

# INSITE

PORTSMOUTH  
VIRGINIA  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

SUMMER '09

## HIGH TIMES ON HIGH STREET. AGAIN!

Downtown High Street is enjoying new activity and development. Once vacant storefronts now boast the names of new and returning retailers and restaurants. New businesses such as **NEXT**, a trendy furniture consignment store, in the former Vincent Hester Gallery space located at 607 High Street. The aromatic fragrance of essential oils and body products has returned to High Street with the reopening of **Faveur**

**Natural Spa Essentials** which is located at 614 High Street. New Restaurants such as **Still**, which serves worldly eclectic tapas, at 450 Court Street, and **Montgomery Grill**, located at 725 High Street in the former Comfort Restaurant, allows its patrons to continue to enjoy down home southern cuisine.

Downtown guests can also enjoy international cheeses, exotic wines and

even Sake, at the newly opened **Angry Adam's Wine and Cheese Spot** which anchors the Governor Dinwiddie Hotel and Suites. Entrepreneurs Adam Henderson and Randy Withers, opened the store which offers gourmet items from Virginia only companies. The two have partnered with High Street Art Gallery and offer monthly

*See High Street, page 2*

## Unity of Business Community Proves Successful

Nelson Velez of The Book Owl, located at 5772 Churchland Blvd. says that he never wanted to open a business because, "I am not a businessman." After a friend with a bookstore encouraged him to pursue a similar venture, he says that he chose the Churchland section of Portsmouth, "Because of the cost, perfect size of shops, nice housing, and the fact that three cities are within close proximity of his bookstore location in the Churchland Shopping Center." Nelson explains that bookstores are

*See Unity, page 2*

## Faith is Cornerstone of New Martial Arts School

During a stringent economy when financing for new construction projects is challenging, two local Portsmouth



brothers, Willie & Jeffrey Hunter are fulfilling their father's dreams of building their very own Martial Arts facility. The Tiger Martial Arts facility located in the western section of the city is going to be a \$1.5million 6,700 square foot facility. The brothers believe,

*See Martial Arts School, page 3*

## Maritime Gallery Rises From the Ashes

After a devastating fire destroyed SkipJack Nautical Wares and Mariner Gallery in December 2007; that store has reopened on the water at One High Street in a beautiful 5,000 square foot spacious art gallery and retail storefront. Business owners Joe & Allison Elder considered moving from Portsmouth after the fire, but it was the love and support of the people of Olde Towne that kept them here. Although they were able to salvage a few personal items, much of every-

*See Maritime Gallery, page 3*

## HIGH STREET *Continued from page 1:*

wine tastings with a featured Artist.

With the profits from Angry Adam's, in the fall, Henderson and Withers are planning to open Smokes, an upscale cigar and specialty cigarette shop also located in the Governor Dinwiddie Hotel. The shop will also offer such specialty items as cigar cutters and humidors. Additionally, in the fall, the two are preparing to open Sushi 360, a dine-in, take-out and delivery restaurant. The restaurant will have a modern industrial style and will service all of the Olde Towne area.

Music will soon be in the air as **ERM Media**, a recording label dedicated exclusively to music of the 20th and 21st Century, completes their renovation of the Olde Colony Inn Theatre. The non-profit organization which performs and conducts recordings of their adult symphony, "Millennium", as well as their "Virginia Youth Symphony Orchestra", is in the process of completing their \$50,000 renovation. The theatre will be renamed the **New Colony Theatre** and will include approximately 369 seats, office space and a small retail space for music sales. The organization is expected to bring new music to Portsmouth and new pedestrian activity to High Street as students, their parents and other performers make the theatre their new home and recording studio.

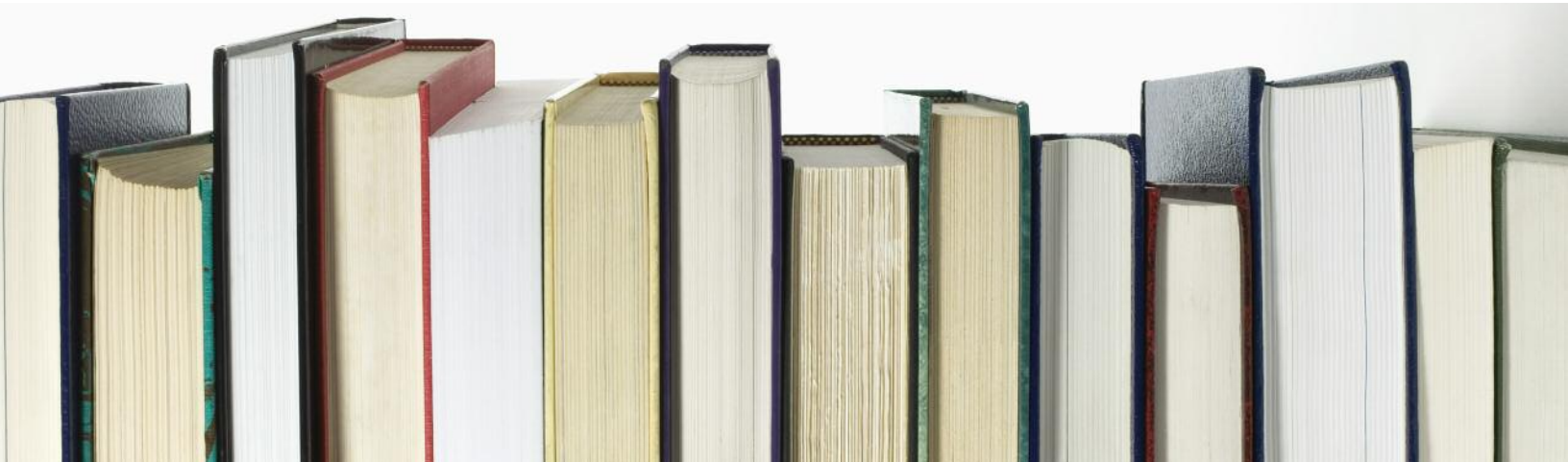
### *Unity, continued from page 1:*

"an endangered species" but he survives by selling books, even brand new at 1/2 price. As the competition of the internet builds, Nelson explains that even if a person does not have the money he will allow them to trade something and get a book for free. He also suggests, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em", so he encourages businesses to make sure they have a website to aid in directing foot traffic to their store location.

Despite the success of his business, Nelson is most proud of his work in

uniting the businesses in the Churchland Shopping Center and surrounding area to form the Churchland Regional Association of Businesses or as it is commonly referred to, CRAB. Through uniting the businesses, Nelson has been able to convince the landlord of the shopping center to participate in the cost of advertising in various publications for the businesses in the center. Nelson explains that as a result of the newspaper advertising and articles, prospective business owners began to visit the shopping center and six businesses

eventually grew to 12 businesses. He explains CRAB has created an environment where businesses work together. For example, an event the organization hosted included antique cars, an outdoor concert and a student art auction benefitting the American Red Cross, American Society for Leukemia and the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Nelson explains, "The event was a very good reflection of the people of Portsmouth because they supported the arts and charity. It showed the businesses what they could accomplish by working together."



*Maritime Gallery, continued from page 1:*

thing they owned was lost in the fire, most critically their home above the storefront.

Joe explains, "Rebuilding the business has not been easy, but through planning and patience, he has recovered." He advises any business that is trying to recover from a catastrophic event to most importantly "Look at what you can afford to do." Secondly, he suggests if possible, rely on previous business relationships and find niches



*"Rebuilding the business has not been easy, but through planning and patience, he has recovered."*

in the marketplace that may create exclusivity for you. He also explains that careful consideration must be put into finding your new location. He and Allison greatly appreciate the community assistance that has been offered and made available to them. He has begun to rebuild his inventory and has launched an aggressive marketing campaign. SkipJack Nautical Wares & Marine Gallery is back and open for business and according to Joe Elder, "business is good"!

*Martial Arts School, continued from page 1:*

"you can't let the economy dictate your emotions... or control your dreams." They credit their faith as the catalyst that encouraged them to pursue their dreams. After approaching several lending institutions and being declined financing, the Hunters realized that they needed to be strategic and careful in their planning. The brothers started

another use. They also recommend that with any construction project it is wise to, "draw what you would like, but be willing to compromise on what you can actually afford".

The Hunters have furthered safeguarded themselves during tough economic times by striving to provide exceptional customer service and encouraging their students who have



saving money for their project. They wrote a business plan and as a result of their discipline in saving money and no business debt, they were able to get a 504 loan from the Small Business Administration.

The Hunters explain that when considering any construction project, one should consider a multi-functional use for the building. Their logic in this approach serves as a safeguard in case the business is not successful and they need to sell or lease the building for

lost their jobs to keep training at the facility. They also believe another way to insulate your business against the challenges of the economy is to create a business within a business.

Willie and Jeffrey Hunter are proud of the fact that so many people in the community have expressed pride in their building being built in Portsmouth. The Hunters believe, "so many people are afraid of failing, but failing is a part of succeeding".

## WHAT'S NEWS

Visitors to the Victory corridor will notice new construction activity on the site formerly occupied by Fairwood Homes. The new infrastructure to include all utilities, curb, gutters and roadways is being constructed under the direction of Victory Crossing Developers II, LLC, the master developer for the project. Scheduled completion of the infrastructure is February 2010. This 135 acre site will host Victory Village, the city's first true mixed-use development. Efforts are ongoing to bring multiple elements of improvements to the site from the residential, office, hospitality and retail industries. Parcels have been designated at the site and are actively being marketed. Unique to this site, will be a strong education component in the form of the Fred W. Beazley Portsmouth Campus of Tidewater Community College. Its targeted opening date is January 2010.



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## WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO HELP YOU SUCCEED

### Resources

The Department of Economic Development wants doing business in Portsmouth to be easy. We have updated and revised several of our key resources such as our *Existing Business* and our *Incentive Zones* brochures. A newly created *Guide to Starting Your Business* brochure was established to provide prospective business owners with a step-by-step analysis of how to start your business in the City of Portsmouth with the contact information for the appropriate department. The brochure also provides helpful hints such as where to find necessary forms and information online and suggested timelines for required licenses and applications.

The Department paid special attention to making sure that our recently redesigned website, [PortsmouthVaED.com](http://PortsmouthVaED.com), is extremely user friendly and resourceful. Visit the Department's online business center to have access to important documents such as the Department's *Development Guide* and other resourceful information in electronic format. Information on upcoming workshops and conferences sponsored by the Department is also available on the website.

### Outreach Efforts

#### Workshops & Conferences

In an effort to provide sound business information and tips for our existing businesses, the Department sponsors monthly workshops that are on a variety of topics such as Procurement practices, *Marketing Your Business* and *The Fundamentals of Writing a Business Plan*. The workshops are free and open to the public. In an effort to accommodate the busy schedules of our existing business community, these workshops are generally held in the evenings.