

Kathy Swinehart

Supervisor

Keeping Middlesex Competitive

I have had conversations with people across Middlesex, and the one thing I hear is they want to keep the county competitive. We can compete, and the people of Middlesex County should expect us to. As a member of the Board of Supervisors I intend to help citizens of Middlesex meet this challenge by focusing on actions that do the following:

- **Expand Business Opportunities**
- **Keep the Best – Public Safety and Teachers**
- **Preserve our Quality of Life**

Our county offers residents and visitors many opportunities for a good life. We are blessed with beautiful rivers, rich land and established communities. We are also adjoined by counties that have similar advantages.

These counties, Lancaster and Mathews, are also gifted with miles of waterfront and water access. These counties have roughly the same number of residents as Middlesex. Their tax rates on real and personal property are nearly the same and their spending for public safety and education are very close too.

For the fiscal year 2017-18 Lancaster's total spending was a little over \$31 million, Middlesex was almost \$25 million and Mathews spent over \$23 million.

To remain a vibrant community, Middlesex must attract residents and new business and compete for tourism dollars. If we don't we could be faced with a slow decline in population, business and quality of life. That's not something that the citizens of Middlesex are willing to accept.

I believe in the people and the potential of our beautiful county and I will work to see that we are prepared to take advantage of opportunities to keep Middlesex competitive. We need to retain the highly skilled people who are teaching our children, providing important public service and keeping our county safe. We also need to welcome and plan for new businesses and employers.

Being competitive means planning for a future of shared prosperity and optimism. **It's important that we are realistic about what neighboring counties do to attract business and visitors and make sure that we can do the same for all of our merchants, marinas, and industries.** When we have information that tells us we are falling behind, we need to act, not simply wish things were better.

So, how can we make Middlesex more competitive? In the coming weeks I will expand on each of the key elements of Keeping Middlesex Competitive. Let me know what you think. **I'd like to hear your ideas.**

You can call me at 804-356-5856, email at kathyswinehartforsupervisor@hughes.net or follow me on Facebook at Kathy Swinehart for Supervisor.