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What's really changed?



Muslims and Arabs reflect on life in Chesterfield five years after 9/11

By Katherine Peters
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Half a decade after the atrocities of September 11, 2001, life in Chesterfield County has returned to normal—almost.

The shunning of and discrimination against Muslims or Arabs after 9/11 has alleviated, but Muslim and Arab Chesterfield residents still face sidelong glances and questions about their ethnicity or religion at nearly every turn.

However, for both the Muslim and Arab communities, the fear factor is slowly decreasing as Chesterfield and the nation continue to mend. Five years after the largest attack ever on American soil, local Muslims and Arabs are sharing what their lives have been like since 2001. Here's what they have to say:

Malik Khan

Malik Khan admits that Chesterfield Muslims led a separate life from the rest of the county prior to 9/11.

"[Interacting with the greater community] wasn't that high of a priority. That has changed," he says. "We're trying because our backs are against the wall." Khan, a process engineer for Philip Morris, is originally from Pakistan, and serves as chairman of the outreach committee at the Islamic Center of Virginia off Buford Road.

Today, "people get a little bit tense the moment they find out the person across from you is Muslim," he says.

Muslims have begun to realize how much more they need to be

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Close to home



County homeland security funding may not be secure

By Richard Foster
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Chesterfield County's Homeland Security gravy train might get derailed this year.

Since 1999, the county has received more than \$2.28 million in federal grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, not including regional funds, and more than half of that—\$1.66 million—was awarded in 2003 and 2004 alone.

However, due to major changes in how the federal government

dispersed the grants to the states for fiscal year 2006, it looks like Chesterfield might see far less Homeland Security funds this year, or perhaps none at all.

"This is going to be a significant decrease," said Bob Spieldenner, spokesperson for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. "These [Homeland Security] projects will have to be done on at least a regional basis. The bottom line is not every locality is going to end up getting money as they did in

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Burning down the house



Page Dowdy/Chesterfield Observer

Firefighters practice extinguishing a roaring blaze at a vacant home near the intersection of Inge and East Hundred roads during a live burn training exercise on Aug. 25. The latest career recruit class from the Chesterfield County Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services also participated in the live burn.

Five candidates seek Dale District School Board seat in November

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

School boards in Chesterfield County have been elected since 1995, but there have never been more than two candidates running for any one of the five magisterial districts. Until this year.

Now there are five candidates looking to replace Beth Davis who passed away last June. Jim Holland, Art Maxwell, Verena McCall, Janet

Stephens and David Wyman turned in at least 125 valid signatures to the Registrar's Office before the Aug. 25 deadline, qualifying them to appear on the Nov. 7 ballot. Since School Board positions are considered to be nonpolitical, no party affiliation will be listed.

Here is a rundown of the candidates:

Jim Holland

Holland is a certified public accountant with 20 years of experi-

ence in the educational field, having served as an adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in accounting and at J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College. He has a bachelor of science degree in accounting and an MBA from North Central State University.

"We need better communications with parents in the district...to give them more opportunity to express

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See the special pull-out section for the Chesterfield County High School Football schedules. Sponsored by Central Virginia Bank & CJW Medical Center