



**Supervisor John T. Stirrup**  
**Gainesville District**

# THE GAINESVILLE EXPRESS

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Dear Gainesville Resident,

Tax season is upon us and the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) must make some difficult choices. In these uncertain times, the Chairman of the BOCS has made tax relief a priority to help both homeowners and business. In order to understand the debate on this issue, it is important to understand two key points; how the County generates revenue, and how the differential between commercial and residential property values complicates the budget debate.

The County generates some revenues through sales taxes, fees for service, and other sources, but the vast majority of revenues come from personal property taxes on real estate. Real Estate tax bills are sent to property owners on a semiannual basis. Your property tax bill is a function of two variables: the assessed value of your property and the tax rate. Given this, if the assessed value of your property declines by a greater percentage than the tax rate increases, you will pay less in taxes this year than you did last year. It is likely that the BOCS will adopt a tax rate which is much higher than last year, but this increase in the tax rate is anticipated to be much lower than the decline in average property values resulting in a lower tax bill than last year for homeowners.

One of the challenging issues this year is the fact that while residential property values have declined over thirty percent on average, commercial properties have appreciated over the year. Virginia State law prohibits localities from charging separate tax rates for residential and commercial properties. One tax rate serves both homeowners and commercial properties. A large increase in the tax rate coupled with the appreciation in commercial property values will result in an unacceptable increase in property taxes for businesses. An increased tax burden could potentially force already strained businesses into bankruptcy. As a result, the Chairman has suggested that the County advertise a tax rate of \$1.198, which is the rate the County Executive based the proposed budget. The advertised rate is not the adopted rate, but an upper limit which the BOCS cannot exceed. At the March 3, 2009 BOCS meeting I supported the Chairman by voting for \$1.198 to be the advertised rate. Unfortunately, this rate failed four in favor, four opposed. Three other rates were suggested, all failed. It is expected that the BOCS will revisit the issue at the March 17, 2009 meeting.

If the BOCS were to adopt the \$1.198 tax rate, it is anticipated to reduce the average homeowner's tax bill by \$548.00 (a 16% reduction) while increasing the average business tax bill only 5%, the County would reduce its spending by \$56 million, when compared to the last fiscal year, without reductions in uniformed police or fire and rescue personnel. This is a responsible proposal to homeowners and businesses, and leaves the core functions of the County government intact. The proposed reductions in this year's budget will affect services, but I feel it is important that government be responsible in good

times as well as bad. When a family sees a reduction in their income they must prioritize and determine what is essential and what is not. Government must also make these decisions when revenues are down and reduce spending instead of looking to the taxpayers to make up the difference.

In order to provide more detailed information on the budget; I have included the following links.

- [Current Financial Forecasts](#)
- [Prince William County Budget and Analysis Webpage](#) (includes links for the proposed budget and Capital Improvement Projects)
- [Fiscal Year 2010 \(FY10\) Budget Process Calendar](#) (Two events I would like to highlight from the calendar are below)
  - Monday, April 6 at 7:30 pm - Budget Public Hearing #1 (Dr. A.J. Ferlazzo Building Auditorium, 15941 Donald Curtis Drive, Woodbridge)
  - Thursday, April 9 at 7:30pm - Budget Public Hearing #2 (Battlefield High School, 15000 Graduation Drive, Haymarket)

My next Gainesville District Quarterly Town Hall Meeting will be held on March 19, 2009 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Bull Run Middle School. County Executive, Craig Gerhart, Assistant County Executive Melissa Peacor, Budget Director, David Tyeryar and Finance Director, Chris Martino are scheduled to attend to present an overview of the proposed budget.

The budget process is a dynamic one which affects everyone in the County. I would encourage everyone in the County to voice your opinions regarding the budget. Without public input, it is difficult for elected officials to know the needs of the community. Questions regarding the budget can be sent to my office at [Gainesville@pwcgov.org](mailto:Gainesville@pwcgov.org) or to the budget office at [budget@pwcgov.org](mailto:budget@pwcgov.org). Each year the budget office receives hundreds of questions so I would recommend that you send your questions as early as possible. As always, please send me questions on any other topic you may have.

Sincerely,

John T. Stirrup  
Supervisor  
Gainesville District

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

##### **Gainesville District Quarterly Town Hall Meeting**

Supervisor Stirrup will hold his next town hall meeting on March 19, 2009 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Bull Run Middle School. The topic of this meeting is the proposed 2010 budget, County staff will attend to give a presentation and answer questions.

**Gainesville District Quarterly Town Hall Meeting  
Bull Run Middle School  
6308 Catharpin Road  
Gainesville, 20155  
7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

### **Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) Meetings**

The **BOCS** will hold meetings on March 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> starting at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Chambers at the McCoart Building located at 1 County Complex Court in Woodbridge. Meetings are broadcast live on Comcast Cable Channel 23, and then re-broadcast in their entirety at 7:30 p.m. on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday following the Tuesday Board meeting and at 10 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. To view the current agenda, visit: [PWC - Board Of County Supervisors \(BOCS\)](http://www.pwcgov.org/MeetingRoom.aspx). You can also visit the County website to view video of past BOCS meetings using the following link: <http://www.pwcgov.org/MeetingRoom.aspx>.

### **Public Invited to Learn How to Buy a Foreclosed Home**

The Prince William County Office of Housing and Community Development is pleased to announce the Foreclosure Rehabilitation Acquisition Program (FRAP). This new program is designed to help qualified homebuyers purchase foreclosed homes in local targeted areas of Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

To learn more about the FRAP and the application process, the public is invited to attend one of the following free information sessions Pre-registration for the sessions is not required.

- Saturday, March 21 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Osbourn High School, located at 9005 Tudor Lane in Manassas; and
- Saturday, April 4 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dr. A.J. Ferlazzo Building.

The FRAP uses Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding through the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 to provide new homebuyers financial counseling, homeownership education, deferred loans for down payment, closing costs, energy efficiency improvements or rehabilitation for purchase of foreclosed properties.

Applications for the FRAP will be available after March 7, 2009, at <http://www.pwcgov.org/housing> or by calling 703-792-7530. There will be no waiting list; the funds will be awarded only upon successful completion of all phases of the application and purchase process as outlined for the program. For more information about FRAP, including applicant eligibility criteria and property eligibility, visit <http://www.pwcgov.org/housing> or call 703-792-7530.

### **Love My Library Campaign for 2009 Begins!**

For the fifth consecutive year, all libraries in the Prince William Public Library System will display heart-themed cards with titles of books, music CDs and DVDs that the Library could use in its collection! Library users simply select and fill out one of the displayed cards, then give the card and either cash or check to the Circulation staff. In return, donors will receive a Love My Library bag and bookmark and their choice of a Love My Library magnetic date due receipt holder, squishy stress-relief heart or ribbon magnet. A special Love My Library book plate with the donor and/or honoree's name will be placed in the book or on the CD or DVD selected. Items may also be donated in honor of, or in memory of, any individual! In 2008, 406 items were donated by library users in a variety of categories from board books and children's fiction to adult fiction, non-fiction, audio books and DVDs!

The 2009 "I Love My Library" Campaign begins February 14th (Valentine's Day) and runs through the last day of National Library Week (April 18). For more information, please contact your local library or call 703-792-6100.

### **“Start Up” Small Business Workshops**

The Flory Small Business Center will host small business workshops from 9am to 1pm (coffee served at 8:30am) on Saturday, March 28, 2009, and Saturday, April 25, 2009. The topics will include: Are You an Entrepreneur?; How to Write a Business Plan; Record Keeping; Business Entity; and Financing. The program will also include a question and answer period. There is no charge for this workshop; however, pre-registration is required. To pre-register, please contact the Flory Small Business Center, Inc. at 703-335-2500 or email [florycenter@attglobal.net](mailto:florycenter@attglobal.net).

The Flory Small Business Center, Inc.  
10311 Sudley Manor Dr.  
Manassas, Virginia 20109

The Flory Small Business Center is funded by: Prince William County, The Prince William County Industrial Development Authority, The City of Manassas Park, The Manassas Park Industrial Development Authority, The City of Manassas, and The U.S. Small Business Administration

### **The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby**

The Prince William County Historic Preservation Division is hosting a lecture “The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby” on March 26, 2009 at 7 p.m. The lecture will be conducted at the Old Manassas Courthouse in Manassas. David Goetz, a local historian and owner of Mosby’s Confederacy Tours, will lecture on the famous Confederate partisan raider.

The old courthouse is located at 9248 Lee Avenue, Manassas. The lecture is free and open to the public. Call ahead if inclement weather is forecast. For more information, call 703-257-5243 or e-mail [dborn@pwcgov.org](mailto:dborn@pwcgov.org)

### **Battlefield High School Choral Concerts**

Battlefield High School Award Winning Choir will be performing two concerts in May. The Spring Concert will be held on May 7th in the school auditorium at 7:30 p.m. The cost is free.

The Broadway Concert will be held on May 28th at 7:30 p.m., in the school auditorium. The cost for the Broadway Concert is \$5.00 per person. Proceeds from the Broadway Concert will benefit the choir department at Battlefield High.

Battlefield High School, 15000 Graduation Drive, Haymarket, 20169

## **DID YOU KNOW**

### **Comprehensive Plan Amendments, March 17, 2009**

The [2008 Comprehensive Plan](#) is a document which the County uses to evaluate rezoning and special use permit applications, public facility locations and capital improvements for consistency with its development policies. If an application has been determined to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment may be considered. In such an event, the applicant must have the [amendment request](#) initiated by either the [Board of County Supervisors](#) or the [Planning Commission](#). Applications for Comprehensive Plan Amendments are reviewed annually. To be considered for review, all applications must be received by the [Planning Office](#) no later than the close of business the first Friday of January. Once initiated, an amendment will be heard by the Planning Commission, and then forwarded with the Commission’s recommendation to the Board of County Supervisors for final action.

The following is a summary report of the Comprehensive Plan Amendments requests that will be considered for initiation by the Board of County Supervisors on March 17, 2009, [2009 CPAs Summary Report](#). View the staff report: [2009 CPA's Staff Report](#).

### **Federal and Virginia Government Web Sites Track Stimulus Funds**

This site <http://www.recovery.gov/> will include information about Federal grant awards and contracts as well as formula grant allocations. Federal agencies will provide data on how they are using the money, and eventually, prime recipients of Federal funding will provide information on how they are using their Federal funds.

Virginians can go to this Web site <http://www.stimulus.virginia.gov/> to monitor how the money is being spent. The site will allow visitors to map expenditures by locality or look by Cabinet secretariat.

### **2009 Real Property Assessments**

The 2009 assessments are available online. You may view assessment information via the online [Real Estate Property Assessment system](#).

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Route 15 South Widening (I-66 ramp to 1000 feet north of Utterback Lane)**

The majority of work for the past two months was concentrated on Little Bull Run Bridge (shown in the picture below). Currently the PPTA contractor is working on the bridge approach slabs and final grading stages for the south bound lanes between Stepping Stone Drive and Little Bull Run Creek. The scheduled completion date for this phase is December 14, 2009, but the realignment to the final configuration is anticipated to occur sometime mid to late April, weather permitting. This will provide a 4-lane divided highway from I-66 all the way to Dominion Valley Drive which will significantly relieve the daily traffic jam. Phase I which is the section between Dominion Valley Drive and Route 234 will be completed by mid December.



Intersection of Heathcote Boulevard and Route 15

**Old Carolina**

Grading and bridge work has begun. Construction crews have moved approximately 300,000 yards of earthworks, laid approximately 400 feet of storm sewer pipes and eight structures, the storm water management pond is built, foundations for south bound lane bridge abutments were excavated and poured and reinforcement rebar are being erected. Washington Gas and Verizon are currently relocating their facilities to allow the north bound bridge work to commence. The scheduled completion date for this phase is September 1, 2009, but the realignment to the final configuration is anticipated to occur mid to late July 2009, weather permitting.



Grading work and bridge construction of Old Carolina Road



Grading work and sewer line work on Old Carolina Road

## Recent Happenings in Gainesville



Martha Hendley, Gainesville District Planning Commissioner with Scott Chambers, Gainesville District Chief of Staff  
Mimi's Café ribbon cutting ceremony, February 12, 2009

The Gainesville Mimi's Cafe is located in the Virginia Gateway shopping center at 5005 Wellington Rd. Restaurant hours are 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For more information on Mimi's Cafe, please visit [www.mimiscafe.com](http://www.mimiscafe.com).

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