

# The Virginia Beach Sun

June 7, 2012

Virginia Beach's Hometown Newspaper

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## Beach's park system is 7<sup>th</sup> among largest U.S. cities

Based on need, improvements, impact, compared to 40 other municipalities

By Chona O'Galvin  
Special to The Sun

Virginia Beach's system of 13 public parks has been named one of the top 10 systems in the country, earning the city four "park benches," based on the "ParkScore" rating system.

According to figures recently released

by the nonprofit group, Trust for Public Land, Virginia Beach's system ranked 7th overall, when compared to other systems in the nation's 40 largest cities.

ParkScore rates municipal park systems on a scale of zero to five "park benches." It is a comprehensive

*Virginia Beach led all cities on the playground measurements, with five playgrounds per 10,000 residents.*

park-rating-system that's designed to help local communities identify where new parks are most needed; and which park improvements have the greatest impact on the local citizenry.

The ratings are based equally on three primary factors:

Park accessibility, which measures the percentage of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park – a distance of

about ½-mile.

Park size – which is based on a city's median park size and the percentage of total city area dedicated to public parks.

Services and investments – combines the number of playgrounds per 10,000 city residents and per

capita park spending.

Virginia Beach led all cities on the playground measurements, with five playgrounds per 10,000 residents, more than double the ParkScore city average. Data compiled through the ratings system reflects national, state and city public parks and open spaces. Please See Parks - Page 4

## Tom Hanks' piracy film shooting here

Hanks plays Phillips

Noting Virginia Beach's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and its tight relationship with the U.S. Navy, motion picture director Paul Greengrass plans to shoot portions of the new film, "Captain Phillips," starring Tom Hanks in the Resort City.

Set for release on March 22, 2013, the film stars Hanks, as Captain Richard Phillips, and Catherine Keener, as his wife, Andrea. The screen play is by Billy Ray. Based on the book, "A Captain's Duty: Somali Pirates, Navy

SEALS and Dangerous Days at Sea," by Phillips and Stephan Talty, the movie tells the story of Phillips' ordeal while captain of the Norfolk-based Maersk Alabama, when it was boarded and held hostage by sea pirates in 2009 off Somalia's coast. He was a prisoner in a life boat for five days before Navy Seal snipers fatally shot three captors and freed Phillips, a Vermont native.

In the aftermath, Phillips visited Norfolk, thanking the crew of the Norfolk-based destroyer Bainbridge, which transported the SEALS to the scene and helped in the rescue.

Hanks is a California native. It's unclear when filming will begin.



Tom Hanks as "Forrest Gump"



This was the view, looking southwards from 37th Street, around noon on Memorial Day. Sun-worshippers are always advised to use sun screening products to protect their skin from cancer. (Sun Photos)

## Memorial Day 2012 – It Was A Hot One!

Visitors from across Virginia, the nation and up-and-down the East Coast converged on Virginia Beach over Memorial Day weekend, enjoying hot temperatures, low humidity and sunny skies. The city offered its visitors, as well as its locals, a multitude of activities and events to keep the entire family busy for days. See more photos in the Sun Photo Gallery on Page 3.



The Boardwalk attracts thousands of visitors each year, such as this couple out for a leisurely stroll.

## Norfolk's Tide still on the minds of Virginia Beach planners

While awaiting a fall advisory referendum, talks go on over routing it to Town Center, Hilltop, Convention Center and Oceanfront

If and when The Tide ever makes it to Virginia Beach, it's likely to visit the city's Hilltop business district, routing it farther away from NAS Oceana.

As the Norfolk-based light rail system continues operating effectively within the city of Norfolk, Virginia Beach city, community and political leaders and planners continue debating whether the city can afford such a transportation luxury, whether or not the public wants it – and if so, where exactly should the rail line run.

As The Tide was being launched last August, Hampton Roads Transit had already commissioned feasibility studies determining the advantages,

Please see Tide, page 4



The Tide, heading west last summer, from the Newtown Road Station. There are now calls for it to be extended to Hilltop. (Sun Photo)

## Hello Kroger Marketplace; bye-bye Kmart

New Kroger Marketplace said to be largest in Hampton Roads



Shelina Hawkins stands behind the counter at the Approved Cash Advance Center on Holland Road, looking through the clean front window at the closed down Super Kmart directly across the street in Holland Windsor Crossing shopping center.

An assistant manager at the loan center for 10 years, she shopped at the huge department store a couple of times, she said, but wasn't impressed.

"It really wasn't good at all," said Hawkins. "It was like a big thrift store; it wasn't that nice; it wasn't that clean."

She's glad Kmart is gone, she said, and now looks forward to see how the soon-to-be-build Kroger Marketplace compares with where she usually shops, Food Lion and its rival, Farm Fresh.

"It's going to be good to see how they all compete," said Hawkins, a Chesapeake resident living in the city's Twin Oaks neighborhood. "There's a Food Lion at the next intersection and a Farm Fresh close by."

First in 12 Years

And soon, she'll have a new Kroger from which to choose, thanks to the Kroger Co., which for the first time in 12 years, plans to build a new mega-supermarket Virginia Beach. The Marketplace will occupy 123,600 square feet of space in what was the Super Kmart site on Holland Road, between Windsor Oaks Boulevard and Governors Way.

The new store is expected to sell furniture, jewelry, kitchen supplies and home décor items, as well as food and fuel. Fresh produce, such as organic and locally grown fruits and vegetables, will also be available, along with other natural products.

Please see Kroger, page 3

## Washington Post singles out 10 public schools

Named by paper as being among the nation's best

By Eileen Cox  
Special to The Sun

Virginia Beach City Public Schools are well represented in The Washington Post's annual list of the country's top public high schools.

Ten of the division's high schools rank among the top 9 percent, compared to 1,900 other high schools, according to the High School Challenge index.

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## In This Issue of The Sun

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Take a look at a small Virginia Beach garden, as it grows and grows

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Your Virginia Beach City Council and School Board members

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VBEF and 100 students build new "green" house

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### Bayville Farms Park

Meet some of the people who enjoy it regularly

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Say "Hello" To:

## The Virginia Beach City Council



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## The Virginia Beach School Board



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## Virginia Beach Library Board names new chair and vice chairman

Nancy Parker, Dr. Michael Summers

The Virginia Beach Public Library Board has elected Nancy K. Parker as its chair and Dr. Michael S. Summers, vice chair.

Appointed to the board in September of 2006, Parker is a former Virginia Beach City Council member. Board-appointed in 2010, Summer is the provost of Tidewater Community College's Virginia Beach campus.

Appointed by the Virginia Beach City Council, the 13-member library board meets monthly at the Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library, on Virginia Beach Boulevard near Thalia, September through May.

The Virginia Beach Library system is comprised of the following, plus a bookmobile:

- Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library.
- Bayside Special Services Library.
- Great Neck Area Library.
- Kempsville Area Library.
- Oceanfront Area Library.
- South Rosemont Youth Library.
- Princess Anne Area Library.
- Pungo-Blackwater Library.
- Wahab Public Law Library.
- Windsor Woods Area Library.

During the 2010-2011 calendar year, the city's libraries hosted a total of 1.9 million visitors, who checked out 3.3 million items.

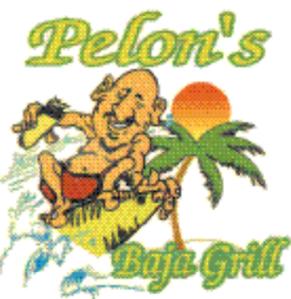


The Oceanfront Area Library is located at 700 Virginia Beach Boulevard, within walking distance from Atlantic Avenue. Library manager is Susan Head. Reach the library at 757-385-2640.

### The Virginia Beach Sun

Publisher Greg Goldfarb

Send correspondence to The Virginia Beach Sun, P.O. Box 5103, Virginia Beach, VA, 23471. Email: thevirginiabeachsun@gmail.com; or call 757-464-6611 or 757-718-5904 for more information. The Virginia Beach Sun is distributed throughout the resort city every three weeks, on Thursdays. Deadline for news and advertising is the Friday before.



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The new student-built "green" house is located at 413 23 1/2 Street, near the Oceanfront.

## Education Foundation goes 'green'; 100 students build new house on 23 1/2 St.

By Yolanda Jones-Howell Special to The Sun

A new "green" home, built by more than 100 Virginia Beach high school students, was recently unveiled by the Virginia Beach Education Foundation during a special ceremony at house, located at 413 23 1/2 Street, near the Oceanfront.

The unveiling was a culmination of the foundation's eighth "House Project" that generates funding for the organization.

For more than two years, students from the Virginia Beach Technical and Career Center, who worked together constructing the house, received hands-on, technical training in various fields, including masonry, plumbing, electrical services, landscape design, turf management, carpentry, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) installation; and CISCO networking. Thirty-six businesses donated or discounted materials and labor

to the construction project.

Thirty-six businesses donated or discounted materials and labor to the construction project.

The three-bedroom, two-and-one-half bathroom house is full of many rich amenities, including granite countertops in the bathrooms and kitchen, tile-surrounded gas fireplace and hardwood floors in the great room.

The home is the first "green" structure that includes sustainability features, such as modern DWV pipe made from 100 percent recycled materials; energy-efficient windows; Energy Star appliances; flooring developed from 60 percent recycled material; and a closed-loop geothermal HVAC system.

With the proceeds from the home's sale, the foundation will fund innovative projects that will impact more than 20,000 students each school year. Call 757-263-1069; or visit www.vbef.org.

## Backyard Gardener

Still time to get started

By this time of the year, most Virginia Beach gardeners have planted their plants and seeds, fully confident that blooms, then fruits and vegetables are well on their way.

Virginia's southeastern side, nestled closed to the Atlantic coast, makes conditions ripe for growing many varieties of the most popular fresh foods.

For most local gardeners, all it takes to get started is a little spot of land, seeds and plants, water and sunshine – a simple recipe for hours of relaxing and working in the sun, working the soil, watching anxiously for seedlings and baby plants to mature to yield their bounty.

Tomatoes, string beans, corn, onions, carrots – the list is endless of the kinds of vegetables that are now growing in Virginia Beach backyard gardens – and well as on large farms – across the Resort City.

While it's still not too late to start planting for this summer season, many gardens are already yielding radishes, carrots and beans. It's not too late to start planting and growing for this year because the local growing season extends into October and November, as part of frequent local "indian summers."

If you have questions about gardening, farming or agriculture in general, call the Virginia Beach Department of Agriculture at 757-385-5775.



A wild Virginia Beach brown hare



Tomato plants are now producing little tomatoes



String bean plants are now blooming



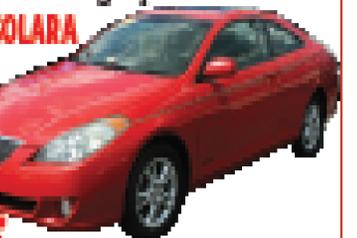
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*Sun Photo Gallery*



*Visitors enjoy cruising on tour boats*



*Looking north from 36th Street*

***A Day at the Beach***

Virginia Beach residents and visitors traditionally look forward to the Memorial Day weekend, as the start of the summer vacation season. The resort city's main attraction is its clean, spacious beaches, which draw beach-lovers from around the country and around the world.

**Kroger**

Continued from page 1

In addition to Virginia Beach, Kroger is also opening a marketplace in Richmond.

Known as the nation's largest grocery retailer, Kroger's first foray into Hampton Roads was in 2000, buying up nine Hannaford Bros. supermarkets. As a result, Delhaize America Inc., which owns Food Lion, divested those stores after acquiring Hannaford.

Kroger closed two stores in 2008, in Virginia Beach and Newport News, due to low sales; but now has four locations in Virginia Beach and one each in Norfolk, Portsmouth and Yorktown.

In Hampton Roads, Kroger remains in fourth place in sales, among the other traditional food chains, with \$111.2 million in sales last year. Construction is set to begin by year's end, with a projected opening in summer 2013.

*Competition is Good*

Despite the competition, it's human nature for people to shop close to

their homes, no matter which store is closest, Hawkins said. For her, price and convenience are important.

"There's always going to be a certain type of person who shops at Farm Fresh and they'll always shop at Farm Fresh," said Hawkins, an Ohio native, who used to work in downtown Norfolk as a bank teller. "It will be interesting to see what happens, but I don't know that a new store will sway people that much."

Still, she adds, she will give the new Kroger a try and predicts that it will attract those shoppers who don't have a strong loyalty to other food and merchandise chain stores.

"I'll go see how it compares to Wal-Mart, as far as clothing and electronics," she said. "I think the new store will split the market some, because it will attract the 'independents.'"

**Schools**

Continued from page 1

The High School Challenge used a ratio – the number of Advanced Placement (AP) and/or international Baccalaureate (IB) tests taken by students at individual schools during the 2010-2011 school year, divided by the schools' total number of graduates – to compare schools. Researchers for the newspaper maintain that this formula is an adequate measure of student readiness for college.

In addition to being on the recently released The Washington Post list, Princess Anne High School is also ranked 369 among the nation's top 500 public schools, by U.S. News on its "Best

High Schools" list. In this case, the magazine worked with the Washington, D.C.-based, American Institutes for Research, to evaluate state test data and student participation in AP or IB testing, to develop its list.

More information related to VBCPS testing data and the division's key indicators for student success are available on the school division's web site: vbschools.com.

Sandi Maxwell, an administrative associate in the division's Media and Communications Department, can be reached at 757-263-1949; or eileen.cox@vbschools.com.

***Here's How They Rank***  
 This chart shows the city's schools appearing on the list and their ranking among the nation's top 1,900 high schools.

- Princess Anne High School – 213
- Frank W. Cox High School – 742
- Ocean Lakes High School – 987
- First Colonial High School – 1,172
- Floyd E. Kellam High School – 1,264
- Landstown High School – 1,305
- Bayside High School – 1,524
- Tallwood High School – 1,580
- Salem High School – 1,635
- Kempsville High School – 1,776

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# Park

Continued from page 1

Virginia Beach led all cities on the playground measurements, with five playgrounds per 10,000 residents.

The rating system does not include privately-owned neighborhood parks and other recreational amenities like swimming pools, athletic fields and playgrounds that are funded through homeowner association fees.

“We are pleased to be ranked within the top ten park agencies in the nation,” said Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Director Michael Kalvort. “This ranking shows that we are balanced in providing access to our citizens; and it’s a testament to the commitment of our city’s mayor, city council and city leadership to provide a safe and vibrant quality life for our residents. Their vision, beginning with the implementation of the ‘open space plan,’ has enabled the city to double our ‘parkland’ since its adoption in 2001.”

In addition to its bikeways and trails, natural areas, dog parks, skate parks and beach and boating facilities, the city also operates the following city parks:

- Bayville Farms Park
- Beach Garden Park
- City View Park
- Great Neck Park
- Little Island Park
- Lynnhaven Park
- Mount Trashmore Park
- Munden Point Park
- Providence Park
- Red Mill Farms Park
- Red Wing Park
- Woodstock Park
- Williams Farm Park

More information on Virginia Beach’s ranking is available at [www.ParkScore.TPL.org](http://www.ParkScore.TPL.org).

Reach Chona O’Galvin, Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department’s media and communications coordinator, at 757-385-4261; or at [cogalvin@vbgov.com](mailto:cogalvin@vbgov.com).

# Tide

Continued from page 1

disadvantages and costs of extending the rail line to Town Center and the Oceanfront. It’s apparent, however, that the city and the Navy will be better served if the proposed route was not a direct shot from Town Center to the Oceanfront.

Under a new plan, put forth by Urban Design Associates, the light rail service would be shifted, from the former Norfolk Southern right-of-way, which runs straight to the resort area, up to Laskin Road and along the flanking feeder roads.

HRT is also reviewing the recommendations as to whether they should be considered as part of a federal feasibility study on extending the light rail line from Norfolk into Virginia Beach.

At one point, the proposed Beach extension located the Hilltop light rail station two miles from the Hilltop area, on Potters Road, close to Oceana Naval Air Station. Concerned citizens suggested moving the line to Hilltop.

Virginia Beach City Councilman Jim Wood, who worked with the city of Norfolk and with HRT in establishing The Tide, said moving the line away from the master jet base is wise. Mayor Will Sessoms has also expressed support for the move.

There is also talk of possibly swinging the line from Laskin Road to the Virginia Beach Convention Center; or pushing the line south from Laskin Road along First Colonial Road and back to a city-owned railroad right-of-way; running the trains eastward along Virginia Beach Boulevard to Birdneck Road; taking the line east along I-264 to Birdneck; and extending the line along Laskin Road to Birdneck Road.

All of the options up for consideration are part of a \$6.6 million federal feasibility study, set to be completed in 2013. An advisory referendum on whether to proceed with efforts to bring The Tide to the city is set for the fall.

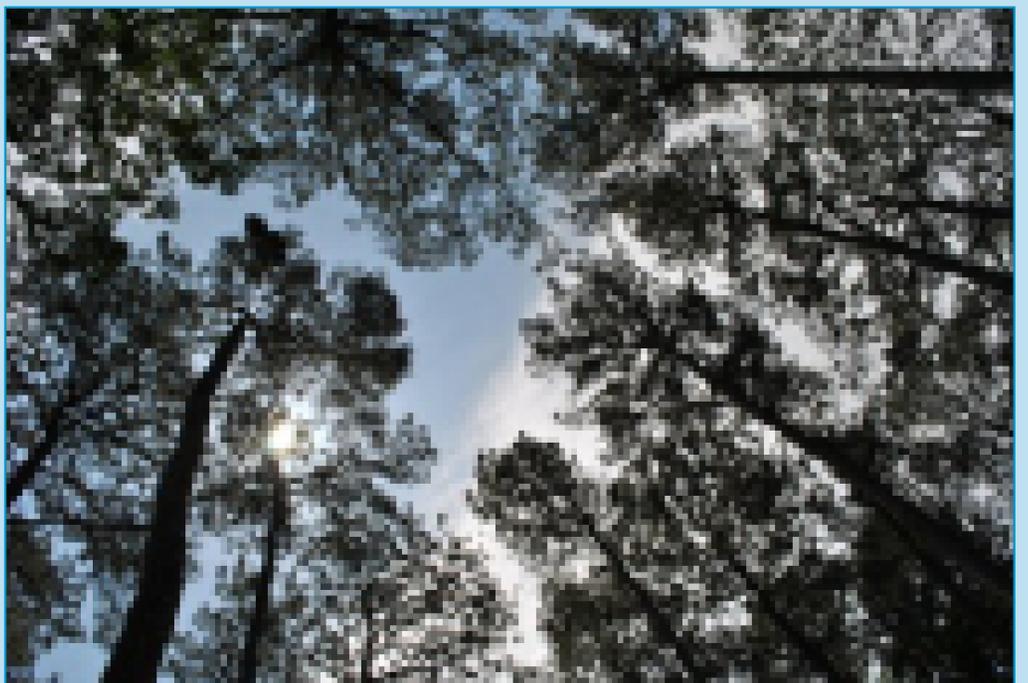
## Sun Photo Feature - Bayville Farms Park



Enjoying Bayville Farms Park’s walking path, left to right, are: Todd Ricks, a contractor, Virginia Beach native and Bayville Park resident; his wife, Isabelle; Amy Butcher, a Bayville Park resident and homemaker; and Eli, 9, who is home-schooled. Todd and Amy are Virginia Beach natives and Cox High School graduates. The dogs are Lily, a rescue dog; and Gunner and Bella, both standard poodles. “We walk out here almost every day,” said Ricks. “We think it’s a great park – the beautiful trees, it’s well-maintained and there’s lots to do for the kids.”



Preparing for a round or two of “disc golf,” left to right: Jeff Small, a landscaper and Virginia Beach resident who lives in the Rudee Inlet area; Brian Henry, who lives in Kempsville and is a carpenter; and John Weddle, a Norfolk resident and steamfitter. They play at the park regularly, as well as disc parks in Newport News, Pungo and Bennett’s Creek in Suffolk. “It’s local, it’s close and there’s good people here,” said Small.



Some of the trees at Bayville Farms Park must be more than 10 stories tall.

### A Day at the Park

Virginia Beach’s system of public parks has been recognized as one of the country’s top 10 systems.

Please see story page 1



Visitors to the park enjoy lunch under a nice shelter