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**Minutes**  
**Northampton County Take Charge**  
**“How Do We Get There?”**  
**Wednesday, January 29, 2003**  
**Northampton High School, Eastville**  
**6:00pm – 8:00pm**

Present: Brenda Holden, VCE; Jennifer Haycox, VCE; Jon Johnson, VCE; Pam Gibson, Institute for Innovative Governance; Thom Henderson, ESVA.net; Reverend James E. Davis, Jr, Cape Charles; Charles Smith, DOCAG; John Nottingham, DOCAG; Leo Owens, NRCDG; Samantha Pitts, The Nature Conservancy; Lenora Mitchell, Concerned Citizens of Cape Charles; Marian V. Ames, Concerned Citizens of Cape Charles; Learl Ames, Capeville; Mary P. Heard, Capeville; Pat Smith, Northampton County.

Gibson opened the meeting at approximately 6:00pm. Following introductions, Gibson discussed the accomplishments of the Take Charge program by directing participants' attention to the list of strengths and weaknesses, as well as to the prioritized listing. An open discussion then followed regarding the issues that have been brought to the table by the group. These issues included availability of affordable, quality housing, living wage jobs and training, and citizen involvement in local government. Mitchell, Director of Concerned Citizens of Cape Charles and board member of the Accomack-Northampton Housing and Redevelopment Corporation, provided the group with incentives to become more involved by relaying knowledge she has gained from her involvement in community groups.

Following the open discussion, Gibson led the workshop participants in a discussion of how to achieve the community involvement that was recognized as essential to addressing some of the weaknesses of the county. Suggestions included:

- ✓ A regular presence by members of the Leadership Team at each of the monthly Board of Supervisors meetings,
- ✓ Requesting that citizens be invited to attend regular meetings of the Economic Development Advisory Board,
- ✓ Distribution or Improved availability of newsletters from all local agencies or organizations, and
- ✓ Composing a list of locations of all public access computers in the county and putting that list in the local newspaper.

During this discussion, Holden discussed the use of the Eastern Shore Virginia Portal at <http://www.EasternShoreVirginiaPortal.com>, to inform and motivate the public about involvement and education opportunities. Heard pointed out to the group that Barnes & Nobles sponsors free online classes on their website at <http://www.barnesandnoble.com>. This is an item that the group agreed would be ideal to post on the Portal. Holden also pointed out other upcoming involvement opportunities including the A-N PDC's workshop being held at the Trawler Restaurant in Exmore, on February 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the development of the Eastern Shore's housing agenda for the next 5 years.

The workshop was adjourned at 8:00pm with plans for the group to meet again on March 13, 2003, for the Technology Leadership Training being sponsored by the Blacksburg Electronic Village.