



Greetings from the Occoquan District and Happy Thanksgiving!

Winter is just around the corner and I hope you are looking forward to spending some time with friends and family on Turkey Day! In the meantime, I wanted to take a few moments to update you a few things going on around our district.

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**County Sticker Update**

A few residents have written to me with questions regarding the “county sticker” for personal vehicles. Below is a pretty good summary of the current situation, courtesy of our Solid Waste Division:

Historically, Prince William County collected a personal property tax based on the value of your vehicle, as well as a local registration fee. As part of paying the local registration fee, citizens were given a vehicle sticker, which was designed to provide a quick verification to the police and the tax enforcement staff that the citizen had paid his or her personal property taxes. The local registration fee of \$24 more than covered the cost of the sticker, and the balance of the money was placed into the county's general revenue fund. In short, the local registration fee paid for the sticker itself and the staff time to administer the program, and it also served as a source of additional general fund revenue for the county.

In recent years the sticker has outlived its usefulness. Modern technology makes it possible for us to verify that you have paid your personal property tax quickly based on a license plate check. Therefore, in Prince William County, the most common use of the sticker in recent years has been to provide proof of residence at the landfill and NOT as a proof of paying one's taxes.

Because of county budget shortfalls, the finance office suggested that a cost cutting measure would be to eliminate the sticker altogether, hence saving the county several hundred thousand dollars by not having to create and distribute the stickers since we no longer need them to prove payment of taxes. However, the county still needed the revenue generated from the local registration fee (or the difference would have to be made up with increased property taxes). As a result, the Board voted to eliminate the sticker but keep the local registration fee. Consequently, the revenue coming in from the local registration fee stayed roughly the same, but cost went down, thereby making it a net positive for county revenues without an additional increase in property taxes.

Many counties are moving in this direction with their local registration fee stickers, so you have nothing to fear in other jurisdictions unless you permanently relocate a car there.

However, elimination of the county sticker created the landfill problem.

The short term solution at the landfill was either: 1) to require a driver's license or utility bill; OR, 2) to continue to use the existing, but technically expired and unnecessary, county sticker to serve as proof of residency. However, we now know that the State Police would prefer that the expired stickers be removed and most car inspection centers are removing them when they replace inspection stickers.

To mitigate this situation, the Board recently approved a "Solid Waste Disposal Decal" program. Regular users of the landfill can get a free sticker that does not expire that will serve as proof of residency for the landfill only. Folks who don't use the landfill frequently can still get in without the sticker, but will still have to show ID. The new stickers were relatively inexpensive for the county, and are a one-time cost since they never expire, so the budget saving from the Board's prior action is still realized.

For more information or to obtain a Solid Waste Disposal Decal call Taxpayer Services at 703-792-6710 (Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.).

### **Santa is Coming to Occoquan**

Santa will arrive by boat in historic downtown Occoquan at noon on Saturday, November 28. Bring your family to welcome Santa and then be sure to visit him at Town Hall where he will be hearing Christmas requests all afternoon.

### **Holiday Hayride**

On Saturday, December 12, 2009 join LRPRA for a Holiday Hayride through Lake Ridge. Bring your camera, blanket and flashlight for a fun evening event! The 1st wagon leaves at 5:30 PM from the LRPRA parking lot at 12350 Oakwood Drive. Adult LRPRA members cost \$5, children of LRPRA members cost \$3.00. Adult nonmembers cost \$6.00 and children of nonmembers cost \$4.00. For more information call 703-497-7112.

### **Ten Prince William Master Food Volunteers Graduate from Program**

Those who love cooking, learning about nutrition and wellness, and wanted to help others embarked upon a training through the Master Food Volunteer (MFV) Program of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) which began October 1 and concluded on October 22. This training program was held on Thursdays at Fairview at River Club in Fredericksburg, Virginia with 30 participants from throughout Northern Virginia, ten are from the Greater Prince William area.

The Master Food Volunteer Program is modeled after the Master Gardener Program of Extension. Volunteers in the MFV received 30 hours of training in basic nutrition, meal planning, healthy cooking techniques, and food safety, with an opportunity to sample delicious recipes. In exchange, they are asked to complete 30 hours of volunteering within one year.

Opportunities for volunteering will include food demonstrations and displays at health fairs, farmers markets and food pantries. They will also teach canning classes and test pressure canners as well as food preparation and food safety classes. With the FCS extension agent and three SNAP Ed program assistants they will be able to increase nutrition education programs for adults and children. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to create their own forum for outreach in the community. Contact Nancy Stegon, (703) 792-4764 for more information.

Volunteers have a plethora of experience including registered dietitians, culinary arts students, family and consumer science teachers, chefs, entrepreneurs and more. This training in Northern District of Virginia encompassed 19 counties and the 30 volunteers who are being trained to assist Family & Consumer Sciences Agents through community outreach. This pilot program will be replicated in other localities throughout Virginia.

### **Cell Phone Collection Program**

Our office continues to collect used cell phones for the "Cell Phones for Soldiers" program and the "Secure the Call" program. To make a donation, please stop by our office, located at 2241-B Tacketts Mill Drive in Lake Ridge, during normal business hours. If you have a preference of where your phone is donated, please notify us at the time of delivery. Thank you for your continued support!

**Lake Ridge Lions Club Collects Used Eyeglasses**

The Lake Ridge Lions Club is still collecting used eyeglasses around the community and our office is a collection location. Used eyeglasses are refurbished and distributed to needy in the community. Your donation is welcome.

Thanks for reading our November E-Update and please have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving! As always, if we can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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