



Click topics below to read the various sections of the 2002-03 Annual Report:

[Manager's Message](#)

[Human Resources](#)

[Board of Supervisors](#)

[Information Technology](#)

[Building Construction and Inspections](#)

[Internal Audit](#)

[Capital Area Training Consortium \(CATC\)](#)

[James River Juvenile Detention Center](#)

[Circuit Court](#)

[Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court](#)

[Commonwealth's Attorney](#)

[Juvenile Detention](#)

[Community Corrections Program](#)

[Juvenile Probation](#)

[Cooperative Extension](#)

[Libraries](#)

[County Attorney](#)

[Mental Health/Mental Retardation](#)

[Demographics](#)

[Permit Center](#)

[Division of Fire](#)

[Planning](#)

[Division of Police](#)

[Public Relations & Media Services](#)

[Economic Development](#)

[Public Utilities](#)

[Finance Financial Summary](#)

[Public Works](#)

[General District Court](#)

[Real Property](#)

[General Registrar](#)

[General Services](#)

[Health Department](#)

[Recreation and Parks](#)

[Schools](#)

[Sheriff](#)

[Social Services](#)

Manager's Message



Through this past fiscal year, we have seen the economy turning further south and the world still reeling from the tragic events of September 11, 2001. As a local government entity, Henrico County has been challenged by the aftermath of the terrorist events, by the war in Iraq, and by the potentially devastating state budget cuts. While many jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth have been forced to cut spending across-the-board, resort to layoffs, and to subsequently reduce services to their residents, Henrico County has remained not only stable and strong, but also progressive.

In the past 12 years as your County Manager, we have been committed to offering the best possible service to you—our residents—and this service will not be compromised, period. Because of long-term planning and fiscal

responsibility, Henrico County has not fallen into a nearsighted budgetary trap. We owe it to you to foresee possible shortfalls and economic challenges, and that is exactly what we have done. I am pleased to present this annual report to you because we, frankly, have a lot of good news to share. Henrico County's exceptional staff and incisive leadership from the Board of Supervisors, combined with an institutional goal to provide innovative and incomparable services, have once again earned us recognition from the National Association of Counties as being among the best in local governments nationwide. This year, we received 13 Achievement Awards, one of which was also the coveted Best in Category. From our nationally accredited divisions of Police and Fire and our cream-of-the-crop Public School system, to our triple-A bond ratings, Henrico County continues to be at the top of the game. As proud as I am to be your County Manager, I am even more proud to be a Henrico County resident. Even in the face of potentially serious challenges and hurdles, we stand strong, and we will not fail you. As a Henrico County resident, you have every reason to feel confident and secure with your local government, because I assure you we are, Rock Solid.

[contents](#)

Board of Supervisors

Brookland, Fairfield, Three Chopt, Tuckahoe, and Varina are the five magisterial districts that comprise Henrico County. One elected representative from each of these districts constitutes Henrico's Board of Supervisors. The board appoints the county manager who is the chief administrator of the county, overseeing 34 departments within the local government. In addition, the board appoints members to 40 local boards and commissions to ensure the best possible administration of the county.

[contents](#)

Division of Police

Henrico residents won't soon forget our Division of Police's involvement in capturing the violent sniper suspects last fall, who eluded authorities for three weeks as they went on a shooting rampage along the I-95 corridor from Richmond to Montgomery County, Maryland. When the snipers struck in Ashland, the entire Henrico Division of Police kicked into high gear—working in conjunction with other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies—to follow leads and develop strategies to apprehend the suspects. The Division of Police played a vital role in the sniper operation; their cooperation and dedication assisted authorities with the ultimate capture and arrest of the two suspects, who are presently awaiting trial in several jurisdictions. In the wake of September 11, 2001, and with the ever-present threat of terrorism, the experience and knowledge gained from an incident of this magnitude have better prepared the Division of Police in developing and implementing homeland security measures. Also in FY03, the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission reaccredited Henrico's Division of Police. The law enforcement assessors gave high praise to our division's operations, noting that Henrico “exemplifies professionalism and pride from the chief executive officer to patrol officer. Every member is very knowledgeable of his or her duties and responsibilities. The agency is well-managed and prepared to meet any challenge that would come their way. [It] is very community-oriented and is well-liked in the community.”

Last April, the Division of Police, School Resource Officers and the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Unit, sponsored the 10th annual “DARE to Go Fishing” at Dorey Park, successfully bringing together fifth grade students, their families, police officers and business and civic groups, offering a positive alternative to drugs and violence. D.A.R.E. and School Resource Officers created “learning-to-fish” stations around the lake, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries provided educational materials, and business and civic groups supplied drinks, food and prizes for attendees. Depending upon weather, this annual event draws 300-700 participants.

Division of Fire

The Division of Fire added a Quality Assurance Coordinator position to its complement during FY03, demonstrating the county's commitment to provide excellent emergency medical services to our residents. Emergency Medical Services' (EMS) full-time registered nurse helps to ensure high quality medical care; the quality assurance coordinator identifies any areas needing reinforcement, making suggestions for new or additional procedures that field staff can implement. For example, the program developed the first "treat and release" protocol in Virginia, allowing staff to treat patients for minor injuries and release them, avoiding an unnecessary trip to the hospital.

With coronary heart disease being the nation's leading cause of death, access to an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) could mean the difference between life and death for victims of cardiac arrest. Through an internal computer system, AEDs can detect the appropriate timing and level of energy delivered to an unconscious cardiac arrest victim. Because of the user-friendly design, virtually anyone can administer the electrical shock in an emergency, saving precious time for a victim until medical personnel can arrive. During the past fiscal year, the division installed 21 AED units throughout various county buildings, focusing on remote locations and areas with high employee and visitor traffic. Henrico is the first locality in the region to install publicly accessible AEDs.

In October, the newly constructed Fire Station 18 opened for business to serve the eastern part of the county. The 10,330 square foot station houses an engine company, tanker, brush unit, a SCBA Unit (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) and a police field office. The 2000 Bond Referendum, overwhelmingly approved by Henrico voters, provided funding for the sorely needed station—the first Henrico has opened since 1993. Station 18 is the county's only facility built to accommodate both fire and police staff.

Planning

Local residents and businesses were the catalyst for the Brook Road Enhancement Study, which resulted in Planning staff recommending more than 50 improvement proposals for the area last fiscal year. This

emerging success story is possible through code enforcement, community policing, market analysis, the Commercial Assistance Team's technical support to property owners and businesses, and encouraging business development. Not only has the plan established an effective public/private partnership to revitalize Brook Road, but has formed unified neighborhood and business associations.

During FY03, the Commonwealth of Virginia approved a joint application from Henrico County and the City of Richmond to create an Enterprise Zone designed to stimulate economic growth along West Broad Street from Glenside Drive to Staples Mill Road, and Nine Mile Road between Dabbs House and Hanover roads. This zone will allow the county and the state to provide incentives to local businesses, encouraging new jobs and economic stimulation for these aging commercial areas. As part of the incentives, Planning staff will offer a design and technical assistance program to qualified businesses. In addition, commercial and industrial businesses located in the Enterprise Zone may qualify for tax credits and grants to assist with redevelopment.

Henrico's Planning Office also implemented the Urban Mixed Use (UMU) District Ordinance as part of the county's Comprehensive Revitalization Strategy. UMU allows high quality, pedestrian-oriented activity centers, which can include businesses, entertainment uses, office and retail space and apartments, all within the same building or site. A prime example of the UMU development is currently in the planning stages; Rocketts Landing, located along the James River and bordering the City of Richmond, will reuse some of the existing structures as well as new construction to revitalize one of the oldest industrial areas in Henrico.

In FY03, the Planning Office earned awards from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Virginia Downtown Development Association and the Virginia Association of Counties in recognition of their innovative revitalization strategies.

[contents](#)

Economic Development

In March, the official announcement that Philip Morris USA would be moving its corporate headquarters to Henrico County was welcome news not just for the Economic Development Authority (EDA), but the entire metro region. Not only will the relocation of Philip Morris USA, a unit of New York-based Altria Group Inc., bring high-paying jobs and add a significant boost to the county's tax revenues, it will positively impact the region's retail, housing and business sectors. The newly created Enterprise Zone along Broad Street helped entice Philip Morris USA to relocate its headquarters to Henrico. More good news for our local economy came with the San Francisco Bay-based GE Long Term Care's announcement to expand its existing Henrico County facility, and relocate its company headquarters. New to the area, the Insurance Group is a business unit for GE's national long-term care program. EDA staff estimates 200 new jobs will result from the relocation. The EDA continued the Existing Business Assistance Program, a valuable resource dedicated to helping the small business

owner in Henrico County. Any existing company is qualified to use this varied service, which provides assistance with everything from business plan development, facilities leasing and financing, to marketing, legal representation and advertising. Small business owners need only contact the EDA to begin the process. Last fiscal year, staff sent letters to hundreds of local businesses reminding them about the program, and the free services from which they could benefit.

[contents](#)

Building Construction and Inspections

In anticipation of the International Residential Building Code that becomes effective this fall, Building Inspections staff conducted 11 free, comprehensive training programs for contractors, architects, engineers and residents to explain the differences in the new codes, and the impact they would have on the building construction and inspection process. These well-attended sessions covered everything from roofing and framing, to electrical and utility codes. Despite the sour economy, new building construction continued in Henrico County during the past fiscal year. Building Inspections staff issued more than 18,000 permits (in total) and performed more than 82,000 new conealth for our local economy.

[contents](#)

The Permit Center

Because of The Permit Center's outstanding technology initiatives, the county received its first Silver Award for Local Governments at the 2002 Governor's Technology Award ceremony last year. The Permit Center combines cutting-edge technology and a streamlined staff in one location to simplify what was once a lengthy, complex process for Henrico homeowners and builders: the review, approval and issuance of residential building permits. By merging the functions of the Planning Office, Building Inspections as well as the Public Works and Public Utilities departments, the process of reviewing and approving additions, decks or accessory structures can often be completed now in two hours or less instead of several days. Technology has played a key role in the center's success; software provides easy access to legal descriptions of county properties and facilitates permit review.

[contents](#)

Public Utilities

Mother Nature delivered both feast and famine rainfall extremes during FY03, keeping the Department of Public Utilities staff hopping. Despite last summer's severe drought conditions and the intensely wet spring and summer, Public Utilities was able to complete construction of major water distribution piping and expansion of the central testing laboratory; both projects will facilitate operations at the new Water Treatment Facility.

To enhance communications with its customers, Public Utilities staff developed a quarterly newsletter, *The Water Source*, to distribute with utility bills. The newsletter encourages public comment and feedback while relaying important water conservation measures and changes affecting customers. The Solid Waste Division of Public Utilities received recognition for its efforts with two awards from the Virginia Recycling Association: one for its Outstanding County or Municipal Recycling Program, and a Spotlight Award for an educational video developed by Keep Henrico Beautiful, Public Schools and Solid Waste. Back at the Water Reclamation Facility, it's 1,020 days and counting . . . without a single "lost time" accident—meaning one serious enough to require staff to miss time from work. An extraordinary accomplishment for a facility the size of Henrico's (200 acres of operating space), this achievement demonstrates the department's commitment to safety on the job, and serves as an example of our top-notch, professional staff.

[contents](#)

Public Works

While many of us spent the 2003 President's Day holiday bundled up in front of the fire, marveling at the winter wonderland outside, Public Works staff was toiling around-the-clock to penetrate the rock-solid ice that paralyzed the entire metro area. The steady sleet, snow and freezing rain made the removal effort an age. Public Works had 120 vehicles working the snow and ice removal effort 24 hours a day until the county's roadways were safe and passable. Also in FY03, the Public Works Department

completed the preliminary development and testing of a traffic-calming program. This program uses physical barriers, such as speed humps and diverters, to slow traffic in residential neighborhoods without restricting access to residential streets. Staff studied the impact tools and options in three areas last year, and plans to present the findings and propose a program to the Board of Supervisors later this year. The Public Works Environmental Division continued implementing the stream restoration project last year, focusing on stream system restoration, buffer creation and dumpsite elimination, as well as meeting water run-off requirements for future and existing development. Several years ago, the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of an environmental fund to accomplish the project, which will also add buffers such as vegetation and trees along the banks. Vegetation functions as a natural filter to help eliminate pollutants (such as chemicals or sediment) from ground water before it runs into the stream system, as well as prevents further erosion and encourages aquatic life growth. The removal of dumpsites along streams is an extremely important—yet tedious—element of the project; since its inception, county staff has removed 50 dumpsites from our stream system.

[contents](#)

County Attorney

During FY03, the County Attorney's Office continued its litigation with Gold City Showgirls in federal and state court, as well as participated in hearings before the Henrico Board of Zoning Appeals and the Local Board of Building Code Appeals for code violations ranging from adult video sales to erecting improper partitions. The office was victorious in obtaining injunctions against Gold City for its violations of county code. County Attorney staff also helped guide Henrico through a legal jungle known as HIPAA—the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. This federal legislation seeks to protect the privacy of individuals' health information and to make health insurance more affordable and accessible, resulting in sweeping changes in most health care transactions and administrative information systems. Because Henrico County provides health care to its employees and is itself a health care provider (through the departments of Mental Health and Health), it is impacted by HIPAA legislation. Like other health care providers, the county must adopt national standards for certain electronic health care transactions, codes, identifiers and security. The County Manager established a HIPAA Task Force to make recommendations on achieving and maintaining compliance under this new legislation. During the past fiscal year, the County Attorney's Office also acquired easements, rights-of-way and property for the Division of Fire, Schools, Recreation and Parks, Libraries and the Government Center at Parham and Hungary Spring roads for improvements and expansion. Staff worked with Public Utilities to acquire easements for sewer rehabilitation projects; Public Works for rights-of-way and easements for road widening projects; and negotiated office space for Mental Health and Retardation.

[contents](#)

Office of the General Registrar

In FY03, the Registrar's Office put technology to use and can now electronically supply most public records for in-house viewing. Using Apple iBooks borrowed from Henrico's Public Schools, election officials at the polls are able to provide information to voters about their particular polling place (voting location), significantly reducing the volume of calls to the Registrar's Office on Election Day. The office also upgraded its Web site to include a polling place locator, assisting residents and county agencies with magisterial district information and precinct maps. Residents can now print these maps and information from their home computers rather than visiting the office in person to purchase the documents. In addition, the office implemented the use of student pages at the polls. Last fall, 28 students between the ages of 16 to 18 received training and worked at polling locations assisting election officials and voters. Student volunteers gain valuable experience, can contribute to their community and receive a Certificate of Achievement. The Registrar's Office is always looking for a few good pages; students interested in becoming a page can call 501-4347 for more information.

[contents](#)

General District Court

Henrico's General District Court handled a heavy caseload in FY03, while continuing to implement cost-cutting and timesaving measures to improve court administration. Last year, staff developed a video arraignment system for defendants who are not able to make bond. Video arraignments relieve staff of both the labor and expense of transporting defendants from the jail to the courtroom, while ensuring they still receive fair representation.

[contents](#)

Circuit Court

After two years of planning, the Circuit Court instituted the first Drug Court last January. The Drug Court program targets adult probation violators with a long history of substance abuse and offers new solutions to the chronic problem of drug use and crime. The program takes 12 to 18 months to complete and participants are regularly tested for drug use and are subject to random home visits. The offender's prison sentence is resuspended upon the completion and adherence of stringent requirements. Preliminary data has shown that the Drug Court team is meeting its goals while reducing crime. The program has expedited court processing of nonviolent felony probation violators who are eligible for Drug Court. It has increased the number of successful rehabilitation participants through intensive treatment, community supervision and judicial monitoring, and reduced recidivism among graduates of the program.

[contents](#)

Commonwealth's Attorney

The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office won a 2003 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement award for "Open Arms? Open Eyes!" —a video produced in 2002 designed to educate young people about the issues of power and control that can lead to abuse in teen relationships. The office initiated the production of this crime prevention video in conjunction with the Community Criminal Justice Board for the county's 18,000 middle and high school students to prevent or reduce domestic violence. Teenagers who witness domestic violence at home or see it in the media often repeat the abusive and violent behaviors when they begin dating. "Open Arms? Open Eyes!" aims to help break this cycle of violence before teens develop negative dating patterns and interpersonal relationships. The video is now part of the eighth grade curriculum in Henrico, and more than 250 copies have been distributed throughout Virginia. During FY03, Commonwealth's Attorney Wade A. Kizer successfully

prosecuted Juanita Marie Lowery on murder charges, proving she willingly and maliciously injected her non-diabetic husband with lethal doses of insulin. Circuit Court Judge L.A. Harris, Jr. sentenced Lowery to life in prison after a jury convicted her of murdering her husband, Michael Wayne Lowery. The trial and conviction received major media coverage early this year, and was a tremendous victory for the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office.

[contents](#)

Sheriff's Office

Due to its success and popularity, the Sheriff's Office expanded the Substance Abuse Educational Program at Jail East by 36 beds, bringing the total number of beds devoted to substance abuse education to 152. In addition, the office established an Alumni Substance Abuse Group for offenders who are released from custody and are returning to the community. In a continued effort to reduce cost without compromising services, the Sheriff's Office implemented the video arraignment program between the jail and the General District courts. As mentioned, this reduces staff time and costs associated with transporting defendants from jail to court, yet ensures the same fair treatment of the individuals charged. The office also remodeled a portion of the Jail West booking area to accommodate the processing of juvenile arrestees and offenders. By law, juveniles and adults must be kept separate. Staff streamlined the process, making it more efficient and eliminating the need to hire extra personnel, resulting in a one-time \$100,000 savings for the county.

[contents](#)

Community Corrections Program

The Community Corrections Program (CCP) celebrated 20 years in Henrico County in FY03, and 10 years since its pretrial services program began. Last year, CCP supervised more than 1,400 people on local probation supervision and 860 in pretrial supervision. The Virginia Community Criminal Justice Association (VCCJA) recognized the effort of CCP staff and board members for their outstanding work with two awards: the Community Criminal Justice Board won Board of the Year, and Probation

Supervisor Jane Hardell won the Meritorious Service Award.

[contents](#)

Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

In FY03, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court hosted a court improvement program with the Supreme Court of Virginia on foster care best practices. The 70 attendees represented agencies that have a direct role in Henrico's foster care program including Mental Health, Social Services, Courts, Court Services and Schools, as well as private attorneys. Participants focused on maintaining the best interests of the child entering foster care, including immediate needs assessment (rather than waiting several days before a court appearance) and keeping the child enrolled in his current school, regardless of whether he has been placed with a family who lives in a different school district. By focusing on the child, and implementing measures to alleviate further disruption, these agencies can help ensure a more positive outcome when foster care becomes necessary. Staff from the clerk's office held their third annual court-planning day with the judges to review accomplishments and changes for the upcoming year. The daylong retreat enhances communication between staff and judges, leading to better and more efficient court operations. The court's renovation and 7,000 square foot expansion continued throughout the year. The expanded customer service counter and added secure storage areas will allow staff to provide more effective and efficient service. A new attorney workroom, equipped with phones, computers and other essential office resources will provide a more private area for attorney-client consultations.

[contents](#)

Juvenile Probation

In FY03, intake officers in Juvenile Probation processed 7,451 complaints, including juvenile charges and domestic relations issues. However, 200 juveniles completed the Shoplifters Program, 107 completed the Court Alternative Program and 303 juveniles completed Community Service. Supervised Probation was mandated for 314 juveniles while 350 were successfully released. There were 26 new referrals to the parole unit.

The Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) provides a continuum of services for

juvenile offenders including anger management, parenting groups, drug and alcohol testing and assessments, detention outreach and intensive home-based day treatment. Although the state reduced funding for these services by 51 percent, 1,456 juveniles were referred to services provided by VJCCCA.

[contents](#)

Juvenile Detention

During FY03, several state and federal audits resulted in high marks for Juvenile Detention's sound and safe operations. The S.T.O.P (Service Through Opportunity Program) and Outreach Program passed with flying colors and received compliments on its file management and documentation. State and federal auditors commended the Food Service Department on food preparation, record keeping and organization. In April, Secure Detention underwent a three-day certification audit, including a thorough review of records and covering more than 400 Standards for Interdepartmental Regulations of Children's Residential Facilities, including life, health, safety, treatment, medical and more. A near perfect compliance rate of 99.8 percent resulted in another three-year license for Juvenile Detention. Juvenile Detention also enhanced its curriculum through enrichment programs last year, inviting guest speakers from Henrico's divisions of Fire and Police to talk with juvenile detainees about personal and fire safety, community support and their role in the community. By engaging in progressive, insightful dialogue with the county's respected public safety officers, the juveniles are often more prepared to re-enter their private lives with improved self-esteem and confidence. Juvenile Detention continued to operate without any escapes or serious injury to staff or residents throughout FY03.

[contents](#)

James River Juvenile Detention Center

During the past fiscal year, the James River Juvenile Detention Center (JRJDC) complied with the Interdepartmental Standards and Board of Juvenile Justice Standards for residential services, and received certification for another three years. Having seen the positive difference the structured Post Disposition Program has made on juvenile detainees, the Juvenile Court judges requested more beds, and the eligible population for the community-based program rose from 10 to 20 beds. The program is a joint effort between judges, JRJDC staff and the families of juvenile offenders ages 14 to 17, focusing

on education, vocation and community service. The program helps prepare juveniles to lead positive, productive lives once they are released from the facility.

James River staff continued to enhance programs and increased the number of youth services volunteers last year to better meet the detainees' evolving needs and provide more individualized services while holding juveniles accountable for their actions.

[contents](#)

Finance

Due to its sound fiscal management and stable economic position, Henrico County maintained its impressive triple-A bond rating from Fitch, Moody's Investor Service and Standard and Poor's, earning the distinction as one of the few counties in the nation with a "triple" triple-A rating. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) presented the Department of Finance the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 22nd consecutive year; this is the association's highest honor for governmental accounting and financial reporting. For the 14th year in a row, the GFOA also awarded the Department of Finance the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. This feat is a reflection of Henrico's continuing commitment to excellence and indicates the county's dedication to providing good stewardship of taxpayer funds.

[contents](#)

Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) underwent a changing of the guard during FY03. A new director, Steven M. Lewis, was appointed to succeed former director Brian D. Wantling who retired after 26 years of service. Lewis joined the county in 1997 as the first assistant director of IT, and has 30 years of technology and communications experience. IT operates a continuously running, multi-enterprise server computer center linking more than 100 county buildings, 3,500 workstations and supporting some 33 major computer application areas, including electronic and voice mail response systems. By automating business license and property renewal applications, IT eliminated preprinted forms and combined data

from two systems, allowing the creation of individualized instructions based on the account's unique specifications. Forms are now permanently stored as PDF (Portable Document Format) files allowing for easy reprint and archiving. More than 20,000 county businesses use these forms, generating more than \$40 million in revenue.

During the past fiscal year, IT modified the Geographic Information System (GIS) on Mobiles Program used by Henrico Police and Fire staff when responding to service calls. This computer-aided dispatch program allows an officer, firefighter or EMS staff to immediately access a map showing the emergency location on their mobile laptop computers. IT is finalizing development of an identical program for Building Inspections field personnel to use in the coming year. The Darwin Data warehouse, primarily used by public safety, fully matured this year and is more functional and user-friendly than ever. IT staff helped to improve public safety operations by providing easy access to data retrieved daily. The system also enables IT staff to post real-time traffic information on the county's Web site alerting residents to accident scenes or traffic back-ups, allowing them to alter routes if necessary before venturing out.

[contents](#)

Public Libraries

Several years ago, Libraries introduced public-use computers allowing visitors to access an online catalog, surf the World Wide Web, e-mail and use software applications for free. The popularity of the network has brought challenges, including a growing number of daily users, recovering printing costs and managing access to objectionable material. During FY03, library staff customized, tested and installed the Smart Access Manager (SAM) on more than 220 public-use computers. Now patrons can log on with a library card, use up to two hours of time daily, select between filtered and unfiltered Internet access (adults only) and pay as they print with a library debit card. Library staff also implemented "Ask A Librarian," a convenient new service providing patrons the flexibility to complete research wherever they have e-mail access—whether at home, work, school or far away. Residents who pose reference questions to a librarian through a link on the library's home page will receive an answer within 24 hours whenever possible. The Sandston Branch Library, Henrico's first which opened in 1923, underwent a major renovation this year, adding new study rooms, expanding the meeting room, improving lighting, updating fixtures and furniture and refreshing its materials collection. Library patrons are sure to benefit from the renovation for years to come.

[contents](#)

Schools

Henrico's school administration welcomed wonderful news this year: based on local calculations, 100 percent of Henrico County's regular public schools are fully accredited, according to Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) guidelines. The leadership of principals, the remarkable dedication of teachers and hard work of students, along with the immense support of parents and the community, made this incredible accomplishment possible. Henrico County Public Schools also won two prestigious awards during FY03. The National School Boards Association's (NSBA) very first Trailblazer award recognized the Teaching and Learning Initiative, a wireless laptop project designed to enhance academic achievement and ensure that all students become proficient in information technology. Schools issued all middle and high school students and teachers laptops during the past two school years. The initiative expanded with elementary teachers receiving laptops this past spring. Henrico County Public Schools was also named one of the "Best 100 Communities for Music Education in America," the only school division in the United States to earn this designation four years in a row. Educators from all over the country visited Henrico County Public Schools in March to witness the school division's successful enhancement of teaching and learning through technology integration. The NSBA selected Henrico schools as one of only two national site visits in 2003. Henrico is the only school system in Virginia ever selected for this honor and only one of a handful in the United States chosen throughout the 17-year history of these annual site visits. The NSBA chose Henrico County Public Schools for many reasons, including its vision to close the digital divide by providing computers and Internet access to all students and teachers.

[contents](#)

Recreation and Parks

In May 2003, the Division of Recreation and Parks dedicated and opened for play a new, four-diamond baseball/softball complex and two new soccer fields at Dorey Park. These state-of-the-art facilities will provide outstanding recreational opportunities for Henrico County boys and girls who participate in

youth baseball, softball and soccer. In addition, the facilities will be the home of many local, state and regional tournaments, bringing visitors to the county. RF&P Park welcomed two historic train cars, joining another retired RF&P car there. Both cars were steady workhorses for the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad. The postal car was built in 1916 and will be used for storage. The county refurbished a 1923 passenger car for coaches, teams and umpires to use during county events and tournaments. Each car features a historic interpretation sign, providing a glimpse of the past and acknowledging the RF&P Railroad's significant role in the county's history. During FY03, the Division of Recreation and Parks continued its ongoing initiative to upgrade playgrounds throughout county park facilities and added or replaced equipment at Short Pump, Woodman and Crump parks and Laurel Recreation Area. Playgrounds are one of the most popular park activities for children of all ages, and local publications have consistently recognized several county playgrounds as the best in the area.

[contents](#)

Public Relations & Media Services

It was a year of change for Public Relations & Media Services (PR&MS), beginning with the department's name. Formerly the Public Information Office, PR&MS underwent an entire reorganization during the last fiscal year to encompass new responsibilities and expand the capabilities of Henrico's government access cable channel 37. On May 14, PR&MS launched the brand new HCTV-37, Henrico County Television. The updated format offers Henrico cable subscribers a wider range of information with a more sophisticated, modern look. Currently, the station offers information about county meetings and events, as well as news from the Associated Press, local weather, date, time and photo-features of county attractions. In the near future, HCTV will begin airing full-length programs about county agencies and services. In addition to hitting the television airwaves, PR&MS began broadcasting Henrico Hot Talk on WLEE, AM-radio 990. The first Monday of each month, host Lou Dean invites guests from various county agencies to keep our residents in the know about Henrico County happenings.

Never forgetting the print medium, PR&MS staff continued churning-out informative brochures and publications (including this annual report) to educate our residents and promote county services. In addition, staff completely revamped Henrico Today, a quarterly newspaper produced on behalf of the Board of Supervisors. PR&MS staff now creates the publication completely in-house, including all writing, design and photography. These accomplishments of FY03 did not go unnoticed: the PR&MS Department won 10 more state and national awards from six different professional public relations

organizations for exceptional writing, communication programs, design, video production and creative art direction.

[contents](#)

General Services

If you've ever thought about doing business with Henrico or purchasing surplus property, the place to start is www.co.henrico.va.us/genserv/. Residents and businesses can access current bids and Requests For Proposals, download the specifications, review bid awards, surplus auctions, surplus sales information and more. During FY03, General Services staff enhanced and expanded the well-used site, making it more user-friendly and efficient for county residents and staff. In FY03, General Services also initiated a program to reduce the use and cost of energy in its operations, creating a new Energy Manager position to head the effort. Staff has already collected useful information after a thorough review of rate schedules for all county facilities and schools. Plans are in the works to identify further opportunities for energy reduction through technology, education and equipment upgrades and will incorporate energy efficient technologies in all new and renovated facilities, contributing to the county's sustainable energy future.

For the third year, General Services employees conducted training sessions to educate Henrico's field employees and technicians about West Nile virus, and treatment of standing water on county and school properties. Last year the department's Safety Officer assisted in training an additional 45 technicians and 200 field personnel about West Nile conditions, identification of standing water and active mosquito pools, how to protect themselves and how to assist citizens with standing water and West Nile virus questions.

[contents](#)

Capital Area Training Consortium (CATC)

During the past fiscal year, amidst an uncertain economy and ever-changing welfare and workforce development policies, CATC staff conducted a Self-Sufficiency Study to establish new measures on income adequacy and to discover what "self-sufficiency" really means. CATC staff detected a trend of parents leaving public assistance programs and entering the workforce only to earn wages that were inadequate to support their families. Although some did not meet the "official" poverty measure, CATC

staff recognized a need to establish firm measures on wages that would truly allow their client base to be self-sufficient. They found that a single individual with no children needed to earn \$8.75 an hour (or \$18,105 annually) to be truly self-sufficient, and an adult with one infant and one pre-schooler must earn \$17.29 (or \$36,519 per year). CATC staff plans to use the study results to form policy related to case management, career guidance and training in the region. CATC received a Work Incentive Grant during FY03, allowing the Workforce Investment Boards to enhance services and improve accessibility for people with disabilities at the One Stop Workforce Centers. The grant has allowed Workforce Center staff to complete training courses designed to help them learn new, adaptive software and enhance etiquette training in order to provide the best possible service to their special needs clientele. Staff is installing adaptive equipment to workforce centers to assist with physical, hearing and visual obstacles and allow full access to services and information. The Work Incentive Grant is specifically awarded to complete these improvements to better accommodate all customers. Truly a sign of the slow economic times, the Capital Area Workforce Centers received requests from 30 local companies to assist employees who were soon to be laid-off. CATC's Rapid Response Team subsequently assisted 2,900 laid-off individuals from these 30 companies, six of which permanently closed for business. Staff went on-site to each individual business and assisted the employees with information about services, new job prospects, skill assessments and unemployment insurance support.

[contents](#)

Real Property

During FY03, with assistance from Public Works and the County Attorney's Office, Real Property acquired rights-of-way for several road projects: the Britton Road overpass, Nuckols Road widening, Skipwith-Anoka intersection improvements and Quioccasin Road widening. Staff also acquired easements for drainage projects at Broadway Avenue, Byron Street, Magnus Lane and Marvin Drive as well as rights-of-way and easements for rehabilitation projects including Crestview Road drainage, Upham Brook sanitary sewer, Broadwater Creek sanitary sewer and the sewage treatment plant expansion outfall. In addition, Real Property staff, with assistance from Public Utilities, was able to obtain property adjacent to the Gillies Creek Sewage Pumping Station for the county to use as a flow equalization basin.

[contents](#)

Internal Audit

Last fiscal year, the county's internal auditors worked to strengthen general government buildings' security after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Auditors emphasized the importance of employees' displaying proper identification and recommended enhanced safety and security procedures within the government complex. Internal Audit staff continues to recommend procedures to address any known gaps in government security. The real estate and personal property billing systems generate the taxes that fund most county-provided services. During FY03, Internal Auditors made recommendations to update the current property tax billing system by automating the assignment of special tax districts, implementing better procedures of tax reconciliation information and replacing the systems. Internal Audit also stressed the need to back up critical computerized information last year, identifying the practice as a vital county government function. Staff suggested procedures to help ensure that needed data is protected and recoverable. Internal Audit worked with county agencies to recommend uniform policies ensuring continuity for computer services.

[contents](#)

Human Resources

In FY03, Henrico County continued to be an employer-of-choice with a single digit turnover rate for the 16th consecutive year, applications reaching an all-time high and the average employee age remaining in the low 40s. Customer service, innovativeness, employee development and training programs, a rich history, diversity, fiscal strength, economic development and technological advances all help recruit and retain Henrico's top-notch workforce. Applying for a job with Henrico County has never been easier, thanks to the Job Opportunity Source for Henrico (JOSH). Human Resources unveiled this innovative, Internet-based application system last fall. The completely paperless process allows job seekers to send applications electronically any time, day or night, 365 days a year. Applicants may then conduct the entire process online—including searching for positions, obtaining detailed information about benefits

and skill requirements, completing and submitting job applications and tracking their status—from any computer with Internet access. The system, located at www.henricojobs.com, is the first of its kind for public employers in the Richmond metropolitan area. Applicants can complete the online form in 20 to 30 minutes and apply for a position with just a few mouse clicks. Job hunters can save their completed applications in JOSH for at least a year, allowing them to apply for multiple positions. JOSH has been a great timesaver for both applicants and county staff. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the need for enhanced governmental security and safety measures increased. In response, the Human Resources Department sponsored and secured state legislation that requires all Henrico County water treatment personnel to undergo criminal background checks. The war in Iraq and increased national defense measures affected county personnel in other ways: 49 employees enlisted with our military reserves were called to active duty. Henrico County steadfastly supports these valued employees by supplementing their military pay so they do not suffer a salary decrease while defending our country. Last spring, Henrico employees overwhelmingly participated in a campaign to support their colleagues in the military by assembling and sending care packages to active duty county employees. Departments also are maintaining contact with the families of employees throughout their deployment.

[contents](#)

Mental Health/Mental Retardation

The Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR) staff planned for future mental retardation day support needs last year by establishing long-term strategies, creating new mental retardation vocational programs and enhancing services. Since 1998, MH/MR has been able to avoid a waiting list for day support services. However, over the past several years, two-income families have become the norm creating a challenge for parents of older children with disabilities to find appropriate after-school and summer day care options. In addition, adults with disabilities are living into retirement age, requiring services for a longer period of time. The number of people with complex-diagnosed disabilities is increasing, and more consumers are asking for day support services that result in meaningful, paid work. Staff has also identified an increased demand for paid employment for more severely disabled people, while the need for work traditionally offered through “sheltered work shops” is decreasing. MH/MR staff intently studied all of these trends during FY03, and is in the process of devising a five-year plan to address these increased demands for services in the future. Throughout FY03, MH/MR staff worked in tandem with the Sheriff’s Office to expand and enhance the jail-based substance abuse services. The department added two part-time mental health clinicians and implemented the third stage of a four-tiered program called “Successful Living.” The program prepares inmates to

transition from the structured environment of incarceration to the outside world. County staff also recommends health and mental health care providers to prisoners for continued treatment once they are released.

Staff initiated smoking prevention activities last year in two Henrico County middle schools and two high schools. The program, which is entirely funded by the Tobacco Settlement Grant, focuses on changing teenagers' perceptions of social norms. Studies have shown that teens think half of their age group smokes, when in fact only 10 percent do. The program helps to get the word out through smoking cessation activities, posters, videos and contests.

[contents](#)

Social Services

Earlier this year, the Department of Social Services (DSS) headed a coalition of public and private agencies throughout the Richmond area to provide free tax assistance to low-income families in order to increase access to the Earned Income Tax Credit. County staff operated two sites three days a week from January 28 through April 15. During that time, staff assisted 136 taxpayers with tax refunds totaling more than \$200,000.

DSS staff hosted the first annual Henrico Fatherhood Conference in March, with an impressive 150 participants attending the one-day event. DSS co-sponsored the conference with Henrico's Division of Police, Henrico Mental Health and Retardation Services, Henrico Doctor's Hospital, the Virginia Fatherhood Campaign, the Virginia Division of Child Support Enforcement and Virginia Home for Boys. Workshops included the impact of fathers as experienced by daughters and sons; roles of mentors; dealing with drugs and alcohol; healthy relationships; disciplining with love; handling anger; staying involved with children who don't live with you; being a responsible husband and child support.

Participant evaluations were overwhelmingly positive; most attendees rated the workshop "excellent." Participants shared positive feedback including "the workshop has forced me to rethink my whole relationship with my children" and "I am not the same man that first came into the conference facility." DSS staff is already in the process of planning the 2004 conference for March 12 and 13. Because of layoffs and reduced hours of employment, DSS saw an increasing number of residents needing public assistance during FY03. Through the first half of 2003, more than 2,500 people applied for food stamps.

[contents](#)

Demographics

Demographics	
Population	274,847
Land area (square miles)	244.06
Total housing units	116,345
Assessed value of taxable land and improvements	\$19,695,107,150
Public schools	64
Public school enrollment	43,490
Roads (linear miles)	1,250.58
Roads (lane miles)	3,138.35
Voting precincts	89
Total registered voters	165,702

[contents](#)

Health Department

In January, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began distributing the smallpox vaccine to state and local governments as part of the nation's voluntary vaccination program to protect against potential terrorist attacks. Henrico conducted three smallpox clinics for health care providers in March and vaccinated 22 Richmond area health staff and nurses. In total, 13 Henrico County school and mental health nurses, plus five Henrico Health Department staff, have received the smallpox vaccine. Before the vaccination, each person received information and viewed an 11-minute educational video. Health staff diagnosed and successfully treated two active cases of Tuberculosis (TB) early this year at Douglas Freeman High School. As part of the testing process, health care workers questioned the student body about symptoms that might indicate they had TB. Epidemiology staff identified and treated 150 Freeman

students. Those who tested positive for inactive TB were given chest X-rays and received antibiotics (a series of four drugs taken daily) to ensure that the disease would not become active. Have you ever wondered what really goes on in the kitchen at your favorite eating establishment? Well, now you can find out with a simple click of your computer mouse. During FY03, Henrico's Department of Health, in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health, established a Web site listing the inspection reports for more than 900 Henrico foodservice establishments. Residents can view restaurant inspection reports online including inspection type, date, number of critical and non-critical violations, plus a definition and summary of each. To access this information, visit www.co.henrico.va.us/health and follow the appropriate links.

[contents](#)

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Once again in FY03, the most popular service offered by the Henrico Extension Office was the environmentally-friendly advice for home lawn care and landscaping. Extension staff offered free clinics throughout the year to demonstrate how to use lawn equipment and products, discuss summer lawn recovery, winter preparation techniques, and weed, insect and disease control. Residents can also call the free horticulture help-line at 501-5160 for information or to request a speaker for their civic group. Extension's 4-H camps continued to provide fun, educational experiences for Henrico's youth, with 180 campers, 28 teens, 14 adult volunteers and about a dozen counselors-in-training attending last year's camp at the Jamestown 4-H Center. Participants had the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, develop friendships, and learn self-reliance, cooperation and interdependence skills that will stay with them through adulthood. Last fiscal year, Extension's Family and Human Development programs continued to teach fundamental skills such as money management tips, ways to stretch income, reduce debt and create a budget. Any resident who wants to learn sound financial management and consumer skills can attend the financial education programs. The Extension Office also continued with their Smart Choices Nutrition Education Program (SCNEP) last year, targeting residents eligible for food stamps or with limited resources. The program helps participants manage money and food stamps through lessons on meal planning, making a grocery list, budgeting and using food labels to choose best buys. SCNEP helps the whole family with healthy food choices, nutritious snacks, disease prevention, new food ideas and food safety and storage. Best of all, both of these programs are completely free to participants.

