



Courier

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2007 Compensation Study Recommendation County Begins Job Class Review Project

The county is reviewing the job class structure and the methods currently used to evaluate job classes. The Job Class Review Project was a recommendation from the compensation task force and consulting firm that completed a comprehensive compensation study last year (<http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>).

The purpose of the Job Class Review Project is to ensure that job classes are evaluated through an objective and fair process, and that Fairfax County remains competitive at retaining and attracting qualified employees. The project includes reviewing and examining:

- ▶ How job classes are structured.
- ▶ The methods used to determine job classes.
- ▶ How the county evaluates and determines competitive salary ranges for job classes.
- ▶ The types and number of job surveys that the county participates in each year to determine whether its pay levels are competitive with other public and private organizations in the Washington, D.C., metro area.
- ▶ How often the county reviews job classes.

County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin** has asked the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to coordinate the project. A project team is working with The Segal Company, a consulting firm with experience in reviewing government job classifications. Some of their recent local clients include Arlington County government and public schools, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro). In addition, an advisory group of employees, including representation from the Employee Advisory Council, has been established to provide input on the project.

Working with DHR and the employee advisory group, Segal will spend several months gathering input from employees and managers. After a thorough analysis, final recommendations are expected by early 2009.

To keep employees updated and informed throughout the review process, a communications plan is being developed and implemented including ongoing Courier articles and a Web page – <http://infoweb/cex/classreview>.

For more information on the 2006-2007 Compensation Study and the

A question that frequently comes up is “What is a job class?” A job class is a group of positions that are similar in general duties and responsibilities and use the same title, class specification and pay range. Example: Alex is responsible for recruitment of jobs; Laura is responsible for analyzing salary surveys; while Pam is responsible for writing personnel regulations. All have different, but similar, duties and responsibilities. However, they are all assigned to the same job class - in this example, human resources analyst.

recommendation for the class review, visit <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>.

Please note that the Job Class Review Project does not include a review or reconsideration of the Compensation Study, including:

- Changes to the Market Rate Adjustment.
- The Pay for Performance System.
- Pay adjustments for promotions and reclassifications.
- Reclassification requests for individual job positions. ■

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Courier is available online at <http://infoweb/courier>

Pitfalls of Proliferating PDFs



By Greg Licamele, Web content director
Office of Public Affairs

Have you ever clicked a link for a PDF and your Web browser crashed or the document took a long time to open?

Have you ever Googled a topic and some of the results showed “Untitled,” “PowerPoint042006_a,” “R T C G” or some other phrase that doesn’t help you find what you’re looking for?

There are some pitfalls when PDFs are used as substitutes for Web content that should be simple HTML Web pages.



According to a search of www.fairfaxcounty.gov, there are more than 14,000 PDF documents available to residents and employees.

- ▶ For people using screen readers, these documents are likely inaccessible.

- ▶ For people with slow Internet connections, these files may download slowly or crash their browser.

- ▶ For most people who scan Web pages, browsing through to a PDF changes the browsing experience.

The latest training module from the Office of Public Affairs Web Content Team helps Web content providers and county employees understand the shortcomings of PDFs on the Web.

The field of usability testing, which is a one-on-one testing experience for Web pages (and other things such as products and gadgets), has shown that “usability” plummets 300 percent with PDFs compared to HTML Web pages.

Another study concludes, “Users get lost inside PDF files, which are typically big, linear text blobs that are optimized for print and unpleasant to read and navigate online.”

When county employees provide information to the public, it can be a disservice to have too many PDFs on the county Web site.

If your department is publishing news releases, announcements, fliers, brochures or whole letters (with only one paragraph in the letter that actually contains your core message to the public), then the Web industry’s best practices strongly suggest the use of HTML Web pages.

- ▶ Web pages will not break the flow of a Web browsing experience and they increase the usability of a site.



- ▶ Web pages will be coded correctly so search engine results are more relevant and helpful.

- ▶ Web pages will provide context for

the content with links to navigate to other areas, whereas a PDF can be isolated. Many people do not access the county’s Web content directly through the county Web site – more often people will use search engines.

Another reason to avoid using PDFs when possible is accessibility for people with disabilities.

“Using PDFs can create a barrier for people with disabilities viewing our Web site because PDFs are often incompatible with screen readers resulting in unnecessary accessibility issues under the Americans with Disabilities Act,” noted **Matthew Barkley**, director of Disability Services Planning and Development, Department of Family Services.



There are appropriate uses of PDFs: for long reports such as the Board of Supervisors’ meeting package, as well as historical and other complex documents.

The Department of Information Technology provides the technical guidelines for coding PDFs correctly. If you have to use a PDF format, consider providing an HTML viewing option for Web site visitors.

- ▶ To view the training module on PDFs, visit <http://infoweb/opa/webcontent/training.htm>. ■

2007 Onthank Nominations Now Being Accepted

Nominations for the 2007 A. Heath Onthank Memorial Award are being accepted through Feb. 28. The award, named for A. Heath Onthank, the first chairman of the Civil Service Commission, recognizes accomplishments of outstanding worth in advancing and improving public service in Fairfax County government during 2007. Recipients will be recognized at a Board of Supervisors meeting in June and will receive a plaque and a \$2,000 award.

The award is open to merit employees of Fairfax County government and to unified scale and food service employees

of the Fairfax County Public Schools. Nominees must have completed their initial probationary period. Nominations may be made by fellow employees or residents.

Nomination forms are available from members of the Board of Supervisors, department heads and the Department of Human Resources. The form also is available at <http://infoweb/hr/relate/forms/onthankaward.doc>.

For further information, contact **Betty Marshall** at 703-324 3308, TTY 703-222-7314, or betty.marshall@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

Ethics and Fraud – An Update

By the Internal Audit Office

Organizations that have fraud awareness and ethics training programs in place have average fraud losses that are half of those at organizations without such training, according to the “Report to the Nation on Occupational Fraud and Abuse” published by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners.

Having a strong ethics policy, with training, awareness and adherence to the values set forth in the policy, provides a positive work environment for county staff, and also can reduce potential fraud.

Use of the new Ethics Help Line and the ethics reporting form link on Internal Audit’s Infoweb site (<http://infoweb/audit>) have been steady during the three months

since the revised Ethics Policy was rolled out to county staff, according to **Chris Pietsch**, director of the Internal Audit Office,

“While allegations received have outnumbered questions, we definitely encourage county staff to utilize the Ethics Help Line as a proactive resource to help make sure that decisions and actions are appropriate and in line with the county’s ethical standards,” he said.

Internal Audit works with other departments (including the Department of Human Resources, Department of Purchasing and Supply Management and Department of Finance) to provide answers to ethics questions.

In addition, an Ethics Panel has been created to answer questions and provide

guidance in areas where there is no documented policy.

“The Internal Audit Office makes presentations at county training seminars in the areas of risk assessment, internal controls and fraud. We are happy to work with individual agencies to review controls in place or speak at staff meetings regarding controls, ethics and fraud awareness,” noted Pietsch.

The county’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct can be found at <http://infoweb/cex/ethics>. ■

- ▶ Ethics Help Line: 703-787-3167
- ▶ Fraud Hot Line: 703-787-3243 (Both numbers are TTY 711.)

New “Leave Year” Begins Feb. 1

The 2008 leave year begins Friday, Feb. 1 (pay period 2, Feb. 1 payday). Personnel regulations allow employees with less than 10 years of service to carry 240 hours of annual leave from one leave year to the next.

Employees with 10 or more years of service may carry up to 320 hours of annual leave to the new leave year.

No employee may carry more than 240 hours of compensatory leave from one leave year to the next.

At the end of pay period 1, a payroll program reduced the annual and compensatory leave balances of those employees who were over the authorized maximum. Excess annual leave was converted to sick leave and added to the employees’ existing sick leave balance. Compensatory leave over the maximum was forfeited.

The 2008 leave year will end on Jan. 2, 2009, at which time excess annual leave and compensatory leave will be cut back again. To avoid losing leave next January, review your leave throughout

the year. Your pay advice has a “use or convert” box that projects the amount of annual leave that must be used before the end of the leave year.

Adjustments will not be processed to change prior annual or sick leave taken to compensatory leave taken. If you have a lot of annual leave and/or comp time to use during the year, consider using it instead of sick leave during times of illness or for doctor’s appointments. You never “lose” sick leave; every 172 hours of sick leave on the books when you retire from county employment may be used to purchase an additional month of service toward county retirement.

Current leave balances are displayed on the pay advice each pay period. Current leave balances also can be viewed in Online TIME by entering transaction 13. Press the F6 key to see detailed

information on the amount of leave earned and used, as well as current balances.

▶ If you have any questions about using leave, talk to your department’s payroll contact. A list of current payroll contacts is available on the Department of Human Resources Payroll Web page at <http://infoweb/hr/payroll/default.htm>, click on “Forms and Processing Info,” and scroll down to “Department Heads & Payroll Contacts.” ■



An Aging-Friendly Fairfax County

An increasing number of Fairfax County residents, including county employees, 50 and older (50+) are choosing to stay in their homes and communities, instead of moving south to spend their retirement years in Florida and other locales.

By 2020, the number of county adults age 50+ is projected to increase by 32 percent, according to a 2004 projection by the Department of Systems Management for Human Services.*

“Residents’ reasons for staying may include a desire to stay in the homes where they raised their families and have a network of friends; caregiver responsibilities for elderly parents who live with them or close by; and a strong connection to the community as active volunteers. Many are still employed and have postponed retirement,” noted **Grace Starbird**, director, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

County employees are also part of this demographic shift. More than 4,000 (or 32.2 percent) of merit employees are 50+, according to **Joyce Ferritto**, Department of Human Resources.

Since the growing number of residents 50+ presents many opportunities and challenges to the county, the Board of Supervisors’ Committee on Aging, AAA and several county agencies recently developed a 50+ Action Plan. The plan outlines the planning and resources that have been identified by the Board of Supervisors to provide appropriate, accessible and affordable services – ensuring a more aging-friendly Fairfax County.

The plan identifies 11 focus areas for planning and resources:

Community Planning – Create and revitalize communities to enable residents to live independently as they

age; include access to transportation, services, recreation, health care and technology.

Housing Options – Promote universal design concepts that ensure that housing meets the needs of all ages and can be easily adapted. Homes should be designed to benefit older adults adjusting to mobility limitations and caregivers who need to have aging parents live with them.

**More than 4,000
(or 32.2 percent)
of county merit
employees are 50+**

Affordability – There are thousands of older adults in the county living below the 2007 poverty level of \$10,210 for one person and \$13,690 for two, and the basic cost of living here is much higher than national averages. There is a growing need for affordable housing and services for older adults with limited resources.

Transportation Options – The average man will have six years when he can no longer drive and the average woman will have 10 years – causing a significant loss of mobility for older adults. Family members and their employers may be affected when older adults need transportation to medical and other appointments. The transportation needs of older adults can be integrated into mainstream transportation planning.

Keeping Older Adults Engaged in Community – The growing number of older adults means an increasing

pool of potential employees, volunteers and community activists. The county government can be a model for recruitment and retention of talented older workers.

Build on Strength of Diverse Population – By 2010, approximately 45 percent of the county’s population will be racial and ethnic minorities and 39 percent may speak a language other than English at home. The county can build on this diversity to enhance the cultural richness of the community.

Support Caregivers – Many residents are part of the “sandwich” generation, taking care of both children and parents. Nearly one out of four U.S. households has at least one caregiver for a relative or friend at least 50 years old. Other caregiver issues within Fairfax County include grandparents raising grandchildren and aging parents caring for adult children with disabilities.

Technology – A “baby boomer” turns 50 years old every seven seconds; this generation has familiarity and comfort level with technology that will impact their expectations for services as they age – and stay connected.

Health and Mental Health Services – The incidence of disability doubles every five years after the age of 65. By 2030, nearly one in five adults over the age of 65 will have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder. Fairfax County needs to recruit and retain health and mental health service workers to meet these and other growing health care needs.

Safety and Security – The increasing fraud targeted at older adults, the devastating impact of emergency

situations affecting older adults, and the loss of life due to fires highlights the need for public safety education and support.

Service Planning – The county’s approach to services is consistent with the goals of the federal Older Americans Act to keep older adults as independent as possible through good community planning and community involvement. Planning today is crucial to support

tomorrow’s increased demand for specialized services.

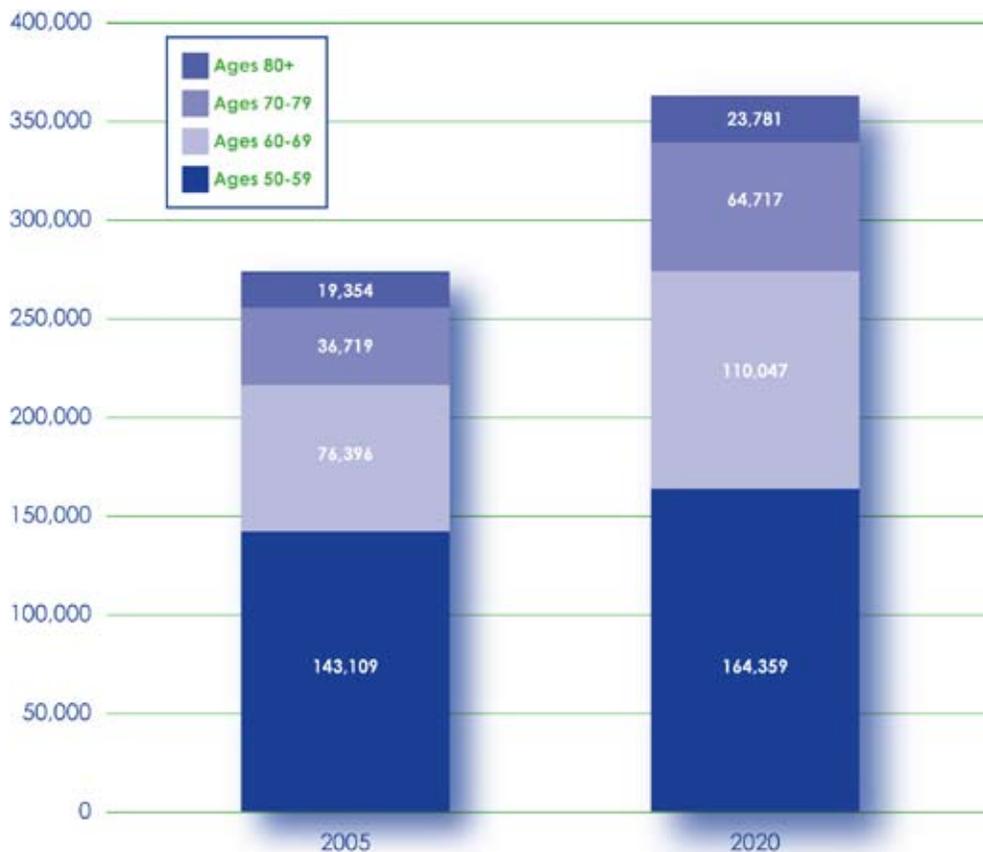
▶ For more information on the 50+ Action Plan, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults.

▶ For information on services available for older adults in Fairfax County, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/seniors. ■

Facts and statistics are from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Committee on Aging’s “Anticipating the Future, Fairfax 50+ Action Plan 2007.”

* Updated projections are expected later this year from the Department of Systems Management for Human Services.

Fairfax County Forecast for Ages 50 – 80+ from 2005 – 2020



The expected rate of growth in Fairfax County between 2005 and 2020:

- Age 0 – 19.....11 percent increase
- Age 20 – 49.....7 percent increase
- Age 50 – 69.....25 percent increase
- Age 70+.....58 percent increase

Focus on Benefits

Flexible Spending Account Reminders

Employees participating in the Medical Spending Account and/or the Dependent Care Account in 2007 have until March 15 to incur eligible expenses that can be reimbursed from the 2007 account.

This grace period will benefit participants who may have over-estimated their 2007 expenses and have unused balances remaining in their 2007 accounts.

Although the deadline for incurring expenses runs through mid-March, the deadline for submitting reimbursement requests to FBMC is still March 31.

When submitting requests for reimbursement from your 2007 account to FBMC, keep in mind:

- ▶ The flexible spending account reimbursement request form is available at http://infoweb/hr/benefits/FBMC_Claim_form.pdf.

- ▶ Reimbursement requests can be submitted to FBMC via fax at 800-524-7751 or by mail to Fringe Benefits Management Company, P.O. Box 1800, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1800.

- ▶ If submitting by mail, reimbursement requests must be

HR Central

HR Central has benefit information.

- ▶ Call 703-324-4900
TTY 703-222-7314
- ▶ Visit <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>

postmarked by March 31.

- ▶ If submitting by fax, be sure to keep a copy of the transmission confirmation showing that the request was faxed on or before March 31. ■

Reminder for 2008 EZ REIMBURSE Card Users

Important reminders to employees who have elected to use the Medical Spending Account EZ REIMBURSE card in 2008 include:

- ▶ Keep receipts for all of your transactions in the event you are required to substantiate a claim.

- ▶ Submit substantiation to FBMC for claims that cannot be identified as a standard medical co-payment (such as \$10 for an office visit or \$20 for a formulary brand prescription drug).

- ▶ Examples of types of claims that

require substantiation include eligible over-the-counter medications, dental care services, vision care services and any eligible services that are co-insurance based (where you pay a percentage of the charge rather than a fixed co-pay amount).

- ▶ If you are covered as a dependent under your spouse's health plan (either under a county health plan or another employer's plan), you must substantiate all claims paid using the EZ REIMBURSE card.

- ▶ Your card will be frozen if you have unsubstantiated claims from 2007 or if you have a claim in 2008 that shows as "outstanding" for more than 60 days.

- ▶ For more information on reimbursable expenses and the flexible spending accounts, contact FBMC at 800-342-8017, TTY 711, or at www.myfbmc.com. ■

TAC Seeking Employee Award Nominations

The Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) is accepting nominations for its annual Transportation Achievement Award to recognize outstanding performance by a Fairfax County employee. The deadline is Feb. 22.

Nominations should be made for exceptional performance toward enhancing the quality of transportation in Fairfax County within the scope of assigned duties; contributions that advance or support the objectives of the Fairfax County Transportation Plan; or original contributions toward enhancing the quality of transportation in the county.

Nominations should be forwarded to **Janyce Hedetniemi**, Transportation Advisory Commission, c/o Department of Transportation, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 1034, 10th Floor, Fairfax, VA 22035-5511.

- ▶ For more information, contact your district TAC commissioner, or **Bob Owolabi** at 703-324-1147, TTY 703-324-1102, or bob.owolabi@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

Briefs

W-2 Forms

More than 20,000 federal W-2 forms have been mailed to current and former employees who worked for Fairfax County government during the 2007 tax year.

Federal law requires that employee W-2 forms be postmarked by Jan. 31.

The Department of Human Resources Payroll Division thanks

all the agencies and employees who worked on this huge annual task, including the Payroll Division's Accounting Section, the Finance Department Risk Management Division, the Print Shop and the Mail Room.

▶ If you do not receive your W-2 form by Feb. 19, contact the Payroll Division at 703-324-3347, TTY 711.

Courier Online - Photo Gallery

A new feature on the redesigned online Courier Web page is the photo gallery. This month, you'll find the photos that were submitted by employees showing their favorite spots in Fairfax County.

▶ Go to <http://infoweb/courier> to visit the photo gallery. To provide feedback, ideas and suggestions to Courier send an e-mail to courier@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Ethics Library Available to Employees

The county's revised Code of Ethics was approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 9, 2007, and officially presented to senior management on Sept. 19. The Organizational Development and Training Division has compiled books, articles and other print materials as resources for employees to foster a better understanding of how to develop and support an ethical work environment. Employees can visit the library during business hours in Suite 170, Government Center.

▶ For more information contact **Judy Lynch**, 703-324-3645, TTY 703-222-7314. For reasonable ADA accommodations, call 703-324-3394, TTY 703-222-7314.

Eco-Savvy Symposium: Techniques for Keeping Our Planet Healthy

Experts will share practical information on environmental issues and show gardeners and homeowners how they can make a difference in environmental health at the Eco-Savvy Gardening Symposium on Saturday, Feb. 23, from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. The 2008 symposium focuses on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the impact of community upon environment.

▶ For more information, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/ecosymposium.htm.

▶ To register, call Green Spring Gardens, 703-642-5173, TTY 711. Registration is \$45; boxed lunch is \$11 additional (specify meat or vegetarian).

RCC Annual Prom Dress Drive

Be a fairy godmother (or father) and make a young girl's prom truly a night to remember. The Reston Community Center (RCC) Teen Department is hosting its annual prom dress drive and give-a-way through March 28.

RCC is collecting gently used formal clothing, prom wear and accessories for young girls who might not be able

to buy these items. All donations are appreciated, however, donations should be in good condition and no older than five years. Donations are tax deductible.

Prom dresses will be given to any teenage girl in the metropolitan D.C. area in need of a dress. Donations may be dropped off Monday - Saturday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Reston Community Center's Hunters Woods facility.

▶ For more information, contact **Nakish Jordan**, RCC teen director, 703-476-4500, TTY 800-828-1120.

New Roof for Government Center

Contractors will soon begin the process of removing the Government Center's old roof and constructing a new roof.

The areas to be re-roofed are approximately 122,000 square feet or about 2.8 acres. This is equivalent to about two football fields. The work is expected to take six to seven months.

▶ For questions, call the Facilities Management Department Work Control Center, 703 324-2055 option #1, TTY 711.

Event Workshops - Feb. 8 and 9

In addition to the Events101 Workshop on Saturday, Feb. 9, Celebrate Fairfax Inc. is offering a special one-day workshop focusing on event sponsorship development to be held Friday, Feb. 8, at the Government Center. This program will be capped at only 75 registrants. Attendees may register for one or both workshops; special rates apply for two-day registrants.

▶ For more information, visit www.events101.org or contact **Meagan Lindsay** at 703-324-5457, TTY 711; also for reasonable ADA accommodations.

Tech Tips and DIT News

To be productive in Outlook, you must be able to view data when you need it. Here are some tips to help take advantage of various Outlook features and shortcuts.

► Toggle the navigation pane:

Outlook 2003 breaks the e-mail window into three panes: the navigation pane, the message list and the reading pane.

The navigation pane takes up a lot of space considering all it does is list folders. If you spend most of your time reading e-mail in the Inbox or a few personal folders, you rarely need the navigation pane.

Put that third of a screen to better use reading mail. Hide the navigation pane by pressing Alt+F1. When you need it, press Alt+F1 to display it.

► Open new windows:

Switching back and forth between Outlook windows (Calendar, Inbox, Contacts, etc.) is sometimes necessary depending on your tasks. If you find yourself switching a lot, open each application in its own window and use the taskbar to move quickly between them.

Right-click on an item in the folders list and choose Open In New Window. Open as many applications as you need. To move back and forth between them, simply click the appropriate icon on the taskbar. That way, you always return to a window exactly the way you left it.

If the taskbar isn't available or it's crowded, use the Alt+Tab shortcut to get through the open applications. To close a window, simply click its close button. ■

IT Service Desk

- Call: 703-324-HELP (4357), Option 1 TTY 711
- E-mail: ITservicedesk@fairfaxcounty.gov
- Online: <http://ITSD>

Virginia Primaries Are Feb. 12

Primary elections to nominate candidates for president of the United States for both the Democratic and Republican parties will be held in Virginia on Tuesday, Feb. 12.

These two separate elections will occur simultaneously. Polls will be open on Feb. 12 from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Virginia does not register voters by political party. All registered Virginia voters are eligible to participate on Election Day in either the Democratic or Republican primary election, but may not participate in both. Voters will be asked to identify which party primary they wish to participate in when entering the polls.

Voting will be held at regular polling locations. In the event schools are closed due to inclement weather, school polling locations will remain open. For information about precincts and polling locations, voters may call the Office of Elections at 703-222-0776, TTY 711.

Applications to vote absentee by mail



File Photo

are available from the Office of Elections or at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb.

In-person absentee voting will be available through Feb. 9 at the Office of Elections, Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Saturday, Feb. 9, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A list of candidates appearing on each party's ballot is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb.

► For more information, contact the Office of Elections at 703-222-0776, TTY 711, or voting@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

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Lisa Connors, editor
703-324-3197, TTY 711
E-mail:
lisa.connors@fairfaxcounty.gov
or courier@fairfaxcounty.gov

See Courier online at
<http://infoweb/courier>.

Office of Public Affairs
12000 Government Center Pkwy.,
Suite 551, Fairfax, VA 22035-0065
Phone: 703-324-3187, TTY 711
Fax: 703-324-2010



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