

# THE STAFFORD HIGHLIGHT

February 5, 2025



Rotary Club of Stafford  **People of Action**

## February 5 – iPDG Rene Laws, District 7610 Annual Share Fund Subcommittee Chair



IPDG Rene will the Rotary Foundation, club and individual contributions, how to access personal giving reports, and using Rotary Direct. She will also discuss District 7610's Legacy Campaign.

### January 29 Meeting

President Jamie presided. He thanked Nikki for finding our club a new meeting location, Stafford High School. We will begin meeting there in March. The cost will be \$10 per person for a lunch, prepared by the culinary students. There will be a place for the storage cabinet, and Zoom meetings are able to continue.

### Announcements

- ❖ February noon meetings will continue to be held via Zoom only. The venue for our February 26 evening meeting will be announced later in the month.
- ❖ Relay for Life is April 26 at Berkley Elementary School. More information will be forthcoming.
- ❖ On March 26 there will be an evening meeting at Fredericksburg Baptist Church. It will be a membership summit with the other are clubs.
- ❖ IPDG Rene asked us to send her ideas for speakers.
- ❖ Michael announced that invoices are being sent out for this quarter.
- ❖ Cheri sent out a community service survey to club members. Please complete

### Club Calendar

February Is Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month

- ❖ February 5 \_Regular Virtual Noon Meeting, iPDG Rene Laws
- ❖ February 12 – Regular Virtual Noon Meeting t.b.a.
- ❖ February 19 - Regular Virtual Noon Meeting, Speaker: Tina Ramirez
- ❖ February 20-22 – RI Peace Conference in Istanbul
- ❖ February 26 – Evening Meeting - Long Markets Young Entrepreneurs Program" Venue tba
- ❖ June 21-25 – Rotary International Convention in Calgary, Alberta
- ❖ September 27-28 -Via Colori

the survey.

- ❖ Cheri also reminded us of Via Colori in September. This will be our fifth year. We need to renegotiate the terms.
- ❖ District Grant – We are partnering with North Stafford and Germanna to locate the Stafford County Public School clothes closet in North Stafford because the old school building where it was supposed to go is no longer available.

## Program –Meg Bohmke

Jamie introduced our speaker, Meg Bohmke, Stafford County Supervisor for the Falmouth and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. She shared some important updates on Stafford County projects.



### 1. Buc-ees

The application for the Buc-ee's is with the Planning Commission. It with advance to the Supervisors after public hearings. The transportation Study is completed and is extensive. There will be a second set of public hearings for this application. Ms. Bohmke reminded us that citizens can speak for or against this application at any of the public meetings that have scheduled public comments.

The application for such a large business has generated many questions. The largest of these is "Are we ready for a business that will attract 20,000 cars daily?"

### 2. VRE

Ridership was 18,000 daily trips before the pandemic, but that dropped to 1,500 at the nadir. Stafford obtained state and federal aid to close the income gap. Ridership is slowly increasing. Saturday and Sunday VRE service should begin as early as this fall.

### 3. Aquia Town Center and the Garrisonville Projects.

These two projects are just stagnant now.

### 4. Road Projects

Widening projects well underway. The Enon Road project cost has doubled since it began.

### 5. Downtown Stafford

We discussed the need for a civic organization sign.

### 6. Capital improvements

One new high school and two new elementary schools are planned. A new courthouse has been mandated by the state because our current courthouse does not meet state legal requirements. This is a project that has been delayed

for years. There followed a discussion of the need for more tax income from businesses. The county needs some national chain restaurants and stores. The county has been trying to get a Trader Joe's for the county.

#### 7. Data Centers

Ms. Bohmke shared a map with the locations of proposed data center projects, their size and the status of the planning application for each project. There followed a lively discussion of the impact of the larger centers on the entire county and the advantages and disadvantages of having so many of these projects in our county.

Cheri added that Germanna has been working with the Data Center owners. The Community College is currently developing Data Center, Fiber Optic, and Clean Energy certification programs to help our local community gain the necessary credentials to be employed by the incoming centers.

#### 8. River Crossings

Environmental studies are underway for the new Rappahannock crossing to relieve interstate traffic. She commented that most of the traffic on Highway 17 now comes from I-81 traffic wishing to connect with I-95.

The Falmouth Bridge cannot support the addition of two-way pedestrian and bike lanes. We need a completely new bridge for the Highway 1 crossing.

Thank you, Ms. Bohmke. for a very informative presentation.

## February Is Peace and Conflict Prevention/ Resolution Month



According to the Rotary International calendar, February is designated as "Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month" where Rotarians focus on promoting peacebuilding initiatives and conflict resolution efforts around the world; this is largely due to the anniversary of Rotary's founding on February 23rd, which is now

recognized as "World Understanding and Peace Day."  
Key points about Peace and Conflict Resolution Month:

- ❖ Rotary's focus: During this month, Rotarians actively engage in projects that train leaders to prevent and mediate conflicts, support refugees, and address underlying causes of conflict like poverty and inequality.
- ❖ World Understanding Day: February 23rd is celebrated as "World Understanding and Peace Day" marking the anniversary of Rotary's founding.
- ❖ Activities: Rotary clubs may organize peace education workshops, community dialogues, fundraising events for peacebuilding projects, and awareness campaigns related to conflict resolution.

## Peacebuilding Conference, District 7610 on February 1, 2025

Several of our club members attended this conference, sponsored by the Rotary EClub of Global Peacebuilders on Saturday. The Keynote Presenter, Michael Collins, Executive Director for the Americas at the Institute for Economics and Peace helped attendees explore "Building Peace in a Divided World" at the global, national and community levels through multiple interactive activities.

Everyone was provided a copy of "Peace in the Age of Chaos", by Steve Killelea, founder of the Institute for Economics and Peace, a strategic partner of Rotary International. The book eloquently guides readers to question the current analysis of peace as an absence of violence and to honestly evaluate and decipher the inner working of a peaceful society.

