

'Tis the roundup

Observations and ideas from stories that have a Christmas angle or otherwise lack goodwill.

Williamsburg Area Transport has made a good-faith effort to expand local bus service, but it seems new routes only marginally serve shopping areas such as Prime Outlets and the Marquis.

Workers, not just Christmas shoppers, use the buses to get to those locations, yet transit begins and ends based on store hours, not employee shifts. Officials should study ridership statistics to see where the most usage is, and run some trial buses into those areas to see how much need exists for earlier and later routes.

Busch Gardens gets it when it comes to tourism innovation. It was among the first to recognize the value of sports marketing, and last week launched Christmas Towne as winter's answer to the popular Howl-O-Scream.

Despite a dismal year for tourism, Busch Gardens and Water Country USA had their second-best year ever. And that's before Christmas Towne.

Stop-and-go traffic made Jefferson Avenue infamous in Newport News. Monticello Avenue is becoming our Jefferson, with yet another stoplight activated this week near the new BB&T branch. Ironically, the light will largely serve traffic that uses Ironbound Road to circumvent growing congestion at New Town.

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Rusty Carter

Life generally runs at a slower pace in greater Williamsburg, a welcome relief. The local DMV office seems to have taken that philosophy to the extreme. Cortney Langley reported that the DMV has the longest wait times in the state at more than 30 minutes. That's longer than Tyson's Corner in the hub of notoriously hectic Northern Virginia, and Roanoke, which serves the largest geographic area in the state. Our DMV needs more clerks, duh.

Cell phone towers may be one of the biggest blights on our landscape as well as the catalyst for infighting at Kingsmill. A Distributed Antenna System seems a plausible answer, but the cell phone companies balk at the cost. The towers are needed more to satisfy executives attending conferences, where service is spotty.

Meanwhile, stepped-up enforcement of covenants has angered some homeowners, who were ordered to restrain mailbox posts and fix other mostly minor unsightly problems. The message, intended or not, is that one man's blight is another's conference business.

... SNIP ...