

FYI ALEXANDRIA

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Alexandria's Official Resident Newsletter

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EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

City Receives Awards For Public-Private Partnerships, Youth Programs

The City of Alexandria received two prestigious awards in January: one, for its work in providing resources to the City's youth, and the other, for developing innovative public-private partnerships.

The first award, granted by the America's Promise Alliance, named Alexandria one of the nation's "100 Best Communities for Young People." This is the second year that the City has won this competition, which recognizes the 100 outstanding communities across America that are the best places for young people to live and grow up.

The City was cited by the Alliance for its commitment to creating partnerships to address youth issues, as evidenced by the Early Childhood and Youth Policy Commissions, which implement, fund, and monitor the City's Early Childhood Development Plan and Asset Development Initiative, respectively. Through this work, two funds were created: the Children's Fund, which has awarded more than \$6.3 million to organizations to help provide quality childhood programs and services to at-risk children; and the Youth Fund, which has awarded nearly \$1.6 million to programs that build assets in youth. The City's support for its young people encompasses programs and services in areas such as teen pregnancy prevention, juvenile delinquency, education, post-secondary education, mentoring, and youth development.

The City also received an award from the United States Conference of Mayors for "The Station at Potomac Yard," a partnership between the City and national home builders Pulte Homes and Centex (also known as Potomac Yard Development, LLC). Awards were given in two categories: Awards of Excellence and Outstanding Achievement Awards. Alexandria is one of two municipalities to receive an Award of Excellence. This is not the first time the City has achieved this distinction: in 2006, the City and Comcast received an Award of Excellence for its long-term, joint development of the City's Institutional Network, "I-Net," and an innovative interconnection with the Arlington County government I-Net.

The Station at Potomac Yard was cited as an outstanding model of sustainable design, construction, and livability. The design maximizes the use of donated land, incorporates green building design and principles in all building components, and combines multiple uses—including long-term affordable rental units, apartments with rents affordable to those working in the City, and parking, located close to shopping, amenities, and public transportation.

"These awards validate the wise investments the City has made in its future—not only in our infrastructure, but in our most precious resource—our young people," said Mayor William D. Euille.

For in-depth interviews about these award-winning efforts, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.



Pictured from left to right: Tom Cochran, Executive Director, U.S. Conference of Mayors; James S. Williams, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association; Mayor William D. Euille; and Las Vegas Mayor Oscar B. Goodman, Chair, Mayors and Business Community Task Force.

Our City is a "Cool City!"

The City of Alexandria is committed to building an environmentally and socially sustainable city. In February 2005, Mayor William D. Euille endorsed and signed the 2005 U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement along with 278 other mayors from 43 states, representing a total population of 48.5 million citizens. The agreement committed Alexandria to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol greenhouse gas reduction targets through the use of local land use planning, urban forest restoration, public outreach campaigns, emissions inventory, and other greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

In November 2005, the Sierra Club recognized the City of Alexandria as a "Cool City." The City is keeping that commitment of environmental sustainability and has implemented notable programs and plans. An upcoming podcast will be available online with additional details and upcoming events.

Here are some examples of the City's efforts in keeping Alexandria "green."

- Replacement of incandescent lighting with energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs.

(Continued on page 6)

Please join

Mayor William D. Euille & The Alexandria City Council

for the Mayor's

State of the City

The "State of the City" will provide residents with highlights of the year, including programs, initiatives and the City's successes.

Wednesday, March 26, 7:00 p.m.

T.C. Williams High School
3330 King Street

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA | CITY HALL, 301 KING ST. | ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

WWW.ALEXANDRIAVA.GOV

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Mayor's Corner

The New Year is underway, and many of us have made resolutions—to take up new hobbies, change a bad habit or two, or to lose the pounds gained during the holiday season.

In the spirit of the New Year, I'd like to share the story of someone who made a resolution to change her life. Ms. M., a mother of six, entered the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) program in July 2007. She was unemployed and desperate to find a job. Ms. M., who is disabled due to brain trauma and head injury, applied for many jobs at hotel chains and fast food restaurants. She was willing to take the first offer that came her way, but could not even get a call back for an interview.

For some, the story could have ended there, but not for Ms. M. Thanks to Alexandria Works! (AW), a City program that provides counseling, job search and readiness training, mentoring, life skills classes, and other services to VIEW clients, her story did not end.

Ms. M. plunged into the program wholeheartedly, first achieving perfect attendance in AW job readiness training. From there, she was referred to the Community Work Experience Program, where she completed a class on financial education; became a presenter for the Job Readiness Class, educating clients about life insurance and goal setting; and provided Microsoft software training to AW staff. She also applied for and received a small business license to make gift baskets. Once labeled as "learning disabled," Ms. M. is now an honor student at Northern Virginia Community College. Recently, she accepted a paid position with Virginia Cooperative Extension, working with at-risk youth, a job that enables her to support herself and her family.

In addition to her achievements, Ms. M. also "gives back" to the community. She is a successful grant writer who obtained funding for Read to Succeed Program, she developed a newsletter for AW clients, and she works with community organizations to help clients solve housing, utilities, and food-related issues.

Ms. M's success is a testament to hard work and perseverance, and a reminder that there is power within each of us to not only achieve our dreams, but to help others to achieve theirs, too.

For additional information about Alexandria Works! please call 703.519.3393 or visit alexandriava.gov.



Representatives from Alexandria's sister cities in France, Scotland, Armenia, and Sweden visited City Hall December 2 to celebrate the dedication of the Sister Cities Conference Center. From left to right: Carin Wredstrom, Mayor of Helsingborg, Sweden; John Letford, Lord Provost of Dundee, Scotland; Alexandria Mayor William D. Euille; Khachatur Ghazaryan, Armenian Consul (representing the city of Gyumri); and Brigitte LeBrethon, Mayor of Caen, France.

NEW TO THE CITY?

Just Moved to Alexandria?

Here's a list of useful web sites and telephone numbers:

- Automobile Registration: alexandriava.gov/finance or 703.838.4560
- Citizen Assistance: 703.838.4800
- Alexandria City Public Schools: www.acps.k12.va.us or 703.824.6600
- Trash Pick-Up and Recycling (Division of Transportation & Environmental Services): alexandriava.gov/tes or 703.519.3486
- Voter Registration: www.alexandriavoter.org or 703.838.4050

A complete listing of services in Alexandria can be found in the *Know Your City* guide available at the Citizen Assistance Office in City Hall and the City's web site at alexandriava.gov.

Want to learn more about how the City can help residents? Listen to an interview with Citizen Assistance Director Rose Boyd at alexandriava.gov/podcasts.



Your Alexandria Mayor & City Council

(pictured from left to right)

Mayor William D. Euille
alexvamayor@aol.com

Vice Mayor Redella S. "Del" Pepper
delpepper@aol.com

Councilman Ludwig P. Gaines
councilmangaines@aol.com

Councilman Rob Krupicka
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Councilmember Timothy B. Lovain
timothylovain@aol.com

Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
paulcsmedberg@aol.com

Councilman Justin M. Wilson
justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov

Messages for City Council may be left at 703.838.4550. City Council Meetings are shown on Cable Channel 70; for listings, visit alexandriava.gov/cable. Dockets, videos, and podcasts of the meetings are also available at alexandriava.gov/council.

"Alexandria is a vibrant, diverse, historic, and beautiful city with unique neighborhoods and multiple urban villages where we take pride in our great community."

— Alexandria Vision 2015, the City's Strategic Plan

Real Estate Using New Technology to Develop Property Tax Assessments

In 2007, the City of Alexandria implemented a state-of-the-art Computer-Assisted Mass Appraisal system (CAMA) to value most property types. The new technology represents a significant upgrade from the previous software package by incorporating the latest functionality relative to data management, sales analysis, valuation, and assessment administration. These functions work together to help ensure that all property in the City is assessed accurately, fairly, and equitably.

Different from single-property appraisal, mass appraisal provides the ability to systematically value groups of property as of a specified date using standardized procedures and statistical testing. Real property is valued using a variety of measures including location, site and building characteristics, neighborhood trends, recent property transfers, and various economic indices that impact the broader market. Using the latest available data and information sources, the new CAMA system enables the appraisers to utilize any one, or all three, of the traditional approaches to value: a market calibrated cost approach, sales comparison approach, and the income approach. With an extensive storage capacity, the new system effectively allows the Department of Real Estate Assessments to track and monitor all real property in the City.

The City will mail out all property tax assessments on February 12. Residents should review their new assessments carefully and contact the City's real estate assessment staff at 703.838.4646 with any questions.

For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/realestate. To hear an interview with Cindy Smith-Page, Director of Real Estate Assessments, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.

TRAFFIC & TRANSIT

New Duke Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Overpass Opened

On Friday, November 30, elected officials and community members braved chilly winds at Ben Brenman Park to celebrate the public opening of the Duke Street pedestrian and bicycle overpass. The overpass, a 0.3-mile pedestrian and bicycle improvement, provides a safe connection for pedestrians and bicyclists from Cameron Station and Ben Brenman Park to the Beatley Library and other points on the north side of Duke Street. Previously, the overpass allowed vehicles, but did not include safe accommodations for pedestrians or bicycles. The overpass now provides access via two new 8' sidepaths. Once the overpass is repaved, it will also include shared lane bicycle markings and wayfinding signs. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/localmotion.



Monroe Avenue Bridge Opening

The first new span of the Route 1 Monroe Avenue Bridge in Alexandria opened in early December 2007. The three-lane span includes a reversible center lane to accommodate morning and evening rush hour traffic. The opening of the new span allows the demolition of the old bridge and the construction of the second span of the new bridge. The second span is scheduled for completion by late 2008. For detailed maps about new traffic patterns and pedestrian walkway changes for the bridge, please visit www.potomacyardalexandria.com.

Guaranteed Ride Home Program

People who drive alone for the work commute often cite fear of having an emergency arise during the workday as the reason for not wanting to use an alternative mode of transportation. No need to fear when there's Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH). Through GRH, commuters who take transit, carpool, vanpool, bicycle, or walk to work at least twice a week may receive a free and reliable ride home in the event of an emergency or unexpected overtime. Commuters who register for GRH may use the program up to four times per year. To learn more about the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home program, visit alexandriava.gov/localmotion.



Pictured from left to right: Congressman James P. Moran, Danny Abramson (President, Alexandria Housing Development Corporation), Councilmember Timothy B. Lovain, Councilman Ludwig P. Gaines, Kevin Hall (Land Development Manager, Potomac Yard Development), Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Redella S. "Del" Pepper, Fire Chief Adam Thiel, Councilman Paul C. Smedberg, Councilman Justin M. Wilson, Councilman Rob Krupicka, and City Manager James K. Hartmann.

City Breaks Ground on The Station at Potomac Yard

In December 2007, City officials broke ground on The Station at Potomac Yard, an innovative public-private partnership combining affordable housing, retail, and community infrastructure at East Glebe Road and Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1). When completed, the project will be the first newly constructed fire station in the United States to combine a fire station, affordable housing and retail in a single mixed-use building. It will consist of a four-bay fire station, 20 workforce housing units, 44 affordable housing units, a community meeting room, and neighborhood retail space.

The Station at Potomac Yard is the result of a public-private partnership between the City of Alexandria, Potomac Yard Development LLC (comprising Centex and Pulte Homes), and the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation (a not-for-profit housing group).

In November, the City of Alexandria received an award from the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association (NCAC-APA) for the project's design. The NCAC-APA awards panel noted that the collaboration of City agencies to coordinate their facility planning was a creative response to using scarce public land in an efficient and effective way to meet community needs. In particular, the panel cited the use of air rights over the fire station to provide for affordable housing as an inspired approach that could serve as a model for other jurisdictions in the region.

To learn more about The Station at Potomac Yard and the City's public-private partnership, visit alexandriava.gov/potomacyard.

Braddock Road Metro Neighborhood Update

In September 2007, the process to create a new Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan was begun as an effort to give community members an opportunity to come together to discuss elements of the neighborhood they wanted to preserve or change, and to talk about how to handle the challenges and opportunities of redevelopment. To date, more than 70 Braddock residents and stakeholders have engaged in an intense and rigorous planning process.

The process began with three separate educational workshops, where experts provided background information on topics such as transportation, historic preservation, commercial, retail and housing development. After the workshops, more than 75 attendees dedicated an entire Saturday to participate in the Community Design Charrette on November 3. The day included a hands-on review of photos taken by neighbors for the Community Visual Preference Survey, an in-depth discussion of community objectives, and an opportunity (for participants) to create physical models of alternative development scenarios and preferences.

The next step in the process featured a series of five community worksessions, where residents developed a vision, principles, and objectives to serve as the foundation for the community's Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan, which is expected to go to the Planning Commission and City Council in the Spring.

Materials from each of the educational workshops, the Charrette, the community worksessions, and additional background information are available online at alexandriava.gov/braddock.



Be Ready, Alexandria!

Preparing for a natural disaster, weather emergency, or national threat takes just a few simple steps. By having the right supplies, knowing where to get information and having a written plan for you, your loved ones and your pets, Alexandria residents can do their part to protect themselves and their families.



Make a Plan!

With today's busy schedules, it is likely that you will not be with your loved ones when an emergency arises. It is a good idea to create a preparedness plan, which may include emergency phone numbers and contact information, and then share it with each of your loved ones. Be sure to consider all occupants of your home or office. Take into consideration those with special needs, small children and pets.



Be Prepared

In the event of an emergency, you should tune in to your local TV or radio station for instructions from your local government on how to proceed. Depending on the situation and type of emergency, you may be instructed to either "shelter in place"—that is, take immediate shelter where you are—or evacuate.



Shelter in Place

During an emergency, unless you are in a burning building or an otherwise unsafe location, chances are you will be instructed to shelter in place — whether it's at home or work — and await further instruction from your local government. To prepare for this scenario, you should plan on having the following supplies:

- A three-day supply of bottled water, one gallon per day per person
- A three-day supply of non-perishable food
- An extra supply of prescription medications
- A flashlight, battery operated radio, and extra batteries
- A first aid kit
- A written preparedness plan



There are many other supplies in addition to this basic checklist that will help you and your family become even better prepared. For an expanded checklist, please visit www.makeaplan.org.

Evacuation

Should your local government instruct you to evacuate, remember to stay calm and follow your preparedness plan. Consider alternate ways to travel in case a part or all of your route is blocked. Having an alternate evacuation route is essential when creating your preparedness plan.



Emergency Resources

- City's Office of Emergency Management — alexandriava.gov/fire
- City of Alexandria Emergency Alerts — enews.alexandriava.gov
- Alexandria Citizen Corps — alexandriava.gov/citizencorps
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) — www.ready.gov
- American Red Cross — www.redcross.org
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) — www.fema.gov
- www.makeaplan.org



Code Enforcement: Reorganizing to Improve Customer Service

The City of Alexandria's Code Enforcement Bureau, a division of the Fire Department which manages City-wide compliance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code and Statewide Fire Prevention Code, is undergoing a comprehensive effort to improve the delivery of its services and to improve customer service. Those efforts include organizational changes to improve customer service and process improvements to ease the burden on customers.

The Bureau is realigning service delivery under leadership of a newly created Deputy Building Official, with three reallocated vacant positions to support service delivery goals. These positions include (1) an additional New Construction Supervisor, to provide technical expertise for inspections of buildings under construction; (2) a Customer Service Technician, to respond to customer requests about the Bureau's functions (and about other departments involved in the permitting and inspection process); and (3) a Customer Services Manager, to track and coordinate permit applications through all the permit-reviewing agencies. The Customer Services Manager will also oversee the implementation of all customer service improvements, coordinate small project reviews, distribution of public information regarding the Bureau's activities, and the administration of surveys and customer training. Staff will be hired for these positions during the winter of 2008.

Permits and inspections—two vital components of any building construction project—can sometimes be the most challenging. The Bureau is implementing several changes to facilitate speedier resolution of permits and inspections, including:

- improvements in the process for obtaining construction-related development reviews;
- a streamlined application process for issuing permits that allows for increased accountability; and
- a restructured New Construction division that expands capacity for service improvements.

Future planned improvements for the Code Enforcement Bureau include:

- Web-based permitting and information retrieval
- Application kiosks for agency customers
- Improved staff and customer training
- Automated equipment improvements
- Expansion of "one-shop" services

"This reorganization will allow us to continually evaluate the customer's needs, and we look forward to hearing from the community as these changes are implemented," said Code Enforcement Director John Catlett. "Their feedback is critical in helping us to fully meet our customer's needs." For more information about the Bureau, please contact 703.838.4600, or visit alexandriava.gov/code.

Introducing *FYI Alexandria on the Air*

This issue inaugurates a new feature—podcasts—to expand and enhance the articles in *FYI Alexandria*. The podcasts are part of *FYI Alexandria on the Air*, a new effort to bring you fresh content that bridges the quarterly nature of the City's resident newsletter, through downloadable interviews with City officials, newsmakers, and others on topics important to you and your community.

Featured podcasts include interviews about the public-private partnership, The Station at Potomac Yard; a look at the City's real estate assessments and appraisal process; and a preview of the City's plans to bring history to life on the streets of Old Town. You can also hear Web-only exclusives, including City-focused legislative previews and updates from the 2008 General Assembly.

To learn more about *FYI Alexandria on the Air* and podcasts, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.

Gang Prevention & Intervention City Priorities

Since 2005, the City of Alexandria has teamed with other jurisdictions around the Washington, DC Metropolitan Region in creating, supporting and enhancing programs that mitigate the existence of gangs as a part of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force. This Task Force recently announced that, since its inception, it has seen a 33 percent decrease in gang-related incidents region-wide as it focuses its efforts on a balanced approach of law enforcement, prevention, education and intervention supports.

The City of Alexandria has experienced a relatively low amount of criminal activity by gang members; however, the City of Alexandria's Gang Prevention Community Task Force, composed of 17 community members (including elected officials); and the Senior Policy Group on Gangs, comprising 13 public serving agency directors, follows national best-practice recommendations that call for communities to proactively address these issues. These committees are staffed by a Gang Prevention and Intervention Coordinator.

Research from the National Gang Crime Research Center indicates that at least 80 percent of gang members surveyed said that they would leave their gang if offered the right help. Among the number of local and regional efforts, there is the regional, research-based Intervention Prevention Education Counselor outreach program, which targets youth ages 12 to 21 who are considered to be at-risk for gang activity or in need of assistance to decrease their involvement. As part of this program, two half-time staff members are assigned specifically to the City of Alexandria. Through direct referrals from law enforcement, school staff, Court officials, mentors, parents, and other community members, more than 20 cases in the City have been served in just months. Staff members have also conducted 1,185 street outreach contacts within the City to communicate with community members and to augment services. To find out how to refer someone to the outreach staff, contact Mike Mackey, City of Alexandria Gang Prevention Coordinator at 703.838.4144, ext. 242.

For more information on these and other services, visit alexandriava.gov/gangprevention (local), www.preventgangsnova.org (regional), contact Mike Mackey, or contact the regional resource information line at 703.GET.HELP.

To hear more from Mike Mackey and Court Service Unit Director Lillian Brooks about the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.

City Agencies Work to Wipe Out Graffiti

One of the offshoots of the work of the City's Gang Prevention Task Force is the City's graffiti reporting and removal initiative. The initiative—which involves a partnership between City agencies and residents—was cited in the August 2007 Virginia Municipal League's Virginia Town and City for an impressive success rate: most graffiti is removed from the City within 72 hours after it has been reported.



The program partners include the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; the Police Department; Transportation and Environmental Services; with some assistance from the Fire Department and Code Enforcement. Graffiti can appear anywhere in the City, regardless of the type of neighborhood or business—in fact, recently graffiti was cleaned from the Masonic Temple. There are several types of graffiti: “publicity” graffiti, which advertises a person, cause, or group; “tags” (signatures); “slap tags” (art drawn on labels, which are “slapped” onto property); and paintings. Some graffiti can be gang-related, marking territory, or posing a warning to an opposing gang. Sixty percent of the graffiti that turns up in the City falls into the “publicity” category; the remainder is a combination of the other types.

Residents may report graffiti by using the Incident Report Form at alexandriava.gov/contactus. The Incident Report form allows users to not only report graffiti, but to also attach images of the vandalism. After a resident has reported graffiti, an officer will arrive on the scene, make a report, and take photos of the vandalism.

In 2006, the City purchased two environmentally (and structurally) friendly machines that remove graffiti with a high-pressure spray of baking soda and hot water. One machine is maintained and operated by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities to remove graffiti in parks and on private property. The other machine, maintained and operated by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), is used to remove graffiti in public rights of way.

Upon receipt of graffiti incidents from the police, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff removes the graffiti within three business days, and staff from T&ES removes graffiti within about 24 hours. Roger Blakeley, deputy director of the City's park operations, has been instrumental in the graffiti removal program. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/police. To access the Incident Report Form, click on “Contact Information.”

To hear Officers J.C. Dorsainvil and Derek Santos of the Alexandria Police discuss the City's graffiti program, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.

Free Mammograms for City Residents

One in eight women will get breast cancer in her lifetime; however, breast cancer mortality is down and early detection is one reason for that. Make sure you examine your breasts monthly, get regular clinical exams, and have a yearly mammogram. City residents who have no health insurance (or have insurance that does not cover mammography) can get a free mammogram at Inova Alexandria Hospital.

To qualify for a free mammogram you must have a prescription for a mammogram from your health care provider; however, if you have no health care provider, you can schedule an exam at the Arlandria Health Center (703.535.5568). Fees are charged on a sliding scale based on income.

If you have a health care provider, get your check up and prescription and bring it to be stamped at the Office on Women, 421 King St., Ste 400. Once you have a stamped prescription, call Inova Hospital at 703.504.5000 to schedule your free mammogram.

This program is funded by the Alexandria Breast Cancer Walk Fund at Inova Alexandria Hospital. For more information about using this program or sponsorship opportunities, call the Office on Women, 703.838.5030.

City Offers Housing Modification, Assisted Transportation Programs

The City of Alexandria offers two programs aimed at increasing housing and transportation accessibility for senior citizens and residents with disabilities.

The **Rental Accessibility Modification Program (RAMP)** can provide accessibility improvement grants of up to \$50,000 to lower-income renters who require accessibility improvements to their residence. Households must include at least one disabled resident and meet applicable income limits. The program also provides “mini-grants” to assist households needing limited modifications of up to \$1,500. Landlords are encouraged to accept any modifications as permanent improvements. For more information, contact the City's Office of Housing at 703.838.4622.

The Department of Human Services Office of Aging and Adult Services has announced a new program, **Door Thru Door Transportation**, that provides individuals with assistants for transportation to non-urgent medical appointments. The program provides an aide to accompany persons 18 years of age and older who need assistance due to physical or cognitive limitations. Aides can help an individual to prepare for the trip, assist the person in and out of the vehicle, go with them to the appointment, and return with them and help get the individual settled back at home. Trips are limited to medical appointments within 10 miles of the home and should be scheduled at least 10 business days before the appointment.

Persons who use the service are responsible for scheduling and paying for transportation for themselves and the aide. The cost of the assistance ranges from no cost to \$20 per hour, based on a sliding fee scale. Access to this service, however, will not be denied due to inability to contribute to the cost. Door Thru Door Transportation, offered by the City in partnership with Arlington County and Home Care Partners, is funded by a grant to Arlington County from the Council of Governments. To schedule assistance, please call Home Care Partners at 202.638.0736. For information on transportation options, please call the Office of Aging and Adult Services at 703.838.0920.



Our City is a “Cool City!”

(Continued from page 1)

- Replacement of old vehicles with low-emission/more efficient vehicles—including hybrids—in the City’s fleet.
- New Multi-family Residential and Business Recycling Program in 2006.
- 2003 Open Space plan focus on preservation and acquisition of open spaces.
- Promotion of sustainable transportation options.
- Green roof at the new Health Department Building and at Duncan Library.
- T.C. Williams High School’s green features.
- The Cora Kelly School for Science and Technology’s Green Roof project.
- Transportation Master Plan with innovative options for transportation choices.
- The municipal waste-to-energy facility operated by COVANTA generates 25 megawatts of electric power from municipal waste.

The City will hold two special informational events in the coming months: an Eco-City Summit, to be held on May 10; and Alexandria’s commemoration of Earth Day, April 26. The Spring edition of FYI Alexandria will cover City initiatives in-depth and include podcasts. Mark your calendars and visit alexandriava.gov for further updates!

Choose How to Receive School Closing Info

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is improving the way we communicate school closing and emergency information to you, just in time for snow.

Through a partnership with the City of Alexandria, ACPS can now send information about school closings or emergency events to your cell phone, pager, BlackBerry, PDA, and/or e-mail account. To sign up for this new and improved emergency notification service, visit enews.alexandriava.gov. ACPS Emergency Announcements is one of many City e-news lists to which you can subscribe. Please note that ACPS Emergency News is a different list than the City’s Emergency News. For school information, make sure you sign up for ACPS.

The ACPS Information Hotline is another valuable source for school closing and emergency information. In fact, it is updated first. Call 703-866-5300 for information in English and Spanish. School closing and emergency information will also be posted on the ACPS Web site at www.acps.k12.va.us, on ACPS-TV, channel 71, and will be shared with local media outlets.



Arts, Language, and Fun!

Students at Jefferson-Houston School for Arts and Academics, who were asked to create centerpieces for the Mayor’s Unity Breakfast on Nov. 21, created holiday pop-ups based on this year’s theme, “Family.” Teachers also sneaked in some

language arts into this fun assignment. The letters *T, H, X, V, A, L, Y*, and others can be found throughout the works. For example, the bodies were created by cutting out the letters *T* and *A*. The heads are *O*s and the hands, *U*s. The students loved “writing” their pictures!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: BE RESOLVED TO GET INVOLVED!

Remember those resolutions you may have made on New Year’s Eve? Have you kept them? Want to do something that can benefit your mind, body, and soul—and help your City and community? There’s still time to make a resolution to give your time and talent in many ways: mentoring children, providing assistance to residents in need, lending a hand to victims of domestic violence, or sharing your knowledge and expertise in service to your City. It may not be January 1, but it’s never too late to be resolved to get involved!

The **Alexandria Community Services Board** is in need of volunteers to serve in the following positions:

- **Sheltered Homes of Alexandria (SHA) Board Members** govern the SHA, which purchases and renovates properties, then leases them to the City for use in mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse treatment programs. Properties include group homes and supported living residences, which provide shelter and care for approximately 200 persons with disabilities each year. The Board meets one evening each quarter at 7 p.m.
- **Child Care and Activity Providers** provide care and activities for children while their mothers are participating in support groups in an adjacent room. One group meets every Tuesday from 6 to 7 p.m.; a second group meets on Wednesdays (biweekly) from 6 to 7 p.m. Snacks and activities will be provided.
- **Friendly Visitors** plan one-on-one outings and activities with residents of Alexandria group homes for adults with intellectual disabilities. This volunteer activity requires approximately two hours per week.
- **Local Human Rights Committee Members** review policies, complaints, program rules and behavior plans for the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse. The Committee makes recommendations about procedures that affect the human rights of consumers. Meetings are held 10 times each year, on the third Wednesday of the month, at 7 p.m. The Committee is seeking a **health care provider** to become a member of the Committee; an additional member (with no specific background requirement) is also needed.
- **Representative Payees** receive Social Security checks and pay bills for persons with an intellectual disability or mental illness. A separate bank

account is opened with automatic deposit and there are few monthly transactions. The duties require two hours per month, per account.

For more information about these volunteer opportunities, contact Jennifer Cohen Cordero at jennifer.cohen-cordero@alexandriava.gov or 703.838.4455, x161.

Mentor a Child, Change Two Lives. Alexandria recognized January as National Mentoring Month by highlighting the importance of mentoring in the community. Youth who are mentored are less likely to commit crime, join gangs, get pregnant, do poorly in school or use drugs. Mentoring requires no prior experience or special degrees, just a willingness to help. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/mentoring, contact Mike Mackey at 703.838.4144 (ext. 242), or e-mail mentoring@alexandriava.gov.

SARA Program Seeks Volunteers for Crisis Hotline Training. The Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) program is looking for compassionate listeners who would be comfortable talking to sexual assault survivors and their families. SARA requires volunteers to complete 40 hours of training to become a hotline companion. While the initial training commitment is intensive, the commitment following training is two hotline shifts per month. Volunteers take evening or weekend shifts from home or anywhere accessible by phone. The next SARA training is scheduled to begin in late February and meets two evenings a week from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. and on two Saturday mornings. For more information or to register, contact Stacey C. McCullough at 703.838.5030 or stacey.mccullough@alexandriava.gov.

Save the Date! Spring for Alexandria Community Service Day, April 25. Want to volunteer, but don’t have a lot of time to spare? Then Spring for Alexandria on Friday, April 25! The City of Alexandria is pleased to cosponsor the first annual Spring for Alexandria Community Service Day to raise funds and provide assistance to community projects in Alexandria. Spring for Alexandria works like walkathon, except that volunteers will commit their energies to a community service activity, like planting trees in a park, serving meals, painting a school, or even designing a marketing campaign or database. Following the completion of volunteer projects, participants are invited to participate in a celebration at Market Square.

Volunteers can ask friends, co-workers, and families to sponsor them. The funds raised will help the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau to support the community throughout the year. The event is also sponsored by Alexandria Community Trust and the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit www.springforalexandria.com.

From *The Pearl* to Edmonson Plaza: A Story of Two Sisters

As Carr Properties finalizes plans for a new commercial development at Duke Street and Daingerfield Road, City planners and historians are working to protect the historic significance of the site, a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In support of this effort, Carr named the project Edmonson Plaza in honor of two young women whose fight for freedom inspired abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe to tell their story.

The property, located at 1707 Duke Street, was home to Joseph Bruin's slave business and jail from the late 1840s until the start of the Civil War. Thousands of enslaved people were held there after being separated from their families in the Chesapeake region and sold away to owners needing their labor in other Southern states.

Emily and Mary Edmonson, born to a free father and an enslaved mother in Maryland, were taken to the Bruin jail after a failed escape attempt on a ship called *The Pearl* that was stranded in the Potomac. The sisters, attractive young teens, were destined to leave Alexandria for New Orleans, where they would become "fancy girls" or prostitutes. Abolitionists, including Stowe, launched a fundraising campaign and bought the girls' freedom. Stowe later shared the sisters' remarkable account in an 1853 book, *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which proved the inhumanity of slavery as it was portrayed in her bestseller, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The Edmonson sisters went on to become abolitionists themselves, working with contemporaries such as Frederick Douglass.

Last fall, Carr held a meeting with members of the African-American community at the Alexandria Black History Museum to seek input for a commemorative element that will be included at Edmonson Plaza. The public memorial will honor the lives destroyed by slavery while celebrating the triumph of human spirit.

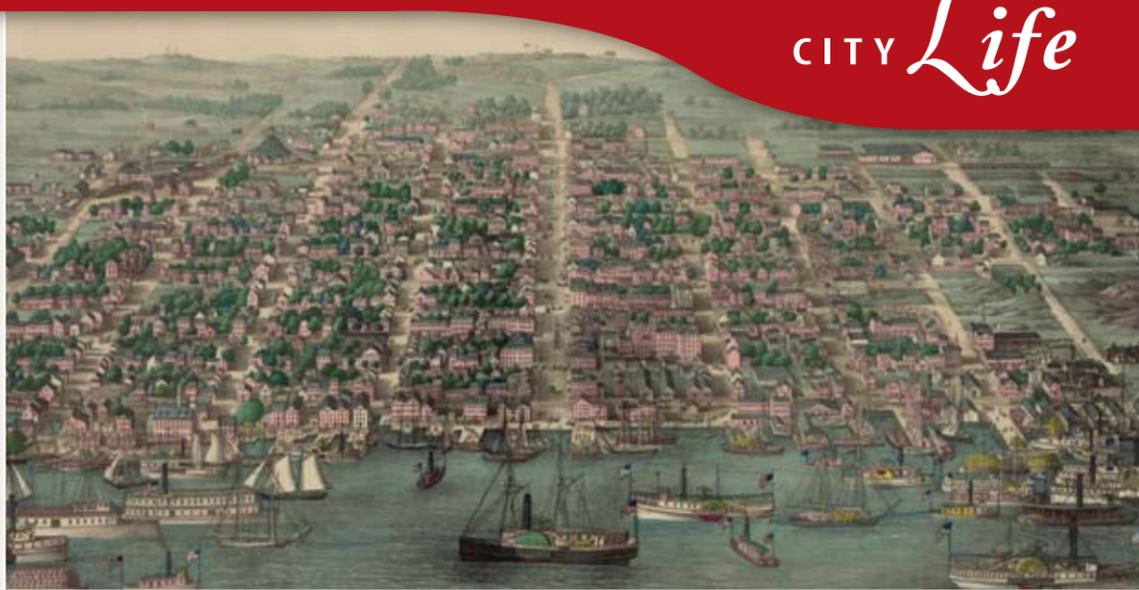
Alexandria's Commitment to Human Rights

Like the Edmonson sisters, the City's Human Rights Commission and Office of Human Rights work to protect the civil rights of all City residents.

In 1975, the Alexandria City Council passed the Alexandria Human Rights Ordinance, one of the first in Virginia. The goal of the Human Rights Commission, which was created to administer the provisions of the Ordinance, is to eliminate discrimination in the City of Alexandria and to facilitate communication and understanding among the City's diverse communities. The Commission is dedicated to ensuring that equal rights are afforded to all residents of Alexandria—regardless of their race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, age, disability, familial status or sexual orientation—in employment, housing, credit, education, public accommodation, health, social services and City contracts. The Commission has the power to receive and mediate complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, negotiate settlements, conduct studies and hold hearings, and advise the City Council or City Manager on human rights issues affecting the City.

Enforcement of the Human Rights Ordinance is the responsibility of the Office of Human Rights, which receives, investigates, makes findings and conciliates complaints of discrimination brought under the Ordinance and applicable federal laws. The Office was designated in 1975 as a Fair Employment Practices Agency, and, since 1978, has been under contract with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to receive and investigate complaints brought under applicable federal laws.

To hear Jean Niebauer, director of the City's Office on Human Rights, describe how the City protects the rights of all of its residents, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.



(Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

Historic Alexandria: Taking it to the Streets

Call it ambiance, historic character, or the Old Town experience, but there's definitely something special about Alexandria's past that attracts people to it! Anticipating the influx of guests from National Harbor, due to open this spring, the Office of Historic Alexandria wants to be sure visitors have easy and affordable access to Alexandria's fascinating history.

Lance Mallamo, Historic Alexandria's new director, is planning several initiatives to help bring history to the streets. Artifacts from Alexandria's museum collections will be featured in "story boxes" or mini exhibits and circulated among pedestrians on "discovery carts," replicas of 19th-century merchant carts, by staff in period costumes. Costumed interpreters representing Alexandria's diverse history will greet tourists arriving by riverboat and introduce them to the City's historic resources and attractions. Before summer, Mallamo plans to launch self-guided audio tours that would let pedestrians use their own cell phones to "dial up" historical information as they walk along King Street.

Mallamo hopes these new efforts will encourage tourists to not only visit downtown museums like Gadsby's Tavern, Archaeology, The Lyceum, Friendship Firehouse, and the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary, but to venture a little further out to the Alexandria Black History Museum and Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site. "Whether someone is visiting for the evening or the week," says Mallamo, "we want them to see firsthand what truly makes Alexandria historic!"

To hear more from Lance Mallamo about Historic Alexandria's initiatives to bring the City's history to the streets, visit alexandriava.gov/podcasts.

Caring for "Puppy Mill" Rescues

The Vola Lawson Animal Shelter recently welcomed Dorothy, Blanche, Rose, and Sophia, four of the more than 1,000 dogs who were rescued as part of an undercover, five-month investigation of Virginia puppy mills by the Humane Society of the United States. In addition to those sent to Alexandria, rescued dogs were sent to shelters in Fairfax County, Arlington County, the District of Columbia, and other jurisdictions.

Many of the rescued animals lived in deplorable conditions and were in poor health. "Stories like these are why we urge people not to buy dogs from pet stores or on the Internet," said Tara Blot, Executive Director of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, which operates the Lawson Shelter. "Instead, get your pet from reputable sources, or better still, adopt from a shelter. Here, we have many dogs, including small adult breed dogs like our four golden girls, who need a loving home."

Luckily, the "golden girls" at the Lawson Shelter received immediate medical attention, behavioral evaluation, human contact and care; by late November, they were ready to be placed for adoption. For more information about the AWLA and adopting a pet, contact the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter at 703.838.4774, or visit alexandrianimals.org.

PETS AROUND TOWN



Punxxy, Del Ray



Storm, Park Center



Casey, Del Ray



Hoover, East Taylor Run

Is your pet licensed? For the safety of our residents and our pets, all dogs and cats are required by City Code to be vaccinated against rabies and to be licensed in the City. Licenses are available at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, 4101 Eisenhower Ave.

Got a picture of your pet you'd like to share? Send your photo, along with your pet's name and the name of your neighborhood to fyi@alexandriava.gov.

Events & Activities

FEBRUARY

Continuing through March 1

Exhibition of Lydston's Civil War Drawings

Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site
4301 W. Braddock Rd.
Tuesday - Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.,
Sunday, Noon - 5 p.m.

View Civil War drawings by soldier, artist, and musician William Lydston, Jr., paired with musical instruments and related objects from the Fort Ward collection.

Admission (and parking): Free
www.fortward.org or 703.838.4848

Continuing through March 7

"Imaging Blackness, 1915-2002: Film Posters from the Indiana University Black Film Center/Archive"

Alexandria Black History Museum
902 Wythe St.
Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

This special exhibition features dozens of movie posters from a variety of black films.

Admission: Free
www.alexblackhistory.org or 703.838.4356

Sunday, February 24

Annual Black History Month Lecture

Meade Memorial Episcopal Church
322 N. Alfred Street
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Join the Alexandria Black History Museum and members of the NAACP for a lecture on this year's theme, "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism," and sample a variety of African-American traditional foods.

Admission: FREE
www.alexblackhistory.org or 703.838.4356

Walking with Washington

Market Square, 301 King St.
1:30 p.m.

Take this two-hour walking tour of the Old Town Historic District, learning about the City's Favorite son, George Washington.

Admission: Free
703.549.7662

Thursday, February 28

Foreclosure Prevention Seminar

Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library
5005 Duke Street
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Presented by the City of Alexandria and the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR). Learn more about the foreclosure process and homeowners rights and responsibilities from area experts.

Admission: Free, space is limited.
RSVP to the Alexandria Office of Housing at 703.838.4622.

MARCH

Continuing through March 31

Legacies of Jamestown

The Lyceum,
201 S. Washington St.
Monday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.,
Sunday, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

This new Jamestown exhibition explores how this seminal event has been celebrated over the years.

Admission: Free
www.alexandriahistory.org or 703.838.4994

Saturday, March 1

St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Parade

Old Town Historic District
Parade begins at intersection of West and King Streets
12:30 p.m.

The celebration includes a classic-car competition along King Street at 10:00 a.m., a Fun Dog Show at 10:30 a.m., and the parade.

Admission: Free
www.ballyshanners.org or 703.237.2199

Saturday, March 1

Bugler Performance and Lecture

Fort Ward Museum
4301 W. Braddock Road
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Hear a demonstration of calls on an original Civil War bugle and learn about the role of field music to signal camp duties and battlefield movements. Reservations suggested.

Admission: \$6
www.fortward.org or 703.838.4848

Wednesday, March 5

SpringFest 2008: A Journey Through the Senses"

Torpedo Factory Art Center
105 N. Union Street
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Join Friends of the Torpedo Factory Art Center for the first annual "SpringFest 2008," featuring wine tasting, live music, light fare, and Target Gallery exhibit preview opening.

Admission: \$30 in advance, \$40 at the door, with group discounts available.
www.torpedofactory.org or 703.838.4565

Friday, March 7 through

Sunday, March 30

The Spirit of Del Ray

Del Ray Artisans Gallery,
Nicholas Colasanto Center
2704 Mount Vernon Avenue
Thursdays, Fridays, & Sundays, Noon - 4:00 p.m.
Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Celebrate the "Spirit of Del Ray"—and its Centennial—by visiting this special art exhibit.

Admission: Free
www.TheDelRayArtisans.org or 703.838.4827

Saturday, March 8 and

Sunday, March 9

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra: "Rapture"

Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
3001 N. Beauregard St.
8:00 p.m. (Saturday), 3:00 p.m. (Sunday)

The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, with Bowen McCauley Dance and the Alexandria Choral Society, presents a program of Mendelssohn, Handel, Faure, and Respighi.

Admission: Tickets \$20-\$80, Sunday Matinee youth tickets (ages 8-18) \$5.
www.alexsym.org or 703.548.0885.

Saturday, March 15

Swordsmen's Rendezvous

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
One hour timed tours, 11:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

This swashbuckling program includes a re-enactment of 18th-century swordplay, a display of 18th-century weapons, and audience participation!

Admission: \$5 per person
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703.838.4242

Monday, March 17

Tavern Toddlers - Going on a Trip

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Toddlers can discover history (and have fun!) by going on imaginary "travels."

Admission: \$10 for a group of three (which must include one adult)
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703-838-4242

Monday, March 17 through

Friday, March 21

Spring Break Nature Camp

Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center
5750 Sanger Ave.
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

This week-long, nature-based camp is for youth ages 7-10 years old.

Admission: \$275 for City residents, \$300 for nonresidents
For more information, call 703.838.4829

Wednesday, March 19

Civil War Story Time

Fort Ward Museum
4301 W. Braddock Road
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Treat your children to a program featuring two children's books based on historical events during the Civil War.

Admission: \$2 per person, reservations recommended
www.fortward.org or 703.838.4848

Saturday, March 22

Hunt for History

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Help find the Tavernkeeper's Easter Eggs and learn about the past at the same time. Remember to bring your Easter basket!

Admission: \$5 per adult, \$3 ages 2-17
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703.838.4242

Children's Book Fair

The Lyceum
201 S. Washington St.
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Children's book publisher Usborne will be offering dozens of selections focusing on social studies and other educational areas. Kids can play "Museum Detective" on a scavenger hunt of The Lyceum and enjoy storytelling, crafts, and hands-on artifacts stations.

Admission: Free
www.alexandriahistory.org or 703.838.4994

Wednesday, March 26

The State of the City Address

T.C. Williams High School
3330 King St.
7:00 p.m.
Admission: Free

Del Ray Centennial Lecture

The Lyceum
201 S. Washington Street
7:30 p.m.

Learn all about the history of the Del Ray community, one of the first "streetcar suburbs" in the United States.

Admission: Free
www.alexandriahistory.org or 703.683.2636

Saturday, March 29

4th Annual Great Rum Punch Challenge

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
7:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Enjoy different rum punch creations from local distilleries, restaurants and caterers and vote for your favorite!

Admission: \$50, reservations required.
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703.838.4242

Monday, March 31

Salute to Women Awards Banquet

Westin Alexandria
400 Courthouse Square
6:00 p.m.

Banquet recognizes individuals who have improved the lives of women and girls in Alexandria.

Admission: \$75, reservations required.
www.alexwomen.com or 703.838.5030

APRIL

Tuesdays, April 3, 10 & 17

Grand Ball Dance Classes

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Prepare for the Grand Ball on April 19th by learning 18th century English country dancing from expert dance instructors.

Admission: \$12 per class, \$30 for the series.
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703.838.4242

Saturday, April 5

14th Annual Homeownership Fair

George Washington Middle School
1005 Mt. Vernon Ave.
9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Learn about the home buying process, special home purchase financing programs, and how to overcome barriers to homeownership.

Admission: Free
alexandriava.gov/housing or 703.838.4622

Saturday, April 5 and

Sunday, April 6

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra: "Bliss"

Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
3001 N. Beauregard St.
8 p.m. (Saturday), 3 p.m. (Sunday)

The Alexandria Symphony, The Metropolitan Chorus, and the Signature Heritage Chorale presents works from Smetana, Hailstork, and Dvořák, and features with special guest, cellist Lynn Harrell.

Admission: tickets \$20-\$80, Sunday Matinee youth tickets (ages 8-18): \$5
www.alexsym.org or 703.548.0885

Sunday, April 13

Annual Walking Tour of Alexandria

The Lyceum
201 S. Washington St.
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The American Institute of Architects hosts this two-hour tour of the unique architecture of Old Town. Part of the Alexandria Architecture Week celebration, it is led by architects who recognize the beauty and uniqueness of the Old Town district.

Admission: Free, but reservations required
www.aianova.org or 703.549.9747

Wednesday, April 16

Myths of George Washington Debunked

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
7:30 p.m. (Doors open at 7:00)

Join Dr. Peter Henriques as he dispels myths about Father of our Country.

Admission: \$12, reservations recommended
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703.838.4242

Saturday, April 19

Springtime Grand Ball

Gadsby's Tavern Museum
134 N. Royal St.
8:00 - 11:00 p.m.

Dance the night away in the historic Ballroom of Gadsby's Tavern at a 1780s springtime ball. Period costume optional, "after-five" attire encouraged.

Admission: \$45 in advance, \$50 at the door. Reservations required.
www.gadsbystavern.org or 703.838.4242

Tuesday, April 29

Days of Remembrance Ceremony

Market Square
301 King St.
Noon

Remember the lives of those lost in the Holocaust.

Admission: Free

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, April 25

Spring for Alexandria Community Service Day

www.springforalexandria.com

Saturday, April 26

Alexandria Earth Day

www.alexearthday.org

Please note that event times, dates, and locations are subject to change. Please contact the event sponsor to confirm details. For updated and expanded information on events in Alexandria, visit alexandriava.gov, www.visitalexandriava.com, or tune in to Cable Channel 70.