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Reimbursement for Unaccompanied Minors

At Tuesday's Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' meeting, I asked the County Executive to calculate the costs associated with providing services to the over 1,000 unaccompanied minors now in Fairfax County, and to look at options to recover the money for these services from the Federal government, either directly or through the Commonwealth.

The influx of unaccompanied minors across the southern border of the United States is in the tens of thousands. According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement the number of these children now in Fairfax County stands at 1,023 - one of the largest in the country. Unlike in Prince William County where children were placed primarily in one center with the costs reimbursed primarily by the Federal government, the children currently in Fairfax County have been placed with family members and none of the costs are being directly reimbursed by the Federal government.

These children will be using a multitude of County services including County schools. At the cost of \$14,755 per English as a Second Language student (per FCPS approved FY14 budget), that

could mean that Fairfax County schools alone will have over \$14M in new unexpected expenses to deal with in this school year.

I also believe it is important for us to know the extent to which this influx will affect both ours and the schools' budgets - \$14M is no small chunk of change, especially in this difficult economy. It is the Federal government who is placing these children in our communities that should be paying for the services that localities have to provide while they are here. The over \$14M figure is just the cost of basic ESOL services.

Great News for Old Keene Mill Road

The Virginia Department of Transportation began the repaving of Old Keene Mill Road/Franconia Road (Route 644) from Elder Avenue to Rolling Road this week. The work will occur five nights a week, Sunday through Thursday from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. This work is expected to take about three months to complete, weather permitting. The roadway will be milled to a depth of 1.5 inches and replaced with 1.5 inches of surface asphalt. Some areas of the existing pavement will require deeper patching.

Many of the County's roads are in disrepair and VDOT is working to address them as quickly as they receive the funds. Old Keene Mill Road has been in a state of disrepair for quite some time now and I glad we were able to work it on to this year's list. I am also working to get a short section of Union Mill Road done this year. Several other major arteries were paved earlier this year.

I know firsthand that the section of Old Keene Mill Road between the Fairfax County Parkway and Rolling Road is just as bad as the section being repaved. VDOT tells me this is on the radar; it could be completed later this year or next season. This also applies to the section of Rolling Road between Braddock Road and Burke Road. I also hope VDOT will be able to make it into our neighborhoods next year as well.

WSHS Renovation

Since I took office in 2008, renovating West Springfield High School, my alma mater, has been one of my top priorities. The school is in terrible disrepair, and hasn't received a significant renovation since it opened its doors in the 1960's - cosmetically it looks the same today as it did when I graduated in 1978, but structurally there are issues that have built up over time. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of groups like SOAR (Spartans Organized for Action and Renovation), the school was placed on the CIP and received funding for renovation. Work will begin in 2016.

In June, I was privileged to be invited to a sneak peak of the plans for renovation and while we have a few issues to address, I am happy to report that the drawings look great and are now available to be viewed online here -

<http://www.fcps.edu/westspringfieldhs/programs/Renovation/Renovation.html>

West Springfield High School is one of the premier schools in the country that is consistently producing well-educated and well-rounded students that have been recognized at the local, state, and national level in many different disciplines. They have made Fairfax County proud; it is past time to give them a school building to be proud of.

Bringing the FBI to Springfield

The GSA warehouse site is on the shortlist of sites being considered for the FBI's new headquarters. The GSA site is optimal because it already has in place the transportation facilities, communications infrastructure, shopping amenities, and hotels and restaurants that the FBI and its employees will need to be successful. In addition the GSA site is right up 95 from the FBI's training facility in Quantico.

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce fully supports relocating the FBI headquarters to Springfield, and it wants to show the decision makers that our citizens do too. The Chamber created this petition and I urge you to sign it and show your support today!
<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/bring-the-fbi-headquarters-to-springfield>