

ARTICLES OF INTEREST



Peter M. Stephenson

What is the biggest improvement Portsmouth hopes to make in the next 10 years?

We are continuing our efforts to revitalize our city. There have been implements for new zoning, forming based codes, and speeding up development measures to aid our efforts to expedite land development deals.

How does Portsmouth support regionalism?

The City has historically participated in regional efforts to serve its citizens in an economical and effective manner. This includes transportation planning through the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), public transit through the Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), corrections through the Hampton Roads Regional Jail Authority, planning and development through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), and economic development through the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance (HREDA).



Dallas O. Jones

SMITHFIELD

**Leader: Peter M. Stephenson
Position: Town Manager**

What has been the most important change in Smithfield in the past 10 years?

The Town of Smithfield enjoyed balanced growth, and we recently celebrated our 250th anniversary. Positive change included construction of a new conference center, additional lodging, a new visitor center and an increase in tourism, which is our second largest industry after meat packing. We also accomplished a long-term goal of increasing recreational opportunities and public access to the water with the opening of Windsor Castle Park.

What is the biggest improvement Smithfield hopes to make in the next 10 years?

Smithfield has been blessed with the continued commitment of Smithfield Foods to the community. In the future, the town needs to look to diversify its economic and employment base while maintaining our unique

sense of place as a historic small town. We must also reinvest in the aging portions of the town's infrastructure.

How does Smithfield support regionalism?

The Town of Smithfield has been an active member of the Hampton Roads Partnership for the past 14 years. We participate in regional programs and meetings coordinated by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and interact with other Hampton Roads localities on a regular basis. We are also part of the Hampton Roads Sanitation District.

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY

**Leader: Dallas O. Jones
Position: Chairman of the Board of Supervisors**

What has been the most important change in Southampton County in the past 10 years?

International Paper's decision to close its Franklin mill late last year. That has huge employment implications, direct and indirect, for many Southampton County citizens. But we haven't been asleep at the wheel. Over the course of the past decade, we've invested sacrificially in infrastructure and educational facilities in order to better compete for new opportunities in today's global economy.

What is the biggest improvement Southampton County hopes to make in the next 10 years?

Our greatest challenge over the next 10 years will be to grow our local economy and create new jobs. Long dependent on manufacturing and agriculture, we must diversify our economic base and better align it with 21st-century opportunities. We must attract, grow and incubate business, expand tourism, and create a community culture where business and industry can flourish.

How does Southampton County support regionalism?

While we may lack a major waterfront, there's no question that we're inextricably linked to Hampton Roads. Southampton

County is the gateway to the Port of Virginia with the majority of all port-related commerce traveling on Routes 58 and 460. We actively pursue opportunities for regional partnerships by participating in the Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance, Hampton Roads Partnership, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and Southeastern Public Service Authority, among others.

SUFFOLK

**Leader: Linda Johnson
Position: Mayor**

What has been the most important change in Suffolk in the past 10 years?

The diversification of our economic base. While Suffolk is famous for our peanuts and we are proud of our history, we are so much more now. We have strategically planned our growth. We are not solely dependent on any one industry. We have fostered technology, manufacturing, medical facilities, modeling and simulation and retail in our city and will continue to look for ways to diversify what we have to offer to businesses and industries wanting a place to call home.

What is the biggest improvement Suffolk hopes to make in the next 10 years?

The biggest improvement needed for Suffolk's success to continue is improved transportation. This need is not unique to Suffolk but is a challenge for the entire region. In order to overcome this challenge we will have to work together as a region and support each other's needs.

How does Suffolk support regionalism?

We absolutely support regionalism. Suffolk and Isle of Wight are both members of the Western Tidewater Water Authority. Water is one of the most challenging natural resources and utilities that localities manage in Hampton Roads, and this regional effort has been very successful toward water resource development, particularly for the two growing communities.

Similarly, Suffolk staff works on a day-to-day basis with other



Linda Johnson

Va. seeks saving strategies

Governor orders agencies to identify ways to trim budgets by up to 6%



McDonnell

BY OLYMPIA MEOLA
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

Amid continued economic uncertainty, Gov. Bob McDonnell has directed state agency heads to identify ways to save up to 6 percent of their 2012 budgets.

Agency heads in the executive branch are being asked to submit a strategy to cut the equivalent of 2 percent, 4 percent and 6 percent of their general-fund appropriations for fiscal 2012.

The state's general-fund budget, largely made up of income taxes and sales taxes, is \$31.4 billion for July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2012. It funds general services such as schools, law enforcement and social services.

State general-fund revenues have

been down the past two years, and McDonnell won't get finalized revenue figures until late November. State leaders previously cut more than \$4 billion to balance the state's two-year budget.

BREAKING NEWS
10/27/10 12:44 PM
TimesDispatch.com

Like the rest of the nation, Virginia's economy is recovering with a limp, not a sprint. Industry experts and state officials yesterday offered a decidedly mixed fi-

nanial assessment of the commonwealth's economy from the perspective of the state's housing industry and the unemployed work force.

"Bleak" was how state Sen. R. Edward Houck, D-Spotsylvania, described the news at yesterday's meeting of the Senate Finance Committee.

Real estate experts and labor officials detailed both modest improve-

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The targeted savings will be calculated using the entire general-fund appropriation for each agency.

Budget

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ments and imposing obstacles to a more robust economic recovery in the commonwealth.

"We don't know where we're going to come up on revenue," Secretary of Finance Richard "Ric" Brown said in an interview.

"We're not cutting agency budgets here. We're asking them to look at their programs, prioritize them, and give us saving strategies that can be used in the budgetary process."

The plans are due by Nov. 5. Any suggestions that the administration decides to adopt would be part of McDonnell's budget amendments, which he will present to the General Assembly on Dec. 17.

McDonnell's chief of staff, Martin Kent, notified agency heads of the directive in a memo sent yesterday.

Preliminary estimates for some state programs show that they might grow at a pace "that is more than modest," he said.

"Moreover, the governor has high-priority areas that are critical to future growth

such as job creation, economic development, higher education and transportation," he wrote.

Unlike in past cost-cutting exercises, the targeted savings will be calculated using the entire general-fund appropriation for each agency, instead of carving out certain services or programs.

"Previous exercises have exempted as much as two-thirds of the general-fund budget from consideration," Kent writes. "A full review of the budget priorities requires that the entire budget be subjected to this exercise."

Kent urges agencies when looking for cuts to consider what work could be switched to the private sector and tells them not to compromise public safety, health or welfare.

As an added incentive to scrape together even more in savings, agencies have the option of saving money in their current budget to put toward any reductions in 2012. And, the savings would be doubled, up to 2 percent.

For example, if an agency manages to save 1 percent of its budget in fiscal 2011, it can carry forward a 2 percent credit and submit a plan for 2 percent of cuts and 4 percent of cuts.

"We saw it as a way to take a hard look maybe at some of the spending that's done in the last quarter of the year and help yourself in the process," Brown said.



Brown



Kent

- Contact Olympia Meola at (804) 649-6812 or omeola@timesdispatch.com.
- Staff writer Jim Nolan contributed to this report.

10/22/10

Danville area getting green jobs

Solar building-products firm to invest \$30 million, create 372 jobs within three years

BY TARA BOZICK
Media General News Service

DANVILLE — Danville and Pittsylvania County beat out stiff competition to attract hundreds of green energy jobs and the next wave of American manufacturing — solar products.

BREAKING NEWS

10/22/10 11:32 AM
TimesDispatch.com

United States Green Energy Corp., a solar building products company, announced yesterday that it would move its headquarters and operations to Cane Creek Centre, an industrial park in Ringgold, just east of Danville. The company plans to invest \$30 million

and create 372 jobs within three years.

"We hope to create jobs, develop our products and help to make the world a better place with more affordable energy for our grandchildren," said President George Peterson.

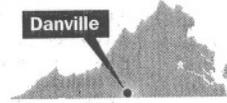
The Dan River Region had the manufacturing background, hands-on training and mindset U.S. Green Energy was looking for, company leaders said.



For the past year, Green Energy was looking at other sites in Virginia and in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. The company formed last year and located temporarily in Fredericksburg.

What cinched the deal was a Virginia Tobacco Commission grant for \$1.6 million, said Robert Bennett, vice president of corporate development.

"The vision of the Danville/Pittsylvania area fits with ours," Bennett said. "What we really



like about this area is it's not only talking the talk, it's walking the walk."

Green Energy plans to move into a 40,000-square-foot space. The company plans to finish renovations — including adding a solar roof — by the end of the first quarter next year. Hiring would start in the first quarter, and full production would begin by June.

Annual employee wages range from \$31,500 for entry-level positions up to \$150,000 for executive positions.

The company manufactures building products that integrate photovoltaic solar cells for

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Jobs

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use in roofs or siding, for example. Green Energy has 20 products in various stages of development, with its AllRoof solar slates currently on the market.

The idea is to make affordable and aesthetically pleasing solar electric generation systems for commercial and residential buildings. Green Energy intends to be a materials supplier to distributors and dealers.

The Tobacco Commission money

will buy equipment, and the company plans to use local vendors and machine shops as much as possible, Bennett said.

Currently, the solar cells used in the building products come from China, but Green Energy would eventually like to use 100 percent American-made materials, Bennett added.

Danville Mayor Sherman Saunders said the project adds another puzzle piece for developing a cluster of sustainable energy businesses in the region.

City Manager Joe King said the city would try to help generate a local market for Green Energy's products, includ-

ing using the solar products on city buildings when possible.

Danville Utilities would allow for net metering so homeowners could get credit for feeding energy to the grid, which could help with peak load and reduce residents' utility costs, King said.

Rep. Tom Perriello, D-5th, said the project bridges the region's textile and furniture history to the new green energy industry.

"These jobs of tomorrow are coming to Southside Virginia today," Perriello said.

• Tara Bozick is a staff writer for the Danville Register and Bee.

1/25/10

Incivility leads to calls for limits at James City meetings

The Virginia Gazette

WILLIAMSBURG — A lack of civility arose again in James City County politics when an offhand remark led to demands for stricter standards.

After a rash of rudeness, the Board of Supervisors adopted speaking guidelines in June that ask speakers to refrain from insults, personal attacks and obscenity.

Despite the rule, tempers flared recently when Board of Supervisors Chairman James G. Kennedy was invited to speak to a subcommittee of the Chamber & Tourism Alliance. Kennedy allegedly remarked on a resident with "long hair and missing teeth" who was involved in an argument at a Planning Commission meeting.

The description matched that of Bob Richardson, a resident who lobbied for Chris Henderson's removal from the Planning Commission and was involved in an altercation during a commission meeting.

"I cannot recall if [Kennedy] did or did not say Bob Richardson's name," John Whitley said this week. Whitley serves on the committee and co-chairs the city Democratic Committee. Whitley said he protested the remark in the meeting and later lodged a formal protest before the Board of Supervisors.

Richardson went to a supervisors meet-

ing to complain. Video of the meeting shows how it played out.

"You can thank Chairman Kennedy for my attendance and comments here tonight," Richardson said. Then he turned on Supervisor Mary K. Jones, whose family has been struggling to avoid foreclosure. Richardson questioned whether she lives in the district and is qualified to make financial decisions.

He added that Kennedy "disparaged my reputation" and delivered his own zinger: "So, I guess if you're going to refer to me as a long-haired, toothless individual in the future, I shall refer to you as 'Fatso.'"

The comments prompted a new backlash at a more recent supervisors meeting, where Henderson and Jay Everson criticized Richardson and called for stricter rules on public comments.

Unfazed, Kennedy said there are no plans to further restrict public remarks.

Kennedy put his comment in context. The committee had asked him what they needed to do to be heard, and he told them, "You need to turn out." He said he noted a number of groups and individuals, without using names, who regularly comment to the supervisors.

"I was encouraging them to participate," he said. "I was saying, 'The water's warm, come on in.'"

Chesterfield employees could get 3% bonus

Supervisors considering recommendation after they are told of budget surplus

BY ZACHARY REID
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

There's a touch of hope in the sour economy of Chesterfield County, especially for its public employees.

Most Chesterfield workers could be in line for a one-time bonus of 3 percent of their salary if the Board of Supervisors follows through on a recommendation from the county budget office. The bonuses would go to employees with a year or more of service to the county.

The county's budget director announced during a committee meeting yesterday that an audit of fiscal 2010 expenses and revenues showed a surplus of more than \$28 million in the \$715.2 million budget. He recommended \$4.75 million be set aside for "performance recognition."

"These employees stuck with the county, and they stayed focused," said Allan M. Carmody, Chesterfield's director of budget and management.

Board Chairman Daniel A. Gecker and Supervisor James M. Holland, both

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Bonus

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members of the budget and audit committee, said they would support the measure when it is presented for full board action tonight.

"It seems very reasonable to me to reward the people who have made the savings," Gecker said.

Holland said money was an important addition to the usual pats on the back.

"We need to support our workers both ways, verbally and financially," he said.

The bonuses were one of six ideas Carmody suggested for the \$28 million. His recommendations, which the board will consider at its regular meeting tonight, include:

- using \$10.3 million for a "revenue stabilization fund" (not to be confused with the county's "rainy day fund" of about \$54 million; that money is set by policy and can be used only in emergencies);

- letting the school system keep its \$9.5 million in savings;

- spending \$3.25 million on equipment and other one-time capital projects, such as fire engines and library books, that were put off because of the budget crunch;

- using \$150,000 to end the \$5 user fee on youth sports programs, effective next summer; and

- spending \$100,000 on groups that offer quality-of-life services to county residents.

Carmody said the county fell about 0.2 percent short of its reve-



Gecker



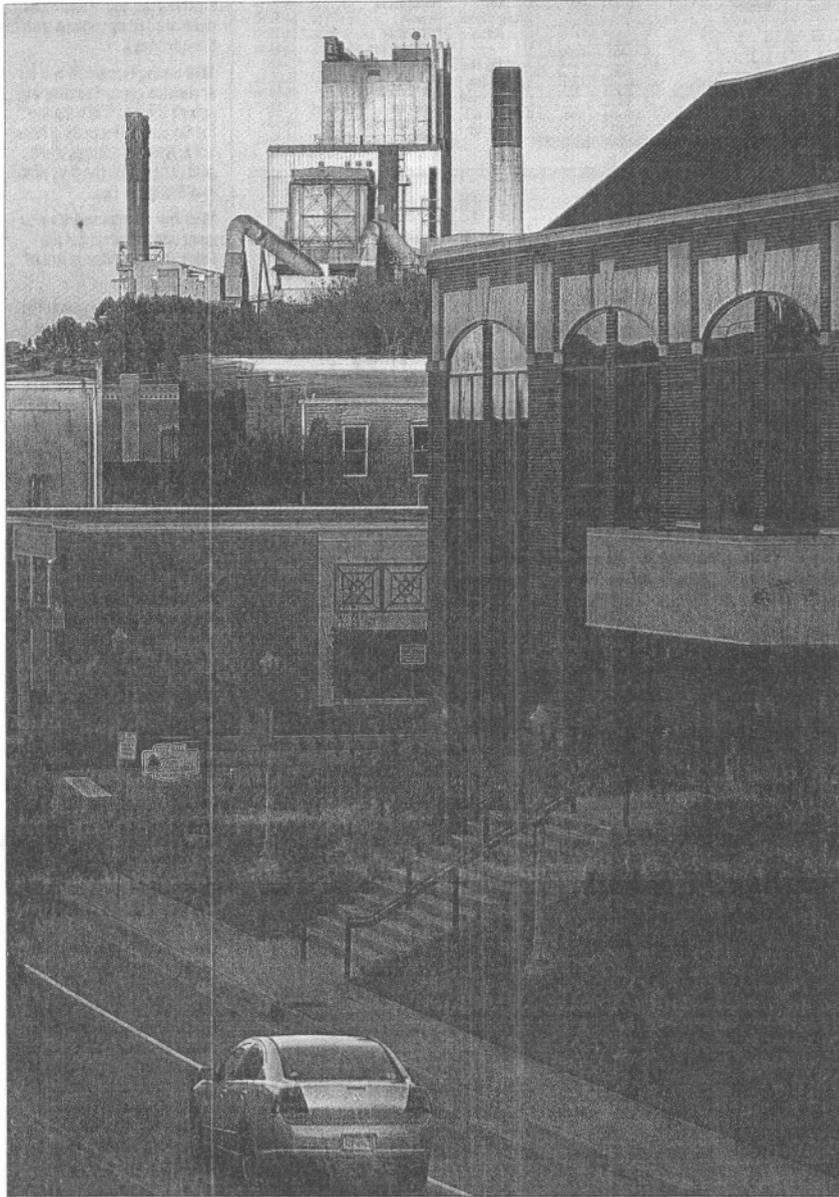
Holland



Carmody

BREAKING NEWS
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Franklin seeking rebirth six months after closing of region's mill



DEAN HOFFMEYER/TIMES-DISPATCH

The sun sets on the International Paper Co. mill across the Blackwater River from Franklin.

Plant dies, roots hold

Residents seek new livelihoods after International Paper closes

BY JOHN REID BLACKWELL • Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

FRANKLIN

On the surface, little seems to have changed in the six months since the industrial heart of this small, Southside Virginia community stopped beating.

In Franklin, a city of 8,300 people, most of the quaint downtown shops remain open, even though the big International Paper Co. factory just across the Blackwater River in Isle of Wight County is no longer churning out the paper products that paid thousands of paychecks in the region.

Local residents still file into Fred's restaurant for breakfast and



to chew the fat. Activity seems to be steady — if not booming — among the chain stores and restaurants on Armory Drive on the other side of town.

Yet one year after International Paper announced it would close the plant and cut 1,100 jobs because of slumping prices and weak demand, changes are happening throughout the region. Local suppliers to the mill have had to scramble for other business, and local governments are looking at looming budget holes because of lost tax revenue.

Many former plant employees are now commuting out of the area for work, including about 130 who found jobs in the shipyards in Newport News.

Other former employees are now back at school, working to update their job skills. That includes Frank-

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FRANKLIN'S FUTURE



will likely relocate, perhaps heading north and out of state, to find a job once he finishes classes. "There are more jobs in the big cities," he said.

Yet many longtime residents who worked at the plant are reluctant to go elsewhere and are making do with severance packages, hoping that the national economy will turn around and more busi-

Cecelia Darden answers the phone at Fred's restaurant in downtown Franklin. Fred Rabil, 91, still occasionally works in the restaurant, which his son David runs. It has been family-owned since 1945.