



Neighborhood Services
Partners with Communities
for Excellence in Leadership

Welcoming New Residents *A Neighborhood Leaders' Group Resource*

The meeting of the Neighborhood Leaders Group held on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 included a brainstorming session to identify what neighborhoods can do to welcome new residents. We are currently experiencing prolonged vacancies in many neighborhoods due to foreclosures and the slow housing market. The Leaders feel that it is important to welcome new residents, both owners and renters. Welcoming new neighbors will serve to involve them in the fabric of the community and to communicate the norms of community maintenance.

If the resources of the neighborhood allow, a welcome packet can be presented to the new neighbors. Some materials may be available from county agencies and local businesses. Other materials can be printed from the Prince William County web site. Suggestions are listed below.

The Leaders feel that it is essential that the first contact be made in person, perhaps by several residents. Bringing a gift of food such as baked goods, fruit, or snacks, is an appreciated gesture. Leaving a packet of printed materials allows the newcomers to digest the useful information as they settle in.

What we want the newcomers to know

- We don't all have to be friends, but we all share the desire for a safe, pleasant home that maintains and increases in value
- The neighbors do more than what is required by the minimum standards of the County zoning ordinances. Neighborhoods with covenants enforce their rules and turn to the county only when needed. Neighbors try to work out differences themselves.
- Shopping, schools, libraries and entertainment are nearby; directions are provided.
- In most neighborhoods, trash service is arranged by residents and not provided by the county, city or town. Trash cans are to be tightly lidded and stored out of sight except on collection day. Additional totes can be obtained from the trash service
- Vehicles must have current state tags and state inspection sticker
- Describe the neighborhood's participation in County Clean Ups, Neighborhood Watch and any social events and communication initiatives like a web site or emailed newsletter
- We obey the speed limits to protect children, pets and property.
- Yard maintenance is important to us. We mow, shovel snow and keep items stored properly, and help each other to keep up the appearance of our neighborhood.
- Pet waste is picked up to keep it out of our local waterways and water supply.
- Neighbors keep noise under control to avoid problems with the ordinance prohibiting it (barking dogs, parties)

Items suggested for a welcome packet

- A welcoming letter specific to the neighborhood with points of contact and monthly meeting day and time
- Neighborhood Watch information
- Information on trash service providers
- Contact information for the elected officials – county Magisterial District Supervisor, state General Assembly Representative and Senator and Congressional Representative and Senator
- The Prince William *Citizens' Guide*
- Voter registration information
- Virginia Cooperative Extension schedules of classes
- Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Act brochure
- Covenants and bylaws (for common interest communities)
- Library schedules
- Neighborhood Services' "Common Violations" pocket folder
- Discover Prince William, a guide to county and city newcomers from the *News and Messenger*
- Quarterly "Leisure" magazine from the PWC Park Authority listing recreation facilities and activities
- Map of the state of Virginia
- Dale City OmniLink bus schedule
- Potomac Mills Directory

Other thoughts:

- Partners and sources of materials
 - Prince William Association of Realtors
 - Settlement companies
 - Wegman's
 - Harris-Teeter
 - Trash services
 - PW Health Systems
 - Utilities
- As available, materials in Spanish
- Post all materials on web for downloading and printing by neighborhood volunteers
- Reach younger residents through blogs, yahoo groups (which can be moderated), FaceBook