

Counting America

The United States of America completes a census every 10 years. The census counts every resident in our country and is required by the Constitution.

The last census took place in the year 2000. Our new year, 2010, will require another census.

According to the official census 2010 website (www.2010.census.gov), the census will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year. This will assist in bringing hospitals, job training centers, schools, senior centers, bridges, tunnels, other public works projects and emergency services to each community. Since the census determines the population in your state, it also helps the government decide how many seats your state has in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

The census will be mailed or delivered to your home in March 2010. Complete and mail the forms back by National Census Day, April 1.

The form consists of 10 questions. The questions inquire about the number of people in your household, whether you own or rent your home, your telephone number, and information about each person in your household.



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

The information on your returned form is confidential. The Census Bureau is bound by law to keep your responses within its agency.

If you would like more information about what the census is and how you can get involved, please visit 2010.census.gov or our Newsroom at www.MontgomeryCountyVa.gov.

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Important dates:

• **Jan. 25,** - Board of Supervisors meeting, 2nd floor Board Room; 7:15 p.m.; Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Christiansburg

• **Feb. 8, 22** - Board of Supervisors meetings, 2nd floor Board Room; 7:15 p.m.; Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Christiansburg

• **Feb. 15** - County offices closed for Presidents' Day

It's Winter - are you ready?

Below are some tips from Ready Virginia for keeping yourself - and your pets - safe this winter.

- What to do if the power goes out and you have no heat: Make sure you have blankets and sleeping bags on hand for warmth. It could take as little as four to six hours for you to become uncomfortably cold.

- If you decide to stay in your home during an extended power outage: You will need a minimum of three days of food that won't spoil, along with one gallon of water per person, per day. Choose a room that will be the easiest to heat and close it off. Dress in several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing and wear a hat and mittens.

- If you use kerosene or propane heaters: These are a fire hazard and should be used with much caution. Make sure the room they are used in is ventilated by opening a window. Keep heaters at least three feet away from flammable objects. Refuel heaters outdoors after they have cooled.



- If you have pets: Bring your pets inside. If they must stay outside, be sure they have shelter and insulation from the cold. Don't use electric heating pads, kerosene heaters or any other heating appliance because they can burn your pet. Make sure your pet has enough food and unfrozen water.

- If you must drive during a winter snow storm: Try not to drive until after snow plows have done their work. Wait until daylight to drive so that sunlight can warm the roads. Call 511 for road conditions or visit www.511Virginia.org.

- If the power is out and roads are blocked: Get a battery and/or crank operated radio with Weather Band so you can hear local stations and reports from the National Weather Service. They are available at electronics and sporting goods stores, department stores, boat and marine accessory stores, through catalogs and online.

Go to www.ReadyVirginia.gov for more information about preparing for winter weather emergencies.

View our online calendar at

MontgomeryCountyVA.gov



Celebrate Winter and Spring with Parks & Rec

Montgomery County Parks and Recreation recently released their Winter/Spring 2010 brochure. It is full of activities, adventures and fun for all! Below are some samples of what's inside:

Customized Group Adventure Trips: Let us arrange an adventure for your work, church or other social group right here in your backyard! Activities include whitewater rafting, paintball and ropes courses.

DOVE Real Beauty Workshop: This course offers wonderful insight for girls and young women who are struggling to find out how truly beautiful they really are. This course follows the DOVE Real Beauty guidelines to provide an enlightening experience. Participants will come away looking at themselves in a whole new light.

Cheer Prep: This is a beginner to advanced skill level class for boys and girls in kindergarten and up. This class is designed to offer basic cheerleading instruction on jumps, cheers, tumbling and stunting. The class was established for those students that want to participate in cheerleading, yet do not wish to compete.

Dixie League Baseball: Dixie Youth Baseball's goal is to promote the development of strong character, a right attitude, a sense of responsibility and citizenship in youngsters, using the game of baseball

as a vehicle. Players will learn the game of baseball and how to play it the right way. Our teams compete in a league with area parks and recreation departments in games played during the week and on weekends.

Desserts First: Take in a little afternoon delight at the Bubblecake Shop and step into a world of sweet aromas and tastes with 24 different cupcakes and icings made from scratch with touches of sprinkles, pearls and frosting swirls. We will take in two shows at the Megadome Theater: "Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs," a rediscovery of the tombs of the great Pharaohs and "Amazing Journeys," a unique opportunity to view the migration of gray whales, millions of butterflies in Mexico and migratory birds navigating by sun, stars and instinct.

Mountain Trekkers Hiking Club: Join us for some great fun, good exercise and an opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. A chance to learn about the area in which we live, both legend and folklore! The hikes are easy to moderate in terrain and two to four miles in length.



For more information on prices, dates and registration, call Parks & Rec at 382-6975 or check out their new brochure online at www.MontgomeryCountyVa.gov/parks.

Did You Know?

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library is open 24/7 on the web! You can use their online databases remotely from your own computer. Visit www.mfrl.org and click on "Online Resources" for more information.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) reminds everyone of the possible carbon monoxide (CO) dangers during cold temperatures. You can't see or smell CO, but at high levels it can kill a person in minutes. CO is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned. In properly maintained appliances, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result.

Know the symptoms of CO poisoning. At moderate levels, you can suffer severe headaches or chest pains, blurred vision, dizziness, confusion, nausea, weakness, or fatigue. You can lose consciousness and even die if these levels persist for a long time.

Be safe. Practice the DOs and DON'Ts of carbon monoxide:

- DON'T burn charcoal or gas grills inside a house, garage, vehicle, tent or fireplace.
- DON'T use a generator indoors, including garages, basements, crawl spaces and enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation.
- DON'T idle the car inside a garage - even with the door open. Fumes can build up very quickly.
- DON'T use a gas oven to heat your home.
- DON'T sleep in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene heater.

- DON'T use any gasoline-powered engines in closed spaces.
- DO have your home heating system (including chimneys and flues) inspected each year.
- DO install battery-operated or plug-in CO detectors with battery back-up in your home, according to the manufacturer's instructions.

If you experience symptoms that you think could be from CO poisoning:

- DO get fresh air immediately; open doors and windows. Turn off combustion appliances and leave the house.
- DO go to the emergency room and tell the physician you suspect CO poisoning, which can often be diagnosed by a blood test done soon after exposure. Prevention is the key to avoiding CO poisoning.
- DON'T ignore symptoms of CO poisoning, particularly if more than one person is feeling them. Do nothing, and you can lose consciousness and die.

For more tips for protecting yourself and your family before, during, and after winter storms and other natural disasters, visit VDH online at www.vdh.virginia.gov, or the Virginia Department of Emergency Management at www.readyvirginia.gov.

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