Even in the best of times, the Eastern Shore struggles with hunger. The growing impact of COVID-19 – closed schools and businesses – puts more Shore people at risk, especially children, those on fixed incomes, and the many among us who live paycheck-to-paycheck. The following was accurate at press time; please double-check online (the local foodbank Facebook page seems the most helpful): www.facebook.com/foodbankeasternshorebranch, or call (757) 787-2557.

How to Provide Help
Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia – Eastern Shore Branch: The Foodbank in Tasley is distributing food, but asks clients to stay in their vehicles, follow the traffic pattern, and please be patient. Hours: Tuesday & Thursday from 9 AM - noon and 1 to 3 PM (24530 Coastal Boulevard, Tasley, Virginia 23441).

Additional drive-through food distribution sites: Northampton High School: Tuesdays from 10 AM - noon (16041 Courthouse Rd., Eastville, Virginia 23347); Eastern Shore Community College: Wednesdays from noon -1 PM (29300 Lankford Hwy, Melfa, Virginia 23410).

A recent online post from the Foodbank: “We are working on alternate distribution models in an effort to keep everyone safe while enforcing social distancing for our staff and those we serve.”

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The legislative session that wrapped up in March ranks among the strongest we’ve ever seen for the environment and clean water on the Eastern Shore. Several key bills that were defeated in previous years finally passed, while legislators also adopted many important new proposals. The 2-year budget includes an unprecedented level of investment in several critical programs.

State investment will reach record levels in both oyster restoration and reducing polluted runoff from developed areas. The Stormwater Local Assistance Fund, which provides matching grants to cities and counties for effective projects, will see an increase to $50 million over the 2-year period. Last year, legislators appropriated $10 million to the program.

Oyster restoration and replenishment efforts in Virginia earned strong state funding as well, totaling $8 million over the 2-year period plus a new $10 million in innovative bond financing to construct sanctuary reefs. Last year, legislators appropriated $4 million for replenishment and restoration. This will boost sanctuary oyster reef construction and support goals to fully restore 10 Bay tributaries for oyster habitat.

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Legislation passed this session will establish a process that will accelerate efforts by farmers to fence cattle out of streams and implement nutrient management plans to reduce fertilizer runoff from cropland. These are among the most cost-effective ways to reduce pollution to the Shore’s waterways.

Virginia will support these conservation practices with investment in Virginia’s agricultural cost-share program, which totals $88.6 million over the next 2 years. Many of the farm practices supported by the program also address climate change and trap carbon through healthier trees, grasses, and soil.

Another significant victory this session revolved around a small fish that has a big impact on the Bay. Legislators voted to transfer management of Virginia’s menhaden fisheries from the General Assembly to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, which manages every other saltwater fishery in the commonwealth. This comes after years of advocacy by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, our members, partners, and anglers.

In a major step for combating climate change, the General Assembly allowed Virginia to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cap-and-trade program for power plants that will reduce emissions. Forty-five percent of the funds generated will go to the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund. This funding will provide major support to Eastern Shore residents preparing for sea-level rise, flooding, and extreme weather.

Legislators also voted to prohibit oil and gas drilling and related infrastructure in Virginia waters up to 3 miles off the coast, just as the Trump Administration has proposed opening the Atlantic Coast to risky drilling.

There was also important progress around living shorelines, an important tool both in preventing sediment and nutrient pollution and in protecting our coasts in the face of sea-level rise. Legislation this session made living shorelines the default method for battling eroding shorelines in Virginia. For the first time, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission must also account for sea-level rise when considering permit applications.

The General Assembly also voted to establish a permanent Environmental Justice Council and enact the first statewide environmental justice policy. Given the growing environmental justice challenges we face on the Shore from climate change, it is now more important than ever that Virginians have a meaningful and permanent venue to be heard.

The significant progress made this Session for healthier waterways on the Shore is a testament to the commitment of Virginia legislators and Governor Northam. But it wouldn’t have been possible without the advocacy and action of the many Eastern Shore residents, including CBES members and CBF members, who wrote, called, and met with legislators. Our voices for clean water are leading to a better future for our children and grandchildren.
As the 2 counties move forward with the proposed Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) Sewer Force Main Project (see December 2019 ShoreLine, “Process Outlined for HRSD Sewer Project”), one of the main concerns raised has been the rates for the new project. According to HRSD General Manager Ted Henifin at the October 24, 2019, public meeting at the Eastern Shore Community College, the projected 2023 rate for all Eastern Shore customers, based on their 20-year financial plan, will be $15.93 per 1,000 gallons per month. This includes $10.15 for water treatment and $5.78 for the collection system. Typical water usage for the average U.S. household ranges from 3,000 to 4,000 gallons per month.

It is useful to compare this proposed rate with current rates for the Eastern Shore towns with wastewater treatment plants. The 31st Annual Virginia Water and Wastewater Rate Report for 2019, from Draper Aden Associates (http://daa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Report-2019-for-digital-WW.pdf) provides wastewater data for the towns of Cape Charles, Exmore, and Onancock, as shown in the table below. Onancock will be included in the proposed project; the town of Exmore has not yet decided if it will participate, although they did vote to support the resolution for both counties to be added to the District by the Circuit Court. Cape Charles may be part of a future expansion project. Inspection of these rates shows that:

- Onancock residents are paying the highest rates, especially those using larger volumes.
- The proposed HRSD rate will be comparable to the current rate for Exmore for smaller volumes, and significantly lower than rates in Onancock for all customers or Cape Charles for smaller volumes.

COVID-19 update: The Circuit Courts for Northampton and Accomack Counties were scheduled to hold public hearings at 9:30 AM on March 30 and 31, respectively, to hear the petition to add both counties to the HRSD. On March 16, Governor Northam declared a judicial emergency in all District and Circuit Courts, to suspend all non-essential, non-emergency court proceedings for a period of 21 days, although the order can be extended for the duration of the threat. We will apprise our members when these hearings are rescheduled.

Residential Wastewater Rates for Eastern Shore Towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>No. of Residential WW Units</th>
<th>No. of Non-Residential WW Units</th>
<th>Residential WW Rate per month for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,000 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Charles</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>$66.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmore</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>$44.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onancock</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>$64.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WW: wastewater.

In Memoriam
Paul J. Driscoll, Jr., CBES President from 2006 to 2009

After retiring from a career in the Navy, Paul and his wife, Patty, made their home on the Eastern Shore near Eastville. Paul generously shared his time and talents with CBES as President, as well as serving on the Board from 2005 to 2012. His support for CBES mission and the Shore community will not be forgotten. We send heartfelt condolences to his family.
Many rural areas are described as “food deserts”– areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food. They’re often located in low-income areas where food resources consist of fast foods, gas station/convenience stores, and “dollar” variety stores that also sell food. Even in rural areas with chain grocery stores, like the Shore, circumstances like unpredictable transportation access, late-night employment, or work/school schedules often lead to choosing “fast and convenient” food shopping over healthy meal preparation. An overheard comment during research for this article was significant: “After juggling 2 part-time and 1 full-time job, my kitchen is usually Royal Farms’ take-out counter.”

Some households, for transportation or other reasons, often find it expedient to shop for food at the smaller variety and convenience stores. Although these stores often get a bad rap as a food resource, probably because of the vast assortment of sugary and salty snack foods they carry, the careful, frugal shopper can find a variety of basic foods for nutritious meals. Often available are dairy products such as eggs, butter, and cheese; fruit juice; frozen meats and vegetables; canned fish, meat, and vegetables, as well as bread and rolls; rice and dried legumes; cereals; and baby food and formula. The basics are often stocked in smaller sizes than supermarkets carry – however, because of logistics, there is an absence of fresh fruit and vegetables.

**Food Purchase Assistance Available for Households That Need It**

To help low-income households, local supermarkets, most convenience stores, and some farm markets accept government-issued food cards from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low-income people buy the food they need for good health. Allowable SNAP food purchases include:

- Fruits and vegetables: juice, fresh, frozen, or canned, vegetable-based canned meals, dried beans, etc.
- Meat, poultry, and fish: fresh, frozen, or canned, eggs, etc.
- Dairy products: milk, cheese, yogurt, soy- or almond-based products, infant formula, butter or margarine, etc.
- Breads, cereals, pasta, tortillas, pita, infant cereal, and rice
- Other foods such as snack foods and beverages, chips, crackers, popcorn, pudding, jello, packaged mixes, ice cream, etc.
- Seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat

**Eligibility Requirements**

People who are working for low wages, full- or part-time, unemployed, receiving public assistance payments, low-income elderly/disabled, or homeless, may be eligible to receive SNAP food assistance if they meet the stringent qualifications. Most households must spend some of their own cash along with their SNAP allowance to buy the food they need. Eligible households receive an electronic EBT card, similar to a debit card, and a pin number, to use when making permitted SNAP food purchases at authorized food retail outlets.

For SNAP, a household is normally a group of people who live together, buy food, and prepare meals together. If the household passes the program’s eligibility tests, the amount of SNAP benefits will depend on the number of people in the household and on how much monthly income is left after certain expenses are deducted from the gross income. After adding all of the household’s countable income (earnings, child support, Social Security, Disability, pensions, etc.), certain deductions will be subtracted – the standard deduction in most states is at least $155. One possible scenario: a 4-person household consisting of an applicant, who buys food and prepares the meals, her 6-year old granddaughter, her elderly father who can’t live alone, and an adult special-needs brother – the maximum monthly adjusted income limit would be $2,790, and the

See Oasis in a Food Desert, cont’d on p. 5
Many Shore residents are wondering how best to occupy themselves during the coronavirus-containment effort. Some are whiling away the time by taking walks, bird-watching, or biking, while others are focusing on indoor activities such as cleaning out closets and cupboards, working on the great American novel, or bingeing the latest streaming offerings. But there is something almost everyone can do that could improve their health and sense of well-being during the weeks or months of dealing with the virus — by planting a Victory Garden!

The term was coined during World War II; many credit African-American scientist George Washington Carver. Carver encouraged people to supplement their diets in the face of produce shortages during the war with either wild foods or those grown in their own vegetable gardens. He published his last agricultural bulletin, “Nature’s Garden for Victory and Peace,” in March of 1942. The idea caught on, and soon afterwards, Victory Gardens were springing up all over the country. Contemporaneous accounts note not only the nutritional benefits of such efforts but also the improvement in morale of those who participated in them.

Gardening can be a family activity; children and grandchildren are often fascinated by the process of planting and growing vegetables — and are especially eager to help with the harvest! It does not have to cost a lot to get started; for example, potatoes can be grown by cutting one into pieces, making sure each piece has at least 1 eye, then planting them around 4” deep.

Traditional gardens require tilling or turning the soil, working in organic matter, and sowing seeds or transplanting seedlings — followed by regular watering and weeding. But other, less labor-intensive methods can produce satisfying results as well. For example, a 15-gallon pot is sufficient for 1 large tomato plant (with a cage for support), 2 to 3 pepper plants, or 1 to 2 zucchini or squash plants. Some of the easiest vegetables to grow in containers include the nightshades like tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, and eggplant. Those types of summer vegetables require at least 6 hours of sun per day to thrive.

For a quick (30-day) turnaround from seed to harvest, try radishes, baby arugula, baby spinach, baby kale, lettuce, green onions, or bok choy. Those veggies can be planted in smaller pots or rectangular containers such as window boxes, and do not require as much sun as most vegetables.

For those who want to go the easy route, a local horticulturist recommends taking a bag of potting soil, cutting an “x” in the center, and planting directly in the bag. This obviates the need to weed, reduces watering, and is a good way to experience the satisfaction of watching your plants develop until they are ready to harvest, with little effort.

For more information and specific recommendations for different soil types and planting methods, the online resources of the U.S. Department of Agriculture are invaluable. A quick search online will yield instructions for planning, planting, and caring for a simple backyard garden, ideas for container gardening, and even how to grow vegetables hydroponically.

Growing a Victory Garden is a way to improve your diet, your budget, and your attitude. Give it a try! 🌼

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Oasis in a Food Desert, cont’d from p. 4

applicant might be eligible for up to $161.50 weekly food assistance for 4 people.

Everyone in the household must have a Social Security number to be counted for assistance — but if a household member does not hold a card, his or her resources and income are still counted as part of the household’s income. With certain exceptions, able-bodied adults age 18 to 50 who do not have children and are not pregnant can only get SNAP benefits for 3 months in a 3-year period. Households may have $2,250 in countable resources, such as a bank account, or $3,250 in countable resources if at least one person is age 60 or older, or is disabled.

A second food assistance program, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), is available for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5. Applicants must meet income guidelines, a state residency requirement, and be individually determined to be at “nutritional risk” by a health professional. WIC foods include infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried and canned beans/peas, canned fish, soy-based beverages, tofu, fruits and vegetables, baby foods, and whole-wheat bread.

As the country’s economy reels from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, more and more households may need government help to access nutritious food. These programs, and the variety of food outlets on the Shore, will be part of food security for the community.

1 https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/facts
2 https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic
**Keeping Track**

**Data: Sea Level Rise Accelerating**

A January 30 report from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) provided an annual update of their Sea-Level Report Cards, which project sea-level rise to the year 2050 for 32 coastal locations in the U.S. “The key message from the 2019 report cards,” said VIMS Emeritus Professor John Boon, “is a clear trend toward acceleration in rates of sea-level rise at 25 of our 32 tide-gauge stations. Acceleration can be a game changer in terms of impacts and planning, so we really need to pay heed to these patterns.”

The data for Sewells Point in Norfolk now show a projected sea-level rise by 2050 of 1.7 to 2.2 feet relative to 1992 levels. This is among the highest projections around the country; only Rockport, Texas, is projected to have a higher sea-level rise (2.7 to 3.2 feet by 2050). Norfolk saw the 4th highest rise among the 32 stations (0.2 inches/year) in 2019, with the 13th highest acceleration (0.005 inches/year²). Further information and the full report can be found at [https://www.vims.edu/research/products/slrc/](https://www.vims.edu/research/products/slrc/).

**The Year of the Census**

Every 10 years, the United States counts its population. The first year of the Census was 1790 – the U.S. population was 3,929,214. Ten years ago, 2010, the population was 308.7 million. The Census is required under the Constitution, and people are required under federal law to respond. The information is confidential. The survey asks basic questions, including how many people are living in your household as of April 1. It also asks about race, sex, and age for each member of the household. There is no citizenship question on the Census.

By mid-March, some people were asked to start responding by phone or online. Not everyone got that invitation at the same time. If you don’t get one, or if you don’t respond, you will get a paper questionnaire. And if you don’t fill that out, a Census worker will later show up at your door and ask you to complete the form.

Much is at stake for local communities. The Census count is used to distribute more than $860 billion in federal funding for schools, health systems, and infrastructure, including roads and bridges.

The count is also important in determining the number of members to represent a state in the U.S. House of Representatives, which could affect the community’s impact on Capitol Hill.

If you haven’t already responded to the Census and been counted, be sure to fill out forms online ([https://2020census.gov/en.html](https://2020census.gov/en.html)), by phone, or by a paper questionnaire.

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**Recycling Corner**

**What Can We Do With Old Pantyhose?**

Unfortunately, pantyhose, stockings, and tights can’t be recycled with our other recyclables. And they can take 30 to 40 years to break down in the landfill. So what options do we have? Quite a few, it turns out. We’ve provided a few ideas below – use your imagination!

**Reuse**

- **If you have unused pantyhose still in the package,** donate to your local thrift store.
- **In the garden and outdoors:**
  - Use to protect vegetables from pests; use as garden ties (cut the pantyhose into lots of rings, to make smaller, unobtrusive ties for climbers, roses, etc.);
  - Use the seat part of the pantyhose to protect melons and cantaloupes from rabbits and deer until they ripen;
  - Put a bar of soap in the toe of old pantyhose, and hang in the campground, so it’s always handy without getting dirty or lost.
- **In the kitchen:**
  - Cover a rolling pin with clean pantyhose to prevent dough from sticking; use pantyhose to store onions and garlic, while allowing air circulation;
  - Use a piece of scrunched-up pantyhose with a drop of detergent as a dish scrubber.
- **Around the house:**
  - Use pantyhose instead of a mesh bag in the laundry for delicate items; use an old pair over a broom or mop for cleaning, or use wool tights for surfaces and mirrors;
  - Add soap shavings or old soap pieces to pantyhose for the bath or as a gentle scrubber for your skin;
  - Use pantyhose over the nozzle of your vacuum cleaner to find a lost item, such as a pin or contact lens.

**Recycle**

Donate any fabrics, including pantyhose, to the boxes from Special Olympics Virginia at each convenience center in both counties, and at the Moose Lodge in Belle Haven and the Lighthouse Ministries Thrift Shop in Onley to be turned into filler for car seats and other items.

**Sources:**


Upcoming Town Elections

Elections will be held on Tuesday, May 5, for the following towns:

- **Accomack** (Mayor and Town Council) – Belle Haven (also Recorder), Chincoteague, Hallwood, Keller, Onancock, Parksley, Saxis, Tangier, and Wachapreague
- **Northampton** (Town Council) – Cape Charles and Exmore

Key Dates for these elections are:

- March 20 – Absentee voting begins.
- April 13 – Deadline to register to vote, or update an existing registration
- April 28 – Deadline to request an absentee ballot to be mailed to you; if you mail your absentee ballot, it must be received by 7:00 PM on Election Day, May 5.

For a complete list of candidates, and details on polling locations, visit the Registrars’ websites for Accomack County (https://www.co.accomack.va.us/departments/registrar) and Northampton County (https://www.co.northampton.va.us/government/departments_elected_offices/voter_registration_and_elections).

Remember, all elections matter, and every vote counts – including yours!

**COVID-19 update:** With the threat of the COVID-19 virus, in order to protect the health of voters and Election Officials, voters in these towns are being encouraged to vote at home via absentee ballot. There has been no call to postpone the May 5 election. You can apply online for an absentee ballot at https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting/. You can use the reason #2A “my disability or illness” if no other reason is applicable.

Although the Voter Registrar’s office in Northampton County remains open, satellite voting centers for in-person absentee voting have been set up in Cape Charles and Exmore through April 30 (see the website listed above for locations and hours). The office in Accomack County is closed to the public, and anyone needing in-person absentee voting is advised to call first.

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Save the Date – Clean the Bay Day

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) will hold its 32nd annual Clean the Bay Day on Saturday, June 6. As in past years, CBES will partner with The Nature Conservancy to clean up Oyster Harbor. Online registration, and a list of Eastern Shore sites, is available at https://www.cbf.org/events/clean-the-bay-day/.

In 2019, approximately 3,500 volunteers at almost 200 sites in Virginia removed 45,000 pounds of debris from over 250 miles of stream and shoreline.

**COVID-19 update:** CBF has canceled all events through May 1, and is closely monitoring the situation, to take every precaution to create a safe and healthy environment for event attendees. At press time, they are still moving forward with Clean the Bay Day; if it is canceled, registrants will be notified. CBF’s website states, “Although the challenges we face this year are unprecedented, we hope that the situation will evolve to let this annual tradition be bigger and better than ever!”

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**CBES Membership 2020**

New _____ Renewal ______ ShoreLine by US mail _____

Name ______________________________________________
Phone____________________________________________
Address____________________________________________
City_____________________ST________ Zip__________
Email ______________________________________________

_____ 1 yr. Regular Membership (includes ShoreLine) $25
_____ Life Membership (includes ShoreLine)  $500
_____ Optional add’l tax-deductible contribution of $______
_____ Gift subscription to ShoreLine for a friend  $25

Please provide recipient’s name, email, and mailing address so we can send a welcome card; otherwise, we will welcome them via email _____________________________________________________

Volunteer for our community-building opportunities:

- Bike Tour ______  Community Unity Day ______
- Oyster Roast _____  Clean the Bay Day _____
- ShoreLine reporter _____  Hospitality _____
- Fundraising _____  Candidate Forums _____
- Administrative _____  Where needed _____

Send to CBES, PO Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347
Join online at www.cbes.org

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**Cook – Share – Reach Out**

*Help Thy Neighbor*
Community Calendar*

*NOTE: As of press time, all public meetings in both counties have been cancelled until further notice. For current information, go to the county’s website or call the county office at the number listed.

Accomack County
757-787-5700
www.co.accomack.va.us

1st Wed  Board of Zoning Appeals
          10 AM, Accomac
2nd Wed  Planning Commission (PC)
          7 PM, Accomac
3rd Tues School Board
          6:30 PM, Accomac
3rd Wed  Board of Supervisors (BOS)
          5 PM, Accomac
4th Tues PC Work Session
          7 PM, Accomac
4th Thur Wetlands Board
          10 AM, Accomac

CBES and Other Activities
1st Wed  VIMS Public Seminar
          7:30 PM, Wachapreague
3rd Tues ES Ground Water Committee
          10 AM, Accomac
3rd Tues CBES Board Meeting
          7 PM, Eastville or Belle Haven

Northampton County
757-678-0440
www.co.northampton.va.us

1st Tues Board of Zoning Appeals
          10 AM, Eastville
1st Tues Planning Commission (PC)
          6 PM, Eastville
2nd Tues Board of Supervisors (BOS)
          6 PM, Eastville
3rd Wed Wetlands Board
          Meets as needed, Eastville
3rd Wed PC Work Session
          6 PM, Eastville
4th Tues BOS Work Session
          5 PM, Eastville
4th Tues School Board
          6 PM, Machipongo

PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS!
Sponsor the 28th Annual CBES Between the Waters Bike Tour
October 24, 2020
Sunset Beach Hotel

Share the Excitement with over 1,100 riders

More info:
www.cbes.org

The 2019 CBES Bike Tour provided an estimated $385,000 economic impact to the Shore!

For membership and other CBES information:
www.cbes.org

Check your label – if it doesn’t show ‘20 or Life, you need to renew (cbes.org).