

Regional Progress

An Annual Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

Fiscal Year 2004-2005

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

New Affordable Housing Funds Highlight 2005

Over \$12.5 million was awarded in 2005 to private and public Eastern Shore groups to develop affordable housing in the region. This funding will build or repair over 180 units of affordable homes. The affordable housing projects included:

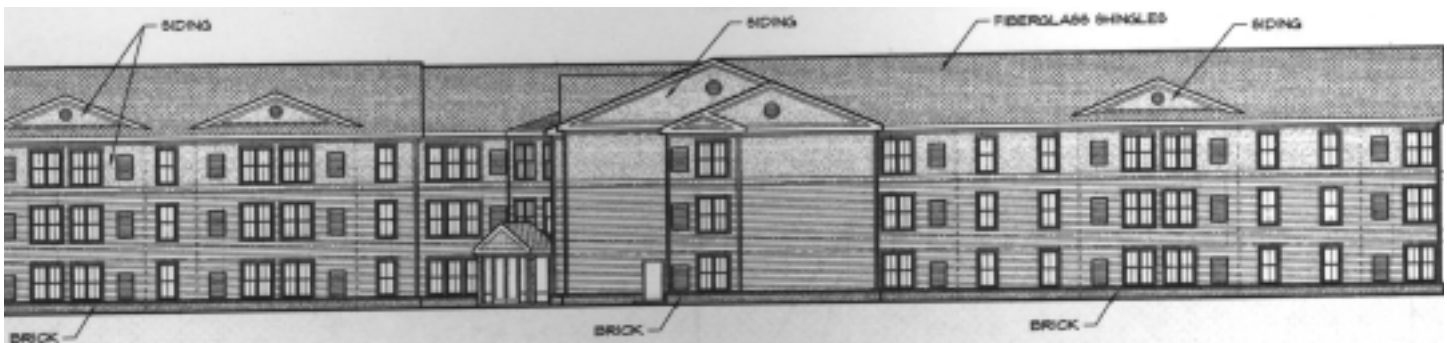
- \$7.7 million to build 90 units of affordable senior rental apartments in Accomack County;
- \$1.4 million to build 15 affordable rental units for persons with disabilities in Exmore;

- \$1.38 million to repair 40 family affordable rental units in Onancock;
- \$1.25 million for income-eligible families to purchase affordable homes;
- \$.75 million to build 8 new affordable rental units at Mill Run Apartments in Belle Haven; and
- \$68,000 to house 5 chronically homeless persons.

These new projects, in addition to ongoing projects Bayview and New Road communities, are important steps

forward in meeting critical shortages of affordable housing on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

The need for new projects was detailed in the A-NPDC's *Regional Housing Assessment and Strategic Plan* in 2002. The Plan calls for more affordable rental units for families and persons with disabilities, expanded homeownership counseling and homeless services, and continued improvement of communities with concentrations of substandard housing.



Elevation Drawings of the Accomack Manor Project

A-NPDC to Elevate 91 High Risk Homes in Accomack, Northampton and Tangier

In September, the Accomack County Board of Supervisors voted to accept a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to elevate 60 homes in Accomack County and to acquire and demolish the Wachapreague Volunteer Fire Company building.

This project in Accomack County comes in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel, and calls for the elevation of high risk homes in low lying coastal areas. All of the properties that will be raised

in this project are located within the Special Flood Area of the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay and applied for the HMGP Program after Hurricane Isabel. They include homes on the Island of Tangier and in the communities of Saxis, Onancock, Wachapreague, Pungoteague, Hallwood, Hacks Neck and Quinby. Each will be elevated to at least one foot above the base flood elevation as required by Accomack County. The acquisition of the fire station will allow the department to rebuild on a higher, safer site.

Under the Accomack County 2004 HMGP Program, FEMA will contribute \$2,678,550, representing 75% of the cost of the project. The Commonwealth of Virginia will contribute \$714,280, representing 20% of the cost and the property owners will contribute 5% or \$178,570, for a total project amount of \$3,571,400.

The A-NPDC will also elevate 18 homes in Northampton County and 13 Tangier Island homes with FEMA funds.

Groundwater Committee's Annual Report FY2005

The Groundwater Committee conducted several activities under the leadership of Chairman Wanda Thornton and Vice Chairman Suzanne Wescoat. The Committee reviewed and tracked Ground Water Withdrawal Applications and Permits and ground water use trends. They also continued their work with the USGS and the Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Model.

Several ground water protection measures were implemented. A new Ground Water Webpage has been created by the Committee's consultant. It is located at www.a-npdc.org. The Committee also assisted the Soil and Water Conservation District in producing the Shore Outdoors Ground Water Supplement for the Eastern Shore News. Other activities included the development of the Ground Water Awards Program and two Household Hazardous Waste Collections, where over four tons of material was taken off the Shore to be disposed of properly or reused.

The Committee's consultant also monitored ground water quality data. Although most of the permitted facilities on the Eastern Shore do not show evidence of saltwater intrusion, some facilities have elevated chloride concentrations although the cause of this is unknown. The facilities are Eastern Shore Seafood, NASA Wallops Island, and YMCA Campground at Silver Beach. There is saltwater intrusion in the Town of Cape Charles, as predicted by the Town's Withdrawal Permit work.



Household Hazardous Waste Disposal at ESO Arts Center



Left to Right: Ground Water Committee Past Chairman Wanda Thornton, Chairman Suzanne Wescoat, Jane Corson-Lassiter, Secretary Paul Berge

First Annual Ground Water Award Presented to Jane Corson-Lassiter

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee has awarded Jane Corson-Lassiter of the Eastern Shore Environmental Education Council the 2005 Groundwater Award. The Award was made at the annual A-NPDC Holiday Reception. The Award recognizes her work on the 2005 Shore Outdoors newspaper insert featuring information about Ground Water Resources. The issue highlighted that our drinking water aquifer is limited. The lens of drinkable water is quite small when looking at the surrounding salt water which surrounds us and underlays us. The supplement reached approximately 65% of Shore households and contained detailed information about local ground water use and supply.

The Eastern Shore Environmental Education Council has been publishing Shore Outdoors since 2003. The Environmental Education Council is an association interested in environmental education, conservation, and natural resource protection on the Eastern Shore. The Environmental Education Council has plans to develop an additional newspaper supplement concerning Eastern Shore ground water issues.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia is dependent on ground water as its only source

of fresh water, and that supply could easily be irreversibly damaged. The Ground Water Committee wants to reward activities that protect that supply. The Committee has established the Ground Water Awards Program to publicize efforts that benefit our water supply. Six types of projects are eligible: Water Conservation, Recharge Area Protection/Preservation, Aquifer Preservation, Recycling/Reuse, Pollution Prevention and Public Education/Community Outreach.

Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee

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First Draft of Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment Released

The first draft of the Eastern Shore Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, funded through a grant from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and FEMA, was released at the June 2005 Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Committee meeting. The primary purpose of this document is to describe risk on the Eastern Shore. This is the first step towards compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

The draft explains in detail the Eastern Shore's vulnerability to four natural hazards -- coastal flooding, storm water flooding, high wind and coastal erosion. Accomack County, Northampton County and the Towns of Chincoteague, Cape Charles, Wachapreague, Tangier, Saxis and Onancock have individual risk assessments. Other towns are discussed under the county risk assessments.

A large number of structures on the Eastern Shore lie in the most hazardous areas. The coast is a very attrac-

tive location to live and is also the most vulnerable in times of coastal storms. Some 12,351 structures, 38% of all structures, are located in the 100-year coastal floodplain. Of these, an estimated 8,147 were built before the county adopted building code of standards to reduce the threat to coastal buildings. Further, 127, representing 4% of all structures, lie within 50 feet of the shoreline and are the buildings with the most risk for damage from coastal erosion. The wind borne debris hazard vulnerability area is defined as one-mile inland from the coast and include 9,595 structures within this area.

Knowing how a hazard event could affect our community is the first step toward creating a safer place for all residents of the Eastern Shore. By considering this information, county officials and residents can make the best decision about how to keep themselves, their families and property safe.

Northampton County Emergency Operation Plan Completed

Northampton County has adopted the Emergency Operation Plan Update prepared by the County with the A-NPDC's assistance. The Board of Supervisors considered the document in June 2005 and again after Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana.

Several new annexes have been added since the last revision and these include: terrorism, animal control, recovery, and debris management.

Transportation Committee 2005 Highlights

Under the guidance of the A-NPDC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, and the A-NPDC staff:

- Completed the Transportation Element of the Accomack County Comprehensive Plan;
- Secured funds to prepare a Transportation Element of the Chincoteague Comprehensive Plan;
- Reviewed the Rt. 13/Wallops Island Transportation Study and studied closure of unused medians on Rt 13;
- Completed the Parksley Bike Plan;
- Partnered with the Virginia State Police to analyze traffic accident and fatality data.



Eastern Shore of Virginia
Public Service Authority

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Hon. Richard B. Tankard, Vice Chair
Stephen C. Bunce, Sr.
Michael Peirson
Hon. Jeffrey K. Walker

Advisors

Lance L. Metzler
Robert C. Oliver, Jr., Esquire
Russel O. Slayton, Jr., Esquire

PSA Now A Single Member Authority

On Wednesday, July 20, 2005, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority received communication from the State Corporation Commission that the Certificate of Amendment for Accomack County's petition for withdrawal from the Authority was effective on July 13, 2005.

Following Accomack County's withdrawal, the Northampton County Board of Supervisors selected two citizens, Stephen C. Bunce of Nassawadox and Dr. Michael Peirson of Eastville, to fill the vacant positions for a minimum Board complement of five members.

A-NPDC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

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Paul F. Berge, Secretary
Nancy Duncan
Robert Howard (for Mary Ardolino)
Larry LeMond
Sandy Manter
Harold Paxton (for Unwanna Bellinger)
Robert Johnson (for Paul Burnette)
Eric Stringfield
Hon. Wanda J. Thornton
James West
Ivan Ruker (non-voting)

NEW FOOD POLICY COUNCIL STUDIES FOOD PRODUCTION, MARKETING, AND AVAILABILITY

In September and October, the ANPDC held four public meetings to solicit citizen feedback on the current state of agriculture, food access, and food security for the Eastern Shore of Virginia. These meetings were part of a project funded by USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) to develop a Regional Food System Policy.

A successful policy would serve as a roadmap to create stronger links between farmers and local markets, improve food security and access to locally produced food, and enhance downtown revitalization by capturing a portion of the estimated \$125 million in food dollars that leave the Shore every year. A successful policy would also create opportunities for self-employment by growing or processing food for local consumption.

As a result of these initial meetings, several attendees expressed interest in forming a new regional food policy

council to work on the goals set out by the SARE grant. The group welcomes participation from all interested citizens and hopes to involve many more people in its work.

The first task of the new food policy council will be to study the Shore's current agricultural system. The study will involve the use of standard data such as the US Census of Agriculture and state resources, but it will also involve ways to make new connections between agencies, nonprofits, churches, and businesses so that people can talk about food and health in a new context – the context of "local food." An article on the Food Policy Council's initial research appeared in *Shore Outdoors*, an annual insert prepared by RC&D for distribution in the Eastern Shore News. The council's next step is to conduct a survey about where citizens buy their food, what they buy, how they view growing their own food, whether they travel off the Shore to buy food, why they do, and to gauge inter-

est in buying more locally grown or processed foods.

The final step will be to request that localities adopt a regional food policy resolution.



Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership

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Suzanne Taylor
Honorable Suzanne Wescoat
James M. West
Bruce E. Underwood

Broadband Initiative Begins

Broadband Internet access is an important tool for businesses and students, but it's not available across most of Accomack County. Universal broadband access could help our existing businesses stay competitive and enable dozens of new business start-ups.

Worcester County, Maryland has the same problem as Accomack – broadband Internet access isn't available in most of the County. They are tackling the problem by supporting the Lower Shore Broadband Cooperative. The Cooperative is going to have a WiMax wireless broadband system operational in Worcester County on October 1. The system will cover the entire county and will be cost-competitive with DSL. WiMax is a new wireless standard that can cover up to 5 miles from the broadcast tower and has a connection speed of 1.5 Mbps.

Accomack County has an opportunity to encourage the development of broadband Internet throughout the en-

tire County, just as Worcester has. To proceed with a broadband Internet project, there will have to be: a request for proposals (RFP) from Internet providers, a business plan, a system design, and a financing strategy.

At its August meeting, the Accomack Board of Supervisors approved an application to Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for money to complete the project plan. The planning grant will fund the Request for Proposals process and the preparation of a detailed plan for a broadband Internet system covering the County. The plan will then be used in another application to the Community Development Block Grant program for construction funding.

The Commonwealth of Virginia, Accomack County, Northampton County, and Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative are also partnering to bring a backbone fiber optic cable along the Eastern Shore.

Towns Develop New Eastern Shore Logo

The Towns of Cape Charles, Exmore, Onancock, and Chincoteague, using a regional planning grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development, have designed a new logo for the Eastern Shore. This grant was also used to develop a strategy to implement individual marketing efforts as well as a joint effort to market the towns based on their assets and strengths. The Regional Downtown Management Committee Team, lead by the Town of Cape Charles and staffed by the A-NPDC, worked with Bay Dream Design to develop a logo to be used on

marketing material for the towns and the region. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Logo has several distinctive features that reflect the resources of the Shore.

The towns selected a armorial design with several symbols that have significance to the region. The crest of the logo is a sunburst representing our climate. The shield has six picture areas, these include a sea gull, shop building with awning, crab, and the dog rose resembling Virginia's state flower the dogwood on green background with wavy blue lines on either side.



The New Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Logo

Exmore Receives Enhancement Funds

Exmore was awarded \$264,100 in the latest round of TEA-21 Enhancement Grant funding. The grant will help the Town to construct the first phase of a public parking facility between Broad Street and Main Street. It will include 56 parking spaces, a sheltered Star Transit stop and pedestrian connection to the commercial district. Property owners have agreed to donate the land needed to construct the facility.

The funds will also be used to continue improvements to Main Street. New streets and sidewalks, relocated utility poles and facade improvements have already been completed.

23 Years after its Creation, Economic Development Commission to End

With Northampton County ending funding for the Eastern Shore of Virginia Economic Development Commission, the Commission closed operations on September 30. Accomack and Northampton Counties jointly established the Commission in 1982 to promote the economic development of the region. The A-NPDC started staffing the Commission in 1985. Five professionals served as Economic Development Director of the the Commission. The last, Greg Manter had served the Commission since 1996.



Eastern Shore of Virginia Economic Development Commission

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Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

	A-NPDC	A-NHRC	A-NRHA	ESVEDC	ESVRP	ESVPSA
REVENUES:						
Local	\$ 235,556	\$ 18,167	\$ 105,151	\$102,000	\$114,185	\$100,000
State	91,524	2,780	0	0	0	8,000
Federal	961,570	651,475	2,496,233	0	0	0
Other	134,175	38,106	137,900	536	706	246
TOTALS	\$11,422,825	\$710,528	\$2,739,284	\$102,536	\$114,891	\$108,246
EXPENSES:						
Personnel/Management	\$ 885,796	\$ 90,766	\$ 315,349	\$ 86,612	\$ 554	\$ 88,512
Contractual Services	366,203	90,077	59,134	9,061	114,880	31,435
Other Operating Expenses	177,201	137,707	127,147	18,579	0	752
Construction/Capital Expense	0	390,754	0	0	0	0
Rental Assistance	0	0	2,120,212	0	0	0
Reserve (Deficit)	(6,375)	1,224	117,442	(11,716)	(543)	(12,453)
TOTALS	\$11,422,825	\$710,528	\$2,739,284	\$102,536	\$114,891	\$108,246

Regional Housing Authority To Administer Homeless Intervention Program

The Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority (A-NRHA) will administer the Department of Housing and Community Development's Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) for the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The Homeless Prevention Task Force's November 2004 survey showed that 169 people were homeless on the Eastern Shore. HIP seeks to prevent homelessness by providing temporary financial assistance that results in housing and financial stability as well as self-sufficiency.

Services offered by HIP include up to



Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority

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Donald Sawyer

9 months of rental or mortgage assistance, security and/or utility deposits, and housing counseling to establish and implement a self-sufficiency plan. Persons eligible for HIP are those who have not previously received assistance from HIP either through A-NRHA or any other agency, are in imminent danger of losing their home or apartment through foreclosure or eviction, are experiencing a temporary financial crisis due to unavoidable circumstances, such as accident, illness, job layoff, loss of transportation, etc., have exhausted all other resources, meet income requirements, and can demonstrate evidence of prior self-sufficiency and the potential for future self-sufficiency.

Enrollment in HIP is a two step process, with potential clients responsible for completing a screening application to allow for an evaluation to assess the immediate need of and eligibility for assistance. A qualifying applicant will be given an application and an appointment for an interview with a housing counselor. Upon verification of documentation and a committee review of the application, the applicant will be noti-

fied of the enrollment decision.

Continued eligibility for the program will be determined on a monthly basis by the HIP Counselor and based on the participants' strong commitment to achieving the goals outlined in their Housing and Self-Sufficiency Plan. Persons facing foreclosure on a primary residence mortgage property may access HIP funds available in the form of no-interest loans. The A-NRHA does not issue grants for mortgage assistance through the HIP program. A Promissory Note will need to be executed for all mortgage assistance loans, as well as a Deed of Trust for loan amounts in excess of \$2500.



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Eastern Shore Lead Safe Homes Program Update

The initial grant for the Virginia Lead Safe Homes Program will terminate on July 31, 2005, having completed lead remediation and rehab on 17 units on the Eastern Shore, including 10 in Northampton County and 7 in Accomack County. In a flurry of activity, almost half of these will have been finished in the last four months of the contract, with the PDC having expended approximately \$400,000 to reduce lead hazards in these homes. The Lead Safe Homes Program will continue with CDBG funds allocated for lead remediation in another 18 homes.

The Eastern Shore has been identified as having a high incidence of children with lead poisoning. Young children are

at risk of lead poisoning, which damages their brain and nervous system.

To be eligible for the Program, families must own or rent a home built before 1978, have children under the age of 6 spending significant time there, and meet HUD income guidelines for low-to-moderate income households.



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Thirty Families Benefit From Housing Improvements

Thirty families on the Shore benefited from housing improvements provided by the various housing programs administered by the A-NPDC, the A-NHRC, and the A-NRHA.

Lead-paint hazards were eliminated from twelve houses whose families include children under the age of six. Nine families become first-time homeowners, and ten families were provided with first-time indoor plumbing.

Approximately \$910,000 of State and Federal program funds were accessed to provide the improvements.

The A-NRA partnered with Accomack County to purchase a house through HUD's \$1 Home Sales to Local Governments Program. The proceeds from the sale of the house will be used to support local housing and community development initiatives

Survey Finds 169 Homeless on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

A survey conducted on November 18 found 102 households, single adults and families were homeless. In total, 169 were without permanent housing, 67 were children. The homeless may sleep from house to house, in shelters, cars, abandoned or unsafe buildings, or even outdoors.

The survey showed that half of the identified homeless were males and half were females. Three-quarters had a high school degree or less. A majority had lost their housing due to a lack of employment or insufficient funds to sustain their home, a majority will spend the night either in unsafe/abandoned housing or living from house to house, a third were disabled and a third reported substance abuse problems. Ten percent were victims of domestic violence, and

ten percent have served our country in the military.

The November 18 survey was intended to be a "snapshot" of the homeless population on that date. Because of the difficulty in counting in rural areas, it is likely that more families and individuals are homeless than were identified by the survey. The results will be used by the community to prepare a homeless prevention plan and funding applications to the state and federal governments for services and facilities.

The Homeless Task Force enlisted the help of many agencies to conduct the survey, including sheriff and police departments, shelters, soup kitchens, social services, housing and human service agencies.

David Annis Receives the Carl Rasnic Lifetime Achievement Award



(Left to Right) Paul Berge, A-NPDC, Kat Edwards, A-NPDC, Todd Christensen, DHCD, David Annis, A-NPDC

David Annis, Director of Housing Production, received the Carl Rasnic Lifetime Achievement Award at the Annual Housing Rehabilitation Conference sponsored by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Todd Christensen, the Associate Director of the Community Development

Division of DHCD, made the award. Mr. Annis was selected based on his long record of rehabilitating over 300 houses and constructing over 50 new homes for poor Eastern Shore residents. (The A-NPDC has another staff person, Director of Housing Development Kat Edwards, who received this award in 1997)



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A-PDC Mourns Tommy Matthews

Accomack Supervisors Thomas J. Matthews passed away on February 28, 2006. He served on the A-NPDC during his entire public career starting in 1992. He also served on the Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation for the same 14 years. Tommy's legacy was

the revitalization projects in Withams, Horntown, and Makemie Park, all distressed communities needing comprehensive improvements. "Tommy was the champion for affordable housing for the Shore," said A-NPDC Director Paul Berge. "We will dearly miss his energy, commitment, and leadership."



Thomas J. Matthews
Photo provided by the Eastern Shore News

A-NPDC Staff

Paul F. Berge, Executive Director
David F. Annis, Dir. of Housing
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Kat Edwards, Dir. of Housing Develop.
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