

# EDA rejects supers' request for land

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

Negative opinions predominated during the first of two public information sessions Thursday on the proposed juvenile correctional center to be located south of the Town of Windsor.

Days earlier, the Isle of Wight County Economic Development Authority voted not to transfer the property at its Jan. 8 meeting, but plans to meet again to reconsider the action, according to Isle of Wight Assistant County Administrator Don Robertson.

(See related story on page 3)

EDA member Richard J. Holland Jr. said he was a long-time opponent of the correctional center because transferring the property to the state for the facility would mean giving up future tax revenue that would have come from a business if one were to be attracted.

"And we're getting a prison with criminals in our backyard," said Holland, who is also CEO and Chairman of the Board of Farmers Bank.

The EDA currently owns the property, which was purchased by Isle of Wight in 2009.

EDA member Len Alphin was upset over how the proposal has evolved publicly, as well as the loss of potential revenue.

"You can put lipstick on a pig, but this is a prison," said Alphin.

The proposed juvenile correctional center would house 60 male youth, ages 14-20 who have committed felonies, some serious in



Staff photo by Diana McFarland

**Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton answers questions from residents about the proposed juvenile correctional center Thursday.**

nature and could include murder, rape and robbery, said Andrew Block, director of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

Alphin, who had questioned the types of crimes the youth may or may not have committed, said, "Be upfront so everyone knows what we're getting."

Softening a bit, Alphin added

later, "everyone needs a second chance."

Block said the idea was to make a smaller facility closer to family, and since a good amount of Virginia's youthful offenders are from the Hampton Roads region, this location was a good pick.

Block said that historically,

the state's current juvenile correctional system has a recidivism rate of 75 percent within the first three years of release, but this new plan is an attempt to do a better job at rehabilitating the youth.

"The majority of our people would like you to do better some-

# County EDA owns the land

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

The Isle of Wight County Economic Development Authority owns the property being eyed for the state juvenile correctional facility and that is why it is involved in the process.

Isle of Wight County purchased the property in 2009 as part of Phase III of the intermodal park and deeded it to the EDA.

At its Jan. 8 meeting, the EDA voted not to convey the property and did not indicate if that was the state or the county, with either party being an option for this project, said Isle of Wight Assistant County Administrator Don Robertson.

The motion, made by EDA member Richard J. Holland Jr., indicated that the EDA wanted to wait until after the public information session before taking definitive action on whether or not to convey the property, said Robertson.

Of the seven-member EDA, Ron Pack abstained

from the Jan. 8 vote and James Ford voted against it, according to Robertson.

Voting not to convey the property at the Jan. 8 meeting was Holland, Len Alphin, Diana Beale, Carroll E. Keen Jr. and Tim Hillegass, according to Robertson.

Robertson said the EDA is planning to have a called meeting to further consider a decision on transferring the land.

Concerns raised by the EDA at its Jan. 8 meeting centered on the lack of tax revenue the project, being a state facility, would generate, as well as the nature of the project. Some members of the EDA criticized the county's original purchase of the land due to its wetlands issues and that the parcel's best acreage was going to the correctional facility, as well as how the project was introduced to the public.

EDA members were also frustrated with how they were receiving information

from county officials.

"I learn more from The Smithfield Times than I do staff. If you want to know what's going on, read The Smithfield Times," said Alphin.

A similar sequence of events ended the project in Chesapeake — the original location for the proposed juvenile correctional center.

The Department of Juvenile Justice had worked with the city for a few years to build a joint facility on city-owned property, said Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton.

However, a super-majority vote was needed to transfer the property to the state and that failed, he said.

Since then, the state has been skittish about that sort of situation unfolding because it doesn't want a repeat in Isle of Wight County, said Robertson.

If this fails, it would not bode well for the county's relationship with the state, he said.

The property was deeded

to the EDA to make property transfers easier for any type of project, said Keaton at the public information session held Jan. 10 on the proposed youth correctional facility.

One component of that arrangement is that no public hearing is legally required if the transfer is for a state facility.

However, the Board of Supervisors can hold a public hearing if it deems it necessary or desirable.

Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree told the audience at the public information session, that contrary to popular belief, "it's not a done deal."

Acree said the county could hold a public hearing if that is what is wanted.

Holland Jr. said residents don't want this and that the public information session was merely, "after the fact."

"This is a show," he said, adding that having a formal public hearing now would mean "zero."

## Detention

• Continued from p. 1

where else," said Holland.

"You are doing a terrible job," said Holland about the recidivism rate.

The proposed facility would be a new model for the state, combining incarceration with job training, educational and athletic opportunities and medical and counseling services in a smaller group treatment setting.

The facility is expected to generate 240 jobs, as well as the Commonwealth covering three quarters of the cost of running a water and sewer line down Route 258 — lines that could also be made available to homes and businesses. Isle of Wight is pitching in \$500,000 for the utilities, as well as donating 20 acres of land.

County officials have also indicated that another business is interested in lo-

cating next to the proposed correctional center.

Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton said the added jobs, the water and sewer line and the possibility of additional meals tax revenues in Windsor were considered the "return on investment."

Other residents were concerned with their property values. According to a map provided by county officials, there are three

single-family homes located within a half mile of the proposed facility.

Other maps showed what is located within a half mile of the state's current juvenile correctional facility, Bon Air, in Chesterfield County, as well as the Western Tidewater Regional Jail for adults in Suffolk.

Both facilities have residential neighborhoods within a half-mile radius, with median assessed values ranging from \$173,000 - \$245,250.

The neighborhood in Suffolk was built after the jail was constructed.

The Bon Air facility opened in 1914 on what used to be a farm, said Block. Since then, the area has filled in with residential neighborhoods and busi-

## Detention Center info flow criticized

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

Several individuals complained about how news of the proposed juvenile correctional facility was rolled out to the public during the Jan. 10 information session.

Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton said conversations began in December 2017 and quickly involved the Windsor Town Council.

Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree suggested including the Town Council because he knew the idea of a prison near town would be controversial.

The Smithfield Times initially reported on the proposal in February 2018 based on a comment from a Windsor Town Council member.

Keaton pointed out that the Town Council signed a letter of support in April 2018 approving the project — a move needed to get the General Assembly to change the funding appropriation to Isle of Wight County. That move was finalized in June, he said.

As soon as the budget appropriate was complete, the county and the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice held a public meeting in Windsor in July.

Isle of Wight County Economic Development Authority member Richard J. Holland Jr. said the Town Council doesn't want it now.

"They're bitterly opposed," he said.

Former Windsor Mayor Rita Richardson admitted to signing the letter, but said the concept seemed different at the time — something to help youth and seniors and get utilities to Phase III of the intermodal park.

However, once it was revealed that the property may have wetlands issues, questions began to arise, she said.

The support letter was based on information the Town Council had at that time, said Richardson.

The letter, dated April 10, and addressed to Del. Emily Brewer, R-64<sup>th</sup>, said "as you may be aware, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice is proposing a 60-bed juvenile detention center in Isle of Wight County. Based off the information we have received, we believe the project will have a positive economic benefit on the town, the county and the Hampton Roads region." The letter went on to say the town was supportive of the state budget amendment to make it happen.

A prior letter, dated Feb. 27, signed by then Board of Supervisors Chairman Rudolph Jefferson, stated that the county had "received very favorable feedback from the members of the Windsor Town Council."

The wetlands issue arose from a change in federal law concerning what is considered wetlands in 2011 — a change that pushed larger parts of Phase III of the intermodal park under that designation.

However, the county has received a preliminary determination from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would allow for construction of the facility on 20 acres on the Route 258 parcel.

## Letters

• Continued from p. 2

Regional Medical Center in Newport News, in the emergency room, second floor neurological center

residents are invited to a "Four Chaplains Day Service" at the Healing Waters Center, 12712 Smiths Neck Road, Carrollton on Jan. 27 at 1:30 p.m. The ser-

rifices of Chaplains John P. Washington, George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode and Clark V. Poling in World War II has been acknowledged nationally

## Lunches

# Supervisors respond to detention facility critics

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

Ridiculous, inaccurate and inappropriate were some of the terms used by members of the Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors to describe reactions from some community members about the proposed youth correctional center near Windsor.

The Board took turns speaking out about the proposed facility Thursday during its regular meeting.

Chairman William McCarty said he allowed the comments because it's important for residents to hear the Board's reactions.

The Board was responding to comments made at a pair of public forums held earlier this month in Windsor.

Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree said the perception is the county is rushing this project and its being "rammed down" people's throats and that it's a done deal.

Acree said the Board should slow down and let people get their questions answered.

At the same time, there are a lot of positives to the project, he said.

Hardy District Supervisor Rudolph Jefferson said residents were "inaccurate" and "inappropriate" in characterizing Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton as acting alone in the

process of working with the state.

The county administrator works at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, said Jefferson.

Jefferson said the pros of the project outweigh the cons, 10 to one.

It's a way to educate and train troubled youth and bring them back into the community, said Jefferson, adding that Windsor will benefit from the 240 jobs the facility will bring.

Smithfield Supervisor Dick Grice took "personal exception" to the notion that the Board had not been transparent, particularly with regards to including the Windsor Town Council in the

• See **RESPONSE**, p. 7



# Response

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process.

“We did include them from day one,” he said, adding that it was “ridiculous” to think that Isle of Wight was rushing the project along.

No matter how many public meetings the Board has, people who are opposed will likely remain opposed, said Grice, citing the long-standing controversy over the Nike Park bike trail.

Those opposed to the trail continue to feel that way despite the passage of years and a plethora of information about how and why the money was spent.

Grice said the businesses in the intermodal park

could come and go, taking tax revenue and jobs, while a state facility is there to stay.

Other companies can also sue the county, such as International Paper, causing legal fees, but the state does not do that, he added.

Grice said giving away land is also a way to attract businesses and has been done in the past.

Meanwhile, the county has sunk more than \$300,000 to create pad-ready sites in another portion of the intermodal park that already has utilities, and there have been no offers at all, he said.

With regards to the purchase of the land being eyed for the project, and the subsequent criticism about the amount of wet-

lands, Grice said a previous Board bought it, and besides, where were the Economic Development Authority members when that was happening?

Two members of the county’s EDA have been particularly vocal about their opposition to the project.

Grice criticized those who say they do not want a correctional center in their backyards, noting that there was only one residential house that may fit that description — and it’s across the highway.

The property being eyed is along Route 258 and is mostly surrounded by farm fields and forest.

“I’m opposed to some of the ridiculousness for rea-

sons against this. Not in my backyard is not a reason,” said Grice.

McCarty reiterated that the Board has been transparent and did include the Windsor Town Council in the process from the beginning.

McCarty defended the expenditure of \$500,000 to help with the cost of building water and sewer lines to the project, as none exists along that portion of Route 258 right now.

The \$500,000 allows the lines to be big enough to accommodate other users, he said.

“Sometimes in the noise of what people may think the facts may be lost,” he said.

# EDA will deed land to IW

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

The Isle of Wight Economic Development Authority voted 5-2 to give the land for a youth correctional center back to the county so the plans can go through an official public hearing process.

After voting against the move on Jan. 23, EDA member Richard J. Holland Jr. resigned. EDA member Len Alphin also voted against giving the land back to

## Windsor members resign following 5-2 vote

the county and has since resigned from the EDA.

"I don't kiss the ring," Holland said of the Board of Supervisors' request to convey the land back to the county rather than the state.

If the EDA had given the land to the state, the public hearing process would not be required. The county had planned to host

information sessions instead, and so far, it has held two.

Holland said he was chosen to represent his "constituents" in Windsor, and they do not want a prison near town.

EDA members are not elected, they are appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

The proposed 60-bed youth cor-

rectional center is being eyed for 20 acres of county-owned property south of the Town of Windsor.

"Prisons have a stigma that people don't want to be around," Holland said.

Holland predicted the public hearing process would be a "sham" and a "masquerade."

Prior to the vote, EDA Chair-

man Ron Pack went over the boundaries and duties of the Authority, saying it originated as a way to issue bonds for business, including his own, Smithfield Station.

After the county began buying property for its intermodal

• **See EDA, p. 3**

# Regional jail not a bother to neighbors

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

Residents asked about living next to the Western Tidewater Regional Jail in Suffolk were generally unconcerned about the facility.

Living next to a correctional facility in terms of safety and property values are some of the top concerns surrounding plans to build a youth correctional facility outside the Town of Windsor.

The Smithfield Times knocked on the doors of 15 residents of Riverwood last week and spoke to eight — all living on the street closest to the jail — about what it's like living next to the jail.

Riverwood, a development of about 140 houses, was built after the jail opened, which was in the early 1990s. The average

sales price for homes in the neighborhood is \$240,390, according to Isle of Wight County staff.

"It's the best neighbor you could ask for. They keep to themselves," said Noelle Rhoads, who moved to Riverwood in 2000.

Residents also figured that if anyone did escape, their first move would be to get as far away from the jail as possible and coming into Riverwood would not be part of their plans.

Ira Sadler, who happens to work at the state prison in Sussex, said the jail wasn't a consideration when he purchased his home 18 years ago.

He can only recall one incident about 15 years ago when one inmate did escape and Sadler saw him running through the neighborhood.

But he was caught, said

Sadler, adding that has been the only escape incident he can recall.

Colonel William Smith, WTRJ superintendent, said that is the only escape he can recall and he's been with the jail for eight years. In that case, the inmate ran out of the sally port area due to a broken door and was caught, he said.

JoAnn Volz has lived in the neighborhood for 17 years and said she sometimes sees those who have been released walking along Hannah Hunt Boulevard, the main road outside the neighborhood, but that's about it.

Once, many years ago, a released man asked her to call his wife to pick him up and she did, said Volz, adding that was the only direct contact she's ever had with a former prisoner.

Volz said the exasperated



Staff photo by Diana McFarland

**The Riverview community was built near a regional jail that is co-owned by Isle of Wight County.**

wife told him to walk up to the corner where it meets Godwin Boulevard.

Smith said inmates who are released are advised to walk toward Godwin Boulevard on the right side of the road for safety as well as to eliminate any interaction with Riverwood residents.

Smith said some inmates walk away from the jail, but most get a ride.

In his eight years, Smith said he has not received a complaint from anyone in the neighborhood, adding that a jail employee lives in Riverwood.

Toni Simms, who has lived in Riverwood for two years, said they did not even notice the jail until after they closed on the house.

Tara Ralph's parents have lived in the neighborhood since the beginning, and she and her family moved to Riverwood more than four years ago.

Ralph said she hasn't put any more restrictions on her kids than she would anywhere else and said Haloween in Riverwood is like any other neighborhood.

"We don't really notice," said Ralph of the proximity

of the jail, adding that at least those in the jail have been caught compared to potential criminals still on the streets.

Gary Boucher has lived in Riverwood for three years and was initially apprehensive about buying a house next to a jail, but that concern has long since dissipated.

Instead, Boucher figures criminals will stay away from Riverwood because of the number of police cars that drive to and from the jail.

It's a deterrent, he said.

## EDA

• Continued from p. 1

park, the EDA (formerly the Industrial Development Authority) was used to hold, manage, maintain and dispose of property purchased by the county, said Pack.

Pack said it was not the duty of the EDA to decide what business comes to the county, nor was it to change the county's mind on a plan of action.

Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton went over a requested list of pros and cons of the project.

Pros included having the state pay two-thirds of the cost of running a water and sewer line to the property, as well as the 240 jobs and the economic activity

those would generate, said Keaton.

The utility lines would be large enough to serve other residential and business properties, said Keaton, adding that the property was not likely to be developed by a private business due to the lack of utilities.

Isle of Wight officials have also stated that another business is interested in locating next to the correctional center.

The utility lines make the property marketable, said Keaton.

The cons include the negative perception of a prison, but Keaton said the reality is that the Bon Air youth correctional center in

Chesterfield, or the Western Tidewater Regional Jail in Suffolk, have not hampered residential or business development.

It's a clean industry with well-paying jobs that will stay here, said Keaton, referring to the fact that private business can come and go, taking the jobs with them.

The average pay has been estimated at \$60,000 a year.

Isle of Wight County Director of Economic Development Chris Morello said the proposed facility would also have a masonry wall around it with a top that curves inward, making it impossible to climb and escape.

"It's not a barbed wire facility," he said concerning questions about safety and

security.

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Director Andrew Block has stated that since Bon Air put up a fence around its facility in Chesterfield, there have been no escapes.

However, Block on Friday would not deny or confirm the material or design of the fence to encircle the facility, stating it is still early in the design process.

The proposed residential facility was once slated to be built in Chesapeake, along with the city's own detention center, but those plans fell through when the project failed to get the necessary super majority vote by the city council.

Chesapeake had offered the land as well as \$7-8 million as an incentive for the

state to locate its new facility in the city. The utilities were already there, said Keaton.

When that deal fell through, Isle of Wight approached the state, and based on the offer proffered by Chesapeake, the county offered the land and a portion of the cost of the utilities, said Keaton.

Isle of Wight County has spent about \$10 million purchasing property around Windsor for its intermodal park — originally devised to work in conjunction with the expansion of the Port of Virginia.

The idea was that Isle of Wight could become home to warehouse facilities de-

signed to handle the freight coming and going from the Port due to its location along Route 460.

So far, that hasn't materialized. Since it began building its intermodal park, Isle of Wight has attracted three businesses — Cost-Plus World Market, Safco and Keurig Green Mountain, but nothing since 2012.

Holland said previous Boards of Supervisors had been known for certain things, such as buying the Stoup property for \$1 million and signing on with the now notorious Norfolk water deal.

This Board will be known for bringing a prison to Windsor, he said.

## Letters

'No excuse'



Staff photo by Diana McFarland

**One of the residential units at the Bon Air youth correctional facility. Designed like an adult jail, the unit has a center open area with chairs and tables. Individual rooms with locking doors surround the area. The plan for Isle of Wight includes more opportunity for natural light.**

# Transformation

*Isle of Wight County is eyed as part of the plan to change juvenile justice in Virginia*

**By Diana McFarland**  
Managing editor

Missouri's approach to juvenile justice has been called a 'guiding light' and Virginia is one of many states to follow its lead.

The Missouri approach called for therapeutic treatment coupled with confinement, and building on that model, Virginia has added its own touches, such as more clinical staff and a robust set of educational and post-secondary offerings, according Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Director Andrew Block.

One key component being eyed as part of Virginia's juvenile justice transformation is slated for Isle of Wight County.

Virginia's current secure residential correctional center, Bon Air, has 270 beds and houses male and female youth, ages 14-21, with an average age of 17.

Located in Chesterfield County, Bon Air was designed to resemble adult facilities and Virginia is looking to move away from that model for its youth in the future,



**The Bon Air youth correctional facility in Chesterfield County is surrounded by a tall chain link fence and razor wire. The proposed facility in Isle of Wight County will also be fenced, but the final material for that has not yet been decided.**

said Block.

The proposed Isle of Wight County facility will have 60 beds divided into five cottages with 12 beds each and serve boys only,

said Block.

Each boy will have his own room with a lockable door, along with a common area, staff offices, a treatment space and an attached outdoor space, said Block.

There will be a main dining hall, a separate school building and recreational area so that the youth can get fresh air and sunshine rather than being inside all day, he said.

The units will be kept to 12 boys or less to increase familiarity and trust between the youth and the adults, said Block, adding it's harder to generate those attributes with more kids.

Each unit will have an assigned clinician, who will work with the youth on individual needs, such as anger management, aggression replacement therapy, substance abuse and family therapy, said Block.

Academic coursework will also be individualized as many kids come to a correctional setting several years behind, he said.

The goal is to earn a high school diploma, and beyond that, college credits or vocational training.

Vocational training will be tai-

## Public hearing

The Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors is having a public hearing Thursday, Feb. 21 on giving the land to the state for a new 60-bed residential youth correctional facility south of Windsor. The meeting begins at 6 p.m. at the Isle of Wight County courthouse complex.

lored to the area, and in Hampton Roads, welding is one area being pursued, said Block.

Staff members will be in the cottages around the clock with a minimum of two on duty. Each unit will be managed by a community coordinator, and there will be a therapist and case manager assigned as well, said Block.

It appears that a higher ratio of adults per child is most effective for treatment and supervision, said Block.

"This is hard work on the staff," he said.

The proposed facility in Isle of Wight County is expected to employ 240 people.

• See TRANSFORM p. 13



**Youth leadership at Bon Air, from left: Jaquan Brehon and Sage Williams with Community Manager Rukiya Bellamy.**

## Creating a structured life while confined

**By Diana McFarland**  
Managing editor

A young inmate last week eagerly described how the four phases unfold in his unit at the Bon Air Youth Correctional Center in Chesterfield.

Phase 1, "Rookies," lets newcomers learn the ropes, explained Carter, whose last name is being withheld because he is an inmate at the facility.

Phase 2 is important because kids need feedback, and Phase 3 is when kids begin to face the impact of their actions on their victims and learn empathy, he said.

Completion of each phase is accompanied by a reward, such as switching out a blanket for a comforter, said Carter.

As part of Phase 4, called "Big Dawg," inmates write a letter to themselves about what

they have learned and what they did wrong. That is mailed home so it can be read after being released, said Carter.

Carter enthusiastically described each phase and with great detail. When he was finished, Franklin Wilkes, resident specialist II, rushed over to give him a hug.

Wilkes said Carter was hard to reach when he first arrived at Bon Air and seeing him aptly give a presentation "brought tears to my eyes just to listen to him," he said, wiping his eyes.

Bon Air, founded in 1910, is located in Chesterfield County and houses youth ages 14-21, with an average age of 17. Those at Bon Air have committed crimes from misdemeanors to serious felonies.

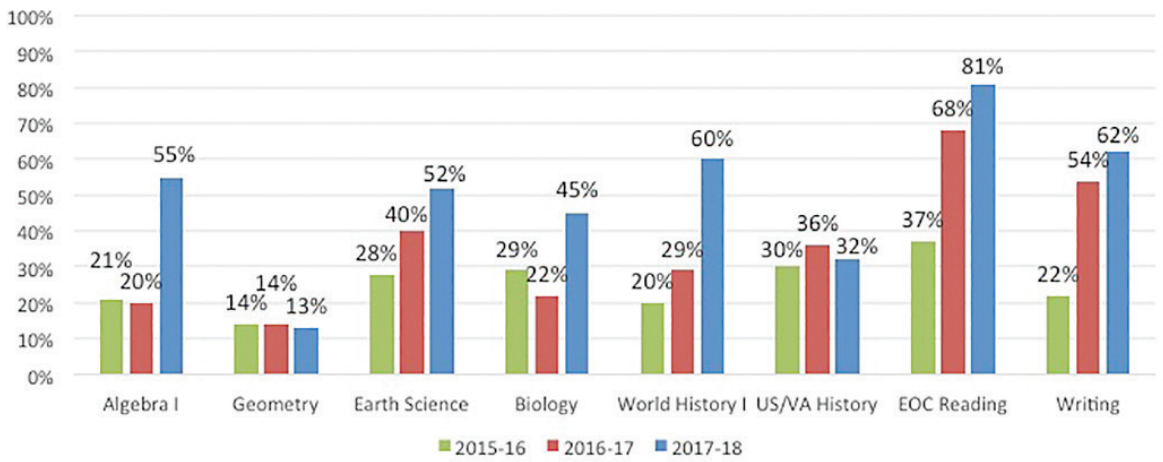
The facility is in the pro-  
• See STRUCTURE, p. 17



**An unoccupied room at Bon Air. The youth sleep on a mattress (shown folded on the floor) on the platform in the rear. This room has a sink and toilet, but those in Isle of Wight would not. Instead, youth would use a communal bathroom. The window would also be larger, but still secure, to allow for more light, according to Director of Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Andrew Block.**



# SOL Pass Rates by School Year



**While the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice is patterning its transformation on the Missouri model, it has placed a greater emphasis on education, according to Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Director Andrew Block. The graph above shows how Standards of Learning scores have increased for youth in its care. Students at Bon Air can receive a standard or advanced diploma, graduating from the Yvonne B. Miller High School.**

## Transform

• Continued from p. 11

Those who are chosen to go to the Isle of Wight facility will be the kids with the highest needs on multiple levels and who need the highest level of services to be successful upon release, said Block.

The Isle of Wight facility will be fenced and use state-of-the-art security measures, said Block, pointing out that since the fence was erected at Bon Air in the 1990s, there have been no escapes.

Meanwhile, Bon Air will remain open and the state is looking to build another residential facility like that proposed for Isle of Wight in central Virginia, said Block.

Overall, the idea is to create smaller facilities closer to the homes and families of the youth they serve. Also, if the youth are closer to home, they can begin working with service providers before they are released, easing the transition, said Block.

For example, prior to 2017, Virginia had three facilities that provided multi-system and functional therapies, and those were located in or around Richmond, according to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Transformation Plan 2018 Update.

By the end of 2018, the department had developed 13 teams and the infrastructure necessary to serve 113 of 135 cities and counties in the Commonwealth, according to the plan update.

### The Missouri model

Missouri's juvenile correctional system is based on six core characteristics, according to a report by The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The first is that youth are confined in smaller facilities closer to their homes and families rather than large, prisonlike training schools.

The largest youth correctional facility in Missouri has 50 beds.

The state also manages non-residential community care programs for the least serious offenders, group homes for less serious and moderate security facilities for up to 50 youth. Many of the latter are located on state parks, according to the report.

For the most serious offenders, there are secure care facilities.

Youth in Missouri are placed in highly supervised small groups offering extensive individual care rather than being confined in a cell or left to fend for themselves among their peers. The small groups conduct all parts of the day together and treatment is woven into that model, according to the report.

Aggression and emotional abuse from peers is controlled through constant adult supervision and positive peer relationships. Coercive restraining techniques have been replaced by intensive supervision, according to the report.

The Missouri model helps youth achieve academic, pre-vocational and communication skills, as well as an understanding of the roots of the behavior that led them to delinquency in the first place.

Finally, the model provides considerable support and supervision once the young person is released, according to the report.

Block said it has taken two years for the state to convert its residential units to the community treatment model.

The move to a smaller facility in Isle of Wight County is a further realization of the state's plan to reform its juvenile justice system, a

process that began in 2015.

So far, the number of detainments, as well as the average daily detention population, has decreased by about 20 percent from fiscal year 2015 to 2018, according to the DJJ 2018 Transformation Update.

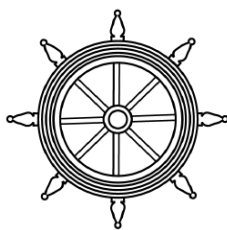
Also on the decrease is the rate of aggression and violence, use of force by staff, disciplinary reports with isolation and worker's compensation claims, according to the report.

During community

meetings about the Isle of Wight facility, Block stated that the three-year rearrest rate has historically been about 75 percent — with that being a more rigorous measure than incarceration.

However, due to declining number of youth in the juvenile justice system, the number of youth rearrested from both probation and direct care decreased by 22.5 and 24.6 percent, respectively, since 2015, according to the update.

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Staff photo by Diana McFarland

**Quilting and upholstery instructor Franklin Harvey shows off one of the quilts made by youth at the Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center. In addition to quilting, the youth can learn to do upholstery and embroidery in preparation for jobs once released.**

## Structure

• Continued from p. 11

cess of transforming its approach to juvenile rehabilitation from a traditional correctional system to the community treatment model that got its start in Missouri. (See related story above).

The change takes on many forms, from top-down to student-led.

Sage Williams, 18, is the president of the Student Government Association at Bon Air, and Jaquan Brehon, 19, is “governor” of District 3.

Williams, who was elected to his position by the other inmates, explains the structure of the SGA, which has a highly defined chain of command.

Under the president there is a vice president and four governors over four districts, which are made up of several units. Each unit has a mayor, said Williams.

As issues arise, they are worked through the chain of command as resolutions are sought, said Williams.

The association has most recently formed a family engagement committee on how to improve family relations, said Williams.

The student government is also consulted when the facility seeks to change a policy, such as room confinement, said Andrew Block, director of the Vir-

### The proposed Isle of Wight facility at a glance

- The site being eyed for the facility is located south of the Town of Windsor on 20 acres of county-owned property along Route 258.
- It is planned as a 60-bed residential facility designed to be close to the homes and families of its inmates.
- The Virginia General Assembly included funding for the project effective last year, and the state is contributing three quarters of the cost of installing water and sewer to the site. Isle of Wight is contributing the land and \$500,000 to the utilities, which will be able to be used by other residences and businesses.
- The facility is expected to provide for 240 jobs with an average salary of \$60,000 a year.
- The facility will be fully fenced and employ the latest in security technology.

ginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

The student government was founded in 2016 and its first president has since been released from Bon Air and is now a reservist in the military, said JROTC instructor Richard Pittman.

Williams and Brehon said the level of support they have received at Bon Air has been helpful in terms of increasing interpersonal skills and offering more opportunities to advance themselves in preparation for the day they are released.

Being involved with the student government allows

them to spread that message to other inmates as they arrive at Bon Air, said Williams.

“We’re doing it right here at Bon Air,” said Williams.

#### School days

Williams wants to go into business when he is released. He earned his high school diploma at Bon Air and has so far completed six college credits.

Since he has already graduated high school, Williams works five days a week at the facility’s advertising and design section, creating materials for use in the agency and beyond.

The section uses software currently used by designers outside Bon Air, such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign.

Brehon has also graduated high school, is certified in CPR, OSHA and Healthcare and wants to join the U.S. Merchant Marines when he is released.

The agency has been working on increasing graduation rates, and inmates can earn a standard or advanced diploma or a GED, said Block adding that 90 percent of those eligible to graduate have done so.

In addition to academic classes, inmates can obtain certificates in barbering, upholstery, industrial sewing machine use, automotive upholstery and more.

Those that receive their

• See STRUCTURE, p. 20

# Structure

• Continued from p. 17

certification in barbering leave Bon Air with \$1,000 in tools so they can get a job, said instructor Franklin Harvey.

Bon Air leads the state in those obtaining their barbering license and that also leads to lower recidivism, said Block.

Bon Air has a JROTC unit where inmates earn ranks and learn about the military.

In the quilting and upholstery class, inmates are currently working on quilts to enter in the Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival at the Hampton Coliseum, which they will also attend, said instructor Roy Mitchell.

In addition to quilting and upholstery, inmates can learn embroidery and do a lot of work for the agency, said Mitchell.

Jobs are also available at Bon Air in the dining hall, as well as grounds maintenance and janitorial, said Block.

## **Community treatment model**

Woven into the day is a wide-ranging set of structures designed to support the inmates on multiple levels, such as the “Cougar Creed,” which outlines an acceptable list of classroom behaviors such as not having physical contact with others and attempting any given assignment.

The PBIS model, which stands for Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, is also used in public schools.

Behavior Analytical Service Manager Autumn Kaufman said that in January, no inmate had to leave a classroom due to a behavioral issue. Overall, it has decreased the time inmates have to leave a classroom for behavioral issues by 50-70 percent, said Kaufman.

Inmates earn points for good behavior and can ex-

change those for rewards, such as a special hygiene items, she said.

On the unit level, each inmate has 15-20 adults for support, and that can include family members, said Community Manager Rukiya Bellamy.

Each unit is made up of 12-14 youth, with the ideal number being nine to 10, she said.

For those who are staying at the unit level, they have their own room and can personalize the walls with approved designs and illustrations to soften the prison-like atmosphere, said Bellamy.

Other unit arrangements include three open bays, which are like military barracks, a unit for the facility’s female population, two units for those with cognitive and mental health issues and three units for sex offenders.

Some single occupancy units have a sink and toilet, while others do not.

All were designed like adult jails and prisons and the goal is to move away from that, said Block.

The first unit to fully employ the new community treatment model two years ago is a stand-alone brick residential unit with the remnants of a summer garden in front.

Inside, the unit has an open meeting area with “words of wisdom” painted on the walls from former inmates and staff for those who are currently living there.

The residential hall has single occupancy rooms and a communal bathroom. Each room has a desk and a dresser and the inmate is allowed to decorate the walls with approved designs. The unit also includes a treatment room.

The facility began train-

ing under the community treatment model in 2015. Prior to the switch, the emphasis was safety, so there were a lot of room checks and kids behind locked doors, said Bellamy.

With the new model, staff can more spontaneously interact and engage the youth, teaching appropriate behaviors as the situation arises, said Bellamy.

Before that change, any interaction was more rigidly approached, she said.

Resident Specialist II Marquisha Jenkins described a unit “town hall meeting” that was to be held later that day. During the meeting, a wide range of issues would be discussed, as well as going over the accomplishments of each inmate, she said.

“It’s sort of like a family meeting,” said Jenkins.

With its emphasis on building relationships, the new community treatment model has also cut down on staff turnover, said Block.

Working in a correctional facility is one of the toughest jobs there is, and it’s made harder because those employees want to change lives, he said.

Part of the move to the community model included changing staff titles from the correctional mode — major, sergeant, juvenile correctional officer — to titles and roles such as community manager and resident specialist. Uniforms were retooled to be more casual, such as cargo pants and polo shirts. And as security staff transform to the new model, the work shifts decreased from 12 hours to eight hours a day.

Block said that not only does the facility work to rehabilitate the youth, it also works to advance and promote its employees.

“It makes me so proud,” said Bellamy of how Unit 54 has evolved with the new

model.

“It’s outside the box what you can do with this program,” she said.

Block said the overall goal is to make the kids accountable for what they have done and to administer the appropriate punishment, but at the same time, show them what life can be like in the future.

Williams and Brehon said the one of the keys to not returning to prison is to change their environment once they get released.

Brehon said moving to a new place would help, as well as continuing to do positive things.

Williams said he’s had to change how he thinks, from a “boyish mindset” to being “strong-minded” and working toward positive personal goals.

“Some people are just a negative influence,” he said.

# Electric co-op looked at locating to IW site

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

Community Electric Cooperative has explored the property alongside the proposed youth correctional center site, but it is only one of other potential future sites to which the utility might relocate, according to spokesperson Jessica Parr.

What has only been referred to as “Project Bolt” by Isle of Wight County officials was seemingly revealed during the Feb. 12 Windsor Town Council meeting, but Parr said that saying it is the new business for that property is “not factual.”

“We may ultimately find that remaining in our current location is best at this time,” she said.

Isle of Wight County has been working with the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice to build a 60-bed correctional facility on 20 acres of property south of the Town of Windsor. During public meetings, county officials have also stated that another business has looked at locating next to the facility, referring to it only as “Project Bolt.”

Located along Route 258, the property is part of Phase III of Isle of Wight’s intermodal park — large swaths of county-owned property originally purchased to bring commercial business to the county.

Conversation concerning Community Electric swirled at the Windsor Town Council meeting as part of a rising tide of public opposition for the project.

Isle of Wight Assistant County Administrator Don Robertson said it is not true that the Isle of Wight Economic Development

# Co-op

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• **Continued from p. 1**

Authority has transferred the property to Community Electric.

The EDA did vote to transfer the 20 acres to the county for the youth correctional center rather than to the state so it could go through the public hearing process. A public hearing on transferring the land to the state for that purpose is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 21, 6 p.m., at the courthouse complex.

The 20 acres is part of a larger 139-acre parcel, some of which is wetlands.

Parr said Community Electric has had a few confidential conversations with the EDA about relocating.

Robertson said those would not be characterized as negotiating.

The EDA is made up of seven members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. After the vote to transfer the land back to the county, two members, Richard J. Holland Jr. and Len Alphin, resigned. Both were bitterly opposed to the youth correctional center coming to Isle of Wight County.

The county purchased the land several years ago and had transferred it to the EDA as a way to easily facilitate new business com-

ing to the county, such as cutting out public hearings, if needed.

Also stated during the Windsor Town Council meeting was that Isle of Wight wants to use Community Electric's current location for construction of a county maintenance facility.

Robertson said he doesn't know if that's true or not. He said there's been some preliminary discussion in general but nothing agreed to. Even so, it is far too early to suggest that as a possibility, he said.

Robertson doesn't disagree that Community Electric's current location, the corner of Routes 258 and 460, is prime real estate for commercial purposes and that using it for a county maintenance facility isn't its best and highest use.

Community Electric currently owns the property and there have been no conversations about the

county purchasing it, said Robertson.

Robertson said he doesn't know who "Project Bolt" is because the economic development staff keeps prospective businesses a secret.

Community Electric is a tax paying entity, providing \$142,959 in real estate and personal property tax revenues to the county a year, according to Isle of Wight County Commissioner of Revenue Gerald Gwaltney.

Community Electric pays \$12,500 for the public service corporation tax to the Town of Windsor, said Town Manager Michael Stallings.

The proposed center is an attempt to make youth facilities smaller and closer to the homes of its inmates. Employing a new model of detention, the smaller facility will focus on academic and vocational education, athletics, as well as treatment and counseling.

## Facility

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• **Continued from p. 1**

ty had deeded the property, about 20 acres, to the appointed body years ago as a way to more easily facilitate bringing new business in Isle of Wight. The original

plan was for the EDA to directly deed the property to the state for the correctional center, but after much public opposition, it sent it back to Isle of Wight, triggering the need for a public hearing.

# Questions collected for IW Board hearing

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

WINDSOR — Questions, concerns and comments about the proposed youth correctional center Monday ran the gamut — from an inquiry about Isle of Wight’s return on investment to accusations of inviting “slime” and “animals” into the community.

The town hall was hosted by the Windsor Town Council as a way to gather information for Thursday’s public hearing before the Board of Supervisors.

The issue is whether Isle of Wight should deed

a portion of its intermodal park property to the state to build a 60-bed residential youth correctional center.

The 20-acres is located about two miles south of Route 460 along Route 258.

Windsor Mayor Glyn Willis said he would take the questions compiled during the meeting to the Board for consideration.

The Board is expected to take a final vote on the project at its March meeting, although it can also do so after Thursday’s hearing.

The Board of Supervisors meeting begins at 6 p.m. at the county Court-

house complex.

Many of the concerns expressed Monday centered on security and the possibility of an escape by the youth incarcerated at the facility.

Andrew Block, director of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, said that in the 20-plus years that the state’s Bon Air facility has had a fence, there have been no escapes and that the new facility would have a state-of-the-art security system, as well as a fence. Bon Air is currently the state’s residential facility in Chesterfield and is considerably larger than that

proposed for Isle of Wight.

Others were worried that those who were released would hang out in Windsor and do harm to the daughters of residents.

“You’re inviting slime and you’ve done it in a slimy way,” said Zuni resident Grace Little, who was referring to the potential inmates, as well as the Board of Supervisor’s rollout of the project.

Former police officer Ronald Neal of Windsor said he’s seen the type of youth that would be housed at the proposed facility.

“I know what these animals are capable of ... They’re animals and I don’t want them here,” he said.

Other residents were concerned about Isle of Wight County’s investment in the project and if it would get any return, such as tax revenues.

Isle of Wight is offering

land valued at \$200,000 and will contribute \$500,000 toward running water and sewer lines to the property. The state will pay the remaining \$1 million for the water and sewer lines, which will also be available to properties along its path.

Other residents worried about property values, the proximity of the facility to public schools (about three miles) and if any plan with local law enforcement and first responders had been devised in the event of an incident.

Another concern was whether academic test scores for youth at the facility, such as SOLs, would be included as part of Isle of Wight County schools. One young father said he did not want to raise his five children across the street from a prison.

One resident questioned whether or not the county

had offered the property to any other business for \$10,000 an acre.

When the project was initially announced last year, the county stated that the property was worth \$700,000. That has recently been adjusted to \$200,000, or \$10,000 an acre, to reflect the original purchase price.

Others simply did not want a prison near Windsor, regardless, and feared the Board had already made up its mind.

“Don’t bring your liberal, progressive ideas to a God-fearing community,” said Pete Chapman.

There were no answers provided verbally at the town hall, although copies of the county’s continually updated “frequently asked questions” handout were available. The FAQ is available on the county’s website at <http://www.co.isle-of-wight.va.us/>.

## Co-op

• Continued from p. 1

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ing to the county, such as cutting out public hearings, if needed.

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county purchasing it, said Robertson.

Robertson said he doesn’t know who “Project Bolt” is because the economic development staff keeps prospective businesses a secret.

# Windsor renews opposition

## Correctional facility hearing is Thursday

By **Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

WINDSOR — The Windsor Town Council plans to resubmit a letter it wrote to the Isle of Wight Economic Development Authority last year expressing opposition to the proposed youth correctional center south of town.

The Council also plans to draft a resolution, to be considered at its March meeting, to oppose the project.

Both documents are directed at the Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors, which is poised to make a decision by its March meeting whether or not to deed county-owned property to the state to build a 60-bed residential youth correctional center.

The two moves are an about-face from a year ago, when former Mayor Rita Richardson signed a letter to Del. Emily Brewer, R-64, supporting the project.

Richardson's letter, dated last April, was sent to Brewer because the project needed to be switched from Chesapeake to Isle of Wight in the state's biennial budget.

By September, however, the Council had changed its mind and wrote its letter to the EDA opposing the project.

The Windsor Town Council has since gained four new members and the decision to resubmit the EDA letter, as well as penning a new resolution, was made at its February meeting.

The EDA was involved because the coun-

• See **FACILITY**, p. 7



Staff photo by Frederic Lee

**American K-9 Interdiction Dog Trainer Chris Pittman and his German Shorthaired Pointer, Balu, enjoy the sun after a morning training session. According Pittman, Balu is the only German Shorthaired Pointer at the training academy. He said he preferred that breed because of its dedicated temperament and love of work.**

# American K9 expands to former Presbyterian Home

# Facility

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• **Continued from p. 1**

ty had deeded the property, about 20 acres, to the appointed body years ago as a way to more easily facilitate bringing new business in Isle of Wight. The original

plan was for the EDA to directly deed the property to the state for the correctional center, but after much public opposition, it sent it back to Isle of Wight, triggering the need for a public hearing.

# Coordinator has worked with troubled youth for 3 decades

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

Beverley Tackett has worked with incarcerated youth for more than 30 years and loves her job.

She has served at six different Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice facilities over the years and is now the volunteer coordinator at Bon Air in Chesterfield.

“I see a lot of good in them,” said Tackett of the youth at Bon Air.

“They respond to you, they know you care about them. They deserve a chance,” she said, adding that so many come from dysfunctional backgrounds.

Tackett recently met with several pastors in Isle of Wight County to discuss ministry opportunities at the proposed juvenile correctional center south of

Windsor.

The DJJ is in the process of changing its programs, and the proposed Isle of Wight residential facility is smaller, with 60 beds, and will be closer to the homes of those who are sentenced there.

Bon Air is currently the only residential facility in Virginia and it is large, with 270 beds. It serves youth charged with misdemeanor and felony crimes.

The decision to bring in volunteers is based on the need to connect the youth in our custody with as many adults who care about them as we can, said Director of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Andrew Block.

“You never know what, or who, is going to help the youth in our custody think differently about them-

selves or their futures. Our volunteers create more opportunities for this awakening and connection to take place,” said Block, adding that the DJJ is optimistic about establishing the same sort of relationships in Isle of Wight County.

Tackett said she currently works with about 25 churches and 340 volunteers at Bon Air.

Some of the churches include Bon Air Presbyterian, Faith Landmark in Hanover, Bon Air Baptist Church, County Line Baptist in Louisa and Clover Hill Church in Chesterfield.

The churches and volunteers host Bible studies, game nights, birthday and Christmas parties, teach a variety of lessons such as guitar, and provide mentors and tutors, said Tackett.

The churches are interested in ministering to the youth, giving them opportunities and showing them that there is a better way, said Tackett.

Many of the volunteers go above and beyond what is needed, she said, adding that oftentimes, the youth return after they’ve been released to help out themselves.

“We’ve really seen a change in them ... we have a lot of success stories,”

said Tackett.

Tackett said the volunteers find the work rewarding too.

“They come in not knowing what to expect but leave feeling as if they have received a blessing,” she said.

## Chowan dean’s list

Chowan University officially announced the President’s and Dean’s List honorees for Fall 2018. To earn membership on the President’s List, a student must earn a semester GPA of 3.8 or higher.

Those who have attained a grade point average between 3.25 and 3.79 for the

semester are awarded Dean’s List honors.

Named to the President’s List were De’shuan J Beamon, Iziahn Jocary Moore and Jamarie Wrenn, all of Smithfield. Named to the Dean’s List were Mikaiiah DeAndre Hamlin of Smithfield and Noah Clay Pye of Windsor.



# Juvenile ctr. advances



Staff photo by Diana McFarland

**An overflow crowd gathered for the hearing Thursday. Most who spoke are opposed to location of the juvenile center in IW.**

## 3 supers vote to transfer land to state

Opposition to facility remains vigorous

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

For nearly four hours, the overwhelming sentiment among residents who appeared during a public hearing was against putting a juvenile correctional center south of Windsor.

And as the hour approached midnight, the Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 Thursday to transfer land to the state for the facility after the public had spoken.

Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree and Carrsville District Supervisor Don Rosie, whose constituents would have the facility nearby, cast the two dissenting votes.

The Board needs to listen to its constituents, and its members need not be afraid to change their minds after receiving new information, said Rosie.

"My perspective has changed," said Rosie.

Acree said he ran for his seat after it seemed that the fire and rescue volunteers were not being heard concerning certain issues several years ago, and the only thing he could guarantee was being a voice of the people.

"The Department of Juvenile Justice needs to be embraced by the community where it goes.

## School Bd. questions budget hike

**By Frederic Lee**  
*Staff writer*

Several Isle of Wight County School Board members voiced concern about the \$2.4 million county spending increase in the school superintendent's proposed budget. The total county contribution is proposed at \$28.7 million, up more than 9 percent from the current budget.

In response, Schools Superintendent Jim Thornton said he would bring cost alternatives and their ramifications to the School Board's next budget work session on March 7.

Additional required staff and 5-percent teacher raises put forth in Gov. Ralph Northam's Dec. 18 budget proposal have become a financing obstacle, according to

Thornton, stating that budget announcements from the governor's office have created expectations of a 5-percent raise throughout the schools.

"We met with TAC today, our Teachers Advisory Council, and we shared the pay scale, the one that we're proposing," said Thornton, "and the feedback we got was, they do expect a five

percent raise from what they heard from the governor," said Thornton.

To complicate the matter, the Virginia General Assembly has not finalized its own budget proposal, namely, the portion pertaining to teacher raises, according to Thornton. Ultimately, the General

# Juvenile

• Continued from p. 1

Windsor is not the location for this,” he said.

The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice plans to build a 60-bed residential facility for male youthful offenders, bringing a new model of rehabilitation to the state. Isle of Wight County has offered 20 acres of land along Route 258, as well as contributing \$500,000 to run water and sewer lines to the property.

Those living in and around Windsor, as well as the southern end of Isle of Wight, turned out in force for the public hearing. The building was so crowded that residents had to stand outside in the cold because there was no other room inside. Many wore “Vote No” stickers.

The residents were concerned about safety and

the possibility, although remote, that young prisoners might escape. Others were concerned with property values and with Windsor being seen as a prison town. Some criticized the Board for past actions, such as buying the land in the first place, and that a state facility would not bring in tax revenue. Many criticized how the county has valued the land and suggested the project be moved to the northern end of Isle of Wight.

Pete Chapman warned of county children being “accosted and molested” because of the facility.

“Do not place this bomb on our front porch, light the fuse and not believe it won’t explode. Don’t allow this facility to rip the heart from this community,” he said.

The land being offered is part of Isle of Wight’s inter-

modal park — the parcel being part of many hundreds of acres purchased by the county years ago for industrial development.

Daren Wingard complained that he did not know this was being considered, stating that there had been “radio silence” so far on the subject. Other residents voiced the same complaint.

The Smithfield Times published 24 stories about the proposal over the past year, and Isle of Wight has held several informational meetings on the matter.

Others were opposed in a general way.

“NIMBY is a valid reason,” said Macon Hodges, referring to “not in my backyard” criticism.

Sprinkled among the overwhelming opposition to the facility were several people in favor of the

project. Some worked in the state’s justice system, others in counseling and mental health, while some simply supported a new approach to rehabilitating troubled kids.

William Smith, superintendent of the Western Tidewater Regional Jail and who also happens to live near Windsor, said he worries about a lot of things, but not a juvenile correctional facility.

He suggested that opponents look at Virginia’s sex offender list and see who is living nearby.

Michael Whalen, who also works at WTRJ and lives in Smithfield, recalled when he worked at the juvenile boot camp that used to be in Walters — not far from the newly proposed facility.

Whalen said the program really turned a lot of the kids around, many of whom helped the community clean up after Hurricane Floyd.

Valerie Slater with Rise for Youth out of Richmond was in favor of the DJJ’s new concept but believes that Windsor is too remote a location.

The proposed facility was originally slated for Chesapeake, but the City Council ultimately failed to get the super majority it needed to transfer the land. Isle of Wight offered the land outside of Windsor and the state decided it would work because of the proximity to the entire Hampton Roads region where many of the offenders originate.

The idea is to put the facility closer to the homes of the offenders so that the families can be more involved in their rehabilitation.

Department of Juvenile Justice Director Andrew Block was on hand to answer questions following the public hearing. Block stated that it was likely possible for the Board to ne-

gotiate specific conditions in the land transfer, such as what will happen to the facility if it closes.

Once the Board votes in favor of conveying the land the county can begin to negotiate the terms of the transfer, said county attorney Robert Jones.

Once the terms are negotiated, and those can be public, then the Board can cast a final vote — yea or nay, Jones said.

If the terms are not agreed to, then the deal is off, said Block.

Block said the state is aiming to begin construction in the next two years and possibly open the facility in 2022.

He said there is no desire to make it any bigger than 60 beds and the most it would expand to is 72 beds.

The facility is limited by the new juvenile justice model as well as the size of the property, he said.

# Budget

• Continued from p. 1

“match” the state funds for

she said, adding that more

# Terms for property transfer on table

**By Diana McFarland**

*Managing editor*

The Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors plans to discuss the terms of its property transfer to the state for a youth correctional center at a work session on Thursday.

The meeting begins at 6 p.m. at the courthouse complex.

A preliminary list of considerations include limiting the number of beds to 72, restricting the property to a juvenile facility only, aesthetics of the fence and what happens if the facility closes, among others.

The proposed 20-acre site for the correctional facility is located about two miles south of Route 460 along Route 258 and is part of Phase III of the county's intermodal/industrial park. The property is owned by Isle of Wight County.

While the Board voted 3-2 to convey the land in February, the deal still requires that certain terms be worked out between the

# Terms

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- **Continued from p. 1**

county and the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

The proposed juvenile facility, for incarcerated youth age 14-21, has been met with a tremendous amount of opposition from residents of Windsor and the southern end of the county.

The proposed juvenile facility, for incarcerated youth age 14-21, has been met with a tremendous amount of opposition from

residents of Windsor and the southern end of the county.

Most of the concerns center around safety, the impact on property values and quality of life and what benefits the county is to receive from the project.

The project calls for a 60-bed residential facility. Isle of Wight County is donating the land, as well as \$500,000 for water and sewer lines to be run to the property. The state, in turn, will pay the remaining cost for the utilities.

# It's all about the details

## Supers view HES condition

### School Bd. wants to remodel 1960s facility

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

Renovating and expanding Hardy Elementary School was the focus of a tour and discussion Monday between the Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors and School Board.

The Supervisors and School Board members also toured the school division's bus garage, which is also on the list for replacement.

Included in the tour were Hardy's too small gym and the crumbling offices of maintenance staff.

"It's sad that we even call that a gym," said Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree of Hardy's gym, which is third of the size of Carrollton Elementary School's gym with the same amount of students.

The idea is to bring equity among the county's school facilities, said Isle of Wight County schools Superintendent Dr. Jim Thornton.

Hardy Elementary School, built in 1961, is outdated and too small for today's needs, according to school officials.

Renovating and expanding the school would also alleviate crowding at Carrollton and Westside Elementary schools for the immediate future, according to school officials.

The supervisors were con-

• See TOUR, p. 7



Staff photo by Diana McFarland

## Cougars win state title

Senior Zhamare' Slade takes a shot, with an assist by Brandon Drew, Saturday during the state championship game against Eastside High School in Richmond. The Cougars took home the trophy by defeating the Spartans 57-48. The girls came in as state runners-up against Parry McCluer High School. See story on page 12.

## IW begins outlining limits of land offer

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

Restricting the juvenile correctional center to 60 beds, capping Isle of Wight's utility contribution and a more detailed security plan emerged as some of the top priorities Thursday as the Board of Supervisors began negotiating the finer points of its deal with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

When it comes to the name, no one wants Windsor included in it, said Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree.

The Board also wants to restrict the facility to youth only.

The Board approved the transfer of its property to the state in February, but still needs to work out the terms of that transfer, which includes items ranging from capping septic systems to how the property will be disposed of should the facility close in the future.

Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton went over a list of terms for the county, as well as the Department of Juvenile Justice, at the March 7 Board work session.

Residents attending the meeting were also encouraged to fill out a form concerning terms they would like to see on the table.

One suggestion was for an audible alert in the event of an escape, according to Isle of Wight Assistant County Administrator Don Robertson.

The fear of an escape appears to be one of the main concerns of residents living nearby the proposed site of the juvenile center, which will house youthful male offenders, age 14-21.

However, there hasn't been an escape at the state's current facility in Chesterfield County, Bon Air, since the 1990s, when a high security fence was erected.

Acree said he envisioned women in the area trying to sleep at night after the facility opens, and further suggested that the offense level of some of the first residents there be lower until staff training is complete.

"You don't need people in there with elevated risk while new staff is training," said Acree.

Carrsville Supervisor Don

# Thornton trims budget request

By Frederic Lee  
Staff writer

Several new positions were cut from the initial Isle of Wight County schools budget proposal, reducing the county funding request by \$450,000, while starting teacher salaries were increased.

The School Board plans to ask the Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors for \$28.2 million — which still represents a 7.5-percent increase from last year's local contribution of \$26.2 million.

The changes to the proposed

budget were discussed Thursday at a School Board work session.

While some line items were cut, others were added to create an overall operational budget of \$66.3 million, compared to the initial \$66.9 million when the budget was first introduced.

Line items that were added to the budget proposal included a bump to the first five-year teacher salary, costing \$640,923, and three additional elementary S.T.E.M. teachers at an expense of \$190,700, according to Isle of Wight Coun-

ty schools spokesperson Lynn Briggs.

"We all agreed that the bottom of our scale, those first few steps, really need to be adjusted," said Schools Superintendent Dr. Jim Thornton on the pay raise. Teacher raises had been included in the previous budget proposal, but weren't specified to a specific experience level.

The starting salary for teachers in the county was raised from \$41,310 to \$44,000 in the proposal, and the first five years' salary

reflects a \$120 pay raise each year.

On budget cuts, four guidance counselors, at a cost of \$285,000, were removed from the budget proposal in response to additional amendments that Governor Ralph Northam made to his biennial budget. Overall, the state contribution was cut by \$165,958, down to \$32.7 million, during the budgetary process between the governor and the General Assembly, according to Thornton.

• See BUDGET, p. 8

• See CENTER, p. 8

# Center

• Continued from p. 1

Rosie agreed.

“Break in your staff, break in your facility with low-risk, not high-risk individuals,” said Rosie.

State officials have said that some of the youth to be housed at the facility will have committed serious offenses.

Keaton presented some possible fencing options, courtesy of drawings from the DJJ, showing a raised earthen berm and wall along the portion of the 20-acre parcel that runs along Route 258. Another option is an inwardly curved fence, along with some solid walls.

Keaton didn't know the height of the various fencing options. The facility will also employ state-of-the-art security systems, said Keaton.

The Board said it wanted more clarity on how that system would work.

So far, the state wants Isle of Wight to provide the property, contribute \$500,000 for a water and sewer line along Route 258, remove all existing structures and remove the debris, perform any necessary environmental remediation, close any existing on-site septic systems and close all but one existing well for use during construction.

The state also requests that the county restrict development next to the proposed facility and not allow certain types of businesses, such as a sawmill, livestock auction, landfill and a scrap



**The DJJ has produced this conceptual drawing of the proposed Windsor facility.**

and salvage service, among others.

The state, in turn, agrees to limit the number of beds to 72, restrict the facility to youth only, be responsible for utility costs beyond the county's contribution, the aesthetics and safety of the fence and a 25-foot vegetative buffer along Route 258.

The agreement would provide that the property would revert to the county if the project is not built within three years. Other provisions protect the county if the facility closes in the future, give right of first refusal for the county and a reimbursement to the state

if the property is converted to another state use.

Board members were concerned that the state's terms now called for a facility of up to 72 beds.

Why is it now up to 72 beds, when it was originally touted as 60 beds, asked Acree.

The concept for the new juvenile facility, as present-

ed by DJJ Executive Director Andrew Block, was for a smaller facility closer to the homes of the offenders. The smaller facility would better facilitate treatment of the youth as well as further engage the family in the process.

Block said 60 beds are all the department wants and all it has funding for.

“At some point in the

future if we had to expand — which I hope we don't — we agree that we would never get bigger than 72 beds,” said Block in a March 8 email.

Near the end of the discussion, Acree and Rosie said they have been asked how they can participate in the negotiations if they voted against the facility.

Acree and Rosie cast

## Windsor meeting

The Board of Supervisors plans to hold its March 21 meeting at the Windsor Town Center if terms for a 60-bed residential youth correctional center are ready for a final vote by then.

The center, to be located on 20 acres of Isle of Wight-owned property two miles south of the Town of Windsor on Route 258, would be built and operated by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. The supervisors approved the transfer of the land to the state and are currently negotiating the terms of that transaction.

The Windsor Town Center is located at 23361 Courthouse Highway in Windsor.

the two dissenting votes and it is residents in their districts who will live closer to the facility. However, both said that it's better that they participate at this point by providing input based on their constituents' concerns.

“It's better to be at the table, rather than to step back and let whatever happens, happen,” said Rosie.

# Advocacy group joins 'center' fight

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

A Richmond-based group is calling for the proposed youth correctional center to be located on the Peninsula and in the neighborhoods where the boys are from.

Valerie Slater with RISE for Youth said that a large percentage of incarcerated youth in Hampton Roads are from Newport News and Hampton, and asked why not put the 60-bed residential facility

## Terms to be weighed Thursday

Further consideration of the terms of the land transfer to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice for a 60-bed residential youth correctional facility is expected Thursday when the Board of Supervisors meets at 6 p.m. in the Windsor Town Center, 23361 Courthouse Highway, Windsor.

in one of those communities.

Locating the facility where the kids and families live brings all the resources that come with it to where the problems originate, said Slater.

"Break that cycle," she said.

Instead, by locating in rural and remote Isle of Wight, the youth will serve their time where they receive a good deal of support, but are then returned to

disenfranchised communities where it is lacking, she said.

If the state is going to build a small facility based on a new model of juvenile rehabilitation, why not put it in the place where it's most needed, said Slater.

The lives of kids shouldn't rest on where a locality has offered land, she said.

The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice did not respond

• **See CENTER, p. 8**

# Center

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• **Continued from p. 1**

to a request for comment.

Isle of Wight County last year offered the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice 20 acres and \$500,000 for utilities to locate a new 60-bed residential facility on county-owned property two miles south of Route 460 along Route 258.

The county purchased the land about 10 years ago as part of its intermodal park, but so far, there hasn't been an interest by business to locate there. Missing from the site is municipal water and sewer — which would be provided if the

state locates its facility there — along with 240 jobs.

There has been strong public opposition to the project — predominantly among residents of Windsor and southern Isle of Wight County. The Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to transfer the land, but the details of that transfer are still being worked out.

If a consensus between the county and state is not reached, the deal could fall through. Further discussion is expected at Thursday's Board of Supervisors meeting, to be held at the Windsor Town Center.



# New group organizes to represent 'southern' end

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

A new group called the Southern Isle of Wight Citizen's Association tried to reserve the community room at Sentara St. Luke's for RISE for Youth to speak about its ideas on youth rehabilitation on March 15.

When Sentara asked the decades-old Isle of Wight Citizen's Association who the southern version was, Vice President Albert Burckard said he didn't know.

The Isle of Wight Citizen's Association regularly meets at St. Luke's.

Burckard said he told Sentara that RISE for Youth, however, was a lobbying group out of Richmond.

Sentara cancelled the reservation.

RISE for Youth has spoken publicly concerning the proposed 60-bed youth correctional center to be located south of Windsor. The group would prefer the facility be put in Newport News or Hampton.

The Richmond-based nonprofit advocates for juvenile justice reform in Virginia.

Sentara found itself in the middle of a controversy and tries to take a neutral position in situations such as this, said Sentara spokesman Dale Gauding.

Sentara doesn't want to

be perceived as being on one side or another on an issue and that is why the reservation was cancelled, he said.

Sentara tries to reserve the community room for non-political health-related issues that support its position on health care, said Gauding.

Volpe Boykin said the Southern Isle of Wight Citizen's Association was just formed, so new that it doesn't even know who its officers are yet.

The southern end of the county needs a group to represent its interests, he said.

When the Southern faction was told the reservation was cancelled due to the political nature of the discussion, Boykin said they were angry and told Sentara that the Isle of Wight Citizen's Association had taken a political stance on the issue and voted to support it while in the Sentara community room.

Burckard said the Isle of Wight Citizen's Association is angry that another group is trying to co-opt its name.

Boykin said he would advise the southern group that the original Citizen's Association is not happy with their name selection.

There was some initial suspicion that RISE for Youth had made the reservation, posing as the South-

ern Isle of Wight Citizen's Association, but its executive director, Valerie Slater, said her organization would never operate like that.

Slater said her group was invited by the individuals with the Southern Isle of Wight Citizen's Association to speak at Sentara.

She said her organization also did not make the flyer that was passed around.

Slater said "RISE" is written in all capital letters and all their material includes a logo, which the flyer did not have.

Meanwhile, RISE for Youth volunteers have passed out postcards for residents to sign and send to their respective supervisors, said Slater.

There are two versions — one for the two super-

visors who voted against transferring the land to the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, and one for the three who voted in favor.

The cards directed at Windsor and Carrsville supervisors Joel Acree and Don Rosie thank them for voting against transferring the land. It then goes on to promote a different approach to juvenile rehabilitation using small, therapeutic facilities.

The cards directed at Hardy, Smithfield and Newport supervisors Rudolph Jefferson, Dick Grice and William McCarty urge them to reject the final plan for the youth facility.

Each card has a space for someone to sign and the cards are addressed to the home address of each supervisor.

# Opponents dig through juvenile detention emails

## Exchanges with state, each other date back to December 2017

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

A leading opponent of the youth correctional center near Windsor spent \$877 to track emails and other correspondence on the project from its beginnings here in 2017.

The Freedom of Information Act request was made and paid for by Richard J. "Dick" Holland Jr., CEO and chairman of the board of Farmers Bank, a former member of the Economic Development Authority, and an outspoken opponent of the proposed youth facility.

Holland and a group of residents provided The Smithfield Times with a notebook of the emails and correspondence, spanning a time frame from Dec. 7, 2017 to March 1, 2019. The correspondence is between members of the Board of Supervisors, some residents, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice and General Services and county staff.

The information begins with initial conversations concerning whether or not Isle of Wight would be a suitable site and concludes with the county attorney informing the state that a deed has been drawn up in anticipation of the final vote on the project, scheduled for April 18.

### Highlights include:

- Isle of Wight was one of about 20 potential sites to be submitted to the state for consideration. (Dec. 7, 2017).

## Vote now set for April 18

The Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors is poised to cast the final vote April 18 on the terms of a property transfer to the state to build a 60-bed youth correctional center about two miles south of Route 460 along Route 258. The new facility is part of the state's effort to transform its rehabilitation of youth charged with crimes. The proposed center would include academic and vocational training, as well as medical, substance abuse and mental health support.

The 20 acres of county-owned property is part of its intermodal park. The project includes building a water and sewer line to the facility, at a cost of \$500,000 to Isle of Wight County, with the state picking up the remainder of the cost. The facility is also expected to generate 240 jobs.

- Isle of Wight County initially told the state that it could participate in a multi-jurisdictional effort to share funding for public transportation. (Transporting families of the incarcerated youth to the facility is a consideration for the future success of the project.)

• See **EMAILS**, p. 8

# Juvenile Justice director leaving post

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

The man leading the effort to build a controversial youth correctional center south of Windsor will serve his last day on the job the day after the Board of Supervisors is expected to take a final vote on the facility.

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Director Andrew Block is leaving his post effective April 19.

The Board is expected to take a final vote on the terms of the land transfer to the state at its



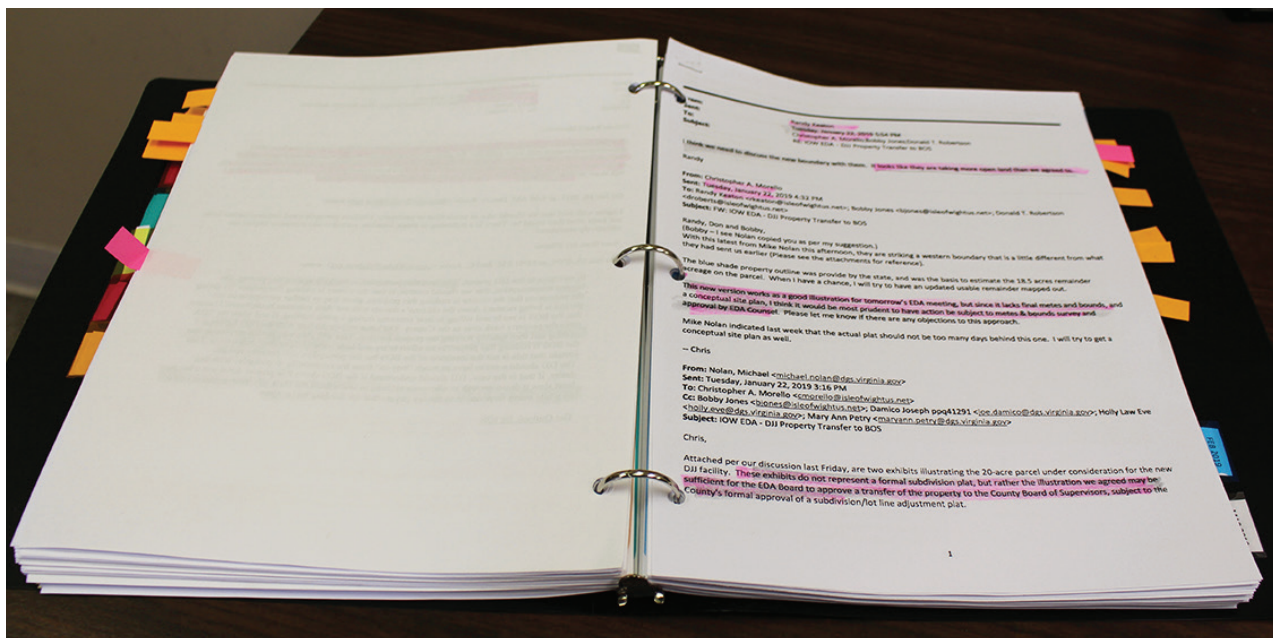
**Block**

meeting April 18 at the Windsor Town Center.

Gov. Ralph Northam has appointed Valerie Boykin, a Suffolk native, to head up the agency.

Boykin has served as deputy director of community programs for the DJJ since 2015, and has been with the agency for 25 years.

• See **BLOCK**, p. 9



**Email exchanges relating to the juvenile detention center fill a three-ring binder. Opponents organized them and held a news conference to discuss the contents.**

# Emails

• Continued from p. 1

ect). (Dec. 15, 2017).

•Isle of Wight Director of Utilities Don Jennings, in a discussion on the utilities, said the county may be taking a risk in putting off potential users based on the perception of having “that” neighbor, and effectively creating a stranded asset, at least in the short term (in reference to the water and sewer lines the county is planning to contribute \$500,000 to build). (Dec. 21, 2017).

•The state informed the county that the majority of jobs, 91 out of 240, would have an average pay of \$38,270. The overall average for pay for all jobs at the facility would be \$61,642.

•Smithfield District Supervisor Dick Grice was concerned with meeting with Windsor officials before the project was announced in the newspapers. (Dec. 22, 2017).

•Board of Supervisors tossed around ideas for the name of the facility in Jan. 2018 to include “Windsor or Walters Adolescent Care Complex,” the “Youth Center for Hope” or the “Teen Center for Corrective Care,”

or the “Carrsville Youth Rehabilitation Center.”

•Grice took issue with those opposed to the project, stating that “this not in my backyard and blindsided bull needs to end here and now.” (July 16, 2018).

Grice also stated that it would be nice to get support from the new Windsor Mayor, Glyn Willis, but if not, “remaining mute would be better than taking an adversarial position.” (Jan. 2, 2019) Grice also stated, “certain EDA people want to cover your ass. The only people who will show up for a public hearing are the naysayers. If a hundred show up ... there are 36,000 people out there that weren’t heard and don’t have a problem with the issue.” (Jan. 4, 2019).

•Isle of Wight hired a public relations professional, former TV newscaster Joel Rubin, to assist with the presentation of information at a cost of \$2,635.

•Rubin suggested to county officials that they not refer to the project as proposed but rather planned as “no one should think you are going to retract commitment to the state.” (Dec. 21, 2018).

•Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree suggested that slowing down the process might help with the perception that it was being rammed down the throats of residents. Carrsville Supervisor Don Rosie agreed with Acree. (Jan. 17, 2019).

•Isle of Wight Director of Economic Development Chris Morello emailed Jennings about the concerns of EDA Chairman Ron Pack about a four-inch sewer line being inadequate. (Jan. 29, 2019).

•Isle of Wight County attorney Robert Jones reported Feb. 4, 2019 that the necessary deeds to transfer the property to the state were 90-percent complete. (The vote on transferring the land was made Feb. 21).

•Jones forwarded a proposed motion to county staff for transferring the land to the state a day before the vote. The proposed motion was requested by Grice, who told Isle of Wight Citizens’ Association Vice President Albert Burckard that he hadn’t shared the details of the motion with his fellow Board members before the vote.

•Grice provided Virginia Department of Juvenile

Justice Director Andrew Block with a list of questions for the evening of the

• See EMAILS, p. 9

# Block

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• Continued from p. 1

“During Andy’s tenure as director, the men and women of the Department of Juvenile Justice have fully invested themselves into transforming both the agency and our juvenile justice system, and have set the course to continue this progress,” said Northam.

“I am grateful for his leadership, for the time he spent serving this administration and the Commonwealth, and for the passion and dedication he brought to serving children, families and communities across Virginia.”

Block said his leaving has nothing to do with the project in Windsor, and if anything, would be a reason to stay.

“For some time it has been clear to me that as much as I love my job, and deeply believe in all we are doing, I need to be more available to my family than I have been,” Block said in an email last week.

“The agency is lucky to have Valerie in this role as she has been a key leader in our transformation,” said Block in a governor’s press release.

“She knows our people, knows this work, and cares passionately about the children and families we serve. She will do an amazing job as our new director,” he said.

The facility in Windsor is a piece of that transformation, which is based on the results of a system-wide assessment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The transformation calls for safely reducing the number of youth placed in state custody, dramatically reform-

ing correctional practices to focus on more rigorous treatment and education, and closing two juvenile correctional centers, re-investing the savings into building out a statewide continuum of community-based services and supports, according to a press release from the governor’s office.

The 60-bed residential facility proposed for south of Windsor is smaller and closer to the homes of the boys who will be housed there. The program will include academic and vocational training, as well as medical, substance abuse, emotional and family support.

Smithfield District Supervisor Dick Grice said he has no concern at all that the DJJ is changing hands as the county is poised to take a final vote on a project that has generated an enormous amount of public opposition.

“The young lady who is taking his place is abso-

lutely super,” said Grice of Boykin.

Grice said he’s met Boykin and is impressed.

Grice was one of the three supervisors who voted to transfer the county’s 20 acres to the state, along with Chairman William McCarty and Hardy District Supervisor Rudolph Jefferson.

Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree, who voted against the transfer, said the resignation is a “game changer.”

Acree is disappointed that the state did not better convey that the Windsor facility was part of an overall transformation based on actual data and practices in other states.

“This wasn’t their first rodeo,” said Acree, referring to the failed attempt to build the same facility in Chesapeake, where public opposition led to a lack of a super majority vote by the city council.

## Emails

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• Continued from p. 8

public hearing on Feb. 21.

•Isle of Wight Citizens’ Association President Lisa Meunier, in an email to Board Chairman William McCarty about letters he had received, said of those opposed to the project, “these south county folks are like two-year-olds who are throwing a tantrum. They need to understand that we are a nation of laws. That might get them to back off a bit. They’re feeling quite emboldened right now.” (Feb. 26, 2019). The Citizens’ Association had

voted in favor of the project.

•When County Administrator Randy Keaton suggested including some residents on a tour of Bon Air (the current state secure youth correctional facility in Chesterfield County), Grice said the only citizen who should be invited is the one who lives across the street from where the proposed facility would be located.

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# Acree blames state

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

On her first public appearance in Isle of Wight County, newly appointed Director of Juvenile Justice Valerie Boykin was met with a lengthy criticism of the agency's performance during the run-up to getting the youth correctional center approved.

Boykin has responded, and plans to form a citizen's advisory

## Says agency has relied on IW to explain facility

committee for the facility.

The one-page, single-spaced statement came from Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree, who represents ground zero for opposition to the project.

Acree, who voted against the land transfer to the state in February, read his statement at the

April Board of Supervisors work session.

Acree said he believes the DJJ is largely responsible for why the proposed facility is not being embraced by Isle of Wight County residents.

The DJJ should have been sharing its vision to transform

youth rehabilitation to residents here as soon as the possibility that a facility would be located here, said Acree.

The 60-bed all-male residential correctional facility is slated for 20 acres along Route 258, about two miles south of Route 460.

That vision should have been

backed up with facts, studies, examples and data, as well as the level of offenses clearly defined, said Acree.

Acree said county staff had been put in the position of marketing the project, which left the

• See STATE, p. 8

# Agreement for juvenile facility nears completion

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice would consider using an audible alert for escapes from its proposed correctional center near Windsor.

Escapes from the facility were one of the top concerns of area residents, as it may house youth who have committed serious crimes.

The DJJ would also be willing to participate in IWAAlert — the county's system of directly notifying residents of incidents, such as storms, floods, major accidents and other emergencies according to Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton.

The Board of Supervisors went over the final terms with the state Thursday concerning its transfer of 20 acres to build a 60-bed youth correctional center along Route 258.

A final vote is expected at its April 18 meeting.

The proposed facility has generated a tremendous amount of opposition, with concerns ranging from safety to what Isle of Wight County would receive in return for its land donation and \$500,000 contribution to a water and sewer line.

The lines would run from Route 460 to the facility and plans call for those being large enough to serve additional users.

To ensure safety, the state plans to install two fences, as well as state-of-the-art security systems.

A vegetative buffer will screen the facility from Route 258, with a 16-foot interior fence and a 6-8-foot exterior fence with screening, and the state is open to community input about the exterior fence.

Other terms include having Isle of Wight retain the right of first refusal if the facility were to close — and the value of repurchase would be based only on the buildings, not the land.

The state would demolish the existing structure on the property after it was used for fire training, as well as foot the bill for closing the septic system and well, according to Keaton.

Keaton also discussed the issue of the state making a payment in lieu of taxes, as the facility would not generate tax revenue for the county — another issue of concern by the opposition.

However, the General Assembly exempted the Department of Corrections from that payment 10 years ago, said Keaton.

A change would require a budget amendment by the General Assembly, said Joe Damico, director for the Virginia Department of General Services.

Newly-appointed DJJ Director Valerie Boykin

introduced herself to the Board and said her agency is committed to continuing its transformation to include replacing its outdated facilities with smaller ones, such as that proposed for Windsor, as well as emphasizing a therapeutic, skills-based model of treatment for its youth.

Boykin said 90 percent of the youth under DJJ care are being supervised within their own communities, and the remaining 10 percent are sentenced to a facility such as that proposed for Windsor.

DJJ Deputy Director of Administration Jamie Patten pointed out that the proposed facility would have a direct financial impact on the surrounding community in terms of purchased items and services, such as buying medications from local pharmacies and employing local lawn care companies.

Of the \$3.5 million spent on outside goods and services at Bon Air in 2018, \$1.6 million was spent within 10 miles of the facility, and another \$2.2 million from within a 30-mile radius, said Patten.

Bon Air is the state's remaining secure correctional center, and is located in Chesterfield County. It can house about 200 youth, boys and girls.

## State

• Continued from p. 1

impression that County Administrator Randy Keaton is a proponent of the facility. Acree referenced the lengthy question and answer document staff had created, updated and posted online.

"I believe his only duties should have been handing the microphone or projector remote to the person presenting the DJJ program," said Acree of Keaton.

"These misplaced obligations have resulted in a division within our citizens and a division between the Board of Supervisors and the citizens we are elected to serve," said Acree, referring to the groundswell of opposition that has arisen since the project was announced last summer.

Boykin responded with a statement of her own, stating that the DJJ has presented information to the public on several occasions, including data to support the agency's ongoing transformation.

The transformation includes more community-based programs, and for those needing incarceration, smaller facilities closer to the homes of the inmates. The smaller secure units will incorporate academic and vocational training, as well as medical, substance abuse and

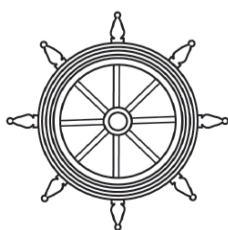
mental health services and support.

The DJJ has also hosted the Board and its guests on a tour of the Bon Air facility in Chesterfield County, the only secure unit operated by agency in the state, said Boykin.

"I had an opportunity to listen and discuss the concerns of some citizens following the Board's work session on April 4. We will develop a citizens' advisory committee as we currently have for our Bon Air facility. We have already had conversations with members in the faith community, and as we move forward with the County on the project, we are committed to working closely with more citizen groups. We want to ensure that we build a safe and se-

cure facility that provides quality rehabilitative services to youth while being a good neighbor and minimizing disruption to the community," said Boykin.

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# Windsor mayor wants opposition letter posted

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

Windsor Mayor Glyn Willis was concerned Monday that Isle of Wight County has not posted two letters from the town opposing the proposed juvenile correctional center. Isle of Wight Assistant County Administrator Don Robertson said the delay was due to a virus on the county's website.

While Isle of Wight had posted former Mayor Rita Richardson's initial letter in support of the project, written a year ago, the two subsequent letters had not been included — until Tuesday morning when they

appeared on the website.

Faced with mounting criticism, Richardson penned a second letter last September, outlining the town's reasons for no longer supporting the facility.

It was addressed to the Isle of Wight Economic Development Authority that, at the time, was to make a decision to either deed the land over to the county or the state. It has since decided the former.

After Willis was elected mayor and took up his post in January, the Windsor Town Council again wrote another letter in February supporting Richardson's opposition.

Willis had also attached Richardson's opposition letter and sent it to Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors Chairman William McCarty.

Meanwhile, Isle of Wight had published a lengthy "frequently asked questions" document on its website.

Willis said he contacted the county and McCarty, asking why those letters were not yet included and had been puzzled by the type of transparency the county was trying to achieve.

Robertson said the request coincided with a virus infecting the county's website.

Indeed, some items were missing or unavailable from the site last week.

Robertson said that issue is likely resolved and the letters were to appear Tuesday.

"We don't have a problem in doing it (posting the letters), we just weren't able to," said Robertson on Monday.

He went on to explain that the timeline of the project was to show how the public was notified and invited to participate in the process. The timeline was devised to demonstrate the level of transparency, said Robertson.

According to McCarty, the issue was to show how the project has progressed, not document Windsor's support and subsequent opposition.

## Brewer mum on IW issue

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

Del. Emily Brewer declined to discuss the proposed youth correctional center and the ensuing opposition — a potential conversation prompted by a Windsor resident.

The resident wanted to know if Brewer had anticipated the level of opposition that would form against the proposed 60-bed residential facility for incarcerated youth when she took Isle of Wight's request to the General Assembly. The resident also wanted to know what she thought about it, as the opponents are also her constituents.

The Smithfield Times asked Brewer's aide, Michael Kemp, for a phone or in-person interview and received the following response.

"I have re-attached the press release in a Word document in this email. Emily Brewer's position on this project has been consistent since Day 1. We have no further comment," said Kemp.

The press release, dated July 19, 2018 and in response to questions about the correctional center, states, "As the delegate for Isle of Wight County and the Town of Windsor, it is my duty to ensure that the Commonwealth is responsive to requests by those localities," said Brewer.

"Our office received letters of support for this facility from both Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors and the Town Council of Windsor based on the positive economic impact it could bring to our region," said Brewer in the release.

Brewer was referring to an April 10, 2018 letter from former Windsor Mayor Rita Richardson supporting the budget amendment placing the facility in Isle of Wight County. There was also a letter from then Board of Supervisors Chairman Rudolph Jefferson outlining the Board's support for putting the county in the state budget as the location of choice, as well as what

it was offering as part of the deal.

Brewer's press release was dated the day before the first public meeting was held about the project, which was at the Windsor Ruritan Clubhouse.

The proposed facility had initially been slated for Chesapeake, but the plan failed amidst public opposition.

When opposition here began to grow against the facility, Richardson signed another letter in September of last year, reversing the town's support and sent that to the Isle of Wight Economic Development Authority. That was followed by a similar letter in February from the current mayor, Glyn Willis. Willis said the Town Council voted to affirm Richardson's second letter.

Brewer received those letters last week, said Willis.

Brewer appeared last year to see her role as messenger for the localities — at least prior to the letters reversing the town's support.

# No juvies here

## McCarty's vote flip kills correctional center in IW

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

After months of bitter controversy that had seemingly divided the county, it all boiled down to one vote, and it came from Isle of Wight Board of Supervisors Chairman William McCarty.

McCarty reversed his long-standing support for a juvenile correctional center near Windsor and cast the deciding vote to kill the project.

Isle of Wight's offer to host the facility on industrial develop-

ment land south of Windsor had galvanized hundreds of residents in opposition for nearly a year.

Carrsville District Supervisor Don Rosie and Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree had already voted in February against transferring county-owned property to the state to build the prison, and they again voted against the final terms of the land transfer Thursday.

McCarty's surprise decision came in a series of two votes. The first was to reject the terms that

had been negotiated between the county and the Department of Juvenile Justice. That was followed by another 3-2 vote by the Board to rescind its support for the seminal project — part of the DJJ's overall plan to transform the way it rehabilitates youth in its care.

Hardy District Supervisor Rudolph Jefferson and Smithfield District Supervisor Dick Grice voted in favor of the terms and against rescinding support for the project.

The votes came after the state

offered to pay all but \$50,000 for the water and sewer lines that would have run from Route 460 to the site, which was located about two miles south along Route 258.

Originally, Isle of Wight had offered \$500,000 toward the cost, as well as donating 20 acres of land valued at \$200,000.

Isle of Wight County Administrator Randy Keaton also provided data on how much the county had given in incentives to other businesses in the intermodal park such as Cost Plus, Safco and

Green Mountain, and how the DJJ facility came out ahead when the cost per job was computed.

Keaton said it took nine years for the county to recoup the incentives it gave to CostPlus.

Other concessions offered by the state included the possibility of using an audible alert in the event of an escape, and phasing in the staffing and inmates at the facility.

The proposed 60-bed facili-

• See **REJECTED**, p. 9



# Anti-prison lobby aided opposition

By Diana McFarland  
Managing editor

One common denominator in the efforts to defeat the youth correctional center, in both Isle of Wight County and Chesapeake, was the nonprofit Rise for Youth.

The Richmond-based organization is dedicated to dissolving the prison system for youth and replacing it with community-based alternatives.

Rise Executive Director Valerie Slater was present for the Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisor's vote Thursday to withdraw support for the 60-bed correctional center for youth near Windsor.

Slater said the vote made her "glad" and "hopeful."

"It was the right decision," she said.

Slater wasn't sure of all the reasons behind the Board's decision — there had been a good deal of opposition to the project — but in the end, she believes all the economic development touted for the facility in Isle of Wight should be put in the communities where the kids are coming from.

Slater has been pushing the Department of Juvenile Justice to put the new facility in Hampton or Newport News, as those are two cities where many of the youthful offenders in the Hampton Roads region come from.

The DJJ had eyed Isle of Wight because of the county's offer of land, as well as its location near the more metropolitan areas of Hampton Roads — as compared to its current facility in Chesterfield County.

Slater said that the Isle of Wight and Chesapeake locations were still remote enough that parents and family members were going to need rides due to a lack of public transportation.

It was another government hand-out that these people do not need, she said.

Instead, the economic development advantages laid out for Isle of Wight — the 240 jobs, the increased tax revenue from employees and visitors, as well as local business, should go to the communities where it's needed and where the youth are from, said Slater.

Proximity to the families is important, said Slater.

The Rise for Youth website calls for facilities that house youth to be more than 24 beds. Slater said that the proposed 60-bed

correctional center would work — if it was designed to have portions repurposed as the number of incarcerated youth decreased over time, such as transitional housing.

That's why it should be located in the same community, said Slater.

Former Department of Juvenile Justice Director Andrew Block said the state had looked across Hampton Roads for possible locations.

Slater said she had attended an Isle of Wight Citizens Association meeting, and offered to meet with other groups, if interested. She also directed folks to the Rise website to show how the youth correctional center was not right for Isle of Wight.

There were also pre-printed postcards

mailed to the supervisors.

Slater said she will continue to fight at the state level and plans to meet with Gov. Ralph Northam about an appropriate location for the facility.

Meanwhile, Slater said her organization has been

working with community leaders in Newport News and Hampton so that what happened in Isle of Wight — the large opposition and the sense that the project was already underway before made public — would not happen there.

## Rejected

• Continued from p. 1

ty was to be designed for males age 14-21 who had committed crimes and who would have come from the Hampton Roads region. The smaller setting would have focused on academic and vocational training as well as providing mental health, substance abuse and emotional treatment and family support.

Prior to the vote on the terms, Rosie quoted a portion of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address — "... that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

"The resounding voice of our community says no," said Rosie.

He was rewarded with a standing ovation.

Acree said that comparing private businesses to this project was "apples and oranges."

## Bridge

• Continued from p. 1

construction," said Napolitano.

Napolitano said that in some cases, public hearings are automatically given for large major projects that have significant impacts to

### What next for land?

The vote to withdraw support for the youth correctional center has left Isle of Wight with a piece of land carved from a larger parcel.

Now the county has to decide what to do with those 20 acres that had been set aside for the facility, said Isle of Wight Assistant County Administrator Don Robertson.

The property had been transferred back to the county from the Economic Development Authority for the project.

Robertson said one decision is whether the county keeps the deed to the property or transfer it back to the EDA.

"This is different. Our bosses are sitting in this room," he said.

Acree was also given a standing ovation.

Hardy District Supervisor Rudolph Jefferson said this project was about helping kids who had had a "bad day" and transforming their future.

"I truly believe in the transformation of kids," said Jefferson.

After the vote, McCarty defended the Board's transparency throughout the

process, eluded to personal attacks and comments made to Board members and his own children and pointed out the level of integrity possessed by each Board member.

"Nothing I can say that will stop that impassioned mentality," said McCarty of the opposition to the project.

"In the end, you live here," he said.

After the votes, DJJ spokesman Greg Davy read a prepared statement outside the Windsor Town Center.

Davy, speaking on behalf of outgoing Director Andrew Block, said the agency was disappointed by the vote, but despite the setback, would not waver in its promise to youth to continue to look for ways to give them a safe and successful future.

is available at the VDOT Hampton Roads District Office and Franklin Residency office located at 23116 Meherrin Road in Courtland.

Napolitano said that since the structure was built in the early 1970s, the rehabilitation was "just a

# Juvenile center debate spurs new citizens' group

**By Diana McFarland**  
*Managing editor*

The now failed youth correctional center has spawned a new citizens' organization in Isle of Wight County.

The Southern and Central Isle of Wight Citizens Group will cover the area from Central Hill Road down to the far southern tip, near Carrsville, said newly elected President Volpe Boykin.

"We don't want to get caught like this again," said Boykin about how the three supervisors that represent the northern end of Isle of Wight initially voted to transfer the land to the state for the youth facility, while the two that represent Carrsville and Windsor voted against it.

There has been an enormous amount of opposition in to the facility, mostly from residents from Windsor and southward.

The final vote to kill the

project, however, included Newport District Supervisor William McCarty.

The proposed correctional center would have been located on Route 258, about two miles south of Route 460 in Windsor.

In a situation like this, two district representatives can vote against something in their districts, but the remaining three can vote for it against their objections — because their districts, and constituents, are not directly affected, said Boykin.

Boykin was referring to McCarty, Smithfield District Supervisor Dick Grice and Rushmere District Supervisor Rudolph Jefferson who voted in February to transfer the land to the state. That vote was followed by a 3-2 vote to cancel the project.

This organization needs to look at candidates that will represent the entire county, not just their particular districts, said Boykin,

but declined to say if the group would be actively seeking candidates for the Newport and Smithfield districts for the November election.

McCarty and Grice are up for reelection, as is Windsor District Supervisor Joel Acree.

Jefferson and Carrsville District Supervisor Don Rosie were elected for four-year terms in 2017.

The Southern and Central Isle of Wight Citizens Group will also operate like the decades-old Isle of Wight Citizens Association, in that it will discuss issues and bring them to the attention of the Board of Supervisors, said Boykin.

"We want to be prepared for the next issue. We know there will be more issues," said Boykin.

Boykin said the new group did not join the Isle of Wight Citizens Association because it tends to represent the more populous and

suburban northern end of the county, as well as the sheer distance between Carrollton and Smithfield and Windsor and Carrsville, which are far more rural.

The Isle of Wight Citizens Association also voted in favor of the proposed youth correctional center, and did not allow central and southern county residents who attended the meeting to vote on that issue because they were not dues paying members.

Boykin said the group has about 30 members right now and is still in the process of organizing meeting times and places.

Boykin said the group is working on another mailing to residents about the proposed youth correctional center so that everyone has a chance to be heard.

# Juvenile center site will revert to EDA

**By Frederic Lee**  
*Staff writer*

Economic Development Authority Chairman Ron Pack has asked the county attorney to draft a resolution confirming that the EDA still owns the property previously designated for the development of a juvenile correctional center south of Windsor.

The proposed 60-bed juvenile

correctional facility south of Windsor was turned down on April 18 by the Board of Supervisors, nearly three months after the EDA voted to transfer to the supervisors the property for the correctional facility.

"We all know what the vote was having to do with the DJJ facility," said Isle of Wight Director of Economic Development Christopher Morello during a meeting of the EDA on April 30, referencing a 3-2 Board of Supervisors vote that doomed the progression of

the proposed facility roughly two miles south of Windsor along Route 258.

"The property matter is in a little bit of a limbo right now," said Morello, "because the property didn't convey to the county from the EDA. So it is probably going to be the case that the Board of Supervisors will need to make sure that that part is kind of put to bed as well."

"As I understand it from talking

• **See PROPERTY, p. 10**



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# EDA looking for Windsor replacements

**By Frederic Lee**  
*Staff writer*

Members of the Isle of Wight Economic Development Authority are on the lookout for two new members following the resignations of members Richard J. Holland Jr. and Len Alphin over the now failed juvenile correctional center.

The two vacant seats represent the Windsor voting district and the town of Windsor, with Alphin being the former representative from the voting district, and Holland having represented the town of Windsor.

The two members resigned back in January following a 5-2 vote by the EDA to transfer the 20-acre property to the county for

the proposed juvenile correctional center, both voting 'no' at the time. In a turn of events, the Board of Supervisors ended up voting against the entire juvenile correctional facility project, 3-2, last month.

On process, Isle of Wight County Director of Economic Development Chris Morello said at the meeting that the EDA chairman is supposed to collect nominees and then forward those to the Board of Supervisors, who approves or rejects them.

Of the seven EDA members, one, each, represents the Smithfield, Newport, Windsor, Carrsville and Hardy voting districts, plus one representative for the

town of Smithfield and another for the town of Windsor.

EDA chairman Ron Pack said at the April 30 meeting that he'd spoken to Windsor Mayor Glyn T. Willis about potential recommendations but hadn't gotten any names. "I think they were kind of waiting to see what the DJJ vote was going to be like, and I'm just not getting any responses. I'm going to give one more shot at it," said Pack, adding that it was coming time for current EDA members to start making their own recommendations for the two vacancies.

Pack said that he didn't have anyone in mind since his contacts in that section

of the county were limited.

"We need two recommendations. See what y'all can do to find some folks to recommend so that we can get them to the board," said Pack to the other EDA members at the meeting.

Morello said that Holland's term expired in

April, and that the new appointment's term would be a full, four-year term. Morello said that Alphin's seat, however, only had one remaining year, but that whoever filled the role could be reappointed next year.

While the town is within the Windsor voting district,

the district itself stretches up along the southeast section of the county to the town limits of Smithfield.

"The town of Windsor is actually in the southern portion of that particular district," said Supervisor Dick Grice, who was present at the April 30 meeting.

## Property

• Continued from p. 1

with the county attorney, the vote didn't get specific about the property, so it may be that we want to, in essence, clean that part up and then make sure that for the record, for history, that it's clear that the property never conveyed and that it's still EDA property," Morello told the EDA.

Pack agreed. "I recommend that (the county attorney) prepare a resolution to that fact, that states that specifically so that we got it covered," he said at the meeting. County Attorney Robert Jones wasn't present at that time.

With its members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, the EDA originated as a way to issue bonds for businesses, ac-

cording to Pack. He also said that it was not the duty of the EDA to decide which businesses do or don't come to the county, nor to affect the Board of Supervisors' decisions on that.

In January, the EDA voted to give the land to the county for the correctional center in a 5-2 vote, and the two dissenters — both from the Windsor area — resigned over the vote.

Assistant Isle of Wight County Administrator Don Robertson said on May 1 that the conveyance of the property from the EDA to the county had been in process when the deciding vote on the correctional facility was cast on April 18, but he wasn't sure if it had been technically finalized. He said that it would make sense to him for the EDA

to have ownership over the property since the correctional facility project isn't going forward now.

Pack said on May 1 that while the EDA had previously voted to transfer the 20-acre property to the Board of Supervisors for the juvenile correctional facility, since it doesn't look like the project is moving forward, ownership of the property should revert back to the EDA. He added that the Board of Supervisors would probably have to vote on it.

Pack said that, because of the Board of Supervisors' vote to drop the correctional facility project, the 20-acre property should now fall into the same category of consideration for business development as the other empty parcels at the Shirley T. Holland Intermodal Park, where the facility had been proposed.

Pack said that EDA ownership over a parcel of land makes the process of business development easier. For instance, he said that if a property is owned by the EDA, officials can avoid the process of putting out RFP's and immediately begin collaboration with potential businesses.

Other businesses at the park include a Cost Plus World Market Virginia distribution center, a Keurig Green Mountain manufacturing facility and SafCo Products Company distribution center.

## Website focuses on Virginia 400th

RICHMOND (AP)— The Virginia House of Delegates has finished a new searchable website that has biographical sketches of every lawmaker who's served in the body for over the past 400 years.

House Clerk G. Paul Nardo said Wednesday that the online database has posted information of the more than 9,700 men and women who've served since the House of Burgesses first met in 1619.

Past House members

include George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Nardo said he made the announcement on the 400th anniversary of George Yeardley assuming the position of deputy governor on April 18, 1619. The first legislative session convened in July of that year.

The state is planning several events this year to mark the start of the House of Burgesses in Jamestown, the New World's first representative legislative assembly.