

# Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

July 2004

## Accomack and Northampton Adopt Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan

After holding public hearings in June, Accomack County and Northampton County have adopted the Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan. The purpose of the bicycle plan is to identify future bicycle facilities that will improve safety for bicyclists and maintain traffic capacity for other vehicles. Bicycle facilities include shared lanes, paved shoulders, bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, bicycle racks, and safety signs. Funding for bicycle facilities can come from the VDOT construction budget, Virginia's Transportation Enhancement Grant Program, and local government appropriations.

The Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan recommends paved shoulders on the Chincoteague Causeway, a designated Seaside Bicycle Route with paved shoulders from Maryland Route 12 to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and shared use paths from Onancock to Onley, Cape Charles to Cheriton, and Cape Charles to Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. The plan also recommends a designated bicycle route on the Bayside, bicycle facilities to connect towns and communities with schools, businesses, and recreation facilities, and improved access along and across U.S. Route 13. Paved should-

ers at least four feet wide, and shared use paths ten feet wide, are recommended.

The plan includes a recommendation to consider a railtrail from Cape Charles to Maryland if the Eastern Shore Railroad right-of-way ever becomes available. At the request of Accomack County, the plan was also pre-

sented to the Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission and the Eastern Shore Railroad in June. Now that the Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan has been adopted by Accomack County and Northampton County, VDOT and the counties will determine if bicycle facilities will be built when the designated roads are improved.



*CBES Bicycle Tour in Onancock. The Eastern Shore Bicycle Plan is a starting point for safer bicycling in Accomack and Northampton Counties.*

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# First Draft of Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment Released

The first draft of the Eastern Shore Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, funded through a grant from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and FEMA, was released at the June Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Committee meeting. The primary purpose of this document is to describe risk on the Eastern Shore. This is the first step towards compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

The draft explains in detail the Eastern Shore's vulnerability to four natural hazards -- coastal flooding, storm water flooding, high wind and coastal erosion. Accomack County, Northampton County and the Towns of Chincoteague, Cape Charles, Wachapreague, Tangier, Saxis and Onancock have individual risk assessments. Other towns are discussed under the county risk assessments.

A large number of structures on the Eastern Shore lie in the most hazardous areas. The coast is a very attrac-

tive location to live and is also the most vulnerable in times of coastal storms. Some 12,351 structures, 38% of all structures, are located in the 100-year coastal floodplain. Of these an estimated 8,147 were built before the county adopted building code standards to reduce the threat to coastal buildings. Further, 127, 4% of all structures, lie within 50 feet of the shoreline and represent the buildings with the most risk for damage from coastal erosion. The wind borne debris hazard vulnerability area is defined as one-mile inland from the coast and there are 9,595 structures within this area.

Knowing how a hazard event could affect our community is the first step toward creating a safer place for all residents of the Eastern Shore. By considering this information county officials and residents can make the best decision about how to keep themselves, their families and property safe.

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# EDA Official Visits the Eastern Shore

Neal Noyes, Economic Development Representative covering Virginia and Maryland for the Economic Development Administration (EDA), was on the Shore in June to discuss potential development projects with the Planning District Commission and the Eastern Shore Community College. As part of the US Department of Commerce, the EDA makes grants for infrastructure development, local capacity building, and business development to help economically distressed regions alleviate conditions of substantial and persistent unemployment and underemployment.

With the assistance of the Planning District, the Eastern Shore Community College is applying to USDA Rural Development and to the EDA for funding the new Business Development and Workforce Training Center. Other sources of funding include \$2.347 million from the state's education bond, \$75,000 from the ESCC Foundation, \$110,000 from the Eastern Shore Regional Partnership, and \$602,000 from Accomack and Northampton Counties.

The need for the new training center is documented by area statistics and a 2003 survey of area employers. The college is hard-pressed to find space to conduct its current workforce training courses, let alone expand its curriculum.

The 20,000 square foot Business Development and Workforce Training Center will provide the ESCC with flexible space for a wide variety of training venues. In addition, it will house the Small Business Development Center and will have facilities for employers who need off-site training space.



*Flooding in Wachapreague from Hurricane Isabel*

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## Housing & Redevelopment Corporation Officers

The Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation re-elected its officers at a recent meeting.

Lenora Mitchell continues as the President and Nathaniel Williams as the Vice President. Donald Sawyer is the Treasurer and Paul Berge is the Secretary.

The Housing and Redevelopment Corporation owns low-income rental properties and administers programs such as the Indoor Plumbing/Rehabilitation program.

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## New Regional Partnership Officers

The Eastern Shore Regional Partnership held elections for officers at its May meeting. Richard L. Hubbard was re-elected to another term as Chairman and Jack W. Bonniwell was elected as the Vice Chair. Paul F. Berge remains Secretary-Treasurer.

Members at Large of the Executive Committee are Brenda Holden and the Honorable Bruce Paone.

The Regional Partnership is a group of about 40 business, civic, education and government leaders working on regional competitiveness projects.



### 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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