

Courier

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Griffin Presents Budget

By the Department of Management and Budget

County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin** presented his proposed

FY 2008 budget to the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 26, noting that the proposed budget is balanced, with funding initiatives tied to the county's strategic priorities.

Griffin reminded the board that at their joint meeting with the School Board on July 17, he projected a significant decrease in General Fund revenue growth due to the cooling real estate market. In fact, the slowdown has occurred

as predicted and is actually somewhat worse than anticipated. Recalling the real estate market and revenue trends of the

1990s, Griffin noted, "History is repeating itself. Our current real estate market is similar to 1990 [FY 1992 assessments] where the number of home sales declined precipitously, while inventory rose and houses remained on the market longer. Unlike 1990, however, prices are not declining as drastically. This is due to continued job growth and relatively low



County Executive Anthony H. Griffin answers questions at the media briefing held after his presentation to the Board on Supervisors on Feb. 26. The deputy county executives, as well as Department of Tax Administration and Department of Management and Budget (DMB) staff were also at the briefing, including Deputy County Executive Rob Stalzer (middle) and DMB Director Susan Datta (right).

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Gov. Kaine at Government Center



Gov. Timothy M. Kaine (fourth from left) traveled to the Government Center on Wednesday, March 7 to meet with Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly** (center) and elected officials from several other Northern Virginia jurisdictions to discuss concerns and possible changes to the General Assembly's transportation bill. ■

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 mortgage rates, unlike the early 1990s. We are now seeing a similar correction in the market that has been predicted for some time. Fortunately, the nonresidential sector has experienced healthy appreciation or our fiscal situation would be even more challenging for FY 2008. Nevertheless, our budget continues to be overly dependent on real estate taxes, which make up almost 60 percent of total General Fund revenue.”

Griffin added, “Barring a considerable turnaround in the housing market, we will face an even more difficult situation for FY 2009.”

General Fund Revenue

FY 2008 General Fund revenues total \$3.3 billion, an increase of \$92.2 million or 2.9 percent over the FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan. This is significantly lower than the growth of the past six years. The actual revenue in-

crease for FY 2006 was 9.5 percent, so this is a considerably lower growth rate. Real estate tax receipts are anticipated to increase \$76.1 million or 4.0 percent, and represent almost 60 percent of total revenue. All other revenue categories combined are forecasted to increase 1.2 percent over FY 2007 levels, reflecting the slowing economic growth.

The good news for homeowners is that their real estate tax bill will not increase as steeply as in past years. In fact, many will see a decrease. Based on maintaining the real estate tax rate at \$0.89 per \$100 of assessed value and an average assessed value of \$542,744, the typical homeowner will pay \$4,830 in real estate tax in FY 2008. This is a decrease of \$16 or .33 percent from FY 2007. The Department of Tax Administration mailed assessment notices to property owners on Feb. 26.

General Fund Disbursements

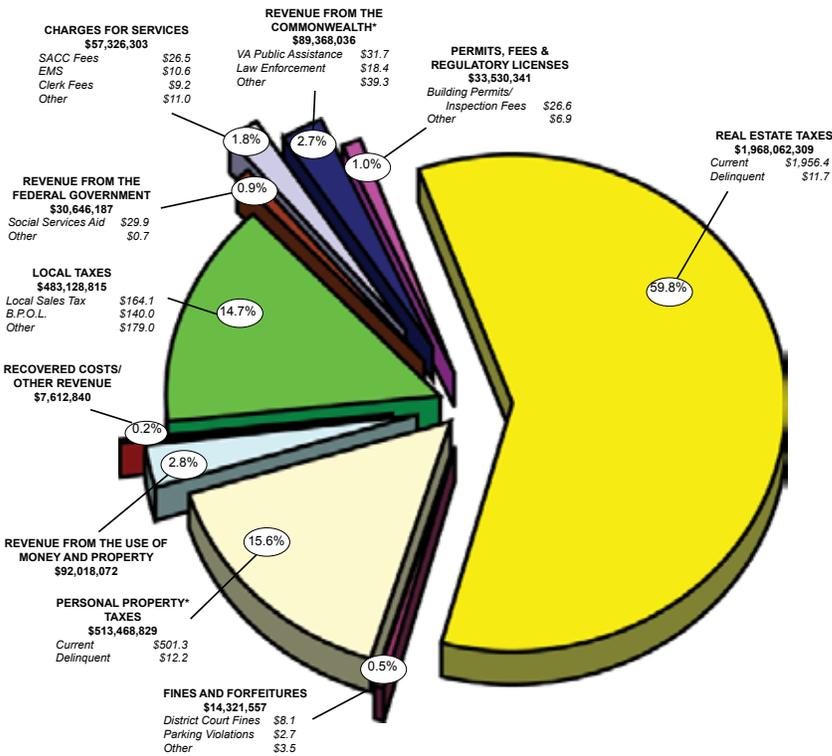
FY 2008 General Fund Disbursements (which include the General Fund as well as the transfers to Fairfax County Public Schools, Metro, Fairfax Connector, and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, among others) total \$3.3 billion, which is an increase of 1.3 percent over the FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan. Excluding adjustments in the current fiscal year of \$61.5 million, the increase over the FY 2007 budget is \$105.4 million or 3.3 percent.

In order to prepare a balanced budget taking into account rising costs for salaries, utilities, fuel and contractual services, the county executive requested most General Fund and General Fund-supported agencies to participate in a reduction of personnel services funding by 2 percent or \$16.3 million. This will require agency directors to manage vacancies even more carefully in the next fiscal year. However, doing this avoids having to cut programs or eliminate positions for FY 2008. But it also means that agency requests for additional resources in FY 2008 could not be funded beyond those associated with public safety and new facilities. To address the needs associated with public safety and new facilities, Griffin recommended a total of 70/63.0 SYE new positions. Among the positions recommended are police officers and a victim services advocate

Where the Revenue Comes From:

FY 2008 GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS **

Where it comes from . . .
 (subcategories in millions)



FY 2008 GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS = \$3,289,483,289 **

* For presentation purposes, Personal Property Taxes of \$211,313,944 that are reimbursed by the Commonwealth as a result of the Personal Property Tax Relief Act of 1998 are included in the Personal Property Taxes category.

** Total County resources include the receipts shown here as well as a beginning balance and transfers in from other funds.

for the domestic violence program, as well as training staff and a police psychologist; a wildlife biologist and administrative assistant associated with increasing wildlife cases, as well as increased hours for animal adoption at the Animal Shelter; staff for the new Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center anticipated to be completed by summer 2008; Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court positions associated with the Courthouse expansion; staff for the new School Age Child Care room serving special needs children at Key Center; and personnel for the new Oakton and Burke Centre libraries scheduled for completion in late summer 2007 and spring 2008, respectively. These funding decisions are intended to address strategic initiatives supporting the Board of Supervisors' priorities, as well as the county's vision elements.

Despite the reduction in personnel services, FY 2008 disbursements still exceeded FY 2007 receipts by \$27 million. To address this shortfall, Griffin recommended that \$21 million prudently set aside by the board as part of the FY 2006 Carryover Review be used in combination with an additional \$6 million anticipated as part of the FY 2007 Third Quarter Review. He cautioned that these steps are a short-term solution, and if restrictive revenue conditions persist beyond two years, it will be necessary to undertake more significant reductions in programs and services similar to actions required in the 1990s.

Compensation

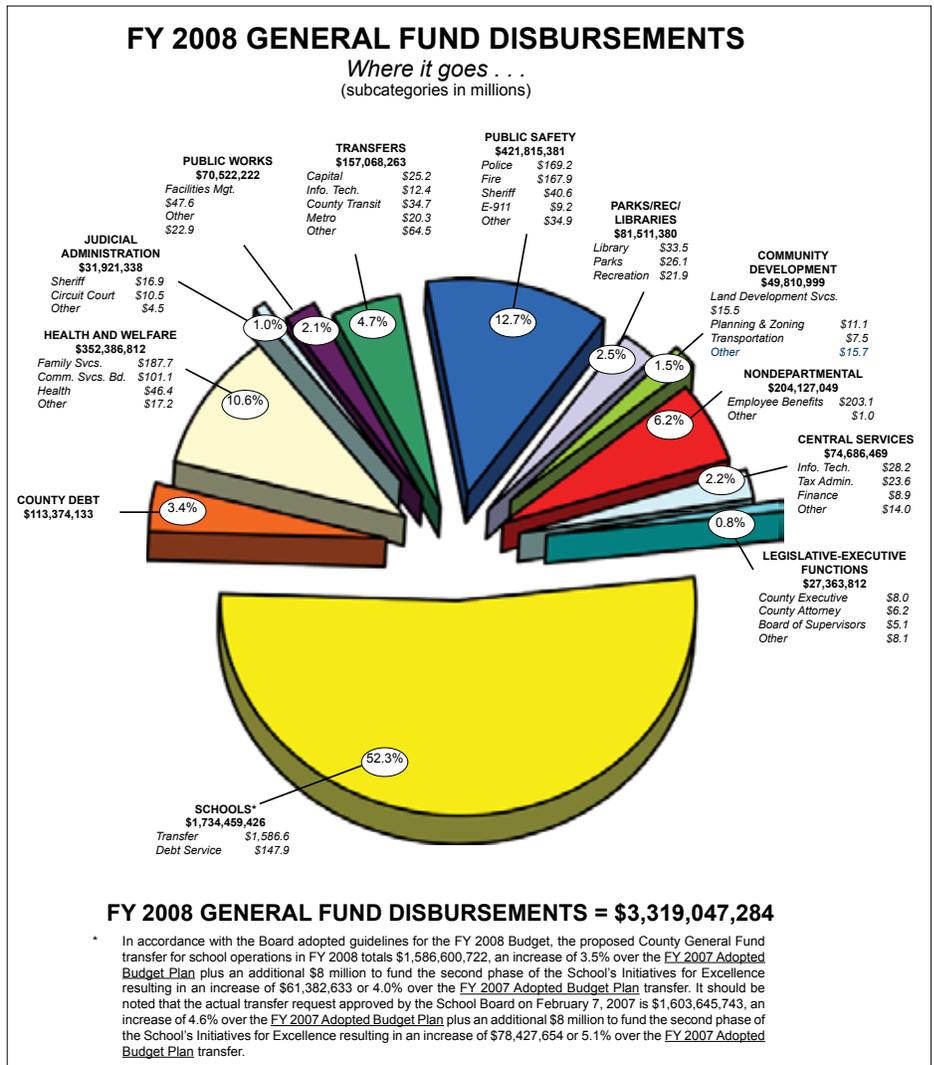
Funding of \$12 million is recommended for the eighth year of the Pay for Performance (PFP) program, which includes approximately 8,000 non-public safety employees. The pay scales for non-public safety employees will be increased to reflect the 2.92 percent market rate adjustment. However, non-public safety employees do not receive this adjustment through a cost-of-living increase. Pay increases continue to be earned through performance. The market rate index is currently calculated based on data from

the Consumer Price Index; the Employment Cost Index, which includes private sector, state and local government salaries; and the Federal Wage adjustment. This is designed to keep county pay scales from falling below the marketplace, requiring a large-scale catch-up every few years. The Compensation Task Force has been studying different approaches to the market rate index and will be making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors (see Courier articles on compensation at <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>).

Public safety employees (not under Pay for Performance) will be eligible for regular step increases (depending on their current step) at a total cost of \$3 million and their pay will be adjusted 2.92 percent for the market rate adjustment in July 2007 at a total cost of \$11.8 million in FY 2008.

More Budget, see page 8

Where the Revenue Goes:



Training on the New Pay for Performance Process

Changes to Pay for Performance will be implemented starting with pay period 14 (which begins on June 23), as part of County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin's** recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for the Advertised FY 2008 budget. The changes are anticipated to maintain the current distribution of ratings (roughly a 4.4 percent average increase) while correcting the current disconnect between an employee rated as "fully proficient" and a 1.7 percent pay raise.

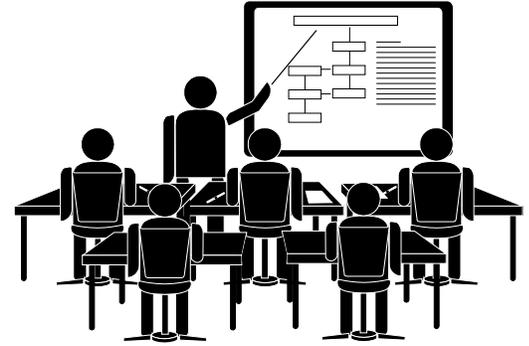
In order to meet the FY 2008 time frame and provide as much information as possible, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is scheduling training for both supervisors and employees. Mandatory supervisor training will begin early next month and run through May. More details about the training dates have been provided in NewsLink and can also be found at <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>.

The supervisor sessions will be located in Government Center conference rooms and run approximately two hours. Employee training will be conducted in the Government Center Board Auditorium and will run 60 to 90 minutes.

Payroll contact training on the technical changes in PRISM processing will be conducted separately with more information to be provided in April.

With supervisor approval, employees will be able to register for training using the online Learning Management Systems registration process. Instructions on how to do this can be found on the Infoweb at <http://infoweb/hr/training/SelfEnrollProcforClassesbyDHR.pdf>. Employees who do not have access to the Infoweb should contact their agency training coordinator. Class registration will be conducted on a first-come, first-registered process. It is anticipated that some of the larger agencies may decide to have a "train the trainer" approach and conduct some training internally.

The change to the Pay for Performance system is one of the county executive's recommendations for implementation resulting



from the Compensation Study. The full report that was presented to the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 26 can be found at <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>.

The changes to Pay for Performance include:

- ◆ The removal of the labels from the five current rating levels (Unsatisfactory, In Development, Fully Proficient, Superior and Exceptional). The rating descriptions for performance elements and behaviors will not require changes.
- ◆ Two rating level boxes are being added for a total of seven rating options.
- ◆ The 500-point rating scale is being revised to a 700-point scale (100 – 700).
- ◆ Pay award options are reduced from 12 to 11, bonus award options are reduced from five to four.
- ◆ Employees who receive all ratings at the fourth box (i.e. "in the middle") will receive a 3 percent pay increase (as compared to the current 1.7 percent).

In addition to changes to Pay for Performance, employees will learn more about the other changes for FY 2008, including promotional policies, market rate adjustment, classification benchmarking (e.g. regrades), compensation benchmarking (salary competitiveness), reclassifications and the All Job Class Study to be launched in the fall. ■

From the Police Department

The Citizen Reporting System

County residents who are victims or witnesses of certain misdemeanor crimes can file police reports online or by phone using the Police Department's Citizen Reporting System (CRS). The system operates seven days a week and includes evening hours. It is available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/crs/ or through the department's non-emergency phone number at 703-691-2131, TTY 711.

The Police Department has recently improved accessibility to the system which was implemented in 2003.

Not all crimes can be reported using the CRS. The following criteria must be present to use the system:

- ♦ The crime or incident must have occurred within Fairfax County.
- ♦ The identity of the suspect must not be known, or the resident must not want to pursue criminal prosecution.
- ♦ The report is being made for informational and/or insurance purposes only and the citizen understands and agrees that the Police Department will take no further action.
- ♦ The suspect information is so general in nature that it provides no real investigative leads (e.g., blue van or white man).

An example of a crime that could be reported using CRS would be a missing bicycle:

A young boy leaves his bicycle in the front yard one night and doesn't realize it's missing



CRS is centralized at Police headquarters in the Massey Building. (Photo by John Nash)

for a few days. No one knows when the crime happened; there aren't any suspects or leads.

The parents are able to go online, fill out the required information and within 24 hours receive a case number. The

case number can be used for insurance claims.

Reports **cannot** be handled using CRS if any of the following criteria apply:

- ♦ The offender is still on the scene or the incident occurred within the last 30 minutes.
- ♦ The crime was perpetrated based upon race, religion or national origin.
- ♦ The report is for a lost or stolen passport or firearm.

According to the Police Department, the advantage to using CRS is convenience. Instead of having an officer respond to take a report, residents can file the report at a time and location convenient to them. When the reports are filed online, officers can e-mail a case number, for documentation or for insurance purposes, usually within 24 hours.

When residents use CRS, patrol officers are able to use their time to conduct proactive and preventive patrols, such as traffic enforcement, community policing, high visibility patrols in residential and business districts and criminal/drug interdiction.

Information obtained by CRS officers assists the Police Department in preventing crimes with the ability to analyze trends, locations and times of incidents. The report may also assist in the identification and return of stolen property recovered as a result of other investigations.

For more information on CRS visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/crs/ ■

The following types of crimes or incidents can be reported using CRS (using the criteria noted in the article):

Alcohol violation
 Check/credit card case
 Counterfeit prescription
 Civil dispute
 Destruction of property, littering
 Disorderly conduct
 Drunk in public
 DWI
 Forgery
 Fraud
 Larceny under \$5,000
 Loitering
 Lost property
 Parking violation
 Solicitor violation
 Suspicious vehicles, persons or events
 Telephone violation
 Traffic violation
 Trespassing
 Vehicle tampering

Focus on Benefits



**HR Central
has benefit
information.
703-324-4900,
TTY 703-222-7314**

Delta Dental Introduces Healthy Smile, Healthy You Program

As a result of growing evidence connecting oral health to overall health, Delta Dental now offers the Healthy Smile, Healthy You program as part of the county's dental plan. The program offers one additional cleaning or periodontal maintenance procedure to members who are pregnant and members with diabetes who enroll in the program, regardless of plan limits.

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, pregnant women with periodontal disease may be seven times more likely to have a baby that's born too early or too small. Research indicates that a labor-inducing biological fluid is found in oral bacteria. This fluid increases with periodontal disease, increasing the risk of pre-term, low birth weight babies.

In addition, people with diabetes can be very susceptible to periodontal disease. Increased sugar levels have a negative impact on oral health, increasing the risk of cavities, gum disease and tooth loss. People with diabetes can also be more prone to gum infections, which can cause increased blood sugar levels putting diabetics at increased risk for complications. Research also suggests that the relationship between gum disease and diabetes goes both ways – people with diabetes who have periodontal disease find it far more difficult to control their sugar levels than those who do not have gum problems.

Enrolling in the program is easy:

1) Complete a one-page form, including

your physician's signature. Forms are available on the Infoweb at <http://infoweb/hr/benefits/HealthySmileDiabForm.pdf> and <http://infoweb/hr/benefits/HealthySmilePregForm.pdf> or at www.deltadentalva.com.

2) Fax the form to Delta Dental at 540-725-3880 or mail it to Delta Dental of Virginia, ATTN: Healthy Smile, Healthy You, 4818 Starkey Road, Roanoke, VA 24018.

3) Once Delta Dental receives your form, your enrollment is complete and you can talk with your dentist about scheduling the additional service.

Dental plan members with questions can contact Delta Dental at 800-237-6060, TTY 711. Additional information on the program is also available on the Infoweb at <http://infoweb/hr/benefits/dental2007.htm> or at www.deltadentalva.com. ■

Look for Delta Dental Booklets in the Mail

- Employees currently enrolled in dental coverage will receive booklets in their home mail from Delta Dental in the near future.
- The booklet provides detailed information about your Delta Dental coverage, including covered procedures, plan limitations and what you and the plan pay for various services.
- Employees can also review the booklet on the county's Infoweb at http://infoweb/hr/benefits/Delta_EOC.pdf.

2006 Flexible Spending Claims Must Be Submitted by March 31

- ♦ Reimbursement request forms are available on the Infoweb at http://infoweb/hr/benefits/FBMC_Claim_form.pdf.
- ♦ Reimbursement requests can be sent to FBMC by fax to 800-524-7751 or by mail to: Fringe Benefits Management Company P.O. Box 1800 Tallahassee, FL 32302-1800
- ♦ Remember to keep copies of your reimbursement request documents for your records.
- ♦ FBMC Customer Service can be reached at 800-342-8017, TTY 711. ■

Briefs

Mark Your Calendar: Bring Our Children to Work Day

The Office of the County Executive is hosting the annual Bring Our Children to Work Day on Thursday, April 26, at the Government Center. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the program runs from 9 a.m. to noon.

Look for more information in the next issue of Courier on March 30, including how to register your child/children, ages 9 to 15 to participate in this educational and fun-filled program.

Millennium Forum on March 28



Tamara Draut is the keynote speaker for the Millennium Forum "Why Getting Ahead Has Gotten Harder" on Wednesday, March 28, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the Government Center Board Auditorium. The free event is open to all employees.

Draut is director of the economic opportunity program at Demos, a non-partisan public policy research and advocacy organization. She oversees research, policy and advocacy work on issues related to economic security and mobility. Draut focuses on the growing debt burdens facing low- and middle-income households and, more broadly, the challenges confronting households

trying to work or educate their way into the middle class. She has conducted groundbreaking research on household debt, serving as the principal investigator of a national survey of indebted households.

The author of "Strapped: Why America's 20- and 30-Somethings Can't Get Ahead," Draut is the co-author of several Demos reports including "The Plastic Safety Net: The Reality Behind Debt in America"; "Millions to the Middle: Three Strategies to Grow the Middle Class"; "Borrowing to Make Ends Meet: The Growth of Credit Card Debt in the 90s"; and "Retiring in the Red: The Growth of Debt Among Older Americans."

For more information on the Millennium Forum series, go to <http://infoweb/mfs>.

Court's I-CAN! Service

The Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC) has developed Fairfax-specific information for the Web-based I-CAN! (Interactive Community Assistance Network) system, which was developed by the Supreme Court of Virginia. I-CAN! helps residents file Family Abuse Protective Orders by taking filers through the process step-by-step. Through responses to a series of questions, I-CAN! creates properly formatted petitions for a Family Abuse Protective Order that can be brought ready for filing to Intake (the Domestic Relations Services of Fairfax County's JDRDC). There is a link to I-CAN! from the JDRDC Web page at www.fairfax-county.gov/courts/jdr.

The JDRDC serves residents of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the towns of Herndon, Vienna and Clifton.

Briefs

Briefs

JDRDC Judge **Gayl Carr** headed a work group of representatives from the courts, county agencies, state and community legal organizations that developed the Fairfax-specific information for the I-CAN! system.

The county information explains the law; the procedure; how to find the JDRDC; what to expect in court; what time the court reviews petitions for protective orders; and how to access county and community-based resources, such as supportive services and legal assistance.

More detailed information about Family Abuse Protective Orders is available on the JDRDC Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/jdr/jdrFamilyViolence.htm.

Call for ERICA Nominations

The ERICA (Employee Recycling Committee Award) is designed to recognize those individuals or groups within county government who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to recycling in the workplace.

If you know of an individual or group that meet this standard, you can nominate them for the ERICA. All individuals or groups that are nominated will receive a special recycled glass award to display in their office, plus additional prizes and recognition in various county publications. The deadline for award nominations is Friday, April 6.

Fill out the nomination form at <http://infoweb/dpwes/msw/ericanomination.htm> and read about past ERICA winners. E-mail the ERC at erc@fairfaxcounty.gov if you have questions or need more information or reasonable ADA accommodations.

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless and tasteless toxic gas. It is produced whenever any fuel is burned. It is a concern if fuel-burning appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, carbon monoxide poisoning is the cause for more than 200 deaths each year. It is important to become aware of the sources of carbon monoxide and understand the concerns.

Sources: All fuel-burning appliances, including oil, natural gas, propane/LPG-fired furnaces and appliances (water heaters, ovens and dryers), kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, wood stoves and grills produce carbon monoxide. All fuel-

powered engines, including vehicles, mowers, snow blowers and generators produce carbon monoxide.

Symptoms: It is critical to know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Low levels can cause shortness of breath, nausea and mild headaches. Moderate levels can cause severe headaches and dizziness. Exposure to higher levels or for longer periods can lead to unconsciousness and even death. Keep in mind many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu.

Protect Yourself: Read and follow all of the instructions that accompany any fuel-burning devices. Carefully follow any listed cautions.

♦ Have all fuel-burning appliances inspected by a professional annually.

♦ Never idle vehicles in a garage or enclosed space.

♦ Never use charcoal or gas grills indoors. Be certain the flue is unobstructed before using your fireplace.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms: Alarms are available at most hardware stores. Make sure it has an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label. Carbon monoxide alarms should be located on every floor and mounted according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the alarm goes off, everyone should get out and call 911 from outside the structure.

Contact **Robert Johnson**, Risk Management Division, Department of Finance, at 703-324-3043, TTY 711, or robert.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov if you have safety questions. ■

For More Information on the FY 2008 Budget...

More Budget, from page 3

Those seeking more details on the FY 2008 Budget are encouraged to access all of the budget documents on the Department of Management and Budget's Web site www.fairfax-county.gov/dmb.

Calendar for FY 2008 Advertised Budget Plan

February 26:

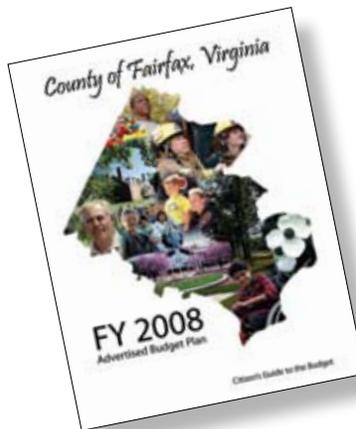
County executive presented the proposed FY 2008 budget to the Board of Supervisors.*

April 9, 10 and 11:

Public hearings** will be held in the Government Center Board Auditorium at 7 p.m. To be placed on the list of speakers, contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151, TTY 711.

April 23:

The Board of Supervisors marks up



the budget, 10 a.m.

April 30:

The Board of Supervisors formally adopts the budget.

* The presentation of the proposed budget will be available as video-on-demand on the county's Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable throughout the month of March.

** The public hearings will be televised live on Fairfax County Channel 16. ■

Courier is published most payday Fridays. The deadline for articles and information is two weeks before publication.



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