

**The Farmville Herald**  
**Area Has Tourism Center**  
*Now Open 361 Days*  
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**By ROB CHAPMAN**

PRINCE EDWARD — It may not be 24/7, but Prince Edward and the Farmville area as a whole has its own regional tourism office that is open 361 days a year.

County Economic Development Director Sharon Carney, in addition to her economic development responsibilities, wears a second, but related, hat of promoting tourism. The new tourism office on Third Street in Farmville, which meets state standards, is open every day but Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and Easter Sunday.

"Now that we're a state visitor's center, we'll have much more traffic...even more so when the visitor center signs go out about at the Town limits," Ms. Carney said.

Virginia has 55 visitor centers, none of which are even close to Farmville. This center will be to promote not only Prince Edward, but the region that includes Cumberland, Buckingham and Appomattox.

"...Farmville's the commerce center for all of those areas," Ms. Carney cited. "So if we attract people here, they're going to stay here, they're going to eat here, they're going to shop here, they're going to buy their gas here.... They may go out to Sailor's Creek, but they're still going to stay here."

Consider that state estimated that tourism was a \$17.7 billion industry in 2006, created 208,000 jobs, \$706 million in state taxes, and \$503 in local tax revenues.

The concept of the regional tourism center was ignited last year as Town Council members and Board of Supervisors met jointly. Tourism, was highlighted as a primary focus for both entities, and would be viewed as a new industry.

So, Ms. Carney cited, Town Planner Cindy Morris and she were commissioned to put together a plan and in January, a plan of goals of and objectives were presented to the two governing bodies.

One of those goals was to have the visitor's center certified by the state and that required a facility open seven days a week, easily accessible to the public, handicapped accessible bathrooms, handicapped parking, provide a certain number of parking spaces (which is in the works), staff for the center, and display brochures of other visitor center.

"The County hired two part-time people to rotate on weekends," explained Ms. Sharon Carney.

Not only will there be information available about local interests, but to attractions all across the state. It works both ways, however, as tourists will have access to local attractions at other centers across the state.

Locally, visitors can also pick up maps, telephone books and real estate brochures.

"We are to become the first source of information for anybody that comes to the community," Ms. Carney said.

It is the visitor's center that will also prepare "fulfillment packets" for organizations holding conferences.

The packets would include information of what to eat, where to go and what to do.