

TOWN OF  
*Leesburg*  
VIRGINIA

# FY 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

## The Road to Recovery

Leesburg Residents,

Leesburg has made positive progress on the road to economic recovery in Fiscal Year 2012. Overall property values have stabilized, retail sales have increased, more businesses have opened in Town, and we are seeing new single-family housing construction again.

Our Town government has taken positive steps to insure the Town's long-term fiscal health. The Mayor and Town Council have adopted a financial plan that will provide for long-term budget stability by establishing targets for balanced budgets, planned investments in important community capital projects, adequate funding of infrastructure maintenance, and established reserve funds to minimize impacts on property tax bills. In a very real sense, this long-term fiscal plan is the "map" for the road to fiscal recovery and economic stability.

While the past few years have been challenging for the community and the Town government, we have worked hard to maintain quality services for Town residents. Recognition by CNN's Money Magazine that ranked Leesburg the #4 community nationwide did not occur by luck or accident. The commitment and support of the Mayor and Town Council, and the hard work and dedication of our workforce working in conjunction with our residents, have provided for a quality of life that our community enjoys and can take great pride in. This year's Annual Report presents many examples of what has been achieved this past year.

I am certain that after reading this year's Annual Report, you will be as proud as I am of being a resident of the Town of Leesburg.

Sincerely,

*John Wells*  
John Wells  
Town Manager

*Pictured, from top: A.V. Symington Aquatic Center, Mason Enterprise Center—Leesburg/Loudoun County, Carr Tanks 1 & 2*



## Town Wins State Supreme Court Appeal

In 2008, Cornerstone Chapel filed an application to rezone their property, located at the corner of Sycolin Road and Battlefield Parkway, in order to build a new church and day-care facility. Cornerstone Chapel also applied for a Town Plan amendment to remove a proposed segment of Tolbert Lane, from where it currently ends, through their property to Battlefield Parkway. In May 2010, the Leesburg Town Council approved Cornerstone Chapel's applications.

However, an adjacent property owner sued the Town over the rezoning. His property and the Cornerstone Chapel property, as well as a third parcel, were at one time a single parcel that was rezoned in 1988. His suit contended that the Town could not amend the zoning unless the owners of all parcels included in the original zoning case agreed. In May 2011, the Loudoun County Circuit Court found in his favor, ruling that the Town did not have the authority to rezone the Cornerstone Chapel property without the consent of the adjacent property owners.

Since virtually every lot in Town was once part of a larger parcel, this decision could have created significant obstacles to future development within the Town.

The Town appealed the decision and in June 2012, the Virginia State Supreme Court reversed the Circuit Court's decision, finding that the adjacent property owner did not have a vested interest in the zoning of Cornerstone Chapel's property and the Town had acted within its authority.

## New Battlefield Parkway Section Opens

In December 2011, the Town completed one of the last missing sections of Battlefield Parkway. Construction on the segment of Battlefield Parkway from Edwards Ferry Road to Fort Evans Plaza II began in the fall of 2008 with utility relocation and grading work. During the summer of 2011, the Town closed the intersection of Battlefield Parkway and Edwards Ferry Road in order to accelerate construction schedule for two lanes of the new roadway segment and the reconstruction of the intersection, including the installation of a new traffic signal. The closure of the intersection allowed the Town to complete two lanes of Battlefield Parkway before school started in August 2011. The remaining two lanes opened on December 2, 2011, completing the segment of



Battlefield Parkway from Fort Evans Road to Edwards Ferry Road.

With this new segment of Battlefield Parkway open to traffic, the Town saw an immediate improvement in traffic flow on the east side of town and reduced congestion on the Route 15 Bypass, particularly at the Fort Evans and Edwards Ferry intersections.

## Town Plan Updated

The Town Plan is a policy document that provides long-range guidance for Leesburg's future development—how the Town will accommodate growth while preserving the character of Leesburg. Under State law, Leesburg is required to have a Town Plan and to review that plan regularly. The current Town Plan was initially adopted in 2005.

In 2010, the Leesburg Planning Commission initiated a comprehensive review of the Town Plan to identify needed updates to the Plan, based on changed conditions since the Plan's adoption in 2005. Between June 2010 and February 2012, the Planning Commission held over 20 meetings with Town advisory boards and commissions as well as the general public. In February 2012, the Planning Commission presented their recommendations to the Town Council, which then conducted its own review of the Town Plan and held a series of public hearings and input sessions. In June 2012, the Town Council adopted the updated Town Plan, now available on the Town website.

Some of the key policy guidance changes in the updated Plan include greater flexibility in locating certain commercial uses such as technology and clean industries, targeting growth opportunities in key business sectors to increase the commercial tax base, future development of a Town Preservation Plan, future development of neighborhood plans to provide better guidance for coordinated development, encouragement of better housing design to accommodate special needs populations and updates to the planned road network to coordinate with the County's transportation plan.

## Leesburg Receives Virginia Municipal League Award for Land Development Process Reorganization

In October 2011, the Virginia Municipal League presented Leesburg with a 2011 Achievement Award for the Town's initiative to overhaul its cumbersome land development application and permit process. The award recognized the Town's success in streamlining the land development process after acknowledging in 2008 that the old process was an impediment to economic development within the Town.

In October 2007, Wolf Furniture cancelled the construction of a new furniture showroom in Leesburg, citing the length of the Town's site plan approval process. Following this embarrassing announcement, the Town began a complete reorganization of the entire land development process, with the goal of creating a shorter, more predictable and transparent system. The reorganization took six months to implement, using no new funding or additional staff positions.

"No organization wants to be faced with a system failure," said John Wells, Leesburg's Town Manager. "But when that did happen to Leesburg, I'm proud of how we responded. We owned up to our shortcomings. We didn't just tweak the existing system. We completely reorganized our land development processes, including the creation of a new department that now has ownership of the site plan approval process. It was a difficult process, but with the staff's hard work and Town Council support, it has paid off. Our reputation in the development community is greatly improved. Wolf Furniture came back and, now, Leesburg has been recognized among our peers for this accomplishment."



## Despite Rain, Leesburg Airshow Delights Visitors

Even though the weather did not cooperate fully, the second annual Leesburg Airshow still drew several thousand die-hard aviation enthusiasts to the Leesburg Executive Airport for a day of flight demonstrations, experimental and antique aircraft displays and more, on Saturday, October 1, 2011. The afternoon show began with a pair of skydivers making a precision landing after jumping from a DHC-4 Caribou aircraft. Pilot Kirk Wicker (pictured below) then demonstrated the aerobatic capabilities of his Stearman 450 bi-plane "Aurora" with a high-flying performance of loop and dives, followed by Steve Nixon's precision flight exhibition in his R-22 helicopter. Charlie Schwenker thrilled the audience with a gravity-defying performance in his Extra 300 airplane. Kirk Wicker returned with a comic turn in his acclaimed "Flying Farmer" skit, in a bright yellow J-3 Piper Cub. The aerial show concluded with a speed demonstration of the Aero L-39C Albatros jet trainer.

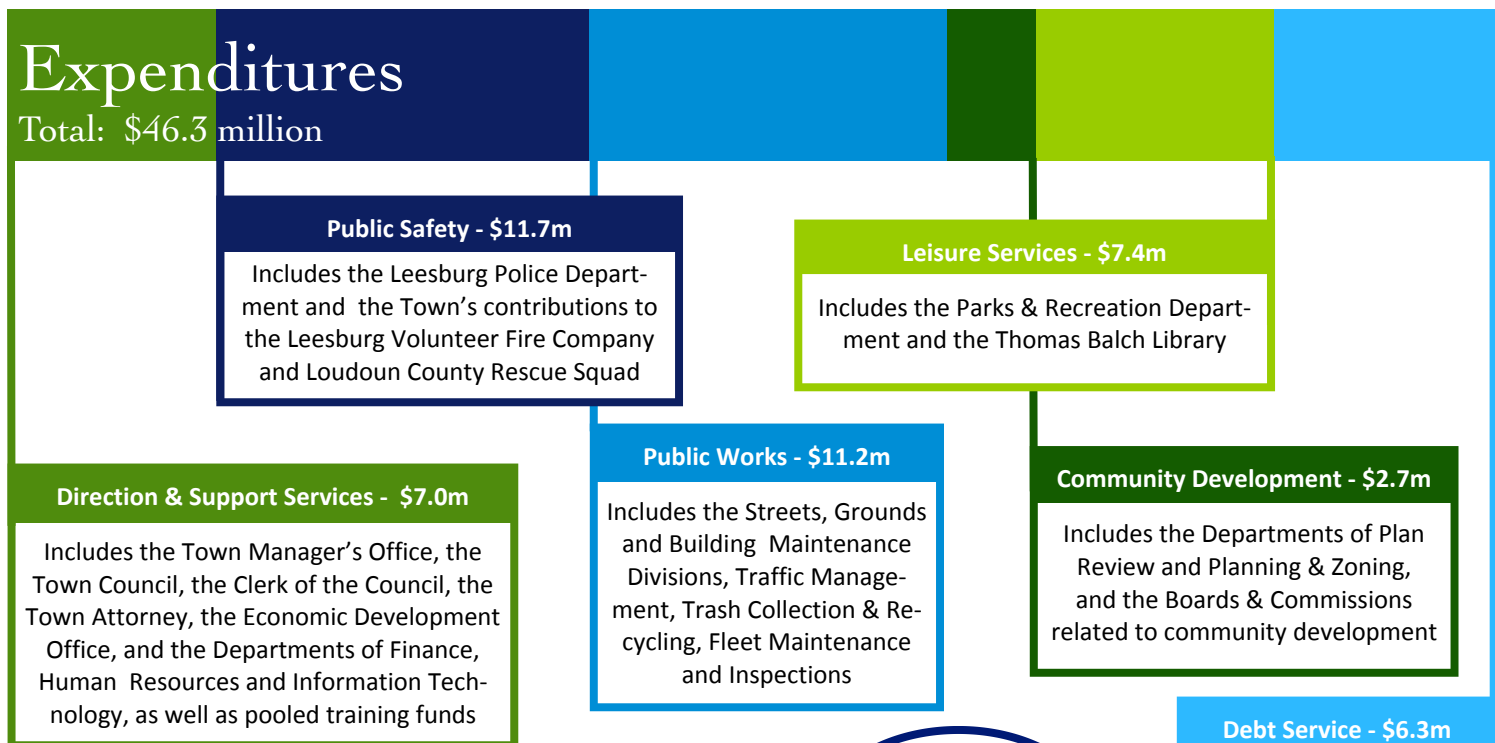
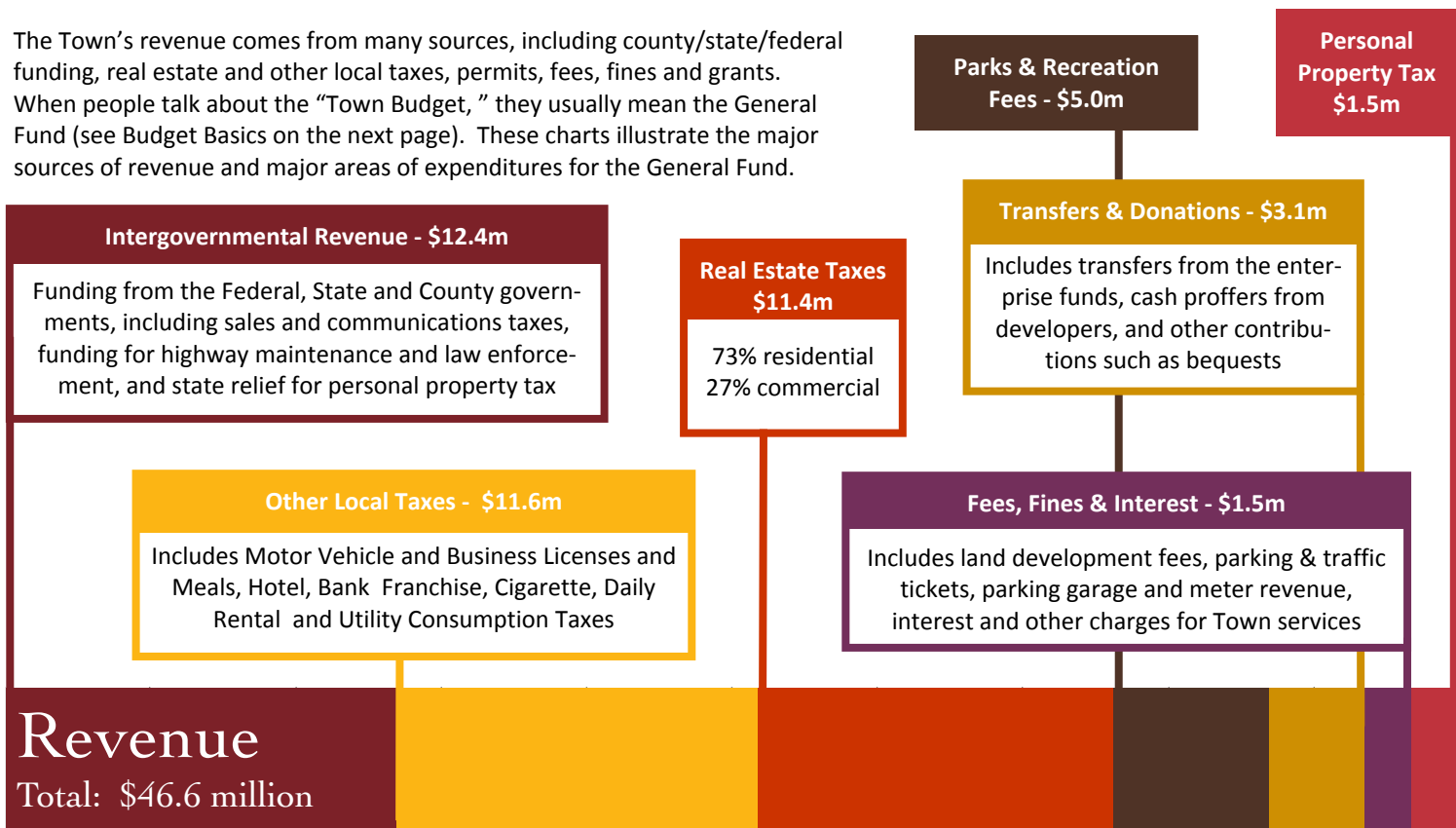


The first Leesburg Airshow, in 2010, was a project of the Airport Commission and was organized entirely by volunteers. Given the Leesburg Parks & Recreation Department's experience in producing award-winning special events like the Flower & Garden Festival, the Airport Commission partnered with the department to grow the airshow into a major event. Although the cold, rainy weather dampened attendance, Town staff were organized and prepared for a much larger turnout.

The airshow offers the Town an opportunity to showcase the Leesburg Executive Airport to local aviation businesses, highlighting the first-class facilities and services available at the airport, and is also a way to introduce the non-flying public to the world of general aviation. The 3rd annual Leesburg Airshow will be on Saturday, September 29, 2012.

# TOWN BUDGET

The Town's revenue comes from many sources, including county/state/federal funding, real estate and other local taxes, permits, fees, fines and grants. When people talk about the "Town Budget," they usually mean the General Fund (see Budget Basics on the next page). These charts illustrate the major sources of revenue and major areas of expenditures for the General Fund.



Percentage of General Fund spent on:



Includes payments on the Town's general obligation and revenue bonds

# Budget Basics

## Adjusting to the New Normal *Planning for the Long Term*

The Town Council and staff knew going into the budget preparations that FY 2012 would be as tough a budget year as both FY 2010 and FY 2011 had been. It was evident that full recovery is still a number of years away, and even when it does occur, because Leesburg is nearly built out, the Town will not experience the same rate of revenue growth it saw during the boom years. In other words, the current revenue levels are the “new normal.” The challenge was to rebalance the Town’s finances while maintaining levels of service and keeping the tax rate stable, not just for the FY 2012 Budget, but for the long term.

To start, the Town made some serious cutbacks in operating expenses for the remainder of FY 2011 that would carry through the FY 2012 budget, in the form of a Reduction-in-Force (RIF). Cutting staff is always the option of last resort, but faced with a nearly \$2 million gap between projected revenue and expenditures, in February 2011, the Town Council approved the elimination of 28 full-time positions and a number of part-time positions (7% of the Town’s total workforce) across all funds and all departments. The eliminated positions were selected based on service and program reductions, workload reorganizations, greater reliance on automation and the strategic use of contractual services.

With the immediate budget gap addressed, Council and staff set about crafting a sustainable, long-term budget framework. By taking the long view, the Council and staff do not make decisions on a year-to-year basis. Instead, the effect of decisions made in one budget cycle on future budgets is clearly identified. The new budget framework consists of the following elements:

- ◆ A two-year budget cycle that requires Council and staff to manage to the second year of the budget, based on revenue projections.
- ◆ A scaled-back Capital Improvements Program that focuses on critical transportation, storm drainage and downtown projects.
- ◆ A new Capital Asset Replacement Reserve that allocates a specific amount each year for the replacement of vehicles, heavy equipment and facility upgrades.
- ◆ A long-range pro forma that shows the effect of the debt restructuring beyond the initial savings through FY 2016.
- ◆ A new Debt Service Reserve fund that will “stockpile” excess funds to pay down debt service after FY 2016.

An essential aspect of this new budget framework is keeping the plan front-and-center throughout the year, not just during budget deliberations. In particular, using the 15-year pro forma as a budget tool, the Town Council has a consistent means of exercising budget discipline. The temptation to make spending decisions that resolve short-term issues but create long-term problems is greatly reduced. The end result is that the Town’s long range financial plan will provide Leesburg’s residents and businesses with much-needed fiscal stability and predictability.

For more information about the Leesburg budget, visit the Town website at [www.leesburgva.gov/budget](http://www.leesburgva.gov/budget)

### Fiscal Year vs. Tax Year

The fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. It is the 12-month period designated as the operating year for accounting and budgeting purposes. The tax year is the same as the calendar year (January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>) and is based on the January real estate assessments.

### General Fund

FY 2012 Total: \$46.7 million

The General Fund is the Town’s primary operating fund and accounts for all revenues and expenditures not designated for specific use by statutes or the Town Charter. The General Fund budget increased by 0.2% from FY 2010 to FY 2011.

### Capital Projects Fund

FY 2012 Total: \$12.5 million

The Capital Projects Fund accounts for the purchase and/or construction of major capital facilities, such as roads, buildings, and recreational facilities, and the operating budget for the Capital Projects Department. The revenue for this fund comes from developer proffers, grants, funding from the state and federal governments, bond proceeds, and transfers from other funds.

### Enterprise Funds

FY 2012 Total: \$25.3 million

The Town of Leesburg has two Enterprise Funds: the Airport Fund and the Utilities Fund. These funds were established to account for the operations, investing and financing activities of self-supporting activities of the Town that provide services to the public on a user-fee basis.

### Budget Process

The annual budget process begins in September with revenue projections. In December, each department submits a budget request to the Town Manager. In February, the Town Manager submits the proposed budget to the Town Council. Public hearings are held in March and in April, the Town Council sets the tax rate and adopts the budget.

## Parks Master Plans Updated

The Town of Leesburg has sixteen parks, but until this year, the Town had adopted master plans for only three of these parks. Master plans are an essential tool in park and recreation management. They serve as policy documents to guide public officials and staff in the planning and funding of improvements to the Town's recreational facilities and assets.

In late 2011, Town staff began the process of collection information from the public regarding possible changes and additions to the facilities and features that currently exist in the Town's parks. This information was incorporated into updated master plans for Ida Lee Park, Freedom Park and Veterans Park at Ball's Bluff and new draft master plans for the other thirteen Town parks. These draft master plans were presented to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission for their comment before being presented to the Town Council for adoption in May 2012.

Highlights of new proposals incorporated into the Parks Master Plans include an events garden at Ida Lee Park, a playground at Freedom Park, a dog park at Veterans Park, amenities for bicyclists on the W&OD Trail in Raflo, Georgetown and Foxridge Parks, and a fishing pier and picnic pavilion at Olde Izaak Walton Park. New natural surface and asphalt trails were added to a number of parks, including connections to the South King Street Trail from Brandon and Catoclin Skate Parks and new segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail through Edwards Landing and Veterans Parks. For more information about the newly adopted Parks Master Plans, visit the Parks & Recreation Department's website at [www.idalee.org](http://www.idalee.org).

## Economic Development Commission Hosts Retail Opportunity Forum

On May 2, 2012, the Leesburg Economic Development Commission hosted its first-ever Retail Opportunity Forum. The free event aimed to help existing and potential retailers identify specific opportunities for retail sales growth, by taking advantage of unmet demand within the local market.

"We recognize that small retailers often don't have the time or money to invest in market research and analysis," explained Marantha Edwards, Leesburg's Economic Development Manager. "Even if they do, purchasing data from a national company doesn't give them the local insight about Leesburg's current retail market. We assembled a comprehensive retail market report worth over \$1,000, that included gap analysis, household expenditures, demographics, and population growth projections. We also shared some tools that attendees can use to identify the retail gaps for their specific locations, as well as local knowledge about Leesburg's retail market and where the future opportunities are."

Over 50 existing and prospective retailers, property owners and real estate brokers attended the Retail Opportunity Forum. A second forum is planned for September 2012.

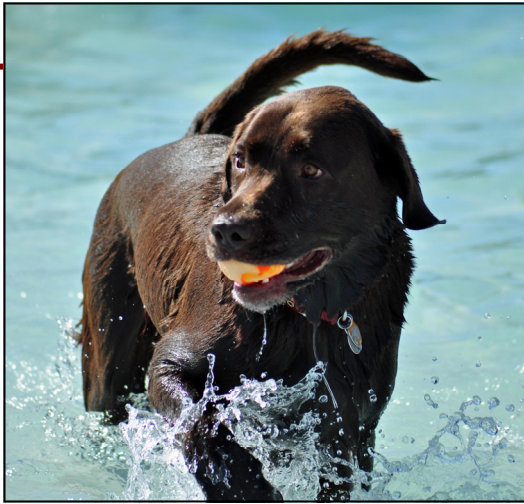
## America's 9/11 Foundation Motorcycle Ride

Each August, America's 9/11 Foundation, Inc. holds a commemorative motorcycle ride in remembrance of all who lost their lives in the September 11, 2001 attacks, aftermath and recovery. The ride travels from Somerset, Pennsylvania to the Pentagon, then to the site of the World Trade Center in New York City. On the first leg of the ride,



the procession travels through downtown Leesburg. Since 2011 was the tenth anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, close to 2,000 motorcycles were expected to participate—five times the number in previous rides.

The Leesburg Police Department, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police worked together to ensure the safety of both riders and spectators, as well as minimize the impact on local and regional traffic. This planning effort began weeks in advance of the actual event. Contingency plans for everything from inclement weather to accidents were put in place. Detour routes were identified and advertised. On the day of the ride, traffic control points were established along Route 15, from the Point of Rocks bridge to the Dulles Greenway toll road. Thousands of spectators lined King Street from the northern Town limits to the Bypass. As a direct result of the coordinated planning efforts by local law enforcement, the motorcycle ride came through Leesburg without incident, and was a tremendous success.



## Ida Lee Hosts Annual “Dog Swim”

Every year since 2009, members of Leesburg Dogs, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that supports the Leesburg Dog Park at Olde Izaak Walton Park, have partnered with the Leesburg Parks & Recreation Department to host an annual “Dog Swim” at the A.V. Symington Aquatic Center, after the pool closes for the season and before the pool is winterized.

The Dog Swim, held on the second Saturday in September, is now one of the most highly anticipated events that Ida Lee hosts. Each year, between 800 and 1,000 dogs attend the Dog Swim.

Proceeds from the admission fees, as well as sales of bottled water and T-shirts, are used to benefit the Leesburg Dog Park. To date, over \$6,000 has been raised. Improvements funded by the Dog Swim include the installation of a water line and spigot inside the dog park and the purchase of new park benches outside the park fence.

## Town Elections Move to November

In the November 2011 general election, Leesburg voters approved a referendum to move town elections for mayor and council from May to November, in even-numbered years. This change required a series of legal actions, including an amendment to the Town Charter and pre-clearance by the U.S. Department of Justice in order to comply with the Voting Rights Act. In March 2012, the Virginia General Assembly approved the Town Charter amendment, which also provided that town elections would continue to be non-partisan.

The first November election for mayor and three council members will be on Tuesday, November 6, 2012.

## Thomas Balch Library Receives Grants to Digitize WAGE Radio Tapes

The Thomas Balch Library received two grants — the \$5,000 Catherine (Kitty) Boyd Grant from the Loudoun Preservation Society and a \$10,000 grant from the Loudoun Library Foundation — to conserve and digitize the Library’s collection of audio tapes from WAGE Radio. WAGE Radio operated in Leesburg from 1958 to 2009, covering local news and sports as well as offering a variety of music formats over the years. The Thomas Balch Library’s WAGE Radio collection includes 506 reel-to-reel tapes and a variety of memorabilia documenting the life and culture of Loudoun County and its place on the global map. The conservation and digitization of the reel-to-reel tapes was completed in June 2012. Library staff are now processing the collection to make the hundreds of hours of radio interviews available to researchers.

## Arts & Cultural District Launched

In March 2012, the Town launched the new Leesburg Arts & Cultural District with a special artist showcase as part of the monthly First Friday celebration of the arts. At the same time the District unveiled its new logo, designed by N2Designs. The Arts & Cultural District was proposed by a joint task force of the Leesburg Economic Development and Public Art commissions. The Town Council adopted the District in 2011, which encompasses the commercial heart of



Leesburg’s Old & Historic District and a large portion of the Crescent District. The goal of the District is to build upon Leesburg’s historic roles as the cultural hub of the community by incentivizing arts and entertainment-related businesses within the District to create a vibrant destination for arts, entertainment and dining. Since its launch, the District has continued to sponsor unique exhibits and performances, to attract new visitors and businesses to Leesburg.

# Working Smarter For You

The Leesburg Town Council and staff are always looking for ways to reduce costs while continuing to provide citizens with the same high level service they expect. Below are three examples of how the Town of Leesburg is working smarter for you:

## Water Pollution Control Facility Improves Capture of Methane Gas

In late 2011, the Town modified the aging digesters at the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) to increase the capture of methane gas. Initially, staff looked at replacing the digester covers to reduce the amount of methane gas being released, but determined that repairing the existing covers would be more cost-effective. In addition to repairing the covers, the digesters were cleaned and 155 tons of non-volatile material were removed, thus increasing digester capacity. The methane gas produced by the digesters is used to power portions of the WPCF. The Town will save \$30,000 annually in natural gas expenses as a result of these modifications to the WPCF digesters.

## Town Purchases First Hybrid Vehicle

The Town owns 98 cars, vans and trucks (not counting police cars). Most of these vehicles are used in day-to-day operations around the Town, responding to calls for service. In April 2012, the Town purchased its first hybrid vehicle, a Ford Escape for the Utility Department's Customer Service Technician, Andy Shadwick.



One of Andy's primary duties is to turn water service on and off at residences throughout Town, so he is on the road most of the day. When hybrid vehicles were first introduced, initial analysis by Town staff determined that fuel savings would not offset the higher purchase and maintenance costs. However, those costs have come down while the price of fuel has continued to go up. Expect to see more hybrid vehicles with the Town seal on the door in the future.

## New Lighting in Town Hall Parking Garage

In 2012, every lighting fixture in the Town Hall Parking Garage was replaced with brighter, more efficient fixtures. Not only is the lighting improved, the new fixtures use about 50% less electricity. Estimated cost savings is about \$7,700 per year. At the same time, the exhaust fans in the basement level of the garage were replaced with more efficient, low-noise models.

## Honors & Accolades

### Leesburg Named #4 in CNN Money Magazine's "Best Places to Live"

CNN Money's 2011 list of the "Best Places to Live" in the United States featured the Town of Leesburg in the number four spot. The report highlighted Leesburg's historic past, charming downtown and proximity to the robust job market of the Washington DC metro area.

### Leesburg's Kenneth B. Rollins Water Treatment Plant Receives State Award

For the 8th consecutive year, Leesburg's Utilities Department earned the Virginia Department of Health's Excellence in Waterworks Performance Award, for achieving goals in drinking water quality beyond the established regulations and making a commitment to customer satisfaction.

## FY 2012 Town Council

Kristen C. Umstatt, Mayor  
Kevin D. Wright, Vice Mayor  
Kelly Burk  
David S. Butler  
Thomas S. Dunn, II  
Katie Sheldon Hammler  
Fernando "Marty" Martinez

Town Manager  
John Wells

*Leesburg* 

*the hometown of the 21st century*

*published by:*

Town of Leesburg  
25 West Market Street  
Leesburg VA 20176  
www.leesburgva.gov