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News and Information Magazine
Spring 2018

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**George Washington District Supervisor
To Be Determined**

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ON THE COVER

The front page features a family kayaking at Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve. To find out more, visit: www.TourStafford.com.

Stafford Magazine Going Green with Fall 2018 Issue

At Stafford County, we are always looking for ways to be better stewards of our resources for our citizens. To that end, we are saving money and minimizing our impact on the environment by going green with the Stafford magazine. What does that mean? It means starting Fall 2018, we will be publishing the magazine online instead of mailing the magazine to every address in Stafford County. That will save a great deal of money on printing and postage, some of which can be used to enhance the wonderful programs we offer through our Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities programs. For those who do not have internet access, the magazine will still be available in print at the locations listed below. Thank you so much for your continued patronage.

- Community Recreation-Rowser
- PRCF Administration Building-Rowser Annex
- PRCF Sports- CCC
- Government Center lobby
- Citizens Assistance
- Economic Development
- Public Safety Building
- Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center
- Woodlands Pool
- Porter Library
- England Run Library
- Stafford Gymnastic and Recreation Center
- Belmont
- Rappahannock Regional Library
- Curtis Park
- Smith Lake Park
- Duff Green Park
- Pratt Park
- Willowmere Park
- St. Claire Brooks Park



A Message from the Chairman

We've had some changes on our Board of Supervisors since the last publication of the Stafford magazine. Bob Thomas has left us to become the 28th District representative to the Virginia House of Delegates. We welcome Mark Dudenhefer, who has returned to the Board of Supervisors to represent the Garrisonville District. We also welcome Cindy Shelton, a new face on the Board who will be the Aquia District supervisor. On behalf of the Board, I thank our former Board members Paul Milde, Laura Sellers and Bob Thomas, and for their distinguished service to Stafford County. Their dedication to the county required many hours of work outside their family lives and professions. It is much appreciated.

We held our first Veterans Day Ceremony at the Armed Services Memorial. We also dedicated the fall installation of memorial bricks. Bricks are available for the spring installation. Visit www.StaffordCountyVA.gov for more information.

In honor of his service and dedication to Stafford County, the region and the state, the Board of Supervisors voted to rename the England Run Library to the William J. Howell Library, to honor long-time resident Bill Howell, who retired as Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates.

We launched a new Parks website and online registration system that will streamline sign-ups for patrons. We opened two new full-size artificial turf fields at Embrey Mill Park, bringing the total number of artificial turf fields to eight at Embrey Mill and Smith Lake. Embrey Mill Park was honored as Best New Facility (Parks, Playgrounds Greenways and Trails) Award in the greater than 100,000 population category. Embrey Mill and the Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center hosted the first annual Christmas in Stafford event in December. Thousands of people enjoyed a 5K walk/run, vendors, a live snow globe and other activities, followed by the Stafford Christmas Parade.

We held groundbreakings for the enhanced Animal Shelter, which will be triple the size of the current shelter, and the new Anne E. Moncure Elementary School. The shelter is

scheduled to open in June of 2018 and the new school will come online in September 2019. Work will begin on a brand new Fire and Rescue Station 14 soon. The station is scheduled to be finished by Spring of 2019 and is located on Shelton Shop Road near Garrisonville Road.

We are continuously looking for ways to combine services with Stafford County Public Schools to save money. We've already combined our insurance group and next we are combining our procurement department, with other shared services to come in the future.



The new fields at Embrey Mill Park

We are currently working on a new project that will vie with the Lake Mooney Reservoir as the largest infrastructure project in the history of Stafford County – the Courthouse Area Redevelopment project. Stafford has hired an international firm with local offices, Stantec, to oversee the project to develop a “downtown Stafford.” Stantec will work with the County to develop a Request for Proposals for public-private

partnerships to bring businesses, homes and recreational and entertainment offerings to the area. The Courthouse area that you see now will look immensely different in the not-too-distant future. Stafford is also in the running for a 108,000 square foot Department of Defense Outpatient Family Healthcare Clinic. VDOT is widening Courthouse Road, building a new Courthouse Road/I-95 interchange that will re-direct traffic on a four-lane road to Stafford Hospital and renovating the Route 1/Courthouse Road intersection.

It's an incredibly exciting time to live and work in Stafford. Above all, I thank you for the opportunity to lead the County through the opportunities ahead.

Meg Bohmke
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors



What You Need to Know about Changes to Courthouse Area Roads

Even when the temperature drops below freezing this winter, drivers can expect to see construction crews continuing to build a new interchange at Exit 140 (Courthouse Road) on Interstate 95 and widening Courthouse Road to four lanes.

A crane in the median of I-95 is ready to move vertical beams of steel - piles - that will support the future Courthouse Road bridges spanning the interstate. Two bridge spans will be part of the new diverging diamond interchange (DDI) at Exit 140. The expanded interchange will add more lanes, enhance safety and reduce delays for drivers traveling through Stafford's central corridor.

Travelers in the Courthouse Road area can expect to see traffic pattern changes at the I-95 entrance and exit ramps in February 2018, weather permitting. Crews will be shifting traffic entering and exiting I-95 at Courthouse Road to temporary ramps, parallel to the existing ramps, to give crews space to build the bridge abutments. Additional concrete barrier will be installed along the interstate travel lanes and ramps.

Construction began in July 2017 to widen Courthouse Road to four lanes as far west as Ramoth Church Road. This \$35.9 million project is funded by Stafford County and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

East of the interstate, Courthouse Road will be widened to four lanes. That work is part of the \$149.4 million project to modernize the Exit 140 interchange at Interstate 95.

"We are pleased to report that our contractor Shirley Contracting Company is keeping work on schedule and has made good progress advancing widening and interchange work during the first six months of construction," said Randy McKinney, P.E., VDOT Area Construction Engineer and Project Manager. "Residents and travelers will begin to see more activity near the interchange and east of I-95 this winter and early spring as work gets underway to build new bridges."

"We appreciate the attention and courtesy drivers have shown to crews working in the roadway, whether crew members are flagging traffic or working along the shoulder,"

McKinney said. "We ask drivers to continue to limit distractions in the work zone, obey posted speed limits and give their full attention to the road ahead as we introduce slight changes to the ramp traffic patterns."

When the combined widening and interchange effort is finished in July 2020, Courthouse Road will intersect with Route 1 at Hospital Center Boulevard.

"I can't emphasize enough the incredible impact these initiatives will have on the Courthouse Redevelopment area. We are working towards revitalizing the area and these road improvements will be important catalysts for Stafford's new downtown," said Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Meg Bohmke. "VDOT has been a good partner with us on meeting our future transportation needs. Traffic around the courthouse is going to greatly improve."

Exit 140 will open with new bridges and ramps in a diverging diamond design. In the new interchange, vehicles are briefly shifted to the opposite side of the road controlled by traffic signals, which eliminates traditional left turns that cross over oncoming traffic. The DDI improves

safety by reducing the number of potential conflict points where vehicles could collide. Diverging diamond interchanges can also handle more left-turn movements per hour, twice the capacity of a conventional interchange.

Safety is paramount to everyone in the work zone. At the time of publication, Shirley Contracting's crews had worked 395 days without any lost time due to injuries, counting from November 2016 when pre-construction activities began.

Reducing the speed limit in the work zone during construction to 35 mph allows drivers more time to react and respond to flagging operations, moving equipment, or new traffic patterns.

Most Courthouse Road lane closures have been scheduled to avoid school arrival and dismissal times, and morning and evening rush hour. Drivers should expect single-lane closures on Courthouse Road to continue in winter and early spring between 8:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Mondays-Thursdays, and between 8:30 a.m. and noon on Fridays. Periodic overnight lane closures with brief traffic stops are anticipated



Courthouse Road/I-95 Interchange Construction



Roads (Cont.'d)



Rendering of the new diverging diamond exit at the Courthouse Road/I-95 Interchange

at the Exit 140 interchange in February 2018 for traffic pattern changes at the I-95 ramps.

As interchange work picks up momentum, ground will also be broken east of I-95 to start construction on two new Park & Ride commuter lots. Crews will begin utility work and clearing near the site of the former McDonald's restaurant on Courthouse Road.

The new Park & Ride commuter lots will have a combined total of 1,100 parking spaces.

The larger of the two new lots will have approximately 850 parking spaces. This lot will include a dedicated carpool/vanpool pickup and drop-off area to assist with High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) use. Bus passengers will have a dedicated drop-off and pickup area. A second, smaller adjacent lot will have an additional 250 parking spaces.

Current lot users will see no change until summer 2018. The existing Park & Ride lot west of I-95 will remain open until that time. In summer 2018, the existing lot will be closed, and users will be shifted to a temporary lot east of I-95. The same number of parking spaces available now — 545 spaces — will always be available

during construction. VDOT wants carpools, vanpools and transit riders to continue ridesharing from this interchange during construction.

Staying Informed

Want to know if there's an active lane closure before heading out the door? Check 511Virginia, VDOT's real-time traffic information website. Users can visit www.511virginia.org, or download the free 511Virginia mobile app for Android and Apple smartphone devices.

Weekly lane closure updates will be posted to the project page on www.VirginiaDOT.org at www.VirginiaDOT.org/exit140

Want to receive periodic project updates by email? Send an email to VDOT Communications Manager Kelly Hannon at Kelly.Hannon@VDOT.Virginia.Gov, with the email subject heading, "Exit 140."

Questions? Call VDOT's Customer Service Center 24 hours a day at 1-800-FOR-ROAD, or the VDOT Fredericksburg District Office Monday-Friday during business hours at (540) 899-4288.

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Stafford Awarded Funds for PDR Program

Governor Terry McAuliffe announced the FY2018 farmland preservation grant recipients recently and Stafford was awarded \$61,615.23. Stafford was one of only five localities in the Commonwealth awarded funds. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (VDACS) Office of Farmland Preservation announced a total of \$308,076 split equally among Albemarle, Clarke, Fauquier and Stafford counties as well as the City of Virginia Beach.

Stafford is one of 23 certified local Purchase of Development Rights programs in Virginia. Nineteen of these programs have received funding over the past few years with more than 12,941 acres on 92 farms being permanently protected.

Stafford County currently has six farms in our PDR program, for a total of 450 acres. Those are 450 acres that will be protected from development. Stafford has also saved more than 10,000 acres across the county from development through conservation easements, the establishment of parks, designating Targeted Growth Areas and the Transfer of Development Rights Program. Three more

farms are in the process of becoming part of the program and there are 11 new applications.

The Purchase of Development Rights program allows land owners to sell their development rights to the County. The land is then put into a conservation easement and will never be developed. The owners submit an application and the County ranks the properties based on specific criteria. The purpose of this program is to help preserve the agricultural resources of the County. Additionally, many of the farms included have historical resources.

Stafford has become proficient in identifying funding sources and using its own revenues so that when the opportunity arises, Stafford is ready. Stafford's Board of Supervisors have made it a priority during good and bad economic times and continue to dedicate funds to the efforts. As a result, Stafford's Economic Development staff is told repeatedly by companies that one of the reasons they decided to relocate in the County is because of the beautiful neighborhoods, abundant recreational opportunities and rich historic heritage.



Walnut Hill Farm is one of the six current farms participating in Stafford's PDR Program.



Stafford County News and Information

