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## **Bulova Byline Chairman's Monthly Report December 2009**

- The difficult year of '09 is drawing to an end. As our community begins preparations for the holidays, we continue to be very much affected by a severe breakdown in our economy. This crisis was rooted in predatory lending practices and risky sub-prime loans during the end of the 90's and beginning of this decade. In the fall of '08, when our national housing bubble burst, we experienced the failure of many of our Country's major financial institutions, including Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, AIG, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Efforts have followed throughout this year to jump start the economy.

How has this affected Fairfax County? Our major source of revenue comes from taxes on residential and commercial real estate. In FY 2010 (our current fiscal year), the value of residential and commercial properties declined 9.95%. Values are projected to decline another 12.0% in FY 2011. In FY 2010, that assessment decline equated to a revenue reduction of \$244 million, before the tax rate adjustment. In FY 2011, the projected assessment decline equates to a revenue reduction of \$252 million.

We began '09 with a series of Community Dialogues held throughout the County. Residents were invited to participate, with their local government officials, in a discussion of how to close a projected \$650 million projected shortfall in the County's \$3.3 billion General Fund budget. Thanks in large part to this inclusive process, and aided by Stimulus funding that provided a bridge for our public schools, our Board unanimously adopted a budget last April that struck a responsible balance. We were able to keep average tax bills steady and, while reductions were made to programs and services, we've been able to protect our highest priorities and the quality of life we value.

As we begin 2010, another Community Dialogue series to prepare for the Fiscal Year 2011 budget is underway. See inside for more information about this topic and for the timeline for adoption for next year's budget. Extensive information about this process can also be found on the County's website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/budget/>

- See inside this Byline some *great information* on the Economic Development front! Fairfax County warmly welcomes the **Ignite Institute** to Fairfax County! This unique nonprofit center brings the exciting new industry of personalized **health care** to Fairfax County. This specialty within the field of

biotechnology will serve as a catalyst for scientific research and development in our county. We look forward to working with Ignite and having the institute as part of community!

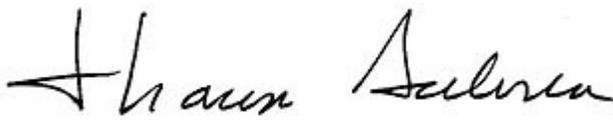
- I enjoyed seeing so many of you at my Town Meeting **“Energizing Fairfax County - Climate Change and Energy Efficiency”** on November 18<sup>th</sup>! If you didn’t have a chance to attend personally, the town meeting is being broadcast on Channel 16 at 8 p.m. on Friday, November 27; Tuesday, December 1; and Saturday, December 5. You can also watch the program at your leisure by going to <http://fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/vod.htm> where it will be posted under the heading “Supervisor Programs” or click: [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/asx/chairman\\_bulova\\_town\\_meeting.asx](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable/channel16/asx/chairman_bulova_town_meeting.asx).

- A new **Fairfax County Financial Transparency Portal** has been activated on the County’s website. The new web portal has been created by our Department of Finance. It affords the viewer the opportunity to navigate to the specific content they are seeking with just “one click” and without having to understand the County’s organizational structure or which department is responsible for the information. See inside this Byline for more information!

- Lastly, I would like to express my sincere sympathy and condolences to the families and loved ones of those who were killed or injured earlier this month at Fort Hood, Texas. Fairfax County is home to many military personnel and their families. We are proud of the men and women who serve our Country and we pray, during these difficult times, for their safety.

Fairfax County is a diverse community of citizens of many faiths and backgrounds. It is important that a tragedy such as this leads us to redouble our efforts to build peace, tolerance and respect in our community. Throughout this holiday season, let us all keep in our thoughts the individuals who were touched by this tragedy.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova  
Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

*Save this Date!*

**Wed., Jan. 13, 2010, 4 – 7 p.m.**

***“Chairman’s Holiday Reception”***

Join me and my staff to celebrate the  
New Year!

## FISCAL YEAR 2011 BUDGET UPDATE



We are facing what is yet again going to be a very difficult budget. The Board received a financial forecast for FY 2011 with a projected shortfall of \$316 million. This is

based on a total projected loss of revenue of \$232.5 million and assumes no funding for salary adjustments or inflation. Difficult decisions have already been made and put in place as part of the FY 2010 budget. We will need to continue to be creative and innovative as we review County government for additional savings, reductions and reorganizational efficiencies and changes.

Continuing the very useful process from last year's budget process, the county has hosted Community Dialogues to share information and invite discussion regarding the upcoming budget. Twelve sessions and 5 employee forums have already been held, a number of which I've been able to personally attend. They've been a really good way for county residents to weigh in on budget priorities and choices, even prior to the Superintendent and the County Executive releasing their respective Advertised Budgets.

County and School staff identified an additional date, Wednesday, December 2, at 7 p.m., for three additional sessions to accommodate demand: Hayfield Secondary School, Herndon High School, and Lake Braddock Secondary School. If you aren't able to attend a session, you can submit your budget thoughts and suggestions via our County website at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget>. You can also find more information about the community dialogues, the budget process, and a summary of the discussions and recommendations so far.

I also wanted to let you know about the innovative joint Board of Supervisors - School Board "Smart Savings" Task Force that the county and schools began last year. Smart Savings is tasked with identifying opportunities for short, medium and long-term savings and/or improvements to County services through

streamlining, combining and/or consolidating separate County and School functions. We have committed to be bold and creative in reviewing, on a high-level policy basis, those separate operations and assets that show real promise for achieving savings and/or improving services.

There are many areas in which the county and schools *already* cooperate, such as: finance and purchasing; many human resources functions; use of athletic fields and community meeting spaces, some meals and vending services, and printing. Some additional areas we have been exploring in our bi-monthly meetings include: refuse collection, food service, warehousing, the AED program, Risk Management, legal services, para transit, and landscaping and grounds maintenance. Significant long term savings and efficiencies for both the General County and School System will be realized through the County's implementation of ERP – Enterprise Resource Plan, software which will allow more opportunity for doing things jointly. This technology will replace current inefficient and antiquated systems with the installation of the required software. Transition to ERP should be in place by 2011.

With the benefit of the community's and employees' feedback, as well as the work of the Smart Savings Task Force, the County Executive will present his advertised budget plan in late February of 2010. Public hearings will be held on the proposed budget in early April. Our Board will adopt a final budget in April at the conclusion of this process, including the School Transfer.

By engaging our residents and businesses in the process of addressing these challenging times, protecting investment in our most critical priorities, and by maintaining strong responsible fiscal stewardship, we can and must ensure: a quality educational system; safe streets and neighborhoods; a clean sustainable environment; livable, caring and affordable communities; a vibrant economy; an efficient transportation network; and recreational and cultural opportunities.

## GREAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS!



(photo courtesy of Anne Ford Doyle, Inova)

On Monday, November 16th, I was extremely pleased to welcome the Ignite Institute to Fairfax!

This announcement comes on the heels of the decisions by Hilton Worldwide and SAIC to relocate their headquarters to Fairfax County.

Participating in the ceremony were members of the Board of Supervisors, Governor Tim Kaine, Governor-Elect Bob McDonnell, and Gerald Gordon, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA).

At the ceremony Governor Kaine announced a \$3 million grant from the Governor's Opportunity Fund. The Ignite Institute will be eligible to receive additional incentive grant funds subject to General Assembly approval.

Fairfax County did not contribute any monetary incentives.

The Ignite Institute is a unique nonprofit center that applies the latest genomic, biomedical and technological innovations to pioneer the development of personalized health care at the community level. The project's \$200 million

investment will create 415 new jobs over five years.

A founding partner in the initiative is Fairfax County-based Inova Health System, and more partners in Virginia and the Washington, D.C. area will be announced in the coming months.

By deciding to locate in Fairfax County, Ignite will be able to take advantage of the many great things that Fairfax County has to offer. One of our best resources is our workforce, one of the best educated and highly skilled labor forces in the world. Ignite's decision to locate here will strengthen the county economy and Ignite will become an important part of an already dynamic business community.

We look forward to working with Ignite and having the institute as part of our community for years to come.

## FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Fairfax County is moving forward on providing residents with more financial transparency, making comprehensive, unfiltered information available to everyone. Residents will have a clear view of the government's operations and how tax dollars are spent. Although the county has provided financial information online for years, I'm very happy to let you know about a new consolidated portal on our website where you can find financial reports, budgets, annual audits, procurement contracts and staff compensation plans:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/finance/transparency/>.

The financial transparency portal will be continually updated as we gain the ability to put more and more financial information online. The county is in the first phases of a multi-year effort to install an Enterprise Resource Planning system that will provide an extensive financial database and allow access to transaction level data.

## FARE DISCOUNT EXTENDED FOR VIRGINIA AMTRAK SERVICE

Amtrak has extended a fare promotion on its Northeast Regional service – including the new Lynchburg route to and from the Northeast Corridor -- through March 31, 2010.



During the busy holiday travel season, taking the train offers a great and cost effective opportunity to let someone else do the driving. With a one-seat ride as far north as Boston, it's the easy way to travel. Virginia stations include Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Manassas and Alexandria, with connecting service for VRE passengers at Burke Centre.

The Lynchburg train is particularly attractive for college students attending the many colleges and universities along the I-81/Route 29 corridors for their trips to and from school during breaks. The average trip from Lynchburg to Washington, DC is faster by train than by car.

Tickets can be purchased at [www.Amtrak.com](http://www.Amtrak.com) or by calling 1-800-USA-RAIL. Go to [www.AmtrakVirginia.com](http://www.AmtrakVirginia.com) for the latest information on all Virginia routes, special deals and tourist destinations.

### CRIME REPORT

**For the third quarter in a row crime in Fairfax County is down.** Compared to last year at this time, violent crime is down approximately 12%. In addition to this, property crime is down slightly as well, with the largest decrease in the category of vehicle theft. We are experiencing a slight increase in our rate of larcenies. Police are closely monitoring these rates in order to adjust their efforts and resources.

## NEWS FROM VRE



At the October 19th Board meeting, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution to include Spotsylvania County as a member of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter rail system. Not only

does this expansion represent a chance for VRE to provide a transit alternative for new customers, it will also take cars off the roads of Fairfax County and our neighboring jurisdictions because many Spotsylvania residents commute to Washington, D.C. or other job centers in the metropolitan region.

Starting July 1, 2010, VRE will have a new operating and maintenance services contract with Keolis Rail Services America. The proposal submitted by Keolis was selected as the most responsive and most cost effective bid in a competitive procurement process required by state and federal laws. Under the new contract, Keolis will provide train operations, train and engineer crews, locomotive and railcar equipment maintenance and repair, VRE yard operations, and warehouse management. VRE has a reputation for excellent customer service and riders can expect this to continue under the new contract. Keolis has an outstanding track record in Europe, where they operate over 5,000 trains daily serving over 360 million passengers annually, and the team which will manage service for VRE has over 90 years combined of experience in American passenger rail. Additionally, Keolis will retain Amtrak employees who currently work on VRE with the same pay, benefits and seniority they currently have as well as a signing bonus to stay. Maintenance will continue to be provided by the same subcontractors, RailPlan International and Motive Power, which currently perform repairs.

## HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

With the holiday season in full swing, I wanted to share some tips to keep everyone safe!

- Never leave children unattended in a room with an open flame.
- Do not place candles near combustible materials such as upholstered furniture.
- Do not place candles on window ledges or near entryways – the potential air draft can “fan” the flame, catching materials on fire.
- Keep burning candles within sight at all times. Candles can present fire hazards outdoors on decks as well as inside the home.
- Always extinguish candles before leaving the home.
- Use holders designed for the particular candle style.
- Place all candles on a protected, heat-resistant, dry surface away from anything that can catch fire and out of the reach of children and pets.



Residents are also encouraged to use the following safety tips when decorating trees or using lights this year:

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant.” Although this label does not mean the tree won’t catch fire, it does indicate the tree is more resistant to burning.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The bottom of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms



- dry out live trees rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic, and do not block doorways.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use.
- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that

resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.

- Use only newer lights that have thicker wiring and are required to have safety fuses to prevent the wires from overheating. And check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house.

For more helpful holiday safety tips, please visit:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/prepare/winter/holiday-safety.htm>. Everyone please have a great Holiday Season, and a Happy New year!

# VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE



## VITA Fact Sheet



### What is the Northern Virginia (NOVA) Cash Campaign?

The Northern Virginia CASH Campaign provides free tax preparation services to low-income families. Working with local businesses and government agencies, the mission is to raise awareness about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and increase financial literacy among low-income taxpayers.

### Where will the VITA sites be located?

Site arrangements have been made at 17 convenient locations throughout Northern Virginia in the City of Alexandria and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William.

### Who should volunteer and what experience is needed?

No prior experience is necessary! Free certified training courses are offered in a classroom setting or online. The IRS offers Link & Learn Taxes e-Learning courses to help prepare tax professionals who wish to volunteer through tax credit sources. The courses will guide preparers through the basics so they are able to accurately assist low-income families in need of help.

### How much of a time-commitment should a volunteer expect?

Pledging just 3-6 hours of your time per week will help make a significant difference in the quality of life for families in your community.

### 2008-2009 VITA Results:

Volunteers donated approximately 12,000 hours of their time to help low-income families in Northern Virginia receive over \$4.4 million in federal tax returns. The average VITA recipient received \$1,300 in federal tax returns and \$1,628 in Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). \$846,760 was awarded back to those families who qualified for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and in total, 3,280 families were able to receive free tax preparation help.

For more information about the NOVA CASH Campaign or to register as a volunteer, please visit [www.nvacash.org](http://www.nvacash.org) or contact James Do at 571-749-7838; TTY 703-533-5316 or [James.Do@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:James.Do@fairfaxcounty.gov).



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call the Department of Family Services at 703-533-5400; TTY 703-533-5316.

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October 2009

Service Starts  
November 23, 2009

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Weekdays



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Tysons Connector is funded by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project at [www.dullesmetro.com](http://www.dullesmetro.com). Tysons Express is funded by Virginia Megaprojects at [www.VAmegaprojects.com](http://www.VAmegaprojects.com).

 If accommodations or alternative formats are needed, call the Fairfax County Department of Transportation at 703-877-5600, TTY 711