

# CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE SHORELINE

A News Journal of Natural Resources, Public Affairs and  
Community on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

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## Medical Services for Northampton Still in a Planning Stage

By John T. Ordeman

Six-plus years ago – in September, 2009 – Shore Memorial Hospital became affiliated with Riverside Health Services. The following year, December, 2010, Riverside filed a Certificate of Public Need (COPN), which requested authorization from the Virginia Department of Health to build a new hospital and relocate Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital (RSMH) to Onley because “the renovation or replacement of the facility at its current location is not feasible or cost-effective.” In addition to giving details about the services that would be provided in the new hospital, the COPN stated:

“The present Cancer Services building ... will be renovated to house an outpatient center, including a fixed CT and a pad for mobile MRI. These diagnostic services are already located at the existing hospital building and will be moved to the urgent care center. A complete outpatient diagnostic and treatment facility can be offered at a convenient location closer to residents of the lower Eastern Shore. Other diagnostic imaging and facilities for collecting laboratory specimens will be included in the urgent care setting.”

I recently met with RSMH administrator John Peterman to inquire about medical services that Riverside Health Services would provide in Nassawadox after the hospital relocates to Onley. Mr. Peterman acknowledged that RSMH would not be able to fulfill all of the commitments made

in the COPN; however, he believes that the level of medical services in Nassawadox will, in most ways, be comparable to what would be found in an Urgent Care Center. The Nassawadox-based primary care group – Drs. Snyder and Perry and Nurse Practitioner Sessoms – will move to the Cancer Center, which he expects will have x-ray and diagnostic laboratory services and, with the addition of one or more staff members, operate with extended hours, into the evening and on Saturdays. Specialists based in Onley will come to the Nassawadox facility regularly to meet with patients who are Northampton residents. He also stated that he believes that the Riverside Clinic operated by Drs. Dalessio and Clarke in Cape Charles may also acquire additional staff and operate with extended hours if there is sufficient demand for this service.

Following my meeting with Mr. Peterman, I wrote several members of the RSMH Board, informing them of all that Mr. Peterman had told me and concluding with the request, “I would appreciate having your thoughts on John’s plans, whether they are feasible and whether they will be realized.”

On March 22, I received a letter from RSMH Board chairman C. Lee Davis, who stated that he had reviewed my request for information with all of the Board members and that, on behalf of the entire Board, he could give me an update of the Board’s plans. He stated that, with the advice of a consultant and an

*ad hoc* committee appointed by the Northampton Supervisors, the hospital Board had decided that it was not feasible to establish an Urgent Care Center in Nassawadox and that the County should “continue to promote and enhance primary care as one solution to insuring [*sic*] access to health care.” He noted that Riverside had recently donated some EMS equipment and was helping to fund a project to improve EMS services “We believe,” he wrote, “that Riverside, with primary care practices in Cape Charles and Nassawadox and ESRH [Eastern Shore Rural Health] locations in Franktown and Bayview, is well poised to address the need.”

Mr. Davis summarized the RSMH Board’s position:

“The Board is unanimous in their support of our plan to provide primary care services, as well as rotating specialists in Nassaw-

*See Medical, Cont’d on page 5*

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# Engage & Enjoy: CBES Annual Meeting & Social

## Thursday, April 28

Like this beautiful spring, Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore efforts have blossomed in this, our 2nd year with a full time director. Join us in sharing and celebrating the teamwork that has helped us to protect the precious place we call home. Peabody Award-Winner Marc Steiner of the Center for Emerging Media is our guest speaker. You don't have to be a member to enjoy this fun and informative night – all are welcome.

It's appropriate that this year's CBES Annual Meeting will be held at the Island House in Wachapreague, overlooking the wild seaside beauty we all treasure. Stoking up the fun factor, everyone is invited to the optional dinner hour at 6 p.m. Relax and reconnect with those who share your passion for a better Eastern Shore.

The dinner will be served as a buffet and will include Island House Crab Cakes, Sautéed Breast of Chicken Marsala, Tossed Salad, Chef's Redskin Potatoes, Seasonal Roasted Vegetables, and Classic Cheesecake with Chocolate Sauce, with iced tea, soda, and coffee. Cost is \$24.99, tax & gratuity not included. Please pre-register by April 20 by reserving and

paying online at [www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org), or you may send a check to CBES, PO Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347.

Our program begins at 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public. For his exemplary service to the community, Jack Ordeman will be awarded the Suzanne Wescoat Award, named in honor of CBES founding president. Help us recognize a man whose volunteer work on the Shore spans decades, including being a dedicated past-president of CBES, Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper, ESO Arts Center, and Exmore Rotary. Jack and his wife Mary are soon leaving the Shore. Let's give them both a heartfelt farewell.

CBES is honored to have as our speaker veteran radio host Marc Steiner from the popular Marc Steiner Show, which airs on WEAA 88.9 FM, an NPR affiliate station in the Baltimore/Washington region. CBES feels a synergy with Marc's lifelong mission of engaging dialogue between citizens, their leaders, and those not often invited to the table, especially on issues that have no easy answers. Marc will be discussing Environmental Justice. Following his presentation, "Beyond Tree Hugging: Communities Can Control Their Futures," Marc will open the floor for a thought-provoking conversation.

Save the date and enjoy an engaging evening. *CBES members: Bring a non-member friend or two and share the Shore Love!*



### About Our Speaker:

For over 20 years, Marc Steiner, with his radio show, The Marc Steiner Show, "Provocative Talk, Intelligent Discussion," has never shied away from grappling with the tough issues of the day. Since 1993, he has continued to bring the voices of all stakeholders to the airwaves, acknowledging that an informed listenership is critical to a true democracy, and trusting that educated listeners are capable of making their own decisions on issues that affect them. The Marc Steiner Show is a production of The Center for Emerging Media (CEM), a nonprofit dedicated to introducing and giving airtime to voices that would otherwise go unheard, particularly the voices and stories of the disenfranchised and dispossessed.

In 2007, CEM and Marc Steiner were awarded the prestigious George F. Peabody Award for excellence in broadcast journalism, for the series *Just Words*. *Just Words* was a weekly documentary feature series that gave voice to marginalized people – low wage workers, ex-felons, recovering addicts, the homeless, and more.

*Don't miss this evening of engaging and informative conversation and a chance to see friends and to meet others who share your love for the Eastern Shore. See you Thursday, April 28.*

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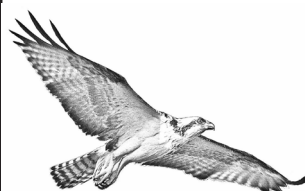
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# Time to Face the Facts

By Martina Coker and Mary Miller

*Two specific challenges were issued by attendees at Northampton Supervisor Granville Hogg's last Community Meeting – two of our ShoreLine regulars offered to explore responses to those challenges.*

## #1. Question from the audience: "How has the county benefited from the 2009 Zoning Ordinance?"

*Response from Martina Coker:*

### Local Industries

Both the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance expressed the community goals of growing the Aquaculture and Tourism industries.

#### Benefits:

- **Shore tourism** – Increased tourism spending on the Shore topped the State average for the past two years – over \$254 million for the year, up 22% in the past five years. Jobs in the industry were up 9% and the payroll was up 21%. A new vacation resort in Northampton will add accommodations for 1,800 people, and an additional 85 jobs. The industry reports that the tourism season is expanding into both the spring and fall months. Tourism revenue represents new dollars coming into the county.
- **Aquaculture** – VIMS latest economic report states aquaculture output nearing the \$100 million mark and supporting 987 jobs. Since 86% of product is sold out of state, this represents new sales revenue coming into the county, generating \$27 million in household incomes for aquaculture industry workers.

### Employment

As the country, and the county, recover from the "great recession," employment growth has increased – commercial and industrial districts in both the counties and the towns, as well as small entrepreneurial start-ups permitted in most zoning districts, has enabled this growth.

#### Benefits:

- **Employment growth** – Latest figures from the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics show an average increase in employment of 10% per month since 2013.
- **New business start-ups** – Virginia Employment Commission reports 121 new business in the past 2½ years in Northampton.

### Commercial Growth

Business expansion in and around towns, and in designated commercial and business districts, has increased, as the impacts of the recession have slowed. As the Towns prosper and generate more revenue, the county also benefits.

#### Benefits:

- **New/expanded business development** – At least 10 new businesses have opened in Exmore; 27 new businesses have opened in Cape Charles. More than 21 businesses have opened or expanded in other areas of the county. Business development has been the result of private sector initiatives and marketing.
- **Enhanced infrastructure** – An Oyster Trail, Artisans Trail, an American Viticultural Area designation, 40 new slips at the Cape Charles Harbor, and the Seaside Water Trail for kayakers, were all developed under the 2009 Zoning.

### Construction

After a national and local real estate bubble burst, the county has started to recover.

#### Benefits:

- **Building permits** have increased 133% over four years. The value of permits has increased, showing a shift from renovation to new construction.
- **Existing home sales** are strengthening, both as retirement homes and families locating to the area.
- **The second home market** has grown, according to realtors. New homeowners say they were attracted to the area for "the natural beauty, peace and quiet."

## #2. Challenge from an audience member: "We should all come back here in a few weeks with some solutions to the problems of Northampton County."

*Response from Mary Miller:*

My first thought was that we need to identify the specific problems we're talking about. Mentioned as problems at Supervisor Hogg's meeting were these – decreasing population, poverty, jobs, commercial development, geographic isolation and local tax revenue.

- **Problem – Decreasing population:** Both Shore counties have decreasing populations. The 2000-2010 Census figures show the Accomack County decrease at 14.4%, mostly through out-migration. Northampton County decreased by 5.4%, divided equally between out-migration, 32 more people a year relocating than moving into the county, and natural increase/decrease, 32 more deaths than births per

See "*Face the Facts*," cont'd on p. 4



**Face the Facts, cont'd from p. 3**

year – not unexpected in an aging community. In economic terms, this may be balanced by the more than 4,000 annual tourists, visitors and vacationers, all contributing to the local economy.


- ✓ **County Solution:** Decreasing population is a national trend for rural counties. Northampton can take advantage of its unique natural and cultural assets and continue to increase visitor numbers, and spending and investment in the county, through tourism and vacation destination marketing. Those retiring to our area consistently report that they were attracted to the county's small town and rural atmosphere – these assets were noted as valuable by the majority of local residents who participated in Community Input sessions.
  - **Problem – Poverty:** US Census and USDA Economic Research Service data confirm continued high poverty figures in the rural South, including Northampton County, particularly in households with children headed by single women, elderly females living alone and in households headed by adults with low education attainment and low skill levels. Poverty is worsened by lack of reliable transportation and available child care. Recent analysis shows that *national* income inequality and stagnant wages of low and middle income earners are now major causes of persistent poverty. Both Shore counties continue to have high numbers of children living in poverty – Accomack, 31% and Northampton, 33%.
    - ✓ **County Solution:** Better education for children, increased workforce training for working age residents and additional housing subsidies for the elderly.
  - **Problem – Jobs:** According to Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) data, Northampton County unemployment rate is 6%, with 607 job openings on the Shore in March, 2016, almost half in Northampton County or within a ½ hour commute; 121 new small business start-ups over the past three years, and several hundred owner-operated business, whose owners are NOT counted as “employed” by VEC.
    - ✓ **County solution:** Improve education and workforce training, support new small business start-ups and recognize and support the economic impact of entrepreneurial business owner/operators.
  - **Problem – Lack of Commercial Development:** Visibility of “For Sale” signs on commercial parcels, both on Rt. 13 and in the Towns, indicates no lack of property to develop. The county has failed to develop a marketing plan for available commercial and industrial sites. Investment by the county in Economic Development Directors has produced little economic development – e.g., the county has still not created a “Business Friendly” website.
    - ✓ **County solution:** Outsource marketing and economic development projects; use development funds to create a business and tourism friendly county website; use state resources to promote the successful county industries, tourism, vacation destination, seafood, small business and research.
  - **Problem – Geographic Isolation:** The Bridge/Tunnel and its tolls will remain in place, and crossing the Bay will remain a part of Shore living. Increased tourism figures are the highest in the state for the second year in a row, so neither isolation nor tolls are a deterrent for this industry.
    - ✓ **County solution:** Market the positive: the rural serenity that the peaceful rural lifestyle provides to vacationers and visitors; continue to support, promote and market the small, locally owned businesses which serve the growing tourism industry.
  - **Problem – Local Tax Revenue:** The county collects about \$15.7 million annually in local revenue and transfers \$8.6 million for school operations. That leaves \$7.1 million to fund all the remaining county services. But every year, \$3 million (+/-) of that balance goes to pay down the debt for the jail and county complex, and another \$1.6 million goes for jail operations – all from local revenue. That leaves \$2.5 million for all remaining county operations, including additional EMS operations.
    - ✓ **County solution:** The county local tax revenue would be more than sufficient without the large debt and jail operation costs. But county taxpayers will continue to remain responsible for those obligations incurred over a decade ago. Decisions must be made to decrease other costs, salaries, operations, services – or raise taxes – or a combination of all those hard choices.
- The county has been immersed in a contentious rezoning exercise for the last 2½ years. The problems and challenges noted above have taken a back seat as Staff, elected officials and the public focused on rezoning. In spite

*See Face the Facts, cont'd on p. 5*

**Face the Facts, cont'd from p. 4**

of the lack of government attention to business growth, aquaculture industry growth, tourism growth and business start-up growth, all that growth has happened. And it's all happened in the private sector.

But problems remain to be solved. Many of those perceived problems need the skill and attention of county leaders – the public sector. And many circumstances have not, and will not change – the county is rural, isolated, aging, with many residents lacking sufficient training and skills for the new economy's workforce.

As every study done over the past 10 years has advised, **the best plan forward for the county is to use the community-based assets economic development model.** The private sector is moving forward using that concept. The public sector can either get on board or get out of the way. 

**Medical, con't from p. 1**

adox utilizing the former Cancer Center building, and fully endorses our plans to evaluate the feasibility of extended hours as well as the possibility of providing radiology and laboratory services at the site as well.

“We will complete our assessment of these additional services and present these findings to the Board by July of this year. I trust that this addresses your concerns and answers your questions about our plans for our Nassawadox campus.”

Well, not really. Six years ago, Riverside Health Care, in making the case for the relocation of RSMH to Onley to the Virginia Department of Health, made a commitment to establish an Urgent Care facility in Nassawadox. Now the chairman of the hospital Board says that in July they will consider the possibility of expanding services to meet the

*Last year's Annual Meeting and Social brought together scores of Shore residents as well as visitors and a contingent of Supervisors from both counties! This year's event on April 28 promises to be equally lively and enjoyable.*



**CBES Annual Meeting & Social**

**Open to ALL**

Thursday, April 28

7 p.m. FREE program

Island House Restaurant, Wachapreague

Cash bar available throughout evening

Keynote Speaker: Marc Steiner


**Optional Dinner Hour 6 p.m. (Details on p. 2)**

**Dinner Registration Required by April 20.**

Online payment for buffet dinner at

[www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org) or send check to CBES,

P.O. Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347.

commitment made in Riverside's COPN, but that for the time being, the only thing they have planned is to move the staff of the existing primary care group across to the Cancer Center building. If the RSMH Board's decision regarding "feasibility" is based only on financial considerations, Northampton County residents may have no medical services available beyond what can be accomplished by a visit to a primary care physician's office or a ride to a hospital in Onley or Virginia Beach. A promise of much more in the way of medical services was made at the state level in Riverside's COPN request in order for them to obtain the right to relocate the hospital. That promise should be kept. 

*The author is a member of the Nassawadox Town Council.*

# Keeping Track

## Poultry Waste Impact Study Coming

With all the discussions of the expanded number of poultry houses in Accomack County, one thing has remained uncertain – how much poultry litter the land can absorb, in direct field applications and as storage, literally, the “carrying capacity” of the Eastern Shore. Now, it looks like we’ll get a study to examine this. The State of Delaware Department of Agriculture is leading a “Land and Litter Challenge” for the Delmarva peninsula, with a goal of zero negative environmental impacts by 2025. As part of this effort, Dr. Richard A. Snyder, Director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science Eastern Shore Laboratory in Wachapreague, and Dr. Mark Reiter of the Agricultural Research and Experiment Center in Painter, will conduct a study of the mass balance of nutrients for the Eastern Shore of Virginia, including the ability of the region to utilize poultry litter as a fertilizer, the impacts on water quality and air

quality, and a review of the relevant scientific literature. On February 17, the Accomack Board of Supervisors voted to send a letter of support for this study. Results of this study are expected in about a year.

After all the uproar in Accomack County about the poultry industry expansion, we have to recognize that a lot of the controversy was because there are few studies focusing specifically on poultry, and none specific to the Eastern Shore, to guide policy decisions. So both sides worked on discrediting the limited information presented by the other side. Either it was “anti-poultry propaganda” or ‘industry public relations subverting public policy’. To their credit, the Accomack Board of Supervisors has now acknowledged this data deficit and is supporting a study to expand our information. CBES applauds their action and looking forward to working with data generated by good science.

## Proposed Instrumentation Tower on Wallops Could Have Significant Impact on Avian Populations

NASA and the Department of Defense are currently evaluating the possibility of constructing an instrumentation tower on Wallops Island, which would be a minimum of 500 feet tall, and optimally 750 feet in height, with guy wires covering a radius of 500 feet. NASA and DOD have indicated they will use a bird-friendly tower lighting scheme with visual aerial markers on the guy wires, and will fund a monitoring program for avian mortality for at least 2 years.

As discussed in the February, 2013, issue of *ShoreLine*, tower height, the presence of guy wires, and the lighting scheme can significantly affect avian mortality. The Virgin-

ia Society of Ornithology (VSO) has asked NASA/DOD to consider alternative sites, or to consider using an un-guyed tower less than 500 feet in height, or two shorter un-guyed towers. They cited a 2011 study by Joelle Gehring, PhD, showing that “tall, guyed towers were responsible for 70 times as many bird fatalities as un-guyed medium towers.” Given the international importance of our migratory shorebird population, as well as eagles, other raptors, and bats, CBES also supports searching for other alternatives. Comments will be accepted throughout the draft environmental assessment process, and can be e-mailed to [Shari.A.Miller@nasa.gov](mailto:Shari.A.Miller@nasa.gov).

## How Will Wallops Accident Potential Overlay Zone Affect Landowners?

At its March meeting, the Accomack County Planning Commissioners discussed the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), specifically the Accident Potential Zones at the end of each runway for the Wallops Flight Facility. As the Commissioners noted, most of the attention concerning risks in the vicinity of Wallops has centered around rocket launches and the noise associated with the touch-and-go flights. However, the JLUS identified zones at the end of each runway that present the highest risk for potential accidents during takeoffs and landings. Unfortunately, there are already developments in these areas, with houses and residential lots, including Trails End, Corbin Hall, and Old Mill Point, to name a few. Future discussions will focus on whether there will be any effort to remove residents in the highest-risk areas, or prevent any further development (and how that would be financed), or whether efforts will be restricted to educating the public as to the real risk involved. Much of this work will be handled by the newly formed Accomack Wallops Working Group, which will include two local residents, Supervisor Grayson Chesser, and Planning Commissioner Angela Wingfield.

### 2016 ESVA Household Hazardous Waste Collection

**Saturday, May 7**

**10 AM - 2 PM**

**Horntown Convenience Center  
Grangeville Convenience Center  
Birdsnest Convenience Center**

**Rain or Shine!**



Northampton County

# 2016 Zoning Ordinance Public Hearing Update

## CBES Staff Report

About 200 people filled the Northampton High School Auditorium on March 9 to address comments to the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission. A presentation by the County Administrator outlined the proposed 2016 Zoning Ordinance and Amendments – which includes the 2009 Ordinance and other changes, some brought forward from the 2015 Ordinance adopted in December – including accessory dwelling units for homeowners, expanded setbacks for industrial poultry operations, removal of Special Use Permits from commercial and industrial uses in designated districts, and changes necessary to comply with State Code.

The Zoning Administrator also noted seven State-mandated programs which are regulated at the local level, but which are *not* controlled by local zoning, e.g., Stormwater and Floodplain Management, Dunes and Wetlands regulations, and the Chesapeake/Atlantic Preservation Act.

About 20% of the attendees provided comments, several letters were read into the record and more communications to the Board were noted for the public record. The statements specifically in support of repealing the 2015 Ordinance restated flaws in the process, lack of public input and the absence of studies or other justification for the vast rezoning changes adopted in December.

Comments in favor of keeping the current zoning, including from a segment of the farming community, off-shore parcel owners and realtors, cited the length of the proposed Ordinance, subdivision changes and dissatisfac-

tion with land use regulations in general. The 100 or so comments and letters contrasted greatly with the several hundred statements, letters and petitions submitted over the past two years, mostly opposing the process and content of the 2015 zoning, which was adopted by a lame duck Board in December.

Confusion about subdivisions – their zoning Districts and lot owners’ vested rights – continues. In 2009, subdivisions were zoned based on the densities, setbacks and uses in the Ordinances in effect at the time of their creation. Owners lost those rights in the 2015 Ordinance. About 30 pages from previous zoning codes will be carried forward into the proposed 2016 Ordinance to reinstate those rights. There will be only one county Zoning Ordinance.

The Board has received the Planning Commission’s recommendation, which was to withdraw the proposed 2016 Zoning Ordinance. Although the Commission maintained its position that proper process was followed and the Comprehensive Plan was considered, they presented no substantive data or public endorsement to justify retaining the sweeping changes included in the current 2015 Ordinance adopted last December. On March 28, the Board considered comments and reached consensus on several changes to the proposed ordinance. Special attention was given to the new Working Waterfront District. Further consideration will be given to expanding that District to other areas that have traditionally served working watermen, and establishing a policy for more efficient use of that District by the aquaculture industry. Changes will be posted on the county website. The Board may act on the Zoning Ordinance at their April 12 meeting.



**Kudos to the Northampton County Board of Supervisors for providing all their meeting documents online in advance of their monthly meetings and work sessions. Now anyone interested in the details that Board members receive in their packets have full access to all the information, as in Accomack County. Maybe Northampton will also provide live audio streaming in the near future, as is already the case in its sister county up north.**

**CBES Membership 2016**

New  Renewal  *ShoreLine* by email only

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Life Membership (includes *ShoreLine*) \$500

Optional add'l tax-deductible contribution of \_\_\_\_\_

*ShoreLine* subscription w/o CBES membership \$25

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MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

# SHORELINE

## Community Calendar - April 2016

*Note: Please verify times and places prior to attending meetings.*

CBES and Other Activities		Accomack County		Northampton County	
<b>Apr 6</b>	<b>VIMS Public Seminar</b> 7:30 PM, Wachapreague	<b>Apr 6</b>	<b>Board of Zoning Appeals</b> 10 AM, Sup. Chambers	<b>Apr 4</b>	<b>Planning Commission</b> 7 PM, Sup. Chambers
<b>Apr 12</b>	<b>CBES Exec. Committee</b> 5 PM, CBES Office	<b>Apr 13</b>	<b>Planning Commission</b> 7 PM, BOS Chambers	<b>Apr 5</b>	<b>Board of Zoning Appeals</b> 1 PM, Conference Room
<b>Apr 14</b>	<b>Shorekeeper Meeting*</b> 3 PM, ES Chamber of Commerce	<b>Apr 19</b>	<b>School Board</b> 7 PM, BOS Chambers	<b>Apr 12</b>	<b>Board of Supervisors</b> 7 PM, Sup. Chambers
<b>Apr 19</b>	<b>CBES Board Meeting</b> 7:00 p.m., Eastville	<b>Apr 20</b>	<b>Board of Supervisors</b> 5 PM, BOS Chambers	<b>Apr 20</b>	<b>Wetlands Board</b> TBA, Conference Room
<b>Apr 19</b>	<b>ES Groundwater Committee</b> 10 AM, Accomac	<b>Apr 21</b>	<b>Wetlands Board</b> 10 AM, Sup. Chambers	<b>Apr 26</b>	<b>School Board</b> 5:30 PM, Sup. Chambers
<b>Apr 28</b>	<b>CBES Annual Meeting &amp; Social</b> 7:00 PM, Wachapreague			<b>Apr 25</b>	<b>BOS Work Session</b> 5 PM, Sup. Chambers

\* Alternating between the ES Chamber of Commerce and the Barrier Islands Center

[www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org)