

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

June 2004

Makemie Park Wastewater Collection System Completed

Installation of force main sewer lines in Makemie Park was completed in May. In a flurry of activity, four thousand linear feet of force mains and twenty-eight valves and taps were installed in one week. The new system can serve approximately fifty homes.

Makemie Park received funding under the Community Development Block Grant Program's Self-Help Virginia project. Self-Help Virginia provides funding in support of infrastructure projects, specifically water and sewer projects, wherein community residents and stakeholders substantially participate in the construction activities.

The goal of the Self-Help projects is to tap neighborhood talent, manpower, and creativity to provide water and sewer services in areas where conventional construction costs make such provisions prohibitive. The most common examples of specific self-help activities are neighborhood residents acting as project managers, installing water and sewer lines, and operating leased or donated equipment.

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. provided eight persons from their staff in Roanoke to help install the sewer lines in Makemie Park, including engineers, rehab specialists and VISTA personnel. Southeast

RCAP helps small rural towns and communities needing aid in upgrading their water and wastewater systems. They also provide training and technical assistance to rural residents for operation and maintenance of those systems, for capacity building and for economic development in their communities.

Southeast RCAP utilizes volunteers in a variety of programs to conduct these projects, to train community leaders, and to train and recruit additional local volunteers.

Created in the 1960s and with its central office in Roanoke, Virginia, Southeast RCAP serves the seven states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. To date, Southeast RCAP has brought clean water and wastewater facilities to more than 450,000 residents in the seven states.

The project has funds remaining, so the capacity of the wastewater treatment system in Makemie Park will be expanded in the future.



Community residents install wastewater pipelines in Makemie Park

Economic Development Commission & Chamber of Commerce Support SBDC

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Economic Development Commission approved the use of \$5,000 from its budget to keep the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) office open another year. The Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce is also supporting the SBDC by providing free office space, saving \$2,500 in rent payments. The rest of the funding for the local office is raised by the regional Hampton Roads SBDC from the federal Small Business Administration and other sources.

The members of the Economic Development Commission voted unani-

mously to approve commitment of the funding at their May meeting. In previous years the SBDC's local funding came from the Eastern Shore Regional Partnership, but that money has been eliminated from the state budget.

The free office space from the Chamber of Commerce saves the SBDC \$2,500 in annual rent that it was paying to the Virginia Employment Commission. The SBDC's mission fits well with the Chamber's economic development goals and the location should benefit both organizations..

The Small Business Development Center offers business counseling ser-

vices free of charge to people considering starting a new business and to existing businesses. The services are an effective, low-cost way to help entrepreneurs. The Eastern Shore office opened in 1999 as an initiative of the Regional Partnership. Sarah Gromow is the only staff member in this office, working part time.

Through the end of 2003, the Eastern Shore SBDC counseled 227 business clients and helped to create or retain 94 jobs. The counseling helped the clients obtain \$3,252,335 in loans and invest \$2,647,536 of their own in the businesses.

Eastern Shore Heritage Tourism Workshop June 23rd

The A-NPDC, in cooperation with the Virginia Coastal Resources Management Program, will hold the annual Eastern Shore Heritage Tourism Workshop on Wednesday, June 23, 2004, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. This year's Heritage Tourism Workshop will include an update on local heritage tourism activities and a familiarization tour of Accomack County sites on the Virginia Coastal Birding and Wildlife Trail. The familiarization tour will give restaurant, bed and breakfast, motel, and campground proprietors the opportunity to learn about the Eastern Shore's Birding Trail sites in order to provide better information to their customers.

The workshop will begin at 9:00 AM at the Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce and continue through the day with short visits to

Wachapreague Marsh, Harborton Landing, Onancock Wharf, Gargatha Landing, Guard Shore, and Saxis Wildlife Management Area. During the tour, Birding Trail site representatives will brief workshop participants on the wildlife observation opportunities and facilities at each site. The tour will include a lunch stop in the Town of Onancock, where participants can eat at the restaurant of their choice or bring a brown bag lunch.

The 2004 Eastern Shore Heritage Tourism Workshop is free and open to all. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce is located on U.S. Route 13 at the entrance to the Accomack County Industrial Park in Melfa, VA. For further information about the Heritage Tourism Workshop, call the A-NPDC at 757-787-2936.



Kerr Place is an example of a heritage tourism attraction in our region

Public Service Authority

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority is pursuing funding sources for a Preliminary Engineering Report to determine the feasibility of taking on the operations of the sewage treatment and public water supply facilities at the NASA-Wallops Flight Facility.

The urgency for the proposed new Northern Northampton and Central Accomack regional sewage treatment plants continues to mount. Regulations governing discharges are likely to be stiffened which would require existing plants to add nutrient removal capabilities to current treatment processes. The new plants with greater capacity and advanced treatment capabilities could allow older, smaller, and less capable sewage treatment plants to be replaced.

New A-NPDC Officers

The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission recently held elections for officers. The Honorable Thomas J. Matthews, Accomack County Supervisor, is the new Chairman of the Commission and Rev. Charles J. Kellam, citizen appointee from Northampton County, is the new Vice Chairman.

The Honorable Oliver H. Bennett, Northampton County Supervisor, is the immediate past Chairman.



How to Contact the A-NPDC

If you have questions or comments about anything in this publication, please don't hesitate to contact the Planning District Commission.

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