

## HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, July 24, 2021

(USPS-6)

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Jason Davis, managing director of the Blue Ridge Regional Airport, communicates with an aircraft following its landing.

## Airport investments intended to help local economy soar

### Staff Reports

The Blue Ridge Regional Airport could hold the key to future economic development initiatives taking off in the area.

For this to happen, the airport must first complete some much-needed improvements, said Jason Davis, managing director of the airport.

"We are the window to the community. We are what they see first," Davis said. "A company that has a business jet has to have an airport that is adequate to meet the needs of that airplane. If we are not adequate to meet the needs, then we are being deficient. Our responsibility is to not be the weak link in the economic development efforts of the area."

Currently, the airport is undergoing a multi-phase project that will culminate in a new ramp and extended runway which will allow for more aircraft to occupy that space.

"The way that I explain it to people is we are currently a Dollar General parking lot for a Walmart," Davis said. "We just don't have enough parking. With NASCAR, Primland and the restaurant, it just doesn't work."

Davis said the project is currently in the preliminary stage that requires the extension of the ramp.

"We are moving the

E Section of Airport Road and we are expanding our ramp about 300,000-square feet," he said, adding this portion of the project is about 50 percent complete.

When the new road has asphalt, Airport Road will be shut down and construction will begin for an expanded aircraft parking area.

The Harvest Foundation previously donated funds to conduct an environmental assessment - which Davis said has already been completed.

"It's approved, so now we are just in the queue for funding for the runway extension phase," Davis said. "We are anticipating a 2023 start date on moving the west road and then a 2024 construction start time for the runway extension itself."

While some may not see the value in extending the runway by 1,000 feet, Davis said the small extension will make a difference in terms of attracting new businesses.

"A lot of people will say 'well it's only 1,000 feet.' Well, that is the difference between 60 percent of the time and 94 percent of the time meeting the needs of the business community," he said. "We've seen airplanes divert to

See **Airport**, page 2



An aircraft takes off at the Blue Ridge Regional Airport.



Jason Davis, managing director of the Blue Ridge Regional Airport, straps down an aircraft after its landing.

## Float lives up to its name, with fun and learning opportunities for all

**Hyacinth Fiorenzo**  
Contributing writer

More than 500 participants took advantage of the warm weather Saturday to gather with family and friends the Bassett Family Fun Float to float, paddle and relish in the steady cool waters of the Smith River.

The annual event, spearheaded by the Greater Bassett Area Community in partnership with Smith River Outfitters, Dan River Basin Association, Riverwalk, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Bassett Furniture, amongst others, organized and presented the family fun community outing.

The event, which was held despite drizzle from skirting thunderstorms, was situated at the Riverwalk in Bassett.

River-goers were shuttled every 30 minutes to the base of the Philpott Dam, to traverse the winding river in an outing that takes about 2.5 hours

roundtrip to return to the Riverwalk area. Folks were permitted to use their own floats, boats, kayaks and canoes to traverse the waters, with around 200 participants on the water at any given time.

In addition to river sports, eventgoers were treated to a variety of things to do and see on land.

The banks of the Smith at Riverwalk were lined with tents, tables, food vendors and live music. Representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers were on hand to run a water booth, where they educated onlookers about water safety as well as the health, vitality, and power of the Smith River.

"We have about 250 cubic feet per second coming out as of yesterday," said Dillon Brown, Interpretive Ranger at Philpott Lake. "We got about 330 coming out this morning, so the flow rate is really good

See **Float**, page 5



This trio spent some time fishing at Saturday's Bassett Family Fun Float.



This group of family and friends seemed to be having a fun floating party.

## Voluntary database launched to provide care during mental health crises

The Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center has created a database for residents and businesses to voluntarily provide relevant information that can assist responders during an emergency.

As part of the Marcus-David Peters Act, the database will equip first responders with pertinent records to find appropriate solutions for those suffering from a mental health crisis or emergency.

"Whenever we dispatch first responders, it is important that we

are sending the right people for the job," said J.R. Powell, director of the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center. "If someone is having a mental health crisis, they may not always need a police officer. Sometimes that escalates the problem rather than improving the situation. The database allows for people to come to us ahead of time and share that mental health information so the dispatcher will know who to send."

Information provided such as

behavioral health illnesses, mental health illnesses, developmental or intellectual disabilities, or brain injuries will remain confidential. The data will not be made available to the public or any other entity. Any data collected will only be used by the 911 Center and emergency responders to better serve the needs of the individuals and the community.

"Right now, all our dispatchers

See **Database**, page 5



Jailyn Draper and Courtney Martin are two business entrepreneurs who brought all the glitz and glam typically reserved for large cities to The Studio VA in Uptown Martinsville.



Sharmane Martin, Danny Turner, Courtney Martin, Jailyn Draper, Tammy Pearson and Kimberly Keller celebrated the official launch of The Studio VA in Uptown Martinsville

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY DANNY TURNER

## Posh space, new experiences offered at The Studio VA

**Hyacinth Fiorenzo**  
Contributing writer

Two Martinsville area business entrepreneurs are making a way for themselves, and every other selfie minded individual with the glitz and glam typically reserved for large cities - right here in Uptown Martinsville.

The Studio VA, located at 20 Walnut Street, is what is commonly known as a Selfie Museum - a posh space filled with 25 various sets specifically designed using lush and glamorous backdrops, lighting and props coordinated to enhance photos for

area models, both professional and amateur.

The business officially launched last week with a ribbon cutting. It is owned and operated by Jailyn Draper, 23, and Courtney Martin, 24, models and social media gurus. Both have established deep roots in the area.

Martin, who is born and raised in Martinsville, originally met Draper through one of Draper's social media classes. Draper is the granddaughter of David Draper, girls' basketball coach at Martinsville High School, and has grown up spending

time in and around Martinsville.

Draper, who studied Marketing at Winston Salem University, has dedicated much of her life to establishing her social media presence and helping others learn to utilize social media for their benefit. She has owned and operated the space at 20 Walnut for over a year, using the space before as The Social Butterfly, where she provided local businesses and individuals with web and graphic design, influencer coaching, content creation, search engine optimization, social media and email mar-

keting, and small business and personal branding.

She also teaches class-

See **Posh Space**, page 2

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



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Saturday, July 24

Fireworks Night! at Hooker Field, 450 Commonwealth Blvd E, Martinsville, at 4 p.m.

Bug Day 2021!, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville. Pre-registration required.

## Sunday, July 25

Maps that Shaped US History,

3 p.m. in the Heritage Center & Museum, 1 East Main Street, Martinsville. Local mapmaker, Zach Fleming, will share 8 to 10 historical maps such as John Smith's Jamestown Map, Lewis & Clark's Maps, John Mitchell's British and French Dominions map to include unique features of the maps, and how they influenced colonization and development of this country.

## Tuesday, July 27

PHCC presents a free virtual workshop, "Back to School Pointers," from 7 to 8 p.m., with representatives from local school divisions. Pre-registration is required by emailing ph.augusoft.net or calling (276) 656-0260.

## Tuesday, August 17

Barn Quilt Class continues at the Spencer Penn Centre with instructor Lauren Byron at 1 p.m. All supplies are provided.

Registration deadline is Monday, Aug. 9.

Pricing is based on size: 12"x 36" exterior \$75; 24"x 24" exterior \$65; 36"x36" exterior \$85. Call (276) 957-5757 for more details and to register.

## Saturday, August 28

W.E.A.R. Book Club meeting with Nancy Naigle, author of "The Shell Collector," 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Spencer Penn

Center, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer. Light refreshments will be served.

## ONGOING

MHC Coalition for Health and Wellness offers "no contact" application assistance for Virginia's free or low-cost MEDICAID plans for Virginians under 65, who meet income requirements. For questions or to apply, call or text Ann Walker at (276) 732-0509.

# Slots available for summer enrichment program

Morning Star Holy Church is hosting a Summer Enrichment 2021 Camp, "Power of Promise," July 28 through July 30.

The 2021 Program will follow the traditional model of the Summer Enrichment designed and introduced some years back by the Rev. Tyler Millner. The model is a unified program hybrid that combines Bible Church School, Camp, Vacation Bible School all in one.

The influencing values wholesome, fun, creative and hands-on.

The program theme is "Expectation and Promise."

With the promises of the Scripture as support base — the performance, life's work, teachings and model-lives -- King, Kobe and John Lewis — will be carriers of theme concept.

The drives are "Expectation" & "Promise."

The project goal is to program a wholesome, fun creative experience for the children and youth. For reinforcement and participation each participant will select

— from the three and, with hands-on — will do a "show and tell" presentation highlighting their chosen "promise"—at the closing program.

The structure and flow of the activity(s) will be a combination of "tracts" and each of the three days will have a sub-theme emphasis.

There will be three impact features — inspiration presenters each day, a Community Day and an 'Ice Cream Bash' to mark the end of the camp and to salute participants' birthdays as well as salute Roderick Hairston — a church member who has invested generously in youth interest and causes.

Fifty slots are available for the camp. They will be filled on a first come, first-served basis.

The registration fee is \$15. Sponsorships also are available.

For more information, contact Millner at (276) 650-8755, (276) 224-4147 or email tcmpastorms55@gmail.com.

The church is located at 2839 Stoney Mountain Road.

## Posh Space

from page 1

es in online presence and social media marketing, and it was during one of these classes where the two girls met and hatched an idea that would lead to the brainchild that became The Studio VA.

Martin, a star basketball standout who played for William and Emory College and then Ferrum College, recently signed to a modeling agency and has been featured online and in multiple magazines. She admitted that finding a space for proper photos and videos has been rather lackluster in this area of Southwest Virginia.

"This is going to be a game changer for so many content creators," Martin said of the new storefront.

The Studio VA has appeal for both professional photographers and models, as well as amateur selfie

takers.

The space will be open to the public from Saturday through Monday. Visitors may stop by and take their own unlimited photos for a nominal fee. During the week, the space will be designated for rent by professional content creators - photographers, videographers, models, YouTubers, etc.

"The creators can use the space so that they don't have to build those things in their room or in their home if they don't have the equipment or the environment to create content," said Draper.

"Trying to create content in this area is difficult," said Martin in agreement. "You usually have to go to larger cities like Atlanta, New York and L.A. We hopped on a trend and brought it to Martinsville."

## Airport

from page 1

Greensboro when the runway is wet or hot. Once again, it's an issue that has to be rectified."

Not having the available space for a company's jet on even one occasion could leave an impression, Davis said.

"Because when we say 'no' then we get them used to another area," he continued. "They will say 'you know what, we are looking at this town and they have this x-foot long runway and Martinsville doesn't.' We don't want to be the reason that we lose a potential client at Commonwealth Crossing or any other industrial park."

Davis said that approximately 33 airplanes come through the airport every day. Given the volume and lack of available space, the need for a runway extension is no longer just an issue of attracting potential clients.

"We have turned away people," he said. "Not as often as we used to anymore; however, what happens is it's a capacity issue. We do have a west apron that is fairly sizable, but it is not located at the terminal. So, what happens is when we get 20 small airplanes and mix it with four business jets, it doesn't work. It's a flow issue that ultimately translates into a safety issue."

Unlike national and international airports, the regional model doesn't function the same way.

"A regional airport is not a ticket-based system," Davis said. "We don't have any scheduled airline service. So, who do we see? We see the recreational guy in his little Cessna, we see the business traveler and we see the vacation traveler."

For example, Davis said travelers come to visit the industrial parks, Primland and Martinsville Speedway.

"We see at least one business jet a day, and generally more," he said. "And we have vacation travelers as well. People say that 'people come to Martinsville for vacation?' Well yeah, actually they do. Primland is probably our biggest client at this point."

While the airport doesn't allow for commercial flights, Davis said it can accommodate charter flights, if requested.

"Now, we do see the charter end of it, so if a customer wants a charter, then we can put those two together, the charter company and the client," he said. "It's not the cheapest way to travel; however, it is the most efficient mode of transportation."

Davis said this could allow a company to fly into Martinsville to conduct business then head to Florida for similar matters on the same day.

"You can't do that in the commercial aviation world. It's a two-day trip at best. But in the corporate jet world, it's a one-day trip," Davis said. "We are a facet in that diamond of conducting business that way. People would be shocked at who we see and what we see as far as the corporate business traveler."

On top of business travel, Davis said the airport fulfills other community needs as well. Examples of these include humanitarian efforts, such as transporting organs for transplants and assisting law enforcement with drug oversight.

With so much going on at the airport, Davis said providing adequate space to house aircraft also is becoming a problem.

Currently there are 49 "t-hangars" at the airport which house small airplanes, and there are 13 corporate hangars.

"They are all full,"

Davis said. "We have a waiting list of about 15."

Following the runway extension, Davis said he has plans to solve this issue as well.

"After we complete the extension itself, we are going to focus on the terminal building," he said. "Like I said, we are moving the road and the apron is going to be bigger. We want to build a new terminal on the northeast side of the ramp."

Once this is complete, Davis would like to expand the taxiway, which runs the length of the runway.

"Then we want to start developing around the new terminal building with corporate hangars on that northeast side," he said.

Davis said he expects the runway expansion to be complete in 2025. Depending on available funding, he would like to see the new terminal and taxiway projects completed around 2028, which would leave a target of 2030 for the new hangars.

The airport is largely self-sufficient for its operations.

"How we function on a daily basis is money that we generate ourselves," Davis said. "Primarily with the sale of fuel. Jet fuel is our biggest source of income. Hangar rent is our second biggest source of income, and then the sale of aviation gas is our third source."

Anything beyond daily operations is a separate matter, Davis added.

"The airports do live and die by the grant, and we receive funding on capital projects from the state and (Federal Aviation Administration)," he said. "Without that, we would just not be able to have those kinds of projects. Every airport in the state, all 66 of us live and die by that grant."

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Fashion accessory
  - 5. Subatomic particle
  - 10. Ethnic group of the Philippines
  - 14. Popular cookie
  - 15. Fabric
  - 16. Alcoholic liquor
  - 17. Peter \_\_, Dutch portrait painter
  - 18. Longtime Chicago mayor
  - 19. A famous "Lady"
  - 20. Islamic calendar month
  - 22. Rocky peak
  - 23. Polio vaccine developer
  - 24. Songs sung in open air
  - 27. Military movements
  - 30. Male parent
  - 31. Beloved hot beverage
  - 32. Female sibling
  - 35. Tackled the QB
  - 37. Set a dog on someone
  - 38. Long live! (Spanish)
  - 39. Porticos
  - 40. Pouch
  - 41. Smooth fabric
  - 42. Enough (archaic)
  - 43. Institute legal proceedings against
  - 44. Scarred
  - 45. Draw from
  - 46. Brother or sister
  - 47. Body part
  - 48. Commercials
  - 49. London soccer team
  - 52. Satisfied
  - 55. Surgical technique (abbr.)
  - 56. Fencing sword
  - 60. French industrial city
  - 61. Intellectual property organization (abbr.)
  - 63. Helps to carry food
  - 64. "Rule, Britannia" composer
  - 65. One-time Empress of the Roman Empire
  - 66. Intestinal pouches
  - 67. None better
  - 68. "WandaVision" actress
  - 69. Comedic actress Kathryn
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Fifth notes of major scales
  - 2. Region
  - 3. Your consciousness of your own identity
  - 4. Georgetown athletes
  - 5. They follow A
  - 6. Spoke
  - 7. Hairdressers' domain
  - 8. Extravagantly theatrical
  - 9. End-blown flute
  - 10. Heroic tales
  - 11. Member of a Semitic people
  - 12. Members of a priestly caste
  - 13. Southern Ghana people
  - 21. Counsels
  - 23. Body of water
  - 25. Awesome!
  - 26. Calendar month
  - 27. Native of region in Caucasus
  - 28. Indian city
  - 29. Exclusive
  - 32. Alaskan town
  - 33. Covered with ivy
  - 34. Loose granular substances
  - 36. Native American tribe
  - 37. Written American English
  - 38. Holiday (informal)
  - 40. Add up
  - 41. Small brown and gray rails
  - 43. Get off your feet
  - 44. Express disgust
  - 46. Surface of the ground
  - 47. Put into a silo
  - 49. Belief
  - 50. British nobleman
  - 51. Tennis game
  - 52. Dry, protective crust
  - 53. Swiss river
  - 54. Large integers
  - 57. La \_\_ Tar Pits, Hollywood
  - 58. Every one of two or more
  - 59. "Deadpool" actor Reynolds
  - 61. Earlier
  - 62. Peter's last name



The Blue Ridge Regional Airport has a planned 1,000-foot runway extension. Pictured is the direction of the planned extension.



The Blue Ridge Regional Airport houses numerous aircraft such as this helicopter used by Wake Forest Baptist Health for emergency operations.

Submit your community news and photos to [newsreporter@theenterprise.net](mailto:newsreporter@theenterprise.net)

# PHCC registering students for fall, aims to meet needs safely

This Thursday, PHCC launches a series of in-person advising days that will help students not only register for classes but also get connected with thousands of dollars in funding.

For students worried about the pandemic, PHCC is crafting a plan to safely and effectively provide as many services and opportunities as possible – including in-person classes and on-campus services like the food pantry and clothing closet.

Administrators say their goal is to meet students' needs while keeping students safe.

"If you learn best in a face-to-face environment where you can interact with your peers and engage with the instructor, we can build a schedule that provides that experience. If you prefer all online classes or a mixture of face-to-face and online classes, we can create that schedule too," said Travis Tisdale, the head of PHCC's Advising Center. "There has never been a better time to come in and get enrolled. Some classes are already filling up and the sooner a student comes in to meet with an advisor the more likely they are to get their preferred classes and instructors."

Before classes start on August 23, the college is planning several in-person advising events for anyone looking to register for fall classes. Advising will be first-come, first-served, and will take place in PHCC's Walker Fine Arts Building on:

Thursday, July 22, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday, July 29, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 17 through Friday, Aug. 20, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tisdale added that the college also aims to connect students with

some of the many funding opportunities available.

"Over the years, I've never seen so many different funding opportunities available," said Tisdale. "Before President Godwin retired, she was saying that this is going to be the 'year of favor' for anyone going to PHCC. She's right."

Some of these funding sources include G3 which stands for "Get Skilled. Get a Job. Get Ahead." This covers 100 percent of tuition, fees, and books for students pursuing high-demand careers eligible for G3 Funding. The Re-Employing Virginians (REV) grant provides a

tuition voucher of up to \$3,000 for students who face unemployment or under-employment during the pandemic. Another grant can provide stipends for eligible students. There are dozens of other grants or scholarships – all of which can provide financial assistance and won't need to be repaid.

For more information on the various funding opportunities call (276) 656-0317 or email [finaid@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:finaid@patrickhenry.edu).

To learn more about fall classes or to register for classes remotely, call (276) 656-5482 or email [advising@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:advising@patrickhenry.edu).

# Unemployment rate drops to 4.3 percent in June

Virginia's unemployment rate dropped 0.2-percentage point to 4.3 percent in June, compared to 8.8 percent one year ago, according to a release from Gov. Ralph Northam's office. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the Commonwealth continues to be below the national rate of 5.8 percent.

In June, Virginia saw over-the-year job gains of 2.8 percent, and total non-farm payroll employment

increased by 3,200 jobs. The labor force increased by 4,343 to 4,234,360, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 5,448 to 183,799. The number of employed residents rose by 9,791 to 4,050,561.

The private sector recorded an over-the-year gain of 179,900 jobs, and employment in the public sector added 10,500 jobs. Compared to a year ago, on a seasonally adjust-

ed basis, 10 of 11 major industry divisions experienced employment gains. The largest over-the-year job gain occurred in leisure and hospitality, up 67,200 jobs, or 25.5 percent. The next largest over-the-year job gain occurred in trade and transportation, up 40,100 jobs, or 6.5 percent. Professional and business services experienced the third largest over-the-year job gain of 26,300 jobs, or 3.5 percent.

"Virginia's falling unemployment rate and expanding labor force show the strength of our economy and business climate," said Northam. "We continue to be recognized as best place in America to do business because we are building a Commonwealth where both workers and employers can thrive. We can all be optimistic about what the future holds as we move beyond this pandemic."

Virginia had the fourth

lowest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate among the Southeast states behind Alabama, Oklahoma, and Georgia.

"The Commonwealth's positive job growth and falling unemployment rate are welcome signs that workers are finding safety and opportunity in the job market," said Secretary of Labor Megan Healy. "I look forward to maintaining this positive momentum in partnership with

our business and workforce development partners, who are working diligently to ensure Virginians have all the support they need to transition back into employment."

"Another drop in the Commonwealth's unemployment rate is a great way to conclude this exciting week," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball. "We expect to see continuing job growth in the coming months."

# Virginia ends fiscal year with record-breaking \$2.6 billion surplus

Virginia reached the end of fiscal year 2021 with an historic \$2.6 billion surplus, the largest in the Commonwealth's history, according to Gov. Ralph Northam. Total revenue collections soared 14.5 percent over fiscal year 2020, ahead of the forecast of 2.7 percent growth.

"We have effectively managed Virginia's finances through the pandemic, and now we are seeing the results—record-breaking revenue gains, a recovery that has outpaced the nation, and recognition as the best place to do business," said Northam. "Fueled by a surging economy, federal American Rescue Plan funds, and the largest surplus in Virginia history, we have significant resources available to make transformational investments in this Commonwealth. I look forward

to working with the General Assembly in the fall to seize this opportunity so we can build a brighter future for all Virginians."

All major general fund revenue sources exceeded their forecasts for the fiscal year. Individual nonwithholding taxes, one of the Commonwealth's most volatile revenue sources, accounted for about half of the surplus, although collections in payroll withholding, sales, and corporate income taxes were also well above their respective forecasts.

Total revenue collections reached \$8.6 billion in the final quarter of fiscal year 2021. In June, revenues decreased by \$180.8 million, or 5.8 percent, compared to the previous year, which can be attributed to the extension of the individual income tax filing deadline to May

17.

"We expected a strong revenue performance, and this surplus is even larger than initially anticipated," said Secretary of Finance Joe Flores. "We are encouraged that for the fiscal year, payroll withholding and retail sales taxes increased by 6.4 percent signifying that Virginia's underlying economic foundation is strong."

The Commonwealth will release the final figures for fiscal year 2021 on August 18 at the Joint Money Committee meeting. A complete analysis of all final receipts for revenue sources, including transfers, will not be available until then.

An analysis of FY '21 revenues based on preliminary data includes

Total general fund revenue collections, excluding transfers,

exceeded the official forecast (Chapter 552) by \$2.6 billion (11.7 percent variance) in fiscal year 2021.

The 30-year average general fund revenue forecast variance is 1.6 percent.

\*Payroll withholding and sales tax collections, 80 percent of total revenues, and the best indicator of current economic activity in the Commonwealth, finished \$560.2 million or 3.3 percent ahead of the forecast.

\*Payroll withholding grew by 4.7 percent, exceeding the forecast of 2.7 percent growth.

\*Sales tax collections increased 12.4 percent as compared to the annual forecast of 4.7 percent. Brick and mortar store sales increased 7.6 percent and internet sales increased 32.3 percent.

Fourth quarter results show

that payroll withholding and sales tax grew 12.5 percent.

\*Nonwithholding income tax collections finished the year ahead of expectations, up 37.1 percent. This was mainly due to a 68.0 percent increase in final payments to the Department of Taxation. Estimated payments increased 19.8 percent.

\*Individual income tax refunds were a positive to the forecast as the average check size did not increase. Tax refunds were \$339.4 million below expectations, a positive to the bottom line.

\*Corporate income tax collections increased 49.8 percent for the year, ahead of the annual forecast of 27.4 percent. A preliminary analysis of the data reveal a broad based increase from larger corporations based on economic related growth.

# DRBA's Virtual Meeting inspires conversation about safety throughout the region

More than 50 participants joined a virtual meeting hosted by the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) on July 9 to hear presentations from safety experts, users and recreational asset owners and discuss outdoor safety in the region.

The nine presenters included Davis Montgomery, Duke Energy; Durwin Joyce, City of Martinsville Electric Department; Kevin Edwards, Piedmont Hydro Technologies; Matt Tatum, Henry County Public Safety; Allen Farrar, Rockingham County Sheriff Office; Todd Robertson, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR); Bill Tanger, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia; Bob Brueckner, Carolina Canoe Club; and Mark Bishopric, Co-Owner, Three Rivers Outfitters. Participants represented regional city and county municipal governments, state parks, state departments of conservation and recreation, land conservancy organizations, emergency and law enforcement agencies and businesses that sell outdoor recreational equipment.

"For many years, DRBA has worked with partners to build trails, parks and river accesses and our municipal tourism partners have been very successful in promoting these assets - which has resulted in a dramatic increase in users of outdoor recreation in our region," said Brian Williams, DRBA's program manager. "With this increase in usage, there is also the potential for an increase in accidents. The July 9th meeting brought regional stakeholders together to hear what others are doing to reduce that

risk for our citizens and visitors and share their ideas to move forward. DRBA is committed to providing information that helps make the outdoor experience a safe and enjoyable one for all users."

At the virtual meeting, dam owners discussed regulations regarding dams and ideas for improved safety, public safety and law enforcement described their best practices for emergency response, a recreational organization, canoe club and outfitter shared ideas for improved safety along rivers from a user perspective. In addition, Iowa is the leading state in deaths related to dams in the United States and Robertson from the DNR spoke about what

they are doing to reduce that risk for kayakers and tubers. Participants were asked to share their challenges and new ideas related to safety during the meeting which resulted in almost 100 comments.

"Safety is not solved in one meeting, the discussion needs to be ongoing, and ideas need to be shared freely and quickly with both stakeholders and users," said Tiffany Haworth, DRBA's executive director. "After the meeting, I heard from dozens of participants who are inspired to continue this conversation about safety in their own locality. DRBA will continue to provide tools, resources and information to continue to increase awareness

and share best practices."

To learn more about how to stay safe outdoors, please visit DRBA's website at [www.danriver.org/our-watershed/trails-and-river-info/trails-river-safety](http://www.danriver.org/our-watershed/trails-and-river-info/trails-river-safety) or view a short webinar at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qen4W7pPuLQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qen4W7pPuLQ)

To learn more about DRBA's impact and programs that protect and conserve our natural resources, visit [danriver.org](http://danriver.org).

The mission of the Dan River Basin Association is to promote and protect the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River basin through education, recreation, and stewardship. DRBA works to fulfill that mission by building river accesses and trails,

educating people of all ages about protecting our natural resources, and protecting our water resources through water quality monitoring, cleanups and

master planning. The Dan River basin is 3,300 square miles including sixteen counties throughout Virginia and North Carolina.



PHOTO BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Paddlers at base of Philipott Dam in Bassett.



**LIVESTOCK AUCTIONS**  
EVERY SATURDAY AT 1 P.M.

- We sell cattle, goats, sheep & pigs.
- State Graded Feeder Sale every Saturday

For directions to our facility, weekly updates of upcoming events and current sale prices, please visit our website:  
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# OPINION

## The Space Disgrace

Aside from the wonderful folks in the English department, one of my favorite college professors was a fellow we'll call Dr. Sandbar.

I only had one class with Dr. Sandbar — I think it was some sort of government or social studies class. And I'm not entirely sure how Dr. Sandbar got roped into teaching this course because he was the college's choir director. But despite the fact that singing never came up in the class, he did a fantastic job.

Dr. Sandbar's teaching style followed the Socratic method. He would ask the class a seemingly straightforward question. After several people answered the question, he would then ask follow-up questions and raise counterpoints, until eventually at least one student's passionate argument violently fell apart like a washing machine with a cinderblock in the drum.

Of course, Socrates was eventually executed, and I know a number of my fellow students probably wished Dr. Sandbar would down a glass of hemlock. Some of my classmates even threatened to complain to the administration about Dr. Sandbar, though I don't know whether or not they went through with it. There's nothing worse than going to college and having to think critically and open your mind to new ideas.

I always enjoyed Dr. Sandbar's classes, however, partly because we

were usually on the same wavelength, and partly because it was always entertaining.

One day in class, Dr. Sandbar asked the class the following question: Should we continue spending money on NASA? He asked everyone who thought we should to raise their hand.

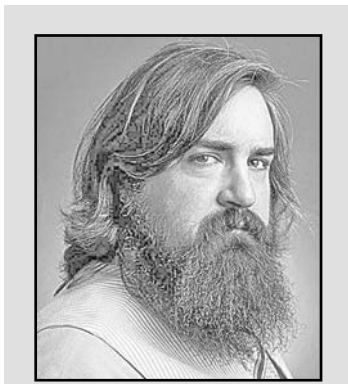
Out of about 30 students, I was one of two who raised a hand.

He called on the other students first and asked them why they felt we shouldn't fund NASA. The responses were generally that we had enough problems at home to worry about. We should be spending money on finding cures for diseases (hey, remember when curing disease was something most people agreed on?), or helping veterans, or providing homes for the homeless, or other good things that are (or at least were) difficult to argue against.

Then he called on me and asked why I felt we should spend money on the space program.

I don't remember exactly how I phrased my response — I'm sure it wasn't all that eloquent — but I remember the gist of what I said.

We do need to address problems at home, I said, but the space program is crucially important. From a practical standpoint, investing in the space program has caused incredible technological advancements that we take advantage of



By Ben R. Williams

every day, everything from faster and smaller computers to cutting-edge medical technology.

But additionally, I said, if there is a meaning to life, then I believe it's to better understand the world around us. As a wise man once said, space is the final frontier, and if we stop looking outward to better understand our universe and just give up on expanding our horizons, then what's the point of all this?

Dr. Sandbar liked my answer.

About 15 years later, I stand by my answer. I remain a big proponent of the space program and I think we need to vastly increase NASA's funding.

I mention all of this backstory to say the following:

I don't much care for Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Richard Branson.

Right now, these three billion-

aires are competing in a space race. Branson was the first to go to space, although he really only went about 50 miles up and the absolute lowest point of low Earth orbit is about 150 miles up. As a wit on Twitter put it, he spent millions to go to "upper sky."

Meanwhile, as I write this, former Amazon CEO and Lex Luthor impersonator Jeff Bezos just flew to upper sky in a deeply unfortunate-looking rocket, while Tesla CEO Elon Musk is planning to actually go into orbit.

Ultimately, all three of these men are spending millions upon millions of dollars to do something that's fairly pointless, unless you're deeply invested in their individual egos.

While I find Elon Musk to be one of the most annoying and tone-deaf individuals on the planet, I'll give him credit for Tesla and SpaceX; as much as I love antique gas guzzlers, electric vehicles are the future, and Musk's SpaceX has made some remarkable breakthroughs in space flight and satellite technology.

If you were to ask Branson, Bezos, and Musk why they all decided to fly into space at roughly the same time, they would probably say that they're providing a proof of concept for a future industry in which regular folks (albeit very wealthy ones) jet up to outer space for a vacation. For decades now, people have been saying that space tourism is the future, and

that future seems closer than ever before.

Maybe that's true, but the timing couldn't possibly be worse. The cost of living is quickly rising. The global chip shortage has made it all but impossible to buy a cheap used car. The housing market has exploded, and wealthy individuals across the country are snapping up real estate for tens of thousands of dollars more than it's worth in order to rent it to people who will never afford to own a house. It's getting harder and harder for regular folks to make ends meet, and there's no relief in sight.

And against a backdrop of millions of Americans struggling just to survive, three billionaires have decided to spend tens of millions of dollars to take a quick jaunt up to space. Even the most debauched Roman Emperor would consider that bad optics.

What's wonderful about NASA is that it's for all of us. When Neil Armstrong planted a foot on the moon, he didn't say, "That's one small step for me." The technology and promise of space exploration belongs to all of humanity, not specific individuals. While it may seem like a fine distinction to make, I'm concerned that the spectacle of billionaire space tourists will only serve to push people away from the wonders of the space program and embitter them rather than draw them in.

Maybe I should look up Dr. Sandbar and see what he thinks.

## The Repression of Communist-Ran Cuba

Morgan Griffith  
9th District U.S. Rep.

In Cuba recently, thousands of Cubans have taken to the streets in protest of the 62-year long socialist dictatorship. In response, the unelected government of Cuba has fired into crowds of protestors and cut off internet access on the island.

When all but a handful of communist countries have fallen or transitioned to more market-based economies, the leaders of Cuba continue to push their false narrative that a state-managed economy is what's best for the Cuban citizens.

The Cuban government has had 62 years to deliver on their broken promises. But instead of cultivating a prosperous society, they have resorted to repression to keep their people in line.

In 2021, their authoritarianism has exacerbated

economic and health-care problems caused by COVID-19. As stated in a recent New York Times article, "Residents are used to long lines and recurring shortages of products in a country where the Communist government exercises near-total control over the economy. But the damage brought by the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted an economic disaster."

The Cuban people have finally had enough.

To show my support for the protestors, I have cosponsored Representative Mario Diaz-Balart's resolution expressing support for the Cuban people's demand for basic human rights.

Representative Diaz-Balart, as well as Representative Alex Mooney, both had a front row seat to the dangers of communism. They both lived in the aftermath of their own family's personal

escape from the suppression of communist-run Cuba.

Representative Diaz-Balart's father, Rafael Diaz-Balart, was a Cuban politician. He was elected senator in 1958. He was never able to take office due to Fidel Castro seizing power.

He was visiting Paris with family when Fidel Castro took over. They were never able to return to their home in Cuba. Fortunately, they were able to come to the United States and grow their family.

It was only by happenstance the Diaz-Balart family was out of the country, barely dodging the socialist takeover. Representative Diaz-Balart has shared, that he still has a wanted poster that was put out by the Castro Regime for members of his family.

Representative Diaz-Balart's connections to the communist regime of Cuba go even farther than this

though. Technically, he was Fidel Castro's nephew by marriage. His father's sister, Mirra Diaz-Balart, was Fidel Castro's first wife.

Similarly, Representative Alex Mooney's mother, Lala Mooney, was also a Cuban escapee. However, her later youth was spent in Fidel Castro's Cuba. After reading her book, *Leaving Cuba*, I had the privilege of meeting Mrs. Mooney personally. She shared additional details about her life in Cuba and expanded on the experiences she conveys in her book. Mrs. Mooney saw the terrors of this government and opposed Castro's communist regime.

In 1961, on the first day of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the regime invaded her home. Everyone over the age of 12 was arrested. Mrs. Mooney shared in her book that one of the scariest moments of that day, was fearing the regime may find her gun that she had

hidden in the back yard. No one was permitted to own guns—except the government. "This is how communism works," she shared at a 2019 Heritage Foundation event.

After her arrest, she was detained for nearly 2 months. Shortly after her release, when she was 20, Mrs. Mooney was finally able to escape Cuba with other family members, fleeing to the United States to begin a new life.

In 1999, while on a mission trip, Mrs. Mooney returned to Cuba to see a glimpse of the life she left behind. In her book, she recalls the devastation and ruin she witnessed when she visited.

The life of Mrs. Mooney and the Diaz-Balart family are not just stories of family history—they are personal stories about the ills of communism.

The current President of Cuba and First Secretary

of the Communist Party, Miguel Diaz-Canel, is the first non-Castro to lead the country in over 60 years. Still, no change is currently in sight.

Thousands of Cuban people have taken to the streets to protest the communist regime for the first time in twenty-five years. With worsening living conditions, and severe shortages of basic goods and services, like food and medicine, the Cuban economy is crashing.

A sluggish to depressed economy is typical of most fully socialized countries.

History continually has shown that fully socialist and communist regimes resort to the repression of the people's rights.

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

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Weekly Publication

Published Each Saturday

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## Henderson appointed to new role

He has not even been in office for a month, but Patrick Henry Community College's new president, Dr. Greg Hodges, is making a significant change. He is adding a new member to the college's Executive Leadership Team (ELT). As a member of the leadership cabinet, this new administrator will have a seat at the table --helping shape the college's future.

This new position is the Assistant Vice President of Student Engagement and Inclusion. To this new role, Hodges is appointing Brian Henderson. Before this appointment, Henderson was serving as the college's Athletic Director. In his new role, Henderson will continue to act in this capacity -- overseeing all aspects of the college's inter-collegiate athletics and intramural sports. In addition, Henderson will now be responsible for the administration of co-curricular operations and will provide leadership for student engagement, inclusion, and retention efforts across campus.

"I am delighted to welcome Brian Henderson to my Executive Leadership Team," said Hodges. "He has led our institution through a major expansion of athletics that is reaping significant benefits for our campus and our community. While continuing to serve as our Athletic Director, Coach Henderson will now assist us in developing our institution's new strategic plan which will align with the Virginia Community College System's statewide plan entitled Opportunity 2027."

Henderson received his Master's degree in Sports Management from Virginia State University in 2007 and began working at PHCC as the Head Women's Basketball Coach in 2012. In 2014, Henderson was promoted to Athletic Director. For several years, Henderson was also responsible for much of PHCC's campus life activities before the college hired a full-time Campus Life Coordinator. In 2020, Henderson was appointed



ed as the chair of the Equity Alliance and Response Committee. In many ways, Henderson's new position incorporates elements from each of his previous roles. As the Assistant Vice President of Student Engagement and Inclusion, Henderson will lean on the experiences he gained while working in athletics, campus life, and diversity to oversee these same areas from a

new seat.

"I'd like to thank Dr. Hodges and the ELT for welcoming me into this new role. While this is a new title, my goals for the students of PHCC have not changed. This only allows me to focus on them even more," said Henderson. "Anything I can do to further enhance (students') experiences is a job I'll gladly accept and embrace. It's all about our PHAMILY."

See more on

[www.henrycountyenterprise.com](http://www.henrycountyenterprise.com)

# New immunization requirements detailed for parents

Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane reminded parents to make sure their children's immunizations are up to date — especially students and young children subject to new requirements that went into effect on July 1. "I encourage school divisions to collaborate with local health districts to provide multiple opportunities for children and students to receive all of the required immunizations and booster shots before the beginning of the school year," Lane said. "Many of our divisions are already doing this by taking advantage of summer learning and nutrition pro-

grams to increase convenience for parents and children, especially for families that rely on school-based clinics and public health agencies for much of their care." To align with recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the 2020 General Assembly passed House Bill 1090 amending Virginia's immunization requirements for attending public and private schools, child care centers, nursery schools, family home day care centers, and developmental centers. The 2020 legislation amended the Code of Virginia to

require the following new immunizations and booster shots: \*Two doses of properly spaced human papillomavirus vaccine for all children. The first dose is required before the child enters the seventh grade. \*Two or three properly spaced doses of rotavirus vaccine, depending on the manufacturer, for children up to eight months of age. \*Two properly spaced doses of hepatitis A vaccine. The first dose must be administered at age 12 months or older. The new hepatitis A vaccine requirement is an addition to the existing kindergarten immunization

requirements. \*Two properly spaced doses of meningococcal conjugate vaccine. The first is required prior to entry to the seventh grade. The second dose is required prior to entry to the twelfth grade. The Virginia Department of Health has created a list of frequently asked questions to help parents understand the new immunization requirements. The FAQ is available in both English and Spanish. In addition, VDH and VDOE have created a Healthy Back-to-School webpage to help parents keep their children healthy this summer and

prepare them for returning to school. The site provides resources about immunizations, COVID-19, well-child visits, routine oral care and mental health. There also is a "Back to School Checklist" to help parents track and organize back-to-school tasks. The new immunization requirements do not include the vaccination against COVID-19. While the CDC recommends the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for children aged 12 and up, Virginia state law does not require COVID-19 vaccines for enrollment in public schools.

# Child Tax Credits are coming and so are the scammers

Beware of con artists using the upcoming Child Tax Credit to pretend to "help" you get your payments earlier, get more money, or gather personal information to commit identity theft. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) Serving Western Virginia offers advice to avoid falling victim to these new opportunistic and timely Government Agency Imposter Scams. From July 15 through December 31, 2021, parents that qualify for payments through the

American Rescue Plan Act will receive monthly payments from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by direct deposit, paper check, or debit cards. These payments are an advance on the child tax credit, which means eligible people will get up to half of their child tax credit in these monthly payments and the other half when they file their 2021 taxes. Visit IRS.gov to see who qualifies, how much you may receive, and how to address any problems. Those who qualify also

have the option of unenrolling from the advance payments program. BBB Scam Tracker has reported forty-eight Government Agency Imposter scams filed this year in BBB Serving Western Virginia's 32-county service area. These scams have resulted in a \$2,150 loss and are 16% of all scams reported to BBB Scam Tracker. Reports show con artists use the phone as their primary means of contact to reach victims and credit cards are the main method of payment

for scammers to receive funds. "Scammers wait for opportunities like these to prey on those who need the payments," said Julie Wheeler, President and CEO of BBB Serving Western Virginia. "It's important to understand that government agencies like the IRS or Social Security Administration will not call, text, direct message, or email you," says Wheeler. According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), scammers are likely to

use impostor scams that may appear to "help" you get your payments earlier, get more money, or commit identity theft. The BBB and the FTC share these tips: Avoid Impostor scams - Government agencies like the IRS or Social Security Administration will not call, text, direct message, or email you. Do not give out any personal information, like social security numbers, bank account information, or credit/debit card numbers. Eligibility requirements

and payments are only monitored by the IRS. When someone is requiring payments by gift card, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency, it is likely a scam. Learn more tips on how to avoid scams by reading 10 Steps to avoid scams. If you've been a victim of a Child Tax Credit scam, be sure to report it at BBB.org/ScamTracker. Your report can help others to spot a scam before it's too late. You can also report scams to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

# Millions to be invested to achieve universal broadband by 2024

Gov. Ralph Northam announced Friday that Virginia plans to invest \$700 million in American Rescue Plan funding to expedite the deployment of last-mile broadband infrastructure to unserved areas and close the digital divide within the next three years. This proposal will accelerate Northam's 10-year goal for achieving universal internet access from 2028 to 2024, with the majority of connections obligated within the next 18 months. In May, Northam and General Assembly leaders released a joint statement outlining shared priorities for allocating the \$4.3 billion in federal funds available to the Commonwealth from the American Rescue Plan. The Governor made the announcement at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, where he was joined by U.S.

Senator Mark Warner and others. Northam also reported that the Commonwealth has successfully bridged half of the digital divide, with an estimated 233,500 unserved locations remaining. "It's time to close the digital divide in our Commonwealth and treat internet service like the 21st century necessity that it is—not just a luxury for some, but an essential utility for all," said Northam. "The pandemic has reinforced how important high-quality broadband is for the health, education, and economic opportunity, and we cannot afford to leave any community behind. With this historic \$700 million investment, universal broadband is now within our reach. I am grateful to Senator Warner for fighting to include this funding in the American Rescue Plan, which will be key to the success of local connectivity efforts and to ensuring

every Virginian has affordable, reliable, and equitable access to high-speed internet." Since 2018, the Commonwealth has awarded approximately \$124 million in broadband grants and connected over 140,000 homes, businesses, and community anchors. Northam and the General Assembly made historic investments—\$50 million in 2020 and an additional \$50 million in 2021—in the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI), a public-private partnership that provides targeted financial assistance to extend broadband service to areas currently unserved by a provider. With this \$700 million allocation of federal dollars and continued state investment, the Commonwealth has the necessary resources to meet the tremendous demand from localities and broadband providers and close the digital divide in Virginia.

"With telehealth and telework becoming permanent staples across the nation, access to broadband is more critical than ever," said Warner. "Earlier this year, I was proud to help deliver more than \$3.7 billion dollars in direct fiscal relief for the Commonwealth through the American Rescue Plan, including hundreds of millions of dollars for broadband. I'm hopeful that my friends in the General Assembly will use \$700 million of that funding to expand access to broadband, thereby creating economic opportunity and ensuring that every Virginian can meaningfully participate in our 21st century economy." "Localities and broadband providers have stepped up over the past three years and helped the Commonwealth connect thousands of unserved Virginians," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball. "With today's announce-

ment, large regional projects that achieve universal service can be funded across the Commonwealth without delay." Because Northam prioritized broadband expansion well before the pandemic, Virginia is on track to be one of the first states in the country to achieve universal broadband service. In 2019, the Governor worked with the General Assembly to establish a pilot program that promotes collaboration between localities, electric utilities, and internet service providers to connect unserved areas to high-speed internet. In just two years of the pilot program, Virginia's utility companies have helped connect more than 13,000 homes and businesses across the Commonwealth. Earlier this year, Northam signed bipartisan legislation that makes the pilot program permanent.

## Float

from page 1  
for kayaking, canoeing, etc." The event originated four years ago but took a hiatus last year due to COVID. This year's participation numbers were the biggest yet, which sparked renewed hope for events to come. Brian Williams, Program Manager for the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA), said the event and others like it are vital in introducing and familiarizing people with the waters in their backyard. "We create these events to make sure that people are able to realize what a treasure they have right here," said Williams. "We've found that if people get out and enjoy the waters for themselves, it's easier for them to appreciate and protect the river. We want to encourage people to get out,

become healthy, connect with nature and be good stewards and ambassadors for their river." DRBA has established 13 river access points just in the last 15-years. Before that, there were no public access points along the Smith. Three takeout access points were added near the Riverwalk Mini Mall, on private property, just for the event. Sharon Wright, site director for the Henry County Food Pantry, is affiliated with Pantry, and helped to promote the Family Fun Float. According to Wright, the event served a dual purpose —in providing information about area opportunities as well as allowing locals to connect, relax and have fun. She worked closely with vendors to make sure every-

one was well represented. Bassett Furniture used the time as an opportunity to host a hiring event and a dining room furniture giveaway. The Turkey Federation held an indoor BB gun shoot for children. DRBA provided life jacket fittings and other vital river safety information. "The entire community came together to make this happen," said Wright. "This is just the beginning of things to come. We want to encourage the people of Henry County to get out and have fun." Williams agreed. "We want people to realize that tourism is not just going to the beach," he said. "We have 45 miles of tourism here on the Smith, right in our backyard."



Andy Burnette and Jake Earles perform in front of the Smith River at Riverwalk Mini Mall during the Family Fun Float event on Saturday.

## Database

from page 1  
are emergency medical dispatchers. We have a question-and-answer process that we use to determine if someone is mentally ill," Powell said. "Sometimes that will lead the dispatcher to catch on that this person is having a mental health emergency and sometimes they may not. That's why this database is important. It'll give the dispatchers that information immediately once they receive the call." The information can be provided by the individual with the illness or by a parent or legal guardian. Any minor will automatically be removed from the database when they turn 18 unless a request to remain in the database is

received from the individual or a legal guardian. The date of birth is required on the voluntary database form to meet the automatic removal guidelines. A resident or business may submit their emergency needs information by visiting the 911 webpage at www.henrycountyva.gov/marcusalert .A physical copy of the form can be obtained by calling 911 Administration at (276) 632-1197. Once the information is received, any future calls to 911 from the address and/or phone numbers provided will populate a window on the dispatcher's computer screen with the information submitted.

received from the individual or a legal guardian. The date of birth is required on the voluntary database form to meet the automatic removal guidelines. A resident or business may submit their emergency needs information by visiting the 911 webpage at www.henrycountyva.gov/marcusalert .A physical copy of the form can be obtained by calling 911 Administration at (276) 632-1197. Once the information is received, any future calls to 911 from the address and/or phone numbers provided will populate a window on the dispatcher's computer screen with the information submitted.



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# OBITUARIES

## Elizabeth Hankins Crouch

Elizabeth Hankins Crouch went to her heavenly home on July 14, 2021. She was born August 4, 1926, in Axton, Va. to the late Bruce James McDaniel and Emma Haley McDaniel.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her first husband, Jewel Claiborne Hankins; brother, Albert McDaniel and sisters, Janie Jordon, Viola Gover, Geneva Sanders and Bessie Moore.

Mrs. Crouch is survived by her loving husband of 34 years, Donald Crouch and five children: Doug Hankins (Sandra), Doris Janney (Curtis), Shirley Redman (Tim), Bruce Hankins (Kelly) and Carol Easton. She also has five stepchildren: Debbie Hundley (Mike), Don Crouch (June), Beth Prohaska (Tom), Wesley Crouch (Shelia) and Kyle Crouch (Hazel). She was also blessed with 12 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren and one great great-grandson.



Mrs. Crouch was very dedicated to her church. She was also a very loving and dedicated mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She enjoyed working in her flowers and garden and being with her friends.

A visitation will be held from 12:30 to 2 p.m. on Friday, July 16, 2021, at McCabe Memorial Baptist Church. The funeral will be held at 2 p.m., officiated by the Rev. Dr. G.H. Vaughn. Interment will be at Roselawn Burial Park.

The family greatly appreciates the special care given by Meredith, Ebony and Deborah while caring for Liz/Granny.

Memorials may be made to Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care, 730 E. Church Street, #13, Martinsville, VA 24112.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, VA. To express condolences online, visit [www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com](http://www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com).

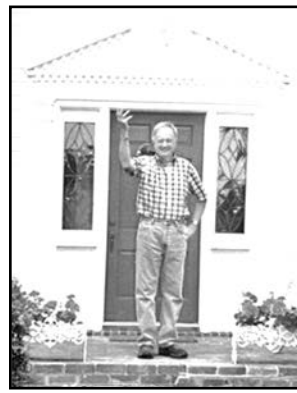
## R. Kermon Thomasson

R. Kermon Thomasson passed away at his home in Martinsville, Va., July 12, 2021, as a result of a major stroke. Born February 6, 1936, he was the son of the late Posie and Ruth (Draper) Thomasson, and he was quite proud of his Henry County origins. The majority of his life was spent in serving the Church of the Brethren as a missionary and denominational leader.

Kermon's first five years of education took place in a one-room school in Figsboro, Va. Later, in 1954, he graduated from John D. Bassett High School, then received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Bridgewater College in 1958. Following graduation, he taught two years of high school in Manassas, Va. Then he entered Brethren Volunteer Service and was assigned to teach in the Brethren-sponsored school in Waka, Nigeria. He remained in Nigeria for thirteen years as a missionary and teacher. He taught history, geography and English.

Kermon is survived by his wife, Margaret (Wampler) Thomasson, one son, Galen and wife, Holly (Williams) Thomasson, grandson Levi, and granddaughter, Heidi. He is also survived by a sister, Ellen Thomasson; two brothers-in-law, J. Paul Wampler of Bridgewater, Va., and Guy E. Wampler, Jr., Lititz, Pa., and by seven nieces, one nephew, five great nieces and nephews, three great-great nephews and one great-great niece. Two other sisters, Mavis Rice and Carlene Blankenship, preceded him in death.

Following his missionary service in Nigeria, Kermon returned to the United States and began a long tenure on the staff of the Church of the Brethren, headquartered in Elgin, Illinois. He served as a writer and illustrator for Brethren publications, exhibits and books, until he became editor of the denominational



magazine, MESSENGER. His tenure on the denominational staff spanned from 1974 until 1998 when he retired to live at his parental homeplace in Henry County, a Southern style home affectionately known as "Old Shady Grove."

Kermon had many interests and talents. His artistic ability was particularly renowned and one of his favorite books he illustrated was "Brethren Brush with Greatness," authored by Frank Ramirez. Kermon was passionate about genealogy and historical vignettes, many of which he penned for a regular series of articles in the Martinsville Bulletin. He also organized the annual reunions of the Draper and Thomasson families for many years. He had a particular interest in US presidential history and data. A little-known fact about his loyalty to friends was manifest in his continued patronage for a lifelong college-formed singing group known as the Wardo Quintet. Kermon was their "manager," arranging places for them to perform long after their association in college.

Kermon's smile and sense of humor endeared him to his many friends and family. It was always a pleasure to receive a card or letter from him, for not only would your address be lettered with beautiful calligraphy, but his anecdotes about his activities and news were skillfully laced with artful descriptions, making the prose flow with anticipation and amusement.

A memorial service was held July 19, at Collins-McKee-Stone Funeral Home on Broad Street in Martinsville. Memorial gifts may be sent to Brethren Volunteer Service, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, VA. To express condolences online, visit [www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com](http://www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com).

## Virginia Phillips Conner

Virginia Phillips Conner, 68, of Fieldale, Virginia passed away July 15, 2021, at her residence. She was born July 3, 1953, in Christiansburg, Virginia to the late Eugene Kelly Phillips and Margie Stutler Phillips, whom survives.

She was an artist, secretary, nurse, teacher, CNA, Hairstylist, and loved going to yard sales and TV shows with Cops and Matlock.

In addition to her father, she is preceded in death by a daughter, Deborah Williams; a son, Tony Stutler; and three brothers, Tommy, Roger and Paul Phillips. In addition to her mother, she is survived by her husband, Garland Conner; daughters, Lynne Fox (Sam)



and Karen Conner; son, David Morris (Chasity); brothers, Eugene, Walter, and Joseph Phillips; grandchildren, Ashley Rowland (Jessie), Heather Perdue (Josh), Cy Williams, Daniel Morris and Brayden Via; great-grandchildren, Madison Rowland, Brennen Fox, Autumn Preeman, Wesley Catron and Aalyah Perdue.

Her service was held July 19, 2021, at Duncan Chapel Church of the Brethren, with Pastor Roy Turpin officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## James Russell Hughes

James Russell Hughes, 77, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away Monday, July 19, 2021, at SOVAH Health of Martinsville. He was born February 21, 1944, in Henry County, Virginia to the late Robert and Lenace Joyce Hughes. He had worked for Southern Finishing and loved to fish and fix model cars.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Brenda Ramsey.

Mr. Hughes is survived by a son, Mark Anthony Hughes; sister, Linda Lynskey (James); and grandchildren,



Blake Hughes, and Ashley Hughes; very special nieces, Chryl Ramsey Jacques (Richard), Sharon Lynskey; and nephew James Lynskey, II; and other relatives and friends.

A graveside service will be held on Friday, July 23, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Patrick Memorial Gardens. Visitation will be Friday, July 23, 2021, 12 p.m. at Wright Funeral Service

Chapel. Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Panner Elizabeth Helton

Panner Elizabeth Helton, 78, of Bassett went to be with her Lord on July 8, 2021. She was born in Bassett, Va., October 4, 1942 to John Peter Daniel and Minnie Ella Mize Daniel.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her grandson, Eric Scott Helton.

She is survived by her daughter Sharon Kay Mullins; son David William Helton; sisters, Bertha Tyree and Mary Cockram; brothers, David Daniel and Carl Daniel; grandchildren, Kristy Helton, Angie Norman, Derek Helton, Adam Helton, Kerri Parish and Kyle Morris

Mrs. Helton was a member of First



Baptist Church of Bassett. She was a very strong believer in her Lord. She loved her family and enjoyed spending time with them and talking with all her friends. She also liked to collect Coca-Cola memorabilia.

A graveside service was held at Henry Memorial Park on Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

Memorials may be made to First Baptist Church of Bassett, 2590 Riverside Drive, Bassett, VA 24055.

Collins Funeral Home in Bassett is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.CollinsMcKeeStoneBassett.com](http://www.CollinsMcKeeStoneBassett.com)

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## Homeowners urged to stop feeding backyard birds in wake of mysterious illness

The early morning chorus of chirps and tweets has taken on a morose note as a mysterious illness is harming Virginia songbirds.

Since late May, people have been reporting sick and dying birds afflicted with swollen, crusty eyes and neurological symptoms—such as balancing issues and tremors. What began in a handful of states has now expanded to include Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana.

According to a statement released by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, cases in Virginia so far have been confined to the state's northern and northwestern regions. Diseases can spread where birds congregate, such as bird feeders and birdbaths, and wildlife experts are asking residents in this area to remove their feeders and keep birdbaths clean as a precaution.

"Experts are still trying to determine what's causing the bird deaths," said

Stefanie Taillon, assistant director of governmental relations for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. "As with any unusual human-wildlife encounter, it's important to report sightings to the appropriate officials."

The DWR says between May 23 and June 30, it received more than 1,400 reports of sick or dying birds in the northern and northwest areas, 450 of which involved birds with eye issues and/or neurological signs. Many species of birds have been affected, but most instances are among fledgling common grackles, blue jays, European starlings and American robins.

Officials say there are no reports of the mysterious illness causing health issues in poultry, livestock or humans.

The specific illness is still unknown, and "multiple bacterial, viral and parasitic agents have not been detected in the bird samples tested," said Sergio Harding, bird conservation biologist for the DWR. "We continue to work with diagnostic laboratories to

investigate the cause of this event."

Among the potential causes that have been ruled out are: salmonella, chlamydia, and viruses including avian influenza, West Nile, other flaviviruses, Newcastle disease virus and other paramyxoviruses, herpesviruses and poxviruses; and Trichomonas parasites.

Homeowners and property owners in the affected geographic areas are encouraged to take the following steps for mitigation:

Stop feeding birds until the deaths have subsided.

Clean bird feeders and baths with a 10% bleach solution, rinse with water, and allow to air dry.

Avoid handling birds. If handling birds is necessary, wear disposable gloves.

If picking up a dead bird, avoid direct contact, and place it in a sealed plastic bag to dispose with household trash.

Keep pets away from sick or dead birds as a precaution.

Report sick or dying birds using the DWR's bird mortality reporting form.

## In Remembrance

Henry County Enterprise publishes obituaries for free

Let us help honor your loved one by placing their obituary in our paper and on our website for free. We are here to help in time of need. Our only requirement is that obituaries are submitted by a funeral home or service. A photo also may be included.

Ask your funeral director to email obituaries/photo to [trisha@theenterprise.net](mailto:trisha@theenterprise.net).

# Pandemic assistance for timber harvesters, haulers announced

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10 percent during the

period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

"USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative promised to get financial assistance to a broader set of producers and today's announcement delivers on that promise," said Secretary Vilsack. "On top of the existing challenges associated with natural disasters and trade, the pandemic caused a major disruption for loggers and timber haulers including lack of access to wood processing mills. This industry plays a critical role in our nation's economy and we are proud to support these hard-working loggers and truckers as they get back on track."

"Like many facets of the agriculture industry, the logging industry has experienced

its share of financial hardships throughout the pandemic," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "We're happy to work with the U.S. Forest Service to develop this new program to provide critically needed support."

"We've heard from loggers and truckers whose livelihoods were significantly impacted this past year by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are pleased that USDA can help alleviate some of the financial burden," said Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen. "I encourage those logging and log-hauling businesses hardest hit by the pandemic to learn more about the assistance offered through this new program."

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business

where 50 percent or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant's gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80 percent. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or \$2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is \$125,000.

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/pathh for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means. To find a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator. They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee.

## 21 motorcyclists killed in seven weeks

Summer is in full swing, and many Virginia motorcyclists have been enjoying the beautiful weather on the open road. Tragically, as the temperatures have risen, so have the number of riders who have lost their lives in traffic crashes.

Since June 1, 2021, 21 riders have died on Virginia roadways in traffic crashes. Of those, nine have been in single-vehicle crashes.

The Virginia State Police is urging all motorists to do their part to share the road responsibly. Passenger and commercial vehicle drivers need to remain alert for motorcyclists due to their size and visibility. When pulling onto or across a roadway or when changing lanes, drivers are especially advised to be on the lookout for motorcycles as they can be obstructed by other vehicles, glare, etc.

Per vehicle miles traveled in 2019, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports motorcyclists were about 29 times more likely than passenger vehicle occupants to die in a motor vehicle crash and were 4 times more likely to be injured. Safe motorcycling takes balance, coordination, and good judgment.

To help enhance motorcyclists' safety, state police is encouraging Virginians to participate in the free "Ride 2 Save Lives" motorcycle self-assessment courses being offered now through October 2021. This course allows current riders the opportunity to learn and practice rider safety, how to handle hazards, special situations, interstate highways, curve negotiation and much more. The course is conducted by Virginia State Police Motors Troopers and allows riders to get to know their own motorcycles in a safe environment.

All participants must have a valid operator's license with a Class 'M' endorsement, appropriate riding attire, and helmet and eye protection. Motorcycles must be street legal and helmets must be DOT approved to participate in this program.

Virginia State Police conducts the "Ride 2 Save Lives" course yearly, beginning in the spring and ending in the fall. A comprehensive listing of Ride 2 Save Lives courses can be found by visiting virginianstatepolice.eventbrite.com. Space is limited and advanced registration for these free courses is required.



## CLASSIFIEDS

### PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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##### FERRUM COLLEGE

Ferrum College is reopening the position of Lead Plumber. We are currently seeking an experienced plumber to install, maintain and repair sanitation units, water and gas supply lines, and associated fixtures and appliances for all buildings and facilities on campus. This position will also be required to design and inspect

plumbing systems, perform diagnostics, and ensure they comply with regulatory codes. Applicant must be able to read and interpret blueprints and other drawings.

Physical Requirements: Must be able to lift and carry up to 50 pounds. Position requires full range of body motion including reaching, stooping, kneeling, and climbing, working indoors and outdoors in all types of weather.

Qualifications: Must have a minimum of 5 years similar experience with a certification in plumbing preferred.

We offer competitive pay and excellent benefit package including health, dental, & life insurance, vacation/personal/sick/holiday paid time off, a 403(b) retirement plan and tuition waiver for employees, spouses and dependents.

#### HELP WANTED

Interested candidates should submit a resume along with the names and telephone numbers of three references to resumes@ferum.edu or mail to: Human Resources, Ferrum College, P.O. Box 1000, Ferrum, VA 24088-9000. Background check required.

This institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

#### YARD SALE

**YARD SALE**  
Inside/Outside Estate Sale - Saturday, July 24 at 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at 1528 Rivermont Heights in Martinsville.

Couch, chairs, entertainment center, TVs, kitchen table & chairs, tools, lots of home décor, Christmas décor, glassware, kitchenware and more.

## Bassett announces increases in Quarterly Dividend, Share Repurchase Authorization

Bassett Furniture Industries, Inc. recently announced that its Board of Directors has increased the quarterly dividend by 12 percent by declaring a dividend of \$0.14 per share of outstanding common stock payable on August 27 to shareholders of record at the close of business on August 13. In addition, the Board of Directors has increased the Company's existing share repurchase authorization by approximately \$16 million back to the original limit of \$20 million.

Bassett Furniture Industries, Inc. also announced that wholesale orders for the fiscal month of June 2021 increased by 25 percent over June 2020 and 39 percent over June 2019 and that wholesale shipments increased 55 percent over June 2020 and 21 percent over June 2019.

"We are pleased that our Board of Directors feels that a 12 percent increase to our quarterly dividend and a \$16 million increase to our share repurchase authorization reflect the strength of our recent operational results

and our solid prospects for the future," said Rob Spilman, Chairman and CEO. "With the reopening of the country fully underway and with consumer spending moving in favor of travel,

dining, and other discretionary pursuits, we do expect our incoming business to ultimately feel the effects of this shift. Nevertheless, the underlying strength of the economy and of our

sales programs continued to produce vigorous sales again in June. That aside, we are committed to decrease our current order backlogs and to improve service levels as soon as possible."

### 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 **August 11, 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 **August 24, 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 public hearings is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.

#### Case R-21-11 Brendan Shreve

The property is located just north of 51 Pruitt Dr, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 39.2(31)/26. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1-acre from Suburban Residential District S-R to Mixed Residential District M-R. The applicant is proposing to place a double wide manufactured on a permanent foundation.

#### Case R-21-12 Mark Place

The property is located 295 Bryants Lake Rd, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 13.8/61. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 25-acre from Rural Residential District R-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to convert the property into a farm winery and other agricultural uses.

#### Case R-21-13 Virginia Visions LLC / Terry Mullins

The property is located 5081 Kings Mountain Rd, in the Collinsville District. The Tax Map number is 29.4(13)/14. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 0.3-acre from Commercial District B-1 to Suburban Residential District S-R. The applicant wishes to rezone the property back to a residential classification for it to be sold as a single family dwelling.

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

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE § 8.01-316  
MARTINSVILLE JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS  
DISTRICT COURT

Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* XAVIER SPENCER

The object of this suit is to:

Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services seeks to terminate the residual parental rights of the unknown father, and mother Michelle Spencer, to the child born to them June 19, 2020 and named Xavier Spencer, all pursuant to Virginia Code Section 16.1-283. Further, the Court shall consider granting a petition adjudicating said child as abused and neglected pursuant to Virginia Code Section 16.1-283 and entering a dispositional Order on that date.

It is ORDERED that the defendants, Michelle Spencer and unknown father appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before AUGUST 4, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

JUNE 8, 2021



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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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# County board fills administrative positions



**Anna Carlton**



**Crystal Dixon**



**Kelsey Gardner**



**Katrina Perry**

After reconvening from closed session on July 15, the Henry County School Board approved a recommendation by Schools Superintendent Sandy Strayer to fill four administrative positions.

Anna Carlton will serve as assistant principal at Bassett High School. Carlton, who currently teaches at FC Middle School, has served students as a teacher since 2012.

“I am honored and excited to be joining the Bassett family. I look forward to collaborating and building relationships with the Bengal students, staff, and families to continue the tradition of excellence present at BHS,” she said.

Crystal Dixon will be principal at Rich Acres Elementary School. Currently, she serves as assistant principal at Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School. Prior to her service at FC, Dixon served students as a teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal.

“I am excited to return to the elementary school I attended and work alongside staff, students and

parents to continue the Buccaneer tradition of excellence. I look forward to supporting the continued growth of every student as they strive to achieve foundational learning milestones,” Dixon said.

Kelsey Gardner will serve as assistant principal at Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School. She is currently the reading specialist at Sanville Elementary School and has served as a teacher since 2012.

“I am both honored and thrilled to be joining the Cavalier family. Alongside Mrs. Perry and Mr. Seiy, I look forward to collaborat-

ing with the entire school community to continue supporting all students in knowledge and excellence. After a difficult pandemic year, I am excited to welcome students back into our building for a fantastic new year,” she said.

Katrina Perry will be principal at Laurel Park Middle School. Perry currently serves as principal at Rich Acres Elementary School and has previously served students as a teacher and assistant principal.

“My heart is happy to be joining the Lancer family. As the new principal, I am looking forward to

this opportunity where my passions can help to inspire teaching and learning, while building supportive and healthy relationships. My focus will be to ensure every child is provided with an exceptional educational experience where academic excellence and social emotional wellness is a priority,” Perry said.

“I am excited to have these leaders partner with our families to support students at their respective schools. Their enthusiasm for learning will certainly serve to encourage students and staff members to continue to excel,” Strayer said.

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## Oh Henry! Program recognized by VSBA

Henry County Public Schools were among nine school divisions to receive honors in the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) Excellence in Workforce Readiness Awards.

The county school division earned a second-place award in the Student Population Between 5,001 – 10,000 Students for its Oh Henry! Internships for the Future program.

Winning divisions were recognized at the VSBA Conference on Education, which took place virtually on Tuesday.

The nine winning school divisions are:

Student Population Below 5,000 Students

First Place- Louisa County Public Schools, The Little Lions Learning Lab

Second Place- Goochland County Public Schools, Utility and Heavy Equipment Operators: Building the Foundation for a Career

Third Place- Dinwiddie County Public Schools, Workforce Ready Diploma Seal Initiative

Student Population Between 5,001 – 10,000 Students

First Place- Isle of Wight County Public Schools, Incorporating Authenticity into CTE Programs

Second Place- Henry County Public Schools, Oh Henry! Internships for the Future

Third Place- Shenandoah County Public Schools, Biomedical Capstone Projects: Department of Motor Vehicles Automated Perimetry by Eli Dellinger

Student Population Above 10,001 Students

First Place- Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, WJCC Schools Healthcare Programs Initiative

Second Place- Roanoke County Public Schools, Roanoke County Public Schools' Registered Apprenticeship Program

Third Place- Portsmouth City Public Schools, Health Sciences Career Development Program

The awards program was created in 2018 by the VSBA Task Force on Workforce Readiness to highlight exemplary programs in Virginia's Public Schools focused on preparing the state's future workforce. The sponsor of the awards was VMDO.

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