



COUNTY OF HENRICO 1998-99 ANNUAL REPORT

Published by the Public Information Office ♦ November 1999



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Manager's Message



For many years, our slogan "Proud of our progress; Excited about our future," has been emblazoned upon countless documents, from brochures and envelope stuffers to our site on the world wide web. It conveys a genuine feeling that can be found at every level of our organization and is reflected in everything we do. We are indeed proud of our progress and for good reason, as the following pages will reveal. It is that sense of solid, positive achievement that makes us excited about our future as we sit at the dawn of a new millennium.

Our pursuit of excellence has spanned the full range of County business. We have captured it time and again in such diverse operations as public safety and finance, technology and economic development, education and libraries, cultural arts and historic preservation. As nationally accredited public safety agencies, our police and fire organizations are among an elite group. So too are our financial accounting and budgeting systems and our bond ratings. From on-line library services and state-of-the-art communications systems to cutting edge technologies like geographic information systems, we are exploiting every hi-tech option available to us and with impressive results. Our public school system continues to excel by every measurable standard. It continues to be one of several key magnets that attract exciting new businesses to our community. In turn, the vitality of our economy contributes enormously to our ability to maintain a low tax environment and build upon our remarkable fiscal strength. We continue to prepare for the future by constructing increased capacities for both our water supply system and our water reclamation facilities. But while we keep our eyes firmly fixed on tomorrow, we have not forgotten our yesterdays. Through a broad range of endeavors, from the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen and the Henrico Theatre in Varina to Walkerton and the Clarke-Palmore House, we are preserving the strengths of our past and harnessing them for the future.

The amount of planning, resources and work necessary to achieve such ambitious goals is considerable. Vision and boldness are also vital to this process and in fact must precede everything else. The Board of Supervisors, working with their appointees on a host of boards and commissions, volunteers and constituents across the community, has provided all of this in abundance. I speak for every member of the County staff in expressing our gratitude for that superb leadership. Vision, boldness, planning, resources and work - we have them all. That simple fact alone explains why we are "Proud of our progress; Excited about our future."

Sincerely,

Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E.
County Manager

Board of Supervisors

Brookland, Fairfield, Three Chopt, Tuckahoe and Varina are the five magisterial districts that comprise Henrico County. One elected representative from each of these districts constitutes our Board of Supervisors. The board appoints the county manager, who is the chief administrator of the county overseeing 33 departments within his administration. In addition, the board appoints members to 41 local boards and commissions to ensure the best possible administration of our local government.



Division of Police

In May of 1999, the Henrico County Division of Police was accredited by the Virginia Law Enforcement Police Standards Commission, making them the only law enforcement agency in the entire Commonwealth of Virginia to meet both national and state accreditation standards. The commission conducted a three-day inspection of the police division covering 211 established standards including policies and procedures, officer safety, use of force, and other personnel practices, operations and training programs.

During FY99 the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognized our Division of Police for their innovative and extremely successful Police/Apartment Coalition Program, aimed at reducing crime and improving the quality of life in multi-family residential communities. Division of Police members formed this alliance with area apartment managers to implement the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. The coalition meets regularly to exchange ideas and develop policies enabling them to establish a stable, satisfied tenant base, increase the demand for rental units, reduce maintenance and repair costs, increase property values, and improve the personal safety of apartment residents. For example, the coalition enacted a policy which amended tenants' lease agreements indicating immediate termination of the rental contract should the tenant commit certain criminal acts on the property. HUD named the Police/Apartment Coalition Program among the top 100 programs currently practiced in the United States.

The Division of Police was proud to accept a third national award in FY99 for their Community Narcotics Task Force. The National Association of Counties (NACo)

recognized our division for this program in which trained narcotics investigators rapidly address complaints that pose an immediate threat to the community and the safety of its residents. Contrary to conventional drug enforcement practices that rely on lengthy investigations, the rapid response teams quickly intervene, seize illegal drugs and contraband, and stop would-be drug traffickers cold. In its first six months of operation, the Community Narcotics Task Force recovered \$55,000 in assets (cash, vehicles, firearms, etc.) seized \$31,000 worth of illegal drugs, and arrested 36 people.

Division of Fire

In our nation's recent history, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has continually reported that arson is the number one crime committed by juveniles, with more than half of all arson arrests involving people under the age of 18. Henrico's Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, and other key officials in the division realized a serious need to address this wave of juvenile firesetting, and approached the Board of Supervisors and County Manager with the idea for the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. With full support, the Division of Fire hired an additional fire investigator to help develop, manage, and implement the program in FY99. Since the program's inception, the Division of Fire has worked with nearly 100 children - ages four to 17 - to educate them on the irreversible and potentially tragic consequences of firesetting. Juvenile program participants frequently assist firefighters with related community service, such as teaching fire safety and escape at public events. While most participants are directed to the program by the Juvenile Courts, many are referred by parents concerned about their child's fascination with matches or fire.

The Division of Fire implemented a second public service initiative in FY99, the Recruit School Citizen Assistance Program. Each of the division's last three graduating classes has sponsored a project to help a Henrico resident in need. For example, one class built a handicapped accessibility ramp at a resident's home, using materials donated from several local home improvement warehouses. Regardless of the project's "relativity" to fire safety or prevention, the recruit school graduates are committed to serving their community.



In addition to kicking-off these noteworthy programs, staff at all levels devoted much of the past fiscal year preparing, practicing, and preparing some more for the single most important emergency planning exercise in the division's history. Along with nearly 80 of the county's top officials, members from the Division of Fire spent the end of FY99 masterminding tactics and organizing procedures before attending the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Management Institute. The Integrated Emergency Management Course is a week-long, hands-on training exercise designed to teach local government officials how to run a tip-top emergency operations center and effectively manage large-scale disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, chemical spills, etc.). After completing the week's events, which culminated with a realistic mock disaster, FEMA officials said that Henrico County had come better prepared than any other locality in the institute's 11-year history.

Planning

The quality efforts of Henrico's Planning Office directly impact the quality of life in our county. Our Planning staff, along with the Board of Supervisors and the County Manager, strives to maintain the delicate balance of business, industrial, agricultural, residential, open-space and recreational zones to optimize the quality of life for all Henrico residents. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update developed by the Planning Office in FY99 is one crucial factor in maintaining this balance. Because Henrico residents, like most Americans, have come to consider the availability of parks and open spaces as an integral community feature, the Planning Office drafted this detailed, long-term plan to acquire additional open space, to preserve and restore the open spaces we already have, to renovate existing recreational facilities, and to develop new parks and facilities. The plan includes analysis and determines goals for these specified projects through the year 2015.

Strong, vibrant residential neighborhoods are also key to our county's success. During FY99, the Planning Office developed and implemented the Central Gardens Neighborhood Plan to invigorate and energize one of the county's established communities. Residents of Central Gardens, a mostly elderly community with aging housing, used federal Community Development Block Grant funds and worked with Planning staff to identify their community's needs, recognize negative and positive trends, and develop a revitalization plan for their neighborhood. With the help of Planning staff, the residents were able to establish goals and an implementation plan covering everything from strengthening their civic association, to improving drainage conditions, public safety, and communications with their local government representatives.

As well as devising plans to strengthen our existing communities, the Planning Office worked to better our future neighborhoods by amending the county's Flag Lot Ordinance to eliminate flag lots and to add regulations for cul-de-sac and stem lots. The amendment

reduces the possibility of ambiguous interpretation in effort to improve the design of subdivisions, and allow for proper yard and house orientation on every future residential cul-de-sac lot in Henrico.

Economic Development

The Office of Economic Development, in tandem with the Economic Development Authority, continued to prosper in FY99 ensuring financial stability and managed growth for Henrico County. The office played an instrumental role in high-tech giant Hewlett-Packard's (HP) decision to construct two major facilities - one printer manufacturing plant and one printer supply company - in the White Oak Technology Park. A company spokesperson cited the county's infrastructure, available workforce and accessibility (calling it an "ideal location") among the reasons HP chose to locate in Henrico. The two facilities will create a combined 900 jobs in the area.

In other business, financial services corporation Capital One announced yet another expansion with plans to hire an additional 2,000 people to join their growing workforce.

And finally, Economic Development is online in a big way with their new website, www.henicobusiness.com. Launched in February '99, the website is packed with business news, space availability (high-tech, office and industrial) demographics, infrastructure data, and information about Henrico's five Fortune 500 companies and eight corporate headquarters.

Building Construction and Inspections

The Office of Building Construction and Inspections performed 78,954 inspections, issued 20,336 construction permits, and published four quarterly newsletters in FY99. In addition, the office continued to co-sponsor Public Awareness Training with Chesterfield and Hanover counties to inform contractors about changes in building codes, and to maintain uniform compliance within the three jurisdictions. This past year, the training courses emphasized windload (the strength and ability of a building to withstand high winds), the durability of wood structures, and building accessibility for people with physical disabilities.

Continuously striving to improve customer service, the office revamped staff positioning by placing technicians at the front counter. Customers with technical or industry-specific questions no longer have to wait for assistance, and can have their questions answered on the spot by the appropriate, knowledgeable staff.

Community Development

The Eastern Government Center (EGC) continued to provide convenient services to those residents, builders, engineers and developers living or working in the eastern portion of the county. Services include online access to county real estate transactions including property transfers, assessments, and owners' addresses, voter registration, sale of dog licenses, business licenses, and vehicle decals, social services assistance, and a drop-off center for water bill payments, personal property taxes, real estate taxes, and parking tickets. With the help of the Information Technology Department, staff at both the EGC and the Government Center can now access zoning and property identification maps directly from their workstations enabling them to quickly assist residents and customers with their zoning questions.

Public Utilities

In FY99, the Department of Public Utilities began the expansion of the Water Reclamation Facility which will ultimately increase the volume of wastewater treated from 45 million to 75 million gallons per day. The Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies recognized the facility with a Silver Award for complete permit compliance in 1998. In addition, staff from the Water Reclamation Facility put their skills to the test by forming the Operations Challenge Team and competing at the Virginia Water Environment Association's annual meeting last spring. Judged on both speed and accuracy, the four-member team competed in a pump repair event, a pipeline repair event, a safety event, a lab analysis event, and a processes question and answer session. Henrico's team placed first in three out of the five events, and placed second in the overall competition.

Henrico's own Water Treatment Facility is officially on the way; the Board of Supervisors awarded the construction contract for the structure in FY99. This major component of Henrico's water supply project, which will initially produce 55 million gallons of fresh, drinkable water per day, will open January 1, 2003.



Public Utilities' Keep Henrico Beautiful Committee (KHB) continued recognizing residents and businesses for their beautification efforts with the Landlover and Clean Business award programs. Landlover award winners must personally maintain their lawns and grounds without help from outside landscaping or maintenance companies. The Clean Business award winners may use outside help, but must keep the grounds litter and graffiti-free, and must maintain an employee recycling program on the premises. KHB recognizes five Landlovers and five Clean Businesses each year. Also in FY99, KHB participated in the second annual Christmas in April event (which focused on the Highland Park community this year) by beautifying the grounds and improving the environment at the Richmond Senior Center. Volunteers and members of the KHB Committee planted fragrant herb gardens in the common areas, and donated a "plastic lumber" bench and trash receptacle, made from approximately 600 recycled milk jugs. Finally, in cooperation with Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, KHB presented Children's Gardenfest, an annual event teaching children about litter prevention and recycling.

Public Works

In September 1998, a nearly one-mile stretch of John Rolfe Parkway between Lauderdale Drive and Ridgefield Parkway was officially open to traffic. The department hosted several public meetings to answer questions and clarify concerns over the future of the parkway, which will eventually extend to Broad Street. Public Works crews will construct the remainder of the parkway in phases beginning in late 2001 (pending funding approval).

It will be a long while before Henrico residents forget the horrific ice storm that all but shut-down Virginia just before Christmas of '98. While many of us were stranded in our homes without electricity, Public Works crews were on the streets battling the icy conditions around the clock. From early December 23 through Christmas Day, emergency crews worked in 12-hour shifts spreading sand and salt over the county's nearly 3,000 lane

miles of roadways. Although the storm subsided and most roads were clear by Christmas night, the biggest challenge remained: debris removal. From oaks to evergreens, large and small, trees throughout the state surrendered to the tremendous weight of the ice, leaving broken limbs and branches everywhere. Public Works' clean-up efforts lasted through January, collecting a mountain of debris that was eventually chipped into mulch.

The Department of Public Works also tackled the Oakland Road project last fiscal year, improving the two-lane road by smoothing the surface, straightening the travel path, and removing two 90-degree turns. Crews added shoulders to the road and moved utility poles away from the travel surface providing safer and more accommodating road conditions for motorists.

County Attorney

The County Attorney's Office kicked into high gear during FY99 representing Henrico's Economic Development Authority in selling two parcels of land to Hewlett-Packard developers. The office provided legal consultation on behalf of the county through a series of transactions with various internal divisions of the Fortune 500 company. Because Hewlett-Packard will construct two separate facilities in the White Oak Technology Park, the County Attorney's Office handled the property closings separately, providing legal consultation, preparing the necessary documents and obtaining consents from the Commonwealth of Virginia. The office's quick response and expeditious closing of these properties further enhanced Henrico's strong reputation in the high-tech business world.

During this same period, the office responded to the needs of our School Board by assisting with the acquisition of four new school sites to meet the growing demands of our school-age population. Between now and 2005, two of the four sites will become elementary schools, one will be a middle school, and one a high school.

In the midst of conducting his duties with the County Attorney's Office, Deputy County Attorney John Knight was serving a one-year term as the president of the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia, Inc. Knight was appointed by a nominating committee, and was subsequently elected by the full 560-member organization. As the Deputy County Attorney for Henrico County, Knight is the first attorney ever elected by the membership who is not the chief, or primary, legal counsel of his locality.

Office of the General Registrar

Aside from managing voter registration and gearing up for coming elections, the county's Registrar's Office focused on better training for election officials during the past fiscal year. Armed with more knowledge and procedural understanding, the election officials can more effectively assist voters once the polls open.

The Registrar's Office created and began publishing a bi-annual newsletter targeted to the county's 1,400 appointed election officials who staff the polling places during elections. The newsletter includes information about upcoming elections, procedures, potential problem areas, and general facts to equip them with the details they need to guide the voters

The office also re-invented the classroom instruction for the election officials, taking advantage of the county's new modernized training facility, introducing PowerPoint presentations and interactive exercises.

These training endeavors, along with in-house work sessions for the full-time staff, make for a more proficient workforce able to provide better, more efficient customer service to the Henrico residents.

Judicial System

General District Court, Circuit Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Community Corrections Program, the Juvenile Court Services Unit (Juvenile Probation) and the Juvenile Detention Home together form Henrico County's multi-faceted, intricate judicial system. These eight independent agencies work for the common goal of serving justice in our county.

The [Clerk of the Circuit Court](#), an elected constitutional officer, maintains criminal court cases, marriage licenses, divorces, disputes and probates of will, estates, adoptions, notary certificates, assumed names, land records, and more. Residents can retrieve land deeds and titles, judgements, and financial records through a computerized network. These records, some of which document the history of Henrico County, are all permanently maintained by the Clerk's office.

The **Commonwealth's Attorney's Office** continued its mission to investigate and prosecute criminals who push drugs to juveniles. Thanks to their tireless efforts, staff attorneys successfully prosecuted nine adults who were distributing drugs to minors. In cooperation with the Henrico school system, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office also prosecuted 11 juveniles who were selling drugs at school or to school peers.

Staff continued to count on the highly successful Multi-Jurisdictional Grand Jury, which assists with investigations of ongoing, historical drug conspiracies. The cooperative and committed effort of this Grand Jury resulted in 45 successful prosecutions, including a neo-Nazi drug ring, a group which included local doctors and lawyers, and the much publicized trial and conviction of Randy Kendall, one of the largest distributors of cocaine in the Metro Richmond area.

The **Henrico County Sheriff**, also an elected official, continued managing the county's jail system which realized a 20 percent increase in daily inmate population during the past fiscal year (from 697 to 836). And, after a three-year, comprehensive audit, the Virginia Board of Corrections issued an unconditional certification to Henrico's Jail West.

The **Community Corrections Program (CCP)**, joined forces with **Mental Health/Mental Retardation** and opened a satellite location in the new Radford Center, a branch office in Henrico's Three Chopt District targeted to the substance abuser. Because many clients who use Mental Health's substance abuse counseling services are also under court-ordered probation, the center offers a convenient, one-stop location for those people who would generally be required to make two. In addition, by operating under one roof, CCP staff and MH/MR staff can maintain constant communication regarding their shared clients' progress and status.

CCP also handled 858 pre-trial and 1,097 post-trial cases (all-time highs in both regards) and collected \$100,000 through the Victim's Restitution Monitoring Program (also a record). Because of the innovativeness and high success rate of this program, CCP earned national recognition with a NACo award.

The **14th District Court Services Unit**, more commonly known as **Juvenile Probation**, strengthened their program continuum by contracting with Alternative Behavioral Services, Poplar Springs Hospital, and Elk Hill Farm, as well as signing a memorandum of agreement with Chesterfield Youth Group Home, to offer residential services to some clients on court-ordered probation. In addition, the 14th District Court Services Unit assigned probation officers to certain schools in order to foster relationships between the school's administrators, juvenile probation staff, and the juvenile offenders. By having a semi-permanent probation officer on site, the juveniles benefit from the increased accountability, as well as the officer's accessibility.

The **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court** implemented their newly developed docket system to better organize court business and significantly reduce waiting time, parking problems, security concerns, court appearance overtime for police officers, and the sheer volume of people in the court building at one time. In addition, the clerk's office streamlined the managerial hierarchy, eliminating unnecessary red tape and redundant (often lengthy) approval processes to offer faster, more efficient, and less stressful service to Henrico residents.

In addition, the **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court** selected an architectural firm that will work with a criminal justice planner to determine the feasibility of renovation and expansion of the court building. The expansion is necessary because of the ever-increasing number of juvenile and domestic court cases, and the additional staff needed to

handle the caseload.

Once again, the **Juvenile Detention** provided a safe, secure environment for staff and detainees without serious injury or escape during the past fiscal year. In addition, the James River Juvenile Center, a 60-bed, co-ed regional detention center, is under construction and is scheduled to open in August 2000. The center will serve the counties of Henrico, Goochland and Powhatan.

Juvenile Detention continued with the highly successful Detention Outreach Program and the Service Through Opportunity Program (STOP). Both are alternatives to secured detention. Because of its success this past year, STOP will increase the participant capacity from six juveniles to 12. These program participants, who are closely monitored by Juvenile Detention personnel, assist the Division of Recreation and Parks with keeping Henrico's parks and facilities clean.

Finance

Last year, due to its sound fiscal management and stable economic position, Henrico County maintained three triple-A bond ratings: from Fitch Investors Service, L.P., Moody's Investors Service, and Standard and Poor's Corporation. This distinguishes Henrico as one of few jurisdictions in our nation to enjoy a "triple" triple-A rating.

For the 17th consecutive year, Henrico earned the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting, and the Distinguished Budget Award for the 11th consecutive year. The National Government Finance Officers Association sponsors both honors.

The Henrico Department of Finance won additional national acclaim with two NACo awards during FY99. The first award recognized the Re-engineering of the Business License and Personal Property Tax Function. By combining the information collection process and filing dates for both taxes, the department significantly reduced paperwork, printing costs, mailing costs, processing time and storage space. Most importantly, however, the program saves our residents both time and money.

Finance earned a second NACo award for hosting the Local Government Bond School, designed to explain the intricacies of municipal debt financing. Representatives from the investment banking industry, financial advisors, state issuance authorities, rating agencies and bond counsel all worked together to present the information to local government officials.

Information Technology

During this past fiscal year, the Department of Information Technology (IT) developed and implemented a client/server software program to be the backbone of Henrico's new



Emergency-911 dispatch system. This state-of-the-art system allows the computer to instantaneously ascertain the nature of the caller's emergency, determine the location, and dispatch the appropriate response team and emergency vehicles. This incredible system has proven to be invaluable for Police and Fire's emergency communications center, and will quite literally save lives.

IT continued to exterminate any potential Y2K bugs, updating hardware and software as necessary to ensure total Year 2000 compliance. Staff members consulted with the board-appointed Technology Advisory Committee, assisting with preparations for the Regional Y2K Readiness Forum that Henrico hosted in June. Residents may access the county's Y2K website by visiting www.co.henrico.va.us.

The on-going implementation of the county's massive Geographic Information System (GIS) project requires a great deal of assistance from IT. During FY99, the department continued to support the effort through technological assistance and by acting as the central server for all GIS data.

Public Libraries

Research isn't what it used to be, as anyone who's recently visited a Henrico library branch can readily see. During the past fiscal year, every library branch in the county began offering free Internet access to its patrons. The branches have a combined 170 computers that are equipped not only with Internet service, but standard office applications and online subscription databases. Soon, the entire catalogue system will be based on the computer (no more "card catalogue"). This wave toward futuristic libraries also necessitated a total re-registering of cardholders and re-bar coding of the library's inventory. Because the new computer system required 14-digit bar codes rather than the previously used 10, every book, video and circulated item was equipped with the new

"smart code." Library employees began re-registering patrons as they came through to checkout materials. Cardholders who still have their old cards needn't worry - the library staff will offer on the spot re-registration for all cardholders until everyone is on the new system.

Like many other Henrico agencies, Public Libraries won a NACo achievement award in FY99 for the Get in the Game at Your Library Program. Henrico libraries teamed up with the Richmond Braves to create this summer reading initiative. Children who participated in the reading program won free tickets to "Library Night at the Diamond: Richmond Braves vs. Columbus Clippers." Ten thousand people attend the game, and participation in the summer reading program dramatically increased from the previous year.

Schools

Henrico County's nationally recognized public school system continued on the path of excellence in FY99 by leading the entire Commonwealth of Virginia in the Standards of Learning (SOL) achievement tests for the second year in a row. The SOL tests, mandated by the Virginia Department of Education, measure student performance in math, science, social studies and language arts. Nineteen schools (34 percent) fully met the criteria for accreditation, and Henrico Public Schools surpassed their own performance records this year with improved SOL scores at EVERY SINGLE SCHOOL in the county.

In FY99, our public school system received additional accolades by earning the Award for Continuing Excellence (ACE) from the United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award (SPQA) for Virginia. To earn the ACE, a school system must first earn the SPQA, which Henrico did several years ago becoming one of only two school systems in Virginia - and only a handful in the nation - to ever receive this high honor. Among other criteria, ACE winners must show "sustained exemplary performance in quality and productivity improvements."

A final feather in the (graduation) cap: Henrico's class of 1999 collectively earned more than \$7.5 million in scholarship money, a 41 percent increase over the previous year's totals.



Recreation and Parks

In March of this year, the long-awaited Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen opened its doors with a black-tie gala followed by a public open house - an event which

transferred operational responsibility from Henrico County to the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen Foundation - marking the center's official grand opening. The building originally opened in 1911 as the Glen Allen School. The school closed in 1978, leaving the building vacant and unused - until now. Henrico County's \$8.5 million renovation of the center includes 50,314 square feet housing an impressive lobby, a 355-seat theater, a ballroom, art gallery, gift shop, dance studios, visual arts classrooms, resident artists studio, rehearsal halls, photo darkroom, audiovisual booth, and costume shop. Furthermore, the old cafeteria building is undergoing renovation to become a full service restaurant and banquet facility. The new center - a shining example of a public/private partnership - is being operated by the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen Foundation. While its primary function is to promote the cultural and performing arts in the metro area, the center is also available for meetings, receptions, and other functions.

Last year, the Fairfield District's Spring Park won the Virginia Recreation and Park Society's Best New Facility Award for localities with a population over 100,000. The park, which includes written interpretation of the historic slave insurrection Gabriel's Rebellion, earned the recognition for its unique qualities and historic significance.

Recreation and Parks acquired two other significant properties during FY99. Earlier in the year, the county acquired the historic Henrico Theatre located in the Varina District. This old movie cinema served residents of Highland Springs until very recently, and is the only existing example of art-deco architecture, popular in the 20s and 30s, in Henrico County. The division also received as a gift the historic 1825 Clarke-Palmore House. During the Civil War, Confederate soldiers used the house as a heliograph station, beaming messages via mirrors from the house's second floor to the State Capitol. Vera C. Morton donated the house, surrounding property, and artifacts to the Division of Recreation and Parks last

summer.

Public Information

The Public Information Office (PIO) conducted a countywide communications survey in FY99 to learn, among other things, how our residents prefer to receive news and information from the county. The results confirmed that most residents think Henrico does a good job at disseminating information (some citing the survey itself as a good faith effort). The survey also yielded some surprising news: residents chose direct mail as their third preferred method of communication (after television and newspaper). The PIO will use the survey results to help tailor future communication plans.

The office continued coaching Henrico staff from various internal agencies on standard media practices, expectations, deadlines, and formats. This knowledge enables them to more effectively use the media, and other non-paid advertising and publicity alternatives, to distribute information to our residents.

The PIO also played a role in the county's Y2K compliance effort by working with the previously mentioned Technology Advisory Committee, and preparing for the Y2K Regional Readiness Forum. The office also produced a Y2K readiness brochure for the committee that will be widely distributed throughout the county later this year.

In addition to these and other functions, the Public Information Office won nine state and national awards from four different professional public relations organizations for excellence in writing, communications programs, design, video production, and creative art direction.

General Services

One of the most appreciated accomplishments of the year, by county employees and residents alike, was General Services' completion of the new parking deck at the Government Center. The department managed the project from inception through completion, culminating with the opening in January. As anyone having occasion to visit the Government Center can attest, parking would get a little hairy at times, particularly during tax season or on days with heavy court dockets. Come January, a collective sigh of relief and smiling faces everywhere was testament enough that the parking deck was indeed open. The new deck, built on top of an existing 140-space lot, provides an additional 532 parking spaces, emergency phones, security cameras, elevators, and a covered walkway to the Administration Building.

General Services also played a key role throughout the entire transformation process of the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen, managing and administrating all aspects of the

design, renovations, and furnishings. Furthermore, the department led the renegotiation effort for the employee health insurance contract, ultimately saving money for the county while providing better benefits to employees. The new contract with United Health is for a three-year term, and covers 6,700 general government and school employees.

Capital Area Training Consortium (CATC)

During FY99, CATC continued focusing its efforts on CareerConnect - the "one stop" website - in conjunction with the Governor's Employment and Training Department, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the Capital Area Agency on Aging, and the Richmond Career Advancement Center to create a comprehensive workforce development information system for the Metro Richmond region. Job seekers can search the site for employment opportunities, get assistance with a job search, and locate training opportunities and more. Employers can access resumes, find information on public and private placement services, view training opportunities for future or existing employees, retrieve labor market information, tax incentive data and more. While the state has not yet "officially" completed or announced the website, citizens may currently gain access through the county's web address www.co.henrico.va.us and following the CATC links, or at the address www.careerconnect.state.va.us/1011richmond.

CATC's hard work paid off in FY99 when they received the Enterprise Designation for continuous performance excellence in workforce development. Sponsored by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Certification Program, the Enterprise Designation recognizes benchmarked performance data, knowledge and expertise in quality practices, a commitment to a quality workforce, service to the community and everlasting value to its customers.

CATC also implemented a Work Experience Program for youth who have been assigned to the program through the court system. CATC staff provides pre-employment training and conducts aptitude evaluations to help the youth obtain better-than-minimum-wage employment opportunities. The program helps the participants develop a strong work ethic, positive work habits, and a sense of responsibility. In addition, the program helps to build a solid work history for some individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

Real Property

In cooperation with the County Attorney's Office, Real Property negotiated deals and acquired properties that are future sites of four new schools in Henrico. The properties, two in the Brookland District and two in Three Chopt, will eventually sprout a new high school, a middle school and two elementary schools in the county. The department also worked on behalf of the Division of Recreation and Parks to acquire the art-deco movie

cinema, the Henrico Theatre, in the Highland Springs area.



In addition, the department acquired easements for the departments of Public Works and Public Utilities to construct road, drainage and utility projects, 52 of which were required to complete the Lakeside Avenue Enhancement. Funded by a Community Development Block Grant, the Lakeside neighborhood will see many improvements including new drainage systems and the installation of curb and gutter.

And, in FY99 Real Property negotiated seven leases, generating significant revenue for the county, allowing personal communication systems companies to place cellular phone towers on county property.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit continued reviewing county agencies' policies, expenditures and operational procedures to increase the county's accountability to its residents. The department conducted a thorough audit of the Division of Police expenditures in FY99, examining compliance and control over purchases of goods and services. In addition, staff completed the Central Automotive Maintenance Division of General Services audit, safeguarding the county's multi-million dollar investment in vehicles and automotive parts. Internal Audit also completed a review of the county's investment portfolio, ensuring adequate protection against loss and maximum earnings.

Personnel

Henrico's Personnel Department is among those county agencies that received national recognition in the NACo achievement awards program in FY99. Personnel earned three awards: one for the Henrico Executive Forum, which promoted business-government partnerships in our community; one for Benefits Enrollment Using the Intranet, wherein 61 percent of county employees signed up for their benefits via the computer; and a third award for the Volunteer Services Language Bank, comprised of volunteers who collectively speak more than 20 languages and dialects, including sign language.

The Personnel Department also provided computer training courses for more than 2,000 of the county's 3,252 permanent, full-time employees. The department conducted other training courses - ranging from Assertive Communication and Increasing Team Effectiveness, to Developing Supervisory Skills - for another 2,400 employees. In addition, the department continued its award winning Leadership Development Program, with more than 1,000 employees participating during FY99.

With the help of Information Technology, the Personnel Department also kicked-off its first "paperless" open enrollment process (previously mentioned for the NACo award) for employee health, dental and disability benefits.

Mental Health/Mental Retardation

As previously discussed under the Community Correction Program (CCP), Mental Health/Mental Retardation's Substance Abuse Program joined forces with CCP to open the Radford Center, a branch office specifically targeted to substance abusers. The center will cater to both court-appointed clients and walk-ins, offering substance abuse counseling and treatment, as well as probation services through CCP. The center opened in February of this year, and handled 112 referrals in its first five months of operation. Since sharing a roof with CCP, MH/MR has realized a significant decrease in "no-shows." When the program was located at the Woodman Road facility, less than 50 percent of new clients showed up for their first appointment. Since relocating to the Radford Center, 86 percent of the substance abusers showed up for their orientation and a remarkable 92 percent for their first appointment. MH/MR staff credits CCP for the dramatic shift, as well as the new convenient location. Since the substance abusers are often in the building to see their probation officers, they are conveniently able to go downstairs to see their drug counselors during the same visit. In addition, because the client knows the counselor is very likely to communicate his progress (or lack thereof) to the probation officer, his incentive to show up for treatment increases. Furthermore, the Radford Center is located on the GRTC bus line, making it easier for clients to keep appointments with both the counselor and the probation officer.

During FY99, MH/MR restructured the Community Support Services Division to improve

the efficiency and effectiveness of services to their clients with mental retardation. The division staff formed four teams of eight or nine people, each bringing a different area of expertise to the table, in order to offer better support to their clients. The teams were able to enhance "wrap around" services including case management services, job development training, and independent living support services. Since the teams began working together in March, staff has noticed an improvement in service delivery, and more shared knowledge about each individual client.

MH/MR also developed its Future Focus Plan, making provisions and establishing a direction for the next three or four years. After careful research and analysis, MH/MR staff prepared the plan considering possible scenarios that may evolve in the near future, and the changing needs of its increasingly diverse clientele. The plan details MH/MR's mission: to enhance the quality of life, social integration, and support to individuals of all ages who are affected by mental illness, mental retardation, and substance abuse, and children with developmental disabilities. The mission further clarifies the department's commitment to promote wellness and mental health within communities, preventing mental retardation, substance abuse, and violence.

Social Services

The Department of Social Services experienced a banner year in FY99 with the success of the Welfare Reform Act. Our robust economy, coupled with state and federal welfare policy changes, prompted a significant decrease in the number of households receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). By the end of last fiscal year, 950 families were in the TANF caseload - a low not experienced since 1989. In the height of the early 90s recession, more than 2,000 families were receiving assistance.

As the number of Henrico residents over age 60 continues to grow, so does the need for Adult Services. Henrico's elderly population is growing at a rate of more than 1,000 per year, directly affecting the number of people requiring nursing home screenings, adult home evaluations, guardianship evaluations and adult protective service intervention. The increased demand for these services directly impacts the Social Services staff, who processed a record number of cases in these areas last year.

In its continued battle against child abuse and family violence, the Department of Social Services offered a range of services in FY99 to children and families designed to protect, support, enhance, or substitute for parental care or supervision. As family problems intensify with substance abuse, drug exposed infants, domestic violence, and young children with mental and emotional disabilities, child welfare workers must often determine what constitutes the best interest of the child. This decision-making process is a delicate undertaking that operates within the core belief that all children are entitled to a safe, permanent and stable environment.

Health Department

This past June, Henrico's fast-acting health inspectors halted a foodborne illness outbreak at the International House of Pancakes in the county's west end. After shutting down the restaurant, the department confirmed 126 cases of salmonella food poisoning - mostly in teenagers - which stemmed from an egg-based batter kept too long at room temperature. The restaurant remained closed for two weeks, reopening only after it had satisfied all Health Department conditions.

The department also participated in Partners for Healthy Communities, a cooperative effort with the United Way's Success by Six program, which aims to increase the percentages of children who receive standard childhood disease immunizations. After reviewing patient records in private doctor's offices, the Health Department determined the percentage of patients with current immunizations, and reported the findings to each pediatrician. This way, those doctors who were not diligent in keeping their patients up-to-date were reminded of the lapse and could take corrective action.

Last January, nine of the county's 15 privately operated nursing homes experienced an outbreak of influenza. Some residents required hospitalization, 12 of whom died from flu complications. Because of this tragic outbreak, the Health Department will conduct an education program in local nursing homes teaching influenza prevention and control in these group-home settings.

Agriculture and Extension Services

This agency is the result of a cooperative effort between county, state, and federal governments. Current programs include urban environmental and commodity agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth programs.



Last fiscal year, the agency continued its highly successful urban environmental programs, including Lawnknowers and Baysavers; together, these programs form the Urban Chesapeake Bay Educational Program. The major pollutants of the Chesapeake Bay are soil particles and contaminants that attach themselves to soil. When rainwater carries away the polluted soil particles, bay contamination results. This is a cycle worth breaking, and both the Lawnknowers and Baysavers programs can help preserve our environment.

The family and consumer science programs focused on human development and building support within families last fiscal year with programs like Money 2000, designed to help people save money and reduce their debt loads. The program includes four different courses: Goal Setting, Budgeting, Savings, and Reducing Debt. The classes are free for

anyone who wants to attend. Now in its second year, the Money 2000 program's success rate looks promising.

Cooperative Extension's tradition of youth development continued with the 4-H youth programming. 4-H is designed to build self-esteem, self-reliance, and prepare children for their adult lives.

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