

HENRICO COUNTY 1995-96 ANNUAL REPORT

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TURNING POINT

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Introduction

In the early 1600s, European pioneers seeking refuge from monarchical control - searching for (what would later be termed) "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" - crossed the Atlantic and settled in what is now Henrico County, unaware that they were forever changing the course of our history. With determined spirit and sound ideals, they laid the groundwork for a land where opportunity was available

to all, religious freedom was a right, and the people chose how and by whom their country would be organized and maintained. Of course, these early settlers had no way of knowing that during the next 400 years, this country that they founded would experience a merging of English and a Native American cultures, a Civil War between the states, an end to slavery, industrialization of the south, two major world wars, 42 American presidents, and in 1995, the first female and the first African-American ever to be elected to the Henrico County Board of Supervisors. Things have changed. Along with the formation of the new, historically significant Board, Henrico continues to grow as one of the most economically sound counties in the country, attracting more attention and becoming a hub for more multimillion dollar businesses every year. While we are no stranger to Fortune 500 companies basing operations in our county, international giants Motorola and Siemens choosing Henrico for the home of their \$1.5 billion jointly owned operation proved that we have reached a turning point. The County of Henrico will enter the 21st century with vigor and stability like never before. We are well on the way to becoming a Herculean jurisdiction offering our residents every opportunity for the pursuit of happiness envisioned by their predecessors so many years ago.

Board of Supervisors

The citizens of Henrico County are represented by an elected Board of Supervisors, with one official acting as the voice for each of the five magisterial districts: Brookland, Fairfield, Three Chopt, Tuckahoe and Varina.

The Board appoints the county manager, who serves at its pleasure and acts as the chief administrator of the county. In addition, the Board appoints members to more than 40 boards and commissions to ensure the best possible administration of specialized segments of local government.

Division of Police

Fiscal year 96 brought new leadership to the Henrico Division of Police. After 30 years of service, nine as the division's chief, Colonel Richard G. Engels retired from the county having paved the way for 33-year veteran Henry W. Stanley, Jr. Colonel Stanley was sworn-in as the new Chief of Police on August 1, 1995, after having served with the division since 1962. He immediately instituted a reorganization of the division, creating an official second-in-command position, Lieutenant Colonel.



Following the reorganization, the division wasted no time continuing the war on drugs by hosting the first Capital Region Drug Summit. Law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal levels met to focus on illicit drug use and trafficking, and the subsequent criminal and social effects on the Commonwealth of Virginia. To the credit of the entire Division of Police, the County of Henrico saw a 4.8% decrease in violent crime in FY 96, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Finally, the School Resource Officer Program (formerly known as the School-Police Liaison Program) was expanded to include all middle schools in the county. Currently, Henrico police officers are present in each of the county's sixteen middle and high schools in efforts to reinforce positive influences and redirect troubled students to more successful paths. The division's goal in this operation is to reduce the possibility of increased criminal and socially deviant behaviors that are so prevalent in other school systems throughout the United States.

[Division of Fire](#)



Continued dedication to our residents' safety is the way of life for the Division of Fire. In FY 96, the generosity of a private Henrico-based business aided this mission by donating a \$25,000, state-of-the-art Cairns Helmet to the Fire Division. This thermal-imaging helmet allows firefighters to see through smoke and darkness when searching for people trapped inside burning buildings. The helmet is equipped with a small television-like screen that detects the location of body heat, making it possible for firefighters to find and rescue people in life-threatening situations. The division is one of only two fire departments in Virginia to own a Cairns Helmet.

Also in FY 96, the development stages of a long-awaited accreditation program for divisions of fire throughout the country

began in FY 96. The International City and County Manager Association (ICMA) along with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) formed a commission to assess, grade, and accredit fire departments across the United States to ensure that critical criteria are met and to standardize the expected level of professionalism and service. This past fiscal year, the Henrico Division of Fire began aggressively seeking this accreditation, which should become reality by mid-1997. Henrico strives to become the first division in the state, and among the first in the country, to receive the accreditation.

Planning

The big news from the Department of Planning's fiscal year accomplishments is the adoption of the 2010 Land Use Plan. After three years of negotiating and conducting public meetings, the Board of Supervisors approved and adopted the plan in December. The Land Use Plan, which is required of counties by the State Code of Virginia, is a "blueprint" of land uses recommending locations for businesses, new homes and industrial sites that will guide Henrico's growth and development through 2010.

Economic Development

Undoubtedly, the single most significant event for the economic development of Henrico County took place in May of this year. Mega-semiconductor groups Motorola and Siemens announced they selected Henrico for the site of their jointly owned \$1.5 billion Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) production facility. The plant, which will be called the White Oak Semiconductor, will be a part of the 2,400-acre White Oak Virginia International Technology Park located on the former Elko Tract in Varina. The park is expected to be a significant source of income and employment opportunities for Central Virginia.

In the midst of the Motorola-Siemens adventure, The Pittston Corporation added its name to the list of Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Henrico County. After a year of searching for a new location, Pittston chose Henrico over sites in both Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina, as well as Atlanta, Georgia.

More good news for our county's economy came via Capital One Financial Corporation: the Henrico-based company announced a major expansion plan and began construction on a \$30 million operations center in the county's Innsbrook area. The expansion will result in hundreds of new jobs for Metro Richmond.

Building Construction and Inspections

The Department of Building Construction and Inspections joined the automation wave this past fiscal year with the implementation of the "Hello" inspection request lines. Because the department frequently receives as many as 300 calls a day from community developers and contractors requesting inspections, the "old" way was time consuming, labor intensive and often caused delays in the processing of information. Now, contractors can automatically enter the type of inspection requested - either building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical or fire protection - schedule the preferred date of inspection, and may even obtain the results of their inspection all over the telephone, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As well as automating inspection requests, the department completed the first phase of a two-year regional contractor training seminar program in cooperation with Chesterfield and Hanover counties.

These seminars are designed to make code enforcement between the three localities more consistent, clarify code provisions to area contractors, and will continue to be a cooperative educational effort in the metro area.

Community Development

For local builders, engineers and members of the development community living or working in the eastern part of Henrico, the Eastern Government Center is a convenient business haven. With representatives from Building Inspections, Planning, Public Works and Public Utilities on hand, necessary services are right around the corner. Citizens can register to vote, purchase dog licenses, business licenses, vehicle decals, and seek assistance from social services in the Eastern Government Center. Water bills, personal property taxes, real estate taxes and parking tickets can also be easily handled at the center's cashier window. For ultra-express service, a drive-up window and two 24-hour depository boxes are on the premises.

Public Utilities



Technological advancement was also on Public Utilities' agenda in FY 96. Using on-site, laptop PCs along with the established televised sewer inspection system, Public Utilities crews can now enter inspections data directly from the site. This on-site entering and coding of information has resulted in more standardized information for comparison studies, immediate availability of the information to other areas of the department, and a higher quality, more usable form of information with less possibility of human error.

In addition to the implementation of automation, Public Utilities began the collection of certain household hazardous waste, a service previously

unavailable in the county. Now, residents can bring hazardous wastes (i.e., oil-based and latex paints, paint thinners, turpentine, kerosene, brake fluid, gasoline, engine oil, anti-freeze, etc.) directly to one of the county's two landfills, seven days a week, and dispose of the waste free of charge.

Another convenience now offered by the Department of Public Utilities is the removal of inoperable vehicles from residents' property. Formerly, county residents had to pay out of their own pockets to have these vehicles towed. Now, in cooperation with Keep Henrico Beautiful and the Kidney Foundation, residents can call and have their vehicles towed at no charge. The cars will later be refurbished and auctioned, with the proceeds benefiting the American Kidney Foundation.

Public Works

Both long-time residents and visitors could have mistaken Henrico County for the recesses of Alaska or Minnesota during the winter of '96. The worst blizzard in the area's history made 12-hour, rotating shifts the norm for Public Works crews. Snow removal efforts continued 24 hours a day for twelve straight days, with 98 trucks plowing nonstop through the streets. Snow removal was this department's priority for nearly three weeks in January and two weeks in February, resulting in a \$2.3 million clean-up effort. Governor George Allen declared a state of emergency, and federal/state funds helped Henrico make it through a winter few will soon forget.

Also in FY 96, the Department of Public Works was able to begin construction on the long-negotiated John Rolfe Parkway. The parkway, a four lane, divided highway, will eventually link Lauderdale Drive to Broad Street. After numerous meetings with residents, developers and contractors, and the Virginia Department of Transportation's wavering involvement, the county finally obtained rights-of-way to begin construction on the segment from Lauderdale Drive to Ridgefield Parkway. Public Works anticipates the first phase of the \$20 million parkway to be complete by 1998.

County Attorney

When we talk about projects the magnitude of the Motorola-Siemens White Oak Semiconductor, you know that lawyers are bound to be involved. Before announcing that Henrico was the future home of the facility, contracts had to be written, land had to be bought and sold, agreements had to be made and negotiations settled - all of this business was concluded by the County Attorney's Office in FY 96, laying the groundwork for the project with the county's best interests in mind.

In addition to working out the White Oak legalities, the County Attorney's Office completed the recodification of county ordinances. While this "overhaul" does not necessarily change the content of the law, it regroups the ordinances into a more logical fashion, removing the obsolete and updating the existing, to help local residents and businesses understand their rights and responsibilities under the Henrico County Code.

Office of the General Registrar

This past fiscal year, the registrar's office extended their daily operating hours in the months of September and October in order to make pre-election voter registration and absentee voting more convenient to county residents. By opening 30 minutes earlier and closing one hour later than usual, residents were offered a greater window of time in which they could register to vote or vote by absentee ballot. In addition, the office set-up a volunteer registration program, where 25 volunteers from throughout the county donated 145 hours of their time to staff registration booths in area malls, churches and businesses.

As well as offering these conveniences to county residents, the registrar's office implemented the changes mandated by the National Voter Registration Act, more commonly known as "motor voter." This new legislation offers people who are conducting business inside a local Department of Motor Vehicles the option of registering to vote at the same time. Along with the DMV option, other state and federally funded agencies (i.e. Department of Social Services, Health Department, Department of the Visually Handicapped, etc.) are now offering voter registration on their premises. The most popular change among county residents, however, has been the "motor voter" opportunity to register by mail.

Judicial System

Circuit, General District and Juvenile courts, the Commonwealth's Attorney's office, the Sheriff's Office, the Community Corrections Program, the Juvenile Court Services Unit, along with the Juvenile Detention Home comprise the multi-faceted judicial system of Henrico County.

It was business as usual in 1995-96 for the **Clerk of the Circuit Court**, an elected constitutional officer, who maintains and officiates everything from criminal cases to marriage licenses. As well as carrying out these standard duties, the clerk's office established an online land records indexing system at the county's Eastern Government Center. Now, people living in the eastern part of Henrico who need access to the land records index do not have to travel to the clerk's office at the Courts Building. The newly implemented State Code of Virginia also enabled the clerk's office to increase the amount of collections by violators. Finally, with the help of a state library grant, the office was able to begin the digital scanning of old records and deeds in efforts to infinitely preserve the historical documentation within the county.

The **Commonwealth's Attorney's** office concluded two highly publicized trials, resulting in one distribution of heroin conviction and one embezzlement conviction. Also in FY 96, in the continued war on drugs, this office instituted a mandatory Grand Jury appearance for drug offenders; in other words, a person convicted of a drug charge **MUST** reveal his source of the drug(s) to the courts. If he does not, he will be jailed indefinitely, with none of the time served being credited to his original sentence.

Meanwhile, in November of '95, mid-way through the construction/renovation project at Jail West, the **Sheriff's Office** completed four new inmate housing units containing 104 beds, and opened their new administrative offices. In March, the new work release, 64-bed area was opened.



The County's **Community Corrections Program (CCP)**, received a record 1,431 people from the courts for both pretrial and post-trial supervision. This reduces crowding in the jails and "failure to appear in court" violations by referring alleged offenders to pretrial services, and allowing post-trial community service sentencing. During this past fiscal year, CCP totaled 35,444 hours of community service, many of which were spent on 12 Police/Community Clean-Up and Graffiti Removal projects in the county. In addition, CCP collected \$31,613 in restitution for crime victims.

The **Juvenile Court Services Unit** (14th District Court Unit) began implementation of the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act. Two significant areas of this legislation include 1.) educating families with juvenile offenders on appropriately controlling and managing anger, and 2.) implementing the Electronic Monitoring System (EMS). This system involves placing an electronic monitoring device on the offender's ankle, allowing probation officers to detect when or if an offender travels outside of his legal, geographic boundaries.

The **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court** continues to receive a heavier caseload in attempt to keep up with the increasing demand for child support services.

The **Juvenile Detention Home** provided secure detention for 588 juvenile offenders for a combined total of 9,918 days. In addition, the Detention Outreach Program monitored 188 non-violent juvenile offenders for a combined total of 5,156 days; the program capacity increased from 17 to 20 juvenile offenders, with as many as eight of these youth assigned to the previously mentioned Electronic Monitoring System. A mental health screening system was also implemented this year, helping to identify youth in need of immediate mental health services and/or follow-up treatment. The Juvenile Detention Home ended FY 96 without escape, serious injury or major code violation.

Finance

Always searching for ways to make life's little necessities easier, the Department of Finance implemented an alternative way to file personal property taxes and obtain county decals. With the new system, residents are no longer required to file year after year on the same vehicle. Provided there is no change in any essential information (i.e., vehicle type, owner, address, etc.) and there are no delinquent

taxes outstanding, the owner will automatically receive his county decal and personal property bill in the mail.

As well as successfully implementing this new tax filing system, the department played an instrumental role in the Business, Professional and Occupational License (BPOL) legislation. By advocating a \$100,000 standard deduction threshold, Henrico County is unique in that small businesses will be able to deduct this total, paying taxes only on the amount in excess of this threshold (most localities have the threshold, but offer no deduction). When this legislation is fully implemented (estimated to be by the year 2000) roughly 2/3 of all county-based businesses will not have to pay for a business license, and a flat 20 cents per \$100 rate will apply to each operation, be it a doctor's office, a hotel, or other small business.

Among these accomplishments, the Department of Finance received the Certificate in Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 15th consecutive year and the Distinguished Budget Award for the eighth year. In addition, the county maintained its triple-A bond rating from both Moody's and Standard and Poor's for the 19th consecutive year.

Data Processing

Replacing "old world" technology with "new world" technology was at the forefront of Data Processing's plan for FY 96. With the advent of the Internet, the information super-highway, came the ability to interconnect each and every county agency not only with one another, but with the world at large. In an age where computers talk as easily as people, Data Processing has been busy keeping the county online with the very latest in innovation, ensuring the fastest, most accurate service possible to county residents. While this project in its entirety will take several years to complete, Data made great strides in FY 96 to make it happen.

The department also streamlined an internal county function with the implementation of the automated Acquisition Information Management System (AIM). This allows individual county agencies to complete their own purchase requisitions online, eliminating staff hours and mounds of paperwork for a more timely, accurate purchasing system.

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Public Libraries

Avid readers will be thrilled with the new Best Seller Plan that the county libraries adopted in FY 96. With this new program, the libraries are able to order multiple copies of current best sellers to ensure availability of the books while they are, in fact, still on the best seller list.

In addition, the library system has started planning for a new "integrated automation" system, where library patrons will be able to check out books, reserve books from other branches, and find the status of a book's availability, all from the libraries' terminals, or from their own home computers. Currently, information stored online at the libraries is on CDs, and must be periodically updated. This means, as a patron, if you are retrieving information at a terminal between updates, it may not necessarily be the latest and most accurate. With this new system, any information retrieved will be the most current available, and each Henrico library branch will be accessible.

Schools

Henrico County Schools continues to enjoy an impeccable reputation as one of the finest public school systems in the United States. This past fiscal year, students enrolled in county schools set unprecedented records on two federally standardized tests. The county's 1996 high school graduates scored the highest in the history of the school system on the verbal section of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SATs) and the highest in 18 years on the math section. The SATs are standardized college entrance exams,

designed to measure the students' reasoning skills, and the scores are proven to be an accurate predictor of the student's performance and success in the first year of college. Not to be outdone, the county's 4th and 8th graders both set records on their respective levels of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) by scoring the highest in the county's nine-year history of the test.

All of this hard work was combined with play when Henrico's Public Schools hosted the first annual "Big Spring Thing" in April. The celebration raised nearly \$90,000 for the Henrico Education Foundation - the largest amount ever raised by a single event for education in Virginia's history. The all-day event, held at the State Fairgrounds on Strawberry Hill, featured student musical groups from each grade throughout county schools, and headlined multiple-Grammy Award Winner Peabo Bryson, who performed with the Henrico students. Because the Fairgrounds donated their facilities, and four major corporate sponsors (Whitehall Robbins, Central Fidelity Bank, Richmond Ford and Atlantic Corrugated Box) backed the event, the Education Foundation was able to benefit from all of the revenues generated.

Recreation and Parks

The Division of Recreation and Parks continued their commitment to provide county residents with functional, up-to-date recreational facilities throughout this past fiscal year. With renovations and construction continuing, the Confederate Hills Recreation Center is projected to open in early 1997, providing a 9,200-square-foot facility for county-sponsored classes, programs, and private rentals. Construction began on the new Pouncey Tract Park, which will include athletic fields, volleyball courts, picnic shelters and a playground. The division also started the second phase of construction at RF&P Park, with provisions for three girl's softball fields and ten beach volleyball courts; and finally, the design plans for the Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen were completed.



Also in FY 96, the division received kudos for its efforts when the National Association of Counties recognized them with awards for two novel projects: the Henrico Reader's Theatre and Tree Detectives.

Public Information



The Public Information Office continued their mission to respond to the changing information needs of its internal and external communities and, through knowledge and education, increase awareness and understanding of Henrico County government activities and policies. This past fiscal year, Public Information coordinated the county's co-sponsorship of "Powhatan Village" at the State Fair of Virginia. The Native American village, an authentic reproduction as it would have been when the legendary princess Pocahontas lived, won the Director's Choice Award for the best exhibit at the 1995 State Fair. In addition, this office played a key role in the White Oak Semiconductor project, from assisting the local media with its coverage of the story, to disseminating the information as quickly as possible to the public. The legislative branch of the Public Information Office assisted with two of the "hottest" new pieces of legislation being passed in the 1996 session of the General Assembly: the Business, Professional and Occupational License (BPOL) tax

and the transient occupancy tax.

General Services

The Department of General Services helped to coordinate the county manager's first electronic staff meeting, or "teleconference," on the county's Institutional Network (INET) in FY 96. With this county-wide cable television network, the county manager was able to conduct a live conference with all of the county's 3,000 employees simultaneously. Because many agencies are located in different areas of the county, conducting full-participation staff meetings had previously been geographically infeasible. The advent of the INET not only made it possible, but gained national recognition for the county due to the innovativeness of the teleconference concept.

In addition to completion of the INET, General Services budgeted, awarded contracts, and oversaw the architectural design and began construction of the Henrico Regional Jail East project located in New Kent County. And, with the outsourcing of the county's records retention and clerical storeroom operations, the department was able to eliminate the middleman and save the county money, space, and countless staff hours.

Capital Area Training Consortium (CATC)

Again, automation played a key role in operations streamlining at CATC during FY 96. With the new Case Management System now fully automated, client eligibility establishment and the flow of case information is more accurate and timely. CATC also initiated a program in cooperation with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) wherein people who have been profiled and identified as potentially long-term unemployable are eligible to receive valuable CATC services. The agency will assist with the

development of resumes, will provide consultation for career changes and, in some cases, will act as a broker to arrange for tuition assistance for individuals referred by the VEC.

Real Property

Dealing in real estate on the county's behalf, Real Property acquired several properties in FY 96 that will have tremendous positive impact. The seven parcels of land acquired on Gayton Road will be the site of the new Northwest Elementary School, scheduled to open in the fall of 1997. Real Property also acquired land in areas of both western and eastern Henrico that will be used for several major utility and drainage projects. The main event during FY 96 was, however, the beginning of acquisition of rights-of-way and easements for the Elko Tract. This gave the county property rights to begin the infrastructure (sewer and water pumping station), install meters and construct the roadways that will be needed to serve the White Oak Semiconductor facility.

Internal Audit

Always committed to ensuring the proper use of public funds, this office conducted three major county audits in FY 96. The General Government Travel audit; the General Government Inventories audit, which focused primarily on equipment-intensive departments such as Public Works and Utilities (with inventories including signage, piping, and mechanical supplies); and the Public Utilities Fixed Asset audit covering trucks, buildings, and large, immobile equipment at the county's Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Personnel

During FY 96, the Department of Personnel revised and implemented the county's employee performance appraisal system. The new, streamlined process proved to be a welcomed change for supervisors and employees throughout county agencies. The department continued with the county's efforts to "rightsize" by eliminating 42 county positions without layoffs in the past fiscal year. And finally, the Department of Personnel became one of the first county agencies to have a presence on the World Wide Web, establishing a home page with links to county job openings, classifications, pay and benefits information, as well as employment applications. Personnel also began the planning stages for "Virtual HR," an Intranet site where current county employees will be able to access their personnel records in a self-service environment and make changes in benefits enrollment, register for training, and even alter their payroll deductions, all from their own work stations.

Mental Health/Mental Retardation

MH/MR's newly established Community Housing Task Force completed a proposal to meet specialized housing needs for the mentally disabled. If approved, the plan will include additional group homes, an increased use of rent subsidies for independent living, and a private, non-profit initiative that will hold

property, provide services and manage a community trust. In cooperation with several other county agencies, MH/MR implemented a Specialized Family Services Program to provide a broad range of services to emotionally disturbed children. Also in FY 96, as a result of a change in the State Code, the department assumed the responsibility of conducting face to face interviews with all mentally disabled citizens from the counties of Henrico, Charles City and New Kent, to properly evaluate each case before seeking involuntary psychiatric detention.

Social Services

Prefacing the federally mandated changes to come, the Department of Social Services instituted the Virginia Welfare Reform Act in FY 96, increasing requirements for eligibility including mandatory school attendance for children receiving aid, proof of proper child immunizations, and strict domicile regulations requiring children (under age 18) to live with the parent receiving aid on their behalf. Social Services also increased welfare fraud convictions and collections, prosecuting (or processing) 437 cases in FY 96, with repayment orders totaling \$154,830.

With the number of abused children in the county continuing to increase, the department added the full-time position of Foster Home Recruiter and Trainer. This person is responsible for finding foster homes for those children who need them, and providing proper training to the parents and families who accept the children, to ensure the most stable environment possible.

Health Department

In cooperation with St. Mary's Hospital and Ukrop's Grocery Stores, the Health Department implemented "Shots for Tots" this past fiscal year. By establishing temporary, mobile "clinics" in the St. Mary's CARE-A-VAN, staff was able to provide free school-required immunizations (i.e., measles, rubella, DPT, polio, tetanus) to the county's school-aged children. Because the schools also require a physical examination within a year of school enrollment, the Health Department created temporary examination clinics at four schools chosen by the Henrico School Administration, and conducted free physical exams.

Another program that was able to continue through a federal grant is the HIV Prevention Education. Targeted to adults, this program is designed to educate people about AIDS and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention while they are already in the waiting room areas at local family planning, maternity and STD clinics. By capturing the patient's attention in a small, informal setting, the health educator (or counselor) can more easily reach the targeted adults, dispelling myths and providing accurate, trustworthy information.

Extension Services

Henrico County's Office of the Virginia Cooperative Extension combines the resources of Virginia Tech

(VPI&SU), Virginia State, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the county to "help people to help themselves." In addition to continuing the 4-H Youth Program and the Save the Bay effort, Extension Service fully implemented the LawnKnowers Program this past fiscal year. Volunteer Master Gardeners deliver this educational program to homeowners teaching them the best management practices for landscaping. Beginning with water quality protection, the Master Gardener will consult on many aspects of lawn care including culturing, soil testing, liming, mowing, and the proper use of fertilizer and pesticides. A \$25 fee covers materials, and the training is free. County residents interested in participating in the program should watch for ads and announcements in the local media, or call the Extension Service Office.



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