

## HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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## Officials react to 'tabled' motion

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

The chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors said the lack of a motion on a Voluntary Settlement Agreement (VSA) came as a surprise.

"I was expecting something in the form of a motion," Jim Adams said. But "it's not totally unusual to delay or have somebody not feel compelled to make a motion one way or the other."

Adams was referring to the lack of a motion at a recent meeting on the county's agreement with the City of Martinsville. (See related story.)

The meeting at least "gave board members a clear-cut opportunity to express, 'this is our frustration leading up to this point,' and that's what I took away from it," Adams said, and while he would not speculate as to when, he and County Attorney George Lyle agree the matter could reappear on a future agenda.

"They had the public hearing, which was required to adopt an ordinance, and this VSA, according to the code, is supposed to be adopted by ordinance," Lyle said. "No one made a motion, so by default the potential action is tabled, which means that it could be considered at a later time."

Supervisors Joe Bryant and Debra Buchanan, who have both consistently voted against all reversion-related issues, also were surprised by

the lack of a motion.

"I'm not 100 percent sure exactly what happened," Bryant, of the Collinsville District, said. Both he and Buchanan expected another 4 to 2 vote to adopt the agreement.

But when Adams asked for a motion and there was silence, "it was just a shocker," Bryant said.

After the meeting, Bryant said, "I understand there were a few (supervisors) who had possibly changed their mind on the way they were going to vote, and they were looking for me or Debra to make a motion."

However, at the time neither were aware the VSA had a chance of being voted down, so neither of them made a motion, Bryant said.

Buchanan, vice chairman and of the Horsepasture District, said that if one or more supervisors have flipped their vote on reversion, that person or persons need to demonstrate commitment by moving against adoption of the VSA.

"Actions speak louder than words," she said, "so I would definitely have to hear a motion to know that support is there. People know where I stand, I think people know where Joe stands."

Ryan Zehr, of Ridgeway, said he is undecided – 50/50 – on the issue.

"I think right now, most people want to take time to think about it," Zehr said. "I'm still doing research. We've got a new governor, things

See **Tabled**, page 2

**Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, called for a motion multiple times on the ordinance to adopt the Voluntary Settlement Agreement on reversion with the City of Martinsville.**

## Supervisors hit pause on reversion

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

The Henry County Board of Supervisors took no action on the Voluntary Settlement Agreement (VSA) on reversion with the City of Martinsville.

The city voted to adopt the VSA by ordinance at its Nov. 9 meeting.

Both city and county must adopt the VSA to

trigger the convening of a three-judge panel, which would be the next step in the reversion process.

During the Nov. 23 meeting, each board member detailed perceived unfairness in how the state handles reversions.

Jim Adams, board chairman, called reversion "a tremendously unfair deal" because the county has little or no input.

However, "if we move against this VSA, we lose everything we negotiated. We have to be prepared at that time to fight it out."

Ryan Zehr, of the Ridgeway District, said that "most everybody on the board has been against reversion this whole time. It's not something we can control. There's nothing we can do to stop

See **Reversion**, page 5

**Commissioner of Revenue Linda Love told the Henry County Board of Supervisors that a number of difficult circumstances led to a delay in mailing out personal property tax bills.**

## County extends deadline for personal property taxes

The Henry County Board of Supervisors voted recently to extend the payment deadline for the county's personal property taxes to Feb. 4, 2022.

The deadline for real estate taxes will remain Dec. 5, 2021.

Due to limiting circumstances, Henry

County's personal property tax bills are being mailed later than normal this year.

Linda Love, the county's commissioner of revenue, said "this is one of the worst years I've ever been in the tax

See **Deadline**, page 2

**Project Development Manager Warren Sakey, of Rocky Ford Solar, LLC, discussed work done by his team during the two years the company has worked to bring a solar farm to Axton.**

## BZA denies requests for two Axton solar projects

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) denied two requests for special use permits related to solar projects in Axton after a four-hour meeting on Nov. 24.

An estimated 75 people attended as the board heard from Project Development Manager Warren Sakey, of Rocky Ford Solar Energy, LLC and Trey Lopez, of Axton Solar, LLC.

The Rocky Ford project proposed building a large-scale, 90-megawatt facility, covering about 800 acres, in the northeast vicinity of Mountain Valley Road and Dees Road.

Axton Solar requested a 484.3-acre expansion on its previously approved 1,203 acres for a 200-megawatt facility.

Invenergy, the developer behind Rocky Ford Solar, "is the largest developer of renewable energy projects in North America," Sakey said, and added that the Axton project began in 2019.

During those two years, the company sought to engage with the community, do site studies, "and make sure we did this right," he said.

"All of the solar-generating facilities are located on a single footprint," Sakey said, rather than being strung out over a wide area. "It is set back from thoroughways that are screened by naturally vegetated areas. Most people will not even see this project."

"All of the naturally vegetated areas that are within this project footprint are going to be put into conservation easements," Sakey said, which would help screen the property from thoroughways and adjoining properties and prevent erosion.

"I understand there's

a lot of passion, a lot of emotion," related to the project, Sakey said. "If we come to a lawful agreement with these property owners who have determined that this is the right thing for their family, for their economic future, for their children, is it right to hold that up, hold back tax revenue for the county because one or two individuals can't be satisfied?"

"The benefits of the project to the community are going to be great," Sakey said, and added the solar farm would create hundreds of jobs during the 12- to 18-month construction period, and other long-term jobs.

"The tax revenue will be substantial," he added, adding that the project would generate millions of dollars in tax revenue for the county.

Sakey said the company would also give the county a signing bonus.

"We understand the county is seeking to replace school textbooks, and there's a \$500,000 budget shortfall for that. We are more than willing for the project to close that gap, plus another

\$500,000 for other needed infrastructure investments in the county," he said.

Several attendees spoke both for and against the project.

Edwin Robertson, who wore a yellow 'support solar' sticker, said "no one loves farming, or the land more than I do."

Robertson added that he planned for the land to be his retirement someday, and noted that most farmers don't have retirement funds.

"Our land is our future," he said, adding

See **BZA**, page 5

Millner, who is originally from the area, said she wants to make a difference in her community. She was initially interested in the position because she wanted to make inroads into the faith-based community, "because they tend to be more hesitant to getting the shot. I am in that community and come from a long line of pastors (her uncle is the Rev. Tyler Millner of Morning

See **Community**, page 3

**Jerelle Carter is one of the West Piedmont Health District's new community health workers. He said he wanted the job in part because he wants to see the community get back to normal and the fastest way to do that is to get people vaccinated.**



The West Piedmont Health District (WPDH) has taken a new step in its push to increase vaccination rates in the area that includes Martinsville, Henry, Patrick, and Franklin counties, with two community health workers added to the team.

Last month, Karen Millner and Jerelle Carter have already begun speaking to people individually or in small groups about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

WPDH Public Information Officer Nancy Bell said the health district was granted \$1.5 million to improve the number of vaccinated people in its service area. It chose to use the bulk of those funds to hire the workers, and contracted with United Way of Henry County and Martinsville for \$478,112 to do so. That funding covered pay, benefits, technology needed for the job, and mileage reimbursement.

United way of Roanoke Valley is similarly contracted for 3 full-time community health workers in Franklin County.

"It's personal for both of us," Millner said, when asked why she and Carter applied for the jobs.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Event information/calendar items must be received by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the desired publication date. Email to [newsreporter@theenterprise.net](mailto:newsreporter@theenterprise.net))

## Saturday, Dec. 4

Bassett will ring in the holidays with its annual Christmas parade beginning at 2 p.m. Come out and enjoy some festive floats with your friends and family.

Join the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA for its annual Pictures with Santa from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. No appointment is necessary. Photographs will be taken by Dawson Photography and the cost is \$10 per pose. Families, children, and pets are all welcome.

The Fab Lab at P&HCC's Dalton IDEA Center in Martinsville is hosting DIY Ornaments for its Fab Lab Family Day from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Participants will use the Fab Lab's laser cutter to create unique, custom-designed Christmas ornaments! Tuition is \$15 and registration closes Friday, Dec. 3 at 11:59 p.m.

The Martinsville Speedway will hold its 17th annual Christmas Toy Drive from 6-9 p.m. This event invites the greater Martinsville region to donate unwrapped toys or \$25 for the opportunity to drive laps around the iconic track in their personal vehicles. The Toy Drive benefits the Grace Network of Martinsville and Henry County.

The American Red Cross will host a blood drive at Stanleytown Elementary School (74 Edgewood Drive, Stanleytown) from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. To make an appointment, visit [redcross-blood.org](http://redcross-blood.org).

## Sunday, Dec. 5

The most highly anticipated holiday event of the season returns when the Roanoke Symphony's Holiday Pops, this year with an all-new matinee performance! David Stewart Wiley conducts the Holiday Pops with all the magical elements you have come to expect—high energy, familiar carols, and lots of holiday warmth. Tickets available at Piedmont Arts and [piedmontarts.org](http://piedmontarts.org). \$15 general admission, \$25 reserved, \$5 K-12 students.

## Tuesday, Dec. 7

Martinsville City Council will hold a community conversation about rever-

sion. The topic of this week's meeting is schools. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in city council chambers. Each meeting is limited to twelve participants per session and anyone who wishes to participate must pre-register by emailing their name and address to [town@ci.martinsville.va.us](mailto:town@ci.martinsville.va.us), calling (276) 403-5182, faxing (276) 403-5280, or mailing the City of Martinsville, attn: Karen Roberts, P.O. Drawer 1112, Martinsville, VA, 24114. Citizens must register by noon the day before each session. Spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis and priority will be given to city residents. The meetings will also be televised on MGTV-21 and linked on the city's website and social media.

The Martinsville Wrestling Academy is hosting boys and girls wrestling for all sizes in Philpott Hall on the campus of Patrick & Henry Community College in Martinsville. Classes begin Dec. 7 and will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays. Grades 2-6 will meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and grades 7-12 will meet from 7-8:30 p.m. The cost is \$30 per month. Temperatures will be taken before all practices. Please bring Wrestling shoes. No street shoes on the mat. Parents may stay for their child's first practice, but must be masked. Club fees are due the first Thursday of the month. USA Wrestling card required. To obtain card visit [www.usawmembership.com](http://www.usawmembership.com). Come join the ONLY wrestling club in Martinsville, Henry, Floyd, Patrick & Pittsylvania Counties!

## Thursday, Dec. 9

Patrick & Henry Community College is hosting a Workforce Programs Open House from 6-7 p.m. in the Frith Exhibit Hall (645 Patriot Avenue) on the campus of P&HCC. This free event will offer information about the short-term workforce training programs offered at P&HCC and the funding assistance available.

The Henry County School Board will hold its regular meeting beginning at 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building. The public meeting will be followed by closed session.

Patrick & Henry Community College will present a Lunch & Learn via Zoom entitled "Setting Achievable Goals" As the year-end approaches, inevitably you may be preparing your personal and professional goals for the upcoming year. Gain some insights to ensure those goals are achievable and put them to work

before the end of the workshop. Pre-registration is required. To learn more or to register, visit [ph.augusoft.net](http://ph.augusoft.net) or call (276) 656-0260.

Piedmont Arts hosts Wee Create! This class is for tots ages 2-5 and their trusted adult(s). Spend time making simple crafts with seasonal and exhibit themes. For December, young artists will use print-making to create holiday cards. Sessions are from 10:30-11 a.m. and 3:30-4 p.m. Advanced registration is required. Call (276) 632-3221 or email [bjohnson@piedmontarts.org](mailto:bjohnson@piedmontarts.org) to reserve your spot.

## Friday, Dec.10-Saturday, Dec. 11

The Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library will host a book sale from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. in the basement of the Martinsville Branch Library, 310 E. Church Street. Christmas is coming, with just the book to help make Christmas special: decorating, crafts, entertaining, and cookbooks; lots of Christmas themed children's books, young adult, and inspirational and religious books. There are even some special books on trains for that train lover on your Christmas list. Proceeds benefit the library system.

## Saturday, Dec. 11

Piedmont Arts hosts Winter Barn Quilt Painting from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. for artists and aspiring artists ages 12 and up. Participants will paint a 12x12 inch barn quilt with instructor Lisa Martin. Choose from 8 design options! All supplies will be provided. The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Advanced registration is required. To secure your spot, visit [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org).

## Sunday, Dec. 12

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society is hosting its annual Christmas Music Program beginning at 3 p.m. in the historic Henry County Courthouse. Everyone is invited to enjoy the talents in our community and beautiful Christmas trees on display. Admission is free.

## Thursday, Dec. 16

Patrick & Henry Community College

is hosting a Workforce Programs Open House from 6-7 p.m. in the Frith Exhibit Hall (645 Patriot Avenue) on the campus of P&HCC. This free event will offer information about the short-term workforce training programs offered at P&HCC and the funding assistance available.

## ONGOING

Piedmont Arts is hosting two exhibits, "Print/Imprint: Asheville Printmakers" and "Carl Chiarenza," on loan from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Both exhibits are on display through January 8.

The Blue Ridge Regional Library offers free one-day passes to the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Henry County YMCA with your library card. The passes are good for one day and exclude special events. There is a wait period before you can check out the pass again. For more details and exclusions, visit [brrl.lib.va.us](http://brrl.lib.va.us).

The Fontaine Ruritan Club hosts Bingo every Tuesday at their headquarters (1903 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville.) Doors open at 5:30 and games begin at 7. Money from Bingo supports community service awards, scholarships, and other community efforts.

MHC Coalition for Health and Wellness offers no contact Medicaid application assistance for eligible Virginia residents from birth to 64 years of age. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deductibles. Including Children's Medicaid/FAMIS, Pregnancy Medicaid and Adult Health Care -19 to 64 years old. Questions can be answered, and applications completed by phone. In-person application assistance is available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays at The Community Storehouse.

Call or text Ann Walker 276 732-0509 to see if you qualify.

The Henry County Adult Learning Center offers free in-house and online classes to help prepare for college, career, or earn your high school equivalency or GED. Classes can help improve your digital literacy, job skills, English language skills, and earning potential. Contact the Center for Community Learning (15 Primary School Road, Collinsville) at (276) 647-9585.

# Deadline

from page 1

office.”

She said the year began badly because of the pandemic, and several employees were out sick. One employee had a prolonged absence, and another quit without notice.

“We got behind to the point we just couldn't catch up,” Love said, adding that she sometimes worked 7-days per week trying to finish the work on time.

Ryan Zehr, of the Ridgeway District, made a motion to extend the deadline beyond the requested Jan. 5 to Feb. 4 to allow for the slowness of mail and the holidays.

“I just don't want them to be penalized for something that falls back on

us,” he said.

Henry County Administrator Tim Hall said from a revenue standpoint, he did not expect the longer delay would be an issue.

Taxes may be paid in person at the Treasurer's Office on the first floor of the Henry County Administration Building or online through the county's service provider, Paymentus. The online portal may be accessed by visiting <https://mss.co.henry.va.us/MSSCounty/citizens/PersonalProperty/Default.aspx>.

Anyone with questions or concerns may contact Love at (276) 634-4690 or Scott Grindstaff, treasurer, at (276) 634-4675.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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48							49					
50							51					

CLUES ACROSS

1. Topsides  
7. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)  
10. A Sultan's court  
12. Maine city  
13. Largest living land animal  
14. Appetizer  
15. Encounters  
16. Leader  
17. The source of bacon  
18. Nuclear near reach weapon (abbr.)  
19. Celery (Spanish)  
21. Pie \_\_\_ mode  
22. Eye disease  
27. Hello (slang)  
28. Those in their 80s  
33. Law enforcement agency (abbr.)

34. Business organiza-tions  
36. Mimic  
37. For indicating speed of rotation (abbr.)  
38. Feeling  
39. Visual way to interact with computers (abbr.)  
40. "Let It Snow!" song-writer  
41. Essential oil used as perfume  
44. Norwegian composer  
45. Coast  
48. \_\_\_ lang syne, good old days  
49. Gland behind the stomach  
50. Tooth caregiver  
51. King of Camelot

CLUES DOWN

1. N. American indig-enous people  
2. Fascinated by  
3. Root of out  
4. Patti Hearst's captors  
5. Atomic #50  
6. Habitual drunkard  
7. Arabic for "peace"  
8. Trickery  
9. One's physique (slang)  
10. Not quite there  
11. Wistfully mournful  
12. Popular dance  
14. Cut of meat  
17. A way to stand  
18. "Gunga Din" screen-writer  
20. 10th month of the year (abbr.)  
23. A way of jumping

24. Utah town  
25. Of I  
26. Actress de Armas  
29. Silver  
30. Play a role  
31. \_\_\_ Falls  
32. Attaches to (abbr.)  
35. Japanese title  
36. Expressed pleasure  
38. Buckets  
40. Dirt  
41. Hypnotists' group (abbr.)  
42. Restaurant drive-\_\_\_  
43. Digs up  
44. He voices "Olaf"  
45. Relaxing place  
46. Body part  
47. Pesky house critter

have changed since before. I want to see how long we have (to make a decision.)”

Referencing Martinsville's scheduled community conversations on reversion, Zehr said, "I didn't understand why they passed it (adopted the VSA), then set up public hearings to talk about it. That didn't make much sense to me. I think myself and my colleagues are just taking it in before we make any type of motion one way or the other."

Regardless, "it's a big step, so I'm doing as much research as I can to make sure it's the right decision for the county and the board," Zehr said, adding that David Martin, of the Iriswood District, plans to request adding the item on the Dec. 14 meeting agenda.

"Whether it passes or fails, I don't know," Zehr said. "They might ask for more time."

Martin said that, since the meeting, he has continued to hear from the public on the issue.

"The state process is flawed," he said. "Times have changed. We now live in, I believe, a collaborative society. We want to know what people think. We don't want to make decisions in isolation, but that's not what the state process is."

With the information he's gathered from his constituents, "I'd like to be part of the process in December and the decision, if there is one," particularly since he was on the board when the

process began, and the December meeting will mark his last as a supervisor.

Martin said his main concern was the short period of time allowed for consolidation of the school systems and the lack of input from the schools in the process thus far.

Additionally, "I'm not convinced that the city is in financial difficulty," he said. "But I believe that if we could work out a way for both school systems to be combined, then Martinsville could maintain its identity as a city."

Though he knows how he likely would have voted on the matter had a motion been made, Martin declined to share that information.

"As an individual board member, we have to make up our own minds based on the data we've been given and I don't want to preempt anybody's thinking on how they're going to vote," Martin said. "I had two calls yesterday that made me think about things in a little different way, and that's okay, but at least our community is in the discussion phase."

Stephen Piepgrass, who is representing the city in the reversion proceedings, said the city also was surprised by the county's inaction.

"The VSA was fully negotiated by both parties, has been voted upon favorably three times by the city and twice by the county, and it has mul-

tiple provisions talking about how both parties are supposed to work to ensure that it moves forward, and reversion occurs. This ordinance is the last piece of that process. We're on the one-yard line," Piepgrass said, and added that he also is unsure what prompted the delay.

However, the city "fully anticipates that (the county) will pass the ordinance and we will move forward," he said.

As to the concerns of several supervisors about school consolidation, Piepgrass said, "I think the city has made it very clear we're willing to work with the county to make that transition as smooth as possible. To do that though, we need to get through this final hoop and have the court approve it so that we have an effective date, then we're more than willing to work through a transition period and a transition plan."

If the county fails to act, Piepgrass said the VSA itself contains provisions for situations in which there is a dispute, or if one of the parties is not carrying out their obligations under the agreement, including arbitration.

"But that is speculative, and we fully anticipate that on the 14th, the county will move forward, and we won't need to worry about that," he said.

Tommy Slaughter, of the Reed Creek District, could not be reached for comment.

Submit your community news and photos

to [newsreporter@theenterprise.net](mailto:newsreporter@theenterprise.net)

# Multiple charges issued in alleged shooting incident



Quinton Lamar Brandon

An Axton man is being held with no bond in connection with an alleged shooting incident, according to a release from the Martinsville Police Department.

City authorities responded to a report of an apparent gunshot in the 1600 block of Spruce St. Ext., around 10:45 p.m. on

November 25, according to the release.

Before arriving on the scene, officers saw a vehicle leaving the area, possibly being driven by the victim, the release stated.

Officers identified the driver and victim, who had a gunshot wound to her arm. The woman was escorted to the hospital where she

was treated and then transferred to another medical facility for further treatment.

Investigators responded to the initial scene and processed it for evidence, the release stated.

Around 11:21 p.m., the Henry County Sheriff's Office contacted Quinton Lamar Brandon, 35, of 417

Tommy Carter Road, Axton.

Brandon was transported to the city police department, where he was charged with aggravated malicious wounding, use of firearm committing a felony, discharge a firearm in occupied dwelling, reckless handling of a firearm, grand larceny, possession of a firearm

by a convicted felon, discharging a firearm in the City of Martinsville, domestic assault, and strangulation.

The case remains under investigation. Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call Martinsville Police Sgt. Durham at (276) 403-5330 or Crime Stoppers at 276-632-7463.

# Teachers sought for work-based learning Coaching Institute

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), District C and the SOVA RISE Collaborative (led by the SOVA Innovation Hub and Longwood University) are teaming up to recruit Southern Virginia educators for a cutting-edge coaching program.

Sixteen educators from across GO Virginia Region 3 will be selected to join the 2022 Winter/Spring District C Coaching Institute where they will discover how to prepare students for the modern world of work with a unique, work-based learning model.

The District C Coaching Institute (supported by IALR and SOVA RISE) is a professional development experience that empowers educators to bring Teamship, an equitable, team-based internship model, back to their classroom. In Teamship, students use skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creative thinking

and citizenship (known as the five C's expected by the Virginia Department of Education) to solve a real problem for a local business. Teamship may be executed as part of a class, bringing valuable work-based learning to students and building their social capital by connecting them with real companies rather than case studies.

The IALR has been implementing the Teamship model through its Next generation Of Work (NOW) program since Spring 2020.

"Our first cohort was done completely virtually with our Academy for Engineering and Technology juniors. Despite knowing that they wouldn't be graded on their participation (due to the pandemic), EVERY student stayed engaged with their team and business partner's problem and presented their final pitch," said Jessie Vernon, Advanced Learning at IALR.

Through just four cohorts, 62 students have worked with nine business partners.

"With just a five-hour commitment from participating businesses, the potential for each business to work with up to 12 students... not to men-

tion the ROI for businesses as students work to solve major pain points. We feel very strongly this is an amazing work-based learning model for our region," said Vernon.

The 2022 Winter/Spring District C Coaching Institute will

equip regional educators with the skills and tools they need to implement the Teamship model at their school. Each educator selected will receive a grant to cover the cost of their professional development, and each educator's school will receive a

grant to cover the cost for the first year of membership to District C. The application deadline for the coaching institute is Dec. 14. Educators and businesses interested in more information may contact [jessie.vernon@ialr.org](mailto:jessie.vernon@ialr.org).



**John Hatchett (right), coordinator and engineering instructor for the Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET), brainstorms with educators as part of the District C Coaching Institute, which teaches how to implement the Teamship model. Hatchett introduced the model—which pairs teams of students with local businesses to solve a real problem—to his AET juniors in 2020 as part of the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research's Next generation Of Work (NOW) program.**

# Community

from page 1

Star Holy Church), so I felt I could reach out and say, 'I'm Karen, you know me,' and already have a foot in the door."

Additionally, she said, she wanted the position because her brother is immunocompromised, and her mother is 81 years old. "I don't want them bumping into anybody with COVID, so it's personal when it comes to that."

She graduated from University of North Carolina Greensboro with a degree in public health, which she said she chose to pursue after her father, who had cancer, passed away. Her more than 15 years in sales gave her a good set of skills that can transfer over to this new position as she educates people on the advantages and benefits of getting the shot.

"My passion," she said, "is to make sure the entire community where we live, work, play, and worship, gets vaccinated."

Carter, who grew up in nearby Pittsylvania County but is has lived in the Martinsville area for several years, said he health and wellness is his passion. He earned a master's degree in the field and spent nearly a decade with the Coalition for Health and Wellness. He then partnered with others to open a gym, Crossfit 276, where, he said, he continues to educate people on their health.

He recalls attending a health fair while working for the coalition and encountering a man who had dangerously high blood pressure. He and his colleagues told the man he needed to go to the hospital immediately, but the man refused.

The next week, Carter said, he saw the man's obituary in the newspaper. He had died of a heart attack. "That's one of the reasons, when COVID came around, I decided to get involved this way," Carter said, adding that he doesn't want to see more people needlessly

die because they didn't heed medical advice.

Carter, who has a wife and 6 children, said, "I don't want my kids to miss anymore school, anymore sports, things like that."

Millner and Carter are in the process of being trained to become certified community health workers. Millner said the training is offered through the Institute for Public Health and will help the new employees ensure equitable health opportunities for all. The 60-hour class focuses on several topics including education about biases, how to connect and communicate with people to talk about things like health and resources, and how to reach out and tap into the resources that may be needed.

"Yes, we're trying to tackle the COVID issue, but COVID has really impacted the community in several different ways that we'll be dealing with other than just the ins and outs of getting sick," including financial hardships and physical and mental health, Carter said.

"A lot of what we learned this week in training was about cultural humility," Millner said, "and how you are to approach different people from different communities, not making assumptions."

"COVID has really ravaged the community and the idea of the community health workers is that we want to level the playing field for everybody," she said.

Millner said examining data helps to pinpoint and target certain groups that may need a little extra attention or convincing.

"That way, you have communities that don't feel like they're left behind," she said. "The objective is to ensure equitable health for all, which is what they'll be teaching us in these 60 hours."

Once training is com-

plete, Carter and Millner hit the road to go talk to others about vaccines. Millner and Carter agreed that they try to get information out in organic ways, like going to food banks and talking with people, asking a local hair salon owner to host a small gathering of clients who might be hesitant about getting vaccinated, talking to people at grocery stores or barber shops. When they can, they get the names and numbers of people who have questions about the vaccine, then they follow up and they listen.

Carter added that he has been working on reaching out to schools through parent/teacher meetings and after school programs.

"We're both people people," Millner said, which goes a long way when striking up friendly conversations with strangers. It also helps that they are familiar faces in the community.

"It's a very small town, it really is," she said. Everybody knows everybody and "that familiarity goes a long way with confidence in what you're saying and trust in what you're saying. It's important too that we look like the community we're targeting."

So far, responses to their conversations have been varied, Carter said. Of the hundreds the two have spoken with since beginning their work, some sign up to get a shot, others flatly refuse, while others say they would prefer to do more of their own research.

"Google is not research," Carter cautioned.

Both said that, within the Black community, many have issues with trusting the government.

"The Tuskegee Experiment comes up a lot," Carter said, and both Carter and Millner use their personal stories to help soothe fears and vaccine hesitancy.

"I got (the shot), my whole family got it. There

is no way I would allow my family to get it if I felt unsafe with it," Millner said. "Those words transcend. It means a lot for people to hear you say that and some of them allow you to continue to talk."

"At the bottom of it all is fear," she said, and the way she and Carter work through that is by listening respectfully and responding to those fears.

During one conversation, she said she went through a list of concerns. While the person opted to not get the vaccine, Millner said she was told, "I appreciate that you listened to me, you allowed me to talk, and you didn't make it seem as if my concerns were not valid."

She said she will continue to follow up with that person.

"Because I allowed him to walk out of the room with the same dignity he walked into the room with, I can have another conversation with him," she added.

Once the workers have done completed their mission in terms of COVID vaccinations, Carter said he and Millner will continue to work to talk to people about health in the community, educating them on overall wellness and issues including hypertension, diabetes, heart health, and other issues.

Millner believes the inroads they will make in the community while working on COVID vaccinations will give them several good resources to build upon when the new chapter of their work begins.

Neither are discouraged that relatively few of those they have spoken with have agreed to get the vaccine. They have only been on the job a few months, and they know that it can take time for their time and effort to take effect. They will continue to listen, to respond to concerns and assuage fears, and working for the health of the place they call home.

"We're planting seeds," Millner said, "and I do believe they will eventu-

ally sprout, and we'll see the fruits of our labors. We're just getting started."



**Karen Millner said that she particularly hopes to make inroads in the faith-based community in her new position as community health worker.**



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# OPINION

## Regarding comedy

I was talking to a fellow the other day and he made a pretty bold statement.

Comedy, he said, is dead.

He argued that “cancel culture” and “woke culture” have ruined comedy. You can’t joke about anything anymore without offending someone and having your career taken away from you.

This is an argument I’ve heard plenty of times before. Even Dave Chappelle, a brilliant comedian I love dearly, has railed against cancel culture.

But I don’t buy it. Cancel culture hasn’t killed comedy. In fact, I’m not sure cancel culture even exists.

Despite the evidence to the contrary, I consider myself something of a student of comedy. I love the rapid-fire genius of the Marx Brothers and the slapstick of the Three Stooges. I consider HBO’s “Mr. Show with Bob and David” to be the pinnacle of the sketch comedy form. I think the first nine (or maybe ten) seasons of “The Simpsons” are probably the most perfect comedy creation of all time. I’ve lately fallen in love with the wholesomely hilarious “Joe Pera Talks With You” on Adult Swim. I even love the patience-grinding anti-comedy of Neil Hamburger, Tim Heidecker, and Eric Wareheim.

These are but a few of my comedy bonafides. Laughter is something I take very seriously. Comedy, to my mind, is a bit like an automobile: you don’t have to understand how it works to appreciate it, but if you do understand how it works, you

might come away with a deeper level of appreciation.

Allow me to explain.

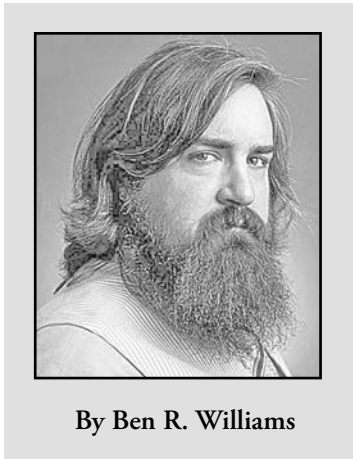
Those who say that comedy is dead usually point to one of two examples: “Blazing Saddles” or “All in the Family.”

These two beloved creations, they say, could never be made today. People would be up in arms. There would be riots in the streets. “Blazing Saddles” features too much racism, while “All in the Family’s” Archie Bunker spouts almost nothing but racism, sexism, and homophobia.

My initial counter-argument would be that if these creations were so terribly offensive, they probably wouldn’t still be airing on TV every week. But there’s something deeper to be explored here.

The reason 1974’s “Blazing Saddles” works is not because racism is heaped upon the African-American Sheriff Bart, who has been deployed to protect the Old West town of Rock Ridge; it works because Sheriff Bart is the smartest guy in the room and the people heaping racism upon him are morons (or “the common clay of the new West,” if you prefer). Bart is never the butt of the joke; the racists are.

Similarly, “All in the Family,” which ran for nearly the entirety of the 1970s, indeed features a deeply-prejudiced, narrow-minded patriarch played to perfection by Carroll O’Connor. Archie Bunker says and does some pretty offensive things throughout the course of the series, but the writers make sure



By Ben R. Williams

we’re not laughing with Bunker; we’re laughing at him. We’re laughing at his ignorance and his blinkered worldview. And we especially laugh when Archie’s preconceived notions blow up in his face in unexpected ways.

One of the most famous comedy axioms is the idea of “punching up” vs. “punching down.” In a nutshell, the idea is that a comic or comic character should only insult people of greater power and influence than themselves. Punching down — that is, insulting people with less power and influence than the comic — generally ain’t funny. It’s uncomfortable, and worst of all, it’s lazy.

I firmly believe that there are no sacred cows in comedy. Anything and everything can be the subject of a joke. But the caveat is, the joke needs to actually be funny. It needs to be clever. And if the target is a marginalized or relatively powerless group, the joke needs to find a way to acknowledge the target without punching down

at them.

If that sounds hard, it’s because it is. Comedy is hard. It’s easy to make someone cry; if you want to make them laugh, you’ve got to put your back into it.

Earlier in the column, I said that cancel culture doesn’t even exist. That may seem like a bold claim, but just consider the case of Dave Chappelle.

Chappelle’s most recent Netflix special, “The Closer,” debuted on Oct. 5. It was immediately met with backlash from the transgender community due to jokes Chappelle made at that community’s expense, with some folks even calling for the special to be removed from the streaming service (a call I personally disagree with, for the record, even if I’m not a fan of the jokes that prompted it).

Does this outrage mean that Chappelle has been cancelled? Is he, as many have claimed, a victim of cancel culture?

Well, considering that he got paid in excess of \$20 million for the special, and considering that he was also nominated for a Grammy award just this month, I somehow think his career will weather this particular storm.

Now, before anyone gets the wrong idea, I want to make one thing perfectly clear: I am not opposed to offensive comedy. In fact, I’m strongly in favor of it. Comedy doesn’t necessarily need to offend, but personally, all of my favorite jokes are unprintable in a family newspaper.

How, then, is it possible to thread the needle? How is it possible to be a filthy, offensive comedian while never punching down?

To answer that question, I

will defer to one Mr. George Carlin, the towering comic genius who was actually once arrested for being too offensive on stage.

In 1990, Carlin appeared on Larry King Live, and Larry asked him about Andrew Dice Clay. For those who don’t remember, Dice was enormously popular in the early 1990s for telling jokes that were derogatory towards women, minorities, gay people, the disabled, and basically anyone who wasn’t a straight white guy wearing a leather jacket. Today, Dice is best known as an answer during a game of “Trivial Pursuit 1990s Edition.”

When asked about Dice, Carlin had the following to say:

“I would defend to the death his right to do everything he does. The thing that I find unusual — and it’s not a criticism so much — but his targets are underdogs. And comedy has traditionally picked on people in power, people who abuse their power. Women and gays and immigrants are kind of, to my way of thinking, underdogs. ... I think his core audience are young white males who are threatened by these groups. A lot of these guys aren’t sure of their manhood because that’s a problem when you’re going through adolescence. ... Women who assert themselves and are competent are a threat to these men. And so are immigrants in terms of jobs. ... There’s a sharing of anger and rage at these targets.”

The folks who are railing against cancel culture, wokeness, and political correctness have plenty of supporters. But after taking a hard look at those supporters, I’m not entirely sure who would want them on their side.

## To Lower Energy Prices, Embrace American Energy Dominance

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

As winter begins, Americans this year confront a most unwelcome holiday guest: high energy prices.

Just like Santa Claus, expensive energy is coming to town. Unlike Santa, it doesn’t matter if you’ve been bad or good. Your wallet will suffer just the same.

You have probably noticed already how much

more it costs to fill up your gas tank. According to AAA, Virginia’s average gas price is \$3.25 compared to \$2.03 a year ago. As people travel for the holidays, this increase will be felt.

But even if you plan on staying home, prepare to pay more for energy. The U.S. Department of Energy forecasts that U.S. households will spend 54 percent more for propane, 43 percent more for heating oil, 30 percent more

for natural gas, and 6 percent more for electric heating.

These price surges are outrageous, but they were preventable. They result from bad policies implemented since the earliest hours of the Biden Administration.

President Biden had barely moved into the White House on January 20 when he cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline. Beside the significant loss of construction jobs that the pipeline would have created, that move set the signal from day one that the new Administration would target fossil energy production, never mind that its preferred energy sources lack the reliability, resiliency, and affordability needed to power the world’s preeminent economy.

This foolish action was followed within days by a moratorium on new oil and gas drilling on federal land. Beyond denying the development of the domestic energy resources specifically affected by his orders, President Biden’s agenda had a chilling effect on energy markets. People in the business

could tell which way the wind was blowing under the new Administration (pun intended).

As the Biden Administration tightened the screws on American energy, demand for natural gas in particular and fuel more generally increased across the world. Shortages are pushing prices ever higher. Yet the White House pushes on, threatening the Line 5 pipeline that brings oil from Canada to refineries in the Midwest despite the fuel disruptions and lost jobs the closure would cause.

When challenged on the fact of high prices, the Biden Administration minimizes, deflects, or literally laughs off the issue.

Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm actually laughed when asked about gas prices and increasing oil production, saying “That is hilarious” and lamenting that she lacks a magic wand to lower prices.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki asserted that “the rise in gas prices over the long term makes an even stronger case for doubling down” on green

energy. Never mind that gas prices are eating into family budgets now, or that the energy sources the White House wants to prioritize have not yet proven that they can viably power our economy.

President Biden plans to release oil stored in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which President Trump refilled. This move may bring limited relief but would not solve any problems. Further, it would deplete a stockpile meant for use in national emergencies.

He also sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission threatening investigations of oil and gas companies and called on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to increase production.

Even if these measures are meant sincerely and not as ways to deflect attention from the Administration, they simply will not make a meaningful difference. In the case of OPEC, they shift power to other countries which may not have our best interests at heart. After all, this is the same cartel, largely made up of Middle Eastern countries,

that once tried to bring down the American economy and forced the government to dictate what days of the week people could refuel their cars.

The best option for our economy and for our security is to restore American energy independence. Our country enjoys a great wealth of resources, and we have the technology and know-how to develop them responsibly while creating jobs domestically. As the current crisis shows, the world still relies on fossil fuels. If we aren’t providing them, less environmentally sensitive countries, including Russia, will.

A reversal by the Biden Administration of its anti-domestic energy policies would be a most welcome Christmas gift. Don’t count on it, but then again, this is a season of miracles.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, contact my Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, my Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, my Washington office at (202) 225-3861 or via email at [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](mailto:www.morgangriffith.house.gov).

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Michael Showell, *Publisher*

Debbie Hall, *Editor*  
dhall@theenterprise.net  
(276) 694-3101

Callie Hietala, *Reporter*  
newsreporter@theenterprise.net

Randy Thompson, *Advertising Manager*  
advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com  
(540) 230-1129

Liz Moonbury, *Advertising Specialist*  
advertising@theenterprise.net  
(276) 694-3101

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

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Non support for Flynn statement

Those that know me will be surprised to find out that I don’t support Michael Flynn’s recent statement, “One nation under God, and one religion under God.” I’m conservative in politics, and non-sectarian in religion, but this Flynn headline made me shudder.

With every fiber of my being, I’m opposed to a state-regulated church. The state church of Rome in the first millennium was a persecuting monster. The state church of England, followed by the state church of Scotland were no better. Fleeing to the “New World” only birthed new oppressors. William Lumpkin documents in his book, “A History of The Middle District Baptist Association of Virginia 1784-1984” that Anglicans imprisoned anyone guilty of “unauthorized preaching.” Meaning anyone that disagreed with Anglicanism.

Someone might say, “Flynn did not mean a state-regulated church.” I don’t know how else he’d ever achieve such. While I voted for Trump in 2020 and Youngkin in 2021, Republicans are an enigma to me. They claim to desire

smaller government, but then spout nonsense as Michael Flynn did. Like Ron Paul I don’t support the federal Department of Education; I for sure won’t support a federal Department of Religion!

Don’t get me wrong: religion in America is a mess. We do not at all reflect Jesus’ prayer found in John 17:20-21: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” American religion is not “one.”

While the Yellow Pages are filled with different types of sects there was only one church in the first century: the body of Christ as per Ephesians 4:4, 12. Today all protestants are against Roman Catholics, but Protestantism is divided into Anabaptists and Pedobaptists. The previously mentioned are seemingly unified, however, against the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses. I wish folks would abandon sectarianism and their

creeds for a unified body of believers in Christ.

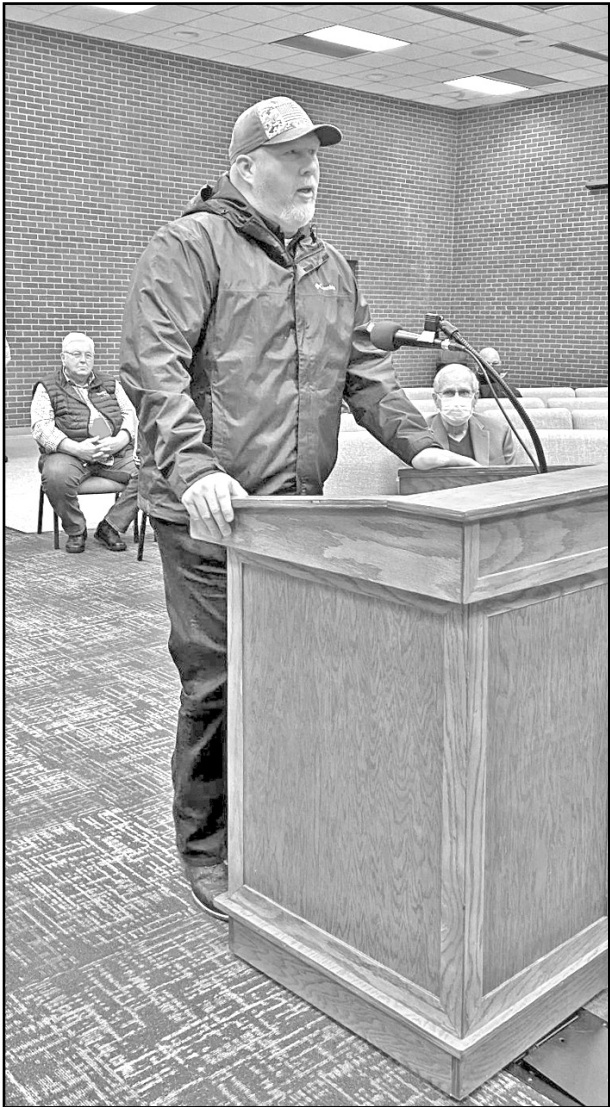
I wish, not only America, but the world, could come to an agreement of one church. I would like to see this accomplished by free conversion, rather than government coercion. We need to remember that Jesus’ church is not an American institution. The Christian religion was birthed in Palestine and spread into Africa (Acts 8’s Ethiopian Eunuch), and then into what was Asia Minor (Acts 19 Paul enters Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor). Revelation 14:6 says that the everlasting Gospel is for “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

In closing, I state my belief that a unified church will never be seen until “religious folks” begin to hold a mutual respect the Bible and cast off their man-made creeds (Baptist Faith and Message, Common Book of Prayer, etc.). Just as America has a governing document, The Constitution, Christianity has its governing document, the New Testament. Unfortunately many Americans have read neither.

*Caleb Robertson, Martinsville*

# Reversion

from page 1



Eric Phillips urged the supervisors to delay reversion.

it except hope that new members are elected to the city council, and they change their mind.”

Zehr and David Martin, of the Iriswood District, also expressed concern about having enough time to merge the school systems.

“I never thought that five individuals could take a vote and change the course of history for an entire community,” said Martin, a retired school superintendent in Henry County and other localities.

“Part of that process hurts me more as an educator who believes in a collaborative process to reach this decision. In this process, we were forced to make decisions in isolation without public comment and without public input. But what hurts me more as an educator, the two largest employers in our community (the public-school systems) were never asked to come to the table,” Martin said.

Vice chairman Debra Buchanan, of the Horsepasture District, echoed some of those sentiments.

“Five city council people not choosing to allow the people that they represent an opportunity to vote on (reversion) is wrong. It’s also wrong and archaic that our law does not allow the residents of Henry County to be able to vote on it, but the city had that opportunity. They did not want to hear from their citizens,” Buchanan said.

Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, indicated that the whole process was less about reversion and more about Martinsville gaining the ability to annex.

Noting displeasure with the increased tax burden reversion would place on county residents, Bryant said, “I’ve never ever been one to have somebody try to stick something down my throat, to try to force something down my throat and say, ‘you take it,’ and not say anything about it. I’m against this reversion. I think it’s a bad deal for the county.”

While he agreed that the process is unfair, Tommy Slaughter, of the Reed Creek District, said, “you’ve got to weigh the whole thing. Do we fight it and spend a lot of money and end up with it happening anyway, or do we try to get the best we can and go with it?”

The board held a public hearing on the matter before calling for a vote. Four people — Mary Martin, Eric Phillips, Andrew Palmer, and Ray Reynolds — chose to speak. All four spoke

against reversion.

Martin said her wish for the year was that the VSA be shredded and used for confetti at a New Year’s Eve party.

Phillips urged the supervisors to delay. He said when reversion came up at a recent meeting he had with local delegates, Del. Danny Marshall told him “it’s not over.” Phillips said the was told that Marshall discussed the issue with State Sen. Bill Stanley. The two legislators plan to bring up new proposals about reversion “now that Republicans have a majority in the House and a friendly governor.”

Phillips said that the city soon will have what he called a “people’s referendum” when it holds elections next year.

“Then, we can see how the city really felt about (reversion) from the residents’ side,” he added.

After the hearing and comments from the board, Adams called for a motion.

“What is the desire of this board? Is there any motion,” Adams asked.

When a motion was not forthcoming, Adams said, “I’ll ask once again. Is there any motion?”

Again, no one spoke. “Seeing no indication of such, this matter is tabled for lack of a motion,” Adams said.

In other matters, the board:

\*Heard an update from County Treasurer Scott Grindstaff. As of October 29, 2021, his office had collected 94.71 percent of 2020 personal property taxes and 96.20 percent of real estate taxes.

\*Passed a resolution to extend the deadline for payment of personal property taxes to February 4, 2022. Heard from Commissioner of Revenue Linda Love who explained the delay in submission of personal property tax data.

\*Heard an update from Mark Heath, president and CEO of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp.; Sarah Hodges, director of tourism & talent development; and Valerie Harper, director of business development.

\*Awarded a \$203,398 contract to Motorola Solutions to buy portable radios for the Henry County Sheriff’s Office.

\*Awarded a \$169,000 contract for a second Intercept Contraband Detection Scanner to Tek84, Inc. to be installed at the new Adult Detention Center.

\*Awarded a \$1,089,350 contract to English Construction Company, Inc., for improvements to

DuPont Road leading to the new Adult Detention Center.

\*Approved the appropriation of grant funds in the amount of \$16,743 received from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant to be used for overtime hours to provide high impact law enforcement activities in areas that are experiencing increases in crime.

\*Appropriated two grants from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to be used for training, equipment, and overtime compensation related to enforcement of traffic laws: \$26,400 for the enforcement of alcohol-related traffic laws and \$17,831 for the enforcement of speed-related traffic laws.

\*Approved an additional appropriation of \$1,371,949 to the Henry County Public School budget to replace the HVAC system at Laurel Park Middle School. The school board is expecting to receive the full amount from the Virginia Department of Education through the American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

\*Appropriated \$219,172 and awarded a contract of \$1,136,761 to Blue Ridge Rescue Suppliers for a new ladder truck. The additional funds will be combined with \$929,000 previously appropriated for this matter. Aid-to-Localities funds will be used for the purchase, which will be placed at the Bassett Fire Department.

\*Approved the carry-over of \$51,136,064.58, including interfund transfers of \$8,874,6990.88 to FY22.

\*Adopted a resolution authorizing the county’s participation in the proposed settlement of opioid-related claims.

\*Approved an amendment to the FY21-22 budget related to the sale of the Patriot Centre Shell building. The building was sold to Shock, NA for \$1 million as part of an economic incentive package. The total loan value of the building was \$3,461,955.

\*Heard an update from the Virginia Department of Transportation on the Collinsville Pedestrian Safety Project.

\*Adopted a resolution supporting the addition of Airport Road to the VDOT Secondary Road System and to abandon the old portion.

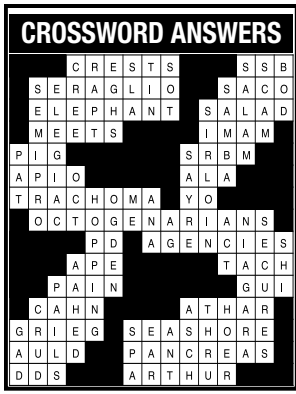
\*Held a public hearing and approved a resolution supporting the Community Development Block Grant application for the restoration of the historic Fieldale Recreation Center.

\*Held numerous public hearings and approved rezoning applications for Lisa Lancaster; Jason and Pamela Mabry; Carver Memorial Gardens, Inc.; and Dana Wade.

\*Held a public hearing and appropriated funds related to the Patriot Centre shell building.

\*Reappointed Vivian Hairston to the Public Service Authority for a four-year term to expire Jan. 5, 2026.

\*Reappointed Jim Adams and Tommy Slaughter to the West Piedmont Planning District Commission for four-year terms, to expire Dec. 31, 2025.



# Nominations sought for Jack Dalton Community Service Award

Nominations are now being accepted for the 21st annual Jack Dalton Community Service Award.

The award will be presented to the Henry County resident who best demonstrates the exemplary community service that marked Dalton’s years of public service.

Dalton served as a member of the Henry County Board of Supervisors for more than 24 years, and was serving as the Board Chairman at the time of his death on May 24, 2000.

All nominations must be received by

Thursday, December 30 at 12 p.m. The recipient of the award will be recognized at the Henry County Board of Supervisors’ meeting in January.

Nominations should be based on the candidates’ personal volunteer efforts and active involvement in helping promote the quality of life in Henry County. Nominees must have performed the service for which they are being nominated within the calendar year 2021.

All nomination forms must be submitted online or downloaded and returned to the County Administrator’s

Office by 12 p.m. on Dec. 30, 2021. Forms can be found online at [www.henrycountytva.gov/jack-dalton-award](http://www.henrycountytva.gov/jack-dalton-award).

Previous award winners include Dr. Calvin Rains, Bill Adkins, Clay Campbell, Mary McGee, Charlie Bradshaw, Bob Petty, Thurman Echols, Nancy Bradshaw, Mary Jordan, Pat Ross, Claude Cobler, Beatrice Bullard, Barry Nelson, J. Smith Chaney, Jr., Paul Kennedy, Bob Norris, John Thomas “Smokey” Pegram, James L. Franklin, Jr., Dr. Joseph DeVault, and all local frontline healthcare workers in 2020.

## BZA

from page 1

the project would not only provide for his retirement but would continue to provide for his children and grandchildren.

Julie Hairston, who lives in Georgia and owns Sandy River Farms, said she has seen the benefits of solar investment in her home state. “I am proud of my opportunity to participate in this project.”

Megan Taylor said that, as a mother, it was good to know the project would provide financial freedom for her family.

G.W. Robertson said revenue from the project would help everyone in the community. “I think I’ve earned the right to make this decision with the time that I’ve put in on the land.”

Mary Thompson expressed concerns with the solar projects removing the value of the land as an agricultural resource.

“The stampede now to get the money that is available out there for these types of projects, you guys are going to be swamped” with requests, she cautioned the board. “When does it stop?”

Herb Atwell, owner of Mountain Valley Brewing, said he and his wife, Peggy, invested their life savings into building the brewery, which relies heavily on its viewshed.

“I hope we’ve brought growth to this county,” Atwell said, and added that he is worried about how the solar project could affect the business. He urged the board to find a balance between the area’s natural beauty and solar projects, which he said he supports. “I’m asking that we make sure we’re doing the right thing here.”

Lenny Holste said that he often goes to Mountain Valley Brewing, and that his daughter, who loves the view, said she wants to get married there. “What will that view be when it’s time for her to get married?”

Kirk Cotter, owner of Mountain Valley Artisan Barn, which hosts events such as weddings, also expressed concern about how the project might affect his business, particularly the views around his property and the noise of construction.

“I can’t run my business, I can’t have a wedding with people pounding posts while people are trying to say, ‘I do,’” he said.

Sakey said that the solar project is one of the best ways to preserve the land for agriculture. After 30 years “this land is going to go back to agriculture.” Technologies are changing so rapidly that what is built today likely would be outdated in 30-years, rendering the project obsolete.

He said he had spoken with Mountain Valley Brewing about an additional setback beyond the 100-foot mandated by the county.

“I do want to be clear that the property they are referring to, that they keep saying, ‘this is a beautiful property,’ that doesn’t belong to the brewery. That belongs to Mr. Robertson. That is his property, and this is America. I appreciate that they have that view, but that is someone else’s property, and this is their right,” Sakey said.

Lee Clark, director of planning, zoning, and inspections, congratulated Invenergy on the quality of its presentation and the work done thus far.

To the landowners, Clark said “there is a certain amount of me that wants you to be able to do what you want with your property.” While he understands that many would financially benefit from the project, “there’s also the greater good of the county.”

Clark explained that because his job is to consider the appropriateness of a land use, not tax value, potential revenues for the county out of the discussion. He noted the county’s current ordinance calls for no more than 2.5 percent of the land area within a 5-mile radius of a project to be used for solar farms.

“I get it. Solar energy, it’s here, and it’s the future, but Axton doesn’t need to be the epicenter of it either. Axton doesn’t need to be an area that’s known for being nothing but a solar farm now. As a planner, I understand that you can have too much of a good thing,” Clark said, and added that several concerns prompted him to not recommend approval of the zoning request.

The board voted unanimously to deny the special use permit.

During discussions of the request from Axton Solar, LLC, the quality and reputation of the company was questioned.

Even Sakey described the proposal as a “smash and grab project” that would have major viewshed issues for many.

The board voted unanimously to deny the permit for Axton Solar.

In other matters, the board:

\*Approved a request from Carver Memorial Gardens for the expansion of the adjacent perpetual care cemetery.

\*Approved a request from Abram Brim to operate a barber shop out of his home at 781 Southland Drive.

\*Denied a request from Justin Stone to allow for a one-time use of his property at 5913 Daniels Creed Road for a cross country motorcycle competition.

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# 'Tis The Season of Giving



Charles Williams presents a donation to Scott Norman, captain of the Fieldale Volunteer Fire Department.



Charles Williams donated to President William Martin and Captain Todd King of the Horsepasture Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Local business owner Charles Williams, of Williams Auction Co., LLC, recently donated \$1,000 each to several organizations, including the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, the Horsepasture Volunteer Rescue Squad,

the Fieldale Volunteer Fire Department, and Fieldale Heritage, Inc.

Williams hopes to inspire others to donate to causes and organizations closest to them during the holiday season and beyond.



Charles Williams presents a check for \$1,000 to Joel Barnes, Treasurer of the Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, to help with ongoing operations.



Fieldale Heritage, Inc. received a \$1,000 donation from Charles Williams (far left) to help with renovations. (From left to right), Charles Williams, Board Vice President Nancy Arnold, President Andrew Kahle, board member Sharon Gilbert, Arribella Gilbert, and board member Jay Gilbert.

# Company donates service to area Boys & Girls Clubs

UScellular has donated 185 wireless hotspots with two years of service to Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia (160 hotspots worth about \$184,160) and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Blue Ridge (25 hotspots worth about \$28,755) to help provide equitable learning access and opportunities and connect local youth during the school year. The combined value of this equipment and service would be valued at \$212,915.

Hotspots have proven to be a vital tool for youth to access the Internet, study and complete homework, and these will help Boys & Girls Club members boost their connectivity on site, while also being loaned out to families to support reliable access at home. The hotspots provided to Boys & Girls Clubs connect to UScellular's network to provide high-speed connectivity for Club members throughout the Roanoke and Martinsville areas, and each hot spot has the potential to support multiple Club

members throughout any given day.

"These Boys & Girls Clubs provide an essential service for youth in our community, and we want to help ensure their members have the connectivity they need to be successful in school," said Nakeita Smith, director of sales and operations at UScellular. "Wireless technology is key to providing broadband service to families in both urban and rural areas, and we believe that every family deserves access to reliable internet access. At UScellular, we want to do our part to ensure youth in our area have the resources they need to stay connected."

Access to reliable connectivity causes a divide between youth who have access and those who do not. Currently, 35% of low-income households lack any access to broadband service at home. This leads to an issue known as the "homework gap" among students who lack proper internet access.

To close this gap, UScellular launched the After School Access Project, a program that provides free mobile hotspots and service to nonprofits that support youth after the school day has ended and provides safe internet access for homework and education. This is an expansion of previous hotspot donations the company provided to address connectivity needs during the pandemic. Seeing the greater need, the company has pledged to donate up to \$13 million in hotspots and service to connect up to 50,000 youth in 2022. Eligible 501c3 nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply by going to <https://bit.ly/3B7zOZQ>.

"When we heard the stories of youth who couldn't get access to reliable internet for their schoolwork, we knew we had to act," said Laurent C. Therivel, president and CEO of UScellular. "Connecting people and communities is our mission and the After School Access Project is just one way that we're

helping ensure students have the reliable access they need to grow and pursue their dreams."

Hotspots are stand-alone Wi-Fi networks that can connect several devices at once wirelessly and have proven to be a vital tool for youth to access the internet, study and complete homework. To date in 2021, UScellular has donated 2,800 hotspots and service to 33 Boys & Girls Clubs across the country, a \$2.6 million investment. Clubs have used them to boost their connectivity on site and loaned the devices out to youth and their families to support reliable access at home.

Nonprofit organizations who meet the following criteria are welcomed to apply:

- Certified 501c3 nonprofit organizations
- Operate within UScellular's service area
- Focused on kindergarten through 12th grade
- Not a school or government entity
- Hotspot devices will be

shipped to nonprofit organizations within 6 to 8 weeks of an approved, completed application.

"Closing the digital divide will require the involvement of many organizations and that is why we encourage nonprofits working with youth in afterschool programs to apply and use this resource to enhance the important work they are already doing," said Therivel.

UScellular is focused on addressing gaps in STEM education and is committed to connecting more than 200,000 of tomorrow's innovators each year with the resources they need today to help shape future opportunities. Since 2009, UScellular has donated more than \$20.8 million along with countless experiences and technology items to nonprofit organizations across the country. For more information about UScellular's corporate social responsibility initiatives, visit <https://www.uscellular.com/get-to-know-us/community-outreach>.

# Poster Contest announced

The Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) are now accepting entries for the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center's (MS-ISAC) annual Kids Safe Online Poster Contest.

The goal of the contest is to engage young people in creating posters to encourage their peers to use the internet safely and securely. It's also an opportunity for teachers in classrooms across Virginia to address and reinforce cybersecurity and online safety issues. All public, private or home-schooled students in kindergarten through grade 12 are eligible to participate.

"I encourage teachers and parents to make sure students know of this creative opportunity to raise awareness with one another about cyberbullying and staying safe online," Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane said. "This is critically important given the

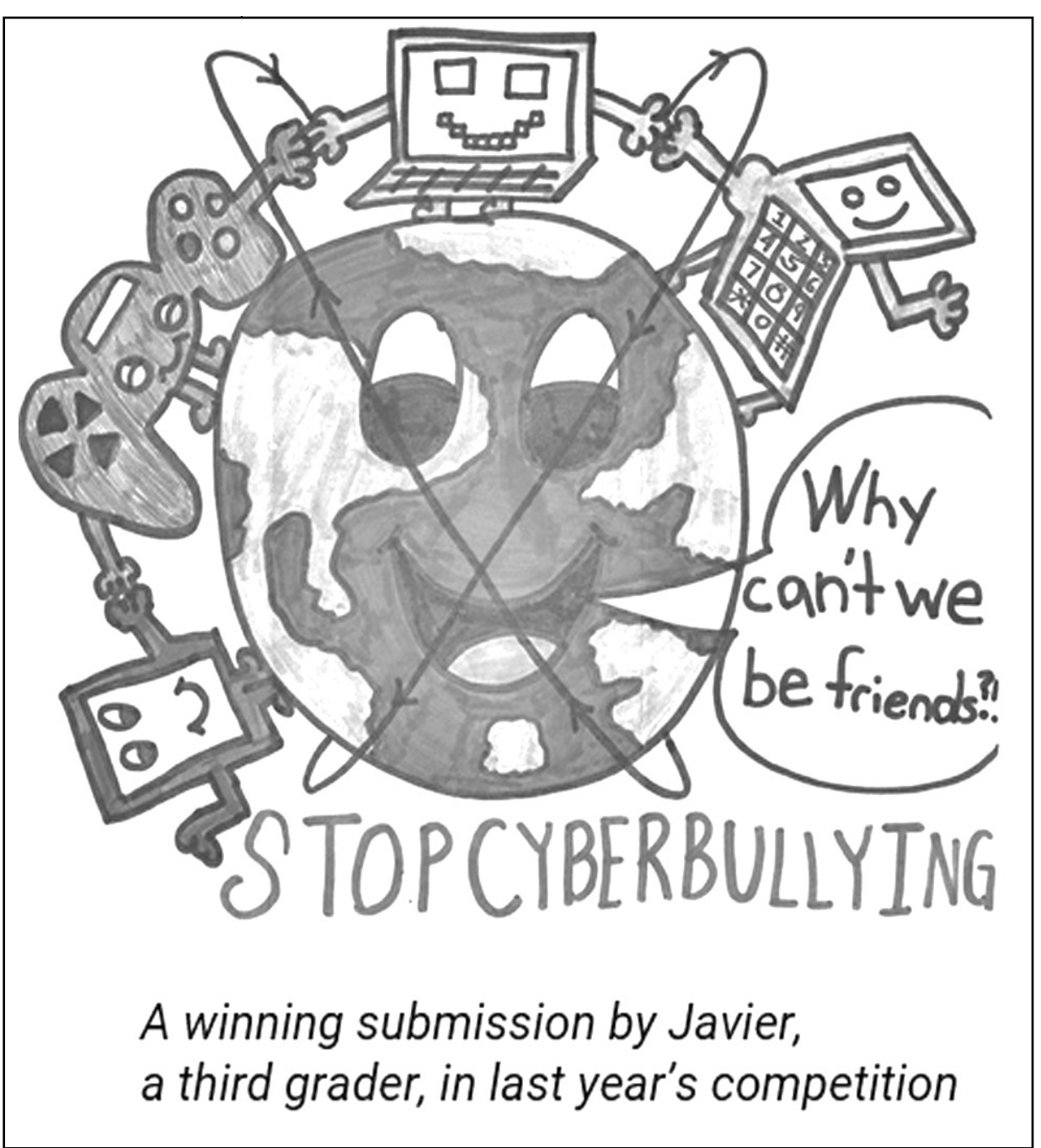
amount of time students spend online for educational and social reasons."

"This is a great opportunity to start educating students of all ages about the importance of staying safe online," said

Virginia's Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) Michael Watson. "Children are some of the most vulnerable targets on the internet and social media. The more they know, the better they can protect themselves when and if the need arises."

The top five Virginia winners from each grade group will be entered into the national competition. Entries received may be used in national, regional and state cyber and computer security awareness campaigns. Entries are due by midnight Jan. 12, 2022.

To submit an entry, send it to [Commonwealth.Security@VITA.virginia.gov](mailto:Commonwealth.Security@VITA.virginia.gov). Include the entry form completely filled out (all fields are required) when submitting the postcard.



# OBITUARIES

## Roxie Ann Mills Belcher

Roxie Ann Mills Belcher, 82, of Martinsville, VA passed away on Wednesday, November 24, 2021. She was born on September 29, 1939, in Patrick County, VA to the late Maggie May Slate Belcher and Sam Hylton Mills. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by daughter, Donna Kay Belcher; sisters, Nannie Sue Mills Biggs, Lula Mae Mills Amos, Mary Virginia Mills Nance, Margaret Elizabeth Mills Plaster, and Kathelen Mills Moore; brothers, Junior Mills, Billy Mills, Marvin Mills, and Shelburn Mills.

Mrs. Belcher worked at Tultex for twenty-one years until retirement. She was a member of Snow Creek Christian



Church.

She is survived by her husband of sixty-four years, Donald Wayne Belcher of the home, and her niece, Susan D. Gardner and fiancé Bobby Jones of Martinsville, VA.

A graveside service was held on November 27, 2021, at 3 p.m. at Roselawn Burial Park with Rev. Scott Oliver officiating.

Memorial donations may be made to Snow Creek Christian Church, 4970 Snow Creek Road, Martinsville, VA 24112.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Belcher family. Online condolences may be made at [www.norrisfuneral.com](http://www.norrisfuneral.com).

## Ezekiel “Zeke” Thomas Craddock

Ezekiel “Zeke” Thomas Craddock, 77, of Bassett, VA passed away Monday, November 29, 2021. He was born March 12, 1944, to the late Nancy Trent Craddock and Paul Harding Craddock. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister, Margie Younker and brothers, Paul Aaron Craddock, and Alan B. Craddock.

Zeke retired from DuPont after 34 years and owned Zeke’s Cycle Center for 44 years (1977-2021). He served in the United States Air Force and attended Abundant Life Fellowship.

He is survived by his wife, Julie A. Craddock; children, Tim Craddock,



Tammy Hodge (Bo), Terry Craddock (Jennifer), and Trey Craddock (Holley); sisters, Janie Pruitt, and Gaye Durham; thirteen grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 4, 2021, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel with Pastor

Teddy Britton officiating. Visitation will be prior to the service from 1 to 3 p.m.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Craddock family. Online condolences may be made at [www.norrisfuneral.com](http://www.norrisfuneral.com).

## Chapter awards flag certification



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**The Colonel George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution recently presented their United States Flag Presentation certification to Jerry and Heather Byrd, of Collinsville. The flag certificate is presented to a selected household that is noticeably displaying the US flag. The Byrd’s met the required standards by keeping the flag illuminated in the evening, and by properly caring for and disposing of flags to ensure that theirs is always in good condition. President Andy Doss presented the certificate.**

## Partnership announced to help those in need, make holidays brighter

Mark your calendars for the return of the Holiday Pops Spectacular! on Sunday, December 5 at Martinsville High School Auditorium. Tickets may be purchased at Piedmont Arts.

Altrusa International

will be on site collecting food cans of non-perishable items for Grace Network as the community works together to help those in need. This is a wonderful way to kick-start the holiday season as three organiza-

tions come together to entertain and help the community at the same time.

For more information, visit [www.gracenetwork-mhc.org](http://www.gracenetwork-mhc.org) or email [info@gracenetworkmhc.org](mailto:info@gracenetworkmhc.org).

## Historical Society to host Christmas music

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will host a Community Christmas Music Program at 3 p.m. on Sunday, December 12, at the Historic Henry County Courthouse.

Talents from the community will be featured, along with beautiful Christmas trees on display.

Admission is free.

The Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum will be

open before and after the program. The building is handicap accessible.

“Join us as we celebrate Christmas through music,” John Phillips, Historical Society president, said. “It’s an excellent opportunity to visit the Heritage Center & Museum and to support uptown businesses.”

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/events/605959883787979](http://www.facebook.com/events/605959883787979) or call 276- 403-5361.

## CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad or for more information call (276) 694-3101.

### 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.

#### SERVICES

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Carpentry/Cabinetry – fine woodworking, design, tile, closet & garage organizers, repairs, etc.  
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#### HELP WANTED

**TEN OAKS**  
TEN OAKS, a hardwood flooring Manufacturer in Stuart, VA is Now accepting applications or Resumes for Industrial Electrician, Accounting Technician, Automation Technician/

#### HELP WANTED

Engineer, 1st & 2nd shift  
Production Positions. Top Pay, Insurance, Benefits, Paid Vacations, 401k. Call, (276)694-3208 or pick up applications at 209 Progress Dr., M-F 7-5 or email Resume to: [human.resources@tenoaksflooring.com](mailto:human.resources@tenoaksflooring.com)

#### P&HCC

Patrick & Henry Community College in Martinsville, VA has the following job openings: SEED & Recruitment Coordinator, Educational Talent Search Advisor, Law Enforcement Officer, Science Lab Assistant, MHC After 3 Program Leader, MHC After 3 After School Instructor, and Adjunct Faculty in English, Legal Assisting, NCCER Plumbing, Nursing, and Welding. For details and application information please visit <http://patrickhenry.edu/>

#### HELP WANTED

[patrickhenry.edu/](http://patrickhenry.edu/), scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on Employment Opportunities. Patrick & Henry Community College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or veteran's status. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

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# CLASSIFIEDS



#### CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION 12/14

TAKE NOTICE that the City Council of Martinsville, Virginia, at its regular session to be conducted on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as may be practicable, at the City Council Chambers, Martinsville Municipal Building (second floor), 55 West Church Street, Martinsville, Virginia, shall conduct the following public hearing:  
Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 15.2-1800, a public hearing to consider the disposition of real property, specifically: the transfer of tax map numbers 31(02)M/26 27, 31(02)M/28, 31(02)M/31, 31(02)M/32, and 31(02)M/41, all currently owned by the City, to the Martinsville Redevelopment and Housing Authority. A more detailed description of the properties and terms of transfer may be obtained at the office of the City Manager. The Public is encouraged to attend and comment.  
Leon Towarnicki, City Manager

Submit your  
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and photos to  
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HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE WOULD LIKE  
TO LET OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES AND  
COMMUNITY KNOW THAT IT'S ALMOST  
TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS  
EDITION!

## Christmas Greetings

are now being accepted. If you'd like to place one in the  
Henry County Enterprise, please contact:  
Liz at (276) 693-3713 or [advertising@theenterprise.net](mailto:advertising@theenterprise.net)



# New round of vineyard grant funding announced

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), program manager of the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission's (TRRC) Vineyard Development and Expansion Program, has announced a new round of grant funding available to vineyard growers.

Applications are being accepted for grant awards of up to \$3,000 per acre for qualified individuals across the 40 localities, including Patrick and Henry counties, of the

TRRC's service area in Southern and Southwest Virginia.

"This program is a wonderful opportunity for vineyard growers to expand their acreage or for would-be growers to step into production," said Mark Gignac,

Executive Director of IALR. "The program offers helpful assistance with the application process, and reimburses on a cost-share basis to reduce risk and encourage viticulture, which is so vitally important to expanding Virginia's wine industry."

A cost-share award of up to \$3,000 per acre is available for qualified vineyard growers—reimbursing 33 percent of eligible expenditures. Vineyards with up to nine acres may receive a maximum award of up to \$15,000, and those with 10 or more acres may receive a maximum award of up to \$20,000. Funding is awarded through a competitive process and may be sought by qualified existing growers who wish to expand their current acreage and by new growers developing their first vineyard. To be con-

sidered for the program, new growers must establish at least three acres of new vines, and existing growers must be willing to plant a minimum of one new acre. Eligible cost-share items include, but are not limited to, grapevines, hardware for trellis systems, fencing and irrigation systems. All projects and reimbursement applications must be completed by Dec. 1, 2022.

Through the cost-share program, IALR works with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, TRRC and the Virginia Vineyards Association to increase vineyard acreage and address the shortage of Virginia-grown grapes. In order for wines to be marketed as Virginia wines, they must contain at least 75 percent of Virginia-grown grapes. While the number of wineries in Virginia has

been increasing, the pace of vineyard expansion has lagged, resulting in acute grape shortages and the slowing of Virginia wine production.

To learn more about eligibility requirements, including a detailed map of eligible localities, growers may visit TRRCgrape.com or contact Program Manager Amy Turner at amy.turner@ialr.org or 434.766.6788. Turner also will assist growers with the application process, which is currently open.

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research serves Virginia as a regional catalyst for economic transformation through applied research, advanced learning, economic development, advanced manufacturing and conference services. To learn more, visit www.ialr.org.



## Fuel prices fall in Virginia

Virginia gas prices have fallen 2.9 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$3.24/ on Monday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Gas prices in Virginia are 5.0 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand \$1.17/g higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia is priced at \$2.89/g today while the most expensive is

\$3.89/g, a difference of 100.0 cents per gallon. The lowest price in the state today is \$2.89/g while the highest is \$3.89/g, a difference of 100.0 cents per gallon.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 3.4 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.37/g today. The national average is down 1.4 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.26/g higher than a year ago.

Historical gasoline prices in Virginia and

the national average going back five years:

November 29, 2020: \$2.07/g (U.S. Average: \$2.11/g)

November 29, 2019: \$2.35/g (U.S. Average: \$2.59/g)

November 29, 2018: \$2.34/g (U.S. Average: \$2.48/g)

November 29, 2017: \$2.31/g (U.S. Average: \$2.49/g)

November 29, 2016: \$1.99/g (U.S. Average: \$2.15/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas

prices:

Roanoke- \$3.23/g, up 1.9 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.21/g.

Richmond- \$3.22/g, down 1 cent per gallon from last week's \$3.23/g.

West Virginia- \$3.31/g, up 0.5 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.31/g.

"Gas price declines are slowly picking up momentum. With oil's recent fall and the jury out on a new Covid variant, Omicron, we could be in store for lower prices based on many countries turning back to travel restrictions,

limiting oil demand and potentially accelerating the drop in gas prices," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy. "There remains a very high level of uncertainty ahead of us as OPEC has also delayed its meetings to await more market movements and information on Omicron. But so far, Americans can expect the new variant to push gas prices even lower. Beyond the next few weeks, it remains nearly impossible to predict where oil and gas prices will head, though turbulence is guaranteed."

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data spanning nearly two decades. Unlike AAA's once daily survey covering credit card transactions at 100,000 stations and the Lundberg Survey, updated once every two weeks based on 7,000 gas stations, GasBuddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy data is accessible at <http://prices.GasBuddy.com>.



Wren  
**Williams**  
DELEGATE

THANK  
YOU, 9TH  
DISTRICT!

It will be an honor to **serve**  
**you** and **Southside Virginia**,  
and stand for our conservative  
values. If I can be of **service**  
**to you**, please reach out to us  
at **276-693-9024**.

PAID FOR BY WREN WILLIAMS FOR DELEGATE

## Buy local, support Virginia agriculture this holiday season

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) encourages Virginians to shop local this holiday season. In every corner of the Commonwealth, consumers can find farmers' markets, retail stores, and agribusinesses laden with local food and beverage items that will make the perfect gift for family and friends.

"Whether you are looking for a Virginia ham, a peanut sampler, wine, candy, baked goods, or jams and jellies, you can't go wrong with Virginia's Finest products," said Brad Copenhaver, Commissioner of VDACS. "The extensive array of Virginia's Finest products includes delectable desserts, tasty snacks, fine beverages, fresh produce, flavorful meats, confections, and condiments, all locally made by Virginia companies. Every participating company has earned the Virginia's Finest trademark seal of quality for the excellence of its products."

The Virginia's Finest trademark program identifies top-quality Virginia-

produced and processed agricultural products. Browse hundreds of Virginia's Finest products at [www.vafinest.com](http://www.vafinest.com), or look for the trademark blue and red VA checkmark in your grocery store, gourmet retailer, gift shop, or specialty shop. When you look for the Virginia's Finest label, you know you're not only getting local products, you're also getting the very best of the best.

Browse [www.VirginiaGrown.com](http://www.VirginiaGrown.com) for other great gift ideas, such as a basket full of Virginia Grown snack items, or honey, jams, syrup, and baked items. Other gift ideas include beautiful garden plants, a bushel of oysters or other seafood, or a gift certificate to a local creamery, winery, distillery, or brewery.

Buying local keeps money within the Commonwealth and supports Virginia's robust agricultural industry. Buying local can also ensure that customers get maximum freshness, taste, and nutrition, straight from Virginia farms to their table.

## Electric company provides online collection to schools

For 20 years, Appalachian Power employees have celebrated Read to Me Day by sharing a special read aloud book with students in elementary schools across West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee. It is an Appalachian Power tradition.

This year, the company has selected the book, "Someone Builds the Dream," by Lisa Wheeler, for the program. The book, read by Aaron Walker, Appalachian Power vice president distribution, was added to the company's read-aloud collection of 21 videos on YouTube, and a copy was donated to each school library.

The YouTube video playlist was provided exclusively to all 450-plus elementary schools in the company's West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee service territory for educational use.

"Read to Me Day is a way that we can show every school we serve that we value education and support what they do," said Chris Beam, Appalachian Power president and a volunteer reader. "We are looking forward to the day when we can visit our local schools and read in-person,

but our YouTube playlist has been well received and allows educators the ability to access the reading of great read-aloud stories year-round."

The company started participating in Read to Me Day in 2001 and estimates that it has read to 280,000 students and donated about 7,500 books since then.

It has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is part of American Electric Power, which is focused on building a smarter energy infrastructure and delivering new technologies and custom energy solutions. AEP's approximately 16,800 employees operate and maintain the nation's largest electricity transmission system and more than 223,000 miles of distribution lines to efficiently deliver safe, reliable power to nearly 5.5 million customers in 11 states. AEP is also one of the nation's largest electricity producers with approximately 30,000 megawatts of diverse generating capacity, including 5,500 megawatts of renewable energy.

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