

WATERWAYS

Promoting the Development of Affordable Water and Wastewater Facilities, Activities and Resources to Improve the Quality of Life for Low-Income Rural Residents of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida



Water Is Life®

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. *“The Original Water Project”*

Virginia Secretary of Trade and Commerce Jim Cheng Will Be The Keynote Speaker at the Southeast RCAP 41st Annual Water Is Life Luncheon

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Join “Friends of Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project” on Facebook!

Keynote Speaker Jim Cheng, Virginia Secretary of Trade and Commerce, will join Southeast RCAP in celebrating National Drinking Water Week at the 41st Annual Water Is Life Luncheon at noon on May 7, 2010 at the Holiday Inn Roanoke Valley View Hotel.

The 41st Anniversary Water Is Life Luncheon will celebrate those individuals and organizations that help bring clean running water to low-income rural communities throughout Virginia and the southeastern United States.

To help celebrate the 41st Anniversary Water Is Life Luncheon, writing contests about how clean water impacts our lives are being conducted in area elementary schools. First and second place contest winners will be recognized at the Luncheon and awarded their contest prizes.

Organizations wishing to join Southeast RCAP in celebrating National Drinking Water Week may sponsor the Water Is Life Luncheon at one of the levels detailed below, which include complimentary luncheon tickets and an advertisement in the luncheon program. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor or purchasing tickets for

the luncheon, please contact Teresa Volk, Administrative Assistant, at (540) 345-1184, ext. 125 or tvolk@sercap.org.



**Keynote Speaker Jim Cheng,
Virginia Secretary of Trade and
Commerce**

Platinum – \$1,000
Full page ad & a table seating 8 guests

Gold – \$500
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Silver – \$250,
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Bronze – \$100
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Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project’s mission is to promote the development of affordable water and wastewater facilities, activities, and resources to improve the quality of life for

low-income rural residents. Established in 1969, Southeast RCAP provides more than 15 programs in seven states that help low income rural communities lead better lives through clean water.



Water Is Life®

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Reflections from Hope F. Cupit, President & CEO



2010: Did you return your census data on time?

The census was due April 1, 2010. Responses to the 2010 census can change the entire political makeup of your state. The deadline to return your census by mail was April 16, 2010. Reports have shown that only 50-70 percent of American citizens in certain cities have answered and returned the ten census questions that will eventually determine where the federal money will be distributed. The national census return rate is approximately 63%. You may ask, how does this affect me and should I be concerned of the results? Absolutely. Rural residents are among those at greatest risk for going uncounted, which is an alarming reality for states hit by tough economic times. This affects nonprofit organizations as well; Southeast RCAP and other nonprofits rely on census responses to better provide services to our clients. Census data establishes how many seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives and is used by a broad array of agencies, businesses and nonprofits to support job growth and provide effective services to their communities.

The census information is important in four ways. **It is the law.** The federal government is required to gather the information. Next, that **information is used to determine how many representatives are allotted to the U.S. House of Representatives**, which impacts the number of votes a state is allocated in the Electoral College. Subsequently **federal aid is typically divided based on an area's population.** And finally, the **Census Bureau has stated it will save the taxpayer about \$85 million in operational costs** for every percentage point increase in the nation's participation rate by mail.

Each question helps determine how more than \$400 billion will be allocated to communities across the country. That is a lot of money to lose if citizens failed to return their census data in your state. But it is not too late. If you do not mail it in you will be visited by a census representative through July 2010. As I stated before, it is the law and there is a great deal of money at stake.

When you think about it, it's easy to see what a precise count of people can do for your community. Better infrastructure, more services and a better tomorrow for all Americans. **Participation isn't just essential—it's the law.**



Southeast RCAP Supports the Bedford Hospice House



Recently Southeast RCAP invested \$45,000 in the Bedford Hospice House, a nonprofit organization that broke ground on a new hospice facility in January. The Bedford Hospice House will create 50 permanent jobs in Bedford County that will help stimulate the economy.

Bedford Hospice House will be a four-room residential facility for end-of-life hospice care. The groundbreaking was attended by roughly 50 people, including Bedford City and Bedford County officials.

Formalized fundraising for the Bedford Hospice House began in 2006. Last year, organizers succeeded in raising \$1.6 million to fund the project. Donations were received from local and state governments, individuals, foundations, and service organizations.

The facility is for patients who live within 50 miles of the Bedford Hospice House and are referred by their doctors. It will have a nursing staff around the clock in a homelike atmosphere that will hopefully comfort those nearing death.

"Projects like this never happen without extraordinary leadership from ordinary people, said Senator Steve Newman, R-Lynchburg.

The Bedford Hospice House is scheduled to open in late 2010.



Virginia Experiences a Harsh Winter



The Commonwealth of Virginia experienced its harshest winter in decades this past season.

While the lack of indoor plumbing is no laughing matter, this ice and snow sculpture of an outhouse made the Southeast RCAP staff smile.

Southeast RCAP is happy that spring is here, and the snow and ice of last winter are now a fading memory!

Happy Spring!

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Water & Sewer Extension in Christ Rock, MD Will Begin in Summer 2010



The community of Christ Rock, located in Dorchester County, Maryland, is located immediately adjacent to the City of Cambridge and is planned to be annexed into the City. The majority of property owners agree with annexation to the City of Cambridge in order to receive needed water and sewer services, as well as other community services. The Maryland Rural Development Corporation Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) has been working for over nine years to bring the needed water and wastewater services to the community.



Christ Rock, MD — Aerial View

Approximately 94 persons reside in the project area in 44 homes. A recently completed income survey performed by the TAP indicates that the median household income is \$28,542 and that 73% of the households are below CDBG income qualification limits. Ninety-eight percent of the residents are African-American. The TAP was made aware of the community needs both by the health department and the City Planner. In the past community members had been willing to consider being annexed into the City, but grant funding needed to be secured in order for the improvements to be made prior to annexation. Unfortunately, there was no one in the lead at the City or County to bring this project into reality. Once TAP became involved, all departments have been working together to make this project a reality.

The TAP met on several occasions with the health department, City and County planning staff, community representatives and representatives from USDA RD, MDE and DHCD to review planning and potential funding options. It was determined that the City needed to be the applicant for grant funds due to Smart Growth issues. The Maryland Department of Environment was willing to fund the project, and the City needed to apply for CDBG funding as well. Over the years a number of community meetings were held which were organized by the TAP. Issues of potential costs to the users, annexation and other concerns were raised by residents and property owners, and the TAP, City attorney and City Planner addressed these concerns. The City Department of Public Works developed the construction estimates and the total project cost is expected to be \$852,000. An application to CDBG required an income survey, which was completed by the TAP. The community was found to qualify for CDBG funding. Affordability data was developed by the TAP and included in the CDBG application.

The TAP assisted the town in the completion of the MDE pre-applications for funding, which were submitted in spring 2005 and again in 2008. The TAP developed a large portion of the CDBG application in conjunction with the new City Planner. TAP facilitated community meetings where the conditions for annexation were discussed and codified. The Maryland Department of Environment has funded \$950,000 in grants and CDBG has provided \$593,500 in grants based on the income survey conducted by the TAP. At this point in time, the bid process is complete and final engineering is underway. The City has selected Van Cleef Engineering Associates to design the project. Currently, construction costs are estimated to be \$1,483,000, including all of the connections. Construction will take six months and is expected to commence in July of 2010.



A Christ Rock, MD Home That Will Be Updated After Water and Sewer Services are Available



Truxon: Years of Pushing for Clean, Affordable Water Pays Off

By Beth Miller, Sunday News Journal



For his decades of strategic, selfless service, The News Journal includes Truxon on its list of “25 Who Matter,” the third in its biweekly series introducing readers to unsung heroes who have strengthened the community in extraordinary ways.

Truxon, 79, is a gregarious, energetic man – “jolly” is how one friend describes him – and those qualities help him connect with all kinds of people, whether those in high positions or those in tough places. He loves a challenge, too, and is not easily discouraged – as Ellendale’s sewer proves. “If it wasn’t for Harold Truxon, there would not be a central sewer in Ellendale – at least not as soon as it was, and it may have been smaller and more expensive,” said Gerard Esposito, president of Tidewater Utilities. Esposito was director of Water Resources for the state Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control during part of Truxon’s battle. “After 23 years in government, I know you need a champion in the community or things get dropped, lost or shuffled aside. ... He was persistent, and he just didn’t accept ‘no’ for an answer.”

All In The Genes

He had that kind of mother, too. Truxon, the oldest of nine children, grew up in Hillsboro, Md., where his father worked for a hardware store and his mother, Georgianna, was a strong figure in the community, working with the WPA – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration, which provided jobs and relief during the nation’s recovery from the Great Depression. She worked hard for the people in her community.

“My mother was a fighter,” Truxon said. “Maybe a gene fell off of her and onto me.” Fentress Truxon could believe that. For as long as he can remember, his father has been looking after people one way or another. For a while, it was out of the back of the family car. He’d offer sandwiches – selling some, giving some away. Later, he rigged up a small tent, set it up and started selling fried chicken. That led to a small trailer – a portable grill type of thing with skillet, burners, a french fryer and soda fountains. Truxon hauled it around to the state fair, to the speedway in Lincoln, to camp meetings throughout the area.

And, of course, there was Truxon Delmarvelous Fried Chicken – an institution on U.S. 113 for years, including that big ice storm when Gov. Russell Peterson sent state workers to help him open the restaurant and feed the state workers, emergency responders, and the crew of that ship stuck in ice off the Delaware coast. “But what touched me the most was that he always had a pot of soup on the stove,” said Fentress, the first of his five children, now 52 and living in Tempe, Ariz. “If you didn’t have any money and you couldn’t buy a meal – well, my dad would never let anybody go hungry.”

He worked hard as a trustee at his church, Mt. Zion AME in Ellendale, on the board of First State Community Action, with the Human Relations Commission. “He is very concerned about the future generation and the opportunities they will have,” said his pastor, the Rev. Linda Powell.

As he and his wife, Virginia, were raising their five children, Truxon read a newspaper story about high cancer rates in the area. It bothered him. When he learned that his church couldn’t open a day care because something had seeped from a nearby junkyard into the church’s wells, he was concerned. The church had to use bottled water until recently – when a new, deeper well was installed. He learned that other private wells were polluted with nitrates and, in some cases, bacteria from failing septic fields. Truxon wanted some answers, so he started making phone calls. At first, few of his calls were returned. He complained about that to his state senator, the late Thurman Adams, and his phone started ringing.

“I had no problem getting calls through after that,” Truxon said. “Sen. Adams was my best friend.” He called state officials and county officials. He got wells tested. He met with the feds. He spoke with reporters at The News Journal and WBOC-TV. And slowly – sometimes agonizingly so – he and his allies made their case. Ed Hallock, program administrator for the Division of Public Health’s Office of Drinking Water, said residents couldn’t afford a new sewer system and a new water system. They opted to start with sewer.

A Relentless Mission



It wasn’t enough to prove that septic systems were failing. It wasn’t enough to get a sewer system approved. The hook-ups had to be inexpensive, or the high-poverty areas would never benefit from it.

“What Harold made sure we kept in mind was that it’s got to be affordable,” Esposito said. “You can’t just charge them \$4,000 a year when they were paying nothing, literally using out-houses or less. We had to keep it under a targeted amount – less than \$500 a year.” Grants,



Harold L. Truxon, Southeast RCAP Board of Directors Members, Stands in Front of a Neighborhood Off New Hope Road in the Ellendale Area Once Known as "The Hole." The Neighborhood is One of Many Now Getting Sewer Services and Cleaner Water Thanks to Years of Truxon's Hard Work.

loans, help from Sussex County Council and state officials, plus about \$2.5 million in federal money made it happen, Truxon said. Though the town council wanted no part of the plan at first, saying the system was not necessary, it changed its mind as Truxon's group gained momentum. "He pushed and he pushed and he pushed," said Loretta J. Benson, a member of the Ellendale Association. "We all just prayed about the situation, stuck with him and kept on going."

Truxon and his allies then held fundraisers, collecting more than \$10,000 to help people pay the hook-up fees. "He's always been the type of person that has a lot of energy and wants to do the best he can for the people that are in his church and live in his area," said Rodney Wyatt, who was an engineer for Sussex County and now works for Artesian Water. "He doesn't stop. If he doesn't get the right answer, he keeps going until he does."

Some have criticized Truxon's ways, but the Ellendale Association and town officials are working together now. Delores Price, a resident for more than

50 years and the town's council president for the past five years, said Truxon knows how to get things done. "People trust him," she said. "They come to him and ask him to help if they need a permit or something. ... You can't please everybody and you're not going to. But he has been helpful." The town has hopes for significant growth, Price said, but the pace of that growth will be set in large part by the pace of the economic recovery.

Now 79, Truxon has more goals. He wants clean water for all in the Ellendale community and he wants a wellness center. He wants the area to be in a central water district, and Esposito and Wyatt both believe that future development eventually will bring the financial muscle needed to make that happen.

"They are on the project priority list for the next round of funding," Hallock said. "But there is still a lot of work to do as far as designing the system." In October, higher-than-recommended nitrate levels were found in 26 percent of 19 Ellendale wells tested. Hallock said the levels were not extreme, but would be a concern for households with infants, pregnant women or nursing mothers. The state Cancer Registry shows Ellendale's cancer rate from 2001 to 2005 was about the same as the state's, according to Division of Public Health spokeswoman Heidi Truschel-Light. A 2004 state investigation concluded that cancer in the town could not be linked to possible water contamination.

But Truxon points to the water standing in nearby fields, rising almost to the doors of some trailers. That water seeps into the area's shallow wells, carrying who-knows-what. "What are the people drinking?" he said. "It bothers me. What are they drinking right now?" Bishop Foster said that's a worry. "A lady called me yesterday and said they can't drink their water," he said. "People are getting sick. We're working on that now." Foster said he and Truxon weren't always allies. They came "from two different sides of the fence," he said. But as they met up in community meetings, they found their goals were similar. Foster believes God put them together for the work they do now.

"These people are very poor, and they don't have much power," Foster said. "Truxon tries to be a voice for those people." And he has his own way with that, the bishop said. "We're going to get that water," Foster said. "I'm a preacher. Truxon's not a preacher. He can say some words I can't say." He doesn't say "quit," though. "I tend to believe that ordinary people can do extraordinary things if they don't give up," Powell, the Mt. Zion AME pastor, said. "That's Brother Truxon."

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Southeast RCAP State Updates



Delaware: In Kent and Sussex counties, nitrates in ground water are a potential health concern and a potential source of nutrient contamination in surface waters. The Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) adopted a watershed approach to determining the most effective and efficient methods for protecting water quality or abating existing problems.

The Southeast RCAP TAP is working with DNREC to replace cesspools, holding tanks, and poor on-site septic systems for better sanitary waste disposal and protection of drinking water sources. The projects will help increase wastewater treatment capacity, eliminate or prevent installation of individual septic systems, and reduce the annual nutrient load entering the Delaware watersheds. Excess quantities of these pollutants can harm water quality and damage wildlife and fish habitats. Funding for these projects also help make sewer rates more affordable for users. Southeast RCAP has assisted residents in Ocean View, Frankford, Greenwood, Morningside Village, Nanticoke Water Shed, Swan Estates, Woodlands of Millsboro, and Fenwick Island, Delaware. Southeast RCAP is currently assisting residents in Angola, Dagsboro, Ellendale, Long Neck, Lucas Development, Inland Bays, Selbyville, Slaughter Neck, and Star Hill.



Florida: Blountstown, FL is located in Calhoun County, and provides its residents with many services, including water, wastewater, natural gas, electricity and solid waste. Southeast RCAP conducted water and wastewater plant inspections, and vulnerability assessments for Blountstown. After the inspections were conducted it became clear that both the water and wastewater systems were in

need of repair and replacement due to the age of the systems and lack of proper operation and maintenance. Southeast RCAP will assist Blountstown in performing rate studies on water, wastewater, electric, natural gas, and solid waste. In addition, Southeast RCAP will assist Blountstown in developing bulk wastewater purchasing rates to help assist in developing a plan to connect the Town of Altha, FL to Blountstown's wastewater system to eliminate water quality problems resulting in failed septic tanks.



Georgia: Georgia Rural Community Assistance Program TAP staff have worked closely with the City of Port Wentworth for almost four years on constructing a wastewater treatment facility and discontinuing treatment of the city's wastewater by an industry located in Port Wentworth. In January 2010 the Georgia RCAP participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the wastewater treatment facility. The facility will cost an estimated \$17 million, which the Georgia RCAP help local officials arrange the necessary funding to support the project. The new wastewater treatment facility will be able to process two

million gallons of wastewater per day. The new system will use Sequential Biological Reactor technology to introduce oxygen into the treated effluent before being discharged into the Savannah River. The project is expected to create and/or preserve approximately 100 jobs.



GA State Director USDA
Shirley Sherrod



Ground Breaking Ceremony
Port Wentworth, GA February 26, 2010



Port Wentworth Mayor, Mr. Glenn Jones (l)
Jim Caldwell, GaRCAP

Southeast RCAP State Updates



Maryland: Recently Maryland Rural Community Assistance Project (MD RCAP) held its first workshop in the George's Creek Region of southern Allegany County, Maryland. Currently working with some of the communities in the region on important infrastructure projects, MD RCAP provided free training to area elected and appointed officials via the US EPA Drinking Water program. Attendees were provided with training on specific topics, including Municipal Budgeting, Use of QuickBooks Software, EPA Water Regulations and an overview of available assistance and project funding. Six communities were in attendance at the training held on August 20th at the Town of Barton Town Hall. The attendees included town administrators, finance commissioners, town mayors and other elected and appointed officials.



North Carolina: NCRCAP has launched a new Chatham County-based health education initiative as part of its *Health Homes for All* program. Lay health advisors, or Promotoras, will education the Latino community about the far-reaching health and environmental implications of pest infestations and pesticide use. NCRCAP, in partnership with Duke University Medical Center Department of Pediatrics Division of Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine, the nonprofit organization Toxic Free NC, and the Community Care of North Carolina, is currently coordinating a series of training sessions for the Promotoras on topic such as asthma and allergy triggers in the home, integrated pest management, and non-toxic alternatives to pesticides. "Our goal is to foster a sense of collective responsibility and to build the capacity of residents to take action to promote environmental protection not only in their homes, but in the wider community," said Margaret Wurth, NCRCAP Outreach Coordinator.

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South Carolina: SC RCAP is working on a new project in Summerton, SC, which is located in Clarendon County. Recently Summerton has taken a proactive approach to expanding and upgrading their water system. Old water lines and hydrants are being replaced before they fail. The system is being expanded to provide water to new customers inside the town limits. The Olanta, Bennettsville and Sellers communities, which are served by SC RCAP, received \$3,403,000 in stimulus funds. SC RCAP conducted site visits in Harleyville, Ravenel and Water Missions International in Charleston, SC.



Virginia: The Town of Phenix, in Charlotte County, VA, has suffered long delays in recent years with the process of installing a community well. Because of these delays, Southeast RCAP was forced to deobligate its previous \$8,000 planning grant funding for this project in Spring 2009 to be in accordance with Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development guidelines. During that time period Technical Assistance Provider Doug Phillips learned of the town's needs and initiated the reapplication process to restore Southeast RCAP's commitment to this project. This coincided

with awaiting leveraged funds from the state's drinking water revolving loan fund. Late last fall Southeast RCAP approved \$32,000 in Facilities Development grants to fund part of the project.

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