

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

September 2006

PDC Acquires FEMA Trailers for use on Hazard Mitigation Projects

The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to accept on loan, three FEMA trailers to use for temporary re-location, when needed, for the three hazard mitigation projects in Northampton, Accomack and Tangier.

Two of the trailers were located in Mathews County as a result of Hurricane Isabel and have been used for two

years by a family there, while their home was being repaired. A third trailer was located in Hampton.

Staff contacted FEMA last year in an attempt to acquire some of these trailers. It almost was an impossible task to cut through all the red tape of bureaucracy. After many months of being sent from one agency to another, with no result, contact was made with the Human Services Officer at the VDEM. After much discussion, an agreement was reached. Due to federal regulations,

the PDC could not buy the trailers, but VDEM could loan them to us for an extended period of time.

The trailers will also benefit our other housing projects. The Eastern Shore Lead Safe Homes Program requires occupants to move out of a house being repaired to reduce exposure to lead. The trailers will be placed onsite and connected to water, sewer and electricity. This will alleviate the problem of finding safe and affordable temporary accommodations.



Two of the trailers at their original location in Mathews County

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Northampton Bicycle Committee Recommends Trail Development

Since January 2006, the Northampton Bicycle Committee has been meeting to consider various opportunities to build bicycle trails within Northampton County. The major focus was projects identified within the Bicycle Plan, adopted by the County.

Members of the committee include tourism professionals, members of the Board of Supervisors, representatives of the various federal and state facilities in the area considered, PDC staff and local citizen groups. VDOT and the Eastern Shore of Virginia Transportation Technical Advisory Committee were also consulted on various options within the County.

The Committee has recommended the development of a link between Kiptopeke State Park and the National Wildlife Refuge along Refuge land. This land was once the railroad. Federal of-

ficials from the Refuge have offered the area for a bicycle path as it is included in their long term plans for that area.

Northampton County Board of Supervisors considered this recommendation. The project will be presented at the September 11, 2006 Board of Supervisors meeting and a public hearing will be held at the October 10, 2006 Board of Supervisors meeting. Staff of the A-NPDC anticipate applying for funds to complete the project from VDOT's Enhancement Grant Program. The application will be due by November 1, 2006 with successful projects awarded in April or May, 2007.

For more information, contact Elaine Meil at (757)787-2936.

Contractor Lead Classes Offered

Contractors are urged to sign up now for two separate classes to be offered on the shore in the near future. A one-day class is offered by the National Paint & Coatings Association and is free to all. The two day class is approved by the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (DPOR) and provides certification for workers to do lead abatement work and/or interim control jobs. This certification will be required for all contractors working in the Lead Safe Homes Program, and will likely be required for contractors in general in the near future.

For more information or to sign up for classes, call Patti Merritt at 757-787-2936, ext 119.

Merritt Receives Housing Counselor Certification

Patti Merritt, Program Administrator for the Homeless Intervention Program, attended the Virginia Association of Housing Counselors (VAHC) Conference and Certification Classes in May, 2006, where she received training to earn certification as a Housing Counselor. Classes included training in Case Management, Credit Counseling, Disaster Planning, Loss Mitigation and other classes on budget counseling.

Housing staff must maintain their certification by regular attendance at conferences and classes sponsored by the VAHC. Ms. Merritt will use her certification training for Homeless Intervention Program clients. The Homeless Intervention Program offers mortgage loans and rental assistance for

qualifying clients in a temporary crisis which has put them at risk for homelessness. Clients must be willing and able to achieve and maintain financial self-sufficiency; budget and debt repayment. A-NPDC staff congratulate Ms. Merritt on her accomplishment.



Area in southern Northampton County being considered for development of a shared use bicycle trail



Housing Choice Voucher Applicants Needed

The Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority (A-NRHA) continues to keep the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Waiting List open. The RHA is actively pulling people from the waiting list and numbers are down to approximately 150 people. Any person requiring rental assistance in order to find safe, decent, affordable housing should pick up an application at the A-NRHA Section 8 Office located at 23372 Front Street, Accomac, VA or call Bobbie Wert at (757)787-2800 or toll free (866)787-3001 to have an application mailed to you.

Accomack-Northampton Planning District
Commission
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SPARC Homeownership Funds Available

The A-N Housing & Redevelopment Corporation has been awarded Sponsoring Partnership And Revitalizing Communities (SPARC) Round 5 funds. The total set-aside allocation is 1.25 million. The allocation interest rates are .5 to 1% less than the applicable rate. SPARC funds target individuals that are within the 60 to 80% of the area median income. The program will leverage federal HOME funds for down-payment and closing costs assistance. The Virginia Housing Development Authority will process and underwrite all SPARC loans. The RHA is seeking applicants. For more information, please contact Bobbie Jo Wert at (757) 787-2800 ext. 125 or toll free (866) 787-3001.



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