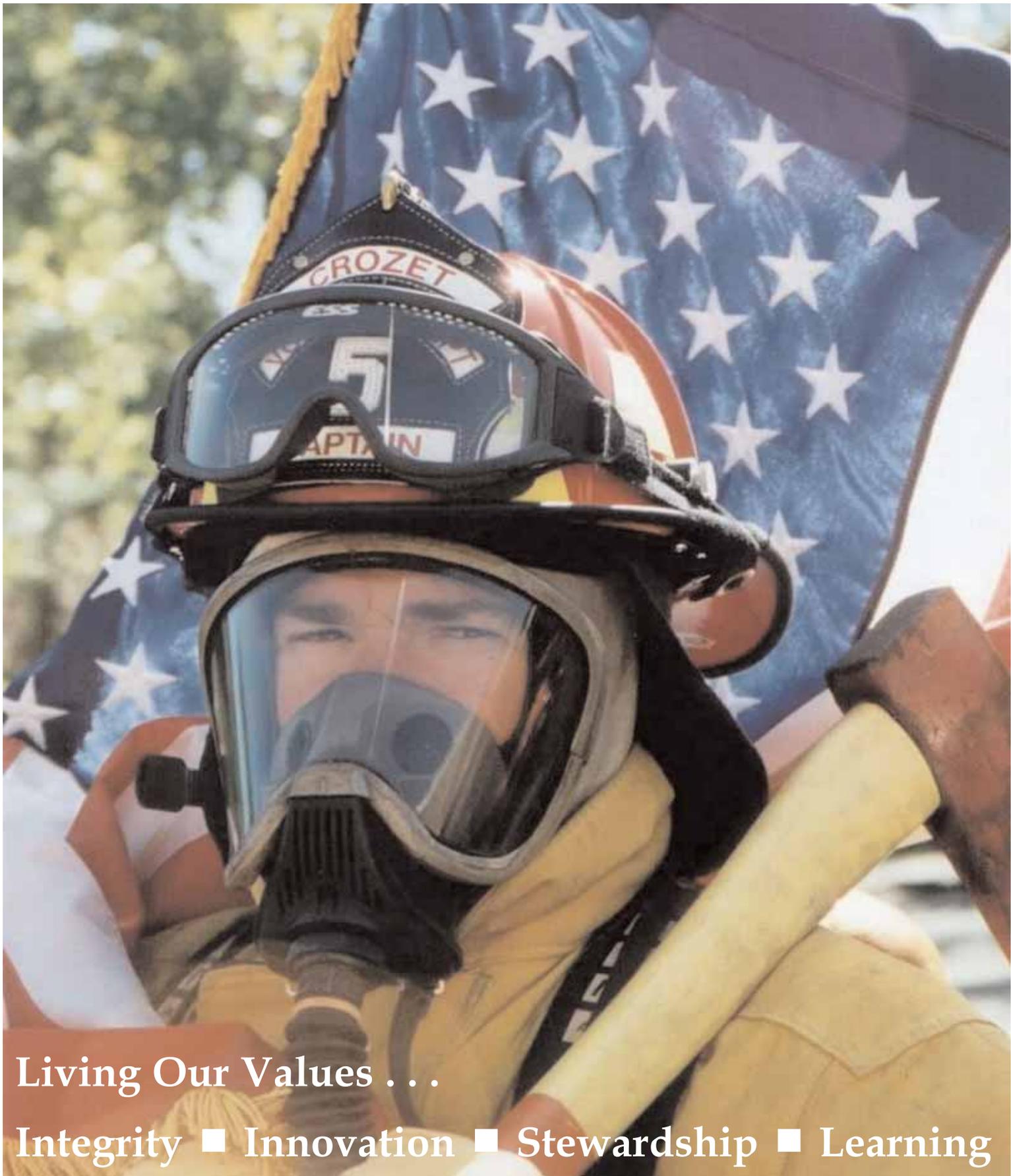


Report to the Community

Albemarle County, Virginia



Living Our Values . . .

Integrity ■ Innovation ■ Stewardship ■ Learning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was produced by Albemarle's Office of Community Relations with contributions and assistance from the Office of Management and Budget and the Albemarle County School Division.

For additional copies,
Call the Community Relations Office at (434)296-5841, email to lcatlin@albemarle.org or write, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

For more information about Albemarle, please visit our websites at:

www.albemarle.org (county)
k12.albemarle.org (schools)

ABOUT THE COVER

Albemarle County's vision and mission are based on our organizational values, which direct the way we do business and guide our interactions with our customers. Our values of integrity, innovation, stewardship and learning define our approach to providing services to the Albemarle County community. Cover photo of Gerald Williamson, a volunteer firefighter with the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department, by Wally Quast.

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING ON 5TH STREET

We have completed the relocation of four county departments to the County Office Building 5th Street, otherwise known at COB 5th Street, which is located on 5th Street just south of the Interstate 64 overpass. At this time, the departments of Housing, Social Services, Fire Rescue and Police are fully moved into the new building and are providing all their services from that location. The Charlottesville Albemarle Commission on Children and Families and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service are also housed in the new building.

We are excited about the possibilities for expanded customer service and operational efficiency provided by the new space at COB 5th Street, and look forward to serving citizen needs at both our new location and at the existing County Office Building at McIntire Road.

All department phone numbers and faxes remain the same, and you can reach the General Information Line at COB 5th Street by calling (434)296-5860. The street address for COB 5th Street is 1600 5th Street.

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To Members of Our Community,

I would like to welcome you to this **Report to the Community** by thanking you for joining with your local government in a strong partnership that has created many outstanding success stories for our community. Working towards our shared vision and mission for Albemarle County, we have achieved significant progress in the strategic directions that outline our priorities for the future.

In the next few pages of this report, you will see many of the exciting accomplishments our community has achieved in strategic areas that have great impact on Albemarle County's future. Our school division and other community partners dedicated to providing learning and training opportunities for citizens of all ages and backgrounds ensure that we maintain our reputation as an area that values and supports education in its many varied forms. Our outstanding quality of life is enhanced by the work of public safety, human services, and parks and recreation staff as well as many others whose continued efforts keep us a safe, healthy and desirable place to live and work.

A strong focus on rural protection and preservation is reflected in initiatives like our Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) program that helps honor our rural heritage and maintain our community's character. Our urban places are also receiving significant attention as we work on infrastructure and amenities that help make these neighborhoods attractive and vibrant community centers. Finally, you will learn more about how our emphasis on customer-focused government is helping us serve you more efficiently and effectively.

While we appreciate public recognition of our community's success and vitality such as the recent ranking of our region as the Best Place to Live in the United States, we realize the challenges that still face us in areas like affordable housing, infrastructure and traffic, and meeting human service needs for all citizens. These issues are at the forefront of our agenda as we move into 2005.

We hope this report will be helpful to you in learning more about the county in which you live and about your local government as we focus on our mission of providing the highest quality of public service to the community. We appreciate your participation and support as we work together to balance the priorities and respond to the needs of our community.

Robert W. Tucker, Jr.
County Executive

Close up on Albemarle County

Albemarle County is a community of approximately 88,400 people occupying 723 square miles. Six rivers - Rivanna, Moormans, Mechums, Hardware, Rockfish and James - flow through the county as do several major streams.

The economy of Albemarle County is vital and stable. The predominant economic sectors are services, education, retail, travel, trade and agriculture. Albemarle's unemployment rate of 1.8% is consistently lower than the state and national averages.

The County's School Division has 16 elementary, five middle and four high schools with an enrollment of 12,356 for the 2004/05 school year.

The county has 2,400 acres of parks in addition to the Shenandoah National Park which occupies 15,000 acres in Albemarle. An excellent system of public parks, recreational facilities and programs exists to meet the needs of local residents and visitors including swimming, fishing, boating, picnicking and trail hiking.

Police protection is provided by a 124-member police force with 102 sworn officers. A 21-member Sheriff's Department handles law enforcement-related duties such as court security and prisoner transportation. Emergency services are provided by over 350 volunteers who staff eight fire departments and three rescue squads located throughout the county. Albemarle County has a Fire Rescue Department and has added career emergency service staff at five locations to support the volunteers in their service to local residents.

In Memoriam

Albemarle County would like to recognize and pay tribute to the passing of two well-loved and devoted public servants during the past year.

- ☞ **Walter Perkins**, former Board of Supervisor member from the White Hall District
 - ☞ **Charlottes Humphris**, former Board of Supervisor member from the Jack Jouett District
- They contributed greatly to our community and are sorely missed.*

Meet County Officials and Management Staff

Board of Supervisors

Albemarle County is governed by a six-member Board of Supervisors elected by qualified voters from the county's six magisterial districts. The County adopted the County Executive form of government and organization in 1933, which designates the Board of Supervisors as the policy-making body of the county. The Board has responsibility for land use decisions, growth and development policies and for adopting the capital and operational budgets.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ▲ Dennis Rooker, Jack Jouett (chair) | ▲ Sally Thomas, Samuel Miller |
| ▲ David Bowerman, Rio | ▲ Lindsay Dorrier, Scottsville |
| ▲ Kenneth Boyd, Rivanna | ▲ David Wyant, White Hall |

School Board

The School Board, composed of seven elected members, governs the School Division and is primarily responsible for overseeing educational programs and laws, policies, budget, and on-going assessment and evaluation of the school division.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| ▲ Diantha McKeel, Jack Jouett | ▲ Stephen Koleszar, Scottsville |
| ▲ Pamela Moynihan, Rio | ▲ Barbara Massie, White Hall |
| ▲ Sue Friedman, Rivanna | ▲ Brian Wheeler, At-Large |
| ▲ Gordon Walker, Samuel Miller (chair) | |

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is composed of seven members appointed by the Board of Supervisors to help develop and guide policy on issues related to the county's Comprehensive Plan, long range development, transportation and housing.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ▲ William Edgerton, Jack Jouett (chair) | ▲ William Craddock, Scottsville |
| ▲ Rodney Thomas, Rio | ▲ Jo Higgins, White Hall |
| ▲ Calvin Morris, Rivanna | ▲ Marcia Joseph, At-Large |
| ▲ William Rieley, Samuel Miller | |

County Staff

The day-to-day operations of the County are managed by the County Executive, his staff and heads of the various departments that provide services and respond to the needs of Albemarle residents. The County Executive, Robert W. Tucker, Jr., promotes a strong philosophy of customer service and quality improvement among all county employees. Email contact with county employees is available through the county website at www.albemarle.org.

County Executive	Robert W. Tucker, Jr.	296-5841
Assistant County Executive	Tom Foley	296-5841
Assistant County Executive	Roxanne White	296-5841
Community Development	Mark Graham	296-5832
Community Relations	Lee Catlin	296-5841
County Attorney	Larry Davis	972-4067
Current Development Review	Amelia McCulley	296-5832
Finance	Richard Wiggans	296-5851
Fire/Rescue Division*	Dan Eggleston	296-5833
General Services	Michael Stumbaugh	296-5816
Housing Office*	Ron White	296-5839
Human Resources	Kimberly Suyes	296-5827
Information Services	Michael Culp	296-5814
Management and Budget	Melvin Breeden	872-4516
Parks & Recreation	Pat Mullaney	296-5844
Planning	Wayne Cilimberg	296-5832
Police*	John Miller	296-5807
Registrar	Jackie Harris	951-6798
School Division	Kevin Castner	296-5826
Social Services*	Kathy Ralston	972-4010

* Indicates staff who are located at the County Office Building 5th Street location

*Any citizen who wishes to bring a matter to the Board's attention may do so by contacting the Board Clerk at 296-5843 or by making a short statement at Board meetings. The Board of Supervisors meets the first Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am and the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm in Room 241 of the County Office Building.
Board Agenda Line - 972-4082*

The School Board meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm in Room 241 of the Albemarle County Office Building. Please call the School Clerk's Office at 972-4055 for specific meeting and/or agenda information.

*The Planning Commission meets every Tuesday evening at 6:00 pm in Room 241 of the County Office Building. Please call 296-5823 with questions or for more information.
Commission Agenda Line - 296-5824*

Who to call if you want to . . .

- Get info on parks and recreation
296-5844
- Learn about water resources and water protection
296-5832
- Check school closings
296-5886
- Get a burn permit or other fire prevention info
296-5833
- Start a Neighborhood Watch
296-5807
- Get general info about the county
296-5822
- Learn more about recycling
296-5861
- Start a building or other land use activity
296-5832

PLANNING WITH A PURPOSE

Albemarle County's Strategic Planning Process is the foundation of our service and operations delivery. We believe that before we can best use our available resources, we must first understand the needs and desires of county residents and the factors that will affect us in the future. Working in partnership with citizens and the Board of Supervisors, we develop goals and objectives to respond to community priorities and create strategies that define actions and identify resources to attain our goals. Our Strategic Plan helps us assure that our efforts are purposefully designed and focused to meet the present and future needs of the county.

Citizen Feedback is the Cornerstone of our Plan

We began our strategic planning with an extensive survey of county residents in April, 2001, to get objective and balanced feedback about what was important to our citizens as we made choices about how to move forward.

These valuable responses were the basis for our initial strategic planning and continue to be the benchmark against which we measure our efforts. The vision, mission and strategic themes that guide our efforts all build on the strengths that our citizens appreciate and value about the community in which they live.

In order to keep citizen feedback at the center of our strategic planning efforts, we conducted another comprehensive survey of county residents in April, 2004. The Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia again contacted citizens by telephone to ask about community needs, issues and priorities as well as satisfaction with county government services and operations.

The results from this survey will contribute very significantly to the future direction of the Strategic Plan, including prioritizing goals and objectives that will guide county activities and resource allocation. Some highlights of the survey are below.

QUALITY OF LIFE . . . Albemarle County residents are very pleased with the overall quality of life. When asked to rate the quality of life in Albemarle County on a scale of 1 to 10, (with 10 being the best possible place to live and 1 being the worst), the mean rating was 7.96. This average was consistent with results from surveys in 1994 and 2002, demonstrating that a high level of satisfaction has remained fairly constant over the past ten years.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS COUNTY GOVERNMENT . . . On the whole, county citizens displayed a positive attitude towards local government. 8 in 10 citizens reported that they were satisfied with the value they receive for their tax dollar and 83.5% reported themselves satisfied with their experiences in contacting and dealing with the County.

PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC GOALS . . . Citizens reported mixed opinions on progress towards the County's strategic planning goals. Citizens were most impressed with efforts in making Albemarle a safe and healthy community, creating lifelong learning opportunities, and providing effective, responsive and courteous customer service. Residents were least satisfied with the County's efforts to promote the development of affordable housing, to protect and preserve the rural areas, and to provide needed infrastructure.

SATISFACTION WITH COUNTY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES . . . Citizens are extremely satisfied overall with the programs and services provide by Albemarle County. Citizens reported 90.6% overall satisfaction with County programs and services, which continues to reflect major improvement from the 1994 results when only 84.3% were satisfied. Satisfaction was highest for fire protection, library services, emergency rescue, safety in business areas and police protection and lowest for efforts to manage growth and preserve open space.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT . . . Citizens are increasingly concerned about the impacts of growth and development. The survey indicated continued support for the county's major growth management policies, with approximately 70% of respondents favoring concentrating development in the urban areas to protect the rural areas, but that percentage showed a significant decline in support from the 2002 survey where almost 80% of respondents said they favored concentrated growth.

What We Believe

OUR VISION: Albemarle County . . . a quality community that preserves our natural resources, rural character and visual beauty and promotes learning, safety, affordability, cultural diversity, civic engagement and economic opportunity to create a desirable place to grow up, raise a family and grow old for present and future generations.

OUR MISSION: To enhance the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds.

OUR VALUES: Integrity Innovation Stewardship Learning

Our Plan Makes a Difference for the Community

As we review our activities and initiatives from 2004, we see substantial and measurable progress towards our four these strategic themes that we believe responds to the directions established by our citizens in the survey. The following are some highlights . . .

♦ We Support Lifelong Learning

Providing High Quality Educational Opportunities for Citizens of all Ages

Our citizens clearly identified quality education as the community's number one priority during our recent citizen survey. Our schools continue to be widely recognized for the excellent learning environment they provide to our students and for the outstanding preparation they give for success in life beyond school. We also actively promote learning opportunities for citizens of all ages as part of our commitment to the over-all educational environment of our county.

Albemarle County Public Schools

Our accomplishments during the 2003-04 academic year

What our customers say about us*

- 85% of Albemarle County residents report satisfaction with the educational services provided to children and adults
- 92.3% of residents with children currently attending Albemarle County Public Schools report satisfaction with the quality of education children are receiving



Technology is a major focus of Albemarle's School Division

Our academic program

- More than half of our 2003 graduates completed at least one rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) course
- More than 70% of our students taking AP courses earn a score of 3 or higher, generally qualifying them for college credit or placement in advanced courses in college
- 80% of our students pursue post-secondary education
- Students enjoy high-speed access to the Internet, state-of-the-art digital equipment, and a student-to-computer ratio of 4:1 or better throughout the division
- Our high school World Languages Program includes instruction in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Russian
- Students at risk of not achieving academically get help from various intervention programs: Bright Stars, Academic Learning Project Schools (ALPS), Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and Title I (reading and language arts)

Our test results

Standards of Learning (SOLs)

- 100% of our schools are fully accredited by the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Over 90% of our students passed the grade 11 SOL reading and literature exam
- Over 90% of our students passed the grade 11 SOL writing exam

Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs)

- 81% of our seniors took the SAT in 2003
- Combined SAT scores reached an all-time high of 1096 in 2003, approximately 70 points higher than the national average

Our instructional staff

- We employ approximately 1,300 teachers and teaching assistants
- More than half of our teachers have an advanced degree
- Albemarle County employs 9 teachers who have earned certification as master teachers by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- Our educators receive strong central office support, including a professional coordinator for each instructional area
- Albemarle County is one of only four school divisions in Virginia that employs an equity and diversity coordinator

Our budget

- Our 2004-05 budget is \$115 million
- More than 75% of our budget supports classroom instruction
- Nearly 66% of revenues for the schools come from local sources
- Our per-pupil expenditure for the 2003-04 fiscal year was \$8,469

*From the 2004 Albemarle County Citizen Satisfaction Survey

◆ We Support Rural Preservation

Protecting the County's Natural, Scenic and Historic Resources

Protecting the resources that shape our rural character is a critical issue for citizens, particularly as those resources define many of the most positive and appreciated attributes of our community. Many of the county's most visible and broad-reaching initiatives are focused on the ultimate goal of rural area protection, as demonstrated by examples of last year's significant accomplishments in this strategic focus area:

Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Program

With ACE, the county can purchase easements on privately owned rural land to protect the property from future development. Albemarle's ACE program was one of the first three programs in Virginia, and was among the first such programs established in the southeast. It is the only "up and running" program that specifically benefits landowners of modest means (payment according to adjusted gross income). So far, ACE has racked up some impressive statistics in rural land protection. During the program's first three years, ACE has

- Acquired easements on 15 farms
- Protected 3,722 acres
- Eliminated 241 potential development lots
- Protected 872 acres of prime farmland
- Protected 1419 acres of land in the drinking water supply watersheds

New Groundwater Ordinance

The county will gather data to promote the long term sustainability of our groundwater resources with the adoption of a new Groundwater Ordinance approved by county supervisors in late 2004 which takes effect February 8, 2005. The ordinance will help ensure

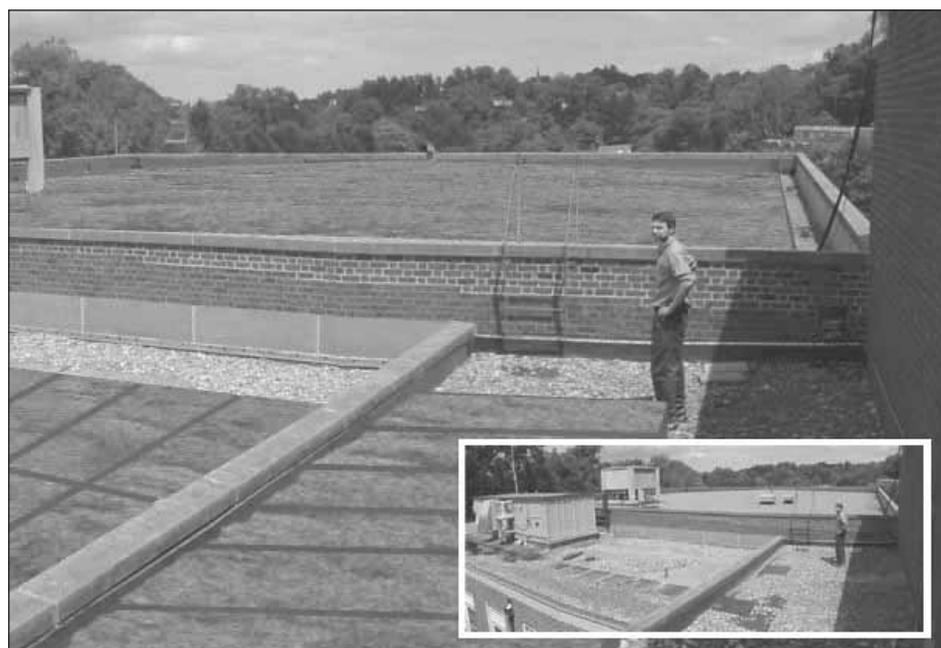
that adequate groundwater quantity and quality exists to meet the long term needs of proposed land uses without hurting the quality or quantity of neighboring groundwater users. Also, the requirements help make sure that a site can provide for its long-term water needs without the need for public water line extensions, which are costly and contrary to the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The data collected as part of the ordinance will assist many people: potential purchasers of property to determine if an adequate water supply exists; developers and landowners who intend to create new divisions to understand the constraints and opportunities of existing groundwater resources; designers of new divisions to match design and layout to groundwater characteristics; and the County to manage, monitor, and continue to build the "big picture" understanding of groundwater resources to make wise land use decisions.

Rural Area Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan

Our citizens consistently rate issues involving preserving natural resources and open space and preserving farmland and forested land as among the most important priorities of the county. The Board of Supervisors is in the final stages of adopting a Rural Area Chapter for the county's Comprehensive Plan that will create a framework for decision making that will ensure the desired future of Albemarle's rural areas. The overall goals of the Rural Area chapter are summarized in the following vision statement:

Critical elements of our rural area vision include a pattern of land uses defined by farms, forests and other natural elements and traditional crossroads communities; a strong agricultural and forestal economy; diverse interconnected areas of viable habitat for native wildlife; and a clearly visible rural character achieved by supporting lively rural industries and activities and discouraging suburbanization.



Computer-generated image of county's planned Green Roof project

Green Roof Grant

The Albemarle County Office Building on McIntire Road will feature the area's first "green roof" in 2005 thanks to a grant program supporting innovative water quality measures to reduce pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. Green roofs incorporate a layer of growing medium on rooftops that are planted with a mixture of sedums and other low-maintenance, drought-tolerant plants that work to insulate building interiors and slow and cool rainwater. An increase in impervious surfaces in urban areas increases non point source pollution and erosion as rainwater, often heated on roofs and pavement, rushes into streams and tributaries.

The green roof will improve water quality, reduce storm water runoff, and decrease the load on the County Office Building's interior heating and cooling systems. However, the larger goal of the project is for demonstration so that developers, students, and citizens can better understand the viability of green roof technology and identify ways to integrate green roofs into new and existing developments.

This demonstration project represents a long standing commitment on behalf of the County to implement storm water best management practices and will compliment existing demonstration projects, such as biofilters, underground detention facilities, and constructed wetlands.

◆ We Support Quality Living

Enhance the Quality of Life for all our Citizens

Our citizens expect and deserve the services and amenities that make the county a safe, enjoyable and caring community. Our public safety agencies are dedicated to providing a professional and compassionate response to emergency needs. We strive to provide fair and convenient access to human services within a secure and stable environment. We also seek to give our citizens meaningful and fun opportunities to enjoy their leisure. These highlights are a few of our most significant accomplishments in the quality of life area last year:

Police Department Accreditation and 20th Year Anniversary

The County Police Department celebrated several major milestones in 2004, beginning with the celebration of the department's 20th year as the county's primary law enforcement agency. Since its founding in 1984, the Police Department has evolved to meet the community's changing needs and demands and has maintained a leading edge of law enforcement innovations.

From the creation of a Community Policing Division to in-car video cameras and computer terminals to Internet crime investigation, our Police Department has anticipated and adapted to meet changing needs and to take advantage of the latest technology advancements. These types of advancements have been made possible by progressive, innovative police professionals who over the past 20 years have acted aggressively to keep our department at the forefront of the law enforcement profession.

This standard of professionalism and quality service was acknowledged at the highest possible level with the reaccreditation of the agency in the fall. All operations and areas of the department were closely reviewed and found to be at the highest level of service before the accreditation was reissued.

Athletic Fields Get a Facelift

Both school and community sports leagues got expanded opportunities for practice and playing time when the Parks and Recreation Department lighted a rectangular multi-purpose athletic field at Western Albemarle High School last fall. This field became the first such lighted athletic field in the county, and is the latest in a string of athletic field improvements undertaken by the Parks and Recreation Department.

During the past five years, the county has focused on athletic field improvements countywide in response to the pressure for quality field space created by continued increase in demand for youth and adult sports. Other major projects have involved upgrading of existing fields including regrading, installing irrigation, and improving playing surfaces. Girl's softball fields at Western Albemarle, Albemarle and Monticello High Schools have also been lighted as part of the improvements.

The most recent improvement, which involved installing a state-of-the-art total light system at Western Albemarle High School, makes space available for evening practices for community league youth football in the fall, and SOCA and middle school lacrosse in the spring, among other uses. Future plans include improvements, including installation of lighting systems, at the other high schools in the county.

New Affordable Housing Policy

The Board has adopted a policy to meet affordable housing needs in the county by promoting the development of affordable housing units and/or contributions to affordable housing funds. County staff, local developers, representatives from the real estate community and non-profit agencies are working together to identify options that will allow developers to meet the county's affordable housing goals with new projects being proposed for the area.

Bright Stars/Family Support

Bright Stars programs that are centered in five county elementary schools provide early intervention services for four year old children and their families to prepare them for a successful start in school. In 2004, 80 children and their families were enrolled in Bright Stars and received help with risk factors that could impact school performance such as low household income, limited English proficiency, substance abuse or physical and mental health challenges. Albemarle educators and social service workers continue to see positive progress for families involved in Bright Stars.

The Family Support program served 175 families at all 16 county elementary schools last year. Family support workers help students and their families connect with health, legal, housing and human services that can create a more stable, positive home environment. Through family support, the school and parents work together for successful school performance outcomes for their children.

• Fire Rescue Department Awarded for Excellence

The State Career and Education Awards Committee through the Virginia Department of Education recognized the Albemarle County Fire Rescue Department and other community partners for exemplary projects that promote excellence in Career and Technical Education. The award honors the first responders' efforts in establishing a new program at the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center to train high school students to become firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

• Social Services Eligibility Staff Commended

two awards were presented at the fall conference of the Benefit Programs Organization by the Virginia Department of Social Services. One award was in recognition of having a payment accuracy rate of 100%, which means that our staff processed cases and established the amount of food stamps a family or individual could get correctly 100% of the time in Fiscal Year 2003. The Department also received an award for a negative action accuracy rate of 100% for the same year, which means that any cases the staff denied or closed were done in accordance with established policy 100% of the time.

• Walnut Creek Named Community's Best Outdoor Site

Walnut Creek Park in Albemarle County was named the Best Outdoor Recreation Site in our community as part of the Best of Cville 2004 award program sponsored by the Cville Weekly publication.

Fire Rescue Station Staffing

The Board of Supervisors adopted a new staffing policy for rural area fire and rescue stations that will insure 12 hour a day, five day a week career coverage at the Stony Point Fire Station and the Scottsville Rescue Squad. The new policy allows the stations to be staffed by career personnel at minimum staffing standards (three personnel for fire stations, two personnel for rescue squads) from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm five days per week. This guaranteed 12 hour coverage allows volunteers to concentrate their efforts on weekends and between 6:00 pm to 6:00 am when more volunteers are off work and available to respond to calls.

Urban Spaces are Important Places

Our focus on quality of life has a critical two-pronged approach which recognizes the importance of protected rural areas as well as the need for vital, thriving urban areas to achieve our goals of a healthy and vibrant community. Our strong and active rural protection and preservation strategies are complemented by our efforts to create urban areas that offer safe and convenient lifestyle choices and attractive amenities, and to residents and business owners. Here's a look at recent projects designed to support our urban neighborhoods:

IN 2003

Four Seasons Sidewalk

The County constructed approximately 7/10 of a mile of sidewalk along the north and south sides of Four Seasons Drive between West Rio Road and Commonwealth Drive, providing safe pedestrian access for residents of the Four Seasons community.

Powell Creek Drive Circle

Located at the intersection of Powell Creek Drive and Shadybrook Trail, this new amenity serves both the Hollymead and Springridge Subdivisions. The traffic circle allows for safer, improved traffic flow at this rapidly growing intersection by replacing the old three-way intersection with yield signage in all directions and features a landscape garden 36 feet in diameter.

In 2004

IN 2004

Route 20 North Sidewalk

The County constructed a sidewalk along the east side of Route 20 between Route 250 East and the entrance to Fontana Subdivision including a variable width, grassed planting strip located between the curb and sidewalk to allow for future tree planting.



Some county young people spend a day with a friendly cop.

Commonwealth Drive Sidewalk

Another sidewalk was built on the west side of Commonwealth Drive between Hydraulic Road and Greenbriar Drive to accommodate pedestrians in this busy urban location. The existing Bradford Pear trees along a good portion of this stretch enhance the walking experience along this new sidewalk. .

Avon Street Sidewalk/Path

The residents living along the west side of Avon Street between Mill Creek Drive and Stony Creek Drive (entrance to Mill Creek South) will be able to safely walk/bike/run on this new path consisting of asphalt trail and sidewalk fronting the Mill Creek, Lake Reynovia and Mill Creek South communities.

UNDERWAY IN 2005

Historic Crozet Streetscape Enhancements

The County will be working with a \$160,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation to reinforce and enhance the aesthetics and functional quality of Crozet's downtown pedestrian circulation system. Improvements will take place on Three Notch'd Road beginning in the vicinity of the Crozet Library and extending to the Mountainside Senior Living Center including handicap ramps, concrete curb and gutters, protective curbs and railing under the RR bridge, gateway plaza seating walls, street trees, street furniture, pedestrian lights and signage.

State Farm Boulevard/South Pantops Drive Sidewalk

Design is underway for a sidewalk beginning just east of Carriage Hill Apartments to the intersection of State Farm Boulevard and Pantops Drive and continuing on the west side of South Pantops Drive all the way to Route 250 East, with construction to begin as early as Spring 2005.

Hillsdale Road Sidewalk and Safety Improvements

A \$296,000 Virginia Department of Transportation grant will fund improvements to Hillsdale Drive between Rio Road and Greenbriar Drive to meet needs of the many pedestrians, including senior citizens, who walk in that area. Improvements will include raised median crosswalks at JABA, Squire Hill, Food Lion, Senior Center and on Branchlands Boulevard, re-stripped travel lanes to reduce vehicular speed, sidewalks between Branchlands Boulevard and Mall Drive, and Pepsi Place to Hillsdale Drive, a trail along southeast Hillsdale, at the Branchlands Basin, and to the mall from JABA, and lighting in medians and along walkways for nighttime and rainy day safety.

◆ We Support Customer-Focused Government

Serving the Public Efficiently and Effectively

We are engaged in an on-going, organization wide effort to transform the County into a highly-performing government that anticipates and responds to customers' needs by delivering public services better, faster, cheaper and when citizens need them. We are working to exceed citizen expectations with this committed approach to customer-focused government. The following are some of our most noteworthy achievements from last year:

Doors Open at COB 5th Street

The County Office Building (COB) 5th Street opened its doors in September, 2004, with the relocation of the Department of Social Services (DSS) and Housing into the new location. The Police Department followed in November, and the final phase of the move occurred in early January when the Fire Rescue Department relocated its staff to COB 5th Street.



Doors are open at the County Office Building on 5th Street

The former Wachovia property, now the COB 5th Street building, was acquired by the county in 2003 to meet space needs for the next 25 years. The \$7 million acquisition provided an additional 100,000 square feet of space for county operations, eliminating the need for a new public safety building and allowing the Department of Social Services to move out of leased space at another location.

The county is examining its programs and services to see how best to provide customer service at both locations to minimize disruption and travel time for our customers. The new building offers many customer service features currently available at the County Office Building including a Visitors Assistance Center and public access computer terminals.

Self-Service Government at Albemarle.org

The county's internet site at www.albemarle.org continues to grow as a convenient and easy alternative way of doing business with Albemarle local government. The county website is constantly adding new interactive features to provide 24 hour a day access to government services, with popular additions including on-line job applications for our Human Resources Department and on-line property records which have proven to be one of the site's most popular features.

Citizens can keep up to date on Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and School Board meetings; download county forms and applications; check Parks and Recreation class schedules; contact staff and officials via email; review county press releases and locate information on all programs and services from the convenience of their computer.

Keep an eye out for new features including on-line GIS data and on-line applications and permitting for community development projects.

Streamlining Community Development Services

The county has completed a multi-year process to reorganize our Planning, Engineering and Building Code and Zoning Services Departments into a unified Community Development Department. The reorganization allows greater focus on strategic priorities, provides leadership for development activities, ensures greater clarity and consistency in review processes, and increases customer-focused service.

As part of the reorganization, the county introduced new software in February, 2004, that allows staff to review and process permits more efficiently and effectively. This software, called Cityview, also allows staff to better track the status of applications and to provide a wider range of information on all types of land use questions that customers may have regarding their application.

With Cityview, county staff inputs information directly into the system at the time the application is being taken, instead of handing out application forms or receiving already filled out forms from customers. This automated permitting process has significantly improved our service to community development customers.

Online Job Applications

Albemarle County has moved its job application process online, which provides complete accessibility for interested job seekers at any time of day or night from any computer with an internet connection. All classified and administrative positions in the county, including those with the School Division, are part of the online process.

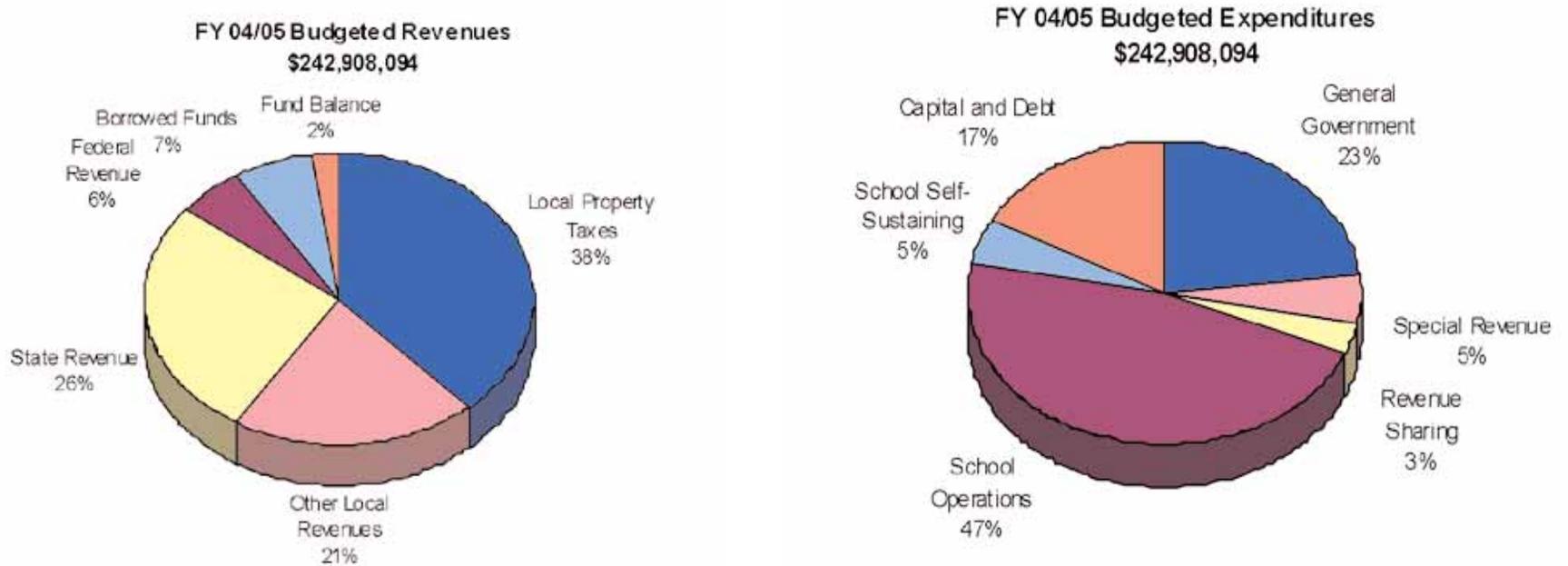
Interested applicants can check job availability, benefits, pay ranges and other information related to specific positions online, and then can complete the application process for as many as six jobs at a time at their convenience. Applicants receive an email notifying them that the application has been received, and the entire process is completed without the need for a trip to the County Office Building.

The online process reduces delays in reviewing paperwork and responding to applicants about the status of their applications. The process also ensures a fair and objective review of all applications.

Excellence in Digital Government - For the second year in a row, Albemarle County was named among the top ten most technologically advanced, cutting edge county governments in the U. S. by the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties in their 2004 Digital Counties Survey

Finance Commendations - The County received two awards from the Government Finance Officers Association, known as the GFOA, of the United States and Canada. GFOA officials presented Albemarle staff with Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and for Distinguished Budget Presentation.

Budget Highlights for the Fiscal Year 2004/05



- Property tax rate - \$0.76 per \$100 of assessed value
- 9% increase in school transfer for a total of \$74.9 million (an increase of \$6.0 million)
- Schools receive an additional \$11.2 million for capital projects and debt service
- Budget includes \$19.5 million for public safety and \$4.9 million for parks, recreation, and libraries
- Funding for ACE is \$1.0 million
- Items added since original budget
 - Four firefighter/ ALS positions
 - Replacement of a fire engine for Crozet Volunteer Fire Department
 - Funding in the CIP to purchase the Levy property
 - Additional Bright Stars classroom

Budget Calendar for FY 05/06 Budget

- March 9 - Public Hearing on the County Executive's Recommended Budget and CIP
- March 14 - Budget Work Session
- March 16 - Budget Work Session
- March 21 - Budget Work Session
- March 23 - Budget Work Session
- April 6 - Public Hearing on Board's Proposed Budget and 2005 Tax Rate
- April 20 - Board adopts operating and capital budgets