

# Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

January 2005

## Survey Finds 169 Homeless on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

A survey conducted, on November 18, found 102 households, single adults and families were homeless. In total, 169 were without permanent housing, 67 were children. The Homeless may sleep from house to house, in shelters, cars, abandoned or unsafe buildings, or even outdoors. "We were surprised by the large numbers," said Joe Bulin, cochair of the Eastern Shore Homeless Prevention Task Force. "People who are homeless are harder to recognize in rural areas. We as a community must strive to raise public awareness and improve our community programs to help these families."

The survey showed that half of the identified homeless were males and half were females. Three-quarters had a high school degree or less. A majority had lost their housing due to a lack of employment or insufficient funds to sustain their home, a majority will spend the night either in unsafe/abandoned housing or living from house to house, a third was disabled and a third reported substance abuse problems. Ten percent were victims of domestic violence, and ten percent have served our country in the military.

The November 18 survey was intended to be a "snapshot" of the homeless population on that date. Because

of the difficulty in counting in rural areas, it is likely that more families and individuals are homeless than were identified by the survey. The results will be used by the community to prepare a homeless prevention plan and funding applications to the state and federal governments for services and facilities.



The Homeless Task Force enlisted the help of many agencies to conduct the survey, including sheriff and police departments, shelters, soup kitchens, social services, housing and human service agencies. "We want to thank all of those agencies, public workers, and volunteers that helped with this 24-hour survey," said Eleanor Drewniak, also cochair of the Task Force. "We remind you to think about volunteering and donating to those groups that help the homeless, including the Lighthouse Ministries, Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Foodbank of the Eastern Shore, Salvation Army, and the numerous churches on the Shore that provide emergency aid."

To donate or volunteer to help the homeless on the Eastern Shore, call

Lighthouse Ministries	757-787-2535
Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence	757-787-1329
Foodbank of the Eastern Shore	757-787-2557
Salvation Army- Accomack County	757-665-6107
Salvation Army- Northampton County	757-678-5153

# Onancock Gets Grant to Plan Downtown Improvements

The Town of Onancock has received a grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop a revitalization plan for the central portion of their downtown commercial district.

Merchants and staff have been working together to gather information regarding perceptions of downtown, building conditions and availability, marking direction and other information pertinent to the plan.

The Town will contract with a consulting firm to help determine streetscape, infrastructure and façade

improvements to help move the downtown in its chosen direction. One of the major features of the plan will be a feasibility study for the building now occupied by the Accomack County Department of Social Services. This building occupies a prominent place downtown and will be vacated next year.

The Town will use the plan to apply for a 2006 Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development for revitalization.

For more information, contact Kat Edwards at (757)787-2936.

# Counties Agree To Accomack's Withdrawal From ESVPSA

On December 13, 2004, the Northampton County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing and afterward voted to agree to the Accomack Board's request to be allowed to withdraw as a member of the Eastern Shore Public Service Authority. One week later, on December 20, 2004, the Accomack Board of Supervisors, after the required public hearing, voted to withdraw from the Authority.

After a petition to the State Corporation Commission and their concurrence with the split, the Eastern Shore Public Service Authority will be a single county entity.

The Northampton County Board of Supervisors had previously voted the fund the remaining Authority in the event of Accomack's withdrawal.

For more information, contact Artie Miles at (757)787-2936.

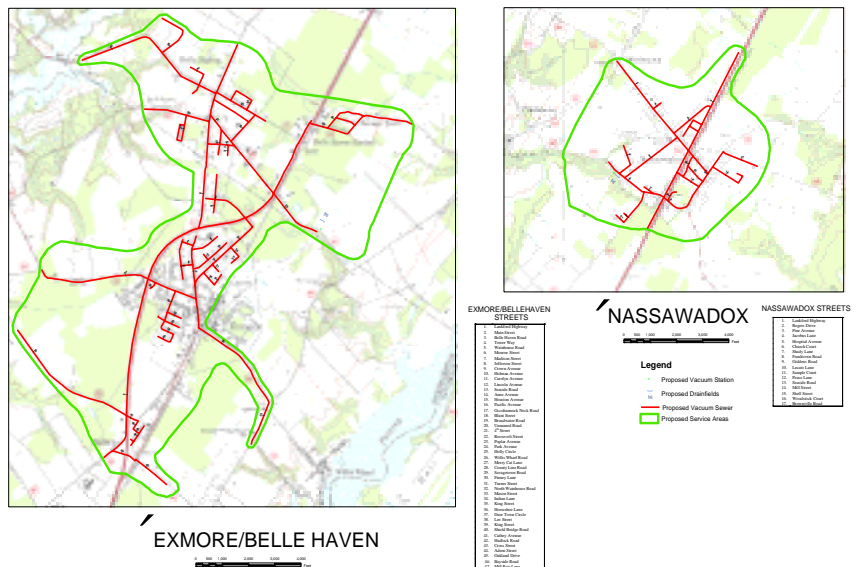
# Northern Northampton Wastewater Project Application Made

On December 14, 2004, the PSA filed an application for funding of the Northern Northampton Wastewater Project through the USDA Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service. The project includes construction of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal facilities in the Exmore/Belle Haven and Nassawadox areas of Northampton and the Belle Haven and Savagetown areas of Accomack.

The proposed service area is currently dependent on conventional septic tanks and drainfields for wastewater disposal. Much of the area involved is intended for development in the Counties comprehensive plans, but is limited due to soils conditions that do not lend themselves to conventional methods of wastewater treatment.

This project protects the community's health by properly treating wastewater that has been receiving minimal treatment and preventing public exposure to the harmful effects of

failing on-site sewage disposal systems. Highly treated wastewater will have far less impact on our sole source drinking water aquifer and the ultimate receiving waters on either side of the Eastern Shore. For more information, contact Artie Miles at (757)787-2936.



Proposed Service Areas of Northern Northampton Wastewater Project

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## Homeless Management Information System Under Development

The HMIS Committee has met to discuss a central HMIS system for the Eastern Shore. The Committee has identified several key service providers as possible HMIS users, and these providers recommend a central HMIS site to input data and maintain the system. The Committee will continue to identify the best course of action for our community with respects an HMIS while we collaborate efforts to eradicate homelessness on the Eastern Shore by developing a Continuum of Care Plan.

For more information, contact Bobbi Jo Wert at (757)787-2936.

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## Position Available Community Development Coordinator

Responsible for providing project management for various federal and state community development projects. Experience in housing and community development, grant applications and grant administration preferred. Bachelors or four years related experience required. Salary range: \$20,000-\$45,000. Send resume by 5:00 p.m., Friday, January 14, 2005, to Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, PO Box 417, Accomac, Virginia 23301. 757-787-2936. EOE.



### How to Contact the A-NPDC

If you have questions or would like to discontinue your subscription, please contact the Planning District Commission.

**Phone** 757-787-2936  
**Toll Free** 866-787-3001  
**E-Mail** [anpdc@a-npdc.org](mailto:anpdc@a-npdc.org)  
**Website** [www.a-npdc.org](http://www.a-npdc.org)

**Accomack-Northampton Planning District  
Commission  
23372 Front Street  
P.O. Box 417  
Accomac, Virginia 23301**

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