

2008 BCLP/CVCC ESSAY CONTEST

SUBJECT: LAND PRESERVATION

QUESTION: Bedford County's population growth is the greatest in the region over the past several years. A majority of Bedford County residents believe that maintaining open space is important to preserve the character and quality of life of their home. What do you want Bedford County to be like in 10 years? How can we achieve that?

RULES/ELIGIBILITY

- Entrants must be enrolled in a CVCC college degree program at the time of entry OR high school seniors that are college eligible in the fall of 2009 are also eligible.
- **Applicant must demonstrate by way of home address that they are residents of Bedford County. Applicant need not intend to enroll at Central Virginia Community College, but potential award for winning entries is greater for students in that circumstance.**
- A stapled cover sheet **MUST** include: name and address of entrant; entrant's e-mail address (if available), home phone number, and your declared major (if applicable).
- Essay must be no fewer than 1,200 and no more than 1,600 words in length (not including references), and must be typewritten and double-spaced. One entry per student.
- Essay must be solely the work of the entrant.
- Essay must be postmarked no later than **February 10, 2009**. Mail entries to: BCLP Essay Contest, PO Box 86, Bedford, VA 24523.
- Decisions of the judges are final.
- All entries become the property of the CVCC and will not be returned.
- Awards will be given on **March 19, 2009** at the Bedford Branch CVCC.

YOU MUST:

- Type your essay, double-spaced, on one side of white 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper with left and right margins set at 1 1/4 inches each.
- **Your name must not appear anywhere on the essay, only on the cover sheet.**
- Number the pages of your essay.

YOUR ESSAY MAY BE DISQUALIFIED IF:

- It is not on the topic.
- Cover sheet is not complete or contains incorrect information
- It does not have reference notes and a bibliography.
- It uses encyclopedia citations in the bibliography, or relies solely on Internet research.
- It is postmarked after the deadline of February 10, 2009.
- It **plagiarizes**—that is, uses someone else's statements or ideas as your own.

HOW DO I WRITE THE ESSAY?

Your essay should contain the following components, although use of these headings is not required.

- An **introduction**, which introduces the subject and contains an explanation of your position. The objective is to demonstrate that you understand the essay contest question and have formed a response to it.
- A **body**, which develops your argument using research and analysis. The process of analysis may include comparing and contrasting, differentiating among several ideas

or events, critiquing a variety of perspectives, interpreting results, or drawing inferences. In this section, you should analyze two case studies. Be sure to identify the sources of your information or ideas.

- A **conclusion**, which summarizes the research and analysis presented in the essay and sets forth your conclusions. Drawing on ideas already presented, you should demonstrate that your conclusions support the position you put forward in the opening paragraphs. Your aim is to convince the reader that your position is reasonable and valid.

Your essay should also include **notes and a bibliography** except when using APA style:

- **Reference notes** (footnotes or endnotes) give the sources of your information or ideas. Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page where the information appears. Alternatively, you may gather all the notes at the end of the text as endnotes.
- A **bibliography** is a list of the works that you have referred to in your essay or have consulted in order to write it.

Essays that use a variety of sources—academic journals, news magazines, newspapers, books, government documents, publications from research organizations—fare better in the contest.

Citations in the reference notes or bibliography should follow rules given in a handbook such as the **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers or the Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations**. Typically an entry will have **at least** the name of the author or editor, title of the work, and date and place of publication. The bibliography should be arranged alphabetically by the last names of the authors.

Encyclopedias are not acceptable as sources. Essays citing encyclopedias in notes or bibliography may be disqualified.

The Internet or World Wide Web should not be the only source for your essay. Be aware that you may encounter "republished" or "third generation" information on the Internet that is inaccurate or improperly attributed. When citing Internet sources, you must include the following information: author(s), title of work, Internet address, and date information was accessed. Detailed instructions can be obtained from the manuals listed above. For the purposes of this essay, Internet sources should be listed separately from non-electronic sources, such as books, magazines, and newspapers.

HOW WILL THE ESSAY BE JUDGED?

Essays will be judged on both style and content. Judges will look for writing that is clear, articulate and logically organized. To ensure the anonymity of our participants, essay cover sheets are removed during judging. The Judging panel will consist of two CVCC staff and two Bedford Citizens for Land Preservation (BCLP) members.

Your essay will be judged based on the seven criteria outlined below.

1. **Focus:** Examines how well your essay responds to the questions and/or tasks presented. Does the essay provide specific and thorough responses to all of the questions and/or tasks presented? An excellent essay provides specific and thorough responses to all of the questions and/or tasks presented.
2. **Organization:** Looks at the structure of your essay and the strength of your thesis statement. Does the essay have an organized structure? An excellent essay has an

introduction, a body and a conclusion. The organization includes an excellent thesis and moves the reader through the text.

3. **Analysis:** Considers how well your arguments are supported. Are the discussion points argued coherently and supported with research? In an excellent essay all of the arguments are strong, well detailed and extremely well supported by convincing and accurate evidence.
4. **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Examines how well conclusions and recommendations are expressed and how closely they follow from the analysis. Conclusions and recommendations should not present new information that is not a part of the analysis: Does the essay provide sound conclusions and recommendations that follow from the analysis? An excellent essay provides a coherent and comprehensive summary based on the analysis. All of the solutions to the problems presented are specific and well thought out.
5. **Originality:** Looks for creativity in writing. Does the writer use develop ideas creatively? In an excellent essay, the writer proposes and develops creative ideas, through the selection of cases and/or examples, to present novel analysis and alternatives throughout the entire essay.
6. **Voice:** Considers how well your writing engages the reader. Is the essay compelling and/or engaging? An excellent essay fully captures the reader's attention. The flow of the essay keeps the reader engaged throughout the entire text.
7. **Style and Mechanics:** Examines how well the essay is written in terms of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as word choice and sentence construction. Is the essay well written? An excellent essay uses standard writing conventions correctly, e.g. grammar, spelling, and punctuation, with no errors. There are no errors in word choice and all sentences are well constructed.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS*:

First Place:	\$300
Second Place:	\$150
Honorable Mention:	\$50

*Need-based students may qualify for matching CVCC Scholarships. Please see your financial aid advisor for details: 587-7901

Additional scholarships of up to \$200 available to students enrolled at the Bedford Branch CVCC.