

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA - ANNUAL REPORT 1997



City Manager Vola Lawson was honored by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) with its 1997 national award for innovative leadership and accomplished professionalism. Mrs. Lawson has been honored by ASPA in the past as the Outstanding Public Administrator in Virginia. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) presented national Program Excellence Awards to Mrs. Lawson and to the City for the City's Community Shelter/Substance Abuse Services Center and for the City's innovative Community Policing Program. Mrs. Lawson was inducted into the Virginia Women's Hall of Fame in 1993.

Mrs. Lawson serves as President of the Alexandria Transit Company, which operates the City's DASH bus system. She also serves on the Alexandria Economic Development and Tourism Board, the Board of the Alexandria Bar Foundation, and the National Council of the

FROM THE CITY MANAGER

I am pleased to present my *1997 Annual Report* to the Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council and to the citizens of Alexandria. This report highlights the major accomplishments of City government during Fiscal Year 1997, and discusses several major issues that will occupy Council's attention during its new three-year term, which began July 1.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the founding of Alexandria, the high quality of public services provided to our citizens is a measure of City Council's support for sound fiscal management and its constant focus on how best to meet the future needs of a growing City and its people. As we begin a cycle of increased capital investment to upgrade or replace aging facilities, equipment and systems, the City's credit ratings take on added importance. In late 1999, the City expects to enter the bond market seeking to borrow \$35 million to finance several major projects, including school facilities, a new library, and recreation center renovations.

As one of only 36 cities and counties in the U.S. with triple-A bond ratings from both of Wall Street's major credit rating agencies, Alexandria will be able to exercise its borrowing authority at the lowest possible interest cost, saving our taxpayers millions of dollars over the life of the bonds.

During FY 1997, the City made significant progress in a number of important areas:

- The long-awaited Beltway interchange and connector serving the Eisenhower Avenue Corridor was constructed, improving traffic access to one of the City's major development districts.
- The City's welfare reform initiative, *Alexandria Works!*, placed over 500 participants in jobs during its first year, helping to reduce the monthly welfare caseload by 21%.
- The City co-sponsored with the Chamber of Commerce and the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership the first annual Alexandria Technology Achievement Week, honoring the 164 technology firms in the City and presenting Technology Achievement Awards to five local companies and the Alexandria City Public Schools.
- City Council created the Potomac West Alliance to coordinate and promote revitalization of Potomac West neighborhoods and commercial centers and launched a Business Assistance Loan Program for new and existing businesses in Potomac West.
- The Small Business Development Center at the Duke Street campus of George Washington University's Graduate Education Center opened in January to assist existing small businesses and new start-up companies.
- The City completed renovations to Alexandria's Union Station, the City's rail passenger depot that serves Amtrak, Virginia Railway Express, and passengers making connections to the King Street Metrorail Station.
- Thanks to our Police Department's community policing efforts and the

American Society for Public Administration.

Mrs. Lawson has received numerous community awards, including the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's George Washington Leadership Award, the Distinguished Service Award from the Alexandria Olympic Boys and Girls Club, the Elizabeth Ann Campagna Award from the Campagna Center, the Urban League's Northern Virginia Community Service Award, and the Alexandria Commission on Women Award for Outstanding Achievement in Housing, Community Builders Award, and the Alexandria-Washington Masonic Lodge's Community Builders Award.

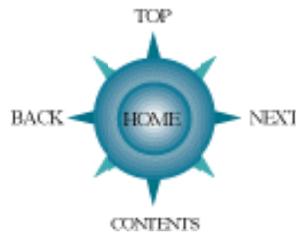
Department's strong partnership with neighborhood civic groups, serious crime in the City declined to a 27-year low in 1996.

- To preserve and expand off-street parking in Old Town, City Council approved \$6 million in capital funding phased over a three-year period to construct a public parking garage at Queen and Lee Streets.

These accomplishments and many others discussed in this *Annual Report* are a tribute to the vision and commitment of our Mayor and City Council, the involvement of citizens, and the hard work and dedicated service of our City employees.



City Manager Vola Lawson reads to Hector Rivera and Craig A. Wade as part of the Alexandria City Public Schools' "Primary Initiative" to ensure that all students have math and reading skills at or above grade level by the end of second grade.



General City Mail: CityMail@alexandriava.gov

To send mail to City Council, other elected officials and individual City departments, [click here](#).

Watch Mailbox in Mid-August!

