

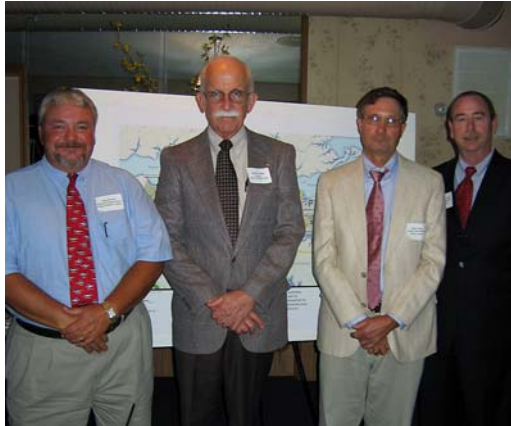


MPPDC Summer Quarterly Meeting

MPPDC Elects New Officers

The Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission held its Summer Quarterly Dinner Meeting on June 23, 2004 at the Oasis Family Restaurant in Glens, Gloucester County.

The following slate of officers for FY2005 was unanimously approved: Chairman, R. Gary Allen, County Administrator, Essex County; Vice Chairman, Andy Conklin, Mayor, Town of West Point; Treasurer, Gene Byrum, Supervisor, King William County; and Secretary, Dan Kavanagh, Executive Director of the MPPDC.



Newly elected Commission officers are, from left to right: Gene Byrum, Treasurer; Andy Conklin, Vice-Chairman; Gary Allen, Chairman; and Dan Kavanagh, Secretary

MPLT Priority Sites Project Presented

Neal Barber, Vice-president of the Middle Peninsula Land Trust gave a presentation of the MPLT's Priority Sites Project. In 1997, the MPLT was organized to preserve the scenic resources of the Middle Peninsula and work closely with property landowners. The MPLT completed an educational seminar with citizens and other state officials focusing on conservation strategies.

Mr. Barber explained the purpose of the project was to identify properties that are the most important in the region with rich environmental and culture values. In ob-

taining the priority sites information, the PDC staff used GIS technology to combine data layers and conduct GIS analysis.

Each of the counties and towns was be provided a copy of the GIS data on a CD plus a map booklet of their locality compiled by PDC staff.

Mr. Barber told the local government officials that the MPLT welcomes the opportunity to work with their Planning Commissions and Boards of Supervisors to better understand the analyses of the Priority Sites in the Middle Peninsula.

First Annual Dragon Run Day

Mark your calendars now for the First Annual Dragon Run Day on **Saturday, October 23, 2004**. This event, sponsored by the Planning District Commission's Dragon Run Steering Committee and the Virginia Coastal Program, will take place on the grounds of the Glens Campus of Rappahannock Community Col-

lege from **10 am – 4 pm**. This community watershed festival seeks to celebrate the Dragon Run watershed's natural, cultural, and historic heritage. Dragon Run Day will feature exhibit and demonstration booths, live entertainment in the renovated 560-seat amphitheatre, nature walks and pond studies,

and local food sold by local non-profit organizations. Join in on the fun and learn something, too! If you wish to volunteer at this event, please contact Karen Fuss, Dragon Run Watershed Education and Event Coordinator, at 757-564-9629 or

karendave@widomaker.com

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Our Mission

"To improve public health, safety, convenience and welfare, and to provide for the social, economic and physical development of communities and metropolitan areas of the Commonwealth on a sound and orderly basis, within a governmental framework and economic environment which fosters constructive growth and efficient administration."

Watershed Management Plan Approved



The Dragon Run (May 2003)

Photo credit: David Fuss, MPPDC

“The Dragon Run Watershed Management Plan ... harnesses the energy and passion for the Dragon Run of those who live, work, and play in its watershed.”

On February 25, 2004, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission unanimously approved the *Dragon Run Watershed Management Plan*, as recommended by its steering committee. The plan represents an effort by citizens, stakeholders, and decision-makers to achieve a common vision – the preservation of the traditional uses and unique resources in the pristine Dragon Run watershed. “This plan is representative of a long tradition of care and concern for the Dragon Run,” said Chair of the Dragon Run Steering Committee, Margaret “Prue” Davis. “The Dragon Run is a special place and landowners have always done a good job of taking care of it. What we’re trying to do is to plan for the watershed’s future before the landscape changes dramatically like it has in so many formerly rural places throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

The spring-fed Dragon Run is one of the Chesapeake Bay’s most pristine waterways. The mysterious river winds its way under majestic baldcypress situated in portions of Essex, King and Queen, Middlesex, and Gloucester Counties. Forestry and farming are the bedrock of the watershed’s economy and, together with extensive swamps, are the main reasons that the

Dragon Run remains wild and secluded.

Yet, encroaching development threatens to fragment productive forest and farmland and natural habitat. While opinions sometimes vary about how to maintain a pristine watershed into the future, substantial common ground exists for proactively preserving the Dragon Run for future generations by safeguarding both natural resources and traditional uses of the land and water, including property rights of landowners.

The Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan project, a partnership of the Dragon Run Steering Committee and the Virginia Coastal Program at the Department of Environmental Quality, has created a process by which stakeholder input was translated into a watershed

management plan. Project funding originates in a match-free grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The Counties of Essex, King and Queen and Middlesex have adopted the watershed management plan. Gloucester is currently considering the plan.

The *Dragon Run Watershed Management Plan* is a symbol of regional cooperation and coordination that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. It harnesses the energy and passion for the Dragon Run of those who live, work, and play in its watershed.

For more information, contact David Fuss at 804-758-2311 or dfuss@mppdc.com or visit the project’s website at www.mppdc.com/dragon.

Dragon Run Watershed Field Workshops

As part of the Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan, watershed educator Karen Fuss has led field workshops to teach about land use, habitat and water quality. Participants collected aquatic animals and insects to determine stream health.

Shown at right are (L-R): James Hobgood, MPPDC Hazard Mitigation Planner Janet Nestlerode, Gloucester Planning Director Jay Scudder, and Jessica Scudder.



S & J Foods to Begin Operations

After years in the Food Service business working sixty hour weeks, Sam Llewellyn decided it was time to go out on his own. With over five years of practical management experience in the food service industry, Sam knows what it takes to build a business. He helped build two of them before coming to the Middle Peninsula Business Development Partnership (MPBDP).

After completing a four week business training course offered by the Business Development Partnership, Mr. Llewellyn worked to put together a comprehensive loan application and business plan that looked at the local market as a whole and enabled Mr. Llewellyn to better understand what his new role as an owner would be. MPBDP's loan review committee approved a

loan for \$25,000 to help S & J Foods purchase inventory and equipment to get started.

With the counseling of MPBDP behind him, Mr. Llewellyn was approved for funding after spending nearly nine months getting quotes on everything from insurance to automobiles and putting together a marketing plan to effectively reach his target market.

"Here is an example of an individual that understands what entrepreneurship is all about; hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Mr. Llewellyn will be successful, there is no doubt in my mind." said Program Director Jason Koptish.

Mr. Llewellyn, along with his wife Jessie, are co-owners of S & J Foods which began opera-

tions as of September 1, 2004. They are looking forward to a prosperous year to come.

This micro-loan pool is one of the key elements of the MPBDP. Along with lending to the underserved populations of the Middle Peninsula, MPBDP

also provides group training and one-on-one counseling to help local entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground. For more information contact Jason Koptish at 804-758-4917 or visit MPBDP online at www.mpbdp.org.



Robert S. Llewellyn receives check from MPBDP Program Director, Jason Koptish

Middle Peninsula Disaster Relief Plan on Track

The federal Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 requires all communities nationwide to adopt a hazard mitigation plan to remain eligible for hazard-related federal assistance. The Middle Peninsula is one of the first areas in the state to address this mandate and is in the process of developing our region's plan. All-Hazard Mitigation Plan will identify hazards, vulnerabilities, mitigation goals, and potential mitigation projects and will be comprised of a regional overall assessment of the hazard issues that are common to all jurisdictions, as well as locality-specific chapters addressing each locality's unique hazards and mitigation strategies.

Mitigation is any sustained action taken to reduce the long-term risk to people and property from hazards. Examples of hazard mitigation activities include relocating or elevating buildings out of hazard-prone areas, improving regional communication and warning systems, educating residents and building owners in hazard prevention and preparedness, and strengthening building codes to resist hazards such as flooding, wind, and wildfire. In addition to creating a useful planning tool, a great benefit of this project is starting a dialogue among county governments because natural disasters are not often contained within county boundaries. This multi-jurisdictional planning

approach encourages localities to work together to reduce the devastating effects of natural hazards through mitigation efforts. All residents of the Middle Peninsula will benefit from hazard mitigation planning. By considering the disasters that could occur, county officials and residents can make the best decision to keep themselves, their families, and their property safe.

The plan is on schedule to be completed this spring. For additional information, contact Janet Nestlerode at the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, 804-758-2311 or visit the All-Hazard Plan Website at www.mppdc.com/ahrrp

"By considering the disasters that could occur, county officials and residents can make the best decision to keep themselves, their families, and their property safe"

Regional Alternative Transportation Needs Identified by Local Stakeholders

A boat landing in Tappahannock, a bike trail in Mathews, improved sidewalks street lighting at Gloucester Courthouse, a Park and Ride lot in Middlesex, a regional airport in King and Queen, a canoe trail in Aylett. . . how are these things connected? Trouble is, they're not. At least not until now.

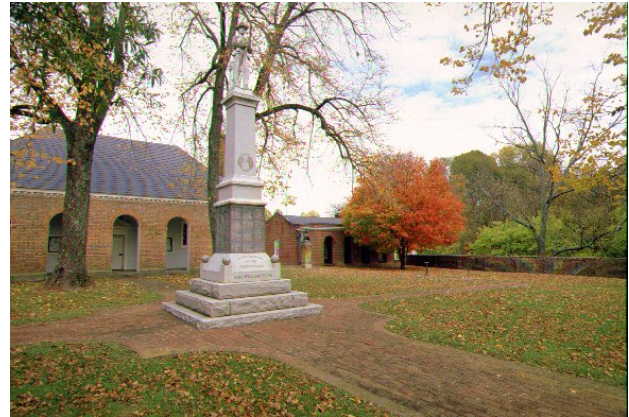
As a rural and suburban region on the Coastal Plain, the Middle Peninsula's history and relationship to water-based transportation and other modes has not been well balanced. Our localities have developed plans for cyclists, pedestrian improvements, waterfront access, as well as addressing several other concerns with no small amount of effort and funding. With all of this work in each of the six counties and three towns of the Middle Peninsula, no comprehensive inventory of these efforts has been documented. By examining these efforts we can maximize the impact of future investments through linking different modes of transportation. Identifying future needs on a regional basis will allow us to provide a sound and balanced regional transportation system.

Using funds from the Virginia Coastal Program and the Rural Transportation Planning Program, the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission contracted with consultants to inventory existing plans and facilities, document the status of alternative transportation plans in each local-

ity, as well as seek input from the community for future needs.

A kickoff meeting was held to identify contacts and take inventory of existing plans. Existing transportation plans were culled from a variety of sources including the localities, regional interests, as well as statewide efforts. This information was used to determine what was happening in each locality, both already in place as well as on paper. The resulting information was presented to local government and relevant stakeholders to review. Six local stakeholder meetings were held to identify needs for a Regional Alternative Transportation Plan. Not surprisingly given our rich history of rivers and creeks, the most commonly mentioned need was increased access to the water. Also mentioned in most localities were the need for additional Park and Ride lots as well as improved facilities for bicycles.

The final report was presented to the Commission at its September meeting. The Study will be presented to localities as a tool in local planning efforts as well as to provide support for funding opportunities. Should you have questions concerning the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission Regional Alternative Transportation Study, please contact Tom Brockenbrough at 758-2311 or tbrockenbrough@mppdc.com



King William Courthouse

Localities Receive Enhancement Funds from Commonwealth Transportation Board

Improvement of the King William Court House area has long been a goal of King William County. The Courthouse dates from 1725 and is the nation's oldest courthouse in continuous use. With a growing population and an expanded State mandate for courts, additional space for court facilities became necessary. In 2003 construction commenced on a few facility approximately seven hundred feet from the original facility.

The County received funding for a Special Planning Grant through the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Rural Transportation Planning Program to conduct a mobility study in the area. The resulting Mobility Management and Master Plan, completed by the firm of Wiley and Wilson improved access and safety and maintains the rural and historic character of the area through the creation of a Visitor Center. It also expanded pedestrian and bicycle trails, improved parking and the road network, as well as calling for landscaping and interpretive signage.

With the assistance of the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, the County sought funding under the Transportation Enhancement Program to fund the first phase of the three phase project. At the July meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board King William County was approved for funding in the amount

of \$118,000 to begin work to improve the safety and preserve the historic nature of the Courthouse village and create a Visitors' Center.

In addition to the King William Courthouse Gateway, other Middle Peninsula projects receiving funding include Gloucester County for Phase IV of its Colonial Courthouse Enhancement; the Town of Urbanna for Phase III of its Downtown and Waterfront; and Mathews Main Street, Inc. to complete design and engineering for the Mathews Historic Courthouse Gateway and Court Green. All told, projects in the Middle Peninsula received over \$625,000 in funding.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board is expected to approve funding allocations at its March 2005 meeting. For questions about the Transportation Enhancement Program, please consult the V D O T website (<http://www.virginiadot.org/project/pr-enhance.asp>) or contact Tom at tbrockenbrough@mppdc.com or 758-2311

Applications for the next round of Enhancement Project Funding are due to VDOT on November 1, 2004

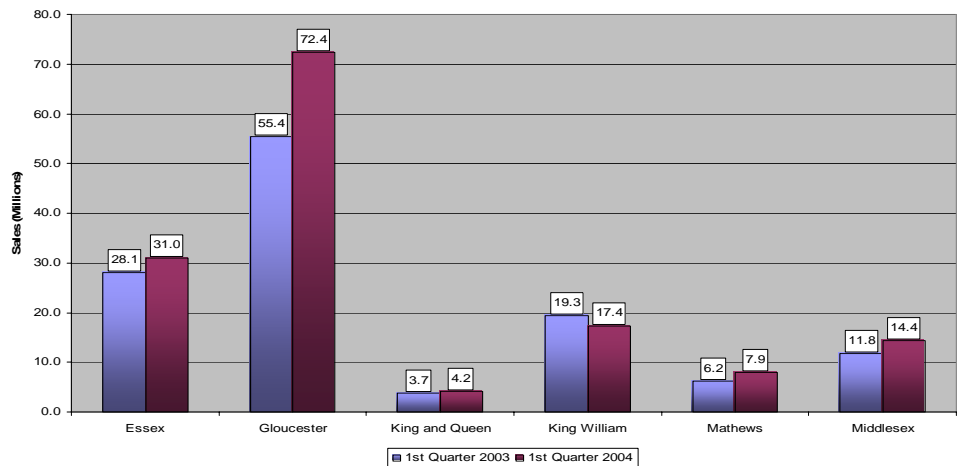


M.P Multimodal Transportation Plan Presented at MPPDC Fall Dinner Meeting

Taxable sales within the region totaled \$125 million for the first quarter of 2004, an increase of \$22.7 over the same period in 2003. The regional increase of 18.2% outpaces the state increase of 12.9%. The largest increases were posted in the localities most impacted by hurricane Isabel. Gloucester County, which saw an increase of just over 30%, was further aided by the opening of two large building supply stores in 2003.

Source: Weldon Cooper Center

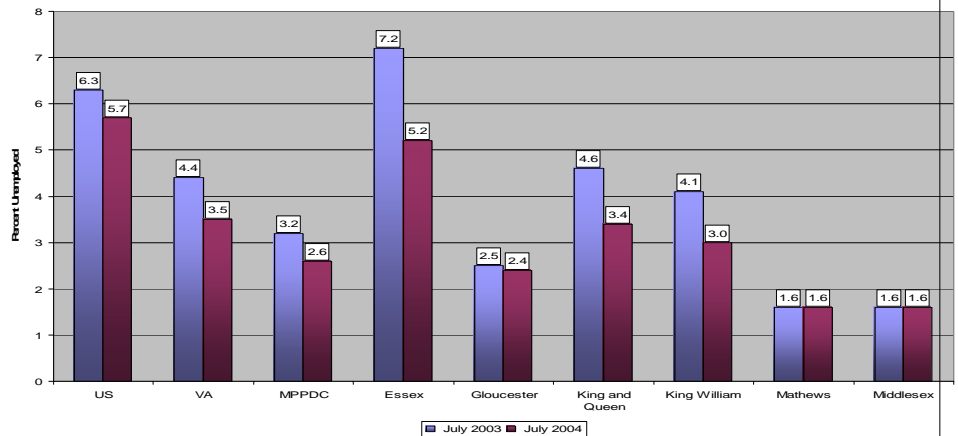
Taxable Sales



Within the Middle Peninsula, the unemployment rate continued to decline, mirroring state and local trends. Two localities with extremely low unemployment rates, Mathews and Middlesex, were unchanged. All of the localities had unemployment rates below the national and state average in July 2004.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

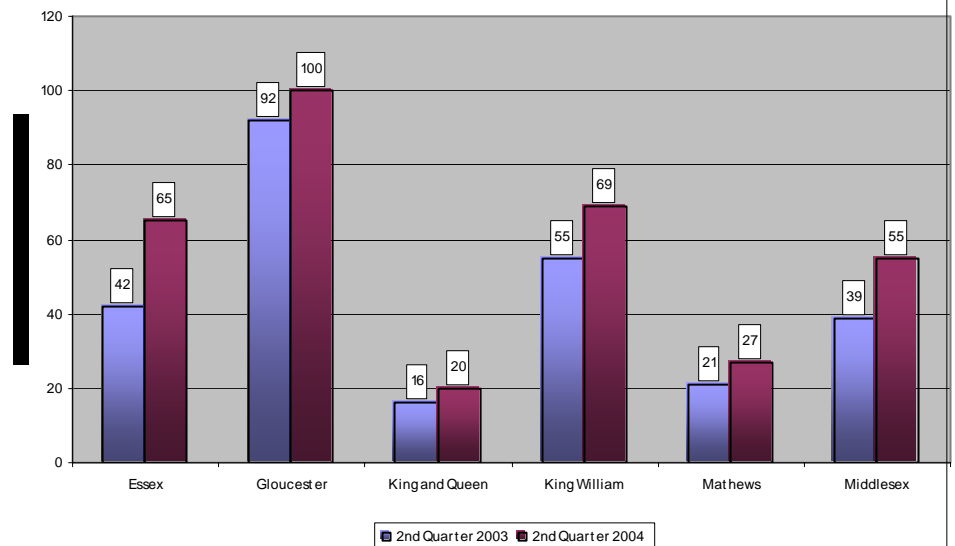
Unemployment Rates



Residential Building Permits Issued

Total building permits for new residential structures increased from 273 to 336 for second quarter of 2004. This represents an increase of 19.4% over 2003 figures. As with previous periods there was a variety of changes amongst the various localities with declines in one locality and dramatic increases of over 40% in Essex and Middlesex Counties. The total value of new residential structures is approximately \$39.3 million, an increase of almost \$4.8 million over 2003 figures.

Source: County Building Officials





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Hon. Margaret H. Davis
Hon. Edwin E. Smith

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Hon. Roy M. Gladding

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Josh Bateman, Regional Planner
Tom Brockenbrough, GIS Specialist/Rural Transportation Planner
David Fuss, Dragon Run SAMP Director
Tim Gaylord, Middle Peninsula Regional Airport Authority Manager
Beth Johnson, Administrative Assistant/Rideshare Coordinator
Jason Koptish, Middle Peninsula Business Development Program Director/ IT Administrator
Eva Lowe, Regional Planner/Coastal NPS Pollution Planner
Janet Nestlerode, Regional Planner/All-Hazards Mitigation
Rose Lewis, Secretary
Harla Sherwood, Rivers Country Tourism Council

Eva Lowe joined the PDC staff in June '04 as Coastal NPS Pollution Planner. She was previously employed with the Virginia Department of Health (Middlesex Co.) as Environmental Health Specialist, Sr. Eva has a B.A. in biology from University of North Carolina at Wilmington and an A.A.S. in Marine Technology from Cape Fear Community College. She has been a resident of Mathews County since 1997.

Janet Nestlerode, In addition to hazard mitigation, flood zones, and wildfire mapping, regional planner Janet Nestlerode also knows a little something about oysters. She earned her Ph.D. in marine science this summer from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science where she studied restored oyster reef communities. While at VIMS, she worked on a number of varied projects in Chesapeake Bay marshes and soft-bottom habitats and brings to the MPPDC an understanding of coastal hazards she learned along the way. Janet joined the MPPDC last November to develop the regional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Josh Bateman, Regional Planner returned from his tour of duty in Iraq in March and to his duties at the PDC in April. Welcome home, Josh.

Jason Koptish, MPBDP Director and PDC IT Systems Administrator, and Leigh Estok will tie the knot on September 18. Mr. & Mrs. Koptish will honeymoon in Hawaii. Setting the bar a bit high there, aren't you Jason?

Upcoming Events

OCTOBER

10/1 — Chesapeake Bay License Plate Fund Grant Application Deadline
10/8 — Local Govt. Administrators Mtg., 9 am
10/8— MP Public Access Authority Mtg., 12 noon
10/11—Columbus Day, PDC Offices Closed
10/13—Local Planners Meeting, 9:30 am
10/13—MP Regional Airport Authority Meeting, MPR Airport, 3 pm
10/17-19— Virginia Transportation Conference, Roanoke
10/18—Middle Peninsula Disability Services Board, 1 pm
10/20-22—Rural Planning Caucus Annual Conference, Mountain Lake
10/23— 1st Annual Dragon Run Day, RCC, Glenss, 10 am—4 pm
10/27—MPPDC Commission Meeting, 7 pm

NOVEMBER

11/1—BDP Class Registrations
11/1—Transportation Enhancement Program Grant Application Deadline
11/10—Local Planners Meeting, 9:30 am
11/10—MP Regional Airport Authority Meeting, MPR Airport, 3 pm
11/10—Dragon Run Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm
11/11—Veterans Day, PDC Offices Closed
11/12—Local Govt. Administrators Mtg., 9 am
11/17—MPPDC Commission Meeting, 7 pm
11/18-19—Virginia GIS Conference
11/25—Thanksgiving Day, PDC Offices Closed