

# Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

April 2006

## The Lead Safe Homes Program Gets a Boost

On March 1, 2006 the PDC signed a \$423,380 contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development to reduce lead hazards in 16 homes on the Eastern Shore during a period ending June 30, 2008. This will supplement the CDBG lead grant, under which \$700,000 has been allocated to perform lead abatement in 14 homes and build 4 new homes where existing houses were found to be beyond repair.

Elevated blood lead levels affect almost 14,000 children under age 6 in Virginia; the primary source is dust from lead-based paint used in most homes built before 1978. Lead is also found

in pipes, solder, brass fixtures, some imported jewelry and toys and some imported mini-blinds. Lead dust can contaminate soil and remains volatile for many years. Lead interferes with normal brain development and is associated with permanently reduced IQ, learning disabilities and behavioral disorders. Parents of children at risk should contact their health providers for a blood test. Most children with elevated blood lead levels show no symptoms, and there is no safe level of lead in blood.

The Eastern Shore Lead Safe Homes Program funds will be used to reduce lead hazards through interim

control measures such as paint stabilization, window replacement, soil removal and thorough cleaning performed by contractors certified in safe lead removal.

To be eligible, families must own or rent a home built before 1978, have children under age 6 spending significant time there, and meet HUD income guidelines for low to moderate income households. Blood lead level testing is required, but participation in the program is not limited to children with elevated levels.

For more information or to apply for the Program, call Patti Merritt at (757)787-2936, ext 119.



*(Left) A house that is beginning the Lead Safe Homes Program. (Right) A house that has been completed under the program.*

## PDC Mourns Thomas J. Matthews

The Honorable Thomas J. Matthews, Accomack County Supervisor, passed away on February 28, 2006.

“Tommy Matthews was instrumental in implementing the Horntown CDBG project which resulted in the rebuilding of an entire neighborhood,” David Annis, Director of Housing Production said.

“Tommy worked hard to obtain funds to help rebuild the community of Withams, which included building a sewer system and new streets to benefit the low-income families of that community. He was one of the first to obtain a Self-Help grant that enabled the community of Makemie Park to build a sewer system that would provide indoor plumbing to many families that had never before had indoor bathrooms.

“Tommy knew the families whose houses fronted an impassable dirt lane, and worked for almost two years to bring together the funding needed to turn Raymond Townsend Lane into a paved road. Looking forward, Tommy laid

the groundwork to bring future community improvement funds to areas of East Horntown and Wisharts Point.

“Tommy was always proud of the fact that he was elected to represent a minority-majority district, and was always looking for ways to better the lives of the families he served,” said Annis.

Mr. Matthews served on the Planning District Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Corporation Board and was a member of the Groundwater Committee.

“Tommy Matthews was the champion of affordable housing for Accomack County. His leadership resulted in the elimination of unsafe, unsanitary, and uninhabitable housing in northern Accomack County,” said Executive Director Paul F. Berge.

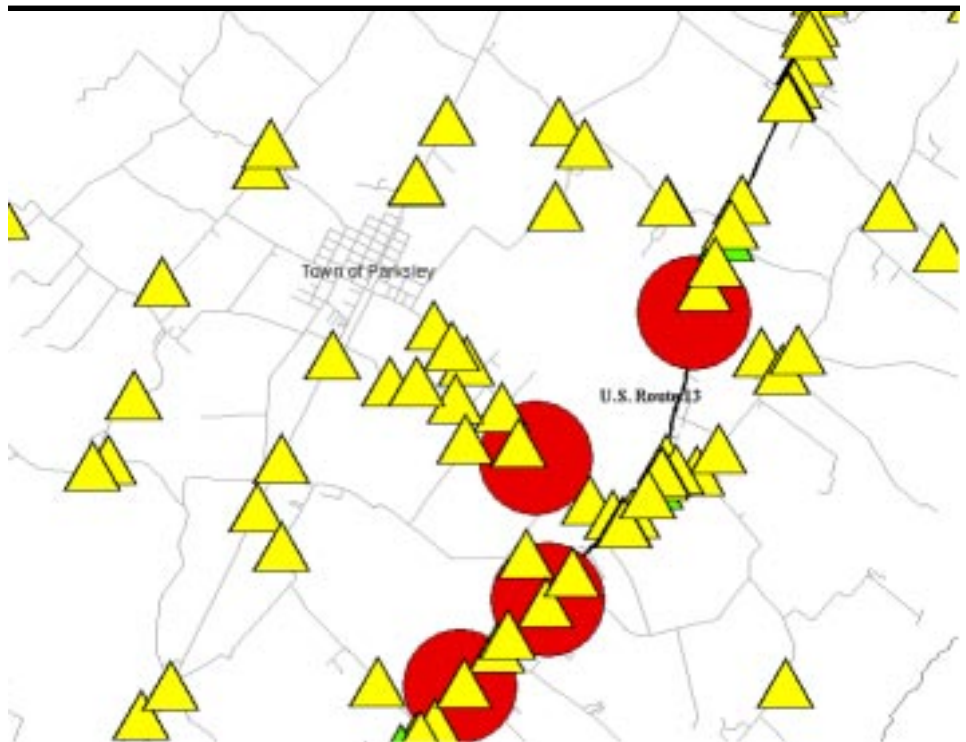
“We will greatly miss his energy, his commitment, and his heart.”

## 589 Non-Fatal Crashes in Accomack

In efforts to increase safety on Route 13 and other local roads, the PDC staff has been working with the local State Police to map all the crash data for 2005.

Staff has collected all the data for Northampton and Accomack County. Accomack County’s 589 crashes have been mapped. Staff has created maps that visualize the areas. These maps show crashes involving deer, single car crashes and crashes involving 2 or more vehicles. All 14 of the the 2005 fatal crashes have also been mapped.

The Virginia State Police and the Virginia Department of Transportation will be able to better identify high-risk areas, leading to increased efforts to improve safety at those locations.



*Detail of 2005 Crashes near the Town of Parksley, Circles indicate Fatal Accidents and Triangles represent Non-Fatal Accidents*

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## **Ground Water Protection Plan Updated**

The Ground Water Protection Plan was finalized on May 5, 1992. In the past 14 years, many of the recommendations have been implemented. Some of the biggest accomplishments include the Chesapeake Bay Program implementation in Northampton and Accomack, large agricultural withdrawals are required to obtain a DEQ permit, both counties have adopted groundwater protection elements into their Zoning Ordinances, several Household Hazardous Waste Collections have been held, and a groundwater information website was established. After reviewing the summary, the Committee identified further actions to protect the groundwater.

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## **Two Disability Transportation Workshops To Be Held**

The PDC is conducting an alternative transportation mode study for persons with disabilities, elderly, low-income and youth populations. The study will help local governments and human service agencies plan for and provide improved transportation by identifying improvements and making recommendations. A workshop will be held on April 6, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. in the Chincoteague Town Office and the other will be April 19, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living, Inc. The public is invited to come and contribute.



### **How to Contact the A-NPDC**

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