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## **The County of Louisa**

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County Administrator

January 27, 2019

The Citizens of Louisa County  
Louisa County, Virginia

Citizens of Louisa:

As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for 2019, I am excited about our plans to meet the challenges that face Louisa County this year and grateful for the opportunity to lead the Board. The Comprehensive Plan update process is extensive but well underway. We are preparing a responsible and fully balanced budget which funds both current year operations and capital projects as well as a savings plan for future projects. The Broadband Authority is working on completing their project to supplement broadband efforts around the County. The Board approved options for the purchase of 700 acres for a future regional business park at Shannon Hill. There are many challenges associated with each of these critical efforts, and I would like to address some of them.

Last year the Board decided to undertake the enormous task of updating the Comprehensive Plan. The process for doing so provides for significant citizen involvement. I am encouraged by citizen involvement so far and look forward to more of the same. Citizen involvement will help to ensure that special interests do not manipulate the process and that best interests of the entire County are served. Some issues that are of paramount importance are: evaluating our existing growth areas and their placement; preserving the rural character of our County; planning for long term capital projects; and deciding if/where County water and sewer will be located (and the type of customers it will serve). Eight potential methods to manage residential growth were proposed in the last Board packet, a copy of which can be found online. One of the most interesting was to create "no growth" areas, which could be adjacent to growth areas to prohibit any unwanted sprawl. There are many ideas that will have to be considered and I am grateful for citizens participating as we complete the process over the next few months.

We are in the middle of budget season. This process always proves challenging, as everyone always wants more money. Unfortunately, we have a finite source of revenue. Our Board maintains a fiscally responsible County and our capable staff is constantly vigilant for opportunities to further increase efficiency. It is my intent to fund all operating expenses and current year projects with current year revenue. The budget proposal will

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also fund savings for future projects. We can always cut expenses by decreasing the size of our government; however, we must balance provided services with the needs of Louisa’s citizens. Your Board takes this effort very seriously.

The Louisa County Broadband Authority received 1.1 million dollars in funding for 10 new towers three years ago. I remain hopeful that this project will lead to a base from which the County can leverage broadband service throughout the County. They currently have erected several towers and the Board remains hopeful that broadband service will be available soon.

After much consideration, many public meetings, and lots of interaction with our citizens, I voted to exercise the options for the purchase of almost 700 acres at Shannon Hill for a future business park. A large concern of many citizens was the size (originally 1450 acres) and how far into the County it stretched. This reduction to just under 700 acres addresses that concern. The County’s population has grown significantly and continues to do so. As such, the park’s development is in our best interest as we plan for the future, diversify our tax base and manage growth. Responsible commercial/industrial growth is generally revenue positive, and this will allow the County to depend on new tax revenue from businesses instead of raising taxes on the individual taxpayer.

During our public meetings on the Shannon Hill Business Park, a great idea was suggested. The question was posed, “Why do we not have a group like the Industrial Development Authority charged with the task of preserving rural Louisa?” Accordingly, I have decided to revamp our Agricultural and Forestry District Committee to do just that. At our next meeting, we will be starting this endeavor. It will be incumbent upon each Supervisor to review their appointee and decide if they are the appropriate person for this new task. This group will meet monthly and will be charged with developing innovative solutions to maintain the County’s rural nature. We must be intentional and clear that it is the desire of the Citizens to keep the suburban sprawl from infringing on our rural areas.

Make no mistake about it, special interests may oppose this effort. We as citizens must come together and compel this Board and future Boards to be vigilant in this fight. The battle was the business park. The war is how to control water and sewer as it is taken around the County. I applaud the citizen involvement to date and look forward to an even greater involvement by the citizens in the future. Together we can make a difference.

*R. T. Williams, Jr.*

Chairman  
Louisa County Board of Supervisors