

Top 10 Reasons to Shop Chesterfield:

- #10 Relieves anxiety of crossing bridges
- #9 Keeps our young drivers closer to home
- #8 Meet your neighbors!
- #7 Avoids tolls
- #6 Less driving is good for the environment
- #5 Saves gas
- #4 Creates and maintains jobs in our community
- #3 Supports schools & public safety through a portion of the sales tax
- #2 Strengthens our local businesses

And the number one reason to "Shop Chesterfield..."

- #1 It's just the right thing to do!
Business starts here...with all of us

In the 12 - month period that ended June 30, 2008 Chesterfield received approximately \$90 million in state and local sales tax revenue. **Let's keep our tax revenue at home.**

County registrar encourages voting by absentee ballot



Photo courtesy of the General Registrar

Voters can avoid the expected large turnout at the polls this year by opting for an absentee ballot.

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

Want to avoid long lines at the polls on Election Day? Chesterfield Registrar Larry Haake is recommending voters make their selections by absentee ballot, in hopes of reducing the number of voters flooding the polls on Nov. 4.

Nationally, voter turnout is expected to be at an all-time high this year. Chesterfield currently has 200,000 registered voters and 67 polling places. That translates into the potential for long waits.

"There are going to be lines. Be patient," cautioned Haake, during a community meeting in Matoaca District last week.

Absentee voting is one way to avoid the lines. Haake has also previously recommended voting during non-peak hours. The busiest times are likely to be before and after work and during lunchtime. The polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

There are a number of reasons to vote absentee, and registrars routinely take your word as long as the paperwork is completed properly. Being out of town on business is sufficient.

"You can be in Petersburg on business," said Haake.

Or you can be scheduled to work for 11 hours or more on Election Day.

Others who qualify for absentee voting include:

- Students attending college away from home or the spouse of a student
- Those serving on active duty in the military and their spouses
- Those who are disabled or are caring for someone who is disabled
- Those who are vacationing
- Those who are pregnant
- Those with a religious obligation

• Those confined on a misdemeanor charge
The deadline for applying for an application is 5 p.m. on Oct. 28, and your ballot must be received by the time the polls close on Nov. 4.

Go to www.chesterfield.gov and click on the "absentee voting" button on the left. Then, follow the links to the Virginia Absentee Ballot application. The completed application should be mailed to Registrar, P.O. Box 1690, Chesterfield, VA 23832 or faxed to 751-0822. For questions, call the registrar at 748-1471.

At the Matoaca meeting, Police Chief Thierry Dupuis said school resource officers (SROs) will be at many of the precincts on Election Day. SROs (uniformed police officers) are assigned to each of the middle and high schools, and 47 of the 67 precincts are at county schools. Dr. Harold Braxton, a county resident who is an African American, said having police officers at the polls intimidates some citizens.

"That really strikes at our souls," responded Dupuis. "We're not going to be standing guard at the polls."

According to Matoaca School Board member Omarh Rajah, all five school board members recommended to Superintendent Marcus Newsome that parent-teacher conferences not be held on Election Day. Last week, the decision was made to move those conferences to Nov. 3. Concerns had been expressed that holding those conferences then would take necessary parking spaces from voters. There was insufficient parking at some precincts during the primary last February.

"While we have not had any issues in the past, we are cognizant of the concerns brought to our attention, [and] we remain committed to informing parents about their children's academic progress," said Newsome. "However, we do not want our programming to have a negative effect on Election Day activities."

Thanksgiving Meal Package program

Each year, the Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Alliance for Social Ministry (CCHASM), working with schools, businesses, churches, county agencies and individuals in the community, coordinates a Thanksgiving Meal Package program to assist those in the community who might otherwise not have the resources to celebrate the holiday. CCHASM is responsible for coordinating the volunteers,

food and financial resources to meet community needs.

The organization would like to collect at least 2,100 complete meal packages, including a \$20 gift certificate for each package. Any individual, business or organization that would like to participate in the program may visit www.cchasm.org or e-mail cchasmoutreach@verizon.net for more information.

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Chesterfield Observer