

# Regional Progress

An Annual Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

Fiscal Year 2002-2003

Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission -- Eastern Shore of Virginia Economic Development Commission -- Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority  
Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation -- Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority -- Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership

## A-NPDC Designated Economic Development District

A request by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission to designate Accomack and Northampton Counties as an Economic Development District has been approved by the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA). David Sampson, Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, notified the A-NPDC of the decision in a letter dated September 4.

The designation will bring additional support for economic development planning and infrastructure to the two counties from the federal government. Funding from the EDA was instrumental in the construction of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport at Wallops, Accomack Airport Industrial Park, and the Cape Charles Sustainable Technology Park.



*Calvin Edghill of EDA (center) presents Economic Development District to J.T. Holland, ESVEDC Chair (right), and Paul Berge, A-NPDC Executive Director (left)*

The EDA's mission is to help regions create a favorable business environment to attract private capital investment and higher-wage jobs through capacity building, planning, infrastructure,

research grants, and other strategic initiatives. The A-NPDC and the ESVEDC annually update a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to set priorities for applications.

## New Regional Partnership Plan Approved

Seven new projects for the Eastern Shore Regional Partnership were approved by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Accomack and Northampton County Boards of Supervisors and the Chincoteague Town Council. The Partnership, a coalition of business, civic, education and government leaders, identified the following projects to improve the economic competitiveness:

1. Promote the efforts of the Public Service Authority and liaison between

the private sector and the PSA.

2. Develop the Wallops Commercialization Center, a business incubator to assist commercialization of business and service activities.

3. Develop a Regional Downtown Revitalization Program to provide staff for efforts in 5 Eastern Shore towns using the Main Street Program approach.

4. Identify demand for broadband Internet access and recruit suppliers of affordable high-speed Internet access.

5. Start a workforce development education program that provides information on all the options available in preparing for careers.

6. Create quality apartments for teachers as a tool for attracting new teachers for both school systems.

7. Develop an Eastern Shore Heritage Trail to encourage travelers to enjoy the scenic beauty, wildlife, history, shops and restaurants of Accomack and Northampton counties.

# Ground Water Committee Expands, Supports USGS Research

During 2003 the Ground Water Committee was expanded from nine to 11 members, with the addition of Accomack County Supervisor Wanda J. Thornton and Northampton County Supervisor Thomas H. Dixon III. The Committee reviewed and commented on Virginia Department of Environmental Quality ground water withdrawal permit applications and added Virginia Health Department water use data to the Eastern Shore ground water database. The Committee also obtained \$37,500 from Accomack County and

Northampton County to provide local matching funds for the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to update the Eastern Shore Ground Water Flow Model. The Committee's consulting hydrogeologist developed a Ground Water Safe Yield Analysis and assessed Eastern Shore ground water level trends by updating ground water monitoring well data. The Committee also presented a Resolution of Commendation to J. Holland Scott of Onancock, who resigned from the Committee after 12 years of dedicated service.

## Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee

Hon. Felton T. Sessoms, Chair  
Hon. C.D. Fleming, Jr., Vice Chair  
Paul F. Berge, Secretary  
R. Keith Bull  
Hon. Thomas H. Dixon, III  
Hon. Donald L. Hart, Jr.  
J. W. Jeffries  
Mapp Walker  
Lance L. Metzler  
Hon. Wanda J. Thornton  
Hon. Suzanne S. Wescoat

## A-NPDC Approves Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan



*The Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan will help create better, safer bicycling routes*

A-NPDC has approved the Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan and will recommend the plan to local governments, which are required to have adopted bicycle plans before VDOT funds can be spent on developing bicycle facilities. The Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan recommendations include paved shoulders on the Chincoteague Causeway, a designated Seaside Bicycle Route with paved shoulders from Maryland Route

12 to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and shared use paths from Onancock to Onley, Cape Charles to Cheriton, and Cape Charles to Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. The plan also recommends a designated bicycle route on the Bayside, bicycle facilities to connect towns and communities with schools, businesses, and recreation facilities, and improved access along and across U.S. Route 13.

## Northampton Adopts Ground Water Protection Ordinance

After a year of development, the Northampton County Board of Supervisors adopted a Ground Water Protection Ordinance on June 23, 2003. The ordinance contains provisions to manage ground water use by new residential developments and prevent ground water contamination from new industrial and commercial facilities. The ordinance was developed with technical assistance from the Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee and A-NPDC staff.

## A-NPDC Assists with Northampton SNRA District

A-NPDC staff assisted with development of the Draft Sensitive Natural Resources Area Overlay District under consideration by the Northampton County Board of Supervisors. The A-NPDC provided geographic information system data for the project, helped delineate the ground water recharge area, and facilitated public meetings on the draft ordinance. The draft ordinance requires best management practices to maintain ground water recharge and protect ground water quality in designated ground water recharge areas.

# A-NPDC Receives Virginia Hazard Mitigation Grant



*Flooding caused by Hurricane Isabel*

At the request of Accomack County and Northampton County, the A-NPDC applied for and received a \$60,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to conduct the Eastern Shore Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Project. Beginning November 1, 2004, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will require local governments to have an adopted and approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to qualify for Hazard Mitigation Grant funding after a natural disaster. Currently, none of the Eastern Shore's 21 local governments have Hazard Mitigation Plans.

The Eastern Shore Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Project will be the first step in preparing an Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan. When the risk assessment is completed and approved, the A-NPDC will apply for additional funding to develop a Hazard Mitigation Strategy and Plan for the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The adopted and approved Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan will enable local governments to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants to prevent and mitigate damage to residential, commercial, and industrial property due to coastal flooding and other natural hazards.

## A-NPDC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

Sandy Manter, Chair  
Will Cumming, Vice Chair  
Paul F. Berge, Secretary  
Mary Ardolino  
Sandra Benson  
Nancy Duncan  
Hon. C. D. Fleming, Jr.  
Larry LeMond  
Harold Paxton (for Uwanna Belinger)  
Robert Johnson (for Paul Burnette)  
Eric Stringfield  
James West  
Jennifer De Bruhl (non-voting)

## Northampton Transportation Plan Under Development

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has awarded the A-NPDC a \$15,000 Rural Transportation Planning Grant to prepare a Northampton County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element. A-NPDC staff is assembling and analyzing Northampton transportation and land use data and will conduct a county transportation planning workshop, a transportation facility needs assessment, develop transportation goals, objectives, and recommendations, and help with the public hearing and adoption process. When adopted, the transportation element will help Northampton County and VDOT coordinate county growth with transportation facility development.

# A-NPDC Planning Seaside Water Trail

With funding from the Virginia Coastal Program's Seaside Heritage Program, the A-NPDC has begun planning for a Seaside Water Trail. The Seaside Water Trail Plan will identify potential canoe and kayak paddling routes on the Seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore, and recommend needs for canoe and kayak launch site improvements.

Water Trail Planning Workshops held in Accomack County, North-

ampton County, and Chincoteague during September 2003 gave Eastern Shore residents the opportunity to discuss possible paddling routes, launch sites, and identify issues that need to be addressed. The A-NPDC has contracted with SouthEast Expeditions to paddle proposed water trail routes and provide technical documentation. As part of the project, the A-NPDC will also prepare a Seaside Water Trail Guide and web site.



*Paddling is a popular sport on the Eastern Shore*

# Regional Downtown Revitalization Program Starts

The new Regional Downtown Revitalization Program, an initiative of the A-NPDC and the Regional Partnership, began this year. The program provides staffing for downtown revitalization programs in Cape Charles, Exmore, Onancock, Parksley and Chincoteague.

It's difficult for all-volunteer merchant groups to sustain a comprehensive downtown revitalization program over a long period of time, so the goal of the new program is to provide staff for the groups to help be more effective and sustainable.

The regional downtown revitalization program provides such services as specialty niche planning (visioning), de-

sign of promotional materials, a database of vacant buildings, business management seminars, administrative assistance, and planning for a "big" project for each town that could be funded by Community Development Block Grants or by other sources.



*Revitalization in Exmore*

## Eastern Shore Defense Alliance

The 2005 Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process is one of the largest economic development issues facing the Eastern Shore of Virginia over the next two years. Through the 2005 BRAC process, the federal government, under the direction of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, will review the current and future value of military installations throughout the country for potential closure or realignment. Along with all other military bases, the US Navy Surface Combat Systems Center (SCSC) at Wallops Island will be reviewed.

The SCSC is an important part of the Eastern Shore economy. It generates employment for 100 military personnel, 50 civilian personnel and 250 contractor personnel. Aggregate payroll is in excess of \$17 million. Approximately \$13 million is expensed annually for items other than personnel.

The purpose of the Eastern Shore Defense Alliance is to proactively protect and expand the operations of the Navy at Wallops Island. The group was originally made up exclusively of Navy

contractors, but it now includes economic development professionals from Virginia and Maryland. The Alliance is now modeled after the successful Southern Maryland Naval Alliance, which supports the Pax River Naval facility. The Alliance sees growth potential in four projects for the Navy at Wallops: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle development and testing, increased cooperative work with Pax River, and the construction of a DDX building.



*US Navy Surface Combat Systems Center*



### Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership

- Frank V. Moore, Chairman
- Julie Badger, Vice Chairman
- Paul F. Berge, Secretary-Treasurer
- Honorable Robert S. Bloxom
- Jack Bonniwell
- Vernon Brinkley
- James Brookshire
- R. Keith Bull
- William R. Bull
- Jerry Clauss
- Keith Colonna
- William Denny
- Honorable Gregory L. Duncan
- Carol Evans
- Lynn P. Gayle
- Phil Gibb
- Dr. S. Dawn Goldstine
- Brenda Holden
- Richard L. Hubbard
- Dr. Richard E. Jenkins
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- Lee Mapp
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- Rose Rulon
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- Honorable John H. Tarr
- Suzanne Taylor
- Honorable Suzanne S Wescoat
- James M. West
- Bruce E. Underwood



### Eastern Shore of Virginia Economic Development Commission

- Ridgway M. Dunton, Chairman
- J.T. Holland, Vice Chairman
- Paul F. Berge, Secretary-Treasurer
- Julie Badger
- R. Keith Bull
- Lance L. Metzler
- Harrison Wehner
- Debra Wharton

# Chincoteague Trolley Begins

Chincoteague received a grant for \$80,750 from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation last year for a demonstration grant to run a trolley system during summer months. The trolley service began June 20th and has carried over 12,000 passengers to date. The trolley averages between 150 – 175 passengers per night as it loops from campgrounds and motels to the downtown commercial district, restaurants, ice cream parlors and points of interest. It takes about 20 minutes for a trolley to complete the circuit.

During Pony Penning week, the Town offered a guided trolley tour which highlighted points of historical and cultural interest on the Island. Response was so great that additional tours had to be added to meet the demand.

While ridership has been good, continuation of the system next year will depend on the willingness of businesses to participate in its funding. The Town would be eligible for 90% of the funds needed to purchase or lease trolleys and possibly 40 – 50% of the funds to operate the system.



## Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority

Hon. Julia E. Major, Chair  
 Hon. Felton T. Sessoms, Vice Chair  
 Hon. Thomas H. Dixon, III  
 Hon. Gregory L. Duncan  
 Hon. Laura Belle Gordy  
 Hon. Wanda J. Thornton  
 Hon. Suzanne S. Wescoat

Advisors  
 R. Keith Bull  
 Lance L. Metzler  
 Robert C. Oliver, Jr., Esquire  
 Russel O. Slayton, Jr., Esquire



Chincoteague Trolley

# Public Service Authority Awarded EPA Funds

Through the efforts of Congressman Ed Schrock, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority (PSA) received \$800,000 in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds for its proposed sewer projects; \$485,000 for the Northampton County sewer project and \$315,000 for the Central Accomack County sewer project. These grants will be put toward constructing the two sewer systems.

In 2003, the PSA completed the initial phase of study of the treating sewage from septic tanks. Groundwater studies of lagoons that currently hold septic sewage indicated that pollution was likely. The PSA will seek additional funds to determine the impact of the pollution and to recommend how to address those impacts.

Former Eastern Shore Health District environmental health supervisor Artie Miles was hired to serve as the PSA's first Director of Public Services.

## Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

	A-NPDC	A-NHRC	A-NRHA	ESVEDC	ESVRP	ESVPSA
<b>REVENUES:</b>						
Local	\$ 327,684	\$ 18,167	\$ 64,275	\$99,000	\$0	*\$19,700
State	65,043	6,327	0	0	145,881	24,500
Federal	766,392	587,031	2,157,565	0	0	26,898
Other	11,573	46,969	26,312	543	2,026	37
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$1,170,692</b>	<b>\$658,494</b>	<b>\$2,248,152</b>	<b>\$99,543</b>	<b>\$147,907</b>	<b>\$71,135</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
Personnel/Management	\$701,320	\$133,495	\$302,408	\$82,615	\$30,192	\$26,898
Contractual Services	181,860	25,088	22,699	10,248	127,635	44,580
Other Operating	165,151	150,682	111,906	16,341	0	560
Construction/Capital	28,375	350,881	0	0	0	0
Housing Assistance	0	0	1,797,565	0	0	0
Reserve (Deficit)	3,986	(1,652)	13,574	(9,661)	(9,920)	(903)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$1,170,692</b>	<b>\$658,494</b>	<b>\$2,248,152</b>	<b>\$99,543</b>	<b>\$147,907</b>	<b>\$71,135</b>

\*Indicates Loan

# Regional Housing Implementation Plan Starts

Over 60 housing providers and consumers met in February 2003 and recommended 9 strategic projects to address needs identified in the Regional Housing Assessment that was completed in FY 2002. The projects identified were:

- \* Develop 100 units of affordable rental housing;
- \* Attract employers that pay a livable wage;
- \* Create designs for affordable housing that are disabled-friendly;
- \* Construct a new 30-bed homeless shelter;
- \* Assist foreign workers in establishing a stable home environment;

- \* Develop a marketing plan to attract developers of planned adult communities compatible with the region's aging population;
- \* Create a local credit union;
- \* Increase public awareness of housing and human services through a directory and media releases; and
- \* Support the regional Public Service Authority efforts to develop public water and sewer systems that reduce the costs of housing.

The Regional Housing Strategic Plan Advisory Committee will refine these projects, and organize working task forces to implement them in FY 2004.

## CDBG on the Eastern Shore

Many towns, communities and neighborhoods on the Shore benefit from the Virginia Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG funds are helping pay for downtown revitalization projects currently underway in Exmore and Chincoteague.

In Accomack County, CDBG funds are providing housing and street improvements in Savagetown-Catsbridge and Locust Mount, as well as financing a self-help sewer system project in Makemie Park.

In Northampton County, the CDBG program is funding housing and



*New home built in Locust Mount*

street improvements in East Fairview and New Road, and supporting the construction of a subdivision, sewer system and community water system for the Community of Bayview.

## Lead Safe Homes Program

Working with the Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission began to gear-up for an aggressive program aimed at eliminating lead-based paint hazards in homes on the Shore. Accomack and Northampton Counties, along with the cities of Danville and Petersburg will benefit from a \$2.1 million HUD grant that will begin to address

the lead hazards that has resulted in elevated blood-lead levels in nearly 4000 children in the project areas.

On the Shore, the goal of the program will be to remove lead hazards from as many as 60 homes over the next 30 months. The A-NPDC will be partnering with the Eastern Shore Health District to provide a comprehensive program of lead removal, blood tests, education and follow-up.

### Regional Housing Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

- Julie Badger, Co-Chair
- George Schoolfield, Co-Chair
- Llewelyn Allison
- Whitesy Banks
- Sandra Benson
- Hon. Robert S. Bloxom
- R. Keith Bull
- Cela Burge
- Jane Cabarrus
- Rev. Charles Cannon
- Cheryl Chesser
- Alice Coles
- Hon. Dewey Crockett
- Eleanor Drewniak
- Roxanne Fabrizio
- Brenda Holden
- William Hughes
- J.W. Jeffries
- Cathy Johnson
- Wayne Johnson
- Sandy Manter
- Lee Mapp
- Lance L. Metzler
- Joe Meyer
- Artie Miles
- Margaret Miles
- Lenora Mitchell
- Yvette Morris
- Mary Parker
- Martha Parks
- Althea Pittman
- Mary Ann Robbs
- Berran Rogers
- Bedford Rogers
- Rose Rulon
- Susan Scott
- Tyrone Sessoms
- Rev. A.C. Sinclair
- Debra Singletary
- Denard Spady
- Richard Sterrett
- Susanne Taylor
- Nancy Watson
- James West
- Ruth Wise



### Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority

- Lance L. Metzler, Chairman
- Howard C. Wessells II, Vice Chairman
- R. Keith Bull

## Section 8 Rental Assistance

In Fiscal Year 2003 the Section 8 staff was successful in implementing procedures that made the program more effective and helped achieve compliance with HUD's Section 8 Management Assessment Program objectives. A major goal for the staff for the FY03 year was to achieve a 95% lease rate average for the 12-month period. In June staff achieved another major goal, attaining a lease-up rate of 95% of all 538 units in the program. Training goals were set for the FY04 year.

When Darlene Burton left her position as Director of Housing Production in June, Kat Edwards assumed the role of Section 8 Program Manager.



### Accomack-Northampton Housing & Redevelopment Corporation

Lenora Mitchell, President  
Nathaniel Williams, Vice President  
Paul F. Berge, Secretary  
Hon. Donald Sawyer, Treasurer  
Delores Bailey  
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Samuel Boggs  
Jay Brown  
R. Keith Bull  
Louise Coles  
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Doris T. Whitley  
Martha C. Young

## Build for the Future

Dave Johnson, the Construction Supervisor for the Build for the Future program, provided intensive training in a supportive atmosphere and succeeded in giving trainees the skills needed to succeed in the construction trades. A total of 14 Northampton and Accomack County residents received training. Nine trainees successfully completing the program and 6 of them are actively employed in construction work.

One trainee has received a Class B contractor's license.

The trainees' final project was building two homes for residents in the Fairview Community Development Block Grant project area. The program officially ended in October and while it was a labor- and dollar-intensive program, the opportunities it afforded trainees to improve their lives made it worthwhile.



*Build for the Future Trainees at work*

## Housing Improvements Benefit 30 Families

Thirty families on the Shore benefited from housing improvements provided by the housing programs administered by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, the Housing & Redevelopment Corporation, and the Regional Housing Authority. Twenty-three new houses were built, six existing houses were rehabilitated, and one family was provided with mortgage funds to purchase an existing standard house.

The improvements included the installation of 23 new deep wells, and 23 on-site sewer systems. Five families received indoor plumbing for the first time. Approximately \$1,124,000 of State and Federal program funds were accessed to provide the assistance.

Additionally, the Regional Housing Authority partnered with Accomack County to purchase a house in northern Accomack County through HUD's \$1 Home Sales to Local Governments Program. The Program makes HUD owned properties available to local governments when the properties have gone unsold after being offered to the public for six months or more. The local government must assure HUD that the property acquired will be used to support local housing and community development initiatives.

After completing some minor repairs, the HUD house will be made available to a low-income family who currently lives in a house without indoor plumbing.

# Wessells Commended for 24 Years of Service

The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission commended former Commissioner Howard C. Wessells II for his 24 years of service. He served the second longest term of any A-NPDC commissioner. Mr. Wessells was appointed in June 1978, replacing his father, Howard Chandler Wessells, a charter member of the A-NPDC.

## Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission Staff

Paul F. Berge, Executive Director  
David F. Annis, Director of Housing Production  
Darlene Burton, Director of Housing Development  
Susan P. Haycox, Director of Administration  
Greg Manter, Director of Economic Development  
James M. McGowan, Director of Planning  
John Aigner, Community Development Coordinator  
Kat Edwards, Community Development Coordinator  
Josie James, Community Development Coordinator  
Allen B. Teasley, Regional Planner  
Robert Williams, Housing Specialist  
Bobbie Wert, Section 8 Administrative Assistant  
Barbara Schwenk, Economic Development Coordinator  
Dave Johnson, Construction/Training Supervisor  
Tabatha C. Walker, Administrative Assistant  
Leslie A. Savage, Clerical Assistant/Receptionist



## Accomack- Northampton Planning District Commission

Oliver H. Bennett, Chairman  
Thomas J. Matthews, Vice Chairman  
Thomas H. Dixon, III  
Gregory L. Duncan  
C. D. Fleming, Jr.  
Donald L. Hart, Jr.  
Julia E. Major  
Lester Spady  
Gwendolyn F. Turner  
Felton T. Sessoms  
Randolph Walker  
H. C. Wessells, II  
James West  
Shirley Zamora

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