



Main Street News

Winter2016

www.wraba.org

WRABA FORMS WILLIAMSON ROAD IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

WRABA has been looking at possible improvements on Williamson Road since its inception. Our push for curb, gutter, sidewalk, better more attractive lighting and other improvements was further emphasized with the results of the neighborhood walks conducted over the past 2+ years. Especially in the areas of the road between Angel and Orange Avenues.

Recent research and conversations with Roanoke City has resulted in the formation of the Williamson Road Improvement Committee consisting of the 3 area Neighborhood Presidents, 4 business owner and 4 City Representatives including a City Council Member.

The purpose of this committee is to work together to make the best possible plan of improvements for Williamson Road.

To do this we do need to hear from you! Your input as businesses and citizens

who work, live and play in the Williamson Road Area is paramount to reaching the best plan. We ask for your input of things you would or would not like to see change on Williamson Road in a positive email written to the Williamson Road Improvement Committee and sent to them via email at wraba@wraba.org or via US Postal Service at WRABA, Williamson Road Improvement Committee, PO Box 7082, Roanoke, VA 24019.

We ask these be submitted in writing so that each committee member can receive a copy of your own words. We ask that you submit your comments personally so that no one else can misconstrue or put their spin on your comments.

The Williamson Road Improvement Committee has only met one time thus far, so you are getting your ideas represented at

the beginning of this process. Monthly meetings of the committee are expected and you may send updated comments through out the process. We anticipate meeting and discussing these potential improvements for at least a year.

As information becomes available, or as we seek additional input, we will let you know. As stated before, comments are always welcome.

Much of WRABA's mission, is to look for and facilitate in the implementation of improvements to Williamson Road. These improvements are to assist in greater economic development for the area.

We have also made strides in the Roanoke County portion of Williamson Road. See page 2 for more on that in the section "from the Desk of the Director."

Looking forward to hearing from you!

2015-2016

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Wendy J. Jones

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FROM THE DESK OF WRABA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Wendy J. Jones,
WRABA Executive Director

*Williamson Road - Over 150
Businesses to serve you!*

The walks in the Roanoke County portion of Williamson Road have now been completed. These walks were held to emphasize the improvements needed in the Roanoke County portion of Williamson Road. Members of the Roanoke County Staff and Police, VDOT and the WRABA Board participated in these walks. We approached the road in several sections and walked each section noting repairs

and amenities needed to make the area safer. Trash was also collected from the roadside as we walked. The sections were:

- 5411 Williamson to Clubhouse
- Clubhouse to Peters Creek
- Peters Creek to Plantation
- Plantation to Hollins
- Hollins to Shadwell

All sections of the road, with little exception, were very difficult to navigate as sidewalks are rare.

Drivers were most kind as they moved out of the left lane where we walked in some cases, including a baby stroller. We thank those drivers!

A lot was learned on these walks. Enough, in fact, to lead VDOT and Roanoke County to look at funding for safer pedestrian accommodations.

See the Roanoke County Projects Update below for more.



ROANOKE COUNTY PROJECTS UPDATE

Submitted by Megan Cronise, AICP-Principal Planner, Roanoke County Community Development Department

Williamson Road

Over 150 Businesses

To Serve you!

ROANOKE COUNTY IS MAKING PROGRESS ON BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WILLIAMSON ROAD

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) applied for and recently received Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the intersection of Williamson Road and Peters Creek Road. VDOT, County staff and Wendy Jones have walked the area and preliminarily scoped a project to include pedestrian signals and crosswalks at that intersection, as well as add pedestrian and potentially also bicycle

accommodations along the west side of Williamson Road to the North Roanoke Assisted Living property. Stay tuned for updates on this project.

To connect the proposed HSIP project and the Plantation Road Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement Project, Roanoke County recently applied for Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding to construct a sidewalk

between the Williamson Road/Peters Creek Road intersection and Plantation Road. The proposed sidewalk would be located on the north side of the road in the existing right-of-way. Funding decisions will be finalized in June 2017.



Carvins Creek Bridge





ROANOKE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Written by Scott Leamon Crime Prevention and Community Outreach Roanoke Police Department

WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR AN OPEN POSITION IN SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Folks don't understand the strategy involved in writing a job description for an open position. It's not as easy as just asking the simple question: "Here's what I want for an employee." You have to think about education. You have to make sure you don't accidentally violate any equal employment opportunity laws. You have to make sure all job duties are included so you don't have a new employee complaining "you never told me these boxes would be this heavy" on the first day of the job.

Imagine how hard it is for Santa:

1. Must be an elf [doesn't that violate EEO laws designed to protect non-elves like me? What if I wanted to apply?].
2. Must be willing to live in a year round arctic climate.
3. Duties to include: making toys, baking cookies, reindeer maintenance, sleigh repair, etc...

So for most of us, our dreams of ever becoming one of Santa's elves are shot! But just because we'll never play in the NBA doesn't mean we can't head

over to the Y for a game of pick-up basketball does it?

We can be elves everyday by helping our fellow man and spreading some holiday cheer!

Here are a few suggestions on how to do just that from a humble, and short in stature [although not an elf] crime prevention specialist:

- We are seeing an increase in vehicle thefts so far this year, particularly in thefts of vehicles left unattended, and when we say "unattended," we mean left unlocked with the keys in the ignition. If you could find some way to gently remind customers to lock their vehicles that would be most... elf-like! We understand that you don't want your customers thinking that your parking lot is unsafe but how would it look to have a police car sitting in front of your door during peak business time investigating a stolen car case where the victim left it unlocked and running?
- Allow your employees to have personal packages shipped to work so they don't have to worry about them getting stolen if the package delivery guy leaves them on their

front porch. How bout letting that employee with the adorable two-year-old niece she'll see at her Christmas family gathering ship the child's toy to the office since she knows she'll be there Monday through Friday between 8 and 5

- Check your business's video security system to make sure it's functioning properly. Does it have the correct time stamp? Are the cameras facing the correct way? Is there always an employee on hand who is familiar with the system in case an officer needs to access the video? Officers need your help to put some of the thieves on the "naughty" list.

Sorry to have ruined your dream about working for the best boss in the world and moving to the exotic locale that is the North Pole. But isn't it the warmth, smiles, and spirit of service that we love about Santa elves anyway? Which is why, much like all those "ballers" at the Y, dreams can still come true!



"We can be elves everyday by helping our fellow man and spreading some holiday cheer!"



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OVERTIME RULE THREATENS AMERICAN JOBS

By Congressman Bob Goodlatte

New costs can mean big changes for a business. As job creators, you know better than anyone else what that means for your business ledgers, employees, and customers. In the case of the Department of Labor's proposed overtime rule, it's the federal government forcing those costs on employers.



"...moving employees from salaried to hourly is a big blow to morale in the workplace."

The new overtime rule would raise the overtime salary threshold for workers from \$23,660 to \$47,476. This change means that workers who make less than \$47,476 annually would now be eligible for overtime pay if they work more than 40 hours per week. Doubling the threshold in one fell swoop puts a great deal of pressure on employers. It will make record-keeping more burdensome and time consuming, and it's fair to say that no one trying to run a business wants to devote more precious time to navigating red tape. The rule will also stretch payroll budgets and threatens the loss of jobs to help meet additional payroll expenses.

Many businesses across the

Sixth District are able to offer the financial security and stability of working a salaried job to their employees. However, the overtime rule's drastic and immediate increase may also force employers like you to move employees from salaried to hourly. Salaried employees have access to a unique flexibility that has proven beneficial to their work lives, families, and employers. Government policies, however well-intentioned, should not strip employees of the flexibility to leave an hour early to care for an elderly parent, arrive at work an hour later in order to make a doctor's appointment, or leave early to watch their child's soccer game. Additionally, for employers, moving employees from salaried to hourly is a big blow to morale in the workplace.

Time and again, employers in the Roanoke Valley have told me that federal red tape stands in the way of hiring and growth. The National Federation of Independent Business even estimates that the rule will harm 44 percent of small businesses. While federal regulations regarding wages should be reviewed from time to time, the overtime rule will put many of the workers the

rule seeks to help in a tough spot.

While the overtime rule was set to take effect on December 1, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction to temporarily block the rule just days before. For now, employers are in a holding pattern awaiting a hearing before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit early next year. I am hopeful that the judicial system will see the major flaw in this rule, and permanently prevent it from taking effect.

Regulations like the overtime rule only increase economic uncertainty. The House's Better Way agenda, available at better.gop, is focused on solving today's problems by getting our economy back on track. In the new Congress, I will continue working to bring common sense to the regulatory system and ensure that we have smart federal regulations, not ones that bury America's businesses in red tape.





Williamson Road



Williamson Road Area Business Association

December 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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January 2017						
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29	30	31				

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March 2017						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

Dates To Remember:

December:

- 6th: WRABA Annual Christmas Dinner
- 25th: Christmas Day/Hanukkah
- 31st: New Year's Eve

January:

- 1st: New Year's Day
- 16th: Martin Luther King Jr Day
- 17th: WRABA Monthly luncheon and Board Meeting
- 17th: Williamson Road Improvement Committee meeting
- 26th: Adopt-A-Street Clean Up Day

February:

- 2nd: Groundhog's Day
- 14th: Valentine's Day
- 20th: President's Day
- 21st: WRABA Monthly luncheon and Board Meeting

March:

- 6-12th: Restaurant Week
- 12th: Daylight Saving's Time Begins
- 17th: St. Patrick's Day
- 21st: WRABA Monthly luncheon and Board Meeting
- 30th: Adopt-A-Street Clean Up Day

WRABA Monthly MEETINGS

WRABA meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month (except December) at noon. A hot buffet lunch is served and there is always a speaker on an interesting topic. Meeting reminders are emailed to dues paying members prior to each meeting, and an RSVP is required as we must provide a headcount to the hotel. Become a dues paying member and join the meetings for networking and knowledge!

Speakers for the next few months are listed below. If there is a topic on which you would like a presentation, please feel free to contact me at (540) 362-3293 or via email at Wraba@wraba.org!

December 6th: Annual Christmas Dinner

January 17th: Brandon Turner, Roanoke City Economic Development, Enterprise Zone 1A

February 21st: King Tower, Attorney with Woods Rogers Labor & Employment Practice Group; Employment Law Update including the new DOL & EEOC rules

March 21st: Marci Stone & Travis Akin, Roanoke City PD Work Place Emergency Preparedness



EESTATE PLANNING TIPS FOR BLENDED FAMILIES

Submitted by Mike Pendleton, CFP, AAMS of the Hollins Branch of Edward Jones



Most of us need to do some type of estate planning, but it's especially important if you are part of a "blended" family. And the best time to start is *now* – before these plans need to be implemented.

Estate planning can be complex, so you will need help from a qualified legal professional. But here are a few general suggestions that can be suitable for blended families:

• *Update beneficiary designations – and think about multiple beneficiaries.* Update the beneficiary designations on your retirement accounts and insurance policies to reflect the reality of your blended family. These designations can supersede the instructions you provided in your will. So if your will states that your current spouse should inherit your assets, but you had named your former spouse, or a child, as the primary beneficiary of an IRA, then your former spouse or your child – not your present-day spouse – will indeed receive the IRA.

To ensure that "everyone gets something," you could name your current spouse as primary beneficiary and your children from a previous marriage as equal contingent

beneficiaries. But the primary beneficiary will receive *all* the assets and is free to do whatever he or she wants with the money. To enact your wishes, you can name *multiple primary* beneficiaries and designate the percentage of the asset each beneficiary will receive.

• *Create a living trust – and consider a professional trustee.* A living trust can help you avoid the time-consuming and costly process of probate, while giving you great freedom to determine how, and when, you want your assets distributed. After you pass away, the trust, if structured properly, can provide your surviving spouse with income for life; then, after your spouse dies, your children from an earlier marriage would receive the remainder of the trust.

So far, so good. However, issues can arise if you name your surviving spouse or one of your children as the "successor trustee" who will take charge of the trust upon your passing. Your spouse, acting as successor trustee, could choose to invest only in bonds for income, but if he or she lives another 20 or so years, the value of the investments within the trust will probably have diminished considerably – leaving your children with very little. Conversely, if you name one of your children as

trustee, the child could invest strictly in growth-oriented investments, leaving your surviving spouse with greatly reduced income. To be fair to everyone, you may want to engage a professional third-party trustee. This individual, or company, is not a beneficiary of the trust, is not entitled to share in the assets of the trust, and, ideally, should have no "rooting interest" in how proceeds of the trust are distributed.

• *Consider a prenuptial agreement.* When it's time to settle an estate, a prenuptial agreement can help avoid disputes among members of a blended family. If you and your new spouse have agreed to keep your assets separate so that each of you can pass an inheritance to your own children, you need to spell out that separation in your "prenup," your will, your living trust and any other relevant estate-planning arrangements.

Above all else, share your estate-planning intentions with members of your blended family. You may not be able to satisfy everyone, but through open communications, you can help prevent bad feelings – and unpleasant surprises.

"Create a living trust -and consider..."





IRS CONTINUES TO ENFORCE “REASONABLE” SHAREHOLDER-EMPLOYEE SALARIES

Submitted by Tim Murphy, CPA, Partner, Kennett & Kennett

If you're a shareholder-employee of an S corporation, you more than likely considered the tax advantages of this entity choice. But those very same tax advantages also tend to draw IRS scrutiny. And the agency has made clear that its interest in S corporations -including possible audits- will continue.

What's The Problem?

The IRS pays particular attention to S corporations because, as you well know, shareholder-employees of these organizations aren't subject to self-employment taxes on their respective shares of the company's income. This differs from, say, general partners in a partnership.

To better manage payroll taxes, many S corporations minimize shareholder-

employee salaries (which are subject to payroll taxes) and compensate them mostly via "dividend" distributions. If this holds true for you, the IRS may take a close look at your salary to determine whether it's "unreasonably" low. The agency views overly minimized salaries as an improper means of avoiding payroll taxes.

If its case is strong enough, the IRS could recharacterize a portion of the distributions paid to you and other shareholder-employees as wages and bill the employer and/or employee for unpaid taxes, interest and possibly even penalties.

How Do You Define It?

By following certain guidelines, your business can ensure salaries paid to you and other shareholder-employees have a higher

likelihood of meeting the agency's typical standards of reasonableness.

For starters, do some benchmarking to learn how S corporations of similar size (as indicated by capital value, net income or sales) in your industry and geographic region are paying their shareholder-employees.

These include:

- ◇ Background & experience
- ◇ Specific responsibilities
- ◇ Work hours
- ◇ Professional reputation
- ◇ Customer relationships

The stronger these traits are, the higher the salary should be in the eyes of the IRS. Shareholder-employee salaries should be fairly consistent from year to year, too, without dramatic raises or cuts.



**Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service**

"...If this holds true for you, the IRS may take a close look at...."

ROANOKE CITY STORMWATER DIVISION NEWSLETTER

Danielle DeHart and Dwayne D'Ardenne of Roanoke City's Stormwater Division-Public Works Service Center have shared their latest article (November 2016) concerning fats, oils, and grease with us in the hopes that we would share this

among the local restaurant businesses on Williamson Road. They are also partnering with the Solid Waste Management Division and Environmental Management to produce informational brochures to restaurant owners concerning fats, oils, and

grease. They hope we find this useful. A link to this important information is:

<https://www.roanokeva.gov/CivicSend/ViewMessage/message?id=27307>



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Membership Application

Name _____

Business _____

Mailing Address _____

Street Address _____

Phone _____ FAX _____

Email Address _____

Website Address _____



Yearly membership is \$165 per member. The membership year runs from July-June. If you have any questions please call Wendy Jones at (540)362-3293.

Attention All
 Readers!!!!

Have a suggestion for an article you would like to see in The Main Street News? Call Wendy Jones today (540)362-3293 or send an email to wraba@wraba.org.



Please join us every third Tuesday (except December) for our luncheon and meeting. This is a great opportunity to network and enjoy some really great food! Meetings are held at noon. Please watch your e-mail for meeting location details!