

## **ARTICLES OF INTEREST**

R.T.D.  
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# Powhatan Localities want OK to enact meals tax

## Board asks assembly for help in dealing with state shortfall

### Familiar theme

• The principal issue at this year's General Assembly will be the state budget. **Editorial, Page A14.**

**BY JAMIE C. RUFF**  
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

**POWHATAN** — The Powhatan County Board of Supervisors is asking the General Assembly to allow it and other localities to enact a meals tax without a referendum.

The request is one of several the board included in a resolution of budget and revenue recommendations for the General Assembly to consider during its 2009 session as the county faces a drop in state revenue.

The resolution, advocated by the Virginia Association of Counties, also asks the state to use its Revenue Stabilization Fund — the rainy day fund — to help offset budget reductions and to reconsider recent state tax exemptions.

The resolution opposes unfunded and under-funded mandates that will impose costs on local governments, and asks the

assembly to consider other strategies to mitigate the impact of state cuts on local governments.

Acting County Attorney Roger C. Wiley Jr. said the Association of Counties is not seeking anything it has not sought before.

The localities are seeking the changes to help combat the \$3 billion shortfall the state is facing and its subsequent effect on local government.

Supervisor Carson Tucker said that in recent years, the state has told localities that there is no more money and there is nothing a locality can do about it. "This is an attempt to rectify that," Tucker said.

"I'm sure a lot of localities will be sending this [resolution] to their legislators," County Administrator Carolyn Cios said.

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The number of older prisoners in Virginia has more than doubled in the past 10 years, a byproduct of the state's prison system.

# Growing old behind bars



BY FRANK GREEN  
Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

**CAPRON**  
**W**inter sunshine slices through a narrow cell window and falls on Aloysius Joseph Beyer, 84, white hair, slight shoulders and thin linen covering his fractured hip. Like the rest of the country, Virginia is coping with a growing num-

ber of aging inmates. Beyer, 84, is the state's oldest and his home, the Deerfield Correctional Center, focuses on geriatric inmates. In 1999, Virginia had 2,013 prisoners 50 or older. Today, there are almost 4,700, and by 2011, state officials expect there to be 5,057. A drop in the number of paroles granted to inmates who remain eligi-

ble is a factor in Virginia's increasing number of older inmates. Tough sentencing reforms that in 1994 led to stiffer, no-parole sentences for violent crimes are expected to contribute to Virginia's aging prison population in coming years. At a Deerfield Correctional Center, Beyer and other inmates are seen in a common living room. Beyer says it would be easy to commit the full range of crimes in the facility. **See PRISON, Page A8**

**Graying behind bars** Virginia has a special facility to house older inmates. Times-Dispatch.com keyword: agingnow

Aloysius Beyer, 84, is in the infirmary at Deerfield Correctional Center. He is the state's oldest inmate and one of a large number of geriatric inmates being housed and cared for at the facility in Southampton County. Beyer is serving 10 years for sex crimes.

# Prison

From Page A1

Identify with those in nursing homes. But it would be a mistake to do so.

Beyrer, a veteran of prisons in Virginia and elsewhere, thinks Deerfield "is pretty good," though security comes first there, even for octogenarians like Beyrer, who is serving 100 years for sex crimes. The prison's goal is to provide older inmates care and some dignity, not freedom.

The warden, Keith W. Davis, who has a master's degree in social work, makes it clear he is not running a spa for the golden years. "This is not a perfect world. We do not have unlimited resources," he said.

Even with a blank check to meet all their medical and mental-health needs, Davis said no one wants to grow old or die in a prison. "That's a big challenge for the staff. . . . We do what we can do, but we can't cure oldness," he said.

"Offenders are like the rest of us. We get old, we get ill, we die," he said. Deerfield provides a continuing-care community, he said, "so they can reach what we believe is their fullest potential — body, mind and soul."

Experts say substance abuse, little or no health care before imprisonment and the stress of living behind bars can leave a 50-year-old inmate physiologically 10 to 15 years older than his chronological age.

In general, older inmates require more supervision and medical and mental-health care, as well as special diets, mobility aids and special housing.

Deerfield, Virginia's only prison dedicated to geriatric inmates and inmates with special medical needs, accommodates 1,080 inmates, 90 of them in wheelchairs and 65 percent over the age of 50.

Other older inmates and older female inmates are in prisons such as the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women and the Greenville and Powhatan correctional centers.

Critics point out that many older inmates are far less likely to commit new crimes and could be released at great savings. Prison officials, however, believe their care would largely be at public expense in or out of prison.

And though older people are less likely to commit crimes, some still do. Beyrer was 67 when he was convicted in Virginia Beach of statutory rape, aggravated sexual battery and forcible sodomy.

Deerfield's head nurse, Bonita Badgett, said 800 of the inmates there have at least one chronic medical condition such as diabetes, high blood pressure or asthma. The prison psychiatrist, Dr. Amit Shah, said the major problem he treats is depression.

In October alone, the prison handled 5,200 prescriptions.

Badgett has a staff of 14 registered nurses, 25 licensed practical nurses and 21 nursing assistants. Two physicians are at the prison three days a week and the psychiatrist visits once a week. At least one registered nurse is on hand at all times.

Deerfield was selected 10 years ago as the site for older offenders. An expansion opened in 2007 and there is now an 18-bed infirmary, a 57-bed assisted-living dorm, a larger ancillary care dorm, a dorm for diabetics and a dorm for other special-needs inmates.

More than 75 percent of Deerfield's



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prisoners have nearly 30 percent of their security measures health-care needs. Mayes, chief of security, said "These guys have special needs and special needs and special needs of equipment. . . . We wouldn't see it in the rest of the world."

Officers must be alert to prisoners who are grumpy, suffering from an attack or a stroke. But not be deceived by someone who is faking to get an advantage to facilitate an escape, Mayes said.

Not everyone at Deerfield is happy. More than 200 inmates signed a letter to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine last year complaining about the parole board's low grant rate. One inmate claims staff stole his brain medication as he recovered from a stroke.

Parole issues aside, inmates interviewed during a recent tour said they liked Deerfield.

James Henry Tinsley, 59, and partially paralyzed, has been there since 2003. "I've been locked up 26 years," said Tinsley, convicted of 56 felonies, including capital murder, robbery and burglary.

"You've got some good people here. I ain't got nothin' bad to say about 'em. . . . As far as the medical, I give it a double-A plus," he said.

Another well-traveled inmate, William H. Glazebrook, 74, has been in the state system for 25 years and at Deerfield for a

year and a half. "This is Boy Scout Camp compared to the rest of 'em. This is a hell of a lot better," he said.

The Rev. Lynn Robinson, the prison chaplain, says, "These guys here, man, this is a special group of fellows." He said the inmates recently arranged to have Thanksgiving food baskets sent to five families and raised \$500 for breast-cancer research.

"The one thing I think the community can be aware of is that they need support when they get home," Robinson said.

Also, he said, "Saturdays and Sundays are visiting days, and some of them have family in the general area, and for some reason they don't come to see them. They need to stay in contact with [their] children."

Beyrer, Virginia's oldest inmate, was president of Deerfield's infirmary in November. Aside from six 1992 felony convictions, little information was available about Beyrer because of privacy rules.

He says that he was a once a prisoner at California's San Quentin State Prison. California authorities could not confirm they had ever held him, but New York state archives show he was released from Attica Correctional Facility in 1956.

Dawn Mosen, the nurse manager of the infirmary, said inmates are held there for observation and treatment before and after hospitalization. In addition to long-term care and special-needs inmates such as Beyrer.

She said the staff is planning how to make room for what is expected to be more long-term patients such as Beyrer.

Last year, an inmate's mother was allowed to be with her son in the infirmary when he died. "We want the patient to feel comfortable and the family to feel comfortable and know that they can be with them in those last hours," Mosen said.

"We want to get a hospice program going," she added.

Davis said another problem is that a lot of these guys have outlived their families. . . . We could open the door to let them go, and where would they go?

Badgett, Deerfield's head nurse, agreed. "Some of them we had to keep beyond their release date because we couldn't find a placement for them. There was no family out there, no home, there was nowhere to send them," she said.

Sex offenders, particularly, are difficult to place. Most nursing homes do not want them, and families often reject them because of their crimes, or, "the families simply cannot take care of the needs and medications."

At Deerfield, younger and healthier inmates — dubbed "pushers," short for wheelchair pushers — assist the older inmates and perform a wide variety of essential jobs for 45 cents an hour, primarily janitorial and in health care that help keep the prison running.

One "pusher," James Lee Wainwright, 47, imprisoned in 1990 for armed robbery, helps in the infirmary. He said he has also assisted with health care at another prison before arriving at Deerfield.

"I plan on taking it no where I get out of here," he said.

An infirmary nurse said, "We couldn't function without these guys, literally without their eyes and their help." William Robinson, chief psychologist at Deerfield, said some inmate helpers perform odious jobs, peculiar to hospitals and rest homes, for infirm inmates. A program has been set up to help the helpers, Robinson said.

"The caregivers support group is for guys who are caring for other guys here. You know, if that isn't the apostle's education, what the hell?" Robinson asked.

"It's a little different here, the way we even think of mental health. We try and redeem a guy."

Said Robinson: "What we do is to find them a purposefulness in living in prison and maybe dying in here." He is familiar with programs in other states and said, "I think we're light years ahead."

"We're not soft on crime. Tough love 'em, and they could still die here with some atonement. . . . with a sense of humanity and self worth."

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Inmate James Wainwright brings lunch to fellow inmate Otille Bailey in the infirmary at Deerfield Correctional Center. Inmates such as Wainwright paid 45 cents an hour to help care for other inmates.