



Maintaining public health: **Henrico focuses on prevention and control of West Nile virus**

For Henrico residents in 2003, the West Nile virus is no longer an exotic ailment only affecting people in distant lands. Since first appearing in the United States in 1999, the potentially serious, mosquito-borne disease has established a foothold in all but a handful of states, requiring increased awareness and vigilance on the part of government officials and regular citizens alike.

Virginia's first human case of West Nile virus occurred in 2002. Henrico had its first human case last year as well. To help control the spread of the virus and maintain the health and safety of Henri-

co residents, county officials have taken new steps—including the adoption of a policy designed to educate residents about potential threats posed by standing water—while further strengthening measures undertaken last year. But Henrico residents continue to play a key role in the effort.

Potentially serious disease

West Nile virus is almost always spread to humans and other animals by an infected mosquito, which itself becomes infected when it bites a bird carrying the virus. It is not spread from person to person, but a small number of cases were a result of blood transfusions or organ transplants from infected people. There may also be a risk of infected mothers transmitting the virus to their unborn or nursing children. Most mosquitoes do not carry the virus; even in areas where the virus has been detected, such as Henrico, only a small proportion of mosquitoes are likely to be infected.

Nationwide last year, more than 4,100 people tested positive for the virus and 277 died as a result of the disease. But it's important to note that most people bitten by an infected mosquito do not get sick—about one in 200, or less than 1 percent. And of those people who become sick, most will experience a mild, flu-like illness that does not require treatment. Less than 1 percent will become seriously ill. Of those people who suffer serious illness, 10 to 15 percent will die.

The elderly, toddlers and people with weakened immune systems are more vulnerable to

serious illness, which manifests symptoms such as high fever, intense headache, stiff neck and confusion.

“Although it's rare, West Nile virus can develop into serious, life-threatening illnesses like encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and lining of the brain),” said Henrico Director of Health Curtis Thorpe, M.D.

No vaccine currently exists for people infected with the virus, but supportive treatments are available.

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Henrico County's efforts to control West Nile virus have been under way since early this year. Above, Environmental Educator and former County Agent Charles Curry demonstrates a mosquito trap, one of the tools used to combat the mosquito-borne disease. Capturing and testing mosquitoes are key steps in stemming the further spread of West Nile virus.

New measures under way

Of course, prevention is the best medicine. County efforts continue to focus on public outreach and preventive measures designed to weaken the foothold of West Nile virus in Henrico.

“Henrico County continues to take an aggressive, proactive approach to combating this virus,” said Deputy County Manager Angela Harper. “Our top priority is the health and safety of our

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residents, so we are doing everything we can to prevent and control this potentially serious threat to public health.”

Prevention efforts began earlier this spring with a focus on sites that tested positive for West Nile virus activity last year. The county has bolstered programs that identify and mitigate these sites, adding extra personnel to trap mosquitoes and eradicate their potential breeding sites through an enhanced larviciding program. The county has augmented its public information campaign, producing an educational video and brochure that are free to residents. And the collection of certain dead birds that can indicate the local presence of the virus—crows, jays and raptors (birds of prey such as hawks)—is under way.

But key to Henrico’s efforts in 2003 is the implementation of a new, voluntary policy regarding standing water. The policy focuses efforts on increasing public awareness about standing water and the potential threat it poses to public health. County officials are interested particularly in working with property owners and reducing standing water on private property. Past efforts focused on treating and eliminating standing water on county property.

Responding to concerns voiced by residents and property owners, the Board of Supervisors decided against a formal ordinance that could have given the county legal authority to regulate standing water on private property. The county’s principal aim has always been to safeguard residents’ health, Harper said.

Boosting public understanding is especially crucial, since mosquitoes can reproduce in even small amounts of stagnant, standing water, and quickly at that: mosquito larvae require just six days to develop and hatch. The virus spread last year despite prolonged drought in the area, so this year’s wet winter and early spring forecast the need for new measures and increased levels of vigilance.

The county has hired five staff members to respond to residents’ concerns and provide information about treating and eliminating standing water on their property. The policy encourages residents to contact county officials with questions and to make use of the West Nile virus hotline



Identifying potential breeding grounds for mosquitoes is another important part of the county’s fight against West Nile virus. Recreation and Parks staff member Randy Buchanan, above, uses a dipper to test for the presence of larvae in standing water at the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen. Timing is key – mosquito larvae can develop and hatch in as little as six days.

(226-NILE) and county Web site (www.co.henrico.va.us) to get information. The county also will provide speakers for interested groups, clubs and organizations. And as always, public cooperation remains the primary goal for county officials.

“This policy gives us another tool in the fight against West Nile virus and another means to reach out to Henrico residents,” Harper said. “Standing water has a potentially significant impact on public health and safety, and we will

continue to work with and educate our residents about it.”

(For more about Henrico’s standing water policy, please see separate story, p. 6).

What you can do

Henrico residents and property owners can contribute to the fight against West Nile virus in several ways:

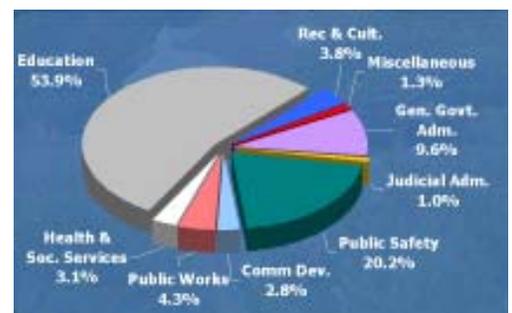
- ◆ **Report dead crows, jays and raptors.** These birds often fall victim to the virus and can indicate its presence locally. Timing is important—birds must be tested within 24 hours of death, before they become too decomposed. Call the West Nile virus hotline at 226-NILE (6453).
- ◆ **Control mosquitoes from breeding.** Treat or eliminate even small amounts of standing water and check your property regularly for new accumulations. Call 226-NILE (6453) for more information.
- ◆ **Protect yourself and your family.** Stay indoors when mosquitoes are biting, if possible, and wear long, loose, light-colored clothing when outside. Use insect repellent with safe amounts of DEET (50 percent for adults, 10 percent for children under 12) and follow instructions when applying.
- ◆ **Get a speaker for your group or organization.** Call the West Nile virus hotline at 226-NILE (6453) for information.
- ◆ **Get more information.** A number of public health agencies offer helpful information. Good places to start include Henrico County, www.co.henrico.va.us

(click on the West Nile virus button), and 226-NILE; the Virginia Department of Health, www.vdh.state.va.us, (804) 786-6261; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov, (800) 311-3435.

Riding the economic storm: Henrico Board of Supervisors’ planning allows county to weather state funding reductions and sour national economy

Stories of governmental budgetary woes have been popular fodder for the news media for many months. As the national economy continues to struggle, governments nationwide have been forced to tighten their purse strings and cut spending, resulting in staff layoffs and the elimination or reduction of programs and services provided to tax-paying citizens.

In Virginia, local governments confronted a double-edged sword. In addition to the sour national economy, the Commonwealth faced a budget crisis that led to significant reductions in state aid provided to localities. As a result, many Virginia localities have been forced to dramati-



ly reduce service levels; some have resorted to significant layoffs of employees.

Henrico County has weathered this fiscal storm, however, thanks to the Board of Supervisors’ demand that the county adhere to long-term financial forecasts and avoid the trap of year-to-year budgeting. Despite the current national economic uncertainty and substantial reductions in funding from the state level—\$12.2 million for this year and another \$12.8 million for next

year—the county has maintained, and in the cases of Education and Public Safety enhanced, the high-quality services provided to its residents. Unlike many Virginia localities, Henrico has preserved programs and services without resorting to across-the-board operating reductions or termination of county-funded positions.

Results of wise planning

At a time when many localities have been buffeted by turbulent economic conditions and faced significant budget deficits, Henrico County has been able to meet its fiscal obligations and enhance those services county residents demand the most. By adhering to a multi-year budget approach, Henrico has been able to adjust revenue estimates of state aid before most localities and, in many cases, use local dollars to offset the state funding reductions.

“The Board of Supervisors recognized the state funding shortfall two years ago, in the 2001-02 budget, and adopted a budget that continued to allocate state aid conservatively. At the time, the national economy was in its ninth year of expansion and the Board was wise enough to suggest that at some point, that expansion would not continue,” said County Manager Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E. “The Board has also minimized expenditure increases since then.

“Those actions have helped the county balance the new budget without layoffs or across-the-board reductions,” Hazelett said. “The Board’s foresight allowed Henrico to plan a budget that is distinctly different from budgets being considered by most local elected bodies in Virginia.”

New budget preserves services

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors recently approved a budget of \$819.3 million for the 2003-04 fiscal year, an increase of 3.9 percent over the previous budget (the new fiscal year begins July 1). Budget highlights include:

- ◆ A \$14 million increase for Henrico County Public Schools, allowing the addition of 112 positions. The lion’s share of the increase—90 percent—will come from county coffers due to diminished state funding.

- ◆ Significant enhancement of Henrico’s public safety and “first responder” needs associated with homeland security, adding 37 new positions to the Division of Fire. Because of deficiencies in state and federal funding for homeland security, county funds will be used for these positions.



- ◆ Significantly increased tax relief for elderly and disabled property owners through the county’s Real Estate Advantage Program. In the new budget, the Board increased the maximum amount of tax relief from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Also, in an effort to ensure most qualifying residents receive enhanced benefits, the minimum percentage of tax relief offered grew from 15 to 50 percent.

- ◆ A commitment to stay on schedule with capital projects, including school renovations and construction of the John Rolfe Parkway, funded through a bond issue approved by Henrico voters in 2000.

- ◆ The maintenance of a real estate tax rate of 94 cents per \$100 of assessed value, the same rate enjoyed by property owners since 1997.

- ◆ Residents will see a change in some public utility fees effective July 1, including a 3 percent rise in water and sewer rates and a \$5 increase for subscription curbside trash pickup services. The increases will allow the county to meet routine maintenance as well as long-term capital needs for utility infrastructure.

More shortfalls expected

Reductions in state aid impacted the budgeting for a broad swath of county personnel, departments, agencies and services, including its constitutional officers, juvenile detention, mental health, social services, extension programs and libraries. A lack of state-funded salary increases for the past two years, especially for education and constitutional officers, resulted in a bigger share of personnel costs for the county.

Although Henrico has absorbed the recent shortfalls in state funding without compromising its services, clouds still loom on the budgetary horizon. State revenues are not expected to improve for several years; county planning is already under way for the 2004-05 budget to compensate for reductions in state aid that could exceed the \$12.8 million reduction experienced in the 2003-04 budget. But Henrico’s determination to maintain quality services for its residents continues.

“Some localities may consider cutting services, but in Henrico, we believe we must provide the services,” Hazelett said. “That’s why balancing this budget is such a painstaking, important process for us. We’re not contemplating reductions in the services we provide our residents.”

Mow your lawn – it’s the law

After a long, cold winter, Henrico’s lawns and fields are growing again. But that growth can’t go unchecked—in fact, the county has an ordinance that requires property owners to keep their lawns cut.

The Henrico Code restricts the growth of grass and weeds to 12 inches in height on any property within the boundaries of a subdivision or within 250 feet of residential property. Tall grass and weeds can contribute to health problems and accidents. They also detract from the appearance of a neighborhood and the community as a whole.

County inspectors will investigate a reported violation within three days. They will then try to contact property owners, who usually are allowed five calendar days to cut the problem grass or weeds. Property owners are given the chance to comply voluntarily, but if they don’t, the county can hire a contractor to do the work and bill property owners for the cost. Violators can be fined up to \$250.

The county’s principal goal is to work with residents to keep problem grass and weeds under control. In cases of hardship, the county will make every effort to assist property owners.

Questions? Need to report a yard or lot that is violating this ordinance? Contact the Henrico Community Maintenance Program at 501-4757 or use the online complaint form at www.co.henrico.va.us/maint.

If there are other maintenance concerns in your neighborhood—accumulations of trash or debris; parked, inoperable vehicles or parked commercial vehicles in a residential district; outside storage of construction materials; or rodent problems—please contact Henrico Community Maintenance. For an explanation of Henrico zoning ordinances, go to www.co.henrico.va.us/maint.

Property taxes: How does Henrico determine this key source of revenue?

With their first bill for real estate taxes due on June 5, many Henrico property owners may be wondering: How did the county determine my bill? And how does the county use my taxes?

The short answers: bills are based on a property's value, which is determined through a careful, uniform assessment process. The revenue generated from these taxes contributes essential funding for the county's top-quality services.

Figuring assessed value

Each year, Henrico's Board of Supervisors sets the tax rate for real estate in the county, making its decision after holding a public hearing and reviewing the county's budgetary requirements. This year, the Board approved a tax rate of 94 cents for every \$100 of a property's assessed value, the same low rate the county has maintained since 1997.

This tax rate is then applied to a property's value, determined annually by the county according to its fair market value. A property's fair market value is the probable amount it would sell



The county works hard to ensure that all Henrico property owners are treated fairly and uniformly in the assessment process. Here, Senior Real Estate Appraiser Jon Shepherd, one of the county's 25 appraisers, measures a Henrico home.

for if exposed to the real estate marketplace for a reasonable period of time, with informed buyers and sellers making decisions without pressure. Simply put, the fair market value of a property is the amount it would most likely sell for in the current real estate market.

When determining assessed value for residential properties, appraisers most often use a sales-comparison method. A property is evaluated based on the sales of similar properties, accounting for differences such as size, condition, location and neighborhood amenities.

A daunting task

With more than 100,000 parcels of real estate in Henrico County, the assessment process is no small job. The county's Real Estate Assessment Division employs 25 appraisers to ensure that each property is assessed as fairly and accurately as possible.

Henrico's appraisers analyze information from more than 9,000 sales annually to determine the assessed value of residential properties. On a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, appraisers compare actual selling prices of properties to their assessed value to determine a sales/assessment ratio for the entire neighborhood. When this ratio is significantly greater or less than 100 percent, it indicates the neighborhood's market value has changed. Appraisers then will reassess each property in the neighborhood.

Generally, the fair market value of an individual property corresponds to the fair market value of its neighborhood; an increase or decrease in a neighborhood's value translates into a boost or decline in an individual property's value. Of course, changes in the condition of a specific property—whether it has been improved with renovations and additions or its quality has deteriorated—can factor in as well. Also, a neighborhood's amenities, such as access to a community swimming pool or golf course, may affect the assessed value of an individual property.

Henrico's Real Estate Assessment Division mails notices to all property owners beginning the first week of February. Property owners can discuss changes in the assessed value of their property with the individual appraiser responsible for the assessment; they can also appeal the assessment. In most cases, appeals are filed when an assessment is based on incorrect data, when it is inequitable when compared with similar properties or when the assessed value exceeds fair market value. Appeals must be filed by April 1 to be considered for the current year.

Sales price vs. assessed value

Because an assessment is based on a property's typical sales price and not its actual sales price, differences between the two amounts may occur. Henrico's appraisers use sales data from the previous year and early months of the current year, so the ongoing appreciation experienced in the market is not always reflected in a property's assessed value. Typically, the county assessment is lower than the actual sales price.

"The assessment process is not an exact science," said Real Estate Assessment Director Sam Davis. "But our appraisers employ accepted appraisal methodology to ensure that all of Henrico's property owners are treated fairly and uniformly."

Supporting quality services

To ease the burden on property owners, Henrico's real estate tax is payable in two equal installments, on June 5 and Dec. 5. The tax is crucial for the day-to-day operation of the county; it currently provides 43 percent of the local revenues the county collects. It allows Henrico residents to share proportionately in the cost of public education; police, fire and emergency rescue services; road service and repair; recreation and parks facilities and programs; and the other quality services Henrico County provides.

It is important to note that the county's real estate tax rate actually has been lowered three times since 1980, when it was set at \$1.03 per \$100 of assessed value. The current rate of 94 cents per \$100 of assessed value has been in effect for the last six years. Henrico continues to be a good steward of taxes collected from its residents.

Want more information about the assessment process or about your home's assessment? Contact the Real Estate Assessment Division at 501-4300 or go to www.co.henrico.va.us/finance and click on the "real estate" link.

Henrico's Department of Health plays a key role in smallpox readiness

Derived from the Latin word for "spotted," smallpox refers to the raised bumps that appear on the face and body of a person infected with the variola virus. Smallpox outbreaks have occurred for thousands of years and can be a serious, contagious and sometimes-fatal infectious disease. Approximately 30 percent of people who contract the more common form of the disease die and there is no specific treatment for smallpox; the only prevention is vaccination.

A successful worldwide vaccination program eradicated the disease. The last case of smallpox reported in the United States was in 1949 and routine smallpox vaccinations in the U.S. ceased in 1972. However, in the aftermath of events in September and October 2001, there is heightened concern that the variola virus may be used as an agent of bioterrorism. For this reason, the U.S. government is taking precautions for dealing with a smallpox outbreak, should it occur.

According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) press release dated Jan. 22, 2003, state and local governments are coordinating



As part of the county's ongoing emergency preparedness efforts, Henrico Health Department staff receive hands-on smallpox vaccine training using a bifurcated (two-pronged) needle and saline.

the vaccination of smallpox response teams. The teams are part of the nation's voluntary vaccination program to protect Americans from the potential threat of a terrorist attack involving the release of the smallpox virus.

Under this program, smallpox vaccine is being offered to those most likely to respond to a potential outbreak of the disease. By preparing these smallpox response teams, the government will be able to protect the American people in the event of a smallpox release. It is important to note that the smallpox vaccination is voluntary.

Currently, the United States has a large enough stockpile to vaccinate everyone in the country who might need it in the event of an emergency; however, the vaccination process has been broken down into stages. During the first (and current) stage, those receiving the vaccine locally include designated volunteer public health responders throughout Virginia and staff from participating hospitals. Should an actual smallpox outbreak occur, the health care staff vaccinated in the first stage would respond by either providing vaccine, investigating potential cases or providing care to those infected.

The second stage will include other health care providers and first responders, including police, fire and emergency medical personnel. The third stage would be a mass vaccination for the entire U.S. population should there be a reported case of smallpox. Presently, health officials are not recommending the smallpox vaccine for the general public.

According to a Virginia Department of Health (VDH) press release, Deputy Commissioner for Emergency Preparedness and Response Lisa Kaplowitz, M.D., M.S.H.A. said, "While the smallpox vaccine is very effective at preventing the disease, it does not come without risks."

The smallpox vaccine is very different from most routinely provided vaccines. For every million people who receive the vaccine, one or two may die from complications. The vaccine is made from a virus called vaccinia which is a "pox"-type virus related to smallpox. The smallpox vaccine contains the "live" vaccinia virus, not dead virus like many other vaccines. For this reason, the vaccination site must be cared for carefully to prevent the virus from spread-

ing. Although the vaccine can have side effects, it does not contain the smallpox virus and cannot give you smallpox.

On Jan. 13, public health nurses from the Richmond metropolitan area joined Henrico Health Department staff to receive training for smallpox vaccine administration at Henrico's Health Department. This was one of five sessions offered throughout the state by the Virginia Department of Health. The Emergency Preparedness and Response Hospital Coordinator presented "Clinical Aspects of Smallpox and the Smallpox Vaccine." Health officials also learned about vaccine risks and how to administer the vaccine from Peter Carrasco with the Pan American Health Organization, Division of Vaccines and Immunizations.

In February, the Virginia Department of Health began providing smallpox vaccine to volunteer health care workers as part of the state's ongoing emergency preparedness efforts. Health care personnel went through a detailed screening and educational process before receiving the vaccine. Each volunteer received an information packet in advance and viewed an 11-minute educational video just before vaccination.

Henrico conducted three smallpox clinics for health care providers in March and vaccinated 22 Richmond area health staff and nurses. All of these individuals had positive "takes" of their vaccination. A "take" means they responded appropriately to the vaccination and should now have protection against smallpox for 3-5 years and increased resistance for several years longer. A few individuals experienced minor reactions such as redness at the vaccination site, fatigue, etc. Although screening, education and safety monitoring minimizes the chance of harmful reactions from the vaccine, nothing can completely eliminate the risk.

In total, 13 Henrico County school and mental health nurses, plus five Henrico Health Department staff who are state employees, have received the smallpox vaccine.

Henrico Health Director Curtis Thorpe, M.D. added, "The clinics have been successful in vaccinating those individuals who will administer vaccine in the event of a smallpox outbreak, such as public health nurses, school nurses, and mental health nurses. Hospital staff are interested but cautious, but we are prepared to provide them with vaccinations if the need arises."

VDH announced in an April press release plans to expand its smallpox vaccination program to include more health care workers and public safety personnel. More than 700 health care personnel have been vaccinated statewide. Of those vaccinated, 97 percent had a take from the vaccine and are now protected.

"We have made significant progress towards the overall goal of increased smallpox readiness in

Virginia just two months into the smallpox vaccination program. Now we are focusing our efforts on ensuring that we are prepared to rapidly provide mass vaccination in all parts of the state, if that should ever become necessary," Kaplowitz said.

For more information, log onto the Virginia Department of Health's Web site at www.vdh.state.va.us, and click on Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs. The CDC Public Response Service hotline with vital information for Virginians is also available at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).

Help clean the James on June 14

River lovers, grab your wading boots and get your kayaks, canoes and boats ready—it's spring-cleaning time for the James!

The James River Regional Cleanup 2003 is set for 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, June 14. Henrico's Osborne Boat Landing, located on Osborne Turnpike, will be one of eight area sites along a 50-mile stretch of the river targeted for cleaning. Sponsored by the James River Advisory Council (JRAC), the event combines the efforts of local and state government, private businesses, environmental organizations and—most importantly—concerned local residents.

Volunteers will clear litter and debris from the shoreline and help with additional cleanup activities. If you can't participate in the cleanup work, your help is still needed—volunteers can also assist with registration, cooking and other projects.

Boaters are welcome! Some of the shoreline at Osborne Landing can't be accessed by foot, so boats are needed to clear many of the hard-to-reach places. Please consider lending your boat, whether it's a jon boat, bass boat, run-about or other recreational vessel, to the effort.

Volunteers should plan to arrive by 8:45 a.m. and should bring gloves, sunscreen, insect repellent and drinking water. Lunch will be provided.

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Henrico public health staff are among the first to receive the smallpox vaccine in Virginia.



Armed with the tools of the trade—gloves, fish nets, trash grabbers and bright orange collection bags—some youngsters prepare to get busy at the 2002 event at Osborne Landing. People of all ages can lend a hand to the 2003 cleanup effort—to register, call 717-6688 or go to www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com.

Pre-registration is encouraged. Call the James River Regional Cleanup information line at 717-6688 or go to www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com and complete the registration form. Volunteers who pre-register will receive T-shirts.

Thanks for helping keep the James clean. See you at the Landing!

Want to become a sponsor? Contact JRAC Executive Director Kim Conley at conleyk@chesterfield.gov.

Continuing the fight against West Nile virus: Henrico policy confronts standing water

When mosquitoes look for a place to call home, the golden rule of real estate, “location, location, location,” just doesn’t apply. Any old patch of stagnant, standing water will do, whether it’s located on public land or private property.

That lack of discretion complicates the task of Henrico officials working to eliminate accumulations of standing water, the home of choice for mosquitoes and thus a potential spawning ground for West Nile virus and other possibly serious mosquito-borne diseases. Past efforts focused on removing and treating standing water on county property.

To help control the spread of West Nile virus, the county administration recently implemented a voluntary policy designed to further educate residents and property owners about potential threats posed by standing water. Part of Henrico’s ongoing effort to maintain the health and safety of its residents by reducing the risk of West Nile virus, the standing water policy also reflects the county’s commitment to work hand-in-hand with residents on key community issues.

Responding to concerns voiced by residents and property owners, the Board of Supervisors decided against a formal ordinance that could have given the county legal authority to regulate standing water on private property, recommending a county policy instead.

“This policy gives us another tool in the fight against West Nile virus, another way to reach out to Henrico residents and another means to deal with this public health issue,” said Deputy County Manager Angela Harper.

What is standing water?

Henrico residents’ first question about the policy might seem obvious: What exactly is standing water? It might not be what they think.

“Standing water is not just any puddle,” Harper said. “It’s a special kind of puddle.”

The policy defines “standing water” as any outdoor, stagnant accumulation of water conducive to the breeding of mosquitoes. This definition **does not** include:

- ◆ Water that has been still for less than six days.
- ◆ Water that contains fish or other natural predators.
- ◆ Water that is moving or that has a device causing it to move, such as a fountain.
- ◆ Water that is in a tidal or non-tidal wetland.

Both large and small collections of water—ranging from a child’s wading pool to an up turned garbage can lid or a clogged gutter—can meet this definition, since mosquitoes need only a small amount to reproduce.

Implementation

Henrico has added five full-time staff members, including two inspectors and a supervisor, to implement the policy. Inspectors visit sites to examine potential standing water problems, speak with residents and property owners and show them how to treat or remove the water. Property owners can obtain a free county-produced video and brochure that further explain standing water and the need to treat it. The county also will

Future leaders take Henrico’s reins for a day

More than 100 high school seniors traded their textbooks for zoning maps, policy manuals and “Robert’s Rules of Order” for a day in April when they assumed the roles of Henrico County’s elected officials and top administrators for the 46th annual Student Government Day. Students took the reins of Henrico’s general government and public schools administrations, gaining a first-hand view of the operations of their local government.

Student Government Day paired top students from eight Henrico high schools with a variety of key county officials, including the county manager, police and fire chiefs, judges and members of the Board of Supervisors, as well as leaders of the public schools administration.

provide speakers for interested groups, clubs and organizations.

County personnel work closely with residents and property owners to answer questions, provide information and convey the need to treat standing water promptly. Timing is key; mosquito larvae can develop and hatch in just six days.

“The time frame for dealing with a standing water situation is narrow—just a matter of days,” Harper said. “Residents can purchase mosquito larvicide briquettes in any home improvement or garden store. They are inexpensive and very effective at killing mosquito larvae.”

Harper emphasized that the county’s principal concern is to educate residents and arm them with the information needed to combat West Nile virus. Although several Virginia localities have passed ordinances to gain legal authority to regulate standing water on private property, Henrico determined that public outreach and voluntary cooperation were the best ways to confront the issue.

“Henrico County wants to increase public awareness because this is a matter of public health and safety,” Harper said. “We want property owners to take care of the problem themselves.”

“Henrico will continue to do its best to work with and educate our residents about the potential impact standing water can have on our neighborhoods and community.”

Residents with questions about standing water or the county’s new policy can call Henrico’s West Nile virus hotline at 226-NILE (6453).

Students “shadowed” their government counterparts throughout the day, gaining insight into the



Students and their government counterparts conduct business during the mock Board of Supervisors meeting.

decision-making process and local governance. Students also made some decisions themselves, conducting a mock Board of Supervisors meeting and ruling on issues such as a shoplifting ordinance and a capital improvement bond issue.

The Kiwanis clubs of North Richmond, Tuckahoe and West Henrico sponsored the event.

Recreation Roundup

Summertime is full of activities and programs that offer fitness and fun made available by Henrico County's Division of Recreation and Parks—far more than can be listed here. For a complete list, pick up Henrico's "At Your Leisure" guide at county libraries and government centers, visit the division's Web site at www.co.henrico.va.us/rec, or call 501-PARK (7275).

Sat, May 17: Lettuce, Peas and Buttered Radishes

The potatoes and apples from last fall have all been eaten. Everyone is looking forward to fresh spring vegetables from the garden. Sample period recipes for spring produce cooked in Meadow Farm's historic kitchen. Free. 12:30-3:30 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Sun, May 18: Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social

Enjoy the bluegrass sounds of George Thomas and Friends, treat your taste buds to delicious ice cream, and try out some old-fashioned games and dances. Great fun and ice cream for the whole family! 4-6 p.m. Historic Deep Run Schoolhouse. Free. Information: Jeannie Murray, 501-5121.

Sun & Tue, May 18 & 20: Auditions for *Mixed Nuts*

Auditions will be held for the upcoming production of the comedy, *Mixed Nuts*. Director Ryan Imirie seeks 5 women, ages 23-65 and 3 men, ages 25-40. Readings will be from the script. Rehearsals begin in early June for a July 11-27 run. 7 p.m. The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen. Information: Amy Perdue, 501-5138.

Sat, May 24: The Doctor is In

What was it like to be a doctor in 1860? What was it like to be a patient? Were there hospitals or house calls? Pull up a chair and find out more about how ailments were cured in the mid-1800s. Free. 1-3 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Fri, May 30: Sweetheart Ball for Mothers and Sons

For ages 4-6 with an adult. This great evening out for boys and their moms will include dinner, dancing and fun. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Belmont Recreation Center. \$15 per family. Register by May 16. Information: Janice Parker, 501-5809.

Sat, May 31: A Fine Hand – Penmanship

Citizens of the 19th-century took pride in their penmanship. Industrialization made steel nibbed pens affordable to the average person. Try your hand at writing the "old-fashioned" way. Free. 1-3 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Sun, June 1: Uncle Remus & Other Folk Tales

Listen to Wali Brandon, as Old Jeb, spin tales of Brer Rabbit and his friends. Free. 1:30-3:30 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Sun, June 1: Beth Elon: Home of the Oak

Ed Slipek, art historian and writer, will discuss the rich and unique architectural elements of Beth Elon, the late 19th-century home of Laura and Leslie Watson. 2 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum Orientation Center. Free, reservations required. Information and reservations: 501-5736.

Sat, June 7: Varina Day

The Varina Ruritan Club in cooperation with Henrico Recreation and Parks is hosting its 7th annual Varina Community Day. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Dorey Park. Free. Information: Jeannie Murray, 501-5121.

Sat & Sun, June 7 & 8: Civil War Encampment and Battle: 140th Anniversary

The Battle of Slash Church took place near Ashcake and Brook roads 140 years ago. Confederate and Union re-enactors will portray camp life and re-enact the nearby battle. In the evening, join the re-enactors for an old-fashioned dance under the stars. Learn the Virginia Reel and other mid-19th-century dances. Sat, June 7, noon-4 p.m., Dance

8 p.m.; Sun, June 8, noon-2:30 p.m.; Battle at 2 p.m. each day. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Sat, June 21: Bring in the Wheat

It takes a great deal of labor to get wheat from the field and make it into bread. Join in the process and help the farmer harvest, bind, thresh and winnow his wheat in order to provide for the family. Free. 1-3 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Sat, June 21: Reunion with the Slack Family Bluegrass Band

Enjoy high-energy bluegrass reminiscent of the early bluegrass pioneers performed by the Slack Family. 2-4 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum/Crump Park. Free. Information: Bill Kelly, 501-5134.

Sun, June 22: Meet the Critters

Join us for an up-close look at our farm animals to find out if a turkey has ears, which farm animals are a rare breed, where wool comes from and much more. Free. 12:30, 1:30, & 2:30 p.m. Meadow Farm Museum. Information: 501-5520.

Community Relations,
Marketing & Publicity
Henrico Recreation and Parks
P.O. Box 27032
Richmond, VA 23273-7032
(804) 501-PARK (7275)
www.co.henrico.va.us/rec

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501-5292



Varina
James B. Donati, Jr.
501-4207

Important County Telephone Numbers

Adult Protective Services	501-7346
Board of Supervisors	501-4207
Building Permits & Inspections	501-4360
Business Licenses/Personal Property	501-4310
Child Protective Services	501-5437
Community Maintenance	501-4757
Fire - Non-emergency	501-4900
Food Stamps	501-4002
Health Clinic - East	652-3190
Health Clinic - West	501-4651
Human Resources	501-4628
Human Resources 24-hour Jobline	501-5674
Leaf/Bulky Waste Collection	261-8770
Library Answer Line	222-1318
Magistrates	501-5285
Marriage Licenses	501-5055
Mental Health Emergency Services	261-8484
Planning & Zoning	501-4602
Police, Non-emergency	501-5000
Real Estate Assessment	501-4300
Recreation & Parks	501-7275
Schools	652-3600
Sheriff	501-4571
Traffic Ticket Court	501-4723
Vehicle Licenses/Personal Property	501-4263
Volunteer Program	501-5231
Voter Registration	501-4347



Government Center
4301 East Parham Road
501-4000



Eastern Government Center
3820 Nine Mile Road
652-3600

HENRICO TODAY

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