

## HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, March 27, 2021

(USPS-6)

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## Potential implications on schools post-reversion

**Brandon Martin**  
Staff writer

The Henry County School Board would have the sole discretion of using the high school, middle school, and many of the elementary schools inside of the current city limits after reversion.

Thomas Auker, chairman of the county school board, said he is open to the idea of potentially closing redundant schools.

But he is quick to add that "all of the details haven't been ironed out yet. We'd need to discuss all of those factors involved before making an actual decision."

Under terms 5-9 of its filing to the Commission on Local Government, the city agreed to several issues about school consolidation.

The city would transfer ownership of Martinsville High School, Martinsville Middle School, Albert

Harris Elementary School, Clearview Elementary School, and the old gym to the county, while retaining Patrick Henry and Druid

Hills elementary schools.

Eric Monday, city attorney and assistant city manager, said both facilities would become redundant upon reversion. The city intends to use the buildings for future redevelopment projects. While the details of those projects are unclear, Henry County recently decided to remodel the former John Redd Elementary School into workforce housing.

For the remainder of schools, the city states in its notice that "the Henry County School Board should be given the right to use those school facilities currently owned by Martinsville on a basis that will fairly recognize the value of Martinsville's interest in such facilities."

Depending on the decision of the three-judge panel on payment, the county would take possession of at least four of the city's six school buildings and the gym. The county also would absorb the costs of operating those facilities.

See **Implications**, page 6



The HanesBrands Inc. manufacturing facility in Woolwine is slated to close by the end of July, officials have said. It employs 140 people and has been a fixture in the community since the 1950s.

## Manufacturing facility to close, 140 employees to be dislocated

**Debbie Hall and Taylor Boyd**  
Staff Writers

Up to 140 employees may be dislocated when a manufacturing company in Patrick County shuts down this summer.

Kirk Saville, senior vice president of corporate affairs and communications for HanesBrands Inc., said the company will close its Woolwine facility later this year.

"We can no longer operate the plant in a cost-competitive manner," Saville said in an emailed statement. He added production will be transferred to the company's other facilities.

Bryce Simmons, director of the Patrick County Economic Development Authority, said the closing will be effective July 31.

It is due, in part, "to a lack of competitiveness and because it is moving operations to Vietnam," Simmons said

he was told by the company. "This is devastating for the people and the community. It's just heartbreaking. We had no inkling this was going to happen," Crystal Harris, chairman of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, said of the closing.

She said County Administrator Geri Hazelwood was notified about the closing "just a few hours before the employees were notified. 'Hanesbrands has been there since the 1950s. It's just devastating' to lose a company that has been a 'lifeline for the people and the community,'" Harris said.

"Our 140 Woolwine associates have done an outstanding job," Saville wrote.

"We expect to offer positions to all interested associates at

See **Dislocated**, page 7

## Mountain View precinct to move locations

**Brandon Martin**  
Staff writer

The Henry County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance during its March 23 meeting to allow for the relocation of one its voting precincts.

Mountain View (#405) voting precinct will be moving from the VFW Building on Old Chatham Road to the Woodland Heights Free Will Baptist Church on the same road.

Rita Shropshire, chairman of the Electoral Board of Henry County, said 1,133 registered voters used the former VFW Building.

See **Mountain View**, page 3



Vice Chairman Debra Buchanan (left), of the Horsepasture District, presents a proclamation declaring March 28 - April 3, 2021, as Boys & Girls Club Week in Henry County. Also pictured are Joanie Petty (center), chief executive officer of Boys & Girls Club of the Blue Ridge, and Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District.

## First-year pandemic unemployment rates rival previous three recessions combined

**Brandon Martin**  
Staff writer

The level of unemployment claims in Virginia during the coronavirus pandemic more than doubled the unemployment claims of the 2007 recession and eclipsed the number of claims for the last three recessions combined, according to data released by the Virginia Employment Commission.

The number of total initial unemployment claims at the year-mark of the pandemic was 1,508,365 claims compared to 664,972 claims in 2007. The 2001 recession hit 326,190 claims and there were 441,817 claims in 1990.

For the most recent filing week ending March 13, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims in Virginia was 15,525. The latest claims figure was an increase of 1,789 claimants from the previous week. This brought the total number of claims filed since the March 21, 2020 filing week to 1,508,365.

The number of initial claims in Henry County was 38 which was a drop of 12 claims from the previous week. Martinsville had 77 claims during the week compared to 45 in the prior week. Patrick County had a drop of three initial claims with a final tally of 15 new claims.

For the most recent filing week, continued weeks claimed totaled 59,976 in Virginia, which was a 3.7 percent decrease from the previous week, but 38,640 higher than the 21,336 continued claims from the comparable week last year. Over half of claims that had a self-reported industry were in the accommodation/food service, administrative and waste services, retail trade, and healthcare/social assistance industries. The continued claims total consists of those recent initial claimants who continued to file for unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Henry County had 370 continued claims during the week which was an increase of 10 claims. Martinsville

experienced a decrease in continued claims at 194 claims compared to 210 the previous week. The number of continued claims was roughly the same in Patrick County at 96 claims compared to 97 claims last week.

Nationwide, in the week ending March 13, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 770,000, an increase of 45,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 13,000 from 712,000 to 725,000. The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 746,496 in the week ending March 13, an increase of 24,318 (or 3.4 percent) from the previous week. There were 251,416 initial claims in the comparable week in 2020. Looking at preliminary data, most states reported decreases on a seasonally unadjusted basis. Ohio's preliminary weekly change (-14,700) was the largest decrease among states. West Virginia's

See **Unemployment**, page 4

## City to become Bee City

**Brandon Martin**  
Staff writer

Martinsville is now officially a "Bee City" following the adoption of a resolution at a March 23 meeting to designate the city as a BEE CITY USA affiliate.

The Martinsville Garden Club and the Garden Study Club will handle the application and any related projects. The city may be requested to alter mowing schedules at certain locations, refrain from use of pesticides, or to provide spaces for native plantings intended to create and enhance pollinator habitat.

Cindy Edgerton, a member of the Martinsville Garden Club, said the designation is important.

"We've lost 40 percent of our

insect pollinators and in 2018, we lost over five percent of our insect biomass," Edgerton said. "Pollinators are responsible for 75 percent of our crops. A third of our food source comes pollinators. And 570 billion of our jobs are related to pollinators. Ninety-five percent of our flowers come from pollinators."

Edgerton said the bumblebee is the most famous pollinator, but others like butterflies, beetles, wasp, flies, and perching birds also fall into the category.

The Xerces Society headed the movement globally in 2012 to designate localities as an affiliate of BEE CITY USA. Since its beginning, 98 cities have become

See **Bee City**, page 5



Cindy Edgerton, a member of the Martinsville Garden Club, discussed the importance of Martinsville becoming an affiliate of BEE CITY USA.

## State tax deadline extended

State tax income filers and those who must pay have a new deadline to file.

Gov. Ralph Northam asked the Department of Taxation to extend the individual income tax filing and payment deadline in Virginia from Saturday, May 1 to Monday, May 17.

The extension aligns Virginia with the recent announcement from the United States Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service that federal income tax filings and payments would be extended from Thursday, April 15, 2021 to Monday, May 17, 2021.

"Aligning Virginia's filing and payment deadline with the federal government will provide additional flexibility and

simplify the process for taxpayers," said Northam. "Even with this extended deadline, we encourage Virginians to file as soon as possible so we can get people the refunds they are entitled to while also protecting the Commonwealth's strong fiscal footing."

This deadline extension affects only individual income taxes and does not apply to estimated payments. Individuals who owe taxes will need to make payments by Monday, May 17, 2021 to avoid penalties. While interest may still accrue beyond the original deadline, legislation to address this issue will be considered at April's reconvened session.

"This extension should provide certainty to tax preparers so that we can

conclude the tax filing season," said Secretary of Finance Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.

There are a number of ways to pay including online, directly from a bank account, check or money order, and credit or debit card, both of which incur an additional fee. The Department of Taxation recommends electronic filing, which is easy, secure and free to use, and requesting direct deposit if a refund is expected.

"Filing electronically is the fastest and most efficient way to submit your return, get it processed and get your refund," said Tax Commissioner Craig M. Burns. "Due to the COVID-19 protocols that are in place, it could take longer for us to process paper returns."

To check on the status of your refund, call (804) 367-2486 or use the Where's My Refund application at tax.virginia.gov. Taxpayers who have questions, should call the Virginia Tax Individual Customer Service hotline at (804) 367-8031.

Visit  
<http://www.henrycountyenterprise.com>  
for updates



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Friday, March 26-Friday, April 2

Blue Ridge Regional Library is hosting an Easter Basket giveaway to children ages 10 and under at each location. The giveaway is curbside pickup only. Children must be present at pickup. One basket per child. Contact your nearest location while supplies last. Bassett: (276) 629-2426; Collinsville: (276) 647-1112; Martinsville: (276) 403-5430; Ridgeway: (276) 956-1828; Patrick: (276) 694-3352

## Saturday, April 3

Miles in Martinsville is holding the Martinsville Half Marathon and 5K beginning at 8 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. respectively. Both races start and finish in front of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, adjacent to the Martinsville Henry County Family YMCA. Participants may pick up their packets with race bibs at the Martinsville YMCA at 3 Starling Avenue, on Friday, April 2, from noon until 6 p.m., and on race day at the Martinsville YMCA from 6:30-7:30 a.m. Deadline for registration is midnight on March 31, 2021. Due to COVID protocols, no in-person paper registrations will be accepted on Friday, April 2 or Saturday, April 3. Details and online registration can be found by visiting www.milesinmartinsville.com.

First Baptist Church Martinsville is hosting a community-wide Egg Hunt beginning at 10 a.m. The egg hunt will begin in two locations: one for younger children and one for older children. Age ranges for the hunts will be 2-4 years old and 5-10 years old. Children of all ages are welcome to attend and experience the stations. Stations will be in the church parking lot for a reading of the Easter story, socially distanced photos with the Easter Bunny, and goody bags containing an Easter craft for the children to take home.

## Thursday, April 8

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society is sponsoring a blood drive event at the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center and Museum from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Schedule an appointment by calling/texting John Phillips at (276) 806-5022 or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

## Friday, April 9

Blackberry Baptist Church is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive at the Sanville Rutitan Building, Bassett, from 1-6 pm.

## Saturday, April 10

The Charity League of Martinsville/Henry County will hold its first ever Charity League Spring Bargain Fair, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 242 Franklin St, Martinsville. Visit <https://fb.me/e/2ajePpkP5> for more information.

## Ongoing

The 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](mailto:eoc@danville.edu).

# HOROSCOPES

## ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Now may be a great time to reevaluate your finances, Aries. Investments could be the right path for now, but you may want to seek some professional advice.

## TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

A message from a business partner could bring welcome news, Taurus. This might be the break you are waiting for at this juncture in your life. Career changes could be in store.

## GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Gemini, expect to engage in a very interesting conversation this week. This person has not crossed your path in a while, and the reconnection sparks new goals.

## CANCER - June 22/July 22

Cancer, frustrations could arise that make you want to vent some anger. Channel your energy into something productive, such as a kickboxing class.

## LEO - July 23/Aug 23

Obstacles at work or home interfere with your ability to work efficiently, Leo. Even though tasks may take you a little longer, don't throw in the towel just yet.

## VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, do your best to lighten the atmosphere around the house this week. Encourage others to kick up their heels and keep the focus on fun and fun alone.

## LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Avoid any drama or chaos that may surround you this week, Libra. Others may seem on edge, but you can remain calm. Quarantine yourself at home and the storm will blow over.

## SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, even though a few setbacks come your way, your financial situation still looks very promising this week. Figure out how to capitalize on

this favorable position.

## SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

You are usually laid back and calm, Sagittarius. However, when something goes against your beliefs this week you are ready to stand up for morals or concerns.

## CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

This may not be a good week to travel, Capricorn. Look over your itinerary again and try to reconfigure them so you can travel later on instead.

## AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, trust your gut instinct about big financial moves regardless of any advice you're getting from others. You'll likely see that now isn't the time for spending.

## PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

A bumpy start to the week that has you questioning several choices will smooth out, Pisces. The weekend will be very productive.

## Bank's donation of more than \$1,300 helped fill food totes for families in need

Carter Bank & Trust continued its tradition of caring for the communities it serves, with a recent donation of more than \$1,300 in support of the Blue Ridge Regional Library's commitment to the people of Martinsville and Henry County.

The donation was used to purchase totes for distribution of food to help those in need.

"Your donation was vital in helping to make this food giveaway a success," Blue Ridge Regional Library Program Coordinator Leandio Gravelly said. "Your giving

has made it evident that Carter Bank & Trust is a bank that cares about the community".

Carter Bank & Trust continues to serve communities across its Virginia and North Carolina footprint through its CARE Forward campaign. Throughout the calendar year, a monetary donation will be made to a local non-profit organization for each new personal and business checking account opened in a branch. For accounts opened online, donations will be made to the American Red Cross.

## SNAP benefits to be increased through September

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a 15 percent increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through September 2021, providing an estimated \$3.5 billion to households experiencing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is made possible by President Biden's American Rescue Plan, which invests federal resources to reduce hunger across the country, strength-

en the food supply chain, invest in rural America, and provide long awaited supplemental to underserved, socially disadvantaged communities.

The 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits will provide about \$28 more per person, per month, or more than \$100 more per month for a household of four, in additional SNAP benefits.

"We cannot sit by and watch food insecurity grow in the United States," said Agriculture Secretary Tom

Vilsack. "The American Rescue Plan brings help to those hurting the most due to the pandemic. It increases SNAP benefits so households can afford to put food on the table. It invests in working people and small businesses to get the economy back on track. And it makes the most meaningful investments in generations to reduce poverty."

To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

## SUDOKU

		6	5		4			
9	4	8						5
		7		3				
8				2	1			7
			9					
						5		
5				7				4
1	3							
7			2	6				8

### Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Advanced

### Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

8	3	1	5	6	2	4	9	7
5	2	7	9	8	4	3	6	1
6	4	9	3	7	1	8	2	5
2	1	5	8	4	3	6	7	9
3	9	8	7	5	6	1	2	4
4	7	6	1	9	2	5	3	8
9	1	6	3	8	7	4	5	2
2	4	8	7	1	2	3	5	6
7	6	4	2	8	9	5	1	3

ANSWER:

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	
				12		13			14			
						16			17			
	18			19		20			21			
				22	23				24			
25	26	27	28	29								
						31						
32								33	34	35	36	37
				38	39	40		41	42			
				43				44				
		45	46									
47	48				49			50	51	52	53	54
					56				57			58
59					60				61			
62					63					64		

- CLUES ACROSS
- 1. As soon as possible
- 5. Gateway (Arabic)
- 8. Doctors' group
- 11. Madder genus of plants
- 13. A team's best pitcher
- 14. Ancient Greek sophist
- 15. Go up
- 16. Neither
- 17. Bolivian river
- 18. Manila hemp
- 20. Comedienne Gasteyer
- 21. British School
- 22. Human reproductive organs
- 25. Surrenders
- 30. Dog with long, silky coat and drooping ears
- 31. Sun up in New York
- 32. Lead alloy
- 33. Eastern Asian plant
- 38. Rapid deployment force (abbr.)
- 41. Japanese warrior
- 43. Festivity
- 45. Interruptions
- 47. Nonsense (slang)
- 49. Data mining methodology (abbr.)
- 50. Calvary sword
- 55. French river
- 56. Global business conference (abbr.)
- 57. Afflicted
- 59. Con man's game
- 60. No (Scottish)
- 61. Jewish spiritual leader
- 62. Fish
- 63. Camera term (abbr.)
- 64. Impudence
- CLUES DOWN
- 1. A continuous portion of a circle
- 2. Genus of seabirds
- 3. Infant's dining accessory
- 4. Native Americans from Arizona
- 5. Popular fruit
- 6. Poisonous plant
- 7. Scolded
- 8. Assists
- 9. Hand (Spanish)
- 10. Amazon product identifying system (abbr.)
- 12. Basics
- 14. Cain and \_\_\_
- 19. Malaria
- 23. Indicates particular shape
- 24. Respiratory disease
- 25. Central Standard Time
- 26. Imitate
- 27. Golf score
- 28. A place to lay your head
- 29. Three cards of the same suit
- 34. Not in
- 35. Human gene
- 36. Ancient Chinese philosophical concept
- 37. French river
- 39. Thinks up
- 40. Type of geological deposit
- 41. Helps little firms
- 42. Area units
- 44. A device to remove
- 45. Secret political clique
- 46. Polite interruption sound
- 47. Foundation
- 48. Clare Boothe \_\_\_
- 49. American writer
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Actor Idris
- 54. Resistance fighters
- 58. Speak disrespectfully of

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# Limited capacity increased for indoor, outdoor gatherings and some entertainment venues

Limited capacity increased for indoor, outdoor gatherings and some entertainment venues. As COVID-19 vaccinations continue to rise in Virginia, certain sports and entertainment venues may begin to operate with additional capacity and indoor and outdoor gathering limits will increase starting Thursday, April 1, Gov. Ralph Northam said Tuesday. He amended Executive Order Seventy-Two with the next steps of the "Forward Virginia" plan to safely and gradually ease public health restrictions while mitigating the spread of the virus. More than two million Virginians, or approximately one in four people, have now received at least one dose of the

COVID-19 vaccine. "With increased vaccination capacity and our health metrics continuing to trend the right direction, we can safely take these targeted steps to ease certain mitigation measures," said Northam. "Virginians have come so far over the past year, and now is not the time to simply throw the doors open or let down our guard. While some capacity limits will be increased, we must all remember to stay vigilant and work together to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities." Virginia will maintain a Safer at Home strategy, with continued mitigation strategies like physical distancing, tele-

working, and universal mask requirements. Key changes in the Fourth Amended Executive Order Seventy-Two include: Social gatherings: The maximum number of individuals permitted in a social gathering will increase to 50 people for indoor settings and 100 people for outdoor settings. Social gatherings are currently limited to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. Entertainment venues: All indoor and outdoor entertainment and public amusement venues must continue to operate at 30 percent capacity. Indoor venues must operate at 30 percent capacity or with a maximum of 500 people, an increase from the current cap

of 250 people. Outdoor venues must operate at 30 percent capacity, with no specific cap on the number of attendees. These venues were previously limited to 30 percent capacity or up to 1,000 attendees, whichever was fewer. Recreational sporting events: The number of spectators allowed at recreational sporting events will increase from 25 to 100 people per field or 30 percent capacity, whichever is less for indoor settings, and from 250 to 500 people per field or 30 percent capacity, whichever is less for outdoor settings. In-person graduation and commencement events: Last week, Northam issued preliminary guidance on safe in-person

graduations and commencements, which included a cap of 5,000 people or 30 percent of the venue capacity for outdoor events, whichever is less. Events held indoors may have up to 500 people, or 30 percent of the venue capacity, whichever is less. Attendees must wear masks and follow other guidelines and safety protocols to ensure proper distancing. Virginians are strongly encouraged to make sure they are pre-registered at vaccine.virginia.gov, or by calling 877-VAX-IN-VA, to ensure that the Virginia Department of Health has all the relevant information to reach out when individuals are eligible to schedule vaccination appointments.

## Mountain View from page 1

According to Shropshire, the building has been purchased by a church. "The pastor of that church informed the electoral board that the membership of the church voted to begin an extensive renovation project immediately to bring the building up to current code," Shropshire said. "Not knowing the status of renovation on election dates, the pastor requested the electoral board to move the voting precinct in 2021." The new location will fall under the 1-mile boundary, Shropshire said. "During our inspection, we found ample parking space, handicap accessibility, and other requirements necessary for a voting precinct," she said. Dawn Stultz-Vaughn, the county's new registrar, will send a letter to each registered voter in the precinct with information about the relocation. The board also discussed a variety of agenda items that pertained to beautification of the area, and unanimously approved a resolution for an application to allow the county to access \$1 million in funding from a Community Development Block Grant for the Historic Fieldale Recreation Center Restoration Project.

and 457. Today, you can't hardly tell that either one of them was picked up." Slaughter said the amount of trash along roads in the county detracts from the overall mission of attracting businesses to the community. "We are busting our butts trying to get businesses in here to give the folks jobs but if I was moving here" and he saw the amount of trash "I might could say we've got good people, we've got good work habits, but I'd have to say it's the nastiest bunch of people I've ever seen. I don't know why they can't get a trash bag in their car and throw it in there instead of throwing it out on the road." He proposed the sheriff's department begin to "take charges" or the court system that "needs to convict some people." "The legal system is going to hell," Slaughter said. "I'm upset that I worked for it for 25-years, but I just don't understand why these folks that are going in there and they are giving them no time and not putting them out there and making them pick up trash. We've got inmates out here every day that are picking up stuff to try and make it look better. Still, it doesn't seem to affect anything. I think if some folks were charged, and put out there on the side of the streets with those orange bags and their buddies were passing by, or friends were passing by and blowing the horn at them" then "it would make a mental difference to them." Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, cited dilapidated homes as a major concern. The issue, he said, "has not been addressed or attended in several years. There's a vast majority of people out there that just don't care. Somehow, we are going to have to do a better job as a county in enforcing these houses that are dilapidated. People that have yards like that are extremely messy. Nobody wants to live by someone that has crap in their back yard." Bryant also proposed "putting people's names in the paper" to "embarrass people" to add enforcement to the ordinances.

In other matters, the board: \*Adopted a proclamation declaring March 28 - April 3, 2021, as Boys & Girls Club Week in Henry County. Bryant read the proclamation, which stated in part, "the Board encourages all County citizens to join the Board in recognizing and commending the Boys & Girls Club for providing the young people of our communities with comprehensive and effective youth development services." Joanie Petty, chief executive officer of Boys & Girls Club of the Blue Ridge, announced this year's Youth of the Year winner. Tania Starkie, a student at Magna Vista High School, "comes to our teen center every day with the school virtually and she also participates in basketball," Petty said. "She continued to be a voice or reason and also leadership at our club with our teens and our other elementary school sites." The nomination includes a scholarship for "whichever school she decides to go to," Petty said, and explained the annual contest is designed "to recognize our clubs and our afterschool programs. We typically choose, out of our teens, a Youth of the Year candidate. That candidate not only represents our club but represents Martinsville-Henry County in a statewide Youth of the Year competition that, this year, will take place in Roanoke, Va.," which will be held virtually this year. \*Adopted a proclamation declaring April 4-10, 2021, as National Library Week in Henry County. Dr. J. David Martin, of the Iriswood District, read the proclamation on behalf of the board stating "the Board encourages all residents to reach out to the library this week, explore what's new at your library and engage with your librarian." Betsy Haskins, Margaret Caldwell and Debbie Youngman accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Blue Ridge Regional Library Board of Trustees. \*Heard a report on delinquent tax collection efforts from County Treasurer Scott Grindstaff. He said the county has collected 89.20 percent of 2020 personal property taxes to the

amount of \$ 299,790.67. Another 92.30 percent of 2020 real estate taxes were collected, amounting to \$271,666.95. \*Approved an additional appropriation of \$489,024. The school board made the request to use funds received by the General Assembly and the Virginia Department of Education to address learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and modifications to facilities to assist with COVID-19 mitigation strategies for in-person learning. \*Passed a resolution to allow Henry County to join a grant funded program to provide pretrial services and local probation. Halifax/Pittsylvania Court Services will serve as the fiscal agent. Henry County will only be responsible with providing office space, according to County Administrator Tim Hall. \*Heard from Lisa Price-Hughes, resident engineer for the Virginia Department of Transportation, and unanimously approved a resolution granting the right-of-way to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for roads in Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre (CCBC). The resolution will allow VDOT to take the streets into its secondary road system. "It's a little over a mile and a tenth," Price-Hughes said. "Final action will be taken by the Commonwealth Transportation Board." She added the county's SmartScale project will be advertised May 25. A virtual public hearing will be held on intersection improvements along the U.S. 220 corridors near Dyer Street from 5-7 p.m. on April 21. A virtual Spring Transportation meeting is set for May 5. \*Approved an ordinance in a 5-1 vote

to allow Martinsville Speedway to enter into a cooperative marketing agreement with WynnBet. Bryant, of the Collinsville District, was the sole vote against the agreement. WynnBet is a Virginia sports betting permit holder. The marketing agreement must be conducted in compliance with the existing zoning and other site plan authorizations. The agreement will allow for the "advertising and marketing of the WynnBet platform for sports betting through signage and displays as permitted by the County's zoning ordinance; distribution of marketing materials; hospitality areas, lounges, and trailers; platform demonstrations; logos; music and videos; and information provided by WynnBet employees or agents." WynnBet can't actually offer devices to place bets on sports but personal electronic devices of patrons can be used for the purpose. Bryant said he voted against the agreement due to his religious beliefs. "I'm a Christian and I believe sports betting is wrong," he said. "Gambling is a part of betting, whether it is lottery tickets or playing cards and poker money. Anything that has to do with betting is in conflict for me. I'm a member of the Church of Christ and I believe that any kind of gambling or betting is not what God wants you to do." He added that he had a discussion with Clay Campbell, president of the Martinsville Speedway, before the vote. \*Approved the appropriation of \$8,037,505 in Coronavirus Response and Relief Appropriations (CRRSA) Act and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency

Relief (ESSER) II funds for the school board to obtain "essential instructional and maintenance supplies, personnel costs, and school facilities upgrades." \*Approved a resolution authorizing the issuance of a bond to refinance loans held on Meadow View Elementary School. The refinancing has the potential to save approximately \$1 million over the life of the borrowing. \*Approved the rezoning of property located at 3446 Virginia Ave, in the Collinsville District. The property is intended to be used as an adjacent parking lot for the planned relocation of Biscuitville. \*Denied a rezoning request by Donna T. Mellott, of the Iriswood District, to rezone approximately 12-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Rural Residential District R-R. The Planning Commission previously denied approving the recommendation because it did not fit the existing surrounding neighborhood. Martin said the surrounding properties ranged in value from \$97,000-146,600, with the applicant's property being assessed as \$91,000 with a manufactured home on the property. \*Approved the rezoning of 5.6-acres of the Blackberry District from Rural Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to keep chickens, which is only allowed on agricultural zoned property. \*Set a budget presentation for April 13, with a work session on April 14. A public hearing will be held April 27, followed by a special meeting on May 10 to adopt the budget. \*Denied the carryover of \$14,177.65 in funds to the Department of Health.

During our inspection, we found ample parking space, handicap accessibility, and other requirements necessary for a voting precinct," she said. Dawn Stultz-Vaughn, the county's new registrar, will send a letter to each registered voter in the precinct with information about the relocation. The board also discussed a variety of agenda items that pertained to beautification of the area, and unanimously approved a resolution for an application to allow the county to access \$1 million in funding from a Community Development Block Grant for the Historic Fieldale Recreation Center Restoration Project.

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# OPINION

## Certified columnist, one day a week

Last week, the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards featured a performance of the song “WAP” by rappers Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion.

Nobody noticed this, of course, because no one watches the Grammy Awards. But then a bunch of articles came out talking about how racy the performance that no one watched was, and boy oh boy, were people ever upset.

I saw all kinds of comments on social media blaming this song for corrupting young minds, for sullying the art form of music itself, for being the musical avatar of the moral decay of Western civilization.

The first thing that struck me was that so many people were apparently just now hearing about WAP. The song came out last August, and if anything, we’re currently at the back end of its slide into irrelevancy, the fate destined for all songs that are absolutely everywhere for a period of a couple of months (looking at you “Achy Breaky Heart,” the bane of my existence in 1992). It’s a rare day that I listen to music recorded after 1985, but even I heard WAP when it first came out.

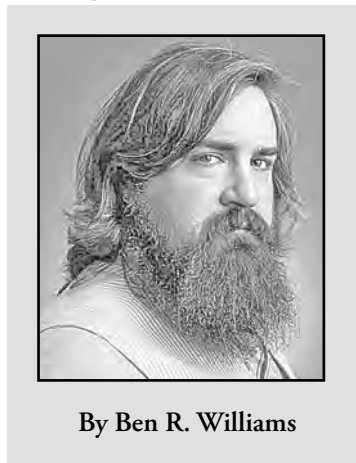
So what is WAP? Well, it’s a song with coarse sexual language,

so much so that I can’t even tell you what the title means since this is a family newspaper. It’s a song that I wouldn’t listen to with my parents. In truth, it’s a song I don’t particularly care for, not because of the lyrics, but because it’s just not my thing on a musical level. I like songs where someone sings about an evil wizard and then a three minute guitar solo happens. This is in no way a judgment on the genre, just a comment on personal taste.

However, it’s also a song that managed to reach the top of virtually every music ranking chart around the globe. It’s a song that has been called a celebration of female agency, a song that many women find empowering as a direct response to misogyny in pop music. And while I, a man who looks more and more like late-career Waylon Jennings with each passing day, am wildly unqualified to address any of those claims, I still wish to defend WAP.

Mainly because I’m tired of this debate.

My favorite musician of all time is Frank Zappa, and as a result, I am intimately familiar with the Parents Music Resource Center, the committee formed in 1985 by Tipper Gore, Susan Bak-



By Ben R. Williams

er, Pam Howar, and Sally Nevius, the spouses of four prominent Washingtonians who all apparently decided that Americans were having too much fun and something had to be done. Their goal — which was successful — was to introduce “Parental Advisory” stickers on albums, and also to shame a number of musicians for writing dirty songs.

Zappa, Twisted Sister frontman Dee Snider, John Denver (yes, really) and others provided an opposing voice at PMRC hearings held in the Senate. Essentially, they argued that the stickers would accomplish little except serve as a form of backdoor censorship because many retailers

would likely choose not to carry albums that bore the “Parental Advisory” warning. Which is exactly what ended up happening, at least up until the internet blew the music industry apart and rendered physical media little more than collectibles for diehard fans.

PMRC member and Florida Senator Paula Hawkins made the comment during the hearings that “much (had) changed since Elvis’ seemingly innocent times,” which is amusing considering that middle America lost its collective mind over Elvis when he debuted because he shook his hips in a suggestive manner. And over time, the bands and musicians that the PMRC directed their ire at back in 1985 — Prince, Sheena Easton, Judas Priest, AC/DC, and Cyndi Lauper, just to name a few — have been rendered either completely irrelevant or become beloved cultural touchstones whose music you probably heard playing over the PA system the last time you bought slacks at JC Penney.

This debate has probably been going on since the first caveman beat a rock against a stump in rhythm. There is always a musician pushing the envelope, and there is always a group that insists that this moment is unique, the final evidence of our nation’s moral degradation. Whether it’s

Elvis’ hips, or the Beatles’ shaggy hair, or heavy metal, or rap music, or Janet Jackson’s Super Bowl performance, or Shakira and J. Lo’s Super Bowl performance, or next year’s Super Bowl performance (TBD), there is always a generational musical outrage that everyone is convinced will deform the minds of our children. And then, just a few years later, the thing that everyone was so upset about begins to look sort of quaint, and our young people have once again failed to turn into murderous, music-crazed cannibals.

Of course, I could be wrong, and it’s possible that WAP will not be remembered as an ephemeral pop culture touchstone that emerged in the midst of a very strange summer, but will instead be the herald of the End of Times.

Anyway, the handful of people who did watch the Grammys hopefully noticed the parental advisories that aired prior to Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion’s performance. With any luck, they were able to flip the channel and instead let their children watch an episode of Law and Order: Special Victims Unit, in which former controversial rapper turned beloved TV star Ice-T routinely explains unspeakable real-life sex crimes to a prime-time network television audience, which is completely different.

# Biden’s Crisis at the Southern Border

**Morgan Griffith**  
*9th District U.S. Rep.*

Abraham Lincoln was fond of a question that asked: if you call a sheep’s tail a leg, how many legs does it have?

If someone answered five, Lincoln said, he would be wrong; calling a tail a leg does not make it so.

President Biden has chosen not to heed this lesson. The situation on America’s southern border is a crisis, even when his Administration has refused to acknowledge it.

Border security was a priority of President Trump and his Administration. Most notably, he made progress on the border wall despite intense Democrat resistance in Congress, but the wall was not the only measure. The United States reached agreements with several Central American countries that had them take in some of the asylum seekers attempting to enter our country, and the Migrant Protection Protocols required asylum seekers to remain in Mexico while American officials processed their claims.

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, enforcement agencies invoked a section of immigration law that permits fast deportation of illegal immigrants to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

President Biden entered office determined to reverse these policies. He halted construction of the border wall, even though Congress had just appropriated \$1.4 billion for it in December. He resumed the “catch and release” policies of apprehending illegal immigrants and then letting them go within our country. The “Remain in Mexico” policy and asylum agreements with Central American countries were cancelled, and unaccompanied minors would no longer be returned from the border.

These actions follow a campaign in which Joe Biden vowed to deliver citizenship for illegal immigrants and said he would end the “Remain in Mexico” policy.

As if the message sent by these actions were not enough, his Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, who is charged with enforcing immigra-

tion laws, said at a White House press briefing: “We are not saying, ‘Don’t come.’ We are saying, ‘Don’t come now,’” suggesting that illegal immigration itself was not a problem, only the timing of it.

The outcome from this clear aversion to immigration enforcement was predictable. Before President Biden’s inauguration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered fewer than 1,000 family units per week attempting to cross the border. Now that rate is at 6,000 per week.

In February 2020, CBP encountered 36,687 migrants at the border. This February, it encountered 100,441 — an increase of more than 170 percent. This scale of illegal immigrant apprehension at the border in February has not been seen since 2006.

Many of these illegal immigrants are unaccompanied minors. Federal law requires that they be transferred to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which then finds sponsors in the United States to take in the minors. But the spike in arrivals has jammed the pro-

cess, so CBP is forced to hold the minors for longer than the time limits imposed by law.

Large numbers of people being held in close quarters and then released obviously pose a serious problem during a pandemic, yet the Biden Administration has released illegal immigrants into the U.S. without testing them for COVID-19, and congressional Democrats have rejected efforts to require testing of apprehended illegal immigrants.

COVID is only one of the dangers from the border surge threatening the health and safety of both Americans and migrants. Smugglers and human traffickers victimize those making the trek to the border, and Biden’s CBP has confirmed that four people arrested at the border since October 1 match names in a terrorist tracking database. Border patrol officers have been taken off the border and reassigned to process migrants. The coyotes and smugglers know how to exploit this additional gap in border security.

Yet when Secretary Mayorkas appeared at a House Committee

on Homeland Security hearing on March 17, he followed the lead of his boss, President Biden, and repeatedly refused to call the situation at the border what it is: a crisis.

I strongly believe in legal immigration. In fact, I would like to see our country welcome more legal immigrants. The Biden Administration’s reckless border security policies are deeply unfair to immigrants who want to become Americans the right way and diminish the rule of law, one of the defining traits of our republican system.

In only two months, the Biden Administration has turned upside down policies meant to secure our border, enforce immigration law, and treat fairly those who want to share in the American dream legally. The consequences are incurring a real cost. Americans and those who want to be Americans deserve better.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, call my Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405; my Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, or via email at [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](mailto:www.morgangriffith.house.gov).

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## HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

henrycountyenterprise.com

Weekly Publication  
Published Each Saturday

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## Foundation extends scholarship deadline

The Patrick Henry Community College Foundation elected to extend the deadline for the Patrick Henry Scholars and Commonwealth Legacy scholarships this year.

The deadline for these scholarships was originally scheduled for March 31. It will now be Thursday, April 15.

When the deadline for the scholarships was initially established, the college’s spring break had been set for earlier in the month. However, due to changes caused by the pandemic, college officials moved the spring break to the end of March. From March 28 through April 2,

the college will be closed.

To provide students adequate time to submit their applications once the college re-opens after spring break, the PHCC Foundation Board pushed the deadline for the scholarship application up two weeks.

These scholarships, which are open to local high school seniors, will cover tuition, textbook, and fees for up to two academic years. To be eligible for the scholarship, students must have a high school grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. They must be graduates from an area high school or have com-

pleted a homeschool program of study. Scholars are chosen for their superior academic achievement, civic involvement, and leadership potential. Graduates of homeschool programs must be seventeen years of age or older at the time of the application and must reside in the PHCC service region.

Applications are available on the PHCC Foundation’s Website at [www.patrickhenryfoundation.com](http://www.patrickhenryfoundation.com), as well as on PHCC website’s homepage, [www.patrickhenry.edu](http://www.patrickhenry.edu), under Financial Assistance. The new deadline to apply is April 15, 2021.

## Unemployment

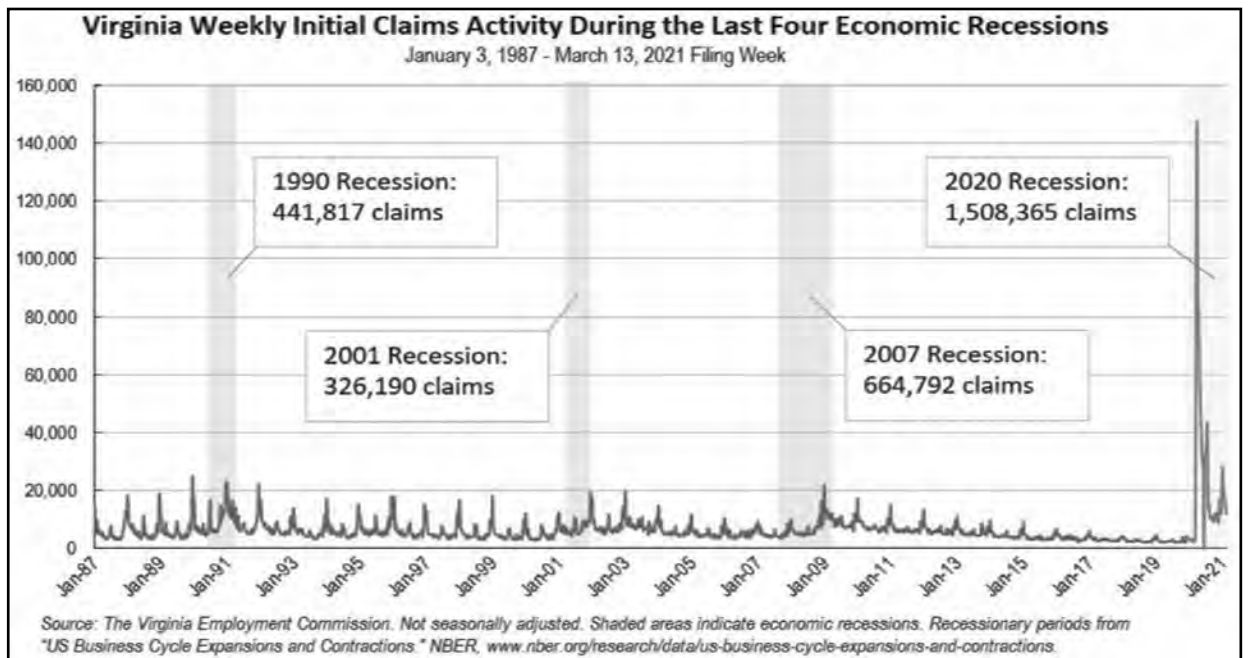
from page 1

preliminary weekly change (-3,602) was the second largest decrease. Georgia’s

preliminary weekly change (-3,035) was the third largest decrease. South Caro-

lina’s preliminary weekly change (-2,728) was the fourth largest decrease. Vir-

ginia’s preliminary weekly change (+10,103) was the third largest increase.



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# OBITUARIES

## Charles William Brinegar

Charles William Brinegar, 90, of Spencer, Va. passed away Friday, March 19, 2021. He was born in Henry County on October 2, 1930 to William Alford "W.A." Brinegar and Maggie Taylor Brinegar.



In addition to his parents, Charles was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Roberta McMillan Brinegar; brothers, Frank S. Taylor, George D. Brinegar and Robert A. Brinegar; sister Gladys B. Compton.

He is survived by his son Steve Brinegar (Pam); step-son Mike Agee (Karen); grandchildren, Brian Brinegar (Stephanie), Stephanie Vipperman (Jason), Susanne Washburn (Joe), step-grandson Patrick Agee (Michelle); seven grandchildren,

Kendra and Kipton Vipperman, Bryant and Brinden Washburn, Bristol Brinegar, Zariah Scales, step-grandchildren Robbie, Benjamin and James Agee.

Charles and Roberta were faithful members of Mayo Baptist Church and the Spencer Penn Centre.

Charles graduated from Spencer Penn

High School in 1948 where he played basketball and baseball. He later played semi-pro baseball. He was the owner of Charles W. Brinegar Enterprise Inc., a logging and sawmilling business he started and operated.

A funeral was held at Mayo Baptist Church on Sunday, March 21, 2021, officiated by Pastor Curt Ashley. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Pallbearers were Brian, Bill, Tyler and Austin Brinegar, Wayne Taylor, Josh Baker, Joe Washburn, Jason Vipperman, Patrick and Robbie Agee, and Bryant Washburn. Honorary pallbearers were great-grandchildren Zariah Scales, Bristol Brinegar, Kendra and Kipton Vipperman, Brinden Washburn, and Benjamin and James Agee.

Memorial donations may be made to the Mayo Baptist Church, 85 Penn Store Road, Spencer, VA 24165 or to the Spencer-Penn Centre, P.O. Box 506, Spencer VA 24165.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, VA. To express condolences online, visit www.collinsmckeeestonemartinsville.com.

## Angeline Martin Riddle

Angeline Martin Riddle, 103, of Ridgeway, Va. passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021. She was born in Henry County February 16, 1918 to William F. Martin and Emma Joyce Martin.



In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband Forrest C. Riddle; her son, F.C. Riddle; and 13 brothers and sisters.

She is survived by her daughter Gloria R. Vipperman (Jay); sons, Garry D. Riddle (Nancy) and Randy L. Riddle (Vickie); 7 grandchildren and 11 Great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Riddle was a long-time member

of Horsepasture Christian Church. She loved life and being with people. She also enjoyed knitting and sporting events.

A graveside service was held Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at Horsepasture Christian Church Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Missions of Horsepasture Christian Church, 1146 Horsepasture-Price Road, Ridgeway, VA 24148 or to the charity of the donor's choice.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, VA. To express condolences online, visit www.collinsmckeeestonemartinsville.com.

## Helen Jacqueline Galloway Jordan

Helen Jacqueline Galloway Jordan, 74, of Ridgeway, Virginia passed away Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at SOVAH Health of Martinsville. She was born January 12, 1947, in Henry County to the late Dollar Bill Galloway and Ella Naomi Carter Galloway Dalton. She was a 1967 graduate of G. W. Carver High School and attended Fayetteville Technical Institute.



She was a member of Shiloh Apostolic Temple where she was in the choir, an usher, missionary and van driver. She enjoyed traveling, drawing, reading, cooking, spending time with family and going to church.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brothers, Leonard Galloway, Dollar Bill Galloway, Jr., and Arthur Galloway.

Ms. Jordan is survived by her daughters, Tonia A. Jordan of Ridgeway, VA, Tchernavia M. Jordan of Martinsville, VA; son, Chester Damon Jordan (Isa-

bel) of Phoenix Arizona; sisters, Dorothy Hairston, Joan Hairston (Vernon), Vanessa Hairston, Vivian Hairston (Ronald); brothers, William Galloway,

Donald Galloway (Sandra); and grandchildren, Dominic Jordan and Isaiah Jordan.

The funeral will be held Saturday, March 27, 2021 at noon, in Wright Funeral Service Chapel with

Bishop James Millner and Elder Carl Lowe officiating. Visitation will be one hour before the service and other times at 1301 Mulberry Road, Martinsville, Virginia 24112. Burial will be in Fair Haven Memorial Park.

Special thanks to Mark France, Della Robinson, Terrance Scales, Charles Price, Kenan Thompson, Davita Dyalysis, SOVAH Health and Carilion Wound Clinic.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.wrightfuneralservices.net.

## Mrs. Esther T. Elgin

Mrs. Esther T. Elgin, age 92, went home to be with the Lord Thursday, March 18, 2021. She was born on August 08, 1928 to Mr. Tom Thomas and Mrs. Minnie Nolen Thomas.



In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband of 52 years, Homer Gray Elgin, and a daughter, Frances Lemaster.

Mrs. Elgin is survived by her sons; Mike Elgin (Genie), Bruce Elgin (Yvonne); a daughter, Debra Elgin; Grandchildren, Jason Elgin, Melissa Elgin, Dustin Elgin, Amanda Hutchinson, Chris Elgin and Jordan Willard; and Great-grandchildren, Nicholas Fisher,

Olivia Fisher and Adaleigh Esther Elgin.

Esther loved her family and was a joy to be around. She enjoyed her coffee time and chocolates. She retired from Bassett Walker after many years of service and was a member of Collinsville Baptist Church.

A funeral was held Monday, March 22, 2021 at Collins Funeral Home, 30 Riverside Drive, Bassett,

VA. The service was officiated by the Rev. Tracy Freeman and Pastor Bobby Rakes. Interment was at Roselawn Burial Park. Online condolences may be made at www.collinsmckeeestonemartinsville.com.

## Bee City from page 1

Edgerton said only three of the bee cities are in Virginia, including Lynchburg.

Martinsville must apply online to become an affiliate and pay an application fee based on local population. Edgerton estimated the fee to be \$200, but she added the fee would be paid by the Martinsville Garden Club and the Garden Study Club.

"It's basically pledging to reduce the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides. And to think about your native plants when you are planting in city planning," Edgerton said.

She added that a committee will be formed to bring in other nonprofits as advisory members.

"Suggestions of people that can be on the committee, and I suggest that we open it to the community, but we've got the Natural History Museum, we've got Honeybee Associations, there are master gardeners, naturalists, PHCC, NCI and high schools can have representations from clubs and majors that are related."

The city will be able to advertise the affiliation with signage and online promotions.

In an unrelated matter, Eric

Monday, city attorney and assistant city manager, clarified the city's policy on electronic skill games.

"We've been dealing with them for about a decade now," Monday said. "They have a convoluted history here in Virginia."

Monday said the skill games were originally illegal in Virginia, being considered gambling devices. He said "they look remarkably like online slot machines."

"About a decade ago, they were legalized," Monday said. "Virginia took advantage of North Carolina's de-legalization of these devices. In the following year, North Carolina re-legalized them and we de-legalized them."

Monday said that was the state's decision until 2020 when "the state re-legalized them, but they are going to be de-legalized" in the summer of 2022.

A local ordinance prohibits the devices in the city, Monday said.

"They are simply not allowed under our zoning ordinance," he said. "That remains the law here in the city regardless of if the state allows this. That's in all areas of the city."

Monday said owners of commercial establishments can lobby by council members to agree to change the zoning ordinance, if it is desired. Private clubs can also seek a waiver.

In other matters, the council:

\*Honored local resident Delia Bowman Martin with a proclamation in celebration of her 100th birthday.

Martin was born March 25, 1921 and is a longtime resident of the Martinsville-Henry County community, previously working for Pannill Knitting Company for many years. She has four surviving children and three stepchildren, nine grandchildren, and sixteen great grandchildren. Martin is a long-time member of Stone Memorial Christian Church.

Members of Martin's family were present at the meeting to receive the proclamation on her behalf.

Danny Turner and Mayor Kathy Lawson plan to visit Martin.

\*Presented a proclamation recognizing the week of April 4-10, 2021 as National Library Week. Betsy Haskins, Marty Gardner and Margaret Caldwell, members of the Blue Ridge Regional Library Board

of Trustees attended the meeting to receive recognition during the proclamation.

"We appreciate the relationship with the city," Haskins said. "It is so powerful, it is so long-standing and having different relationships is what makes us strong. It really touches my heart. This means so much to us and we really appreciate it."

Caldwell said the library is currently open on an appointment-basis and curbside delivery is available.

\*Read a proclamation recognizing the week of March 28-April 3, 2021, as National Boys & Girls Club Week. Joanie Petty, chief executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of the Blue Ridge, attended the meeting to accept the proclamation.

Nine different local schools have participants in the club that is primarily run by volunteers.

Petty said the Boys & Girls Club of the Blue Ridge was one of two clubs in the state to open since August 2020 during the pandemic. It was also one of 24 clubs to open nationwide.

She added that the club received a \$100,000 donation designated for a rural club.

\*Heard from City Manager

Leon Towarnicki about changes to publication of meetings streamed via MGTV. Previously, the city council meetings could be found on the city website, which is linked to its Youtube account. Towarnicki said "for whatever reason" the platform dropped the city's account. To address the matter, Towarnicki said videos have since been moved to a new format called Vimeo. Only videos from 2018 will be available due to lost footage.

Additionally, a switcher for MGTV has become faulty, according to Towarnicki. The function allows the city to feed council meetings into the MGTV stream throughout the day. Without the switcher, Towarnicki said meetings will be streamed live with replays available on the city website.

\*Set the next reversion work session for Wed., April 14 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The next budget presentation has been moved until May 11 with a first reading scheduled for May 25. A second reading and approval will be held June 8. City council will hold a joint session with the school board on May 18. Three additional work sessions will be held between May 12-20.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

This is in response to 9th district U.S. Representative Morgan Griffith's opinion column of Saturday, March 13, 2021.

Mr. Griffith rants about the H. R. Bills that have been flowing through the House and then on to the Senate. He questions why the rush. When Republicans held a majority in the House and Senate, I cannot recall any significant legislation that would benefit our nation, and he well knows what the issues are now, because they are many of the same issues back then.

H.R. #1 is considered the Covid 19 bill because of the various aspects that will eliminate the economic suffering and improve the effort to get vaccines into all people. His question about the rush is absurd. Mr. Griffith, if your house is on fire, would you want a slow response from the fire department?

Your constituents have been suffering with the pandemic for over a year. The Republican party have done little to downright nothing to encourage masks or distancing or the science of handling the pandemic.

The Republican party is in chaos and none of them seem to know how to unify their message. If the Republican party were a restaurant, they would need to change the menu, change the look, change the management.

You, sir, represent the 9th district in the state of Virginia. Pay attention to your constituents and do your job. If you are concerned about losing your seat in the House, you are not busting your butt for Virginia. Virginians voted you in, not the Republican party.

John Rehder,  
Ridgeway



### MULTI-PROPERTY AUCTION






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# Frontline farmers are eligible for COVID-19 vaccine

Agricultural groups know farmers are essential workers, and they are supporting efforts to get them vaccinated against COVID-19.

"Our nation's food supply depends on farmers' and frontline agricultural workers' ability to work safely," said Ben Rowe, national affairs coordinator for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. "The work of planting, cultivating, harvesting, packaging and processing crops and livestock cannot be conducted remotely or accomplished without contact. Despite swift implementation of best practices and state and federal guidance in the fields and processing facilities, the agricultural workforce remains at heightened risk of infection, as do the frontline critical-risk workers."

Food and agriculture workers and veterinarians are eligible under the Virginia Department of

Health COVID-19 Vaccine Phase 1b. Every health district in Virginia has moved into Phase 1b, which means these workers are eligible regardless of their home county.

"We have all seen the significant toll that disruption of the agricultural food supply chain places on communities and families. It's important for them to get vaccinated as soon as possible," Rowe noted. "We appreciate that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the commonwealth of Virginia recognized the role of the agricultural workforce in public health and food security and prioritized them for vaccine allocation in Phase 1b."

A mass vaccination clinic targeting farmworkers in the Blue Ridge Health District was held in late February. Currently, the Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District has partnered with Virginia Cooperative

Extension agents to disseminate an online survey to gauge interest in holding vaccine clinics for farmers, nursery workers, aquaculturalists and agribusiness workers.

In Appomattox County, Extension agents helped organize vaccination clinics on March 3 and March 10 for area farmers.

The county's Extension agents Bonnie Tillotson and Bruce Jones said they had 100 doses available for the first clinic, but after they contacted hundreds of farmers, only 60 signed up. "Then word of mouth took over, and our phones were ringing off the hook," Tillotson said. There was a waiting list for the second clinic.

"A lot of farmers are older, so they're already in the high-risk bracket, and they need to stay healthy to get out in their fields and feed their livestock and keep our food supply going," Tillotson said.

"Our farm is family-operated, so if someone gets ill from COVID, there's no one to fill in," said Lee McClenny, who operates a beef cattle farm in Pamplin with her husband, Kenneth. The couple received their first vaccine at the March 10 clinic in Appomattox.

On the Eastern Shore, where some of the state's largest poultry processing facilities are located, the Delmarva Chicken Association is encouraging its members to get vaccinated.

"Farmers have stayed steady throughout this pandemic as market disruptions, quarantines and labor shortages complicated their day-to-day work producing food for Americans and the world," said Holly Porter, DCA executive director. "Now that vaccine availability is reaching Virginia's farmers and their employees as frontline essential workers in Phase 1b,

the promise of getting back to normal is very close, and that's a relief."

Porter added that the association is encouraging its Virginia members to sign up at [vaccinate.virginia.gov](http://vaccinate.virginia.gov).

Rowe also said he's optimistic about the increased availability of the vaccine—especially in rural areas.

"Rural areas—home to the largest percentage of Virginia's farmers and farm workers—have borne a greater burden from the virus, in part because they tend to have older populations, a high prevalence of underlying medical conditions, and may lack nearby medical care or facilities. We are glad to see rural health districts working to provide greater access to vaccination clinics within close proximity to agricultural operations and their related processing facilities."

# Service launched to help students applying for financial aid

A new free advising service to assist Virginia students and families applying for financial aid and help address the COVID-19 related decline in completion rates of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA has been launched, according to Gov. Ralph Northam, who also set forth a long-term goal for every eligible student in Virginia to complete a FAFSA application each year.

The Virginia College Access Network (VirginiaCAN) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) have partnered on a statewide effort to offer free, one-on-one FAFSA completion assistance. From March 22 through June 30, 2021, students and families can go to [virginiacan.org/fafsa](http://virginiacan.org/fafsa) to schedule a virtual meeting and connect with an advisor who can answer questions

and walk them through filling out the FAFSA application.

"The FAFSA is the first step in helping Virginia students qualify for thousands of dollars in state and federal grants and scholarships," said Northam. "Completing the FAFSA can be difficult under normal circumstances, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and shift to remote learning have added to the challenge of assisting our high school seniors with filling out their forms. This free one-on-one advising service will support our goal of ensuring every eligible student in our Commonwealth completes an application, and open the doors to affordable higher education and technical training for even more Virginians."

So far in 2021, 4,315 fewer Virginia high school seniors have completed

the FAFSA, which is down nearly 10 percent compared to last year and mirrors the nine percent decline in FAFSA completion rates nationally. For students attending Virginia high schools with high concentrations of low-income students, FAFSA completions are down 33 percent. This means students who have the most to gain from state and federal aid are missing out on thousands of dollars in financial assistance for college and postsecondary training. According to a 2018 study, approximately 15,000 Virginia high school seniors that would have been eligible for Pell grants did not complete the FAFSA, amounting to more than \$58 million in federal aid that students left on the table.

The FAFSA is also vitally important for Northam's new "Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back" (G3) initiative,

which provides financial support to cover tuition, fees, and books to eligible Virginia students who complete a FAFSA. The G3 Program aims to make community college more affordable for low- to middle-income individuals seeking employment in high-demand sectors such as technology, skilled trades, health care, early childhood education, and public safety.

"The launch of this new advising tool comes at a critical time when we must double down on our efforts to support the future success of our students and our Commonwealth," said Secretary of Education Atif Qarni. "While we have a lot of ground to make up this year, we are committed to helping every Virginia student get the federal student aid they are entitled to, and that starts with connecting them with the resources

they need to complete the FAFSA." To meet the Governor's goal of ensuring that every eligible Virginia student completes the FAFSA, he has directed Secretary Qarni to convene a work group tasked with forming long-term legislative and budgetary recommendations to improve Virginia's FAFSA completion rates. This group will include representatives from SCHEV, Virginia Community College System, and the Virginia Department of Education, along with other key stakeholders and college access experts. The work group will conduct listening sessions with community groups to collect input which will inform their final recommendations to the Governor.

"Right now, Black, African American, Hispanic, and low-income students are less likely to enroll in college than the state average," said SCHEV Director Peter Blake. "The Virginia Plan for Higher Education calls for closing gaps in college access and improving FAFSA completion is the first step in closing those gaps." VirginiaCAN, a non-profit organization with a mission to support and enhance post-high school education access and attainment for Virginians, is the lead organization in the new one-on-one FAFSA advising service. The five college access organizations participating in this effort include the Access College Foundation, ECMC's The College Place, Great Aspirations Scholarship Program (GRASP), the Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (VASFAA), and the Virginia College Advising Corps (VCAC).

# Implications from page 1

Costs in the operating budgets for schools include salaries and benefits for employees, facility and maintenance, capital outlay, and educational supply.

The county contributed approximately \$18.9 million in local funds for the fiscal year 2021 school budget. The rest of the \$68.3 million is covered by the state and federal government, sales tax revenue and other grants.

The city contributed \$6.3 million to its overall 2021 school budget. Assuming state and federal contributions don't change upon reversion, the county would absorb a 33.3 percent increase in local contributions to schools in the division.

Of the facilities the city agreed to transfer, Martinsville High School is the only one with an existing \$11.8 million debt.

The city filing states, "the Town of Martinsville will pay off the city's existing school debt. With respect to any other existing school debt, as new residents of

Henry County, citizens in the Town of Martinsville will participate in paying down Henry County's existing educational debt through county real estate taxes."

The notice filed by the county concurs that "the city shall be solely responsible for the satisfaction of any and all debt it had prior to reversion, even if an asset securing payment of such debt has been transferred to the county."

Regardless of which locality pays the debt, the high school facility would have the highest fair market value.

Monica Hatchett, director of communications for the county schools, said "the operating budget for a high school is approximately \$7 million dollars."

The current operating budget for Bassett High School is \$6.9 million and the budget for Magna Vista High School is \$6.8 million, not including "other categorical expenses such as transportation, technology, and other instructional costs that are separate from the school's operating budget," Hatchett said.

Both the city and the county noted in their filings that the enrollment rates are projected to decline in future years.

Martinsville Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley Jr. said in January the division expects 1,905 students to be enrolled in city schools next year. Not including adult education, this

would be 147 students per grade level, or 588 students total in the four high school grades.

Hatchett said the total enrollment of Bassett High School is 1,100 students, with 111 staff members assigned to the school. The total enrollment at Magna Vista is 1,074 students, with 140 staff members.

She said the 'effective capacity,' at BHS is 1,420 students and MVHS is 1,309 students.

This means Bassett High School could accommodate 320 additional students and Magna Vista could accommodate an additional 235 students. If the two high schools operated at effective capacity, about 555 more students could be housed in county schools.

According to school population data presented in the city filing, fall enrollment in 2021 was initially expected to be 1,678. According to updated information from Talley, the city had 227 more students than expected.

If this figure is applied to the projections for 2022, when reversion is proposed to take effect, the total enrollment in the Martinsville schools would be 1,838 students, or 141 students per grade level, including an estimated 564 students at the high school level.

These 564 students would put the two county high schools over effective capacity by nine students.

The city's notice also includes information about school attendance zones: "School children residing within the Town of Martinsville should be given priority in attending those schools located within the town."

Hatchett said school attendance in the county is based on the zone in which a student lives.

"This zoning is determined geographically with the help of Henry County and has been evaluated periodically based on need," she said.

The county encompasses 384 square miles. If the city moves forward with reversion, only 11.01 square miles would be added to the county.

Hatchett said the current maximum distance that a student would travel by bus is 29.8 miles.

The distance between Martinsville High School and Magna Vista High School is about 9.6-miles. The distance between Martinsville High School and Bassett High School is about 9.2 miles. Both distances are well within the 29.8 mile maximum allowed by the county.

According to the seventh item listed by the city, "the Henry County School Board should be given the right to use those school buses currently owned by Martinsville on a basis that will fairly recognize the value of Martinsville's interest in those vehicles."

The notice filed by the county agrees to this condition under its own terms and notices but expands the criteria.

For services transferred to the county, "the city shall provide to the county, at no cost, all personal property, assets and resources currently used by Martinsville in the provision of those services, including without limitation, the vehicles, furniture, fixtures, and equipment."

Besides the disagreements about payment and how broad reaching the process would be, both localities

have at least agreed to transfer city school buses. This means the county would only increase its attendance zone coverage area by 2.87 percent but would also gain the benefit of using the city fleet to do so.

Combined, these factors mean the county has a \$6.3 million operating cost incentive to close a high school. For example, closing Martinsville High School would translate into nine students over the effective capacity of county schools. Post reversion, the county school board would determine whether it is financially viable to continue operating all of its schools with fewer students.

But that, like many things, is yet to be determined. The county maintains reversion would come at "significant" non-economic costs to residents. "Martinsville's proposed reversion will result in the loss of civic independence and diminished civic pride, loss of an independent school system and a separate court system, and loss of municipal constitutional officers," the county stated in its response to the Commission on Local Government.

With litigation ongoing, Monday said a final deal could still be made between the localities which would require the transferred schools to remain operational post-reversion.

The city retains the option to not revert, even after the three-judge panel has ruled, if a satisfactory set of terms and conditions is not reached.

Both localities have retained outside legal counsel for the reversion process.

Monday said the city is spending \$124,454 for outside legal counsel during the current fiscal year for reversion costs. He added that is the total cost of the city's outside legal fees, including a pending lawsuit against the Henry County PSA concerning "their contribution to the

cost of replacing the lower Smith River Sewer Interceptor line."

Troutman Sanders is representing the city in that proceeding that Monday said is "a contributing factor" or issue "relating to reversion."

The city is asking for \$8.6 million in repayment from the PSA and continuation of the 1974 contract. The county does not consider the lawsuit between the PSA and the city to be relevant to reversion. As noted by the county in its response to the city's filing, "The PSA is a separate legal entity. It is not a county department. It owns its own property, employs its own employees, provides water and sewer services to parts of the county, and is responsible for setting the rates it charges for those services. Crucially, unlike the city's utility departments, the county does not control the use of the PSA's revenues. The PSA's revenues are used exclusively to fund PSA projects; they are not used to support the county or the county's budget."

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# More than 70 students inducted into national honors society



This week, Patrick Henry Community College's (PHCC) chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society (Psi Phi) inducted more than 70 new members for the spring semester. These students were invited to join this exclusive national honors society based on their academic success. To be eligible, students must have completed at least 12 hours towards an associate degree and have a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

This Spring 2021 initiates are: Julio Amaya Lopez, Heather Amos, Jake Arnold, Diogo Azevedo, Margarita Calderon, Johanna Calix Vivanco, Brittany Carter, Olivia Cassell, Joyce Chacha, Hailey Chitwood, Naomi Daniels, Gabriel Divers, Victoria Everhart, LeRoy Falloon, Elizabeth Ferguson, Kevin Garibay, Karla Garibay, Rosie George-Ambrocio, Melissa Gravely, Carley Gravely, Alyson Gravely, Lydia Gunter, Teresa Harkness,

Landon Hill, Morgan Hill, Amanda Holcomb, Allyson Hundley, Joanie Hurd, Jaden Hurdle, Amanda Jones, Olivia Jones, Elyssa Kancherla, Kaden Knight, Brianna Knight, Jeremiah Law, Joseph Littles, Landon Martin, Isaiah Moore, Matthew Nolen, Mary Nunez, Brittney Perdue, Melissa Potter, Jessica Price, Adina Prillaman, Jasmine Pruitt, Andre Redd, Leah Reece, James Richardson, Savannah Roberts, Amber Robinette, Ignacio Ruiz-Sanchez, Bailey Sharp, Wynter Sims, Susan Smith, Morgan Smith, Kadee Southers, Kara Spencer, Brenton Spicer, Sherita Stanley, William Stowe, Madison Stowe, Myah Taylor, Adam Cade Varner, Giselle Vazquez, Lauryn Wade, John Walker, Gabriella Wall, Neelya Webb, Hunter Whitlow, Stephen Willocks, Arianna Wilson, Sydney Wilson, Leah Wisswell, Anthony Wright, Dan Zou.

Phi Theta Kappa Members are not only honored for their academic

accomplishments but are also provided access to exclusive membership benefits that could help provide a competitive edge as they pursue their education and career goals.

Phi Theta Kappa is the premier honor society recognizing the academic achievement of students at associate degree-granting colleges and helping them to grow as scholars and leaders. With more than 3.5 million members and more than 1,300 chapters in 11 nations, Phi Theta Kappa is the largest honors society in higher education. The goal of Phi Theta Kappa is to not only recognize and encourage academic achievement but also to provide opportunities for leadership development, networking, and community service.

For more information about PHCC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, contact one of the college's PTK Faculty Advisors, LaDonna Varner at (276) 656-0304 or Bronte Miller at (276) 656-0339.

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## Dislocated from page 1

the company's nearby" distribution center in Martinsville.

He did not specify whether employees hold full-or part-time positions, but Saville wrote that those who do not wish to accept roles in Martinsville will be offered "separation benefits and career transition assistance."

Robbie Knight, business services manager at Virginia Career Works - West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board, said John Garrison, a rapid response coordinator with the Virginia Employment Commission, is assembling a team to provide services to dislocated employees.

The team will include members of the VEC, workforce board, community college and others, Knight said, and added team members will work "to let dislocated employees know what the next steps will be."

While Knight said he does not yet know the options that may be available to employees, or a timeline to meet with employees, he speculated the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIAO) will be among the offerings.

The WIAO program is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed

in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy, according to online information.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Act also may be an option, Knight said of the program that helps workers who lose their jobs due to overseas markets.

"I'm not sure if Hanes is going to pursue the Trade Act or not, but if so," a representative familiar with the aspects of the program will be among the team to meet with employees, Knight said

The loss of the company means the county would lose revenue

in an already tight budget year, as county officials eye an up to 5-cents potential increase in real estate taxes.

Treasurer Sandra Stone said the company pays a combined \$150,000 per year for personal property tax and real estate tax.

Although "the real estate is still going to be there, so the taxes are still going to have to be paid on the real estate," Stone said personal property would be taxed only for as long as it remains in the building.

"If they sell the equipment, then of course that will go away. If they close the door and they sell it, then yes, we've lost that revenue on that

equipment. But if they close that building and leave that equipment in there, then they will still owe the taxes," she said.

Saville said the company plans to sell the property.

Simmons said he will conduct a site evaluation later this week in hopes of identifying a "purchaser of the facility to keep it in operation. Hopefully, we can plan for the future of how to best keep that facility in operation."

Saville did not respond to repeated requests for additional information.

Garrison could not immediately be reached for comment.

## Rescue plan 'touches a variety of subjects'

**Brandon Martin**  
Staff writer

The American Rescue Plan signed by President Joe Biden has already provided more than \$90 million in direct deposits to families around the country and around Virginia, according to U.S. Sen. Mark Warner.

"This package is large. It touches a whole variety of subjects," Warner, D-Alexandria, said at a recent press conference. Expanding broadband and funding for state and local governments were among the two biggest sections he discussed.

Of the approximate \$6.9 billion received in aid, Warner said about \$4 billion will go to the state government while another \$3 billion is disbursed directly to local governments.

"That's important because in the previous legislation, it only went directly to localities in an area like Fairfax that was quite large," Warner said. "This \$3 billion goes to every city, every county, and even town governments will be receiving dollars."

Through the plan, the Commonwealth of Virginia received more than \$6.9 billion in state and local government funding; \$4.5 billion in emergency rental assistance; \$3 billion in education funding; \$1.4 billion in rural transit funding; and \$1.5 billion in urban transit funding. Additionally, more than 3,611,000 households in Virginia either have or will receive individual stimulus

checks.

Warner said \$7 billion will go towards making broadband affordable.

"I think if there is one thing that we've learned in the last year of COVID, it is that high-speed internet connectivity, broadband, is an economic necessity and not a nice to have," Warner said. "Unfortunately for Virginia, we have over 700,000 Virginians that don't have access to broadband. In rural communities but also in suburban communities. That doesn't even count the number of Virginians that even if they got access, that broadband is not affordable enough."

To help with this equity gap, Warner said the federal government made "the largest single" investment in broadband expansion "in our country's history," with a total of \$17 billion approved for broadband expansion.

Approximately \$10 billion of those funds are dedicated to state and local governments "with a great deal of flexibility on how we can provide that as an expanded broadband service," Warner said, and added that those decisions are best left at the local level.

"As we've seen in Southwest Virginia, the best solution may be satellite connection. In the Southside, there

may be areas where wireless cell phone connections are a way forward in broadband," Warner said. "In many parts, making sure you have fiber straight to the house. We want to give that flexibility, but we also want to make sure we expand the coverage range."

Warner said the challenges to local broadband lie in the profit margin for providing services.

"The challenge of getting broadband deployed

has been the face that in many jurisdictions, the local incumbent provider particularly in rural areas, has no incentive to provide that expanded coverage," Warner said. "But at the same time, doesn't want a competitor to come in and provide that expanded coverage because at some point down the line it may be worthwhile to expand that coverage."

According to Warner, the need to expand broadband requires urgency.

"If we have had that approach in the 1930s about

rural electrification then it probably would have been 50 years before American households got electricity," Warner said. "We can't have that same model take place in broadband."

The solution, he said, will be multi-faceted.

"It will take some initial investment," he said. "Some of that will be federal dollars, some of that needs to be local dollars. Some of that needs to be local providers that will long term see an economic benefit in revenue that comes in providing that service."

**COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **April 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on each application to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **April 27, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia.

The purpose of these meetings is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.

**Case R-21-07 Jared P. Harris, Rebecca B. Harris, and Charles M. Harris**  
The property is located in the south east corner of the intersection of Old Sand Rd and Pulaski Rd, in the Ridgewalk District. The Tax Map numbers are 62.5(73)/1-4. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of 4 lots, totaling approximately 24-acres from Industrial District 1-1 to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wants to use the property for residential and agricultural purposes.

**Case R-21-08 Mathew Kendall**  
The property is located on the north side of A.L. Philpott Hwy, just east of 780 A.L. Philpott Hwy, in the Iriswood District. The Tax Map numbers are 56.1(I)B/6,7. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of 2 lots, totaling approximately 9.92-acres from Agricultural District A-1 to Limited Industrial District 1-2. The applicant wishes to construct a building on the property to be used for the manufacture and sale of metal roofing.

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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In addition to Henry County Enterprise, which covers Martinsville and Henry County, our other Virginia publications include: The Enterprise (which covers Patrick County/Stuart - including Meadows of Dan and other communities near the Blue Ridge Parkway); Salem Times Register; Fincastle Herald; New Castle Record; News Messenger; News Journal; Vinton Messenger

Our publications in West Virginia are: Pocahontas Times; Parsons Advocate; Calhoun Chronicle; Clay County Free Press; Shinnston News; Harrison County Journal, and our flagship paper, Mountain Messenger.

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# Store officially opens April 3

Harbor Freight Tools will officially open its new store in Martinsville on Saturday, April 3 at 8 a.m.

The Martinsville store, located at 240 Commonwealth Blvd., is the 32nd Harbor Freight Tools store in Virginia.

The new store brings approximately 25-30 new jobs to the community.

As a designated essential service, the store will be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. It will resume its regular hours of 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to

6 p.m. Sunday after the COVID-19 crisis has passed.

“We’re ready to serve and deliver value to customers in Martinsville and all of Henry County,” said Jason Hines, store manager. “At Harbor Freight, we recognize that now, more than ever, our customers depend on Harbor Freight for the tools they need to get the job done at an affordable price. We are the place for quality tools at the lowest prices for mechanics, contractors, homeowners and hobbyists—any tool user who cares about value.”

The store will stock a full selection of tools and equipment in categories

including automotive, air and power tools, storage, outdoor power equipment, generators, welding supplies, shop equipment, hand tools (which come with a lifetime warranty) and much more.

During the COVID-19 crisis, all Harbor Freight stores have implemented more frequent cleaning and are following the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control, including social distancing to protect the health and safety of our customers and associates. Any individual who has any COVID-19 symptoms is asked to shop on our website, [www.harborfreight.com](http://www.harborfreight.com) rather than in our stores.



# VMNH named finalist for 2021 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service

The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) is among 30 finalists for the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. In total, 15 museums and 15 libraries are finalists for this year’s award, according to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The National Medal is the nation’s highest honor given to museums and libraries that demonstrate significant impact in their communities. For more than 25 years, the award has honored institutions that demonstrate excellence in service to their communities.

“It’s an exceptional honor for the Virginia Museum of Natural History to be recognized as a finalist for the prestigious 2021 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service,” said Dr. Thomas Benzing, chairman of the

VMNH Board of Trustees. “Museum leadership and staff strive every day to bring positive impacts to the citizens of the Commonwealth and our local community through STEM-based educational programs, collections-based scientific research, award-winning exhibits, and innovative science festivals. Being recognized for these efforts in such a distinguished manner is truly an honor.”

The Virginia Museum of Natural History is the only collections-based science institution for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the only such institution between Raleigh, N.C. and Washington, D.C. Although a relatively new institution established in 1984, VMNH has amassed millions of specimens and artifacts representing Virginia’s natural and cultur-

al heritage. Even during a world-wide pandemic, VMNH staff leveraged the museum’s resources to serve audiences in unique ways with online tools, safe public hours, and special in-person educational events that kept participants and staff free of exposure.

“The revival and reinstatement of the National Medals by IMLS is another signal of recovery and renewal in the nation’s very challenging—but very hopeful—times,” said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. “We are celebrating not only the ongoing excellence of the best of our museums and libraries, but their extraordinary efforts through the pandemic, the recession, the racial justice protests, and national divisions to serve, heal, and bring together our communities. Congratulations to all 30

finalists.”

From the onset of the pandemic, the museum quickly adapted new methods of connecting with audiences who were no longer able to visit the museum to tour its exhibits or participate in traditional educational programming.

To counter the limitations imposed by the pandemic, museum staff developed new programming, such as the original social media series “Tales of Ancient Life”, “#BenInNature” and “Museum Minute”, while adapting traditional museum programs, such as its Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy, to virtual offerings. Additionally, the museum placed an even greater emphasis on its Distance Learning programming, while also offering several drive-thru science events to help fill the void of being unable to host its traditional lineup of science festivals, which routinely attract thousands of visitors.

**Tales of Ancient Life**  
Our planet has an incredible story to tell and VMNH Assistant Curator of Paleontology Dr. Adam Pritchard helps share it through his original social media video series, “Tales of Ancient Life”. In this series, which can be found on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Pritchard uses spectacular fossils and other scientific specimens from the museum’s paleontology collections to highlight the wonders of earth’s ancient past in ways that are relevant to a wide variety of ages.

**#BenInNature**  
Residing on the museum’s official Facebook page, #BenInNature follows the museum’s Administrator of Science Ben Williams as he ventures outdoors to record snapshots of the unique sights that can be found in the natural world. From the colorful Northern red salamander (*Pseudotriton ruber ruber*) to the intimidating (yet, largely harmless) Wolf spider, Williams provides intriguing facts and unique humor to highlight the wide diversity of flora and fauna found within the Commonwealth.

**Museum Minute**  
The Virginia Museum of Natural History has a spectacular assortment of displays within its exhibit galleries. Some displays are unforgettable, while others don’t always get the attention they deserve. Through the original series “Museum Minute”, museum educators highlight various displays within the museum’s exhibit galleries, while providing intriguing and little known facts about the specimens on exhibit.

Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy



Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy is a series of bi-monthly programs from September to May designed to supplement students’ learning and knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) based topics. Additionally, the museum works with homeschool groups individually to design and provide programming relevant to students’ needs. Since the pandemic began, the Academy transitioned into a virtual-only offering.

**Distance Learning Programming**  
VMNH distance learning programs bring students to the museum without ever having to leave their seats. Through the use of two-way video, classes join museum educators to explore Virginia’s natural heritage and uncover its rich biological and geological history. Together, with the use of videoconferencing and interactive activities, museum educators spark imagination, enhance curricula, and support Virginia and national educational standards.

**Drive-Thru Events**  
Due to ongoing health precautions and crowd-size limitations, the museum was unable to host its lineup of science festivals in 2020, including the highly popular Reptile Festival and Dinosaur Festival. To help fill the void, the museum offered separate drive-thru events in which visitors could drive their vehicles through the museum’s parking

lot to witness a variety of displays, while learning about the specimens on display from museum researchers and education staff. In addition to being held at the museum, the dinosaur-themed drive-thru event was also held in Waynesboro, where a branch campus of the museum is planned to be built in the coming years.

“To be nominated by Senator Mark Warner was an honor unto itself, but to be a finalist for the 2021 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service is exceptional,” said Dr. Joe Keiper, executive director of VMNH. “It shows that the hard work of the board members and staff have shaped VMNH into an institution that is meeting its mission of service to the natural sciences and STEM education, and for that we cannot be more proud.”

To celebrate this honor, IMLS is encouraging the Virginia Museum of Natural History’s community members to share stories, memories, pictures, and videos on social media using the #ShareYourStory and #IMLSmedals hashtags, and engage with IMLS on Facebook and Twitter. For more information, please visit the IMLS website.

National Medal winners will be announced in late spring. Representatives from winning institutions will be honored for their extraordinary contributions during a virtual National Medal Ceremony this summer.

## Appalachian Power Virtual Open House

### Fieldale-Ridgeway Transmission Line Rebuild Project

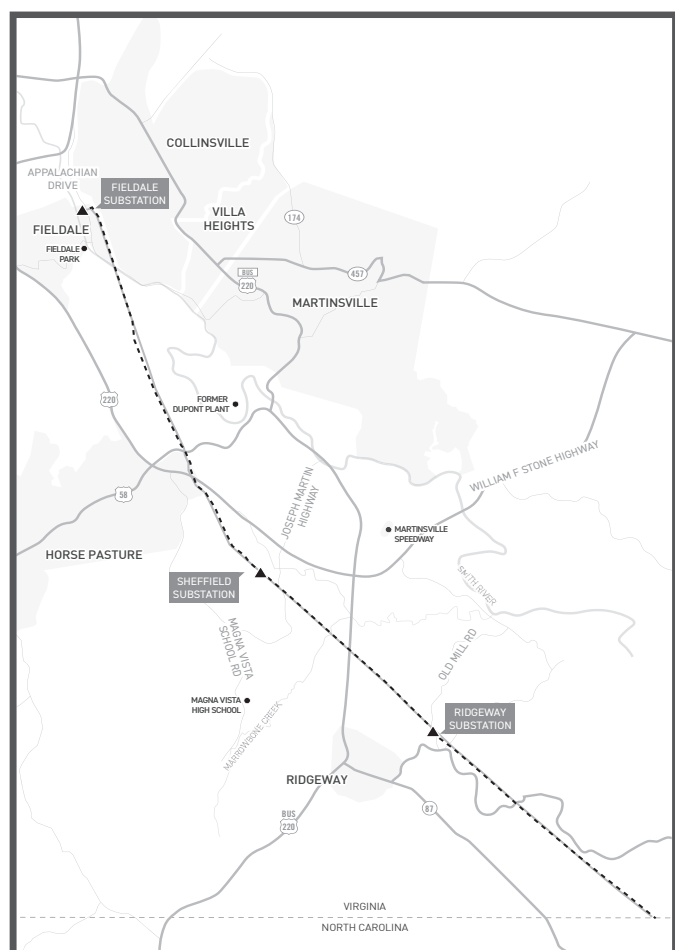
Appalachian Power officials plan to strengthen the transmission grid for customers in Henry County.

The Fieldale-Ridgeway Transmission Line Rebuild Project involves upgrading approximately 15 miles of transmission line in Henry County. Appalachian Power representatives plan to file an application this fall with the Virginia State Corporation Commission seeking approval for the project. If the project receives approval, we expect construction to start in fall 2023 and conclude summer 2025.

We are committed to keeping you informed about this project. We are also dedicated to keeping our customers and employees safe and healthy. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we invite you to a virtual open house to learn more and share your input.

Please visit [AppalachianPower.com/Fieldale-Ridgeway](http://AppalachianPower.com/Fieldale-Ridgeway) to access detailed project information, view an interactive map, enter our virtual open house and submit comments to the project team on the “Contact Us” page. **Please share your feedback by Monday, April 19.**

## FIELDALE-RIDGEWAY TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD PROJECT



**FIELDALE-RIDGEWAY TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD PROJECT**  
--- EXISTING TRANSMISSION LINE TO BE REBUILT (IN OR NEAR EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY)    ▲ SUBSTATION  
\*VISIT [APPALACHIANPOWER.COM/FIELDALE-RIDGEWAY](http://APPALACHIANPOWER.COM/FIELDALE-RIDGEWAY) TO VIEW AN INTERACTIVE MAP