Petersburg Project

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Petersburg, population of 33,740, has gone through severe economic problems. A majority of the community is over the age of 18 with an average age of about 37 years old. The majority of the people who live there are also white and 54% female. There are about 15,955 available housing units with an average cost of $68,600. Comparing this cost to Virginia’s average housing cost, which is $125,400, one can already see that there is a financial difference. The average house cost is a lot higher than the average family income which sits at a low $28,851. About 60% of the people who live there are involved in the labor force with 16.7% of families below the poverty line. Education wise, only 1,388 people have attended college or post grad and people over the age of 25 who graduated high school is only 30%. Many of the people who work there are employed by restaurants and sales coordinators, meaning they are in the low to middle class pay area. The main benefit for Petersburg is that there is public transportation available for people to get to and from work.

In the year 2017, there have been some small efforts made to help Petersburg, Virginia and its individuals. These efforts are recorded online, but mostly through newspaper articles. One such article is “Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services cuts the ribbon on a new office expansion project” or “DARS Office Reopens.” This article was posted November 6, 2017 in Petersburg, by John Adam. Simply, it speaks of how thirty years later this building was finally able to expand, and the business could reach out to more in need individuals. DARS is a business that helps people with mental, physical or both disabilities live a somewhat normal life. They can now help the citizens from all over Petersburg by providing a variation of assistance for those who need it. For example, they can help one find a job. People with disabilities will now have an easier time receiving and obtain their goals. It all starts with one happy, flourishing person to make others want to start obtaining their goals. Another article, “Petersburg administration focuses on employee health,” was posted November 2, 2017 by John Adam. This article talks about how “Female members of the city administration traveled to Southside Regional Medical Center to get mammograms, to discuss women’s health.” This article makes it known that there are some efforts that are being over looked. Nobody wants to ask for help, but some women decided that they would take the risk and make Petersburg’s women speak up about one’s condition. In Petersburg, most working-class citizens are proven to be at risk for this condition. It is proven that most women try to hide the fact they are sick. These administrators walk to help raise hope and independence for the women of Petersburg. “Roanoke and Petersburg will receive more than $600,000 towards affordable housing” is an article posted by Barbara Estrada on November 15, 2017. This article speaks of how the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development decided to help the various families in Petersburg. This Department provides a lot of money. This money will be used to help, victims, low income families, and veterans or to help them gain an affordable house with no worries. This action helps the many citizens gain a worry free, affordable, and safe house.

The solution to the Petersburg problem will not be simple, and one thing may not cause a big change, but anything could help. We propose that the people of Petersburg disband their police force. By disbanding it, this allows the Sheriff Department to take over all of the city. The main difference between a police force and Sheriff Department is that police are paid by the city itself, as well as all of their cars and other expenses. If the city were to disband it, they would only have to pay for expenses such as cars for officers. Deputies are paid by the state, not the city. This would not lose any jobs because by disbanding the police force there would need to be more people on the Sheriff Department to protect the city. This means that all of the disbanded police officers would just be employed by the Sheriff Department. This information was found in an interview with Major Bryan Smith of the Portsmouth Sheriff Department.

Another solution would be to combine expenses. Each city has its own maintenance crew for vehicles such as busses. The state also has a maintenance crew. The easiest way to gain some revenue is to combine crews so again, the state would be paying the salaries instead of the city. The main problem with this would be the loss of jobs. The goal is to decrease unemployment rates, not increase it. To combat this, we could give tax incentives to big companies such as pharmaceutical companies to move to Petersburg. Even though the high paying positions would need to be covered by professionals, all companies, especially big ones, need janitors, field crew, and other lower positions to be filled. This could help decrease unemployment even if it does not increase wages. A way to gain money for the city but also increase wages for lower positions would be to limit the amount of upper level positions. If we remove assistant managers and other positions that are not necessary, we can increase wages for lower positions. It would also be easier for people who have worked higher positions to get a new job than those who do lower level positions.

Our last solution, which goes along with adding a big company, would be to input a shipping company via truck stops or railroads. Petersburg is located strategically between interstates 85 and 95 making it a common place for shipping to pass. Not only would this increase job opportunities, but would also increase money for the city.

In conclusion, the city of Petersburg has already risen out of the economic crisis they entered a little bit. The easiest thing would be to avoid a crisis all together by saving money and giving tax incentives to companies to stay and not shut down. However, since it is already past that chance, the solutions above should hopefully increase money available to the city enough that Petersburg can get out of the slumps.

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