

6 Friday, October 30, 2015

LOCAL NEWS

DAILY PRESS

Southeast petition gets 1,000 signatures

The Southeast CARE Coalition, a local environmental nonprofit, has gathered 1,000 signatures on a petition asking the Department of Environmental Quality to install an air monitoring system in the Southeast Community.

The only state air monitoring system on the Peninsula is at Langley Air Force Base — about 8 miles from the shipyard and about 12 miles from commercial port operations and coal terminals. All the facilities are well below their state emission standards, but the group wants to know the effect of all the pollutants combined, said Kendyl Crawford, one of the coalition's leaders. The group has an appointment in early December to hand the petition to Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward.



DAILY PRESS FILE PHOTO
The coal terminal is visible near the intersection of 16th Street and Marshall Avenue in Southeast Newport News. The Southeast CARE Coalition has gathered 1,000 signatures on a petition asking the state to install an air monitoring system in the Southeast.

a Hampton native, said Crawford. The petition will also be handed to U.S. Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, D-Newport News. Many of the Southeast Community's nearly 19,000 residents have long wondered if the air they breathe could be causing asthma, cardiovascular issues and diabetes. The air monitoring

would help answer that question, but it won't be easy. For example, John Brandt, regional air compliance and monitoring manager for the DEQ, said it can be difficult to discern a coal dust particle from a dirt particle picked up by the system. The coalition is holding a "thank you celebration" as part of its meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday at the Moon Community House, 2101 Jefferson Ave. Contact Crawford at 757-268-8810 or at kendylcrawford@sierraclub.org for more information.

Should city spend \$3.85M to tear down plant?

A controversial plan for the city to spend \$3.85 million to tear down the old Lee Hall water treatment plant is coming back up again. City officials were talking about demolishing the plant back in 2008, but the citizen group RETRO voiced strong opposition to that plan and it never happened. The plant, built in 1943, has not been used since 2005, when the new plant was completed across the

street. In the city's proposed capital improvement plan, released earlier this week, the project is slated to be done in fiscal year 2018. "Buildings, basins and underground infrastructure from the previously used Lee Hall plant need to be removed and the area needs to be made presentable as soon as possible," the capital plan states. John Procyson, a member of the now-defunct RETRO, still opposes the project, and plans to write a letter to City Manager Jim Bourey, he said. "It's ridiculous they're going to spend that kind of money on that," Procyson said.

The \$3.85 million also includes tearing down the remnants of the old Harwood's Mill plant and a pump station on Jefferson Avenue.

Update: Plan for German grocers

Back in July, I reported that competing discount German grocers Aldi and Lidl had both filed plans to open stores on the Peninsula. Lidl, which is opening its U.S. headquarters in Arlington, is still proposing at least two stores in Newport News. MGP Retail Consulting, which serves as Lidl's U.S.

real estate firm, submitted a revised site plan for a store on Warwick, near Harpersville Road, current home of a Bowditch Ford dealership. That revised plan is under review right now, said Susan Kassel, manager of development plan review. MGP also submitted a plan for a store at the northeast corner of Jefferson Avenue and City Center Boulevard, owned by WM. Jordan President and CEO John Lawson, which the City Council rezoned for a grocery store. Staff responded to that application earlier this month and has not yet received a revised plan, Kassel said. Staff also requested changes to Aldi's application for a store next to Kohl's at Jefferson Commons, near the airport. It has not yet been approved, Kassel said.

MGP also submitted a plan to open a store in Hampton at 2000 W. Mercury Blvd., just off Interstate 64, where the Hampton Bay Plaza and Suites now sits. Hampton did not respond to the status of that application by press time. After the site plan permits, several more city permits must be obtained before the stores can be built. *Cliff can be reached by phone at 757-247-7870.*



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IT'S IN THE BUDGET: GLOUCESTER

\$12.4 million for public safety

Gloucester County is expected to spend a little over \$12.4 million this year on public safety, according to its fiscal year 2016 budget. The county's annual public safety budget includes funding for the sheriff's office, volunteer fire and rescue, forest service, radio operations and maintenance, the jail, and animal control.

Line by line

Each day the Daily Press highlights individual line items from state and local budgets. Read the full series at dailypress.com/watchdog. The county budgeted \$4,987,773 for the sheriff's office, which is 2.9 percent or \$146,977 less than last year's budget. The public safety budget includes \$3,088,112 for vol-

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

unteer fire and rescue and \$310,458 for the jail. The jail budget is 15.2 percent or \$40,205 higher than fiscal year 2015. The public safety budget also includes \$576,128 for the county's radio operations and maintenance. The county is a member of the

York-James City Regional Communications System. In addition, there's \$488,652 for probation and pretrial services; \$460,374 for building inspections; \$285,897 for environment programs; \$336,599 for animal control, and \$193,575 for emergency management. There is also \$2,500 for state forest services and \$200 for a medical examiner. —Frances Hubbard

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