

Chesterfield Observer

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Nominations sought for business awards

Each year, Chesterfield County honors local companies that contribute to the county's economy and its citizens. The intent is to give recognition to businesses that consistently contribute to the community by giving back to the citizens of the county through community service, create and deliver products or services to its customers which are innovative, is a leader in valuing its employees, and upholds the principles and standards of ethical business practices. Past winners have included Getloaded.com, Village Bank and BluePrint Automation.

The Chesterfield Department of Eco-

nomic Development, the Chesterfield County Chamber of Commerce and the Chesterfield Business Council of the Greater Richmond Chamber are inviting nominations for the 2008 First Choice Business Awards. Companies may nominate themselves and/or be nominated by any individual or group within the community.

All nominated companies will receive a formal application form to be completed by the nominee.

Winners will be chosen by a selection panel, which will consist of business leaders and county staff selected for their business and

community knowledge. The selection panel will then interview businesses that meet the general eligibility criteria before final winners are chosen.

The winners will be recognized at Chesterfield County's Celebrate Chesterfield Business! event. The board of supervisors will also recognize this year's winners at its June meeting.

If you have any questions about the award program, call Tina Shreve or Karen Alyward at 318-8550, or e-mail tina@chesterfieldbusiness.com or karen@chesterfieldbusiness.com.

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zones, not just one. Moving any other neighborhood wouldn't give SCMS and BBMS the numerical relief they need.

It's not too late for action. A member of the original redistricting committee revised the redistricting proposal to provide true relief. The amended proposal opens BBMS at 86 percent, SCMS at 79 percent, TCMS at 83 percent and MMS at 83 percent after the school additions. Now that is what I call relief!

**Kristin Deckert
Hampton Park**

Primary ballot shortage

Dear Editor,

During a recent board of supervisors meeting where residents voiced their concerns about the presidential primary debacle, [Bermuda Supervisor] Dorothy Jaeckle [said,] "...people need to understand that nobody is perfect."

In one of her first actions as Bermuda supervisor, Dorothy Jaeckle failed to stand up for Chesterfield residents. Instead, she was an apologist for ineptitude and incompetence.

As widely publicized, many Chesterfield residents encountered lines so long that many left in frustration without voting. There were no ballots for the 299 residents who waited, and they were instructed to write their selections on scraps of paper. These votes were subsequently ruled in violation of state code and could not be counted.

Since the primary, Chesterfield has been the subject of negative press that should embarrass and outrage residents. More importantly, this incident undermines residents' trust in the elections process. Apparently, Ms. Jaeckle does not understand this.

I did not support Ms. Jaeckle for supervisor because I did not think she was the best qualified candidate. However, when she was elected, I hoped that she would be responsive to concerns of Chesterfield residents. Sadly, it appears this is not the case.

**Alexis Crump
Chester**

Raise police salaries

Dear Editor,

I am volunteering to assist the police officer teaching at the Chesterfield County Police Citizens Academy, an excellent 10-week program offered by the Chesterfield County Police Department, outlining the functions of the various aspects of the police department. This morning, officers speaking to the class outlined the serious problems of staffing and retention within the department. Not only is turnover an issue, but a number of retirements are expected within the next several years, intensifying the problem.

Further investigation and discussion with police officers, as well as searching the Internet, outlines one of the major reasons for police turnover: low pay. And, the Ches-

terfield County Police Department does not match the salaries offered by other area police departments. Millions of dollars are spent on training new officers to replace those leaving (\$122,000 per recruit and the latest class was 26 men and women).

This whole process results in a drain of experienced officers, with a large number of inexperienced officers on the force, in particular on evenings and nights (evening shift average length of service is between 3-4 years, with nights even less). More experienced officers are, of course, more effective and safer on the job. This impacts us as citizens, as well as the officers themselves. One wonders, will the day come when no officers can respond to our 911 call? Frightening for a senior citizen to contemplate.

Why not pay the current officers adequately to retain them and diminish some of the costs – both monetary and unseen (morale, force memory, knowledge of the county, etc.) – of constant turnover?

**Jerry D. Horton
Woodlake**

Professional engineers?

Dear Editor,

I would like to congratulate the authors of two letters to you in the Feb. 27 edition of the Chesterfield Observer. Each author, Ms. Ellen M. Eggerding and Ms. Marilyn Nelson, both of Midlothian, did an excellent job of articulating their feelings about the design and ongoing construction along Winterfield Road.

I am, however, at a bit of a loss as to why you, as editor, or they themselves, omitted the P.E. behind their name as I am sure they are both well qualified professional engineers skilled in transportation analysis and design.

Thank you for allowing everyone's opinion to be heard.

**Ken Wilkinson
Midlothian**

Ms. Eggerding is not a professional engineer. We were unable to contact Ms. Nelson. Editor

More on Winterfield Rd.

Dear Editor,

Since my original letter concerning the traffic circle that has been built on Winterfield [Road], I have discovered additional information by calling various people in both the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Chesterfield County government. Two things that I discovered bother me tremendously.

1. The turnaround was not approved the first time it was submitted by the builder. It was approved on appeal, but how? Speaking with the county transportation department, I discovered that they felt the design was not a good one; the curves were too sharp for many vehicles. So how did this get approved? I was

told the builder's response was that they could not purchase the land across the road that would have resulted in the turnaround having gentler curves. So again, why did the plan get approved?

2. Although the fire department, etc. approved the design, county officials are aware that making first responder vehicles such as first trucks and ambulances, etc. drive up onto the brick apron will slow them down. How could this be considered acceptable by anyone? When someone is having a heart attack or a house is on fire, seconds matter. And how will snow plows be able to navigate the turns without destroying the brick apron? Who will pay to have the apron maintained?

This information was the result of many, many calls to dozens of people. I was also told that once plans are approved, they are rarely unapproved. However, I have to believe in the voice of the people. I have not found a single person who travels Winterfield and thinks that the traffic circle makes sense of any kind.

**Melissa Holly
Midlothian**

Dear Editor,

I am tired of hearing people say that the roundabout on Winterfield Road near Midlothian Turnpike is "too confusing" or "holds up traffic near the railroad crossing," because I know that roundabouts are the absolute safest type of intersection for a two-lane road. Think about it: they lower speeds and only allow traffic flow in one direction. The chance of a collision at a roundabout is almost zero.

And the roundabout has nothing to do with traffic being backed up all the way beyond the railroad crossing, therefore putting people in danger of a train collision. People should never stop their car over a railroad crossing in the first place. Could it perhaps be that there is a stoplight at the intersection with Midlothian Turnpike that is stopping traffic?

Without this roundabout, all of the young mothers doing their leisurely late-morning shopping at the future Midlothian Towne Center would be complaining that "it's almost impossible to make a left turn onto Winterfield Road from here! We need something like a roundabout that would allow traffic to flow smoothly in one direction, from all angles," wouldn't they?

At least this developer, unlike the rest, has provided curbs and sidewalks along Winterfield Road. This traffic circle adds some much needed character and classical flair to this rapidly expanding part of our village.

**Seth Schipinski
Midlothian**

Letters to the editor can be e-mailed to letters@chesterfieldobserver.com, mailed to P.O. Box 1616, Midlothian, VA 23113, or faxed to 744-3269. Letters should include the writer's phone number and home address, but neither will be printed. For complete guidelines, visit www.chesterfieldobserver.com and click on "letters policy."