

Information should be shared in print

By: Linda S. Sasser | Goochland County

Published: November 06, 2011

It was with great interest that I read Daily Progress publisher Lawrence McConnell's opinion piece in the Oct. 23 Richmond Times-Dispatch (Daily Progress version of Oct. 23: "Putting things in writing makes a difference"). As the commentary so clearly states, "The emerging battle in Virginia is really about whether government should put what it's up to in writing."

I see any move to put all legal notices solely on line as yet another impediment to maintaining (and dealing with the consequences of) an informed citizenry.

As a resident of Goochland County, I depend on the weekly Goochland Gazette for information regarding the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and other local and state regulatory agencies, their hearings, the public response window and so forth. The information is sometimes difficult to locate, but it is there and available to clip, calendar, consider and respond to.

If information were to become available only online, I would almost immediately become uninformed and mute. In my rural location, wireless, cable, cellular and FiOS access to the Internet is unavailable. Though satellite service is possible, the cost to consumers is an impediment for many. Therefore, I depend on a slow modem connection for my email service and Internet access. Depending on the time of day, my Verizon connection and my Juno server access, I can sometimes reach a government website and, occasionally, a document I want to read before the connection is interrupted or broken.

Though local libraries have easy Internet access, the nearest is 17 miles from my gate. For many folks in my area, such a distance, the time commitment, the cost of gas and the effort involved would preclude their active participation in the obligation to be an informed citizen.

It is my hope that all citizens, Media General, as well as newspapers both large and small will actively oppose any move to put the business of the commonwealth solely online.