

# The City FOCUS

A Report to the Citizens of the City of Colonial Heights

## NEW BUSINESS VENTURES CONTINUE

The City welcomes the new Sonic Drive-In on Dimmock Parkway at Temple Avenue. We also expect our new Starbucks to open in the next month or so on Southpark Boulevard. City staff is working with the owners of Southpark Mall on the construction of the new sixteen screen Regal Cinema on the I-95 side of the mall. Our region is excited about the new theatres with stadium seating proposed to open early next year. There are other restaurant and hotel projects in the pipeline that will continue to make our city a regional business destination.

Last month, City Council engaged the Buxton Company of Fort Worth, Texas to do a retail market analysis of Colonial Heights. City Council is marketing a 20-acre parcel next to Wal-Mart for commercial development. The Council will also be considering the reuse of the Colonial Heights Baptist Church property in the near future. City Council wants to bring new businesses to the City that expand our total retail offerings thereby attracting more customers. The Buxton report will analyze our retail market and recommend retailers, restaurants and possibly hotels that can do well in Colonial Heights. Buxton can also assist the City in attracting these businesses into our City. More successful businesses mean better City and school services with less pressure on residential taxpayers.

## WATER QUALITY REPORT

The City's Water Quality Report is contained inside this issue. This annual report is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia to assure our residents that our water meets or exceeds all standards.

## CITY WINDSHIELD STICKERS

Residents are reminded that you still need our new City sticker to operate a motor vehicle in the City. This permanent sticker will not need to be scraped-off and replaced in the future saving everyone that headache; however, you will have to pay to renew it in future years. The sticker is light blue and available in the Treasurer's Office. If you still have a red City sticker, the police are looking for you.



## COLONIAL HEIGHTS POLICE KNOW HOW TO R.E.A.C.T.



As of July 1, 2006, members of the Colonial Heights Police Department have been educated and trained in the *R.E.A.C.T. Program* in an effort to reduce the negative effects of domestic violence. R.E.A.C.T. is **R**eferral and **E**ducation to **A**ssist **C**hildren in **T**rauma. R.E.A.C.T. is a partnership among the Police Department, our Victim/Witness Advocate, the Community Services Board, the Office on Youth and the James House, all of whom are committed to providing family services free of charge in the event your children have been victimized by and/or witnessed domestic violence.

Witnessing violence may change the way children feel about themselves. Understanding what your child is feeling is the first step in helping him/her deal with the effects of violence. We can help you do this. For more information on the program, please contact us at 520-9300. Together we can make a difference.

## CITY'S WEBSITE OFFERS E-GOV SERVICES 24/7

The City's website provides citizens access to many government services from the convenience of their homes 24 hours a day! Residents can visit the website for information and news about the City and can also:

- ☞ Download forms, applications and permits
- ☞ Enroll in recreation activities and trips
- ☞ Perform research through our Virtual Library databases
- ☞ Make online payments for utility bills, real estate taxes, personal property taxes, parking tickets and building permits
- ☞ Search real estate records
- ☞ Submit water exclusion meter readings
- ☞ Browse the library's catalog and request titles online
- ☞ Search the City Code
- ☞ Request assistance or submit questions and concerns through the Citizens Help Desk

Visit us at [www.colonial-heights.com](http://www.colonial-heights.com) today!



### **FARE CARE PROGRAM**



FARE CARE is a subscription program to help citizens alleviate any out-of-pocket expenses, such as health insurance co-payments and deductibles, when emergency ambulance transportation is needed. If for some reason your insurance denies your claim, the FARE CARE Program would take care of your expenses.

FARE CARE is your protection against rising health care costs. Your FARE CARE subscription will also pay emergency ambulance transportation expenses for a subscriber who does not have health insurance. Subscribe to FARE CARE by enrolling for only \$29 a year (single coverage), or \$59 a year (2 or more family members). Subscriptions are valid September 1, 2006 through August 31, 2007.

For more information about the FARE CARE Program, contact Lisa Porter at Colonial Heights Fire Administration, 520-9387.

### **TEMPLE AND I-95 INTERSECTION SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Westbound motorists turning left from Temple Avenue to get onto the I-95 on-ramp now encounter a brightly lit red message reminding them of their responsibility to yield the right of way to opposing eastbound traffic. This addition to the signaling system was completed on June 16, 2006 in an attempt to make the Temple Avenue and I-95 ramp intersection safer for travelers. The message is activated when the green left turn arrow goes off, this permits motorists to make the movement as safe gaps in the opposing eastbound traffic allow.

This project was undertaken after Councilman David Salot noticed a similar application while visiting Lynchburg, Virginia. The City's Engineering Department expounded on this idea by adding the additional signal that is more in the line of sight of the oncoming traffic. While accidents will likely continue here due to "driver error," the outcome of the signal addition is expected to be positive. Other modifications to this intersection were made last fall when vegetation was removed and a sign was relocated to improve site distance for turning motorists.



### **NEW NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS**

The City has also been working on a Rental Property Inspection Program to allow the inspection of rental housing for building code deficiencies in targeted areas. This process will allow the City to detect housing violations early and seek corrective measures from the landlord before they begin to adversely impact our neighborhoods. City Council held a public hearing on August 8<sup>th</sup> on this proposed program. Council is considering the Shepherd Stadium and Violet Bank-Flora Hill neighborhoods as the first areas for inclusion in this program.

In 2005, the City Council adopted the report on the City's neighborhoods and its major implementation strategies. One major program has been the Community Development Block Grant Emergency Repair Program. Federal funding of just over \$104,000 from our first grant has been completely committed, with 28 families being awarded grants to repair their property to address various issues including roof repairs, accessibility issues, and electrical and heating repairs. City Council held a public hearing on August 8<sup>th</sup> on the 2<sup>nd</sup> year program funding of \$90,409 and the proposed plan of work.

### **BOULEVARD REVITALIZATION CONTINUES**

City Council has approved over 50 project requests for matching funds grants. Many of the projects have now been completed and the cumulative impact is showing. Landscaping, parking lot and building improvements are all evident.

The City is now beginning the design of the Government Center project, which received a grant of \$75,000 from VDOT to help create a highly visible project along the Boulevard. This effort will include new street lighting, trees and landscaping and a clock tower/message center in Phase 1.

The Boulevard Revitalization Steering Committee continues its efforts to identify new projects and ideas to insure that the Boulevard is one of the City's major commercial areas.



**NEW RIVER PARKS**

The Appomattox River is one of the City's unsung natural assets. Currently, City staff are working with the Appomattox River Greenway Steering Committee to develop a plan for a section of the area along the river from Temple Avenue south to the western City line (a 2+ mile corridor). It is envisioned that a Greenway could be created that would provide many amenities to the City's residents, including a river trail, boat launch, fishing pier, and other amenities that would both protect the area and allow residents to fully enjoy walking, bicycling or jogging along the river or launching a small boat or canoe. The Greenway will connect two underused City properties, one on Archer Avenue and the other behind the animal shelter.



**CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT**

The City of Colonial Heights has received its twenty-fifth straight Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of local government accounting and financial reporting. The CAFR was judged by an impartial GFOA panel to meet the standards of the program, which includes the demonstration that it clearly communicates the financial story of the locality. The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 16,000 government finance professionals.

**CITY SIGN REGULATIONS**

In late 2005, a City task force completed its review of the 1968 existing sign ordinance regulations and working with City staff developed proposed new rules and procedures. These have been codified and are now before the City Planning Commission for consideration and recommendation to the City Council. It is expected that Planning Commission recommendations will be made in the next few months after a public hearing.



**ENFORCEMENT OF TALL GRASS**

The Building Inspections Division is now responding to complaints concerning tall grass not being properly cut. Call 520-9299 if you have a complaint or think there is a potential violation.

**RECREATION & PARKS**

***Sign up for these trips while you still can:***

- ☆ Colonial Downs trip will be held on Friday, August 11. Cost of the trip is \$33, which includes admission ticket, transportation on vans, reserved seating, meal, and official race program. Vans will leave Shepherd Stadium at 3:15 p.m. and return after last race.
- ☆ American Music Jubilee Musical Variety Show trip to Selma, NC will be held on Saturday, August 19. The musical variety show will be a touch of Branson and Myrtle Beach in NC. Cost of the trip is \$30 per person and includes lunch at Robin's Nest, tickets, and transportation on vans. Vans will depart at 9:00 a.m. and return at approximately 6:30 p.m.
- ☆ Charles Town, WV SLOTS trip will be held on Monday, October 9. Fee for the trip on vans is \$11. Over 3,800 machines with more variety and fun have been installed.
- ☆ Carolina Premium Outlet trip will be held on Friday, November 10. Fee for the trip is \$10.00 per person and will depart Shepherd Stadium at 8:00 a.m. and return at 6:00 p.m. There are 80 stores at the Carolina Premium Outlets.
- ☆ Riverside Dinner Theater trip to Fredericksburg, VA will be held on December 13 to see the lunch show called "Nonsense". Fee for the trip is \$46 per person. Vans will leave the Senior Center at 9:30 a.m. and return around 6:30 p.m.
- ☆ Caribbean Cruise will be held January 20 thru January 27, 2007. Cruise will stop at Grand Cayman; Cozumel, Mexico; and Key West, Florida. Bus will take you to Charleston, SC, where you will board the Norwegian Cruise Line's "The Majesty". Price is \$776 per person for inside cabin and \$886.00 per person for outside cabin.

**The City Focus**

*The City Focus is a newsletter mailed to residents of the City of Colonial Heights, published by the Office of the City Manager, to inform residents of government actions and events of interest in the City.*

*This newsletter is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.*





## OFFICE ON YOUTH



The Office on Youth & Human Services is charged with the task of working to develop and improve those **community assets** that assist families in raising children who are responsible, law abiding, and self reliant. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for youth and families in Colonial Heights, to promote positive youth development and to prevent delinquency. The Youth Advisory Council, a youth governed leadership development group, is available to youth in grades 6-12 in Colonial Heights. Through a combination of services learning through special projects, educational and fun activities, youth experience firsthand the impact they can make on their community. Perhaps your child would like to get involved. For more information you may call 520-9286 or visit the web at [www.colonial-heights.com](http://www.colonial-heights.com).

## REQUEST BOOKS ONLINE AT YOUR LIBRARY

Residents are welcome to request books online at the Colonial Heights Public Library at any time by directing their browsers to <http://www.colonial-heights.com/Library/NewRequestForm.htm>. You can reserve a book already in the collection or request a title the library does not own.

The library receives an average of 15-20 requests each day, and the staff begins processing each request shortly after it is submitted with the objective of delivering it to the patron as quickly as possible.

The library's website also includes a list of the new books and films added to the collection each day along with an online catalog that allows residents to search the collection.

You may call 520-9384 with further questions.



# The City Focus

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