

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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Gummies are an alternative source for CBD, according to owners of The Hemp Post in Collinsville.

Delving into the weeds of recreational marijuana

Brandon Martin
Staff writer

The state has been abuzz lately after Gov. Ralph Northam announced his support for the legalization of recreational marijuana.

Currently, Northam is working with lawmakers to finalize legislation on the issue in advance of the 2021 General Assembly session set to convene on Jan. 13.

"It's time to legalize marijuana in Virginia," Northam said. "Our Commonwealth has an opportunity to be the first state in the South to take this step, and we will lead with a focus on equity, public health, and public safety. I look forward to working with the General Assembly to get this right."

As legislators debate the issue, local community members

have differing opinions on the subject.

"What is done by legislative acts, we follow the law," Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry said. "I don't agree with it. I personally do not think that is a positive but what is handed down by the state, we will follow the laws and we will be professional."

Perry said his personal opposition comes from underlying dangers that could be associated with marijuana.

"I think marijuana is very much a gateway drug and I think it starts people on the way to intoxicants where they are pursuing a high when that (marijuana) doesn't fulfill an addiction anymore," he said.

This is an opinion that Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith also holds.

See **Marijuana**, page 5

Veterans honored at county meeting



David King (right) receives a medal from Henry County Board of Supervisors Vice-Chairman Debra Buchanan (center) after being named the 2020 Outstanding Military Veteran.

Brandon Martin
Staff writer

Multiple veterans were honored at the 2020 Veterans Awards ceremony held during the Nov. 24 meeting of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.

Lt. Col. David King received the 2020 Outstanding Military Veteran Award.

King began his military training at the Virginia Military Institute before joining the Army. He has since led the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) programs at Bassett, Patrick County and Tunstall high schools.

"Most of what I learned as a lieutenant, I learned from soldiers and particularly the non-commissioned officers. My platoon sergeant told me that nobody earns an award on his own and that is certainly true," King said. "The other thing he told me is that you've got to live up to your promotions, awards and anything like that every day. I do my best to do that so thank you all."

The Outstanding Military Veteran Award was created in 2009. Debra Buchanan, of the Horsepasture District, suggested it to honor county veterans.

With the support of Martinsville City Council, the award was expanded in 2013 to include nominations from

the city. The award winner is selected by a committee of county and city representatives and the Veteran's Service Organization (VSO).

"This selection represents the best of what service to our country and to our community means," Buchanan said.

Representatives from the VSO honored other community members that have been instrumental in promoting veteran causes.

David Kipfinger, commander of American Legion Pannill Post 42, presented the VSO Veteran of the Year Award to Charles Williams, who served as lineman in the signal company during the Vietnam War.

"Upon his separation from the military, he returned to the Martinsville-Henry County area and has served the community with honor and distinction," Kipfinger said. "He is a member of many organizations in the area where he serves in many leadership positions. His objective is to challenge himself to be the best he can be with the talents and abilities that God has given to him so that he can advance successfully in the field he has chosen to work in."

"This is quite an honor for me because there are people out here that deserve this a

See **Veterans**, page 4

Agency provides year-round support

Brandon Martin
Staff writer

As Christmas draws closer each year, the sight of bright red pails accompanied by the sound of ringing bells prompts many shoppers to donate their spare change to Salvation Army workers stationed outside of local stores.

While the Salvation Army is most visible during the holiday season, their work doesn't cease on Dec. 24.

"Need knows no season," said Lt. Bradly Mumford, corps officer at the Salvation Army in Martinsville. "What's really interesting, yet alarming, is the fact that after December and Christmas, we will perhaps be able to take a breather and enjoy the scenery but there are going to be a lot of people that we serve where it's just going to be another day for them."

Mumford said the stress of the holidays continues for most people.

"There's going to be knocks at the door the first of the year. The need is going to continue to come and we want to help while we can,"



Lts. Ashley (left) and Bradly Mumford serve as corps officers for the local Salvation Army at 603 S. Memorial Boulevard in Martinsville.

Mumford said. He and his wife, Ashley, have been corps officers for the local Salvation Army for the past year and a half.

The center, located at 603 S. Memorial Boulevard in Martinsville, serves the City of Martinsville and Henry and Patrick coun-

ties. It has been in operation for more than 80 years, according to Mumford. Still, each day brings a new challenge.

"A typical day begins as soon as our staff enters the door at 8:30 in the morning and the phones start

See **Support**, page 6

Country icon helps to bring the joy of reading to local children

Brandon Martin
Staff writer

With the season of giving in full swing, the United Way of Henry County and Martinsville (HCM) and Smart Beginnings Martinsville Henry (SBMH) is gearing up for their campaign to support local childhood literacy through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Parton founded the Imagination Library in 1995 to inspire a love for books and reading amongst the nation's preschool children. Twenty-five years after its inception, the library recently hit a new milestone by giving its 150 millionth book. The library currently donates to approximately 1.7 million children around the world each month.

Philip Wenkstern, director of the United Way of HCM, said that the program provides a book a month for about 1,700 children locally, each year.

"It's a fantastic program that promotes a strong, loving relationship between parents and their children while also promoting literacy," Wenkstern said. "We are so happy to be able to give the gift of reading to so many children in our local community each month."

The books are chosen from a list developed by reading specialists with The Dollywood Foundation. While each child will receive different books based on individual needs, the



A screening of "The Library That Dolly Built," a behind-the-scenes look at the Imagination Library, will be live streamed exclusively on Facebook on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. The screening will be followed by a conversation with, and live acoustic performance, by Dolly Parton. Viewers can tune into the live screening and conversation on FB.ME/dollysimaginationlibrary and ImaginationLibrary.com.

first book mailed to each is "The Little Engine That Could," according to SBMH Director Melanie McLarty. This also is the first book that Parton learned to read.

On average, Wenkstern said it costs about \$27 to provide an age-appropriate book to a child once a month. He said the United Way needs approximately \$49,000 total to cover the local contribution for their participation in the program.

Wenkstern said the United Way has an annual fundraising effort from September until December that helps fund all their yearly activities. Of the drive, he said about \$15,000 will be designated for the Imagination Library. The remaining \$34,000 is covered through a variety of grants and philanthropic contributions.

The local fundraising effort will have a boost from Parton herself this year, with the drive coinciding with the free one-night-only live streaming world premiere event for "The Library That Dolly Built," a behind-the-scenes look at the Imagination Library.

McLarty said that Martinsville-Henry County was originally selected as a host community for the screening of the film, but the event was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The event has since been reimaged as a live stream screening of the film, exclusively on Facebook, available nationally on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. The screening will be followed by a conversation with, and live acoustic performance, by Parton. View-

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County denies rezoning application for storage unit site

Brandon Martin
Staff writer

After hearing opposition of many community members, the Henry County Board of Supervisors declined an application for the rezoning of residential property to develop commercial self-storage units.

Adam Foley proposed to start his business on property located on the northwest side of Smith Rucker Road, approximately 400 feet north of Virginia Ave., in the Collinsville District.

Lee Clark, director of planning and zoning, said "the concerns that were expressed both by the residents and the commission is that this is the first lot in the residential part of the subdivision. There was concern expressed about changing that first lot in the residential

subdivision to commercial and thereby affect change in the character of the existing community there. There was also concern addressed about additional traffic."

Based on concerns of the Planning Commission and department staff, Clark recommended the application by Foley be denied.

"I listened attentively during the concerns of the community about the rezoning of that land," Foley said. "All of the issues that I heard were specific to the convenience store and the issues that have been with the convenience store for quite some time regarding shootings, trash and things of that nature. This is a completely separate business and a completely separate use of land."

To help alleviate some of the concerns, Foley said he intend-

ed to implement lights to prevent "riff-raff" that is "unlikely to occur in a well-lit area."

Additionally, he said signs and fences would be used to prevent undesirable patronage.

"I do not plan on allowing that to happen to my business. I will not allow that stuff to happen at a place of my business," Foley said. "I understand the concerns of the community with that land being changed to commercial zoning."

Gary Brown, of the Collinsville District, spoke out against the proposal.

"I've been there for approximately 43 years, and I am in

See **Rezoning**, page 2



SCC denies Appalachian Power request for rate increase

Appalachian Power Company has earned a rate of return (profit) that is within the range authorized by Virginia utility law for calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019. The State Corporation Commission (SCC) made the finding following a triennial financial review of the company in which it was seeking an increase in rates.

The SCC order means Appalachian Power does not receive

a rate increase. And it means customers are not due refunds. The company was seeking to increase rates by approximately \$10 per month for a typical residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity.

The company's authorized rate of return on equity during the three-year review period was 9.42 percent. After reviewing the reasonableness of the company's expenses and revenues

during the period, the Commission determined the company earned slightly above that level.

The Commission also set a new authorized rate of return on equity of 9.2 percent. That is the rate that will be used to evaluate the company's earnings during the next triennial financial review case in 2023. It will also be the return used for any new rate riders or adjustments to existing riders.

In its final order, the Commission made the following determinations:

*denied the company's request to apply the 2015 planned retirements of three coal-fired power plants to 2019 earnings.

*denied a request to increase the residential basic service charge from \$7.96 to \$14.

*denied implementation of a residential rate design that would have charged higher

rates during summer months and lower rates during the winter. The company will continue charging the same residential rate year-round.

*approved voluntary energy efficiency rate schedules to provide residential customers with pricing signals that shift consumption to hours when demand is less, and prices are lower (Smart Demand and Time-of-Use).

Virginia Redistricting Commission takes shape; public can apply

Hunter Britt
Capital News Service

More than half a dozen legislators have been named to a bipartisan redistricting commission which seeks to fairly draw congressional and state legislative districts.

The commission will be made up of 16 people. Half of them will be legislators and the other half will be Virginia citizens.

Virginia legislative leaders chose four Republicans and four Democrats this week to sit on the commission. Democrats include Dels. Delores McQuinn, D-Richmond and Marcus Simon, D-Falls Church, plus Sens. Mamie Locke, D-Hampton, and George Barker, D-Fairfax.

The Republicans are Dels. Les Adams, R-Chatham, and Margaret Ransone, R-Westmoreland, as well as Sens. Ryan McDougle, R-Hanover, and Steve Newman, R-Lynchburg.

Del. Eileen Filler-Corn, speaker of the Virginia House and one of the officials responsible for naming the legislative members of the commission, announced her appointments on Nov. 30. Filler-Corn said in a statement that McQuinn and Simon are "committed to inclusion" and "dedicated to a fair redistricting process that protects the vote of every Virginian."

House Republican Leader Del. Todd Gilbert, R-Shenandoah, said in a statement that his appoint-

tees "will help craft what the voters have demanded — fair maps for every Virginian."

Almost 66 percent of Virginians voted last month in support of an amendment to establish the commission, according to the Virginia Department of Elections. Days after the election, state lawmakers agreed to a \$135 billion revised budget that included setting up the commission. The previous law stated that the General Assembly and the governor had total control over redistricting.

The majority of congressional and state legislative districts in Virginia were redrawn after the 2010 U.S. Census when Republicans controlled

both chambers of the General Assembly and the executive branch. The maps are scheduled to be redrawn again next year with final census counts. However, the U.S. Census Bureau requested a delay to submit redistricting data to states no later than July 31, 2021, instead of April 1.

Erin Dodson, a 20-year-old from Sussex County, is one of more than 2.7 million Virginians who voted for the amendment. He said that getting Virginians more involved was a step in the right direction.

"I feel like it's only fair that the people are heard," Dodson said. "This is America; freedom of speech and government

involvement is what we're all about."

New legislative district maps approved by the commission would go to the General Assembly for a vote. If any are rejected, the commission would be required to produce new maps. If rejected again, the Virginia Supreme Court would establish the new districts.

The state also started accepting applications this week for residents who want to serve on the commission. Retired circuit court judges will choose the citizen members.

To be considered, citizens must have lived in Virginia for the past three years. They also must have voted in at least two of the last three general elec-

tions. Citizens who hold, have held or sought to hold a political position or public office will not be considered, nor will lobbyists or people who have served as lobbyists in the last five years. Three letters of recommendation are also required to be considered for an appointment.

The applications are due Dec. 28.

They may be submitted by email to varedist@dls.virginia.gov, faxed to (804) 698-1899 or mailed to the Division of Legislative Services, Attn: Selection Committee, 900 E. Main St., Richmond, VA 23219.

For more information, visit: redistricting.dls.virginia.gov

Ban on phone use while driving in Virginia starts Jan. 1

A new Virginia law banning the use of cellphones while driving goes into effect Jan. 1, 2021, and Drive Smart Virginia is reminding motorists of the consequences of distracted driving.

The mandate was signed by Gov. Ralph Northam on July 8, making Virginia the 22nd state to ban the use of handheld devices while driving. The law now prohibits drivers from holding any personal communication devices while driving a moving vehicle on the state's roadways.

Though the ban has officially

been Virginia law since July, it will be enforced beginning Jan. 1. In the interim, DSV is raising public consciousness of the dangers of distracted driving through its "Phone Down. It's the Law." campaign.

According to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles 2019 crash statistics, distracted driving caused 23,246 accidents and 120 fatal crashes. Those figures represent 18.1 percent of all crashes and 14.5 percent of all fatalities on Virginia roadways.

Virginia DMV statistics from 2018 revealed that the jurisdictions with the most distracted driving crashes were Fairfax County, Prince William County, Virginia Beach, Hampton and Newport News. The counties with the most fatalities were Prince William, Fairfax, Fauquier, Hanover and Spotsylvania.

"Thousands of Virginians are involved in crashes every year, and distracted driving is a factor in many of those crashes," said David Tenenbaum, Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance

Co. actuarial manager and treasurer of Drive Smart Virginia.

"Manipulating a cellphone while driving increases your crash risk by 2,300 percent because it involves all three kinds of distractions—manual, visual and cognitive. Help us save lives by putting your phone down."

Drivers who violate the new law will be subject to a \$125 fine for the first offense and \$250 for each subsequent offense. Violations that occur in highway work zones also will carry a \$250 fine.

It still is permissible to use hands-free technology to make or receive phone calls while driving—the ban only prohibits drivers from directly handling their devices. If drivers must use their phones while traveling, they must be lawfully parked or stopped to do so.

Drivers using a handheld device to report an emergency are exempt, as are the operators of emergency vehicles who are engaged in their official duties. Motorists also may handle amateur or citizens band radios.

Rezoning

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opposition of this for several reasons," he said. "Number one, it's right there when you start into our subdivision. It's probably going to create more traffic."

Brown said that the visitors to the business would inevitably tour the rest of the neighborhood.

"You don't know what people are up to. You don't know what they are looking for. You don't know how honest they are," Brown said.

Of the additional

lighting, Brown said there are already areas that "are lit up like a football field at night," but that it hasn't deterred "people from coming over there and parking."

Brown also questioned the motives of people that would use Foley's business.

"People that take the rental part there, are they really for a good reason just to store things or are they storing things illegal," Brown asked the board. "If it's illegal, what are they going to

do within our neighborhood? Before I go, I'm going to leave you with one question. If you lived in my neighborhood, would you want that there?"

Several other community members detailed similar concerns before the board unanimously voted to deny the rezoning application.

In other matters, the board:

*Heard an update on delinquent tax efforts from County Treasurer Scott Grindstaff. As of

Oct. 30, 93.86 percent of 2019 personal property taxes and 95.52 percent of 2019 real estate taxes have been collected.

*Approved a list of projects for the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The plan will be forwarded to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to maintain the eligibility of the participating localities to receive EDA funding.

*Awarded contracts to R. K. Chevrolet, \$37,603.03, and Hall Automotive, \$238,924.82, for replacement vehicles used by the Sheriff's Department.

*Approved a resolution to update the jail inmate fund's signature authority. The jail inmate fund is made up of cash on Henry County Jail inmates at the time of their arrest or contributions to them from their family members. These funds can only be used for the health and welfare of

county inmates.

*Appropriated \$50,000 from the Department of Housing and Community Development and the \$15,000 from the Harvest Foundation to cover the costs associated with conducting a Broadband Planning Study.

*Approved the carry-over of \$76,787,757.77 in funds from fiscal year (FY) 2020's budget to FY21. This includes interfund transfers of \$4,247,783.91.

*Reappointed Marcus Stone to the Public Service Authority for a term to expire in 2025; Jeannette Hurd, Pamela Randall, and Bonnie Favero to the ANCHOR Commission for terms to expire in 2024; Barry Jarrett to the Ninth District Development Financing, Inc., for a term to end in 2022. The board also reappointed Lee Clark and Brian Mc Alexander to the West Piedmont Planning District Commission for terms to end in

2023.

*Considered changes to the Henry County Code of Ordinances to levy a one percent sales and use tax to fund school construction and renovation for a period of time commencing on April 1, 2021 and ending on July 28, 2040 and to authorize the Virginia Tax Commissioner to collect said tax. The measure was previously approved by Henry County voters on a ballot referendum during the most recent election.

*Approved a rezoning request for property located at 1160 Fisher Farm Road in the Ridge-way District. The applicant has removed the existing site-built house and intends to replace it with a double wide manufactured home.

*Heard from Steven Edwards, representing his parents who live in the Reed Creek District, regarding excessive noise from a neighbor's generator.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. Holds candles</p> <p>7. In possession of</p> <p>10. Rodents</p> <p>12. Type of cofactor (Brit. sp.)</p> <p>13. Hard candy on a stick</p> <p>14. Animal of the weasel family</p> <p>15. Things that should not be overlooked</p> <p>16. "Silence" author</p> <p>17. Dried, split lentils</p> <p>18. People native to Ghana</p> <p>19. Barros and Gasteyer are two</p> <p>21. British thermal unit</p> <p>22. Large oblong hall</p> <p>27. Ethnic group in Asia</p> <p>28. Holiday decoration</p> | <p>33. Milliliter</p> <p>34. Open</p> <p>36. Health physics concept (abbr.)</p> <p>37. Tantric meditation</p> <p>38. Where golf games begin</p> <p>39. Birth swine</p> <p>40. Rip</p> <p>41. Remove</p> <p>44. Puts together in time</p> <p>45. Rotary engines</p> <p>48. Skeletal structure</p> <p>49. Member of a labor organization</p> <p>50. Japanese classical theater</p> <p>51. Undergarments</p> <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. "Snake Tales" cartoonist</p> | <p>2. Religious group</p> <p>3. Singer Redding</p> <p>4. ___ and tuck</p> <p>5. Head honcho</p> <p>6. Second sight</p> <p>7. Composer</p> <p>8. About aviation</p> <p>9. Senior officer</p> <p>10. Forecasts weather</p> <p>11. Seasoned Hungarian soup</p> <p>12. Town in Hesse, Germany</p> <p>14. Thought to derive from meteorites</p> <p>17. Hit lightly</p> <p>18. Seemingly bottomless chasm</p> <p>20. Title of respect</p> <p>23. Warms up</p> | <p>24. Man and Wight are two</p> <p>25. Type of scan</p> <p>26. Atomic mass unit</p> <p>29. Article</p> <p>30. Incriminate</p> <p>31. Passes by</p> <p>32. Most nerve-inducing</p> <p>35. David Alan Grier sitcom</p> <p>36. Achieve</p> <p>38. Freshwater fish</p> <p>40. Beginner</p> <p>41. Dark brown or black</p> <p>42. A newlywed wears one</p> <p>43. DiFranco and Vardanyan are two</p> <p>44. Diego, Francisco, Anselmo</p> <p>45. Ancient Egyptian King</p> <p>46. Old name (abbr.)</p> <p>47. Brazilian city (slang)</p> |
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Reading

from page 1

ers can tune into the live screening and conversation on FB.ME/dollysimaginationlibrary and ImaginationLibrary.com.

"The Library that Dolly Built" is directed and produced by journalism professor and director Nick Geidner, with narration by Danica McKellar. The film also provides a glimpse of the impact the Imagination Library has on people through original interviews with authors, policymakers, Imagination Library staff, recipients, and Parton.

Facebook is waiving all associated fees and 100 percent of the proceeds will be delivered to SBMH to support the library locally.

"We are thrilled to partner with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to share this story and many more here in MHC," McLarty said. "Reading is more than words on a page. Reading is the key that unlocks a lifetime of adventure and opportunity. We are thankful for Dolly's Library and to each donor who makes it possible

for us to provide books to more than 1,600 children in MHC each year. Together, we are changing lives one book at a time."

McLarty said the community initially began participating in the program in 2014 with less than 500 participants. That number has more than tripled in only six years.

"We've been very blessed," McLarty said. "We've received so many calls from parents and grandparents who just love reading with their children."

Based on the results from an annual survey, McLarty said "we've found that it's really having a positive effect of bringing families together."

Based on past success, McLarty said she is hopeful that another 186 children will be enrolled this year. To sponsor a child, visit <https://www.facebook.com/donate/168933321563068/>. Donations also may be made by visiting unitedwayofhcm.org/donate.

United Way is more than halfway to fundraising goal

The United Way of Henry County and Martinsville has raised more than half of its \$500,000 fundraising goal.

With more than 80 years of serving locally, the United Way of Henry County and Martinsville has evolved along with Martinsville and Henry County. One thing has remained constant and is needed now more than ever, the United Way's ability to mobilize for the common good to help the most at-risk members of our community and strengthen the capacity of local nonprofits to meet the needs of its most vulnerable citizens.

To help meet these needs, Karen Burgess, 2020-2021 Campaign Chairman for the United Way, announced a goal of \$500,000 for the year.

Contributing to the United Way is incredibly important this year as there are unprecedented needs in the community. COVID-19 and the associated economic downturn have erased the economic progress made by countless families in the community. These families now depend on the numerous organizations supported by the United Way to address their pressing needs. The needs run the full gamut of services provided by United Way partner organizations, including services that address hunger, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse counseling, and childcare to name a

few. Your contribution, no matter how big or small, is incredibly important as we work together to help those in need in our community.

The agency officially kicked off its annual fundraising campaign on September 8, with a social distancing twist.

The Leadership Circle, chaired by Paul and Annette Huckfeldt, is a group of dedicated United Way donors that all pledge at least \$600 to the annual United Way campaign. In a typical year, the United Way has more than 180 donors in the Leadership Circle and with the Huckfeldt's leadership, this year's campaign is off to a fantastic start.

To date, Leadership Circle donors, along with area company campaigns, have already raised \$281,955 or 56 percent of the \$500,000 goal. Companies already reporting campaign results are American National Bank, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Companies, Carter Bank & Trust, Eastman Chemical, and Hooker Furniture Corporation.

"The annual campaign is an inspiring representation of the caring power in our community," Burgess said. "In unprecedented times of isolation and challenges, the work being done by the United Way and other agencies throughout Martinsville and Henry County is made possible thanks to donors and volunteers like you. Your commitment

and generosity brings us together even when we're apart and enables the community to continue meeting needs in education, financial stability, and healthy living, which the community has identified as the building blocks for a good quality of life."

Day of Action is United Way's signature event, historically offering opportunities for nearly 150 volunteers to go out on one day to complete numerous community projects as well as several sponsored drives to collect needed items for local nonprofits. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the safety of United Way staff, volunteers, donors, and organizations, this year's Day of Action shifted to a "Sponsor Drive Only" structure.

Donations for the 2020 Day of Action supported drives for 11 different agencies and provided many essential items. Among these drives included collecting drinking water for Dan River Basin Association river clean-up volunteers, and senior meal support for the Southern Area Agency on Aging.

Donations also included items for parent support kits for Healthy Families, West Piedmont such as diapers, wipes, and grooming kits. Books were collected for Smart Beginnings Martinsville Henry. Other drives included support for our troops, transitional housing support, and personal hygiene

products. Tracy Hinchcliff, director of Grace Network, was overjoyed to report the Southwestern Virginia Gas Company and Midway Bottled Company employees delivered more than 400 donated personal hygiene items, items that Grace Network often find they are lacking. These donations came at a much-needed time as our nonprofits work to support the community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Philip Wenkstern, Executive Director of the United Way of Henry County and Martinsville, said, "While we certainly missed getting together for in-person volunteer projects this year, we could not be prouder of the way the community stepped up to participate in sponsor drives to support our local agencies. It is a remarkable example of the caring power of the community. The United Way is a volunteer-led and volunteer-driven organization, seeing the adaptability and strength of this year's Day of Action really highlights that mindset. Every United Way success is a product of our community, it is your service, your contributions, and your advocacy that are paving the way for positive change."

The United Way of Henry County and Martinsville works to mobilize for the common good. It aims to improve the financial stability of families, increase access to early childhood education and



Boxes of items donated to the Community Dream Center are pictured. David Cruise of Eastman Chemical Company (left to right), Robin Walton, of Eastman Chemical Company, and Robbie Bolden, of the Community Dream Center.



Grace Network received donations of several items to help agency clients. Pictured (left to right) are: Jay Dickens, President/CEO of The Lester Group; Tracy Hinchcliff, executive director of Grace Network and Donna Morrison, vice president of The Lester Group.

development, and works to advance the overall health of the community. Nearly 99 percent of every dollar donated to the United Way of Henry County and Martinsville remains in the area and supports more than 20 local nonprofit organizations.

Anyone who would like

more information about the United Way or how to donate to the campaign, is encouraged to visit www.unitedwayofhcm.org, or contact the United Way staff at 638-3946. Donations can also be mailed to the United Way at P.O. Box 951, Martinsville, VA 24114.

Piedmont Arts offers unique gifts

Find unique holiday gifts in the #ShopLocal Gift Shop at Piedmont Arts. The gift shop is freshly stocked with handmade artwork and gifts. From jewelry to puzzles to custom face masks, there's something for everyone on your list.

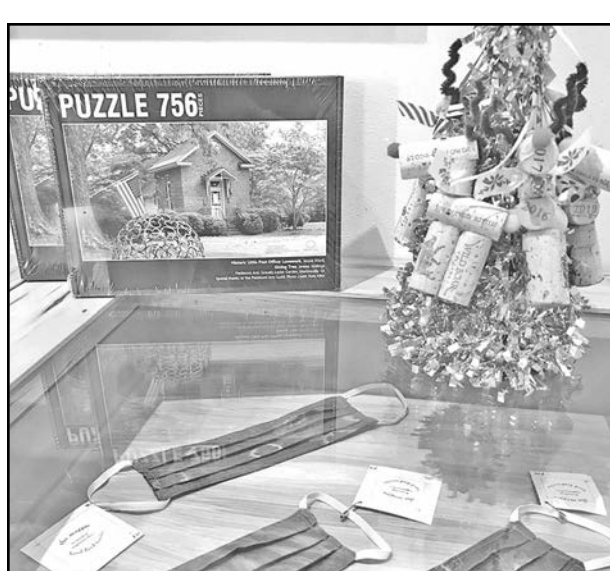
The #ShopLocal Gift Shop features work by local and regional artists, including:

- Karen Despot
- Genie Elgin
- Charles Hill
- Greta Ledyard
- Jennifer Reis

- Susan Weeks
- Joe Williams

Visit the #ShopLocal Gift Shop during regular museum hours: Tuesday – Friday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Piedmont Arts is a nonprofit art museum in Martinsville. It is located at 215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville. Museum hours are Tuesday – Friday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Admission is free. Learn more at www.PiedmontArts.org.



Body recovered from river was missing N.C. man

A body found floating in the Smith River on Oct. 29 was found to be that of a High Point, N.C. man, according to a release from the Henry County Sheriff's Office.

A passing motorist alerted authorities after seeing a man floating face down in the Smith River, according to previous reports.

Several agencies assisted with the incident and the recovery effort, including the Henry County Department of Public Safety, Fieldale-Collinsville Rescue Squad, Patrick County Sheriff's Office, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and the swift-water rescue teams from the Ridgeway District Rescue Squad and Fieldale Volunteer Fire Department.

The remains then were transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for the Western District of Virginia for identi-

fication and an autopsy to determine the cause and manner of death.

Using DNA analysis, medical examiners identified the remains as those of Edward Harrison Ariail, 67, of Abberton Way, High Point, N.C., according to the release.

Preliminary autopsy results showed no apparent signs of foul play or homicide. The completed autopsy report is pending additional testing, the release added.

Ariail, who suffered from dementia, was last seen Oct. 23, authorities said. After his family contacted the High Point Police Department and reported him as a missing person, a Silver Alert was issued.

Henry County Sheriff's deputies recovered Ariail's vehicle in the 2700 block of Fairystone Park Highway, Bassett, the release stated.

Clinician

Part-time Position (30.0 hours/wk.)

Patrick County/Henry County/Martinsville City

Children's Advocacy Programs of the Blue Ridge, Inc. is seeking a master's level clinician (license is not a requirement, but preferred) to work part-time with children and non-offending family members impacted by family and community-based violence. Qualified applicants will be proficient in assessing client needs, implementing treatment plans, and evaluating outcomes.

Applicants will participate on our local multidisciplinary response to child abuse, administer grant required tasks, and participate in peer review supervision. Additional consideration will be recognized for those trained and experienced in trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy, as well as, experience with court advocacy.

A list of duties and/or responsibilities, training expectations, education, and competencies are included in the full job description, as well as, the application for employment are available at www.southernvacac.org or by contacting info@southernvacac.org Position salary negotiable (\$22,000-\$24,000) plus limited benefits available. This is a grant funded position through September 30, 2021; with a possibility of extension. Background checks will be conducted prior to consideration of employment. A completed application, references, a resume, and a letter detailing availability and expected compensation should be returned by mail to the Southern Virginia Child Advocacy Center, 300 South Main Street, Rocky Mount, Virginia, 24151 or by email (info@southernvacac.org) no later than December 14, 2020 by 4:00 p.m. Additional consideration will be provided to those with extensive experience with children and adolescents and experience with billing and insurance paneling. No faxes accepted. CAPS of the Blue Ridge, Inc. is an AA/EEO employer.

Job fair to be held virtually

The West Piedmont Workforce Development Board will host a virtual job fair for residents of the cities of Danville and Martinsville and the counties of Pittsylvania, Henry, and Patrick on December 9.

"We are very excited to host our first region wide virtual job fair," said Tyler Freeland, CEO of the West Piedmont Workforce Development Board. "As part of our strategy to adapt in 2020, we purchased Premier Virtual, an online virtual career fair platform. This technology allows us to connect employers to job seekers in the safest way possible during the pandemic. This job fair will be the first of many regularly scheduled events. We look forward to getting people back to work and meeting the needs of

area businesses."

The virtual job fair, "Click for Careers," is free to participating employers and job seekers.

The virtual format will allow job seekers to apply, chat and interview with employers without having to leave their home.

The employer list currently includes more than 20 employers from across the region that are ready to hire participating candidates.

Recruiters will be live on the site on December 9 from 1 to 6 p.m.

Employers and job seekers interested in participating may register via the links below or on the WPWDB website, www.westpiedmont.com.

Employer: <https://portal.premiervirtual.com/event/register-company/3202-click-ca>

reers-putting-southern-virginia-work

Job Seeker: <https://portal.premiervirtual.com/event/register-jobseeker/3202-click-careers-putting-southern-virginia-work>

com/event/register-jobseeker/3202-click-careers-putting-southern-virginia-work



PRIMLAND

Primland Resort is seeking candidates for the following positions:

Servers for The Elements Restaurant

Desk Agents

Outdoor Activity Guides

Housekeepers

Qualified candidates please send resume to pnester@primland.com or complete an application at www.primland.com under Careers.

Primland is an E/O/E

OPINION

A Christmas for Christmas

December is here, and that means the Hallmark Channel is unleashing its Christmas movies upon the world. I realize that most folks don't have time to watch all 7,483 of these films, so instead, I offer a simple solution: I took the liberty of reading the plot summaries of every single Hallmark Christmas movie ever made and I distilled their essence into one column. I hope it puts you in the Christmas spirit!

Falls, New England. You are to interview Alabaster "Al" Whiteman, a craftsman who makes small artisanal wooden ducks. While there, you will likely be filled with the spirit of Christmas, since it's almost Christmas. I forgot to establish that earlier but I guess it's implied.

"But I'd rather be working hard, especially at Christmas!" Candace Cameron Bure said.

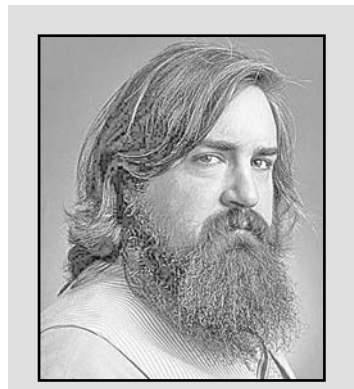
"Yeah, well, the plane ticket is non-refundable."

Then Candace Cameron Bure got on an airplane.

Part Two

When Candace Cameron Bure arrived in Winsome Falls, New England, she was struck by how Christmas-y everything looked. There was snow on the ground, and also lights and candy canes and elves and whatnot. She rode a sleigh to the workshop of Al Whiteman and stepped inside.

Al Whiteman was hunched over painting a small wooden duck. His workshop was very clean and well-lit, unlike a real workshop.



By Ben R. Williams

"I'm here to write a story about you," Candace Cameron Bure said, "but I don't like you because I like hard work too much."

Al Whiteman smiled in a blandly handsome way. "You'll change your mind once you get a load of all this Christmas," he said.

Candace Cameron Bure produced a small notepad and pen. "Let's get this over with," she said. "Tell me about what you do for a living."

"I make small artisanal wooden ducks," he said, "and based on the size of my workshop and my home, I apparently make \$250K

a year doing it."

Candace Cameron Bure grumbled. "I wish I was doing business right now," she said.

Part Three

Al Whiteman and Candace Cameron Bure walked down Main Street. Snow was falling and children were building snowmans. They stopped in front of a bakery where a friendly-looking old woman was making apple pies.

"Isn't it picturesque here?" Al Whiteman said.

"I prefer New York City," Candace Cameron Bure said. "That's where all the work and business are."

"Not to mention traffic, noise, homeless people, and the ethnic!" Al Whiteman replied.

"I guess you're right," she said, "but I still love New York, and there's nothing anyone could say that would change my mind and make me move here and marry you."

"Is that so?" said a booming voice. Candace Cameron Bure turned around. It was Santa Claus. And behind him was a guardian angel.

Part Four

Candace Cameron Bure sat beside Al Whiteman on a couch next to a Christmas tree. She was wearing a green sweater and he was wearing a red one, and they were both drinking mugs of hot chocolate.

"Merry Christmas," Al Whiteman said to her. "Will you marry me?"

"Of course," she said. "After what Santa and my guardian angel told me about Christmas, how could I not?"

Al Whiteman smiled. "Good," he said. "Did you like the small wooden duck I gave you for Christmas?"

"I sure did!" Candace Cameron Bure said. "The only other thing in the world I want is a baby."

"Is that so?" Al Whiteman said. "Look behind the tree."

She looked behind the tree. There was a baby there. She picked it up.

"It's a Christmas baby!" she said. "I wonder what its first words will be?"

The baby looked directly into the camera. "Christmas," it said, and then winked.

A Christmas for Christmas

Part One

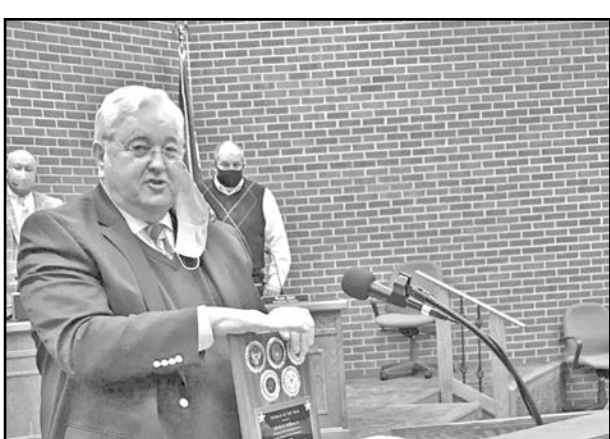
Candace Cameron Bure walked into her editor's office. She was a writer for Business Magazine, which was based out of New York City.

"Hello editor," she said. "I hope you have a lot of work for me, because that's the only thing in my life that's important."

"I have an assignment for you," the editor said, chomping a cigar while wearing a green visor so that you know he's an editor. "You've been working too hard, so I'm sending you to Winsome

Veterans

from page 1



Charles Williams gives an acceptance speech after receiving the Veteran of the Year Award during a Nov. 24 Henry County Board of Supervisors meeting.



2020 Outstanding Military Veteran David King gives an acceptance speech during a Nov. 24 Henry County Board of Supervisors meeting.



Charles Williams (right) receives the Veteran of the Year Award from David Kipfinger, commander of American Legion Pannill Post 42.

whole lot more than I do," Williams said. "Coming from the veterans, I really do appreciate it. Thank you so much. It's quite an

honor."

Two awards, normally presented on Memorial Day, were also presented during the Nov. 24 cer-

emony.

Thomas Spencer, commander of American Legion Homer Dillard Post 78, presented an award to Destinee Spencer in recognition of her grandfather, David Spencer.

David Spencer was "in numerous organizations," according to Thomas Spencer. Some of his associations included his position of vice-commander of Post 78, his involvement with the Veterans

Honor Guard of Martinsville and Henry County, and his work with Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Ford-Stewart 4637.

David Gilleran, commander of Post 4637, accepted a similar award on behalf of the family of Darrel Peay.

"Darrel was a member of the American Legion, AMVETS (American Veterans), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and the Veterans of

Foreign Wars," Gilleran said. "He served honorably in Vietnam. He was Veteran of the Year in 2008. This will remain with us for a while until we are able to get it to their family."

S.T. Fulcher, of Post 42, recognized Sharon Mills with a Certificate of Excellence for her support of the VSO.

"She has made it possible for us to use the Historic John D. Bassett

Center for our Veteran's Day activities the last several years at no cost to us," Fulcher said before inviting Mills to accept the award.

"What I do is so insignificant to what each of you have done as a veteran to serve this country," Mills said. "I'm humbled. Thank you very, very much for everything that you have done for this country. We appreciate it."



David Gilleran, commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Ford-Stewart 4637, accepts an award on behalf of the family of Darrel Peay.



Sharon Mills (left) receives a Certificate of Excellence for her support of the Veterans Service Organization from S.T. Fulcher, of American Legion Pannill Post 42.



Destinee Spencer (left) receives an award on behalf of her grandfather David Spencer from Thomas Spencer, commander of American Legion Homer Dillard Post 78.

Your Community, Your Voice
Serving Henry County, Martinsville, and Surrounding Area

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Friday, December 4

Farmer's Market: Come shop for the holidays with local vendors selling handmade soup, woodwork, yarn work, homemade baked goods, local honey, elderberry syrup, and ready-to-eat meals. Event lasts from 4 p.m. -8 p.m. Submit pre-orders at martinsvillefarmersmarket.com; 65 W. Main Street, Martinsville VA, 24112.

Christmas Parade: Theme is "Saving Christmas." Parade will begin at 5 p.m. The MHC Christmas Parade will be for vehicles only -- although people can watch it at home. The parade will be covered by local media and televised. The parade's grand marshal will be Barbara Guthrie Lay, a Martinsville native who was Miss Virginia in 1958. For more information, contact (276) 656-3900.

Saturday, December 5

YMCA: Miles in Martinsville and the Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA, is pleased to announce the running of the Light Up The Night 5K, starting at 4 p.m. Runners are strongly encouraged to register online prior to December 4 at www.milesinmartins-

ville.com. The race starts and finishes at the Smith River Sports Complex, located at 1000 Irisburg Road, Axton. A course map with details can be found at: www.milesinmartinsville.com This event is a fun kick off to the holiday season with many runners and walkers dressed in festive costumes. As the Fall event for Miles in Martinsville's YOUTH in MOTION program, the race is loaded with youngsters, enjoying an evening of fun and fellowship with parents and friends. Early registration starts at \$25. Call (276) 632-6427.

Thursday, December 10

Piedmont Arts: Join artist Ashleigh Pritchard for a virtual watercolor class via Zoom. A kit, including everything you need to complete the class, can be picked up on Wednesday, December 9 before 5 p.m. The class link will be sent after registration. Register online or call (276) 632.3221. Registration is required 48 hours prior to class. The event starts at 6 p.m., and the admission is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members.

ONGOING

MHC Coalition for Health and Wellness offers no contact application assistance for Virginia's free or low-cost Medicaid plans (Children's Medicaid/FAMIS, pregnancy Medicaid and Adult Health Care (birth to 64-years-old). Applications completed by phone (no contact). Call or text Ann Walker (276) 732-0509 to see if you qualify.

Danville Community College: The TRIO EOC (Educational Opportunity Centers) is a federally funded grant program to assist high school seniors and adults attending college. Free assistance ranges from selecting a career path and potential college to applying for financial aid and scholarships. Contact your local TRIO EOC today for your confidential appointment at (276) 694-8778 or eoc@danville.edu.

Southern Area Agency on Aging: SAAA is offering a series of "Fearless Caregiver Guides" from the publisher of "Today's Caregiver Magazine" free to caregivers. Those interested can request all three titles "Successful Respite Solutions," "Holiday Caregiving" and "Getting Friends and Families to Help" by calling SAAA at (276) 632-6442 or 1-800-468-4571. SAAA can also be reached by email at info@southernaaa.org

Give us your view:
The Henry County Enterprise encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Henry County Enterprise reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

If you have news about or an upcoming event for your organization, company or church, email dhall@theenterprise.net and/or call (276) 694-3101

Online puppy scams rising sharply in 2020, agency warns

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased demand for pets as people seek adding a pet to the family to ease the loneliness and tension of prolonged time at home. Many feel that they now have more time to train a puppy. With this rising demand has come a spike in pet scams, in which an online search ends with a would-be pet owner paying hundreds of dollars or more to purchase a pet that ultimately doesn't exist.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises extreme caution when shopping for a pet online, especially considering scammers' evolving tactics.

Soon after cities and states began to impose tighter restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19, the agency's Scam Tracker saw a spike in pet fraud reports, with nearly 4,000 reports received in 2020 from the U.S. and Canada. Data from the Scam Tracker shows

more reports about fraudulent pet websites in April than in the first three months of the year combined. The COVID bump is continuing into the holiday season, with consumers reporting 337 complaints to BBB about puppy scams in November 2020, a dramatic increase from 77 for the same month in 2019.

The median loss reported to Scam Tracker in 2020 is \$750. Those aged 35 to 55 accounted for half of BBB reports in 2020.

Law enforcement and consumer advocates now say a person searching online for a new pet is extremely likely to encounter a scam listing or website.

The pandemic has given scammers a new tool in their arsenal. Scam Tracker reports show that many fraudsters are telling would-be pet owners they cannot meet the animals

before sending money.

Petscams.com, which tracks and exposes these scams, recommends using another tool popularized by COVID-19 -- video conferencing -- to meet the animal and owner virtually before buying as a way of reducing scam vulnerability.

"COVID-19 has made for a long and uncertain year, and a 'quarantine puppy' or other pet has proven to be a comfort for many people, but it also has created fertile ground for fraudsters," said Lechelle Yates, Director of Communications for BBB of Central and Northwest N.C. "People currently shopping for pets online are prime targets for fraudsters trolling the internet looking for want-to-be pet owners. Knowing the red flags associated with this scam can help consumers avoid heartache and losing their money."

At the current pace, pet

scams reported to the agency will be nearly five times as many as in 2017, when BBB published its first in-depth investigative study on pet scams. The projected dollar loss from these scams is expected to top \$3 million, more than six times the total losses reported in 2017.

If buying a pet online, the BBB recommends:

See the pet in person before paying any money. Consider a video call with the seller so you can see the seller and the actual pet for sale. Since scammers are not likely to comply with the request, this may help avoid a scam.

Do a reverse image search of the photo of the pet and search for a distinctive phrase in the description.

Do your research to get a sense of a fair price for the breed you are considering. Think twice if someone advertises a purebred dog for free or

at a deeply discounted price. It could be a fraudulent offer.

Check out a local animal shelter online for pets you can meet before adopting.

If you are the victim of a pet scam, contact:

Your credit card issuer - if you provided your credit card number, even if the transaction was not completed.

Petscams.com - petscams.com/report-pet-scam-websites tracks complaints, catalogues puppy scammers and endeavors to get fraudulent pet sales websites taken down.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) - reportfraud.ftc.gov to file a complaint online or call 877-FTC-Help.

Better Business Bureau - BBB Scam Tracker to report a scam online.

Canadian Antifraud Centre - antifraudcentre-centreantifraude or call 1-888-495-8501 for scams involving Canada.

DMV offers Commercial Drivers online renewal opportunity

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is now offering commercial driver's license (CDL) renewals online. The new option, instituted due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, gives eligible commercial drivers the opportunity to renew

their credentials online at dmvNOW.com.

CDL holders previously were required to visit DMV in person each time to renew their credentials.

"We are continually looking for ways to assist our customers during these challenging times."

said DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb. "The opportunity to renew online gives our commercial driving community a convenient service option and focus office appointment opportunities on transactions for customers who need in-person assistance."

Detailed information on CDL online renewal eligibility can be found at <https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#renewcdl.asp>.

Customers who are not eligible to renew their CDL online will need to schedule an appointment at dmvNOW.com/

appt to renew in person.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has granted an extension of the validity of commercial driver licenses (CDL) and commercial learner's permits (CLP) that expire between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020.

Any CDLs or CLPs set to expire during this time are extended to December 31 as a result of the COVID-19 emergency.

For more information on federal extensions related to endorsements and/or medical requirements, visit dmvNOW.com/covid19.

Marijuana

from page 1

"The moral implications of legalizing marijuana far outweigh the legal implications," he said. "We're basically saying to an entire generation of kids that it's okay to smoke pot in your parent's backyard, and that is wrong in my opinion."

Based on his 26 years in law enforcement, Smith said marijuana has a propensity to lead to hard drugs.

"In the thousands of hard drug distribution cases that I have been involved with over the years, marijuana use was always the catalyst that led to harder drug use" of substances such as methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin, Smith said. "The term gateway drug is entirely accurate."

This term is disputed by proponents of recreational marijuana, however.

Cameron Post and his father have operated The Hemp Post on Virginia Avenue in Collinsville for a little more than a year, and he sees the issue as more complex.

"Marijuana can be a gateway drug. I've seen where people would start off smoking marijuana and when it wasn't readily available, they would turn to other things. I don't think it necessarily makes you want to do other drugs though," Post said.

He added that the concept of a gateway drug is often used too broadly and often only used exclusively as a talking point against marijuana.

"In that sense, anything can be a gateway drug," Post said. "Alcohol or nicotine could be considered a gateway drug if you frame the argument in the right way. There is also the other side where many people have credited marijuana for getting them off harder drugs."

Post noted recent studies in which scientists found that marijuana could be an "off ramp" from opioids instead of a gateway.

For example, a 2016 study conducted at the University of Michigan found that "patients using medical marijuana to control chronic pain reported a 64 percent reduction in their use of more traditional prescription pain medications known as opioids."

"We're in the midst of an opioid epidemic and we need to figure out what to do about it," said Kevin Boehnke, lead author of the study and doctoral student in the School of Public Health's Department of Environmental Health Sciences. "I'm hoping our research continues a conversation of cannabis as a potential alternative for opioids."

A 2018 study conducted by the University of Minnesota also had similar results.

A total of 353 patients in the study self-reported taking opioid medications before using medical marijuana. Approximately 63 percent of those patients reduced or eliminated opioid use after six months, according to the study.

Additionally, the health care practitioner survey found that 58 percent of patients who were on other pain medications were able to reduce their use of these medications when they started using medical marijuana.

Even with legalized recreational marijuana, Perry said he still sees a market for drug dealers.

"The other part of it is that you'll still have people that are selling marijuana and there are instances where marijuana has been laced with other things," Perry said. "Drug dealers are unethical and what they want are customers. There are instances where marijuana is laced with fentanyl and other products, like cocaine, because they want to see an addiction and they want to see customers coming for it."

The biggest competition for drug dealers would be those with distribution lines already in place, like Post. Not only is he looking forward to that reality, it also is one that he has been planning for from the beginning.

"We would definitely" start selling recreational marijuana upon legalization, he said. "That has always been the plan to graduate from CBD (cannabidiol) to every kind of cannabis product. We've already kind of got the system in place. I would just split the product half and half with equal parts CBD and THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) products. We'd have to make sure that they were separated for customers, obviously."

In conjunction with the 2018 Farm Bill, Virginia laws were changed to recognize hemp as an agricultural commodity, allowing production of the herb without legal consequences provided all federal guidelines are met.

Both hemp and marijuana come from the same plant—Cannabis Sativa L. By altering growing conditions, the chemistry of the plant can be changed, with hemp demonstrating higher amounts of CBD and trace amounts of THC as opposed to marijuana that contains far more THC.

"Hemp is cannabis but it's below a certain amount

of THC so it's not psychoactive and it can't change the way you think," Post said, adding that the legal threshold for THC in hemp products is 0.3 percent.

"The farmers are currently responsible for ensuring the hemp is within regulation standards," he said. "They have to test their crops before they put them out. There are private labs that they send them to."

Post said there can be benefits to differing amounts of CBD and THC which are largely determined by the individual using the product.

"It really depends on the person. You can't really say that products with more CBD or THC are better than the other," he said. "I've had people tell me that CBD does better for them than THC does. For a normal dosage, I tell people to start with 10 milligrams and just work their way up from there. Some people need closer to 50 or 100 milligrams but like the preference for CBD or THC, it's different for everyone."

Post said that his endorsement of the products isn't just for business either. He has personally seen the benefits of cannabis.

"I started using CBD for my anxiety," he said. "I've been taking the gummies for a little over a year and it really turned me around. I never thought that I'd get to the point that I'm at now. It really made me fall in love with it."

While legalized marijuana is considered good news to Post, he does have concerns about how the law will be introduced.

"I'm very worried right now that they are just going to offer one license per county or something like that," he said. "Then there are going to be \$100,000 licenses. It would be impossible for us to do it. It would put us out of business because they are going to go to those dispensaries looking for CBD products once they start drawing more attention from the products higher in THC."

Post said licenses are not required for retailers to sell just hemp if it has been "finished, dried and cured."

Like Perry, Post said he has concerns about who is and isn't allowed to sell cannabis products.

"I'm all for regulations because it keeps people from who shouldn't be selling because they aren't knowledgeable. Especially when you are talking about THC. It does have the power to make people have panic at-

tacks or something like that," Post said. "I already treat my products like they are regulated. We are very meticulous about everything we do."

Post said that distributors should have due diligence when selling products to customers.

"My biggest problem is people not warning people about their dosages. Someone who has never tried cannabis at all before, maybe you shouldn't sell them a chocolate bar with 100 milligrams in it," he said. "I'd really like to see people who are truly educated and can tell people the risks involved. I treat it like its food. Everything must be cleaned, whereas some people think they can just grab it with their hands. You wouldn't do stuff like that if you were at something like a buffet."

With the possibility of legalization and the introduction of regulations, the burden of enforcement would shift more to the Food and Drug Administration. Not much else would change, according to local law enforcement.

"From the discussions that I've heard on the subject, those already serving time for marijuana convictions will finish out that sentence," Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper said. "The biggest change will be for law enforcement on the streets and the process before the suspect gets to the jail."

Should the Commonwealth decide to release inmates serving time for marijuana-related charges, Draper doesn't see a huge dip



A selection of pre-rolled hemp cigars at The Hemp Post in Collinsville.

in Martinsville's jail population.

"We don't have that many that are serving time for simple possession charges. Overall, I don't see it having a large impact on our jail population."

Likewise, Smith said that marijuana possession hasn't been a big issue for law enforcement over the years.

"I have never seen anyone jailed for misdemeanor possession of marijuana," he said. "Marijuana legalization proponents always use this as one of their points for legalization. That is a myth. In fact, in Virginia, simple underage possession of alcohol carries a much more severe punishment than does simple marijuana possession."

Northam signed legislation earlier this year to decriminalize simple marijuana possession in Virginia. The legislation also required the Secretaries of Agriculture and Forestry, Finance,

Health and Human Resources, and Public Safety and Homeland Security to convene a Virginia Marijuana Legalization Work Group to study the impact on the Commonwealth of legalizing the sale and personal use of marijuana.

The report was released on Nov. 30. The findings can be found at: <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginia/gov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Final-Report-on-Marijuana-Legalization-11.30.20.pdf>.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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BBB issues warning about package delivery scams

Shopping experts estimate we'll buy 60 to 70 percent of our presents online this year. Scammers, never missing a beat, are taking advantage of this to fool consumers into giving out their personal information with the fake package delivery scam, according to the Better Business Bureau (BBB).

The scam begins when a potential victim receives a call, email or text from someone claiming to be a mail carrier or a parcel delivery service saying a package is on the way or that they were unable to deliver a package to

your home or they just found a package belonging to you. If you don't remember ordering anything that needs to be delivered, the caller may try to convince you the package is a gift from a friend or relative. The caller may sound friendly and professional, making the scam harder to spot. The email messages also look legitimate - containing official logos and using professional language.

However, things get suspicious quickly. The caller will ask you to verify personal information or give them your credit card information to reschedule the delivery.

Email or text messages may ask you to click on a tracking link for your mystery package. When you click, you may download malware onto your computer that gives con artists access to any personal information and passwords. No matter the method of contact, the package doesn't exist. Sharing your personal information puts you at risk for identity theft.

To avoid package delivery scams, the BBB recommends:

Be wary of unsolicited communications. Package delivery companies will never contact customers unsolicited via telephone

call or text. Instead, depending on the carrier and if the customer signed up for notifications, an email may be sent within a secure online account.

Track all packages. Keep track of online purchases and expected deliveries. Request tracking numbers in anticipation of when they'll arrive. This makes it difficult for scammers to fool with the claim of a fake package delivery.

Never give personal information to strangers. Even when the caller is friendly, always use caution when asked for personal information. Hang up, look up the

official customer service number, and directly contact the company to confirm their request. Whenever possible, use the customer service contact information or chat function within the account at the company.

Never click on links in unsolicited emails. Links in emails can download malware onto your device. Don't click links in emails from people you don't know or from companies you haven't done business with or have asked to be contacted by. Be wary of official-looking email; popular brands can easily be spoofed.

Support

from page 1



Boy toys donated by Widows for Christ in Reidsville, N.C.



Girl toys donated by Widows for Christ in Reidsville, N.C.



The Salvation Army has already begun preparing boxes for toy distribution. There is still a need for more donations, with contributions only at about 50 percent of this year's goal.

going off," Bradly Mumford said. "We just get a lot of phone calls of people who are in need or are wanting to donate to help make a difference. Essentially, that phone is the biggest component of who we are. Every time we pick it up, we never know what that need is going to be but nonetheless it's going to be a need."

Besides Bradly and Ashley Mumford, two part-time staff members work to address needs each day.

"It's really hard to sometimes meet all of the needs that are expected of us," he said. "We make it happen. We've got wonderful staff. They believe in putting the mission first above themselves."

That mission involves a lot more than collecting donations during the annual Red Kettle Campaign.

Throughout the year, the Salvation Army provides hot meals every Wednesday and Friday. Until the kettle campaign began, Bradly Mumford said his team averaged about 100 meals each of those two days. Meals are now only offered on Wednesdays.

"Every Wednesday, you can come to the Salvation Army between the hours of 12 and 1 p.m., and receive up to four hot meals per household," he said. "These are very nutritious meals and great quality food. Our volunteers cook them in the kitchen, and we do what is

called a mobile feeding. The individuals will drive up, they stay in their vehicle, and volunteers will pass them plates of food that are pre-packaged."

Families in need can also get food from the Salvation Army on Thursdays through their walk-in pantry.

"We have this gracious, large donation of food and we didn't know what we were going to do with it," Bradly Mumford said. "Luckily, the Lord inspired us to open our doors to the community once a week and allow them to shop for light groceries."

The program, called "Thank God, it's Thursday," was "very successful," he said.

"During the pandemic, we saw more hunger needs," Ashley Mumford said. "We were seeing about 50 people a week for the food pantry. For us, we saw a lot of people that couldn't afford what was at" some retail stores "and fortunately we were able to kind of subsidize that."

The pantry will reopen on Jan. 14.

In addition to feeding the community, the Salvation Army also provides emergency help.

"We like emphasizing 'emergency' because we want to emphasize the word crisis," Bradly Mumford said. "This is not just a social service type program where we get funding throughout the whole year. We must battle for our funding. Basically, we offer emergency assistance with lighting and rental needs."

This service was especially valuable during the economic strain caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

"Once power companies and rental landlords were issuing cut-off notices, we started noticing a lot of people with \$1,000 light bills because they hadn't been able to pay because they hadn't been able to work," Ashley Mumford said. "Most of our social services were for new people who had never been out of work before and never had to ask for help."

"We also offer hotel vouchers," Bradley Mumford said of the vouchers that help provide shelter for those struggling with homelessness.

"We are able to help combat that," he said. "We have a partnership with the Econo Lodge, and we can put them up for about 3 to 4 nights."

Ashley Mumford said individuals must meet certain criteria to receive the vouchers.

"They have to be seen through Grace Network or through STEP (Solutions That Empower People, Inc.)," she said. "That is the main credential. STEP is a huge homelessness organization. They screen them a little bit harder than we would be able to because they have more staff."

Those in need of support services are invited to schedule an appointment with the local office. Their hours are Tuesday-Friday from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The Mumfords also work to serve their community on Sunday; albeit, in a slightly different manner.

"On Sunday morning, there is a different kind of need. My wife and I are pastors as well," Bradly Mumford said. "We have to suit up once more and we preach and share the gospel of Jesus Christ on Sunday

morning. It's all week long, meeting needs of different kinds."

Due to the extra stresses brought about by the pandemic, the Salvation Army has almost depleted their funds for the year.

"As of right now, our funding is extremely low. I would almost dare say that we've almost tapped out our funding," Bradly Mumford said. "As of March, we've already helped about 30 people who were affected by COVID. We are talking about people of all stature. People that were making a decent wage and next thing you know they wake up and they don't have a job anymore. The bills start racking up. Those are the types of stories you see coming through your door."

While the pandemic has brought cloudy days for some, Bradly Mumford prefers to search for a silver lining.

"They say that 2020 is one of the worst years that we've ever had, but it's relative, I think," he said. "It's a matter of perspective and how you look at it. It's certainly had its downfalls but to the best of my knowledge, we haven't had a pandemic in over 100 years, so it obviously has a lot of people in frenzy. But there have also been a lot of hidden blessings that have come our way. We've been able to shine the light into the darkness by acts of service to our fellow brothers and sisters."

He told the story of one individual who was working on community service hours through the organization before COVID-19 tragically took her father.

"She was in a frenzy because she thought she was going to lose out and lose her hours," he said.

By reworking the schedule to allow for some grieving time, Bradly Mumford said she was able to finish her hours.

"The success of that story is that because she did such a fantastic job, we were able to provide seasonal employment for her as a bell ringer," he added. "She's very lively, very animated. She's bringing joy to others now and it's kind of her paying it forward. The money that is going in that red kettle is going to help the relief of COVID victims so now she is in a position where she can pay it forward. That's a win for us. That's a success story. That's the most rewarding part about what my wife and I do."

The community also can tap into that feeling by getting involved.

"I want to emphasize that there are never enough volunteers," Bradly Mumford said. "We need volunteers for bell ringing, we need volunteers for our soup kitchen, and we need them

for other means as well. The main part besides volunteering is financial contributions. You wouldn't believe what your money is able to do here at the Salvation Army."

The goal for the kettle campaign is \$50,000 this year, according to Bradly Mumford.

"The money that is generated goes 100 percent back into our streamline programs like emergency social services," he said. "It also helps pay the payroll for our staff. It helps sustain us for a couple more months down the road. It's so important for the Salvation Army to raise not only \$50,000, but more because we need to be able to propel ourselves into the year 2021 and be able to sustain this operation."

Those wishing to contribute may send donations to The Salvation Army at P.O. Box 551, Martinsville, Va., 24114.

"That assures them that they don't have to go through a letter or a second party," he said. "That's a direct hit to us that comes within two days."

"The other thing that they can do during the Christmas season is Angel Tree," Ashley Mumford said. "We have a tree at the Patrick County Wal-Mart and a tree at the Martinsville Wal-Mart. They can go pick a child off the tree and shop for that child. That is a huge thing."

Due to stricter patronage guidelines in most shopping centers, a lot of the angels have yet to be taken this year.

"We have about 150 angels that have not yet gone out just because businesses aren't as open due to COVID," she said. "We have about 500 kids in total."

"The need is new toys," Bradly Mumford said. "What good is it to try and make it a memorable Christmas with a used toy that is chipped or broken."

In addition to Angel Tree contributions, toys were also donated by Widows for Christ in Reidsville, N.C.

"We try to give every kid at least three toys. If a kid comes in and only has a couple of toys from the Angel Tree, we can supplement with what we have," Ashley Mumford said. "Our toys just might not be exactly what the kid asked for."

Bradley Mumford estimated that Angel Tree contributions are approximately 50 percent of their end goal.

The last day to bring by toys for the Angel Tree is Dec. 11, with distribution set to take place Dec. 21 at the Salvation Army, as a mobile distribution. Individuals remain in their vehicles as "volunteers load them up for a Merry Christmas," Bradley Mumford said.

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Make a dramatic statement with Virginia cheese gifts

Funky, nutty, rich or smooth—the personalities of Virginia-made cheeses are unique gifts to share with the individuals in your life this holiday season.

The gift of old-world cheeses infused with the essence of Virginia's seasons are a dramatic gesture for cheese-loving friends, or as the centerpiece of a holiday charcuterie board.

Virginians can shop and select handcrafted cheeses through Lulus Local Food, a nonprofit entity of the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innova-

tion and Rural Sustainability, in partnership with the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation and supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Seasonal changes, the weather, humidity, the vegetation, it really makes a difference," said goat cheesemaker and chef Gail Hobbs-Page of Caromont Farm in Albemarle County. She markets her handcrafted cheeses through Lulus online sales platform. "Your job as a cheesemaker is to channel the components of that milk into the right cheese at the

right time."

Hobbs-Page opened Caromont in 2007. She produces 25,000 pounds of dozens of styles of goat cheese each year.

She said spring is the time for fresh cheeses. Blues and dense cheeses are produced in the heat of the summer. Then the composition of the milk changes, with more fat and less protein—perfect for holiday cheeses or washed-rind cheeses, also known as stinkers.

Familiar flavors of Virginia and the influence of international cheese-making styles set the stage for drama at Locksley Farmstead Cheese Co. This sister company of Chrysalis Vineyards in Loudoun County was established in 2018.

"Each cheese has such a character to it," said Locksley creamery manager Erin Saacke. "Like people."

Holstein, Jersey and Brown Swiss cows pro-

duce hundreds of gallons of milk a week for a list of cheeses named for familiar characters from Robin Hood tales.

The King Richard blue cheese is aptly named for royalty, with a spreadable yet crumbly texture. The Little John black wax cheddar is crumbly too; the result of a stirred-curd process. Nottingham gouda is smooth and nutty, listed beside Friar Tuck's tangy, salty fromage blanc. Locksley's pungent washed-rind cheese is named for the villain, Prince John.

Visitors can stock up on cheese, wines and preserves crafted from the vines and milk produced on-site—pairings worthy of an encore.

"Our Norton grape jelly and Maid Marian cheese is an incredible pairing," Saacke said. "That sweet grape jelly with the earthy camembert cheese—so good!"

PET OF THE WEEK



Smores is a mild-mannered hound and she is currently available at the SPCA. She is almost six years old and has been with the SPCA for a less than a month. The adoption fee for adult dogs is \$100. All animals are current on vaccinations, microchipped, and spayed/neutered prior to adoption, if of age.

COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **December 22, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of these public hearings is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of Special Use Permits for the following cases.

Citizens wishing to submit public comments on these cases should email publichearing@co.henry.va.us or call 276-634-4699 no later than December 22, 2020 at 9 a.m. All comments received will be read during the public hearing on this date at 1:00 p.m. Because of the Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **NO public comments will be taken during the meeting and attendance will be limited to 25.** For more information, contact the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection at 276-634-4620.

Case S-20-17 White Stripe Solar, LLC
A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-222 through 21-226 and 21-902 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of a Large Scale Solar Energy Facility at 325 Beaver Hills Club Road. The proposal is to develop a 14MW facility covering approximately 120 acres on what is currently the Beaver Hills Golf Course, in the Collinsville District and shown on Tax Map 29.3(73)C/34A. The property is zoned Commercial District B-1.

Case S-20-18 Hatcher Sisters, LLC
A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-302 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of a building to be used as a wedding/event center. The property is located on the south side of Hatcher Farm Rd, approximately 0.14 mile west of Blue Knob Rd, in the Reed Creek District and shown on Tax Map 20.9/34 and 21.4/7. The property is zoned Agricultural District A-1.

Case S-20-19 Caleb R. Knighten
A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-215 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of an off-site general advertising sign. The property is located at 3681 A.L. Philpott Hwy., in the Iriswood District, is zoned Limited Industrial District 1-2, as shown on Tax Map 44.9/53B.

Case S-20-20 Caleb R. Knighten
A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-215 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of an off-site general advertising sign. The property is located at 2160 Old Chatham Rd., in the Collinsville District, is zoned Commercial District B-1, as shown on Tax Map 43.1 (11)3/16-21.

Case S-20-21 Caleb R. Knighten
A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-215 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of an off-site general advertising sign. The property is located at 2400 Appalachian Dr., in the Collinsville District, is zoned Commercial District 8-1, as shown on Tax Map 41.4(37)D/1-3,1A.

The applications for these requests may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Lee H. Clark, AICP
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

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Improper quarantine practices help drive spike in COVID-19 cases

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

Health officials with the West Piedmont Health District (WPHD) said a leading cause of the increased number of COVID-19 cases is due to a lack of following quarantine guidelines.

Nancy Bell, public information officer for the health district, said the virus has a 14-day incubation period during which symptoms can show up.

"It could be two days after your exposure to someone, or it could be eight days" before the onset of symptoms, Bell said. "You might test and be negative when you're actually positive."

She explained the tests are not 100 percent accurate.

"Some of the tests, the rapid tests have at least a 15 percent less accuracy rate compared to other tests," she said.

"If you think you've been exposed to the virus, you should stay away from others for 14 days," she said. "Even if you get a negative test result back and you feel fine, you should stay quarantined for the remainder of your two weeks in case your test results are false because the virus doesn't manifest in people the same way."

In the past 10 days, Bell said "a lot of our cases have been from Trunk-or-Treat events because it takes a while for the infection to manifest in your body."

Often by the time it manifests, "you've already shared it. So, by the time we recognize a cluster of cases it's too late," Bell said, adding that a Trunk-or-Treat event in Henry County infected between one and two dozen adults and children.

"I know people are getting tired of hearing it and following the restrictions, and I'm tired of saying it too, but it's the only way to ensure you don't get sick or spread it to your loved ones," she said.

"It doesn't matter how healthy you are, even healthy people are having three and four months of after-symptoms, like headaches, blurred visions, and memory problems," she said, adding heart fluttering, extreme muscle ache and weakness, loss of balance, and extreme fatigue are also after-symptoms of the virus.

Bell said the after-symptoms can last for months.

"You can test negative and still be walking around with residual symptoms. The Commissioner of Health explained that your immune symptom builds up to fight the virus, but there's something in the mechanism in the virus that doesn't let it shut off when it's won. So, it continues to attack your body, fighting for something that's not there, so it attacks your organs," she said.

"Your immune symptom kills the virus, dead, it's gone. But your immune system doesn't shut off and is in overdrive, so your own immune system starts attacking your body," Bell said, adding people between the ages of 24 and 42 are more likely to have residual symptoms.

Children under the age of 18 are having heart attacks because "your immune system will attack your heart valves, kidneys," anything it thinks could be the virus, Bell said. Health officials are "trying to put tick marks in columns, and they have to keep making columns" because after-symptoms mani-

fest differently for everyone like regular symptoms, she added.

If people do not follow the COVID-19 guidelines or the state mandates, Bell said Gov. Ralph Northam could issue a state-wide shutdown.

"The more people refuse to follow the rules, the longer and stricter the mandates for the state are going to be," she said, and added that anonymously reporting individuals and businesses on the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) website is one way to ensure guidelines are followed.

"It's three survey questions and you put your complaint there with the date and any details you have," she said, adding health officials look into the complaints of those who are identified as not being in compliance with the guidelines and state mandates.

"For people it's all voluntary and not punitive. We can only tell them they're not in compliance and they're putting other people at risk, and some people just don't care," she said. If it's a business that is not following and enforcing the regulations, Bell said health officials can take more action.

"We first go in and try to educate them and work with them to make changes to follow the regulations, and if they don't, we take progressive actions. If it's a business that serves food, we can take their food license away, and sometimes ABC (Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Authority) will go in and take their alcohol license. Whatever hurts the most to get them to comply," she said.

Bell said the WPHD is

COVID-19 HAS UP TO A 14 DAY INCUBATION PERIOD

DAY 0
Your friend is exposed to COVID-19 and notified by Public Health to quarantine for 14 days.

DAY 5
Your friend gets tested for COVID-19 and results come back negative

DAYS 6-9
Your friend doesn't think they have COVID-19, so they go to work, visit you, eat in a restaurant, and attend a family cookout. They've now exposed over 17 people.

DAY 10
Your friend has symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19

At anytime within the past 14 days, you or a loved one may have been infected with COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said after-symptoms of COVID-19 can range from a cough and chest pain to headaches to long-term loss of smell and taste and organ injury. For more information on COVID-19, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or [vdh.virginia.org](https://www.vdh.virginia.org).

also preparing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

"We could start the first round as soon as December, and that round would include medical personnel, first-responders, and long-term care homes in the district," Bell said, and added that she believes that the second round of vaccinations could be given "sometime in the spring to the elderly and the children."

"Based on the timeline, it could take one year to 18 months to get everyone in the WPHD vaccinated who will have a vaccination," Bell said, adding that people who are "not at risk in anyway, other than just living in the world," will be

vaccinated in the last round of distribution.

She estimated it would take at least a year to get the district fully vaccinated because "we're not a top priority," in part because of the district's population and population density. "In D.C. they have military bases there, those people are residual. It's going to go down through the hierarchy with essential people everywhere getting the vaccine first."

Bell said the COVID-19 vaccine is "a two-part vaccine that requires a booster to be administered exactly 21 days after the initial vaccine is given. The vaccine has to be kept at such

sub-zero temperatures that we're having to order black ice and deep freeze storage areas," she added.

Bell said she thinks the health department is going to approach vaccinations "by having six people come together and get their vaccinations. Then, they get an appointment card for the same time in 21 days. I don't think you'll see us vaccinating people in the parking lots."

The vaccination process, she said, is "going to be costly and a lot of trouble, but it's what's going to save us."

For more tips on how to stay safe, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov or www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.

Legal state marijuana sales could overtake illegal trade by year four

Sam Fowler
Capital News Service

Virginia's commercial marijuana market could yield between \$30 million to \$60 million in tax revenue in the first year, according to a new report by the state's legislative watchdog agency.

The Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission released a report this month that explores how the commonwealth could legalize marijuana. The agency, however, did not give its take on legalization. Shortly after the report was released Gov. Ralph Northam announced that "it's time to legalize marijuana in Virginia."

The state's tax revenue could

grow to between \$150 million to more than \$300 million by the fifth year of sales, according to JLARC. The revenue depends on the tax and demand of marijuana products.

Most states with commercial marijuana markets tax the product between 20%-30% percent of the retail sales value, JLARC said. Colorado, one of the most mature and successful U.S. marijuana markets, currently has a tax rate close to 30%, showing that while the tax may be high, the market could still be successful, said Justin Brown, senior associate director at JLARC.

"But in reality, there's no magic rate that you have to use, and I think that's one thing

that the other states' experience shows," Brown said.

Virginia decriminalized marijuana possession earlier this year. The substance is still not legal, but possessing up to an ounce results in a \$25 civil penalty and no jail time. In the past, possessing up to half an ounce could lead to a \$500 fine and 30 days in jail.

If the Old Dominion makes marijuana legal, it will follow in the footsteps of 15 states.

The legal marijuana market should overtake the illegal market in marijuana sales by the fourth year of legalization, JLARC said. The legal market could likely have two-thirds of sales by the fifth year of legalization. JLARC looked at the

reported use rates compared to the use rates of other states to determine this figure, Brown said.

"In the first year the minority of sales will be through the legal commercial market," Brown said. "But then over time, particularly if supply and demand works out, you'll capture at least the majority of the full market through the legal market."

JLARC said that if the General Assembly legalizes marijuana, the total sales tax would come out to around 25%-30%. This figure also came from the analysis of other states and how they taxed marijuana.

The industry also could create over several years between 11,000 to more than 18,000

jobs, JLARC said. Most positions would pay below Virginia's median wage.

The revenue would cover the cost of establishing a market by year three, according to JLARC.

Northam said in a press release last week that his administration is working with lawmakers to finalize related legislation in preparation for the upcoming Virginia General Assembly session, which starts Jan. 13.

(Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.)

Jingle Competition open for teens

Virginia teens are being encouraged to jingle their way to a safe holiday by creating a safe driving song or tune for a statewide competition and a chance to win \$300.

The Jingle Your Way to a Safe Holiday: Buckle Up and Celebrate Responsibly Campaign kicks off this week across the Commonwealth with a goal to keep teen drivers and passengers safe during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The campaign, sponsored by Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety (YOVASO), the Virginia State Police (VSP), State Farm, and the Virginia

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), is an effort to reduce teen fatalities during what has become a high-risk period for young drivers.

Over the past three years during the month of December, 14 teens aged 15 to 20 have died in motor vehicle crashes in the Commonwealth and 1,797 were injured, according to statistics from DMV. During the same time frame, young drivers aged 15-20 accounted for 6,192 crashes and 15 fatal crashes in the Commonwealth. Many of the fatalities occurred when teens were on break for the Christmas holiday.

The new, virtual campaign will run for six-weeks on social media to encourage teens to buckle up and celebrate and drive safely throughout the holidays. The jingle competition is open to Virginia youth ages 11-20 and involves developing a safe driving jingle (short song or tune) that promotes traffic safety and the holiday campaign theme. Submitted jingles must be in video format and no more than 30 seconds in length. Submissions are due to YOVASO by December 10, 2020 at 5:00pm. The top five jingles as selected by YO-

VASO staff, will be open to public voting on social media during the week of December 14-18, 2020. The winning jingle will be announced on December 21 and will run on social media throughout the week of Christmas.

In addition to the top prize of \$300, the four runners-up will receive \$100. Students who submit a jingle entry to YOVASO are also being asked to share their jingle on their personal social media pages, include #SafeHoliday, and tag YOVASO. YOVASO will give away \$25 to six students with the most "likes" on their jingle. Cash prizes are made possible by State Farm. For the official jin-

gle guidelines, winner selection process, and prize information, visit the YOVASO website or Holiday Campaign Page.

"The jingle competition is a fun way for teens to share messaging about the importance of buckling up and driving safely during this high-risk period," said Mary King, YOVASO Program Manager. "We know all youth and teens love music and this contest lets them be creative with encouraging each other to be safe throughout the holidays. It's a great way to reach youth statewide and everyone is encouraged to get involved by sharing the jingles on their social media pages."

Schools and youth groups may also participate by registering for free Holiday Campaign banners and posters to promote the buckle up and celebrate responsibly message, as well as to encourage participation in the Jingle Contest. Anyone who participates in the contest will also be able to register for cards to remind their friends to vote on the jingles starting December 14, 2020 at www.surveymonkey.com/r/jingle.

For more information or to register for free campaign materials for your school or youth group, contact Casey Taylor, Program Development Coordinator at 540-739-4392 or visit yovaso.org.

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