



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Greenlaw and Members of City Council
FROM: Beverly R. Cameron, City Manager
DATE: August 6, 2013
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

New City Website - Information Technology, with the help of [CivicPlus](#), has completely redesigned the City's website www.fredericksburgva.gov. The new site offers many enhancements to increase community engagement and improve communication between residents and City government. The improvements include:

- “*Notify Me*” – Visitors will be able to sign up to be notified via email and/or SMS text message about items of interest, including community activities, job openings, bid postings, current news items, calendar events, and meetings.
- “*RSS Feeds*” – Real Simple Syndication will be available as a way to receive recently posted information.
- “*Social Networking*” – Visitors will be able to link to select social networking applications from the City website.
- “*Community Voice*” – This new feature offers an opportunity for citizens and others to post comments and ideas on important issues in the City.
- “*My Dashboard*” – Beginning in August, visitors will be able to set up a profile that allows customization of the City's website to select and organize information important to them on one screen.

CivicPlus has worked with over 1,400 local governments in North America, including several Virginia localities, on similar projects and has earned many top website awards. City departments have updated and improved information available on the new site. IT Project Manager, Janet Murphy, has logged many hours with representatives from CivicPlus and each department to build and transfer website content to the new site. The website launched on July 23 without any major issues.

New Assistant Economic Development Director - Tony Williams, Fredericksburg's new Assistant Director for Economic Development, began work August 5. His first priorities will be meeting members of the city's business community and familiarizing himself with current business development projects and the city's tools for economic development.

Williams brings strong economic development and strategic contacts with partnering state agencies to his new position in Fredericksburg. For the past five years, he was Director of Tourism and Economic Development for Greene County, Virginia and he previously worked on major development projects throughout the state during his eight years with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. His experience also includes positions with the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Aviation and the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Williams replaces Richard Tremblay, who is retiring and moving to his hometown of Charlottesville.



Historicon Attendance Increases - [Historicon](#), a miniature gaming society, kicked off its second show in Fredericksburg on July 18. Economic Development and Tourism staff reports that the group booked 1368 room nights, surpassing last year's final numbers. Prior to the event, staff visited Central Park restaurants to give notice of the 3000 expected attendees. Restaurants in Old Town were also alerted that a city-provided shuttle would run from the Expo Center to bring attendees downtown. Additionally, EDT staffed an information booth throughout the July 18-21 event.

Customer Appreciation Day at FRED - On July 30, [FREDericksburg Regional Transit](#) held its annual "Customer Appreciation Day" at FRED Central and at Stop #26 in Lee's Hill. The first 500 riders received an "I take FRED instead" T-shirt with a special thank you on the back to our public and private partners. Every Wednesday during the month of August, passengers who received a T-shirt can ride FRED for free. At both event locations, passengers were also able to spin the FRED wheel to win additional prizes. Drawings were held to win FRED goodie bags, fare cards, monthly passes and the grand prize of a FRED yearly pass.



Virginia Central Railway Trail - Work continues on construction of the [Virginia Central Railway Trail](#). As of August 5, grading and application of stone bedding had been completed between Willis Street and Lafayette Boulevard and this section of the trail has been paved. Considerable grading and drainage work has also been completed between Lafayette Boulevard and Jefferson Davis Highway. The project schedule calls for construction to be complete and the trail to be open for public use by the end of 2013.



Mayfield Farmers Market - A new satellite Farmers Market has debuted in the Mayfield area of the City. The satellite market will be held on Thursdays in August and September from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. in the parking lot adjacent to the Grace Redemption Church on Dixon Street. During the first market at this new site, one produce vendor conducted business and nearly 50 shoppers attended, spending between \$5 and \$15 each. Special appreciation is due to Mr. James Bailey for his tireless efforts to promote the new market.

Family Table and Family Restaurant Week - Held on August 3 as part of an expanded Farmers Market, Family Table had just the right amount of activities for kids and perfect weather. The event received generous donations from the Home Depot stores in Spotsylvania and Fredericksburg and the Walmart and Lowe's stores in Central Park to offset the costs of the "build your own herb garden" booth. The event included face painting by community member Barbara Cochran, veggie art with the Fredericksburg Museum and Cultural Center, a hydration station from the Salvation Army, music by DJ Richard Green, a Touch-A-Truck John Deere tractor from Greenline, tile art and "build your own herb garden" with Parks and Recreation, and a treasure hunt station from Fredericksburg Parent.

The organizers of Family Table were also able to promote upcoming events to the more than 150 attendees, passing out menus for [Family Restaurant Week](#) which runs August 3-11. Participating restaurants will feature special kid's meals nightly from 5- 6:30 p.m. and a 'two for twenty' adult menu. The promotion for Restaurant Week also contained activity sheets for kids that included crayons and suggestions for parents on how to keep kids entertained while dining out.

New Parks & Recreation Catalog - Released on August 6, the new Parks & Recreation [catalog](#) has received a complete facelift. The overall look has been revamped to make it more user friendly and more in line with the layout of its competitors. The Department's printing budget has been reduced, and staff has gotten very creative about marketing the catalog to the public. Parks & Recreation staff will be holding a two-week social media campaign to promote the fall lineup, engaging the help of Fredericksburg Patch, Fredericksburg Parent, and our own [Facebook page](#).

Residents in certain zip codes, those who submit the majority of activity registrations, will get their hardcopy catalog in the Free Lance-Star. Other residents will receive a flyer in the FLS Star Weekly mailer urging them to view the new catalog online and/or download their own copy. This new catalog is just the beginning of various changes within the department. The Parks & Rec staff will be using this campaign to measure the effectiveness of the power of social media and to improve upon our offerings to the community based on the valuable feedback we have recently received from residents.

National Night Out - Heritage Park Apartments - National Night Out, hosted August 6 from 6 to 8 p.m., was a free event whose goal was to build a healthier and safer community by learning more about crime and drug prevention, community service organizations, and strengthening the relationship with the local Sheriff's Offices and

Police Departments. Parks and Recreation was invited to host a table to promote community programs available to the residents of Heritage Park Apartments. They gave away free lunch totes to children, raffled off a free spot on a youth basketball program, and passed out literature including the new catalog. There were approximately 75 residents in attendance.

University of Mary Washington Community Fair - On August 27, the Community Action Fair by University of Mary Washington's Center for Honor, Leadership, and Service will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Parks and Recreation was invited to host a table to help students find out how to get involved in the Fredericksburg area community and to make contact with a great group of volunteers. This free event fair is specifically designed for Parks and Recreation to connect with UMW students who are interested in serving in their community. The goal is to recruit volunteers mostly for special events, interns, and possibly coaches/referees.

Hugh Mercer Elementary School Orientation – On Wednesday, August 29, Parks and Recreation will have a table for the morning and afternoon sessions. They will be in the gym along with other community vendors talking to parents and children about programs Parks and Recreation offer. They will pass out literature including catalogs and possibly host a game.

Soggy Doggy Swim - If last year's attendance is repeated this September 6, it is expected that there will be over 100 dogs and nearly 200 people attending this year's [Soggy Doggy Swim](#) at Dixon Pool. The event will be the 4th Annual Swim and it is a very popular attraction for both dogs and their owners!

Fredericksburg's Finest on Fridays - On June 28, the Police Department launched a new public relations initiative with the first installment of [Fredericksburg's Finest on Fridays](#). The biweekly feature is a series of snapshot biographies published in the "City Police Blotter", a blog that is hosted by fredericksburg.com and written by Ms. Natatia Bledsoe. The biographies have attained a high level of readership and have been extremely well received, eliciting positive feedback from the public and from the editorial staff of the local publication.

Retirement Offered for American and Virginia Flags - Two City departments have teamed up to offer a new service to area businesses and residents. Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities will now accept unserviceable American and Virginia flags for proper retirement. Collection bins have been placed in the lobby of City Hall at 715 Princess Anne Street and the lobby of the Dorothy Hart Community Center at 408 Canal Street. The City is initiating this effort through [Retire Your Old Glory](#), a Pennsylvania based organization dedicated to the proper retirement of American flags. Fredericksburg is the first Virginia locality to participate in the program. To date, over 4,500 American flags have been honorably retired through the program.

The City's decision to also accept Virginia flags is based, in part, on the fact that the recommended procedure for honorable retirement of Virginia flags is the same as for American flags.

All sizes of American and Virginia flags will be accepted. The flags collected will be retired honorably and respectfully through a partnership between the City and the Fredericksburg-Rappahannock Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America. Greg Raines, President of the chapter, said: "It is our chapter's honor to conduct flag retirement ceremonies, in conjunction with local Boy Scouts and their leaders, and we look forward to working together with the City on this project."

