

# Bulova Byline

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman) (703) 324-2321 [chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov)



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In my **State of the County** address in January I said that four major issues were on our plate for 2011. At our April 26th Board meetings, two of those issues were approved: Adoption of the **Fiscal Year 2012 Budget** and of a Redistricting Plan for Fairfax County.

### Budget

In a separate April Byline I sent details of the Budget our Board Marked-up (made amendments to the Advertised Budget) on April 16th. With all “t”s crossed and “i”s dotted, formal adoption took place without further changes. Even factoring in the implementation of a Stormwater utility fee in 2009 and a vehicle registration fee in 2010, **the average homeowner’s tax bill is less in FY 2012 than four years ago.** When we adopt a budget we are investing in the priorities of our community. Thanks to the dedication, innovation and creativity of our County employees, working in partnership with a highly engaged community, we have succeeded in keeping taxes steady while maintaining the quality of life we value during these recession years. I also thank my colleagues, along with their District Budget Committees, who worked in good faith with me to reach agreement on the budget that will begin on July 1st.

### Redistricting

Every ten years the U.S. Constitution requires a census to be conducted in order to count those who are residing in this country. The census figures, which were released in February of this year, are then used to determine district boundaries and the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Virginia General Assembly. Fairfax County’s process for Redistricting ended on April 26 with the adoption of **Plan 9A4**, which moves only seven precincts county-wide. Adoption of the plan is the culmination of a very inclusive and transparent process that included a Citizens Advisory Committee, **chaired by former Chairman Kate Hanley.** The Committee, despite being on a tight schedule due to the upcoming elections, held seven meetings and one workshop, all of which were open to (and attended by) the public. On April 16th, our Board held a public hearing to receive comment on the 22 plans submitted for consideration.

In addition to Chairman Hanley, I want to thank **Deputy County Attorney Michael Long** who provided legal guidance to the Citizens Advisory Committee. Both Michael and Kate have worked on multiple redistricting efforts, and their experience in these complicated matters was indispensable. I especially thank Supervisor Jeff McKay, chair of our Board’s Legislative Committee, for his

leadership over the past few months. At every turn, Jeff made sure that the public was informed and involved in the process and acted as the Board's liaison in bringing our colleagues to consensus. Details of the Redistricting Plan and Process can be found at the County Website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting/redistricting-plan.htm>.

### **Other Issues on the County's Plate**

Already Department of Defense employees are starting to move into new buildings as a result of BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure). According to the schedule 14,000 jobs will be relocated to Ft. Belvoir by September 15th, 8,500 of these to the new Geospatial-Intelligence Agency at North Post and 5,500 to the main post of Fort Belvoir.

While physically located within the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County residents and commuters will be heavily impacted by the Department of Defense's choice of the Mark Center BRAC 133 site in the I-395, Seminary Road area. A recent Inspector General's Report, requested by Rep. Jim Moran, determined that traffic estimates DOD used in approving the re-location were faulty. This report validates Fairfax County's strong opposition to the selection of this site over others that could have been served by mass transit and a more sufficient transportation network. Both Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille and I have asked our staff to explore legal and legislative remedies available to us.

**Rail to Dulles continues to be Fairfax County's number one transportation priority.** Phase 1 of the project, construction of rail and four stations in the Tysons area is on time and within budget. A Value Engineering process is currently underway to determine the cost for Phase 2 which would extend rail from Wiehle Avenue to Dulles Airport and into Loudoun County. Our Board is attempting to work with the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority Board to bring a recent \$3.8 billion revised estimate for Phase 2 closer to the original estimate of \$2.5 billion.

A major driver in the increased cost is the planned location of a below ground airport station (under the hourly parking lot in front of the terminal). Fairfax County has recommended instead an above ground station opposite the terminal and adjacent to the North Garage which is connected to the terminal via a climate controlled corridor equipped with a moving sidewalk. It is important that the station be attractive and convenient to commuters and airport passengers, but also affordable to taxpayers in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, as well as users of the Dulles Toll Road. Revenues from the Toll Road make up 75% of the funding sources for the project. See more about this issue inside this edition of the Byline!

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova – Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

## Board Formally Adopts FY2012 Budget

On April 26 our Board adopted a budget for Fairfax County that lowers the tax rate and keeps residents tax bills steady for another year. The budget invests in County priorities and will serve to maintain the quality of life we value in Fairfax County. Details of the Budget and Mark-up process can be found on the County’s Website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/>.

The FY 2012 Budget includes an increase to the School Transfer for debt service, which will allow for the acceleration of capital projects and renewals. Much testimony at our Budget public hearings involved the final phase-in of **Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)**. The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia does not allow The Board of Supervisors line item authority over the

School Budget. The \$1.6 billion lump sum School Transfer adopted by the Board provides a very modest increase and suggested flexibility along with guidance for how the School Board could complete the phase-in of FDK.

With the Transfer amount decided, the School Board is now continuing its budget process and will be holding public hearings on May 17th and 18th.

For information on speaking at these hearings you can reach the School Board staff at 571-423-1075 or sign up on line using the School’s website [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu). Speakers may sign up starting May 6th. Final adoption of the School Budget is scheduled for May 26<sup>th</sup>.

## EDA Report On Commercial Real Estate Shows Signs of Recovery

The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority released its regular Real Estate Report which includes data through the end of 2010, and the numbers show we are in fact seeing some



signs of economic recovery in key areas.

For example, the countywide office vacancy rate at the end of 2010 is **down to 15.3 percent**, down from 16.4 in 2009. **This is the first yearly decline in the rate since 2005**. But it’s not where we need it to be yet – the EDA says the vacancy rates needs to get below 7 percent before we will see the private sector look at adding more office space.

**A record 13.6 million square feet** of office space was leased during 2010, which shows how successful our economic policies have been at attracting businesses to Fairfax County. We remain the **second-largest suburban office market in the U.S.** (behind Orange County, California) with 113.2 million square feet of office space.

Building sales were very active in 2010, which is another sign that economic recovery coupled with a sound business climate in Fairfax County makes it attractive to investors and companies.

## Inova Releases Buy Fresh, Buy Local Guide

Inova’s inaugural **Buy Fresh Buy Local Guide to Local Foods and Wellness** is now available online and at many Fairfax County parks and libraries. The guide includes locations and hours for area farmers markets, information on Inova’s health and wellness programs, and a handy calendar that shows what’s in season throughout the year. You can download the guide by clicking on the image or visiting their Facebook page at :

[facebook.com/BuyFreshBuyLocalNorthernVirginia/](http://facebook.com/BuyFreshBuyLocalNorthernVirginia/)



## Lots of Helpful Sites on FairfaxCounty.gov

In Fairfax County, we are always looking for better ways to get information to our residents.

We've recently created a mobile-friendly website at [m.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://m.fairfaxcounty.gov). When visiting this link from your smartphone, you will find most of the normal County website tailored for the small screen and touch capabilities. This can come in handy if you're on the go or browse the Internet from a smartphone or mobile device.

We are also using social media outlets to reach our residents: the county's primary Facebook page is at [facebook.com/fairfaxcounty](https://facebook.com/fairfaxcounty) and on Twitter @[fairfaxcounty](https://twitter.com/fairfaxcounty).

We've also got some new websites that provide useful information on a number of important topics:

A **new consumer education section** includes info on a variety of topics such as credit card rules, **identity theft** and more:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumer/education/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumer/education/)

Our **911 center** just published a new virtual tour of its operations: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/tour/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/tour/)

**Farmers markets** are very popular and the county's 12 locations open May 1:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wp-farm-mkt.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wp-farm-mkt.htm)

## Visit Fairfax Unveils Civil War Anniversary One-Stop Shop

One hundred and fifty years ago, on May 23 and 24, 1861, Fairfax County was thrust into the **Civil War**. On those days, Virginia seceded from the Union and federal troops invaded Fairfax.

**Visit Fairfax** launched its Civil War anniversary website recently, and on it you can find a wealth of information about **where to go, what to see, and how best to see it**, as the region honors the sacrifices made and the revisits a major part of the history that makes Fairfax County such an interesting place to be.

“Fairfax County provides an unrivaled opportunity to connect with Civil War

landmarks, museums and re-enactments—at the epicenter of where these history-making events took place, and during the 150th anniversary of the conflict. From here, you can discover regional commemorative events and explore legendary battlefields like Antietam (Sharpsburg), Manassas (Bull Run), Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Harper's Ferry and more.”

Visit Fairfax’s Civil War Anniversary website ([www.fxva.com/150](http://www.fxva.com/150)) is a great place to start exploring. There you can find anniversary events, find out where the best Civil War tours are, and sign up for the monthly newsletter.



## Walking to Dulles – The Lower Cost Option Makes Sense

How much walking is worth **\$330 million**? On April 19 I walked from the North Garage to the terminal at Dulles International Airport, the distance an air traveler would walk if the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority made the sensible decision to build the Metro station at Dulles above ground at that location.

The entire walk is within an underground, climate controlled walkway. The total distance is about 1150 feet and took **4-7 minutes** depending on if we walked or stood on the moving sidewalks. Some members of the media came along for the trip.

Read the Washington Post Editorial Board's opinion here

The distance between the proposed underground station (MWAA's preference) and the aerial station includes **250 feet of unassisted (without moving sidewalks) walking** – that's **\$1.3 million per foot**. It took me **2 minutes and 39 seconds** to walk from the area proposed for an underground station to the aerial alternative – that's **\$2.07 million per second**.



Not only is the underground station within an easy walking distance from the aerial station, it's actually farther away from the destination of most of the future Silver line Dulles rail riders. A majority of Metro riders arriving at the airport station will use it to get to work on the airport campus in buildings that are closer to the North Garage and farther from the terminal.

Unfortunately, MWAA chose station that is **more expensive, will take six months longer to build and is less convenient** for the majority of future Metro riders.

Misinformation is being circulated that the above ground station would ruin the beauty of Dulles and that passengers would have to pull luggage along long distances exposed to the elements. Neither is true and should not be used to make the case for an underground station. Additionally, our Board has let **MWAA know it should not expect the higher (\$330 million) cost to be covered by the jurisdictions**.

I am confident that good sense and facts will prevail. I am looking forward to a discussion with members of the MWAA board so that an agreement can be reached regarding the most logical, cost effective and convenient choice for a station at the airport. **Rail to Dulles is Fairfax County's highest transportation priority and it must not be delayed.**

Media coverage of my walk from the North Garage to the Terminal here

## Concerned about gas prices? Here are a few ways to save at the pump

The rising cost of gas can really put an extra strain on your budget. The [Fairfax County Department of Vehicle Services](#) encourages residents to try some of these fuel saving strategies to help offset the high price at the pump.

### 1. Slow down on highways

Most vehicles reach peak fuel efficiency at speeds between 45 and 55 miles per hour. According to U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) figures, you lose 7 to 23 percent of fuel efficiency for every five miles per hour in excess of 60 MPH. Some drivers might save a gallon of gas a week this way.

### 2. Keep calm and close the windows

DOE says aggressive driving (including rapid acceleration and hard braking as well as speeding) wastes gas. Driving aggressively can lower your highway gas mileage 33 percent and city mileage 5 percent. Driving down the highway with your windows open also creates drag, and lowers mileage.



### 3. Keep tires inflated

You can improve your gas mileage up to 3.3 percent by keeping your tires at the recommended air pressure, the federal website [fuelconomy.gov](http://fuelconomy.gov) says. The savings may not be big, but you'll be making your car safer and helping your tires last longer.

### 4. Turn the engine off

Picking someone up? Held up at a railroad crossing? Shut off your engine and conserve fuel. You'll be saving money and doing the environment a favor.



### 5. Remove needless weight

"Carrying 100 extra pounds in your vehicle could reduce your gas mileage by 1 to 2 percent," according to DOE. If you haven't bothered to look in your trunk or under the seats lately, it might be a real pay-off to spend a few minutes removing all unnecessary items.

### 6. Keep up with maintenance

Tuning up your vehicle regularly can boost gas mileage by an average of four percent, according to [fuelconomy.gov](http://fuelconomy.gov). Fixing a serious maintenance problem, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve your mileage by as much as 40 percent.

### 7. Pump wisely

It is suggested not to pump gas from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. when a "red" air quality alert has been announced. When you're finished pumping, be sure the cap is screwed on tight.

### 8. Carpool

By shifting from driving alone to ride-sharing with someone else, you may cut costs by more than half. Choosing this option can be your entry pass to a faster high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane on the highway.



## All Fairfax Reads: *Little Princes: One Man’s Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal*

The Fairfax County Public Library invites county residents to participate in the eighth annual **All Fairfax Reads**, a “one book, one community” project that encourages adults to read and discuss the same book between May and September. The 2011 selection is *Little Princes: One Man’s Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal*, a memoir by **Conor Grennan**.

In *Little Princes*, the 29-year-old author trades his day job for a year-long trip around the globe, a journey that begins with a three-month stint volunteering at the Little Princes Orphanage in war-torn Nepal. But what begins as just an adventure becomes a passionate commitment that transforms the young American and the lives of countless others.

When Grennan discovers that the majority of orphans in his care are actually trafficked children with families in rural Nepal, he begins the difficult task of reuniting them with their families. In 2006, two years after his first visit to

Little Princes, he founded Next Generation Nepal, a non-profit organization that helps reconnect trafficked and displaced children with their families and communities.

I encourage everyone in Fairfax County to be inspired by *Little Princes*. We can all make a difference when we feel as passionately about something as Conor Grennan felt about the Nepalese orphans.

Conor Grennan will appear on Sept. 21 at 7:30 p.m. on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University as part of the Fall for the Book festival. For more information on All Fairfax Reads, visit the library’s website at: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events/allfxreads/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/events/allfxreads/).

All Fairfax Reads is cosponsored by the Friends of the Reston Regional Library; the Fairfax Library Foundation and Fall for the Book.

## Police Stations Serve as Flag Collection Points

Has your Old Glory worn out? Is it time to dispose of your favorite, weather-beaten flag and purchase a new one? Let the Fairfax Police Department Honor Guard help.

According to Federal Law, the U.S. flag is to be “properly and ceremoniously disposed of when damaged or soiled and no longer suitable for display.”

In a new FCPD Honor Guard initiative, Fairfax County Police stations are now accepting worn flags in bins located in their front lobby areas. Flags will be ceremoniously disposed of by Honor Guard members, in coordination with the Fire Department.

To learn more about the FCPD Honor Guard and their role within the community, call 703-449-7289.



## CEAN Offers Emergency Alerts for Residents, Businesses

**The Community Emergency Alert Network, or CEAN**, is a service of the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management.

When you sign up, you will be provided a personal connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, protective actions that need to be taken, and other important information such as National Weather Service watches and warnings.

CEAN alerts may include personal safety, weather, major accidents involving utilities or roadways, or disaster notification such as a terrorist attack. In addition, residents may also register for any or all of the additional CEAN alert categories: **severe weather 24/7; severe weather 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday; severe traffic disruptions and county government closings/schedule changes.**

CEAN is used by county officials to deliver emergency alerts, notifications and updates

during a major crisis or emergency. Messages will be delivered to e-mail accounts, cell phones (text messaging costs may apply; check with your service provider), text pagers, satellite phones and wireless PDAs that are registered on the system.

**Businesses can register for CEAN, too.** The service allows a business contact to add up to five employees to CEAN. Although the individual who registers is the main contact, all registered employees will receive CEAN messages. Networking multiple employees to CEAN is intended to foster businesses' internal communication and emergency response programs.

To register for the Community Emergency Alert Network, visit the Fairfax County Web page, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean). For additional information on the CEAN, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 703-324-2362, TTY 711.

## County Launches 2011 Disease Carrying Insects Program

It's that time of year again, when the creepy crawlers start crawling. Unfortunately some of our insect residents can carry diseases. The Board of Supervisors on April 26 submitted to County staff our annual **Disease Carrying Insects Program** which includes West Nile virus and Lyme disease surveillance, public outreach and education, complaint investigation and research.

In 2011 County staff will conduct a **County-wide West Nile virus program** that will include bird, human and mosquito surveillance and testing beginning with the mosquito breeding season this month. The County will also conduct **three rounds of stormwater catch basin treatments**, as well as other mosquito breeding areas.

For both West Nile and Lyme disease, our staff will conduct an extensive public outreach and education process in order to raise awareness of the dangers of the diseases and what residents can do to be safe this summer. Awareness is critical – check for ticks and bug bites and be sure you aren't creating a breeding ground for mosquitos with old tires or other places with standing water (drain pipes, platters under potted plants, etc.).

For more information on Lyme disease, West Nile virus and Fairfax County's Disease Carrying Insects Program, visit here: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/>

