



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Greenlaw and Members of City Council
FROM: Beverly R. Cameron, City Manager
DATE: November 18, 2014
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

Project Manger Promotes Safe Sleep Practices - This month the Fredericksburg Department of Social Services is celebrating the two year anniversary of our "Safe Sleep Campaign". The campaign was implemented in 2012 with the goal of educating parents and caretakers on the importance of a safe sleep environment for their infant. Suffocation is currently one of the leading causes of death for children under the age of one, and the majority of these suffocation fatalities occur in the sleeping environment.

Over the past two years, each worker at DSS has conducted assessments of the sleep environment of our families with infants and educated the caretakers on safe sleeping practices. As part of our commitment to the community, DSS provides portable cribs to those families who do not have a safe sleeping area for their infants. Since the first Safe Sleep Campaign, DSS has given away 80 portable cribs and educated many caregivers. These cribs are available free of charge and to any family in Planning District 16. All of the funds for this project are collected through private and corporate donations and fundraising led by the department.

For the 2014 holiday season, DSS is launching Project Manger. The purpose of Project Manger is to encourage the community to join with DSS in this important initiative by making a monetary donation which will be used to purchase additional portable cribs and help ensure that every baby sleeps safely. Those interested in supporting the campaign or learning more about Project Manger should contact Protective Services Supervisor, Shannon Hartung, by phone at (540)372-1032 ext. 247 or by email at Shannon.hartung@dss.virginia.gov.

Third Quarter Retail Report Shows Vacancy Rates Dropping - Fredericksburg's retail vacancy rate dropped to just 6.6 percent in the three months ending on September 30, while tax revenues rose. The most recent Quarterly Retail Report produced by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism shows that the retail vacancy rate is just 4 percent in downtown Fredericksburg (the 600 through 1100 blocks of Caroline Street and the 100 through 400 blocks of William Street). The citywide vacancy rate of 6.6 percent was down from 7.9 percent during the third quarter of 2013.

Fifteen retail/restaurant businesses signed leases for retail space in Fredericksburg during the third quarter, and 13 retail/restaurant businesses opened. More than 30 additional businesses are actively seeking retail space. The report also shows growth in sales, meals and lodging tax revenues in Fredericksburg during the third quarter compared to the same period a year ago. Lodging tax revenue increased 15.4 percent year-over-year. (See attached).

Detective Completes Forensic Science Training - On November 7, Detective Gloria Mejia graduated from the [Virginia Forensic Science Academy](#) in Richmond after completing the challenging nine-week course. Detective Mejia earned her competitive appointment to the Academy through her experience and demonstrated technical expertise in evidence collection. The topics covered during the course include: photography, crime scene investigation, arson evidence, toxicology, forensic biology, latent print evidence, trace evidence, tool marks, firearms evidence and bullet trajectory, crime scene sketching, evidence law, questioned documents, drug recognition, impression evidence and criminal investigative analysis.



Detective Mejia with Chief David Nye and Academy Director Linda Jackson

The Route 66 Challenge - The Wellness Committee recently offered a challenge to the city's employees to promote and encourage physical fitness. The challenge, which ended on November 11, was for participants to record their steps and other activities with the goal of completing the virtual "walk" from Chicago to Santa Monica along Route 66 in just six weeks. While participants kept track of their steps via a pedometer provided by the committee, employees also got credit for other physical activities ranging from running or weight lifting to housework or yoga.

Three hundred fifteen employees signed up for the challenge, which the Wellness Committee assumed would simply be a fun activity to promote better health. But the challenge also encouraged both camaraderie and competitiveness, as participants cheered on their teammates with organized group walks and Friday "healthy" lunches. The committee members heard employees talking about their steps and activities, as well as their successes at losing weight.

The actual Route 66 is 2,451 miles long, and three teams made it to the finish within the six-week deadline. The Department of Public Works, the Fire Department, and the City Manager's team (which included one member of Council, Information Technology and City Attorney Department's) all successfully reached the finish line. Nine city employees logged well over a million steps each, which converts to more than 470 miles that each of these nine employees walked in just six weeks. Even more amazing is that the final tally of steps, entered by all of the challenge participants, totaled **103,737,190!** That is the equivalent of 48,840 miles, just 1,000 miles short of walking twice around the Earth's equator! Not only was the Route 66 Challenge an impressive accomplishment, it was also something that everyone enjoyed. The Wellness Committee looks forward to promoting another challenge after the New Year.