



A report to the citizens of James City County



for your information

Vol. 13 No. 8

October/November 2001

www.james-city.va.us

What's new on the web?

Interesting facts about the County Web Site:

- 🌐 There have been 60,196 visitors to the site since its redesign in April.
- 🌐 The most popular link on the website is Job Opportunities.
- 🌐 There have been six polls and 549 people have participated.

Check it out!

www.james-city.va.us

County closings

County offices will be closed on **November 12** for Veteran's Day and on **November 22** and **23** for Thanksgiving. The James City/Williamsburg and James River Community Centers and Transit will be open on **November 23**.

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We're Calling on You!

Comprehensive Plan Citizen Survey to begin

Your opinions are important to the development of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Supervisors has commissioned a telephone survey of County citizens in advance of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update. Beginning in October, the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research will be placing randomly selected survey phone calls to County citizens to gather opinions on a wide variety of topics including land development and growth, education, recreation, and youth services. The survey results will be presented to the Board in December and help focus attention on issues of primary interest and concern to our citizens. In order for the Comprehensive Plan to adequately reflect a collective vision for our community, it is important that you take a few minutes of your time and share your opinions if you receive a call.



Promoting the Character of the Community

The second segment in a continuing series covering what is being done to preserve the land and character of James City County.

James City County partners with many local agencies who share the commitment to enhance and preserve the land. An example of the active nature of these partnerships is the upcoming **Autumn Adventure** on October 13, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Jamestown High School. Autumn Adventure is hosted by a consortium of Williamsburg area environmental, recreational, and conservation organizations. Hands-on activities for children, nature hikes, environmental displays, scavenger hunts, games, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the County's new Greensprings Trail will be featured. The event is sponsored by the Williamsburg Land Conservancy, James City County Parks and Recreation, Colonial Soil & Water Conservation District, Friends of Powhatan Creek, and James City County 4-H. For more information about Autumn Adventure, call 565-0343.

Business Guide Updated

The County's "Starting a Business" guide, containing information and resources for those interested in starting a new business, has been updated. To get a copy of this free guide, stop by the County Office of Economic Development or the Commissioner of Revenue's office at the Government Center on Mounts Bay Road. Copies are also available at the Williamsburg Regional Library reference desks for check out, through SCORE (contact the Williamsburg Area Chamber of Commerce at 229-6511), through the Small Business Development Center (contact Sally Riley at 253-4322), or on the County's web site, www.james-city.va.us, under "Open for Business."

Upcoming Parks and Recreation events

- **Witches Brew** - Saturday, Oct. 13, 4 - 6 p.m., James City/Wmbg. Community Center (JC/WCC). Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult. \$5 per person.
- **Senior Health Fair** - Friday, October 26, JC/WCC. 259-4181
- **Haunted Forest** - Saturday, Oct. 27, 5:30 - 10 p.m., Upper County Park. Shuttle service and free parking at Toano Middle School. Children in the parade will receive a Halloween surprise. This event is offered in cooperation with Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg.
- **“What am I thankful for?” Picture and Essay Contest** - (Ages 6 & older) Nov. 5-9, Parks and Recreation will be accepting essays with a picture of “What you are thankful for?” 259-4178
- **Indoor Flea Market** - Saturday, Nov. 10, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., JC/WCC. \$20 for one table or \$30 for two. 259-4200.

County Police remind you to be safe this Halloween.

Halloween is Wednesday, October 31. Trick or Treating is between 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. and is for youth aged 12 and younger. Children should be accompanied by an adult.

Some safety tips:

- Wear makeup or face paint. If you choose to wear a mask, pick one that fits properly and has holes large enough for the mouth and eyes.
- Light-colored, flame retardant costumes are recommended.
- Give and accept only wrapped candy, and inspect all treats before allowing your children to eat them.
- Carry a flashlight and trick or treat only in your neighborhood or visit only homes you know. For more information, call 253-1800.

Become a Foster Parent

The Colonial Region Foster Care Program is offering New Foster Parent Orientation and Training.

- Thursday, October 18, 6 - 8 p.m.
- Saturday, October 20, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Saturday, October 27, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

All sessions will meet at the Human Services

Center, 5249 Olde Towne Road. Attendance at all three sessions is required. For more information and to register, call Van Crump 259-3115.



Fuel assistance available

Social Services will accept applications for help with home heating costs from October 9 - November 9 and with heating emergencies from November 1 - March 15, 2002. Benefit amounts for households applying for assistance with home heating costs will be determined in late December. To be eligible for heating emergency assistance, a household must have at least one person who is aged 60 or older, disabled, or a child under the age of six. Call 259-3100 for more information.

Speaking of cold weather...

With winter approaching, it is the season for new furnace, wood stove, and gas fireplace installations. All are regulated by the Uniform Statewide Building Code and must be permitted and inspected prior to use. Call the Code Compliance office at 253-6626 for further information.



Did you know?

Is your home, business, or underdeveloped property in a flood hazard area? Then check out the facts on flood insurance and flood protection at the Williamsburg Regional Library. The following information is available for review in the reference section:

- Flood Insurance Rate Maps for James City County
- Answers To Questions About the National Flood Insurance Program
- Coastal Construction Manual
- Design Guidelines for Flood Damage Reduction
- Elevated Residential Structures
- Flood Emergency and Residential Repair Handbook
- Flood Insurance Study for James City County
- Flood Proofing Systems and Techniques
- Floodproofing Non-Residential Structures
- Living on Flood Plains and Wetlands: A Homeowner's High Water Handbook
- Mandatory Purchase of Flood Insurance Guidelines

Citizens can also request information on the names of contractors, site visits, and the review of retrofitting plans. For more information, call the County Engineer, 253-6671.

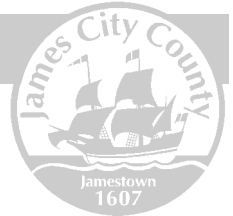
Welfare Fraud Program Hotline

Social Services has added an automated fraud reporting hotline, 259-3244. The hotline gives citizens an easy and anonymous way to report suspected abuse of the system. It also sends a message to potential abusers that Social Services is serious about welfare fraud. Between July 1 and June 2001, six people were determined to have committed welfare fraud in James City County, with overpayments exceeding \$16,000. Questions about the Fraud Prevention Program? Call Brian Taber, 259-3123.





neighborhood news



October/November 2001

Fall Neighborhood Network Meeting

Roads and transportation, drainage, the Greenway Master Plan, youth services, and recycling are some of the major issues for discussion at the Neighborhood Network meeting set for October 18, 7 - 9 p.m. at Berkeley Middle School. The meeting is an opportunity for citizens to network and explore common interest issues. Discussion will take place in five break-out sessions with County staff and public agency representatives serving as panelists. For details, call 229-7630.

Our Common Grounds

Tune in to Channel 48 beginning in October for "Our Common Grounds," a show hosted by Stan Gorrell, President of The Mews Homeowners Association. Stan will invite guests to discuss challenges faced by mandatory homeowners associations. Read *The Virginia Gazette* or log onto www.james-city.va.us for the show schedule. Call 229-7630 if you would like to suggest a topic.

Mark Your Calendars

A Homeowners Association Legal Day is scheduled for Saturday, November 3 from 9 - 3, location to be announced. Topics include Legal Documents, Legislation Updates, and Enforcement of Covenants. A \$15 fee covers materials and lunch. For more information, contact Caroline Rhodes at 229-7630.

From Our Readers:

Q. I am the owner of a home located in a new condominium development in James City County. James City County is to be commended for establishing the Office of Neighborhood Connections, which is no doubt doing a good job of educating homeowners as to how Homeowner Associations (HOAs) should be run. However, there is one matter which is rarely discussed.



The matter I refer to is the law which governs the conduct of the developer of the condominium project. The developer wants to maximize profit, which means minimizing costs. The sales organization wants to move the merchandise and collect their commission. This leads to the making of many promises and representations while courting customers, but once the closing documents have been signed and the money paid, the chances of these promises being fulfilled are very small indeed.

The net result of the above conflicts of interest is that when the developer finally leaves and residents take control of the HOA, the frustration level is often so high that sorting out the mess can easily create friction within the community. I would like to suggest that if James City County really wants to assist homeowner associations in the most effective way, then the County should address this particular matter. At the very least some sort of arbitration board with legal powers should be set up to give homeowners some recourse against abuse by condominium developers and sales agents.---A Reader

A. During the last session of the General Assembly, members of the Virginia Housing Study Commission recommended the establishment of a State ombudsman position within the Virginia Real Estate Board. The Board is to provide information to and foster reduction and resolution of conflicts among common interest community associations and their members. The ombudsman's functions include: listening to observations, inquiries, concerns, and complaints of association board members and non-board members; providing nonbinding interpretations of and whenever possible, substantive responses to inquires regarding Virginia law, and providing information on alternatives to conflict resolution other than litigation. For more information, call Karen O'Neill or Eric Olson at (804) 367-8500.

fyi for your information

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Copies of "FYI" are available at all government buildings, the Williamsburg Regional Library, or by mail. To get on the mailing list, call Communications and Neighborhood Connections at 229-7630 or log on to www.james-city.va.us.

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For more information about how to get involved in the February Patricia MacDonald, 2002 Neighborhoods Conference Chair. 23 event, call 229-7630.



Neighborhoods Conference planning underway

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Emergency Hotline Number, (757) 875-2424
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