



February 2010 “A Month in Review”

- **Initial Thoughts on FY 2011 Budget** – I am continuing with my efforts to reign in spending and provide real homeowner tax relief. The proposed budget is a good start but much more work needs to be done.
- **Tyson’s Lunch Shuttle: Before Its Time** – With 75 total riders on 106 daily trips, the \$1 million Tyson’s Lunch Shuttle is seeing very little ridership. I have asked county staff to examine the effectiveness of the shuttle and to look at options to more effectively utilize the funds.
- **Reporting Potholes** - Governor McDonnell has made pothole repair the number one priority of the Virginia Department of Transportation throughout March. Below is information on how to report potholes.
- **Springfield District Community Parking District Approved** – Starting March 25th, certain oversized and recreational vehicles will be prohibited from parking on state-owned roads in the Springfield District.
- **An Update on Lyme Disease** – Lyme disease prevention efforts in Fairfax are progressing but efforts in Richmond failed this session despite the hard work of Delegates Comstock, Hugo and Rust. Congressman Wolf has made some good progress on this issue.
- **Stop Hunger Now Packaging Event at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church** – I had the chance to witness one of the strengths of our great community as a large crowd gathered to help the people of Haiti.
- **Upcoming Events**
 - **Springfield District Tax Relief Workshop for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities - Thursday, March 18th 2010, 9:00 AM at the West Springfield Governmental Center**

Initial Thoughts on FY 2011 Budget

Last week the Board of Supervisors voted to advertise a property tax rate that will raise the average Fairfax County homeowner's tax bill by over \$80. Add in the other proposed tax and fee increases (stormwater tax increase, return of the car decal fee, etc) and the average tax payer could be looking at a tax increase of almost \$225. Not only did I strongly oppose the advertisement of all of the proposed tax/fee increases, I assure you that as we move forward in the budget process I will continue to fight for a decrease in the actual taxes our homeowners pay. Far too often we forget that the tax burden is already too much for many of our citizens to bear.

Before I joined the Board of Supervisors in 2008, the previous Board doubled homeowner taxes in seven short years from an average of \$2,407 in 2000 to \$4,846 in 2007. In my first year as a Supervisor, as some Board Members were pushing for yet another tax increase, I stood up to the majority and presented an alternative budget that would have cut spending and provided substantial tax relief to our citizens.

My alternative budget in 2008 laid much of the groundwork for last year's budget where we began to fix the county's spending problem. After a decade of out of control spending, last year, in a bi-partisan fashion, we reduced spending for the first time in recent memory, cutting almost \$100 million out of the county budget and reducing the tax burden while retaining the services most important to our residents.

The County Executive put a FY 2011 budget on the table that includes over \$103 million in cuts – a good start - but we can and must go further. There are also some proposed cuts that must be restored. One specific area of the budget I take issue with is the new \$4 million dollar affordable housing program. I don't believe that we should ever add a program that is outside the scope of local government but I am especially concerned that we are discussing this new program at a time when the County Executive is proposing to cut 62 positions in the police department and cuts to the Community Services Board that helps the real homeless people in our community. This new program epitomizes the bad decision making and misplaced priorities that led us into our current fiscal mess.

Future *Herrity Reports* will discuss the budget and my specific proposals in much more detail. I am confident we will be able to give tax relief without significantly impacting the quality of the services our taxpayers expect. If you have any suggestions or comments about the budget please don't hesitate to send them to me at Springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov. If you would like to read the County Executive's proposal you can find it here: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/fy2011/advertised/cex_slide_presentation_fy2011_advertised.pdf.

Tyson's Lunch Shuttle: Before Its Time

Currently the Tyson's Corner Lunch Shuttle, which costs over \$1 million a year, is making 106 runs per day with an average of only 75 passengers per day using the service,

less than one person per trip. Many of the shuttles cover their entire route empty. While the lunch shuttle was only recently implemented, these current ridership numbers are extremely low despite the fact that there is so much construction and congestion in the immediate area. These numbers are equally alarming in light of an on-going marketing program to promote the service.

A circulator service in Tyson's will be critical once the HOT Lanes and Metro service are complete and we have additional residents in Tyson's, but this service appears to be well ahead of its time and does not give riders any real time advantage—a key in attracting transit riders.

The shuttle is not paid for with county funding but rather Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. If the original intent and goals of this program are not being sufficiently met, I am certain that these monies or a portion of them could be used more effectively in other areas that fall under the criteria for using CMAQ funds.

At the February 23rd Board meeting the Board approved my motion to direct staff to look into the effectiveness of the shuttle service and determine if the program is working sufficiently and meeting its original goals. Further, I moved that the Board direct the County Executive to look at options to more effectively utilize these funds if the goals are not being met. With so little transportation funding available we must be vigilant in making sure every dollar is spent in the most effective way possible. I will keep you up to date on this issue as we move forward.

Reporting Potholes

Left in the wake of our record-breaking snow storms are an increasing amount of potholes. Governor McDonnell has made pothole repair the number one priority of the Virginia Department of Transportation throughout March. During this "Pothole Blitz", the state is requesting that residents report potholes on its online work request form <http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/citizen.asp> or via phone at 703-383-8368. For more information, visit <http://www.virginiadot.org/info/faq-potholes.asp>.

Springfield District Community Parking District Approved

After a District-Wide Community Parking District (CPD) was enacted in Mount Vernon District and more recently, Lee District, my office received inquiries from residents as to when I might consider doing this in the Springfield District. Over the years, my office has received complaints regarding oversized recreational vehicles, both aesthetically-based or safety-related (i.e. parked vehicles causing sight-distance issues).

Since March 2008, I have included requests for feedback from Springfield District residents on this initiative in my newsletter. This past October, along with the Springfield District Council, the umbrella organization for Springfield District Homeowners and Civic Associations, I co-hosted a community meeting on the proposal for a CPD for the District. Fairfax DOT staff presented information on what vehicles would and would not

be prohibited. The feedback I received was overwhelmingly positive. We had a public hearing on February 23rd and the Board approved the CPD the same day.

This restriction will become effective on March 25; however, as with the previously established districts, the police will only issue warnings during the first thirty days.

The CPD restricts the following vehicles from parking on state-owned roads in Springfield District:

Vehicles that are restricted:

- * Boat Trailer
- * Watercraft (boat)
- * Motor Home
- * Camping Trailer
- * Trailer or Semi-trailer, even if attached to a vehicle
- * Vehicle \geq 3 axles
- * Vehicle with a gross vehicle weighted rating (GVWR) \geq 12,000 lbs

Vehicles temporarily parked (for up to 48 hours) for the purposes of loading, unloading or preparing for a trip are exempt from these restrictions. For more information on CPDs and exempted vehicles visit the county website at:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot/large_cpd.htm

An Update on Lyme Disease

At this time of year it is hard to focus on the growing problem of Lyme disease. However, in Virginia alone, the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease has doubled in the last two years, and some studies at the national level have estimated that Lyme disease costs our economy \$2 billion a year.

Following a very well attended joint Town Hall Meeting with Supervisor Frey last July, I led efforts on the Board of Supervisors to address Lyme disease, including:

- Directing the County's Health Department to educate our local doctors and health professionals on the difficulty in diagnosing (rash appears in less than 50% of the cases and tests only have 65% sensitivity, missing 35% of culture proven cases of Lyme) and treating the disease. These efforts by the Health Department are underway.
- To fight the ticks which spread Lyme Disease, the County is piloting the 4 poster deer bait station which safely and cost effectively applies a tickicide to deer, killing the ticks that carry Lyme disease.

Recently I also worked with Delegates Hugo, Comstock, and Rust to have Virginia protect doctors' options to treat Lyme disease and provided testimony in February in support of their bill.

I'd also like to thank Congressman Wolf for his leadership and the tremendous work that he has done on Lyme disease; his work at the national level combined with continued work on the local level could go a long way in fighting this terrible disease. See here <http://wolf.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=223§iontree=7,223> for more information on Congressman Wolf's endeavors work in this area.

Stop Hunger Now Packaging Event at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

On February 21st I attended a Stop Hunger Now packaging event at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Springfield to help the people of Haiti. Mrs. Lee Warren, Virginia Director of Stop Hunger Now, coordinated this event along with John Denninger, Senior Pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church along with other local churches. While I was there, over 25,000 meals were prepared and over 142,500 meals were prepared throughout the entire event on both Friday night and Saturday.

This was an entirely volunteer based meal packaging program. The assembly process consists of rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring mix that includes over 20 essential vitamins and minerals into packaged meals. These meals have a shelf life of over 5 years and they transport easily. The event on Saturday was remarkable. It was interdenominational and intergenerational with kids standing on buckets to work and some of the 50+ crowd working at chairs. The enthusiasm from the more than 500 volunteers was astonishing as they called out the cumulative meals count with a gong. This type of response to an international crisis is what makes this such a great community.

My thanks go out to all of the participants, young and old, who volunteered their time for this very worthy cause – your work and commitment is helping to keep people alive, and brings a ray of sunshine into the lives of those left so devastated in the aftermath of a horrible natural disaster. A thank you must also go out to Mr. John Denninger and Mrs. Lee Warren for organizing this event; your work is not going unnoticed, and it is a testament to kind of people we have here in Fairfax County – thank you for all that you do.

It is important to note that although this particular event was for the immediate needs of the victims in Haiti, Stop Hunger Now's focus is on day in and day out chronic hunger. To learn more please visit <http://www.stophungernow.org/site/PageServer>

Upcoming Events

- **Springfield District Tax Relief Workshop for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities**

On **Thursday, March 18th 2010 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM** I will be hosting a Tax Relief Workshop for senior citizens and people with disabilities at the West Springfield Government Center (6140 Rolling Rd, Springfield, VA 22152). Staff members from the Office of Tax Relief will

be on hand to meet with constituents on a one on one basis and to assist them in filling out the necessary forms.

Fairfax County provides real estate tax relief and car tax relief to citizens who are either 65 or older, or permanently and totally disabled, and meet the income and asset eligibility requirements. For eligibility requirements please contact the Tax Relief Office at 703-222-8234 or taxrelief@fairfaxcounty.gov or click on the following link http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/DTA/taxrelief_faq.htm.

The *Herrity Report* is a monthly publication from the Office of Supervisor Pat Herrity to keep citizens informed on the issues facing Fairfax County. Communication is important to Supervisor Herrity and he encourages your feedback on the items in the *Report* or other issues that concern you. Past issues of the *Herrity Report* can be found at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/herrity-report-newsletter.htm>. To sign up for the Herrity Report please go to <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield>. If you no longer wish to receive the *Herrity Report*, please send an e-mail to springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov with “Unsubscribe” in the subject line or call us at 703-451-8873.