

History and Description of Government

History

The County of Hanover, Virginia was formed on November 26, 1720 by the Virginia General Assembly in “An Act for dividing New Kent County.” It is named for King George I of England, who, at the time he came to the throne, was Elector of Hannover in Germany. Two of the County’s native sons – Patrick Henry and Henry Clay – distinguished themselves as orators, patriots, and statesmen in the early history of this country. Prior to English colonization in the 17th century, the Pamunkey Indians populated this area. Our northern boundary, the Pamunkey River, carries their name, and they maintain a reservation on the lower part of the river in neighboring King William County. The Town of Ashland, Virginia, was incorporated in 1858 and is located within the County. The Town was originally founded as a summer community by the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac (R,F&P) Railway.

Demographic and Economic Factors

Located in Central Virginia about 15 miles north of Richmond and 70 miles south of Washington, D.C., the County of 471 square miles, or 301,000 acres, lies in the Commonwealth’s Piedmont and Coastal regions. Approximately 23% of the land in the County is utilized for agricultural and 66% for forestal purposes. The County is bordered by the Counties of Caroline, King William, New Kent, Henrico, Goochland, Spotsylvania, and Louisa, and by the Pamunkey (where the North and South Anna Rivers merge), North Anna, and Chickahominy Rivers. The County’s residential, commercial, and industrial areas are growing at moderate rates. New residents are attracted to Hanover’s schools, low taxes, and low crime rate. The County houses one private college, Randolph-Macon, which was founded in 1830.

Transportation

Based upon its proximity to Richmond and its rural character, the County has been an attractive location for businesses relocating or expanding, and for real estate developers interested in the opportunities in residential markets. The County is primarily served by Interstates 95 and 295, with Interstate 95 connecting the County to the metropolitan Richmond area to the south and providing the passage to Fredericksburg and Washington, D.C. to the north. Interstate 295 connects the east and west portions of the County together and represents a “loop” around the metropolitan Richmond area. U.S. Routes 1 and 301 are north/south primary roads: Route 1 runs parallel to I-95 and 301 runs northeastward toward Annapolis, Maryland. Maintenance of the primary and secondary roads of the County is under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Department of Transportation. Railroad service is provided by the R,F&P Railway and Amtrak, which has a passenger station in Ashland. Air transportation needs are served by the Richmond International Airport (RIC), located in neighboring Henrico County, while the Hanover County Municipal Airport operates primarily for small business and personal aircraft.

Tourism

Home of the internationally renowned Hanover Tomato, the County has a rich history and proud heritage. The landscape is marked by numerous historic sites and homes, including Scotchtown, the Hanover County Courthouse, and the Hanover Tavern. There are two national battlefields maintained and opened year round. Over two million visitors annually enjoy the thrills of Paramount’s Kings Dominion, a 630 acre amusement park featuring over 100 rides and shows. The County anticipates to realize more revenue from the increased activity in tourism, especially as more hotels are constructed along Interstate 295. Not only will the County be known for its own tourism sites, but it will be a point of origin from which many of the area’s historical, amusement, and entertainment options can be visited.

Description of Government

The County is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia and currently employs the traditional Board form of government with a County Administrator. Policies governing the administration of the County are set by a seven member Board of Supervisors, elected from seven magisterial districts. A chairman and vice-chairman are selected by the Board on an annual basis from among its members. The Board is responsible for formulating policy, directing certain governmental services, and appointing

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members of various boards and agencies to implement specific policies or provide certain services. The body also has responsibility for appointing the County Administrator, who serves at the pleasure of the Board, implements Board policies, directs business and administrative procedures, and provides recommendations for various County boards and agency appointments. The County has taxing powers subject to statewide restrictions and tax limits. The operation of public schools in the County is vested in a seven member Hanover County School Board, the members of which are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The local share of the cost of operating public schools is met with an appropriation by the Board from the County's general fund. Operations of the School Board, however, are independent of the Board of Supervisors and County administration as prescribed by Virginia law. A Superintendent is appointed by the School Board to administer the operations of the County's public schools.

The Town of Ashland provides certain additional levels of service to its residents. The ordinances and regulations of the County, with certain limitations as prescribed by State law, generally apply to Ashland. Property in Ashland is subject to both Ashland and County taxation, and Ashland may incur bonded indebtedness without the approval of the County.



Estimated Population (2002) - 91,807
Per capita income (2000) – \$30,015
Median Age (2002) – 37.4
Estimated School Enrollment
(2002) – 17,198
Unemployment rate (2001) 2.4%

