

REGIONAL NEWS WATCH

December 30, 2011

VIRGINIA NEWS

\$2B In Va. Road-Work Contracts Awarded In '11

Gov. Bob McDonnell's office has announced that \$2 billion worth of road and bridge contracts were advertised this year. The contracts included repaving, bridge repairs and replacements, intersection and safety improvements and road widening in addition to other statewide transportation projects.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/traffic/dp-nws-street-smart-1225-20111226,0,439094.column>

Virginia Personal Income Rises Slightly

Personal income in Virginia barely budged in the third quarter, rising 0.1 percent from the second quarter. That slow growth, however, matched the national average for the quarter, which ended Sept. 30.

<http://www.virginiabusiness.com/index.php/news/article/virginia-personal-income-rises-slightly/315953/>

Virginia To Get \$26.7 Million In Federal Bonus Payments

Virginia will get \$26.7 million in bonus payments for children's health coverage after meeting federal medical program goals. Virginia is one of 23 states sharing in more than \$296 million in performance bonuses this year. The performance bonuses are intended to help offset states' costs in enrolling children in Medicaid. The bonuses also serve as incentives to streamline enrollment and renewal procedures.

<http://www.virginiabusiness.com/index.php/news/article/virginia-to-get-26.7-million-in-federal-bonus-payments/315963/>

HAMPTON ROADS NEWS

Riverside Receives Chest Pain Certification

Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News has received Chest Pain Center Accreditation with Percutaneous Coronary Intervention from the Society of Chest Pain Centers.

<http://www.wtvr.com/news/dp-health-notes-riverside-20111227,0,5594712.story>

Newport News Shipbuilding Gets \$113 Million Navy Contract

Newport News Shipbuilding has received a \$113 million Navy contract to continue ship and propulsion-plant design engineering and engineering services for the USS John F. Kennedy aircraft carrier.

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/news/2011/dec/26/tdmet03-newport-news-shipbuilding-gets-113-million-ar-1568210/>

Ford's Colony Centerpiece In James City County Is For Sale

Ford's Colony Country Club in James City County, which faced bankruptcy last year, is for sale at \$9.95 million, barely half the assessed value. The course is the anchor for the 3,250 homes in Ford's Colony, and the listing offers the option of adding 50 fully developed lots to the sale.

http://www.vagazette.com/articles/2011/12/27/slide_show/doc4ef5042b757cb939236600.txt

Historic Colonial Williamsburg Accommodations Top Conde Nast Traveler List

Colonial Williamsburg's historic guest accommodations have received a second accolade from Conde Nast Traveler in as many months. In its January, 2012, issue, the travel magazine recognized the Colonial Houses — Historic Lodging on its "Gold List" of the world's best places to stay. The Williamsburg accommodations scored the third highest of all hotels in the United States. The recognition follows Conde Nast Traveler's November issue where the Colonial Houses bested all others in the reader's choice category of the top 50 small hotels in the United States.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/williamsburg/dp-nws-colonial-williamsburg-20111220,0,1863943.story>

Study To Look At Expansion Of Regional Jail Facility

The four cities—Portsmouth, Norfolk, Hampton and Newport News— that use the Hampton Roads Regional Jail are reviewing their needs at the 1,300-bed complex, including the possibility of expansion.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/study-look-expansion-regional-jail-facility>

Virginia Beach SPCA Partners With Senior Services

A new partnership between the Virginia Beach SPCA and Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia provides food for both subscribers and pets. Homebound seniors who sign up for the meal delivery program will receive meals weekly. Once a month, they can also get food for their pets.

http://www.wavy.com/dpp/news/local_news/va_beach/spca-partners-with-senior-services

Williamsburg Regains Lead In Hotel Room Sales

After falling behind York County in three of the four tourism metrics in 2009, the Williamsburg has made a comeback, even as the overall tourism climate remains poor. James City County has moved up too. This year's sales, through October, show \$56 million for the city, \$55 million for York and \$32 million for James City. York County led the city with \$39 million in sales to \$37 million in August of 2009. James City County was just over \$20 million.

<http://www.vagazette.com/articles/2011/12/27/news/doc4ef5076fe92a5590490634.txt>

Hampton Roads Lags In Virginia Jobs Push

Hampton Roads hasn't been the biggest beneficiary of Gov. Bob McDonnell's economic development push so far. While Northern Virginia has garnered the largest number of new jobs during his time in office, Hampton Roads also lags slightly behind the Richmond area. Multiple jobs deals have gone to the Southside and Southwest Virginia regions plagued by chronically high unemployment. There have been local developments to cheer, though. Regional projects announced in the past few months are expected to create more than 1,000 jobs. In all, the administration says it has brought 5,515 jobs to Hampton Roads. Yet those anticipated gains aren't nearly enough to offset the 45,000-plus jobs the region has shed since the start of the recession, according to federal labor statistics. Still, with federal budget cuts looming, there's cause for concern in Hampton Roads, a region acutely vulnerable because of its reliance on defense spending.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/hampton-roads-lags-virginia-jobs-push>

Localities, Schools Worry Over Possible Budget Shortfalls

Officials from cities, counties and school divisions across the Peninsula and South of the James say cuts in Gov. Bob McDonnell's proposed \$84.9 billion two-year budget will be felt locally, primarily in educational needs.

<http://www.wtvr.com/news/dp-nws-local-budget-reactions-20111227,0,284072.story?page=2>

Portsmouth Weighs Options For Rejuvenating Pier Location

The North Pier and its concrete slab jut into the Elizabeth River next to the nTelos Wireless Pavilion, just south of Portsmouth's downtown waterfront. City officials are weighing how to develop this pier area. Options may be limited as the costs to prepare the pier for development are high, and developers of high rise apartments and stores may not be interested due to this high development cost.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/portsmouth-weighs-options-rejuvenating-pier-location>

Apartments For Working Poor Very Hard To Find

Renting apartments under the Section 8 voucher program is very difficult in James City and York counties. Waiting lists are closed. Williamsburg doesn't offer Section 8, but has another subsidized housing program. That too has a long waiting list. The issue is vital to hundreds who are under-employed and barely scraping by.

<http://www.vagazette.com/articles/2011/12/28/news/doc4efa465566d89226208471.txt>

Discounts Bring Buyers Back To Second-Home Market

Brokers across second-home markets generally agree that second-home sales have increased this year over 2010, which was better than 2009 and 2008. Prices have come down, fueled by sellers who decided not to wait any longer for prices to go back up and by buyers anxious to cash in on bargains. Pick up in sales are occurring in Virginia Beach and the Northern Neck.

<http://www.richmondbizsense.com/2011/12/29/discounts-bring-buyers-back-to-second-home-market/>

Owners Of Beach Care Home Are Charged With Neglect

The owners of the Pleasante Vue Residential Care Home in Virginia Beach have been charged by the police with neglect of an incapacitated adult, a misdemeanor. According to information developed the home did not have enough supervisory personnel on duty to prevent violence against a "severely intellectually disabled" woman.

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/12/owners-beach-care-home-are-charged-neglect>

Virginia Beach Programs For The Homeless Get \$1.2M

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has awarded over \$1.2 million in funding to nine programs aimed at easing homelessness in Virginia Beach. The funding will keep the programs, operating through the city's Continuum of Care; running in 2012. The grant will go to programs within the Virginia Beach Community Development Corp., Samaritan House, Judeo-Christian Outreach Center and Community Alternatives Management Group.

http://www.wavy.com/dpp/news/local_news/va_beach/programs-for-the-homeless-get-12m

Sears Store In Norfolk To Close

The parent company of Sears and Kmart is closing stores to raise cash - a move that sparked speculation about whether the 125-year-old retailer can avoid a death spiral fed by declining sales and deteriorating stores. The Sears store at 880 N. Military Highway in Norfolk is one of the more than 100 Sears and Kmart stores being closed.

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/business/news/2011/dec/29/kmart-stores-closing-richmond-and-midlothian-ar-1575253/>

RICHMOND METROPOLITAN AREA NEWS

Bon Secours Virginia Named One Of The Best Places To Work In Virginia

Bon Secours Virginia has been named one of the 2012 Best Places to Work in Virginia. This award, given by *Virginia Business* in partnership with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Society for Human Resource Management, and administered by Best Companies Group, recognizes Bon Secours for providing employees with an exceptional workplace and positively impacting Virginia's economy, work force and businesses. Bon Secours joins a distinguished group of 70 companies who represent the best employers across Virginia.

<http://www.bonsecourshamptonroads.com/news-and-events-news-room.html?newsID=EC376195-A3F8-48F8-9DA0-3B5473689D9A>

Richmond Schools In Budget Vise

The Richmond public school system faces a budget shortfall of \$25 million to \$30 million in the next school year, primarily because of rising teacher retirement costs and the disappearance of federal stimulus money and other one-time funds. The city school system also is among the apparent losers in the allocation of limited new state aid for education in Gov. Bob McDonnell's proposed budget. The reasons include declining enrollment and a change in the way the state distributes sales-tax revenue for education. While the outlook is brighter for other local school divisions, the two-year budget the governor proposed last week has sharpened political debate over what constitutes the Standards of Quality for public education and how to pay for them. After funding the state teacher pension fund there is less than \$100 million in additional state aid for local school divisions, even though the Virginia Board of Education said in July that an additional \$318 million is necessary to fund the Standards of Quality, even before considering pension and other updated requirements. The pension problem is intensified for localities because almost all state school divisions employ more teachers than the state covers under the Standards of Quality. Localities cover the entire cost of pension contributions for those positions. In Richmond, for

example, the state estimates the city's share of teacher retirement at about \$5.1 million a year, or \$2.2 million more than in the current budget. But the school system estimates that its total pension costs will increase about \$7 million in the biennium. The city also is getting hurt by a change in the way the state estimates school-age children for dividing sales-tax revenue for education. The new estimates, made by the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia, will cost the city about \$3 million in sales-tax revenue. McDonnell's budget isn't all bad for Richmond, which would receive additional money for preschool slots, an initiative to reduce class sizes, and textbooks.

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/news/news/2011/dec/27/tdmain01-richmond-schools-in-budget-vise-ar-1569614/>

Benedictine College Preparatory Preparing For Move

The race is on to move the Benedictine College Preparatory School from Richmond to Goochland County by next school year. There are a number of infrastructure projects involved in this move and Goochland County officials have said that the school will be responsible for all of the costs.

<http://www.nbc12.com/story/16400940/benedictine-college-preparatory-preparing-for-move>

Petco To Join The Fresh Market In Carytown Place Development

Carytown Place, under construction in the former Verizon building near Carytown in Richmond now has two prospective tenants. Pet-supply retailer Petco will join grocer Fresh Market in the development. The two new stores are expected to open sometime next year. Area retailers are concerned that bringing in large retailers will damage the character of the area with its small, independent retailers.

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/news/business/2011/dec/28/tdbiz01-petco-to-join-the-fresh-market-in-carytown-ar-1571489/>

Local Merchants See Boost In Sales

As the Christmas shopping season ends, retailers are breathing a sigh of relief. Holiday sales spiked nationally and locally. According to the Richmond Merchants Association survey- 85% of local merchants saw an increase in sales over this holiday season.

<http://www.nbc12.com/story/16401321/local-merchants-see-boost-in-sales>

Construction Contract Awarded For Library Renovation

A controversial renovation project at Ettrick-Matoaca Library is moving forward after the Chesterfield Board of Supervisors approved a \$2.1 million construction contract earlier this month. The renovation will reconfigure the building to make better use of space, but some library patrons have complained an addition is needed to meet the community's growing demand for library services.

http://www.chesterfieldobserver.com/news/2011-12-28/Front_Page/Construction_contract_awarded_for_library_renovati.html

Chesterfield County Tourism Dollars On The Rise

Despite the lackluster economic recovery, spending on tourism is picking up at a swift pace in Chesterfield County. The amount of tourism dollars spent in the county rose 8.6 percent to more than \$363 million in 2010 compared to 2009, and the trend has continued in 2011. This year is on track to be better than 2010. The revenue has earned the county \$8.3 million in sales tax, and the growth puts Chesterfield ahead of most of its regional neighbors, according to figures from the convention and visitors bureau.

http://www.chesterfieldobserver.com/news/2011-12-28/Front_Page/County_tourism_dollars_on_the_rise.html

\$600K Awarded To Renovate Richmond's Leigh Street Armory Again To Become Black History Museum

The Leigh Street Armory in Richmond's Jackson Ward has been tapped for revitalization with a plan to turn it back into a black-history museum. Richmond has been awarded a \$600,000 state grant to help renovate the historic castle-like structure in an area designated by the city as a center for African-American culture and economic history.

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/business/business/2011/dec/29/tdbiz01-600k-awarded-to-renovate-leigh-street-armo-ar-1573708/>

Two Richmond-Area Kmart's Closing

Two local Kmart stores are among at least 100 Sears and Kmart's being closed across the country. The stores at 11006 Hull Street Road in Chesterfield and 6807 Midlothian Turnpike in Richmond are being closed as their parent company attempts to raise money after poor sales. No closing date has been released.

<http://www.wric.com/story/16412602/two-richmond-area-k-marts-closing>

PETERSBURG-HOPEWELL NEWS

City Envisions Fabric Store, Couture Design Center On Fleet Street

Earlier this month, City Council held a public hearing on the proposed sale of 530-532 Fleet St., a property that belongs to the city with a dilapidated 2,272-square-foot duplex on the land. The proposed sale would be to David Montoya, a fashion designer and professor at Virginia State University. Montoya presented to council on Dec. 13 his plans for the structure which included renovating the building and turning it into a fabric store, design studio, boutique and university store associated with Virginia State University.

<http://progress-index.com/news/city-envisions-fabric-store-couture-design-center-on-fleet-street-1.1249600#axzz1hkEUH1HH>

LYNCHBURG NEWS

More News To Come...

FARMVILLE NEWS

More News To Come...

SOUTHILL NEWS

No Cuts For Community Memorial Healthcenter In State Budget

Officials at Community Memorial Healthcenter say the proposed biennium state budget released by Governor Bob McDonnell does not contain any decreases in state funding for Medicaid, but, for the second year in a row, there are no increases in how much the state will reimburse doctors and hospitals who serve Medicaid patients. This will adversely affect Community Memorial Healthcenter.

http://vancnews.com/articles/2011/12/27/south_hill/news/news33.txt

ROANOKE AREA NEWS

Downtown Roanoke Businesses Report Strong Holiday Sales

An informal survey of several downtown Roanoke business owners and managers revealed a feeling of stronger holiday sales compared to years past.

<http://www2.wsls.com/news/2011/dec/27/downtown-roanoke-businesses-report-strong-holiday--ar-1571321/>

Roanoke Doctors Express Patient Load Exceeding Expectations

Open less than a month Doctors Express at Towers Shopping Center says foot traffic is exceeding expectations. Owners expected about four to 10 patients a day in the first month, but are regularly seeing more than 20 a day.

<http://www2.wsls.com/news/2011/dec/27/patient-load-exceeding-expectations-new-roanoke-ur-ar-1570776/>

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VT-Carilion Research Institute Gets Grant To Recruit Regenerative Specialist

The Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute has received a \$250,000 grant from the Center for Innovative Technology to help recruit a scientist who specializes in heart regenerative medicine. The institute is in the middle of negotiations to bring in a group of scientists who specialize in regenerative medicine and wound healing. Virginia Tech also received \$50,000 for researchers with the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science, and \$148,998 to Tech researchers working to reduce the manufacturing cost of a photovoltaic inverter, which converts solar energy into a usable power source. Blacksburg-based Synthonics, Inc. got a \$50,000 grant.
<http://www.roanoke.com/business/wb/302835>

CHARLOTTESVILLE NEWS

New Orange County Board Faces Bleak Budget Forecast

Orange County faces an estimated \$7 million shortfall as it prepares to enter the budget cycle for fiscal year 2012-2013. This shortfall is attributed largely to scheduled capital improvement projects that likely won't make it into the final adopted budget. To offset the 28 percent drop in Orange County real estate values, a new equalized tax rate of \$.66 per \$100 of assessed value will be needed. The current real estate tax rate is \$.49 per \$100 of assessed value.

<http://www2.orangenews.com/news/2011/dec/21/new-board-faces-bleak-budget-forecast-ar-1560220/>

Keswick Hall In Charlottesville Named One of Top Hotels in the United States

In its January, 2012, issue, the travel magazine, Conte Nast, named Keswick Hall, in Charlottesville, to the magazine's 18th annual list of the top 511 hotels, resorts and cruise lines.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/williamsburg/dp-nws-colonial-williamsburg-20111220,0,1863943.story>

After Banner Year, Albemarle County Will See Less Road Work

After a huge year for secondary road construction and improvements in 2011, Albemarle County residents can expect to see many fewer road projects taken on by the county in coming years. With sharp cuts in state money being sent to localities for secondary roads — Albemarle saw a more than 90 percent reduction from a \$4 million-plus per year average in the early to mid-2000s to \$346,000 this year — the county's construction docket for 2012 only includes four rural road paving projects

http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2011/12/secondary_roads.html