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FALLS CHURCH • TYSONS CORNER • MERRIFIELD • McLEAN • NORTH ARLINGTON • BAILEY'S CROSSROADS

INSIDE THIS WEEK

LAWSUIT VS. F.C. WATER TO PROCEED

A Fairfax Circuit Court judge overruled a demurrer filed by the City of Falls Church last month, allowing the lawsuit brought by Fairfax County against the City's water system, seeking \$21 million in compensatory and \$350,000 in punitive damages, to proceed. SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 7

NEW TYSONS THEATRE GROUP FLOURISHES

Blocks away from a future Metro station, the Tysons Corner-based theatre troupe 1st Stage sits at the forefront of the area's cultural reinvention. SEE PAGE 9

HELEN THOMAS: OBAMA TOUGH ON AUTOMAKERS & WORKERS

President Obama seems to be more interested in propping up Wall Street than saving the car companies and the auto workers in Detroit.



SEE PAGE 10

'ADVENTURELAND' SWINGS INTO THE BOX OFFICE

Set in the summer of 1987, "Adventureland" is a comedy about a college grad who takes a job at a local amusement park and gets more than he bargained for. SEE PAGE 30



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AND THEY'RE OFF!



MORE THAN 400 runners and walkers of all sizes and shapes braved a dreary, damp Saturday afternoon to participate in a five-kilometer benefit run along the portion of the W&OD trail in the City of Falls Church last weekend. They're shown here taking off after a ribbon cutting honoring the 50th anniversary of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and 35th anniversary of the W&OD Trail. Rep. Jim Moran is on the right. (See more elsewhere in this edition). (PHOTO: GARY MESTER)

F.C. Council Hosts Saturday Meet On Budget, Critical Decisions Due

BY NICHOLAS F. BENTON
FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

The Falls Church City Council has scheduled another special opportunity this Saturday morning for citizens to bring their concerns and priorities about the extraordinary next fiscal year budget. Billed as an "informal discussion" with some members of the Council, it will be at 10 a.m. at the F.C.

Community Center.

Faced with the unprecedented need to cut spending below levels in the current fiscal year, the Council is considering both raising the real estate tax rate, and cutting seven City jobs, imposing a wage freeze on all the 350 remaining City employees, and either killing or severely scaling back the operation of the City-owned GEORGE bus service.

A particularly dicey situation faces the Council in this belt-tightening exercise, as the City's School Board has included a modest "half-step" salary increase for all its employees, amounting on average to about \$500 a year, while a strict freeze has been proposed by City Manager Wyatt Shields for all non-school City employees. The disparity has been called "the giant elephant sitting in the room"

by Mayor Robin Gardner.

At a work session on the budget last week, at least three of the seven Council members openly expressed their opposition to any salary increases for school employees, despite the fact School Board members were present to defend their decision in the face of continuing competition for talent in the region. The increase, said School Board Vice Chair Susan Kearney, would only bring the City's salary scale into "the middle of the pack" compared to surrounding jurisdictions, and would insulate it from a potential salary

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