



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Greenlaw and Members of City Council
FROM: Beverly R. Cameron, City Manager
DATE: April 2, 2013
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

City and UMW Foundation Receive Statewide Honor - The City of Fredericksburg and the University of Mary Washington Foundation received a statewide 2013 Community Economic Development Award at the Virginia Economic Developers Association's Spring Conference held March 29 in Charlottesville. The award recognized the Hyatt Place-Fredericksburg hotel at Eagle Village for the creative financing enabled by the city's Tourism Zone program, the new Virginia Tourism Development Financing Program and the entrepreneurial strength of its developer, the UMW Foundation. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism nominated the project for the award.

City Council approved a \$310,000 Tourism Zone performance grant for the hotel in 2011. The city and foundation worked with the Virginia Tourism Corporation to secure a \$310,000 state matching grant for the hotel through the Virginia Tourism Development Financing Program, the first one approved by VTC since the program's creation in 2011. The city and state grants, funded by sales tax revenues generated by the hotel, allowed the foundation to close the final gap in financing the \$15 million project.

City EDA Recognized for Downtown Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program - The downtown facade improvement program of the Fredericksburg Economic Development Authority received a statewide 2013 Award of Excellence in the Commercial Revitalization Plans & Streetscapes Category from the Virginia Downtown Development Association. The annual award luncheon was held April 4 in Petersburg.

In October 2011, the Fredericksburg Economic Development Authority launched a new program offering 50/50 matching grants up to \$10,000 to property owners in the 40-block downtown historic district who were interested in improving the facades of their commercial buildings. Since the program's startup and through the end of 2012, twenty downtown commercial building facades have been improved with EDA grants totaling \$111,000, leveraging additional private investment of approximately \$392,000. The program is based on a May 2011 report by Frazier Associates assessing the façade improvement needs for each of the downtown's 230 commercial and mixed use buildings.

Parks & Recreation Summer Brochure - The [Summer Activities Catalog](#) for Parks & Recreation will be released on April 10 in the Free Lance-Star and at the Dorothy Hart Community Center. The catalog features over 500 activities for children and adults including art, sport, dance and fitness. It also includes trips, special events and information about the Dixon Pool.

Earth Day at Old Mill Park - This year's [Earth Day](#), held on April 14, will feature alternative cars, dozens of exhibitors, hands-on activities, live music, live animals, hikes and food vendors. The one-day event celebrating the environment and protection of natural resources attracts over 1000 people annually to Old Mill Park.

Local Hospitality Industry Training - As part of an ongoing effort to keep our local hotel front desk clerks educated, the Economic Development and Tourism Department, in cooperation with the Fredericksburg Regional Hospitality Council and Trolley Tours, hosted twenty-four people on March 26 on an all-day familiarization tour. Participants enjoyed tours at nine sites during the nine-hour day and learned just how much there is to do in the area. These tours are offered yearly in March, June and September. Additionally, a complimentary "Timeless Ticket" and trolley tour ticket are available year-round to any hotel employee who cannot attend a regularly scheduled familiarization tour.

Family Reunion Workshop - The Department of Economic Development and Tourism hosted a Reunion Workshop on March 9 at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel and Conference Center. Thirty-nine reunion planners attended the one-day event, which concluded with a tour of the historic district provided by Trolley Tours of Fredericksburg. Edith Wagner, editor of Reunions Magazine, shared her knowledge and ideas for planning reunions. Tourism staff was on hand to welcome the attendees and share with them the department's services for planners. The United States Marine Corps Platoon 290 Bootcamp Reunion has booked their 2013 reunion in Fredericksburg as a direct result of this workshop. Other workshop attendees are seeking more information for their upcoming reunions in the Fredericksburg area.

Historicon to Return to Fredericksburg for 2014 and 2015 - [Historicon](#), a miniature gaming society, has signed contracts with the Fredericksburg Expo Center and four hotels for July 17-20, 2014 and July 16-19, 2015. Economic impact is expected to be about \$1.17 million dollars per event. The dates for this year's Historicon are July 18-21, 2013. To date, city staff is able to track 1,105 hotel room nights at eight hotels associated with the 2013 event.

Child Abuse Prevention Month - April is Child Abuse Prevention Month in Virginia. The Department of Social Services protective services unit has collaborated with several community partners to increase awareness and to raise funds to further efforts to prevent child abuse and support families. Last year, the protective services unit responded to 366 child protective services referrals, completed 200 investigations and 258 family assessments, and provided services to nearly 1,000 city children. Education is a critical component to combating the problem of child abuse, and the DSS protective services

team gave 15 presentations to community partners covering topics such as mandated reporting and recognizing the signs of abuse.

Department activities supporting Child Abuse Prevention Month include the following:

- A pinwheel garden is planted in front of the DSS building. The pinwheel is the symbol for child abuse prevention and is meant to reflect hope, health and happiness of children.



Pinwheels in front of the DSS building for Child Abuse Prevention Month

- DSS staff will have the opportunity to contribute \$5 to “dress down” for the day. All proceeds will be given to Safe Harbor, the local Child Advocacy Center.
- On April 17, the Department will be partnering with Sweet Frog at Eagle Village in a fundraising event. Twenty-five percent of all purchases at Sweet Frog between the hours of 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. on this date will be donated to the Department’s Safe Sleep Campaign. Unsafe sleep environments have become the leading cause of death for infants in the U.S., and the department’s campaign educates caretakers, assesses sleep environments, and provides portable cribs to those in need.
- On April 26, the Department will be partnering with the City of Fredericksburg Sheriff’s Office in a fundraising event at the Central Park Wal-Mart to “Cover a Cruiser,” where donors are encouraged to tape paper currency to a deputy’s patrol car. All proceeds will be donated to the Safe Sleep Campaign.

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