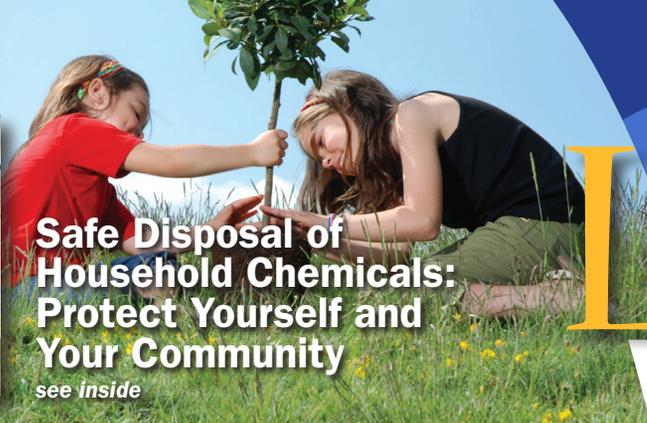




Safe Disposal of Household Chemicals: Protect Yourself and Your Community

see inside



Living WELL

A Newsletter of
Family and Consumer Sciences

<http://sites.ext.vt.edu/livingwell/>

The 2010 Census:

BE COUNTED

By Eleanor D. Schlenker, Ph.D., R.D.

April 1, 2010, is Census Day! On that day we count every person living in the United States – all ages, races, and ethnic groups, citizens and noncitizens. The U.S. Constitution requires that we do a count every 10 years. The first census in 1790 was taken by workers on horseback and counted 3.9 million people. The 2010 census will count as many as 310 million.

Why Do We Need the Census?

There are many reasons why we all need to be counted:

- To set the number and distribution of representatives to the Virginia legislature, local school and county boards, city councils, and the U.S. House of Representatives.
- To determine Virginia's share of federal money for health, education, community services such as school lunch programs, and road building.

- To help state and local governments plan ahead. The census alerts school boards to the need for more classrooms; it alerts state planners to the growing numbers of senior citizens.

10 Questions... 10 Minutes

The 2010 census asks 10 questions that most households can answer in 10 minutes! You will be asked the name, age, gender, race, ethnic group (if Hispanic), and relationship of all persons living at your address, as well as whether you own or rent your home. Completing a census form is easy, confidential, and *it's the law*.

Census questionnaires will be mailed in March and should be completed and returned promptly. Households that do not return their forms will be visited by a census worker. **Census workers will be identified by a census badge and bag.**

Eleanor Schlenker is a Food, Nutrition, and Health Extension specialist at Virginia Tech.

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If you need:

- Census forms in Spanish or other language, call toll-free (866) 928-2010 (Spanish-speaking operator)
- A Teletext device (TDD) for the hearing impaired, call (866) 783-2010
- Help with answering questions, a census form in large print, or a replacement questionnaire, call (866) 872-6868 or visit <http://2010.census.gov/>.



A HEALTHY

COMMUNITY

STARTS WITH YOU

By Crystal Tyler-Mackey, Ph.D.



A strong community greatly influences our daily lives. Youth are more likely to make positive choices and avoid risky behaviors. Adults feel safer and more connected to the resources they need. Healthy communities work to improve their physical and social environments, support one another in their daily lives, and encourage everyone to reach their full potential. How can you help make your community a healthy one for all who live, work, learn, worship, and play there?

Crystal Tyler-Mackey is the Community Viability specialist for the Southeast District.



1 **Get involved** - support local activities, serve on neighborhood watch committees, attend neighborhood events, and support local sports teams. Getting involved builds community connections and creates social bonds.

4 **Volunteer your time and talents** - join the local PTA, serve on committees, become a coach or mentor, start a 4-H club, contribute to local improvement projects.

2 **Take action, take responsibility** - pick up trash tossed in public areas and speak up on issues such as vandalism, the need for safe play areas, or bullying.

5 **Take part in projects** with your whole family to build family and community bonds. What a great lesson for your children as they partner with you to build a healthy community!

See the Clip and Save feature for more information on healthy communities and volunteer opportunities.

3 **Set a good example** - display your community's values of respect by following the rules. Recycle, dispose of household chemicals safely, and follow dog leash laws.



National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

The *Living Well* newsletter was developed by the Family and Consumer Sciences program, Karen Roth Gehrt, associate director. The *Living Well* Editorial Board - co-chaired by C. Sprenger, Augusta County, and E. Schlenker, Virginia Tech - includes A-C Carrington, Central District; D. Baskfield-Heath, James City County; J. Henderson, Amelia County; A. Jewell, Lancaster County; and K. Poff, Shenandoah and Frederick counties. Other reviewers were I. Leech and C. Hayhoe, Virginia Tech.

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Safe Disposal of HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS: Protect Yourself and Your Community

By Eleanor D. Schlenker, Ph.D., R.D.

We often forget that items in our kitchens, bedrooms, or garages can harm people, animals, and the environment if they are just thrown out with the trash. Hair spray or medications are safe when used and discarded correctly, but they can be dangerous if we are careless. Paint and spot removers are often flammable if placed close to high heat, and aerosol containers can explode. Household cleaners and pesticides can harm your skin and are toxic when inhaled. Protect your family and those living around you.

- Read the label. Suggestions to wear gloves or use only in a well-ventilated space indicate that a substance can be corrosive and toxic. Never reuse containers from hazardous materials.
- Select an appropriate means of disposal. Never burn or dump hazardous waste on the ground. Check before pouring liquids down the sink or toilet, as water entering the sewage system eventually

flows to water sources used by fish or animals. Be aware of materials that can damage a septic tank.

- Take part in community-waste disposal programs that collect harmful materials and recycle paint or motor oil.
- Cut down on your household waste. Buy only what you need, look for alternative materials that will not pollute the environment (for example: scrub your sink with baking soda, or clean your windows with vinegar and water).

For more information, see Clip and Save in this issue.

Eleanor Schlenker is a Food, Nutrition, and Health Extension specialist at Virginia Tech.

Use care with these items:

- Antifreeze, windshield-wiper fluid, batteries
- Paint
- Garden fertilizer, pesticides
- Household cleaners, air fresheners
- Hair spray, hair treatments
- Medicines
- Disinfectants, insect sprays



Clip and Save

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Designing and Building Healthy Places: Learn more about how to make your community a healthier place at www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/default.htm.

2-1-1 Virginia: Get Connected. Get Answers. Dial 2-1-1 toll-free to find local resources for the help you need, or visit www.211virginia.org/.

Virginia CORPS: Virginia Citizen Corps assist in times of disaster and support ongoing community programs. Ways to volunteer are listed by locality and age group at www.virginiacorps.org.

See **Guide to Household Waste Disposal**, Purdue University Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for information on safe disposal of particular household chemicals, at www.purdue.edu/dp/envirosoft/housewaste/src/dispose.htm.

See **Hazardous Household Substances: Alternatives That Are Relatively Free of Toxic Effects**, University of Florida Extension publication FCS3149, for more ideas on preparing cleaning solutions that are safe for the environment at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/HE/HE79100.pdf>.

Welcome to Living Well

Welcome to the Winter 2010 edition of Living Well, coming to you from Family and Consumer Sciences of Virginia Cooperative Extension. This issue focuses on ways to be active in and to support your community. We hope you will find these suggestions helpful for growing a healthy community where all can "Live Well." If you have comments or suggestions about this newsletter, you can reach us at (540) 231-2450, livingwell@vt.edu, or Editor, 115 Hutcheson, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0908. We would love to hear from you!

NOTE: Rising postal rates continue to erode our budget for Living Well. If you have access to e-mail and the Internet and could receive your copy of Living Well electronically, we would appreciate hearing from you. Our e-mail readers receive their copy on the day our printed copies go to the post office, so you would actually hear from us a few days sooner. To change your subscription from postal mail to e-mail, call, write, or e-mail the Virginia Cooperative Extension office in your county. You can find their contact information at www.ext.vt.edu/offices. If you currently receive your subscription by e-mail, there's no need to be in touch with us.

Would you like to be a corporate sponsor or private donor for the Living Well newsletter?

Contact Karen Roth Gehrt at gehrtk@vt.edu or (540) 231-9347.

We are pleased to be a Census Partner with the U.S. Census Bureau. We acknowledge funding received from the USDA/HUD Healthy Homes partnership administered by Alabama Cooperative Extension System for this issue of Living Well.

Recovery Tax Incentives for Individuals

By Karen Lynn Poff, MPA, AFC®

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) contains tax incentives for first-time homebuyers, people purchasing new cars, those making their homes more energy efficient, and parents and students paying for college. The Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009 expanded the home buyers credit to repeat homeowners.

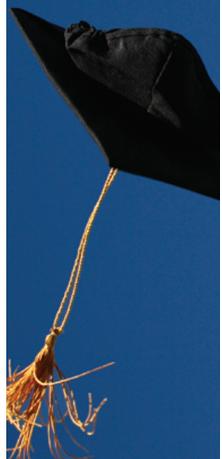
Here are six things the IRS wants you to know about these opportunities:

- 1. First-Time and Repeat Homebuyer Credit:** Taxpayers who purchased a first home may be eligible to receive a credit of up to \$8,000 on their 2009 or 2010 return. To qualify, they must not have owned a home over the past three years and must have a contract by April 30, 2010 and close by June 30. Repeat/move-up home buyers (home owners must have resided in their current home 5 consecutive years out of the last 8 years) may be eligible for up to a \$6,500 credit if they contract by April 30, 2010 and close by June 30.
- 2. New Vehicle Purchase Incentive:** Qualifying taxpayers can deduct the state and local sales and excise taxes paid on the purchase of a new car, light truck, motor home, and motorcycle in 2009. This deduction is limited to the tax on up to \$49,500 of the purchase price of each qualifying vehicle. This incentive does not apply to taxpayers at higher income levels.
- 3. Making Work Pay:** The Making Work Pay Credit lowered the amount of withholding tax deducted from pay checks to put more money into the pockets of wage earners. Individuals who are self-employed can claim this credit when they file their 2009 return.
- 4. Tax Credit for First Four Years of College:** The American Opportunity Credit can help parents and students pay part of the cost of the first four years of college. This credit applies to tax years 2009 and 2010 and is available to a broad range of taxpayers. The maximum annual credit is \$2,500 per student.
- 5. Computer Technology Purchases:** The new law adds computer technology to the list of college expenses that can be paid for by a qualified tuition program, commonly referred to as a 529 plan. For 2009 and 2010, the law expands the definition of qualified higher education expenses to include expenses for computer technology and equipment and Internet access and related services.
- 6. Energy-Efficient Home Improvements:** The amount of credit available to homeowners who have made energy-efficient improvements to their existing homes has increased. Improvements qualifying for credit include adding insulation, energy-efficient exterior windows, and energy-efficient heating and air conditioning systems.

More information on all new tax provisions and helpful videos and audio files can be found at IRS.gov/Recovery and <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=217784,00.html>.

Adapted from Internal Revenue Service, Special Edition Tax Tip #8, September 11, 2009 and Tax Credits for Home Buyers, January, 2010.

Karen Lynn Poff is a Family and Consumer Sciences Agent serving the Northern Shenandoah Valley.



For more information, contact your local Extension office.

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