

Owning a piece of history

DALE CITY » County chairman excited about buying Bel Air

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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Chairman Corey A. Stewart woke up April 19 with the realization that his lifestyle was going to change dramatically very soon.

The day before, his wife, Maria, had made the winning bid for the historic Bel Air estate, which sits on 25 acres in Dale City.

"I was excited about it, but I woke up [April 19] and thought, 'I did what?'" said Stewart, who

has lived in the same home in Lake Ridge since 2001. "It's a chunk of change, and we're not going to have as much spending money as we once had."

The Stewarts' winning bid was \$875,000 for the centuries-old home once frequented by presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. As a self-proclaimed history buff, Stewart said he liked it from the first visit. As the auction date got closer, he and Maria were more enticed by the place.

"We were scared by the challenge, but we fell in love with the place," Stewart said.

Stewart has no plans to change the house and is eager to move in with Maria and his two school-aged sons once the ink has dried on the closing. Stewart said he hopes to main-

tain its impeccable appearance and eventually leave the home to his children.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources placed an easement on the property in the 1980s, which will keep the current parcel of land intact. It also has been placed on the Department of Interior's National Register of Historic Places.

Stewart said current owner Bill Naedele was relieved that a county resident who appreciated the history of the place placed the winning bid. This will mark the first time children have lived in the home since the 1960s, Stewart said.

Naedele inherited the home through his wife's family. In the 1940s, the Florys purchased the home. It was in such terrible disrepair that the renovations



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The Bel Air plantation, seen during an historic show, was sold to Corey and Maria Stewart with a winning bid of \$875,000.

took 25 years longer than expected, Naedele said.

Today, it's a fully restored, five-bedroom home with modern plumbing and a modern electrical system. Stewart, who's running for lieutenant governor next year, joked that it could

become the very first lieutenant governor's mansion in Virginia.

"It's a beautiful home and a beautiful piece of land," Stewart said. "I just thought it was a remarkably good buy."

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