



Sugarland Run

District News
February
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Vice Chairman Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

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My Priorities for 2010

Knowledge-Based Budgeting, Economic Development, Education Set Stage for Future Growth

Hello Neighbor,

Last month, I joined other Supervisors at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast, and spoke about my goals when I took office and my priorities for 2010.

Two years ago, I acknowledged that the 2007 elections had brought change to Loudoun County, and I was honored to be a part of that change. I still am.

Two years ago, I recognized the differences between running a successful campaign and serving as an elected leader. I still do.

I pledged then not to accept any donations in non-election years as one way to exemplify that difference. I continue to fulfill that pledge.

Two years ago, I identified our greatest challenge as doing what's best for Loudoun residents now, but also positioning Loudoun County for future recovery and growth.

And I predicted that nowhere would that challenge be more obvious than in dealing with our budgets and capital improvement projects into the foreseeable future. And so it is.

But two years ago, I never imagined that I would be preparing to deal with about a \$191 million budget gap and a debt cap that does not begin to reflect the realities of our capital construction needs. But here we are.

Things are predicted to get worse before they get better, but they will get better, and we must take action now so we are ready when those opportunities arise in the near future.

My three top priorities this year are

- Helping lead Loudoun County through this fiscal crisis;
- Increasing economic development opportunities;
- Preserving and enhancing education in Loudoun County.

No. 1 Priority: The Budget

These are unprecedented times, and I believe we are about to undertake an exercise many elected officials would characterize as the "unthinkable," as we consider cutting deep into services AND raising taxes. The questions before us are how deep and what's affordable?

Loudoun is a growing community, with a total population increase of almost 2%, and a student enrollment increase of about 5.4% since FY 2009.

Last year, we reduced overall spending by \$182.8 million and decreased the costs/pupil by 6.1%. But we will be challenged to find new ways to deliver the kind of community we have come to cherish at an affordable price.

No.2 Priority: Economic Development

We will not be able to build or sustain the kind of community we have come to cherish if we don't expand the commercial tax base.

More commercial development will bring more jobs and revenue to Loudoun County so we can diversify our revenue sources and relieve the residential tax burden on our citizens.

The Board is working on initiatives to do just that. Some are real game changers, like planning the Route 28 corridor; bringing a full service George Mason

University campus to Loudoun; continuing our cluster approach to economic development, hopefully via an economic department authority; and revamping the sign ordinance so we're a friendlier place to do business.

No. 3 Priority: Education

Simply put, this community must make a choice. Are we going to invest in education to make Loudoun a first-rate school system? We can't talk about economic development, or the budget or a quality community without talking about the quality of Loudoun County Public Schools. Where is Loudoun education on our priority list?

With a 6% reduction in cost per pupil spending last year, Loudoun now ranks second to last in the region for teacher salaries. We spend less money/student than 8 of 9 regional public school systems. But even all these considerations do not preclude asking the question: How can we deliver a top-rate education in a more cost-effective way?

Public Input Sessions on the Budget

- Wednesday, February 24: 3:30 and 6:30 p.m. at the County Government Center, Leesburg
- Thursday, February 25: 6:30 p.m. at the County Government Center, Leesburg, scheduled if needed
- Saturday, February 27: 9:30 a.m. at the School Administration Building, Ashburn

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In closing, if there ever has been a call to action for us, the community, to come together, it is now.
 No one elected leader or member of the community has the experience, knowledge or wisdom to make these decisions alone.
 Rather, it is a time for community collaboration.
 It is a time for pragmatism, not ideology.
 It is a time for shared responsibility - where we give a little more and take a little less.
 I look forward to working with you.




Supervisor Susan Buckley spoke to the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce on January 11.

Photo by Dave Galen

County Budget Situation Still Grim

February 8, the Board of Supervisors got their first complete look at the county budget, as we continue to walk the tightrope between demands for service and affordability for Loudoun's struggling families. Supervisors have a difficult two months as they work through the details of the budget and make choices among the numerous excellent programs Loudoun offers. Be sure to let Supervisor Buckley know your priorities during this difficult budget season; attend a public hearing or email susan.buckley@loudoun.gov.

Where We've Been

The average tax bill during the past decade increased rapidly until the current Board of Supervisors' first budget for FY 2009.

FY 2000	+2.4% (election year)
FY 2001	+4.8%
FY 2002	+18.3%
FY 2003	+17.8%
FY 2004	+16.2% (election year)
FY 2005	+13.5%
FY 2006	+15.1%
FY 2007	+11.6%
FY 2008	- 0.1% (election year)
FY 2009	+6.5%
FY 2010	- 6.5%

What's Proposed

- Budget reductions in FY 2011 of \$8.3 million, including 105 full-time employees (on the county side); Reductions in internal administrative functions, facility maintenance and support, youth programs, building & development functions, assistance to low income residents and mental health services and support to regional organizations; closes libraries on Fridays and Sundays; and eliminates vacant law enforcement positions.
- Absorbs inflationary increases in retirement, utility and maintenance costs
- No salary increases for county staff
- Offsets declining state financial support
- Educates about 3,500 more students
- Increases class size, decreases central office and school-based employees
- Opens 2 high schools and 1 elementary school (adds employees)
- Opens Phase II of the Adult Detention Center, Bolen and Jenkins Parks (adds employees)
- Includes \$4 million in new revenue through fees
- Results in a 5% increase in locally tax-funded expenditures
- Equates to a 10% increase in the average tax bill

Where We Are

The highest tax rate that Supervisors can adopt is \$1.40. Even with that increase, county residents will see a decrease in services. Supervisors are grappling with the question of whether that rate is too expensive for residents during these tough economic times. A tax rate of \$1.27 will keep tax bills about the same as FY 2010.

Expenditure	Tax Rate	Reductions in County Spending	Reductions in School Spending
5% increase to local tax funded expenditures	\$1.40	\$8 million	\$10 million
0% increase to local tax funded expenditures	\$1.35	\$18 million	\$35 million
Current tax rate	\$1.245	\$124 million (includes both county and schools)	

In the Community

Supervisor Buckley has met with many citizens at homeowners association meetings and community events. She would like to meet with your group, too. To arrange a visit, please call her office at 703-771-5033.



Supervisor Susan Buckley along with county staff met with the Richland Acres Citizens' Association in January.

Buckley Works to Solve Richland Acres Issues

At the January 19 Richland Acres Citizens' Association meeting, county staff joined Supervisor Buckley to give residents an update on the numerous issues facing that neighborhood. Well water issues and the state's remediation topped residents' concerns, while speeders, litter and flooding were other topics that Supervisor Buckley's office has been working to address.

"The partnership that I have with the district's homeowners' associations has been an excellent source of information - and a way to help me address the priorities that residents have in these neighborhoods," Buckley said.

Board Changes Structure, Roles

For the third year in a row, Supervisor Buckley has been elected vice chairman of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. That position includes working with Chairman York on agenda and schedules, dealing with corporate Board matters, working with the county's legislative liaisons and presiding over meetings in York's absence.

There are now only three standing committees instead of the previous six: Finance/Government Services & Operations Committee, the Transportation & Land Use Committee, and the Joint Board & School Board Committee. Supervisor Buckley serves on Finance/Government Services & Operations Committee and the Joint Board & School Board Committee. These two committees are in line with her priorities to ensure sound financial management for the county and to protect the core educational values that have created excellent Loudoun schools. Also, she is an ex-officio member of the Family Services Board and regionally serves on the Human Services and Public Safety Committee.

The Board of Supervisors also voted to change some of their meetings to increase their accessibility and efficiency. The Public Input meeting - held Monday night preceding a Board meeting - will now be a Public Input & General Business meeting, starting at 6 p.m. The public input section begins at 7 p.m. All committee meetings will be in the Board Room and will be Webcast, so they will be available for online viewing.

Composite Index Change Helps Taxpayers

Governor Bob McDonnell wants to unfreeze the 2010-2012 Local Composite Index (LCI) for FY2011. That is great news for Loudoun's schools, which would have lost \$34 million that they had expected from the state this year. The Local Composite Index has been a long-time formula for determining how much funding our schools receive from the state. Because Loudoun is adding thousands of new students every year, our allocation from the state would be frozen at a time when we should be receiving more funds.

Northern Virginia is the engine that is driving the economic recovery in Virginia, and the schools are key to our ability to attract businesses.

The Board of Supervisors, the School Board, the business community, all members of the Loudoun delegation and other Northern Virginia localities collaborated to oppose the freeze and influenced the course of events in Richmond. Sen. Mark Herring put in a budget amendment to unfreeze the index.

Supervisor Buckley would like to thank all those who contacted the governor and their state representatives on behalf of Loudoun schools; this wouldn't have happened without you!

Non-Profit Spotlight

Me Time

"Me Time," a results-driven, educational assistance program, is coming to Seneca Ridge Middle School in March and will provide one-on-one assistance to students grades 6-8 with improvement of math and test-taking skills.

Volunteers are needed!

Call 703-728-9223 or email loudoundiversity@verizon.net and susan.buckley@loudoun.gov to volunteer.

Events in Our Community

Two Activities Build Community Spirit

Sugarland Run Cleanup Date Set

■ **April 10:** Supervisor Susan Buckley is partnering with the Rotary Club of Sterling, Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority and other community groups to sponsor an Algonkian Regional Park/Sugarland Run Cleanup Day. The cleanup will be from 9 a.m. to noon. Participants can meet at the Algonkian Regional Park boat ramp. Park staff will tell you where to clean and will hand out trash bags and latex gloves. Participants are encouraged to wear work clothes/shoes.



Feel free to bring your friends and invite your organization to join us. Bring work gloves, rakes, shovels and waders to help reach the trash.

Questions? Call 703-771-5033 or e-mail rcs-info@sterlingrotary.org or susan.buckley@loudoun.gov

Neighborhood Watch Fights Crime

■ **February 20:** The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit has rescheduled the Introduction to Neighborhood Watch program for February 20 at 2 p.m. at the Lowes Island Elementary School library. This class covers crime psychology, prevention techniques, program goals and objectives, getting a program started, accessing educational and informational resources, and many more program-related subjects. For information, contact Deputy Spurlock at james.spurlock@loudoun.gov.



Responding to Residents' Concerns

Power Out? Plowing Issues?

Many residents have had questions about plowing and power outages. For roads that are under state maintenance, the Virginia Department of Transportation handles snow removal. For the latest road conditions, weather, incident information and traffic cameras, visit www.511Virginia.org. For information on how VDOT prepares for snow, visit <http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/snow.asp>. For concerns, please contact 703 383-VDOT or 1-800-367-ROAD, or email NovaInfo@VDOT.Virginia.gov.

For power outages:

■ Dominion Virginia Power Storm Center, www.dom.com/storm-center/ (includes link to Power Outages Map), 1-888-667-3000.

■ Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative, www.novec.com/ (NOVEC) 703-335-0500 or toll-free 1-888-335-0500.

Did You Know?

In 2008, Loudoun County topped the nation with a median household income of \$111,925.

Sidewalk Construction On Tap

During the first two months of 2010, Supervisors approved additional funds for two Sugarland Run District projects that Supervisor Buckley has been shepherding through the county approval process.

■ The River Bank Street sidewalk construction is likely to begin in March when the weather warms up.

■ A short sidewalk segment, a crosswalk and ramps were approved for Hardwood Forest Drive at Great Falls Plaza.

Sheriff's Year-end Report

February 2, the Board of Supervisors heard a year-end update from the Sheriff's Department. In Eastern Loudoun, most categories of crime are down from 2008 with robbery down a whopping 43 percent, while burglary - the one category that has seen an increase over last year - is up 4 percent. The full report is online at www.loudoun.gov/sheriff, then click on "Monthly Crime Analysis Report."

Transportation Input Wanted

Robert E. Simanski is the Sugarland Run District representative on the Loudoun County Transportation Safety and Improvement Commission. The commission advises the Board of Supervisors on transportation safety issues. He would like to have input on transportation safety matters from residents of the district. Please contact him with issues, concerns and comments at rsimanski030941@yahoo.com. Be sure to put "Transportation Safety" in the subject line.

Budget Dialogue Engages Leaders

The January 30 Budget Dialogue was the culmination of a concept that Supervisor Buckley brought to the Board of Supervisors last fall. The Budget Dialogue brought community leaders together to discuss budget options. In addition to brainstorming ideas that might help mitigate the pain of this year's budget, community leaders said that the discussions helped them understand each other's perspective on the budget.