in the press for the last two years." Charles Blow, a liberal New York Times op-ed writer, suggests that the Gallup results shifted because "the facts of an existential threat lose traction among a weary public as deniers attempt to reduce them to partisan opinions."

Perhaps both Rector and Blow are partly correct. More likely, most people are just struggling with how they fit fairness into a civic culture that is usually dominated by themes of prosperity and freedom. How much inequality is too much? Even if it violates their sense of justice, is inequality an inevitable offshoot of globalization and capitalism? Are there roles here for government?

Separate and unequal

In 2011, the Congressional Budget Office reported that the top 1 percent

of earners more than doubled their share of national after-tax income over the previous 30 years. The richest 20 percent received more of total national income in 2007 than the other 80 percent, 53 percent to 47 percent. And so on.

The CBO findings were, in a sense, old news: CBO had reported similar findings for at least a decade. Others had too: Frank Levy, for example, had been analyzing the interplay of American incomes and economic change since his first "Dollars and Dreams" book in 1987.

Some descriptions of economic inequality focus on structural aspects: wages have stagnated, even declined in real terms since the early 1970s; capital increased its portion of national income versus labor; outcomes for blacks and Latinos lag those for whites; the "middle class" shrank; residential segregation by income sharply increased.

Polarized income distribution is so embedded that it shapes corporate strategies. Procter & Gamble, for example, is reported to have changed its consumer product lines and marketing to focus on the "pools of have and have not consumers" that have become larger "at the expense of the middle."

Other descriptions focus on specific financial outrages: CEO earnings skyrocketed; exorbitantly wealthy people paid low tax rates.

Policy and power

All of these disparities are exacerbated by globalization, technological innovation, racism, changing social mores and the continuing plagues of the financial crisis and the great recession.

But inequality is not solely or even mainly the result of economic factors or impersonal forces beyond our control. Public policy can produce inequality as well as mitigate it. Policy produces the so-called safety

net. Policy also produces the rules of the game that skew benefits upward through the class structure.

In a system where money and status can buy access and influence, that's no surprise. In 1984, Thomas Edsall's *The New Politics of Inequality* reported "an erosion", dating from the early 1970s onward and across both major political parties, "of the power not only of the poor but of those in the working and middle classes" and also "a sharp increase in the power of ... the top 15 percent of the income distribution."

Hacker and Pierson's *Winner Take All Politics* (2010) shows how federal action and inaction often begets more wealth for wealthy people at the expense of others. Examples abound. Tax policy gives preference to "unearned income." Labor relations regulation tilts toward corporate interests. Lax regulation of financial institutions facilitates immense bonuses, abusive lending and financial collapse. Too-big-to-fail companies and their executives get bailed out while smaller firms, home owners and workers bear the burdens.

Local government policy can also promote disparities. Increased use of fees instead of the general fund to pay for public services places greater out-of-pocket burdens on those least able to pay. The uneven quality of public schools as between rich and poorer neighborhoods and between jurisdictions perpetuates the differences. Across regions, inequality is written on the land through exclusionary land use mechanisms.

Everyone can work toward useful and productive explorations of fairness and other "ideals and Sacred Things" of the national, regional or local community where they have a voice. The results could be very useful. 

About the author

Bill Barnes, the director for emerging issues at NLC, can be reached at barnes@nlc.org



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