

COUNTY OF HENRICO 1999-00 ANNUAL REPORT

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During this past fiscal year, I have had the opportunity to watch with genuine pride and enthusiasm the positive growth and change that Henrico County has experienced. I witnessed the many talented, committed men and women who comprise our county staff give their all while preparing for, and eagerly welcoming, the year 2000. From our award-winning public safety divisions, to our public school system that is hailed nationwide, the agencies in this county have successfully met challenges, and proactively planned for the future, to create a balance and stabilization that affords every resident - both private and corporate - the opportunities to enjoy the good life. With this, I am pleased to inform the Board of Supervisors, our county residents and our employees, that the state of Henrico County is excellent.

In these pages that follow, you will read about notable programs and initiatives that county staff have implemented specifically to benefit our residents. You will see that every agency, whether operating with a staff of five or 500, has optimized efficiency and modernization allowing us to move seamlessly into the new millennium. It will come as no surprise that technology still abounds; you will see that virtually every agency has taken advantage of the cutting-edge tools available to make our schools even better, our communities safer, our economy stronger, our parks greener and our opportunities limitless. Underlying each and every effort you will see a common thread: a commitment to enhancing the quality of life that our residents have come to know and expect from this county.

The achievements of Henrico County, and the level of professionalism that exists among our staff, have not gone unnoticed; last year, Henrico County won 11 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties. These awards recognized our departments of Finance, Recreation and Parks, Personnel, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, as well as our Public Schools and Libraries. Many other agencies within the county have been recognized with national and state awards too numerous to mention here. For this we are extremely pleased, and anxious to continue on this path of excellence. Hard work, good fortune, and undeniable achievement have set the standard, but there is so much more to come. We welcome new challenges and the opportunity to take Henrico County to the next level. We are, indeed, Looking Back with Pride . . . Moving Forward with Purpose.

Sincerely,

Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E.
County Manager

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 our Board of Supervisors. The board appoints the county manager, who is the chief administrator of the county overseeing 33 departments within the local government. In addition, the board appoints members to 39 local boards and commissions to ensure the best possible administration of the county.

Division of Police

Today's ever-changing technology has sparked a remarkable revolution in the way businesses function, governments operate, and people communicate. Henrico's Division of Police embraced this phenomenon, making exceptional strides during FY00 to protect and serve our communities using methods only previously imagined. During September of last year, the division abandoned its analogue radio system for a new 800 MHz, digital communication system opening an arena of possibilities that were once unattainable. With this new system, county staff can readily communicate with each other during emergency operations. For example, a police officer at the scene of an accident can immediately contact an emergency rescue worker; a Public Works employee repairing a light at an intersection can instantly contact police. Not only will this new system afford agencies within Henrico direct access to one another, but will soon allow police departments throughout the metro area to communicate. The City of Richmond and Chesterfield County are both in the process of converting to the same system now being used by Henrico. Once completed, police officers from each locality can more easily cooperate and exchange information during emergencies which cross jurisdictional boundaries. For instance, if a Henrico police officer attempted to pull a vehicle for a traffic violation, and the suspect decided to run rather than stop, the Henrico officer could instantly alert Chesterfield (or Richmond) officers that the suspect was heading their way.

The Columbine High School and Los Angeles Day Care Center tragedies serve as grim reminders that workplace safety remains an important responsibility for law enforcement today. In the wake of these violent disasters, the Division of Police instituted the "Safe Work" program during last fiscal year. The program allows the division to address our community's crime prevention demands, and help businesses develop a responsible, executive-level directive to prevent workplace violence. Any county business or organization may request this free, four-step program which begins with a Site Security and Employee Safety Survey. After the survey results determine which efforts the organization already employs (such as a zero-drug tolerance policy), the program

continues with implementation of an anti-violence policy, a workplace safety team and training. The Safe Work program was recognized as one of the top 25 "non-traditional law enforcement applications" in the nation, qualifying for a 2000 Webber Seavy Award for Quality in Law Enforcement.

The Auto Theft Task Force represents a third successful endeavor for our Division of Police during FY00. Aimed at reducing auto theft, prosecuting the suspects and enhancing public safety, this program proved itself worthy on all counts. Following the activation of the Auto Theft Task Force, the county realized a significant decrease in automobile theft from the previous year. Due to the success of the program, the Virginia State Police HEAT (Help Eliminate Auto Theft) Unit recognized the Henrico County Division of Police with the first place award for the metro region.

boat

Division of Fire

The Division of Fire took to the sea in FY00, with the purchase and refurbishment of a 41-foot U.S. Coast Guard patrol vessel, now known as the Fire/Police Marine Patrol Unit. Firefighters and police officers spent three months overhauling the boat before launching it on June 10, 2000. The vessel's primary functions include law enforcement patrol, search and rescue missions, serving as a dive platform for division scuba divers, firefighting, emergency medical response, and offering assistance to stranded vessels. The all-weather, all-season vessel is equipped with firefighting pumps, marine radar, forward-looking sonar, marine and local radio systems, a global satellite positioning system, night vision and a cellular phone. The Coast Guard valued the vessel at \$235,000 at the time of surplus. Henrico County purchased it for only \$9,000, adding another \$15,000 to completely refurbish and equip the boat. A bargain by any means, and an extraordinary addition to the county's public safety efforts.

On land, the division was also making strides with the installation of Opticom, a traffic preemption system allowing fire engine operators on emergency calls to automatically change traffic signals to green when approaching busy intersections. Not only does this reduce response time for firefighters rushing to emergency calls, but it significantly increases the safety of motorists driving in the vicinity while emergency vehicles are trying to maneuver through traffic.

Administratively, the Division of Fire had a busy but successful year with an internal reorganization. Fire Chief Mark Light re-aligned and streamlined the division's responsibilities by consolidating four separate and distinct sections into just two: Operations, which covers fire suppression, special teams and emergency medical services;

and Service, which includes business management, support and community service. The new organization allows the division to be more responsive to the needs of our residents, and has paved the way for a smooth transition into the 21st century.

Planning

In the world of Planning, things are rarely black or white. Planning staff realized this while grappling with the "adult bookstore and video store" zoning ordinance amendment last year. After many hours of research, assistance from the county's legal team, and input from Henrico residents, the Planning staff created an amendment to the zoning ordinance specifically addressing adult bookstores and video stores, including requirements that prospective business owners would have to meet before opening an adult establishment in the county. The County Manager and planning staff offered the proposed amendment to the Board of Supervisors, which adopted it on October 12, 1999. No more shades of gray.

The Planning Office also established an amendment to the 2010 Land Use Plan specifically addressing wireless communication technology. With the ever-increasing popularity and demand of wireless communication systems comes the need for more cellular towers. Planning's objective was to devise a policy that would guide the county in finding appropriate locations for the necessary communications towers, while protecting its residential neighborhoods. All the while, county staff had to acknowledge federal legislation, as well as the concerns of both private and commercial residents. With all of this in the balance, the Planning Office drafted the amendment, and the Board of Supervisors adopted it last February.

Revisions to the Plan of Development (POD) review and approval process also went into effect last fiscal year. The new guidelines require developers to submit utility information with the initial POD application. This revision streamlines the approval process for PODs, and helps to reduce the impact of utility lines on required buffers.

Economic Development

The Henrico County administration, in tandem with the Economic Development Authority, continued to attract new and expanded business to Henrico during FY00. White Oak Semiconductor, which already employs 1,600 people, announced plans for a major expansion effort of its east end facility including an extension of its administration building, and construction of a new fabrication unit adjacent to the current facility. If all goes as scheduled, White Oak's manufacturing capability will potentially double within the next two years. Read: more jobs for Henrico residents, more money pumping through Henrico's economy.

Site Selection magazine's online insider termed it the "blockbuster deal of the week,"

when IG2, a subsidiary of the New York-based Fidelity Holdings, announced they had selected Henrico County for their new \$30 million regional technical center, creating more than 500 new jobs. IG2, an application service provider developing bundled Internet, telephone and television services for residential customers, will occupy a 108,000 square foot space in northern Henrico's Villa Park.

And finally, in what many Henrico shopping enthusiasts consider to be the coup of the century, upscale retailers Nordstrom and Lord & Taylor announced that they will anchor the new Short Pump Town Center. Plans indicate that the open-air mall will use landscaping and exterior walkways to connect the stores, creating a shopping experience representative of yesteryear. Henrico-based MJGT Associates and Cleveland-based Forest City Enterprises, Inc. are the developers behind the \$236 million mall that is scheduled to open in mid-2002.

Building Construction and Inspections

Building Inspector

During FY00, the Office of Building Construction and Inspections performed 74,183 inspections, issued 18,758 construction permits, and published four quarterly newsletters targeting architects, engineers and contractors within the metro region. With the continued increase of new construction in the county, Building Inspections' newsletter keeps members of the building community informed about new regulations, happenings and industry news.

In addition, the office coordinated and supervised 19 repair projects for elderly and low-income residents in Henrico County. By working with the Community Maintenance Volunteer Coordinator, Building Inspections was able to oversee safe and effective home maintenance projects for county residents who were physically or financially unable to complete the needed repairs themselves.

Community Development

The Eastern Government Center (EGC) continued to provide convenient services to those residents, builders, engineers and developers living or working in the eastern portion of the county. Services include online access to county real estate transactions including property transfers, assessments, and owners' addresses, voter registration, dog licenses, business licenses, and vehicle decals, social services assistance, and a drop-off center for water bill payments, personal property taxes, real estate taxes, and parking tickets. Through the countywide computer network, staff at the EGC can also access zoning and property identification maps, as well as water, sewer and subdivision maps directly from their workstations enabling them to quickly assist residents and customers with their zoning questions.

Public Utilities

In FY00, the Department of Public Utilities continued the expansion of the Water Reclamation Facility which will ultimately increase the volume of wastewater treated to 75 million gallons per day (mgd). Currently, the facility produces 45 mgd; volume will increase to 60 mgd of treated wastewater by November of 2001, and will reach the 75 mgd mark by November 2002.

Henrico's own Water Treatment Facility is right on schedule. As those residents living or working in the far west end can attest, construction has been steady since Henrico County began this endeavor in 1996. The intake structure off the bank of the James River is complete, as are the transmission pipelines from the river to the raw water station. The pipelines from the pump station to River Road will be complete this December, and those from River Road to Quioccasin Road are all set to go. There is a happy end in sight: during FY00, the Board of Supervisors awarded the construction contract for the final phase of the raw water transmission system from Quioccasin Road to the treatment plant. Henrico's water supply facility, which will initially produce 55 million gallons of fresh, drinkable water per day, will open January 1, 2003.

snowplow

Public Works

In addition to overseeing new construction and performing regular maintenance on Henrico's more than 3,000 (lane) miles of roadways, the Department of Public Works received two unforgettable gifts from Mother Nature in FY00: Hurricane Floyd and Blizzard 2000. On September 15, 1999, Floyd's arrival to Henrico County was imminent, and preparations began. Crews braced themselves for what proved to be a long night, with high winds and rain certain to flood some roads and block others with fallen debris. Although Floyd's visit to the metro region on September 16 was brief, his 80-mph winds and significant rainfall left 140 fallen trees across roadways, and major storm debris scattered throughout the county. The department mobilized 130 crew members who were able to remove all of the trees that were blocking road passage (with the exception of those few involving live power lines) within 24 hours. However, debris removal lasted through November, with the cost of the storm totaling nearly \$300,000.

The aftermath of Floyd was over. But, no sooner was the storm reduced to a bad memory when another one - this one of the frozen variety - struck Henrico. Blizzard 2000 arrived on January 29, leaving more than 14 inches of snow across the county forcing multiple businesses, schools, and the Richmond International Airport to close. This time, the department mobilized 200 employees, with additional help from the departments of Public Utilities, Recreation and Parks, and Schools, as well as private contractors, to work around the clock in effort to restore safe driving conditions for our residents. Before all was said

and done, crews spread 6,000 tons of salt and 6,500 tons of sand across the county roadways, and debris removal continued well into June. The Blizzard of 2000 cost the county \$1.5 million.

County Attorney

During FY00, the County Attorney's office worked alongside the Planning Office and the Division of Police drafting ordinances to mitigate the impact of sexually-oriented "adult" businesses located in the county. The office designed these regulations in order to control the location of adult businesses, barring them from operating near "sensitive" land uses such as churches, residences and daycare facilities. Furthermore, any individual who wishes to open an adult business must undergo a criminal background check with the Division of Police. Those individuals who have been convicted of a felony within the past five years, or those who have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or obscenity laws (for example, lying, cheating, stealing, sexual deviation, child pornography, etc.) are prohibited from opening an adult business. Permits are granted for one year only, and the business owners must undergo a new criminal investigation each year to renew the permit.

The office also handled legalities for five additional property closings in FY00, allowing the county to construct four new schools and one park. Of the four schools, one has been completed - Twin Hickory Elementary School in the Three Chopt District opened its doors this fall. An additional elementary school will be built in the county's Brookland District. The remaining two will be middle schools, one of which will be constructed in the Brookland District; the other currently exists as the New Bridge Baptist Church, and will be renovated to serve as an alternative middle school for students with special needs. In addition, the county purchased property adjacent to the Short Pump Elementary School to expand the existing Short Pump Park.

In the midst of conducting Henrico's legal affairs, County Attorney Joseph P. Rapisarda, Jr. served as the chairman of the Virginia State Bar Standing Committee on Legal Ethics. Attorneys throughout Virginia seek counsel from this committee about ethical issues arising in the legal arena today. Members of this highly respected committee, whose hallmark is that of integrity, meet bi-monthly to render official opinions to their colleagues. That they chose Henrico County Attorney Joe Rapisarda to serve as their chair speaks volumes.

Office of the General Registrar

During FY00, the Registrar's Office conducted three full-blown elections, including our local Board of Supervisors' election last November, a presidential primary in February and a congressional primary in June. Following these elections, preparations began for the

major presidential election on November 7, 2000. While handling the elections, the office moved to a new location in a recently renovated building (formerly the Public Safety Building) at the Government Center. With the additional space, staff in the Registrar's Office was able to more completely focus on customer service. Absentee voters can now cast their votes right in the office, without having to go to a makeshift voting booth in a separate area. In addition, the new location has a permanent customer service counter enabling staff to more effectively assist walk-ins.

While the office will continue to provide election results through the government access cable channel 37, it will also provide "real-time" election results to the State Board of Elections via the Internet. Residents will be able to consult the Internet and see statewide election results as the votes are tallied, providing faster reports than any other medium.

In addition, the Registrar's Office began an in-depth study of the county's 91 polling places to determine which were fully accessible for people with disabilities, and which ones needed attention. The office hopes to make every polling place handicapped accessible so every registered voter can cast his or her ballot without obstacle.

Judicial System

General District Court, Circuit Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Community Corrections Program, the Juvenile Court Services Unit (Juvenile Probation) and the Juvenile Detention Home together form Henrico County's multi-faceted, intricate judicial system. These eight independent agencies work toward the common goal of serving justice in our county.

The General District Court established a Small Claims Court this past fiscal year, alleviating some of the caseload in District Court and saving time for those wishing to absolve their cases without attorneys. Any person seeking damages of less than \$1,000 can opt to have his case heard in Small Claims Court, providing the case is "pro se," meaning "I am representing myself, without an attorney." Those wishing to have an attorney represent them, even if the damages are less than \$1,000, must move the case to the General District Court docket.

The clerk's office also underwent renovation last year, providing staff with more work space, storage space, and ample desktops for personal computers. Staff can now more readily access files and documentation, allowing them to more efficiently assist residents.

The clerk of the [Circuit Court](#), an elected constitutional officer, maintains criminal court cases, marriage licenses, probates of will, adoptions, notary certificates, land records, and more. Residents can also retrieve land deeds and titles, judgments, and financial records

through a computerized network.

Commonwealth's Attorney Howard C. "Toby" Vick resigned his post in May 2000 to practice law in the private sector. On June 22, Chief Judge of the Circuit Court George Tidey administered the oath of office to Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Wade Kizer, who replaced Vick for the remainder of the term.

The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office continued its concentrated effort to eliminate drug pushers from the streets of Henrico, with 29 solid drug convictions in FY00 and two more pending trial. These convictions were the result of seven separate investigations involving the increasingly popular drug Ecstasy, as well as marijuana, cocaine and heroin distribution.

There's a new Sheriff in town. **Henrico County Sheriff**, Michael L. Wade was sworn-in during an investiture ceremony following his November '99 election win. Within five months of taking office, Wade filled 29 vacant supervisory positions within the jail system, from line supervisors to Chief Deputy. Furthermore, he closed the Jail Farm in New Kent County thereby cutting \$800,000 from the office's budget. At Jail East, the Sheriff's Office implemented a voluntary Therapeutic Community for inmates with substance abuse problems. Inmates request admission to the housing community (one pod in the jail) where they are counseled by the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and they focus on structured daily activities and rehabilitative education. Many of those inmates who are participating in the Therapeutic Community are also enrolled in the vocational and educational programs. The Sheriff's Office's goal is twofold: get the inmates off drugs while training them in a trade or vocation so they can lead productive lives once released from jail. With 80 percent of the inmate population having some sort of substance abuse history, a war on drugs is a war on crime, period.

The **Community Corrections Program** (CCP) saw another banner year in FY00, with a record 1,107 court-ordered clients under CCP supervision (on probation) and leading the state with 991 pretrial defendants (those out on bond awaiting trial). In addition, CCP began the mammoth task of converting all internal files to a computer-based case management system. Once completed, this system will save untold hours for CCP staff, as well as staff throughout the criminal justice system, by automating mandated data reporting to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The **14th District Court Services Unit**, more commonly known as **Juvenile Probation**, established the Henrico County Interdisciplinary CHINS/Truancy Committee to review truancy cases referred to the court by Henrico County Schools and Juvenile Probation. Once a child receives seven unexcused absences from school, the case is referred to this committee. Then, representatives from the Juvenile Clerk's Office, Police, Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, Probation, Schools, Mental Health/Mental

Retardation and Social Services collectively discuss each case and make a recommendation to the court as to what services the child or family may need. Because research shows that truancy is indicative of future delinquency, making an effort to get the child back into school is a huge step in positively impacting society in the long run.

Juvenile Probation also used federal money last year to implement a data management and program evaluation model. A "self assessment" of sorts, this model is designed to help staff at probation understand which programs are working and which aren't. By tracking the progress of juveniles who have been through the programs, and collecting and analyzing the data, Probation staff can more accurately project which programs are worth continuing and which need to go.

And finally, the unit developed a brochure that outlines services and procedures for those unfamiliar with the juvenile court system. This way, people with questions can immediately consult this compact information guide to help them through the process.

The **Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court** gained a judgeship during FY00, thanks to the legislators at the Virginia Assembly. The fourth judgeship position was created for Henrico County's Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, provided it "renders assistance" to Chesterfield County. For the time being, this judge sits on the bench in Henrico Court three times a week, in Chesterfield two.

In addition, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court received funding for the partial expansion of the court building. The expansion is necessary because of the ever-increasing number of juvenile and domestic court cases, and the additional staff needed to handle the caseload. The clerk's office is in the process of hiring an architect for the design. Construction bid proposals will follow, and the project should be underway by spring of '01.

Once again, the **Juvenile Detention Home** provided a safe, secure environment for staff and detainees without serious injury or escape during the past fiscal year, only this time it was under new leadership. After 20 years as the Superintendent of the Juvenile Detention Home, John W. "Jack" Mootz retired, making way for Michael D. Bingham, who was appointed the new Superintendent in January 2000. Bingham has worked with the Juvenile Detention Home since 1990, first as a Detention Outreach Worker, and as the Assistant Superintendent since 1995.

During FY00, the Detention Home implemented video conferencing allowing the Juvenile Court Judges to conduct arraignments or review hearings with the juveniles without having to transport them to the courts. The newly renovated Control Room at the Detention Home allows staff to more easily and effectively monitor individuals, equipment, door openings and closings, etc. via a computer graphic of the building's floor

plan.

Finance

Last year, due to its sound fiscal management and stable economic position, Henrico County maintained a triple-A bond rating from Fitch Investors Service, L.P., Moody's Investors Service, and Standard and Poor's Corporation. This distinguishes Henrico as one of few jurisdictions in our nation to enjoy a "triple" triple-A rating.

For the 18th consecutive year, Henrico earned the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting, and the Distinguished Budget Award for the 12th consecutive year. The National Government Finance Officers Association sponsors both honors.

The Department of Finance won additional national acclaim with a National Association of Counties (NACo) award recognizing the Business, Professional, Occupational License (BPOL) tax reforms. Since 1996, the Department of Finance has been reforming the BPOL tax structure to create a more favorable economic climate. The five-year plan reduced the overall tax burden on Henrico's corporate citizens and simplified the filing and payment requirements. Representatives from the business community have widely hailed this reform as an innovative approach to making the BPOL tax more equitable, while enhancing our prospects for future economic growth.

Information Technology

New Year's Eve 1999: the hustle and bustle at the Information Technology (IT) Department looked like anything but a county holiday. As the clock inched closer to midnight, activity increased. Midnight came, and went. No mayhem. No blackouts. No spontaneous combustion. All was well. It was the best compliment the staff in IT could have hoped for - that all of the preparation, the anticipation, the long hours, the lines of code, the contingency plans, checks and balances, test runs - it all worked. To the naysayer, the "Y2K hoo-ha" was all for naught. But for the real people behind the real potential problems, a non-event meant a job well done.

After quietly ushering in the Year 2000, IT focused on renovating their space to accommodate the ever-increasing expanse of computers and servers that technology demands. While most of us are concerned only with the latest and greatest software, or customizing our own departmental program, somewhere in the recesses of IT the servers required to handle this stuff are multiplying like mad. With the renovation, IT was able to organize and expand the once over-populated computer room, while successfully completing and implementing the countywide LAN/WAN network. Now, all workstations throughout the county are networked using the latest technology, streamlining our interagency efforts and data management.

Public Libraries

Public Libraries took their show on the road this year with the brand new Bookmobile: a library on wheels, complete with wireless Internet access, storytime sessions for children, research materials and books for pure pleasure. The Bookmobile, with more than 2,500 materials on board, makes the rounds five days a week to nursing homes, low-income housing projects, daycare centers, and other sites where residents may not have access to one of the library branches because of transportation limitations. You might see the Bookmobile parked at community events, neighborhood festivals and schools - if you do, "all aboard!" Residents can also request certain materials from any branch or area library, and the Bookmobile will deliver it to any one of its 60 scheduled stops.

Back in the stationary library branches, "user friendly" is also the name of the game. A new automated system now allows library patrons to review web-based circulation and cataloguing information. The "remote access" feature allows patrons with home Internet access to renew or reserve materials, and review their accounts, without ever leaving the comforts of home.

Mark Edwards

Schools

Henrico County's nationally-recognized public school system continued on the path of excellence in FY00 as one of the top achievers in Virginia on the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests for the third year in a row. The SOL tests, mandated by the Virginia Department of Education, measure student performance in math, science, social studies and language arts. Recent score results show that 60 percent of Henrico County schools, 35 in all, received full accreditation.

Our graduating seniors in the class of 2000 pulled quite a coup with scholarship totals at an all-time high. Graduates received more than \$8 million in scholarship money from organizations and universities nationwide. Furthermore, the dropout rate among Henrico students hit an all-time low last year, with only 2.37 percent of students opting to quit school before earning their diploma.

During FY00, the United States Department of Education named Harry F. Byrd Middle School a "2000 Blue Ribbon School." Byrd Middle is Henrico's fourth Blue Ribbon School in the past five years, bringing the county's total to eight.

All of these statistics may explain why Henrico Schools Superintendent, Dr. Mark A. Edwards, was named Superintendent of the Year by the Virginia School Boards Association. Dr. Edwards is now in the running to be named National Superintendent of the Year.

Recreation and Parks

During FY00, the Division of Recreation and Parks opened the Hidden Creek Recreation Center - Fairfield's newest - located in Hidden Creek Park. The 2,440 square foot community center, which residents welcomed enthusiastically, is available for weddings, receptions, private parties and business functions. Equipped with a full kitchen and plenty of room for entertaining, this center promises to be a hot spot.

The division also completed construction of three new girl's softball fields at Dumbarton Elementary School. These professional quality fields are providing an outstanding facility resource for girl's softball.

Deep Run School "Saving Henrico's Past" was a big deal for Recreation and Parks during FY00, in more ways than one. This video, produced by Schools in cooperation with Recreation and Parks, offers an educational, entertaining, and fascinating overview of Henrico's history and historical sites. From antebellum houses, to Civil War era taverns, the video promotes the county's rich heritage and brings attention to its historic preservation efforts. By focusing on identification, interpretation, protection, rehabilitation and preservation, the video benefits new and long-term residents of Henrico County. The success and value of the production was further recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Public Information

Hurricane Floyd, Blizzard 2000 and The Coming of Y2K: these three events collectively made FY00 the year of crisis communications for the Public Information Office. Staff worked around the clock, both in the Emergency Operations Center and the administrative office, to ensure that our residents had access to the very latest, breaking news in these emergency situations. From school and government office closings, to blocked roadways, to shelters that were opening in the area, the Public Information staff stayed in constant contact with the media, and continuously updated government access cable channel 37, to make sure Henrico residents had the same, up-to-the-minute information that we did.

During the non-crisis periods, the office continued instructing various internal agencies on standard media practices, expectations, deadlines, and formats so they can more effectively use the media, and other non-paid advertising and publicity alternatives to distribute information to our residents.

In addition to these and other functions, the Public Information Office won nine state and national awards from four different professional public relations organizations for excellence in writing, communications programs, design, video production, and creative art direction.

General Services

Staff at the Department of General Services worked behind the scenes in FY00 to make the Division of Police's new 800 MHz radio system a reality. From negotiating outside contracts, to installing wiring, hardware, and checking every technical detail, the committed effort of the staff made the transition from the old radio system to the new seem effortless - even though they had to do it in the middle of a hurricane. While the switchover to the new 800 MHz system was scheduled to take place on September 20, 1999, Hurricane Floyd had different ideas. With the arrival of Floyd on September 16, several channels on the old system started to fail due to water penetration in the basement area where the communications center was housed. With this, all systems were "go" four days early. Half of the police communications staff set-up shop in the new center with the new system, while the other half stayed with the old. In an instant, the switchover took place without compromising emergency response or service to our residents.

General Services also completed the long-awaited renovation of the former Public Safety Building, allowing the departments of Public Works, Public Utilities, Information Technology, Internal Audit, Geographic Information Systems and the Registrar's Office to move into the building they now call home. The renovation covered three floors, totaling 40,500 square feet of space.

The department also assisted Recreation and Parks with the construction of the Hidden Creek Recreation Center, as well as equipped the county's fire stations with back-up generators to provide continuous emergency services during power failures.

Capital Area Training Consortium (CATC)

CATC made a few major changes during FY00, all for the good of its client base. In cooperation with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Richmond Career Advancement Center, and Powhatan County, CATC implemented video conferencing. This allows clients to discuss career opportunities, conduct interviews, and access the human resources available through all of CATC's partners without having to travel to each location. The partners, which include Henrico, Chesterfield, Hanover, Charles City, New Kent, Goochland and Powhatan, renewed their seven-county consortium agreement this past year. This agreement stipulates that these counties will work together as a group for the duration of the Workforce Investment Act (minimum of five years).

The implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, however, brought a close to CATC's efforts under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Before this change became effective, residents wanting to use CATC's services had to qualify, proving eligibility based on need and other criteria. Now, any resident of the consortium area, regardless of income or need, is eligible to use the CATC resources, including access to job openings, the Internet, fax machines, copiers, and market information.

Real Property

Twin Hickory School

In cooperation with the County Attorney's Office, Real Property negotiated deals and acquired properties that are future sites of four new schools in Henrico. The properties will house two elementary schools (one of which, Twin Hickory, is already open) and two middle schools in the county. The department also worked on behalf of the Division of Recreation and Parks to acquire 40 acres at Pump and Three Chopt roads to expand the Short Pump Park, located beside Short Pump Elementary School.

In addition, the department acquired easements and rights of way for the departments of Public Works and Public Utilities to construct five drainage projects, four sewer rehabilitation projects, two road improvements, a water and sewer extension project, and a raw water line along Gaskins Road for the new water treatment plant. Real Property also acquired a site for a water pumping station and tank next to the river on South Gaskins Road.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit continued reviewing county agencies' policies, expenditures and operational procedures to increase the county's accountability to its residents. Among others, the department conducted a thorough audit of the overtime system, identifying areas of improvement to control overtime expenditures. The office performed an audit on General Services' Risk Management section, reviewing checks and balances on the county's insurance programs, as well as auditing the Division of Fire's operating expenditures.

Personnel

Employee training opportunities continued to be a priority for the Personnel Department, which offered 215 courses covering a wide range of job-related topics. In addition, 1,400 employees participated in the computer training classes, and 2,100 employees enrolled in an additional 100 courses including communication skills, customer service, career enrichment, leadership and supervision, and others. The availability of these training

programs to county employees, and their eagerness to participate, helps every employee become more able to effectively and efficiently serve our residents.

Henrico's Personnel Department is among those county agencies that received national recognition in the NACo achievement awards program last year. Personnel earned two awards: one for the "Customer Service Certification Program," and a second for the "Matching Employee Career Interests with County Jobs" initiative. This program also won the "Best in Category" award in the NACo competition - one of only 15 awarded nationwide. Staff in the Personnel Department guarantees there's more to come; next year, the department anticipates a brand new approach to training with the "Learn It On Line" series. Employees can register for and "attend" these Internet-based courses without leaving their workstations.

During FY00, the Henrico County employee turnover rate remained stable. For the 13th consecutive year, the Personnel Department recorded less than 10 percent turnover in the county, with nearly a quarter of that attributed to retirements of long-term employees.

Mental Health/Mental Retardation

Thanks to an increase in state funding, MH/MR was able to implement Specialized Women's Substance Abuse Services. Because women with substance abuse problems typically have children for whom they cannot afford child care, and many do not have access to transportation, this program was designed to address those issues and provide these women with access to the services they need. A clinical supervisor directed the program's development, which now includes a full time clinician, a child care center in both the East End and Radford Center locations, and transportation for women who could not otherwise report for their counseling services. Furthermore, the program includes after-care services, counseling those women who have remained drug-free and are eager to regain control of their lives.

MH/MR also expanded residential services for their Mental Health clients, opening two group homes which house eight people. Again, with state funding, MH/MR was able to lease these houses and provide intensive services during the day, leaving the clients to enjoy their privacy during the night. To date, each Mental Health client who has participated in one of these group homes has achieved great strides in coping with their illnesses, from becoming employed to enjoying social integration - basic life functions that many of us take for granted.

The privatization of residential services for Mental Retardation clients was possible last fiscal year due to funding from the General Assembly. MH/MR opened five privately-operated group homes, each capable of housing four to five clients. Every group home member either has a job in the community, or attends day programs through MH/MR. By

placing clients with Mental Retardation in group homes, they achieve a sense of independence and a sense of normalcy not otherwise possible.

Social Services

The Department of Social Services continued to witness the success of the Welfare Reform Act with the stabilization of the Food Stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) caseloads. Our strong economy, coupled with the state and federal welfare policy changes several years ago, has prevented an increase in the need for these services.

As the number of Henrico residents over age 60 continues to grow, so does the need for Adult Protective Services. The number of cases investigated for abuse and neglect of the elderly has more than doubled in the past three years. During FY00, Social Services investigated 333 cases of abuse: that's a 19 percent increase over last year, and an 81 percent increase for the past three years. Social Services staff attribute part of the dramatic increase to the aging population. However, heightened awareness among residents, together with Community Policing and Community Maintenance efforts, has accounted for many of the increased investigations.

The number of foster children entering the system due to abuse or neglect also reached an all-time high, with 130 children entering foster care by the end of the fiscal year. As family problems intensify (substance abuse, drug-exposed infants, domestic violence, and young children with mental and emotional disabilities) child welfare workers must often determine what constitutes the best interests of the child. This decision-making process is a delicate undertaking that operates within the core belief that all children are entitled to a safe, permanent and stable environment.

Health Department

A bacterial meningitis outbreak at the University of Richmond (UR) kicked the county's Health Department into high gear last winter, with three on-campus cases being confirmed between December and February. Health Department staff began conducting interviews at the university, gathering information about close contact between infected people and making connections among the cases. Following the interviews, the UR Health Department vaccinated those individuals identified as having come in close personal contact with those infected. The county Health Department offered vaccines to all full-time undergraduate students who lived in the dorms. Approximately 1,600 students opted to get the vaccine. The Health Department then staffed a hotline, fielding more than 1,000 calls from concerned parents and students between February 13 and 15. On February 15, the Health Department offered the vaccine to all undergraduate students, including those not previously vaccinated. Consultation between the county and the University Health

Department continued until the outbreak was conclusively under control.

The Health Department also initiated "Vida de la Casa" in FY00, a federally-funded maternity care program for pregnant Hispanic women. Thirty-seven percent of maternity patients at the West End Health Clinic are Hispanic; many of these women cannot speak English well enough to effectively communicate with their doctors and nurses, who are generally short on time due to patient volume. With the Vida de la Casa program, nurses travel to the patient's home with a translator to educate the patient about prenatal care, and what to expect once the newborn arrives.

Staff at the Health Department also began offering the Restaurant Sanitation course in Chinese to those restaurateurs who speak the language. The department has been offering this course in English and Spanish for years; in FY00 staff realized the need for a course taught in Chinese. The class covers microbiology and food-borne illnesses, as well as proper food safety and control points. Twenty-three people attended this premiere Chinese-language offering.

Agriculture and Extension Services

This agency is a cooperative effort between county, state, and federal governments. Current program areas include environmental horticulture, commodity agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H youth programs.

Last fiscal year, the department continued its highly successful environmental horticulture programs with the help of Master Gardener volunteers. During FY00, 113 Master Gardeners donated more than 5,500 hours providing Henrico residents with lawn and landscape information designed to protect water quality. Under Extension Agent supervision, they staffed the horticulture help line at the Extension Office daily, conducted plant clinics at local garden centers, and presented programs to various community groups on topics ranging from lawn care to pruning. Consumers who want to consult a Master Gardener can call 501-5160 to get help with everything from lawn fertilization tips to the identification of insects found in the home or landscape. Information is also available on two web sites www.co.henrico.va.us/agent and, www.ext.vt.edu.

More than 100 county residents enrolled in the LawnKnowers Water Quality Protection Program. For a \$15 fee, the homeowner receives a soil test of the lawn, an accurate measurement of lawn square footage, and a consultation with a Master Gardener to discuss a customized lawn care plan.

Extension's family and consumer science programs focused on human development and building support within families with programs designed to help people save money and reduce their debt loads.

Cooperative Extension's tradition of youth development continued with 4-H youth programming. Under the leadership of volunteers and the Henrico 4-H Leaders Association, more than 1,000 youth participated in the program which includes 4-H clubs, school enrichment groups, contests, and camps.

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