



HENRICO COUNTY VIRGINIA

February 2008

Note: The following news release is being forwarded on behalf of Henrico County Drug Court.

Virginia Drug Court Association
Richmond, Virginia

Date: February 28, 2008

Contact: Patty Gilbertson Phone: 757-788-0004
Contact: Patricia Shaw Phone: 804-213-3890, ext. 222

SUBJECT TITLE: State Drug Treatment Court Funding in Jeopardy

Richmond, VA. 2/28/2008:

The Virginia House of Delegates voted on February 21, 2008 to approve a budget amendment to House Bill 30 (item 38#13h) that would eliminate \$5.9 million in state general fund support for fourteen (14) Drug Treatment Court programs through out the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Senate version of the budget is contains no such amendment and supports continued funding of the 14 programs at current levels.

The 14 drug treatment courts at risk serve both adults and juveniles throughout the Commonwealth. These fourteen courts in question have long since cycled off of federal funding and rely almost exclusively on state funds. The elimination of state funds may ultimately mean the demise of these fourteen courts since localities have, for the most part, completed their budget process for the year. The drug treatment court programs have provided intensive court supervision and substance abuse treatment services to thousands of adults and juveniles with substance use disorders in the past decade.

In FY07, 1,347 participants were served in the 14 drug treatment court programs receiving state funds. The state contributes \$2,951,000 annually in general fund revenue to these 14 courts which results in an annual expenditure of \$2,190 per participant in a drug treatment court.

If drug courts are forced to close due to a loss in state funding, the 1,347 participants currently enrolled in drug court will either need to be housed in a state juvenile correctional facility at the cost of \$102,000 a year per juvenile offender or the state will need to spend \$22,000 per adult offender to house these offenders in prison.

Since the first program was established in 1995 in Roanoke, drug treatment courts in Virginia have demonstrated repeatedly that they can reduce crime, delinquency and recidivism through enhanced coordination of community based services. Drug treatment courts represent the coordinated efforts of the judiciary, prosecution, defense bar, probation, courts services, law enforcement, behavioral health treatment, social services, schools, and child protection services to actively and forcefully intervene and break the cycle of substance abuse, addiction, delinquency and crime.

A number of local outcome evaluations conducted by independent evaluators have demonstrated that Virginia Drug Treatment Courts are effective. A Virginia Tech study several years ago found that more than two-thirds of Roanoke's 261 participants did graduate, and only 7 percent reoffended. An evaluation of the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Adult Drug Court found that 23% of the graduates of the adult drug court had reoffended three years following program completion. The comparison group in this study, in contrast, had reoffense rates of 68% during the same time frame. The Virginia Supreme Court is currently working with a third party evaluator to complete a statewide evaluation of drug courts. The evaluation, which is well underway, will provide the first comprehensive statewide evaluation of the drug treatment courts in Virginia.

As the President of the Virginia Drug Court Association, Larry Robinson, sums it up, "At a time when the state budget situation is facing tough challenges, it seems penny wise and pound foolish to eliminate funding for programs that have proven their effectiveness in providing quality substance abuse treatment services to juvenile and adult offenders, while holding them accountable for their actions. There are no economic savings associated with cutting off funding for drug courts."

February 20, 2008

CONTACT: Barry Lawrence, Clerk, Board of Supervisors

PHONE: 501-4318

The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) has appointed eight Henrico County officials to the association's steering and operational committees for 2008.

Members of Henrico's Board of Supervisors received the following appointments:

- * Chairman and Three Chopt District Supervisor David A. Kaechele, Finance steering committee;
- * Vice Chairman and Tuckahoe District Supervisor Patricia S. O'Bannon, chairman of the Telecommunications and Utilities steering committee; Resolutions committee;
- * Brookland District Supervisor Richard W. Glover, Community Development steering committee;
- * Fairfield District Supervisor Frank J. Thornton, Education steering committee;
- * Varina District Supervisor James B. Donati, Jr., Administration of Government steering committee.

Other county officials receiving appointments were:

- * Deputy County Manager George T. Drumwright, Jr., Health and Human Services steering committee;
- * Deputy County Manager Robert K. Pinkerton, P.E., Transportation steering committee; and
- * Deputy County Manager Randall R. Silber, Environment and Agriculture steering committee.

VACo steering committees review legislative requests from counties, recommend an annual legislative program and provide policy direction for VACo staff. The association represents local governments at the state and federal levels and provides a resource network for planning and implementing new ideas and technologies.

February 19, 2008

CONTACT: Barb Strohman, Administrative Coordinator, Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District

PHONE: 501-5175

The Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) will hold its annual spring tree-seedling giveaway for Henrico County residents on Friday, March 21 at the Hermitage High School parking lot, 8301 Hungary Spring Road. Trees will be given away free of charge beginning at 8:30 a.m. and continuing as long as supplies last.

HSWCD will offer 15 species of bare-root seedlings, including red bud, white and red osier dogwood, bald cypress, red maple, river birch, green ash, winterberry holly and white pine. Information about individual species and guidelines for planting seedlings are available on the conservation district's Web site at www.co.henrico.va.us/swcd.

The seedling giveaway is part of HSWCD's ongoing efforts to protect the James River watershed by reducing runoff and sediment flows into local streams.

For more information, call 501-5175 or e-mail hsxcd@co.henrico.va.us.

February 15, 2008

CONTACT: Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E., County Manager

PHONE: 501-4386

Henrico County is initiating a process with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) that would stem the loss of millions in county tax dollars each year. Residents, business owners, corporate home offices -- any entity located within Henrico's borders with a Richmond mailing address -- hold the key to the effort.

The county loses an estimated \$5 million annually in tax revenues when thousands of residents and business owners inadvertently pay their taxes to the City of Richmond. The current USPS system -- in which addresses located in Henrico are listed as Richmond -- is the source of confusion.

Henrico is working with the USPS to change the mailing address of county residences and businesses from "Richmond, Virginia" to "Henrico, Virginia." In early May, the USPS will send a one-question survey to residents and business owners; a majority of "yes" responses will change the mailing address to Henrico, Virginia.

"If a majority of our residents and business owners respond in favor of the address change, we believe the problem of misdirected tax revenues will be corrected," said County Manager Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E. "If the initiative fails, the county will continue to lose millions of dollars each year that otherwise would be spent on services for Henrico."

The lost revenue comes from a variety of residential and corporate taxes, including business and individual personal property taxes; sales and use taxes; bank franchise taxes; business licenses; vehicle licenses; and public service corporation taxes.

Residences and businesses located in zip codes 23075, 23228, 23229, 23231, 23233, 23238, 23242, 23250, 23255, 23288 and 23294 will receive the survey. The USPS will not send a survey to addresses sharing a zip code with another locality. Glen Allen and Sandston will not be affected by the process.

Hazelett noted that county staff has worked on the issue of misdirected tax revenues for several years, meeting with staff from the City of Richmond, Virginia Department of Taxation, Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles and State Corporation Commission. Those efforts have not corrected the problem, he said.

"Henrico is now asking for support from our residents and corporate citizens," Hazelett said. "This process is not the result of any ill will toward the City of Richmond. It is our responsibility to Henrico's residents to ensure they receive the benefit of the taxes they pay."

Affected residents and businesses will be mailed an informational brochure detailing the initiative in March. In addition, a speaker's bureau of county officials is available to discuss the effort with community groups. For more information, call 501-4257 or log on to www.co.henrico.va.us.

February 12, 2008

CONTACT: Mikki Knight, Executive Assistant, Board of Supervisors

PHONE: 501-4208

The next town meeting of Tuckahoe District Supervisor Patricia S. O'Bannon will examine the upcoming transition to digital television and how residents can prepare for the change. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20 at Maybeury Elementary School cafeteria, 901 Maybeury Drive.

"Are You and Your Television Ready for Digital?" will feature presentations by representatives from telecommunications providers Comcast, Verizon and Cavalier regarding the services the companies will offer area customers when the conversion to digital television takes effect next year. Federal law requires that all full-power television stations change their broadcasts from the current analog signal to digital format as of Feb. 18, 2009. The transition could affect residents who receive their programs via analog broadcasts.

Company representatives will join O'Bannon for a question-and-answer period as well.

Tuckahoe town meetings are open to the public. Call 501-4208 for more information

February 7, 2008

CONTACT: Lt. Shawn Sears, Animal Protection Supervisor

PHONE: 652-3385

The Henrico County Division of Police will hold a rabies clinic on Saturday, Feb. 23, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at gate four of Richmond International Raceway.

Shots cost \$7, cash only, and include a rabies tag and certificate of inoculation. Dog owners may purchase a 2008 license for \$10 with proof of rabies inoculation.

Lt. Shawn Sears, supervisor of Henrico Police's Animal Protection unit, encouraged residents to vaccinate their pets, noting recent confirmed rabies exposures in the county.

"(Vaccination) will ensure the safety of our residents' pets and will help protect the community as well," Sears said.

Cats and dogs ages 4 months and older are required to be vaccinated for rabies. Contact Animal Protection at 652-3360 for more information.

February 5, 2008

CONTACT: Kendra Kyle, Extension Agent

PHONE: 501-5160

The Henrico Extension Office's annual 4-H berry sale is under way, with proceeds benefiting local 4-H youth programs.

The sale features a variety of strawberry, blackberry and blueberry plants. Strawberry plants cost \$6 for a bundle of 25; blackberry plants cost \$4.50 each and blueberry plants cost \$3.50 each. Instructions for planting and care are included with each order.

To obtain an order form, call 501-5160 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; log on to the Extension Service Web site at www.ext.vt.edu/offices/henrico; or

visit the Extension Office, located in the Human Services Building, 8600 Dixon Powers Drive. Order forms also are available at any Henrico library.

Because supplies are limited, orders placed after Friday, Feb. 22 will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Extension staff will distribute orders from noon to 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 13 and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, March 14 at the Glen Allen Softball Complex on Mountain Road.

For more information, contact the Extension Office at 501-5160.

February 4, 2008

CONTACT: Mark Coakley, General Registrar, Voter Registration and Elections Office

PHONE: 501-4347

With preparations well under way for the Virginia presidential primary Feb. 12, Henrico's Voter Registration and Elections Office (VREO) alerts residents that deadlines for absentee voting are looming this week.

* 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5: The deadline for VREO to accept a mailed or faxed application for an absentee ballot. The application must be physically in the office by 5 p.m.; fax to (804) 501-5081.

* Saturday, Feb. 9: The final day for residents to vote absentee in person. Voting will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at VREO sites at the Government Center, 4301 E. Parham Road; and at the Eastern Government Center, 3820 Nine Mile Road. Residents also may vote absentee in person during normal office hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., through Friday, Feb. 8.

In addition, Henrico's VREO reminds voters:

* Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day, Tuesday, Feb. 12.

* Voters should report to their normal polling location to cast a ballot.

* Virginia's presidential primary is open, meaning voters do not have to be registered with a specific political party to participate.

For more information, call 501-4347 or log on to www.co.henrico.va.us/registrar/.

February 4, 2008

CONTACT: Mikki Knight, Executive Assistant, Board of Supervisors

PHONE: 501-4208

The next constituent meeting of Fairfield District Supervisor Frank Thornton will provide a progress report on capital projects funded by Henrico County's 2000 and 2005 bond referenda. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 11, at the Eastern Government Center multipurpose room, 3820 Nine Mile Road.

Representatives from the county's Finance and General Services departments and Henrico County Public Schools will discuss the fire stations, schools, libraries, parks and other major construction projects funded by the two referenda. Henrico voters approved the issuance of \$237 million of general obligation bonds in 2000 and \$349.3 million in 2005. Staff will join Thornton for a question-and-answer period as well.

In addition, Thornton will introduce three county officials who have recently moved into key leadership positions: Deputy County Manager for Community Development Randall R. Silber, Fire Chief Edwin W. Smith and Finance Director John A. Vithoukias.

Fairfield constituent meetings are open to the public. Call 501-4208 for more information.

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