



Chesterfield Observer

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Chesterfield's housing market is expected to turn the corner

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

The real estate industry's local guru of numbers is predicting home property sales will begin to grow in six months, but at least one Chesterfield executive says he can already feel it turning. "We're hitting the soft landing, and the economy is ready to take off," Dr. Christine Chmura of Chmura Economics and Analytics told the

Richmond real estate market last week during a breakfast sponsored by the Home Building Association of Richmond. The national forecast is for three percent growth in real estate during the third quarter with ad-



Chmura

ditional increases later in the year. The real estate market for new homes and resales declined in 2006, but much of that was due to the comparison to an outstanding 2005. Despite the decline, prices were up again even though homes stayed on the market for longer. Chmura stressed that the two major factors for real estate sales – growth in employment and low
see REAL ESTATE, page 3

Growing pains School system explores solutions for overcrowding

By Richard Foster
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In 2004, with Chesterfield County's public school population bulging at the seams and spillover classes being held in around 300 trailers and temporary classrooms, county voters approved a \$230 million bond referendum to build

new schools and to upgrade existing schools. The \$59.7 million new Cosby High School opened off Hull Street last fall and two new elementary schools and two new middle schools are currently under construction. The county also plans to build a replacement for Clover Hill High School at a cost of \$80-\$90 million,

along with 13 renovation projects, including an addition to L.C. Bird High School. But even after all that construction is completed by 2012, the same 300 trailers will probably still be needed. If not more. "We will still have a need for the same number of temporary classrooms because of the rapid growth in the county," Superintendent Marcus Newsome said in a recent interview with the Chesterfield Observer. With a massive influx of new students expected to come from housing developments under construction and the expansion of the Fort Lee military base in nearby Prince George County, some county school board members are looking at new ways to battle rising student enrollments.

"I think we have to face reality: Growth is going to be far greater than expected," says Midlothian District School Board representative Dr. James Schroeder. Marshall W. Trammell Jr., the Bermuda District representative, says with growth occurring at the rate of about a new school's worth of children each year, and with school construction costs on the increase,
see OVERCROWDING, page 7



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A new middle school and an elementary school is currently under construction in the Bermuda District (above) along with two more schools in the Matoaca District. Even so, the school system is still facing major overcrowding in coming years.

Slippin' and slidin'



Page Dowdy/Chesterfield Observer

Clover High High School students Patrick Sager (from left), Andrew Olsen, Nathan Word and Scott McClachlan enjoyed the brief but beautiful snowfall last week.

County faces business growth challenges

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

Though Chesterfield is proudly proclaiming three new business locations – Meadowville Technology Park, the Watkins Centre and redevelopment at the former Cloverleaf Mall site – each has hurdles to overcome. **Meadowville update** The 1,300-acre Meadowville tract in eastern Chesterfield needs an interchange with I-295, which adjoins the business park, to increase its marketability. The county transportation department estimates that it will cost \$28-\$30 million to build a cloverleaf interchange, which is preferable, or \$14-16 million for a diamond interchange.

"We certainly need the infrastructure to be competitive," said Director of Economic Development Will Davis. "The interchange is critical." "Not having the interchange has not been a factor for any serious prospect," explained Faith McClintic, development manager for Meadowville. "There have been questions about future enhancements." Congressman Randy Forbes (R-Virginia's 4th District) has secured federal funding of about \$4 million for the interchange, and McClintic is discussing the possibility of state funding from the Transportation Opportunity Fund through the Virginia Economic Development
see MEADOWVILLE, page 4



Want to know more about what's happening in Chesterfield County? Read the legal notices on page 14.