



Thomas Auker (left) and Teddy Martin were elected to serve as chairman and vice-chairman for the Henry County School Board. This marks Auker's third term as chairman, and Martin's first to a top post on the local board. (Contributed photo)

Auker, Martin tapped to lead school board

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The Henry County School Board selected Thomas Auker and Teddy Martin as its chairman and vice-chairman for 2022. This is Auker's third time serving as board chairman and Martin's first term as vice-chairman.

"I count it a privilege," Auker said of being elected chairman once again by his fellow board members. "When your colleagues feel you're doing a good job, to be able to continue to lead them" is an honor.

Martin, who has served as regional school board chairman and is current president of the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA), is a newcomer to holding a top post at the local level.

"I did it backwards," he said, laughing.

Auker said he hopes the board can continue working on its list of capital improvement projects, including completing construction of the new bus garage and

See **School Board**, page 5

Durden aims for 'broad stroke' goals

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

When attending her first official meeting as a member of the Henry County School Board last week, Elizabeth Durden said her goals are to involve the community and give residents in the Collinsville District a voice.

Though she said those goals are "broad strokes," meeting them also is the ideal outcome, she said.

To accomplish those ideals, Durden said she first will focus on figuring out how to encourage parents and the community to be more involved, to help them feel like they have a voice, and that if they speak up, they can and will be heard.

She said there is a possibility of hosting town hall meetings to help work toward that goal but acknowledged the ongoing pandemic and related restrictions would make it difficult to host gatherings. As an example, she noted the lack of in-person attendance at the January school board meeting. However, many watching the proceedings online indicates a genuine interest.

Durden said she is looking forward to governor-elect Glenn Youngkin taking office because, "by all indications, he is saying that he's going to give a lot more of the decisions back to the local governments," including decisions about mask requirements in schools.



Elizabeth Durden hopes to encourage more people to speak up and have a voice in the decision-making process. (Contributed photo)

through on that campaign promise, local governments will have the power to make timely decisions about mask requirements appropriate to individual school systems based on local COVID data, rather than relying on a state-wide, one-size-fits-all approach, she said.

Durden also said she is looking forward to attending the Virginia School Board Association's new member orientation, is taking advantage of that organization's mentorship program. The program has connected her with a school board member in a different locality.

While she doesn't yet feel completely settled in schools.

See **Durden**, page 2

Northam issues emergency order to expand hospital capacity

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

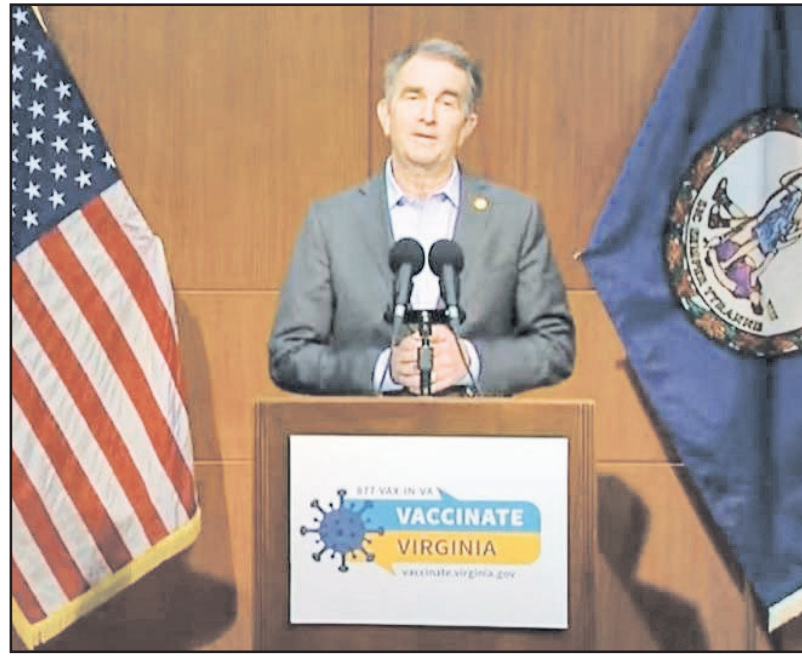
In his final COVID-19 briefing since the virus first appeared in Virginia, Gov. Ralph Northam on Monday issued a 30-day emergency order to provide relief to hospitals and medical workers across the state dealing with rising numbers of COVID-positive patients.

The declaration came after record numbers of hospitalizations were reported last week, Northam said, and is intended to "ease the pressure on Virginia's hospitals and their staff" by allowing hospitals to expand the number of available beds, increase staffing capacity, and allowing public health agencies greater flexibility in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among other provisions, the order allows providers with an out-of-state license to practice in Virginia, authorizes experienced physician assistants to practice without a written supervisory agreement, and provides certain liability protections to healthcare workers who act in good faith to protect patients.

"It has been a long 22 months for all of us," Northam said in the briefing, which was livestreamed. "It has been a roller coaster and we're not built for this kind of uncertainty for this long."

The pandemic has brought out both the worst and the best in people, Northam said. "I've watched people helping and caring for one another in big ways and small ways," particularly the state's



Gov. Ralph Northam issued an emergency order to provide relief to overworked and understaffed medical providers as COVID-19 cases continue to climb.

healthcare workers.

The rapid spread of the highly transmissible omicron variant has led to an increase in the numbers of those needing hospitalization, Northam said, and more are expected because the current spike has yet to reach its peak.

"It's causing a real strain on the people who work in hospitals," Northam said. "Doctors and nurses have worked tirelessly for 22 months to care for people that have gotten sick. I say tirelessly, but it's not really the right word, because they are tired. They're exhausted, and they're burned out. That's why

it's so important for us to help them."

He urged people to go the hospital for medical attention only if it is necessary.

"It is painful to see COVID case numbers rising once again," he said, noting that case numbers are higher than they have ever been.

However, Northam said, the situation is different from what it was a year ago, before vaccines became widely available.

"Case numbers are high, and that's a reason for concern, but not

See **Northam**, page 2

Spike in school COVID numbers due to winter break

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The "pretty scary" numbers recently reflected on the Henry County school division's COVID-19 dashboard are largely related students being out for winter break.

Monica Hatchett, director of communications for the school system, told members of the Henry County School Board at a January meeting that the increase in cases "would not have been school-related."

She said the system expects the numbers to level off as after every other break.

The division's COVID-19 dashboard indicated that 230 positive COVID cases and 629 quarantines have been reported across the school system between Dec. 17 and Jan. 7.

Those numbers include 56 new staff cases and 174 new student cases. The two high schools,



The Henry County School Board heard about the recent spike in COVID-19 cases and quarantines among its population from Schools Superintendent Sandy Strayer and Monica Hatchett, director of communications. The increase is largely due to students being out of school for winter break, and school officials are hopeful the numbers will decrease as students return to school.

Bassett and Magna Vista, have the highest numbers, with 37 and 39 positive cases and 84 and 89 quarantines, respectively.

"Before the break, we had really controlled the spread of the pan-

See **COVID Spike**, page 5

Local physician, hospital part ways

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Dr. James Isernia, a Martinsville physician, is no longer employed by Sovah Internal Medicine, according to a statement issued by Hailey Fowlkes, Sovah Health's marketing coordinator, on behalf of Sovah Physician Practices.

However, several questions remain unanswered, including the reason for Isernia's separation from the healthcare system.

Neither Sovah nor Isernia have addressed that issue.

In a message, Isernia's wife, Michelle, said, "we know everyone is not so patiently trying to get a 'reason' or the story as told by us. We very much appreciate everyone trying to hear both sides, but we are maintaining silence as advised by legal counsel as we push forward through this."

In its statement, Sovah said "we cannot share the specifics of his departure as this is a personnel matter." The statement did not address other questions, including the length of Isernia's employment, the



Dr. James Isernia is no longer employed by Sovah Internal Medicine. Circumstances surrounding his departure remain unclear.

number of patients under his care at the time of his departure, and others.

It did, however, address concerns voiced among many of Isernia's patients regarding transition of care. "As with

any physician departure, we are taking the appropriate steps to notify patients and ensure a

See **Isernia**, page 4



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)

Wednesday, Jan. 19

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

Thursday, Jan. 20

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at Horsepasture Christian Church (1146 Horsepasture Price Road, Ridgeway) from 2-7 p.m. To schedule a donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Friday, Jan. 21

Join Piedmont Arts (215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) in celebrating the opening of its first new exhibits for the new year. From 5:30-7:30 p.m., guests can enjoy music by Lauren Luther as well as complimentary wine and refreshments as they get their first look at three new exhibits: "Our Living Past: Platinum Portraits of Southern Music Makers," "Dear B.J.: Postcards from the Pandemic," and works by Tara Compton. All three exhibits are open through March 12. This opening reception is free and open to the public. RSVP to bjohnson@piedmontarts.org by January 18. For more information, visit piedmontarts.org.

Saturday, Jan. 22

Soar on over to the Virginia Museum of Natural History (21 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) for the grand unveiling of its newest special exhibit, "The Science of Flight!" This day of flight-focused fun includes live birds of prey, balloon animals, food trucks, flight-themed activities and crafts, and more! The first 500 children in attendance will receive a free giveaway. For more information and pricing visit www.vmnh.net.

Monday, Jan. 24

The Patrick & Henry Community College Board ad hoc Nominating Committee will meet at 11 a.m. in the Frith Conference Room #145, 645 Patriot Avenue, Martinsville, to prepare a slate of officers and committee members for the next four years. This is a public meeting, but the committee will not receive public comment.

The Martinsville City School Board will hold its regular meeting at 6 p.m. in city council chambers of the Martinsville City Municipal Building (55 West Church Street, Martinsville.)

Wednesday, Jan. 26

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at

the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

The Henry County Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a public hearing at 1 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.) Rocky Ford Solar Energy, LLC has requested a special use permit to construct a large-scale solar energy facility.

Thursday, Jan. 27

Patrick & Henry Community College hosts a social media workshop, Ask the Expert, from 12-1:30 p.m. This is a perfect, judgement-free opportunity to ask anything, even as basic as, "how do I log on to Facebook?" This workshop will be held at P&HCC's Dalton IDEA Center (26 Fayette Street, Martinsville.) Registration is \$15 at pre-registration is required. To register, call (276) 656-5461 or visit ph.augusoft.net.

Friday, Jan. 28

Henry County will hold a public real estate auction beginning at 12 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.) A list of properties to be auctioned can be found at taxva.com/rs-tax-sales/henry-county-non-judicial-sale/.

Monday, Jan. 31

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA (3 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. To schedule a donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 2

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

Thursday, Feb. 3

Patrick & Henry Community College hosts a professional development workshop, Wow with Public Speaking, from 9-11 a.m. This class can be attended virtually or in person and the cost is \$49. To register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Martinsville Elks Lodge (300 Fairy Street Ext., Martinsville) from 12-6 p.m. To schedule a donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Friday, Feb. 4

Patrick & Henry Community College hosts a professional develop-

ment workshop, Wow with Public Speaking, from 9-11 a.m. This class can be attended virtually or in person and the cost is \$49. To register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Martinsville Elks Lodge (300 Fairy Street Ext., Martinsville) from 12-6 p.m. To schedule a donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Saturday, Feb. 5

Join the Spencer-Penn Centre and Jessica Minter for Charcuterie for your Cutie! Create your own charcuterie board to take home to share with someone or enjoy by yourself. All supplies will be provided. The cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. Pre-register by Jan. 31 by calling (276) 957-5757.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

ONGOING

The Warming Center of Martinsville and Henry County, located at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church (725 Beechnut Lane) is open to provide a warm place to sleep, a warm meal, and personal supplies at no cost to those in need. Anyone who needs transportation to the center can be picked up at 6:45 p.m. at the Martinsville library and 6:25 p.m. at the Collinsville library. Weekly schedules are posted at the Martinsville library, YMCA, and on the MHC Warming Center Facebook page every Saturday. For more information, call (276) 207-9660. Anyone who wishes to volunteer at the Warming Center or make a donation can find more information on Facebook or at www.foresthillspc.com/mhc-warming-shelter.html.

Patrick & Henry Community College is organizing a virtual Leadership Learning Community. If you have leadership questions, P&HCC can connect you with answers through this virtual community. Participants have the opportunity to collaborate and brainstorm current, real-time challenges and successes with fellow leaders while learning from each other or gaining insights from professionals skilled in areas of concern. Sessions are held from 4-5 p.m. every other Wednesday, from January 12 through June 22. Prices range from \$225 for 12 sessions to \$25 for individual sessions. For more information or to register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

Henry County Parks & Recreation invites you out for a trek along the trail. Meet as a group and walk along a different trail each week. Explore the trails of Martinsville-Henry County,

make new friends, and get some fresh air and exercise. Call the HCPR Senior Services office at (276) 634-4644 to find out where the week's trek is happening! Trail Trekkers meet Thursday of each week (weather permitting) at 1 p.m. in the fall and winter and 9:15 a.m. in spring and summer.

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.

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.

Email your community news and photos to newsreporter@theenterprise.net

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12				13					14		15		
16					17				18		19		
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56					57			58					
59					60					61			
62					63					64			

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Requests
 - Calendar month
 - Invests in little enterprises
 - Bird sound
 - S. American plant cultivated for tubers
 - Car
 - Bullfighter
 - Hill (Celtic)
 - Strong criticism
 - Detector
 - When you hope to get there
 - Having the skill to do something
 - Legendary MLB broadcaster
 - Vulcanite
 - C. Asian mountain range
 - In a way, healed
 - Midway between east and southeast

- Small appendages of insects
- ___ Greene, "Bonanza" actor
- A place to bathe
- Postal worker accessory
- Classical music
- A way of wrecking
- Terminator
- You eat three a day
- Pointed end of a pen
- NATO official (abbr.)
- Genus of clams
- Boxing's "G.O.A.T."
- A colorless, odorless gas used as fuel
- Covered thinly with gold paint
- Bachelor of Laws
- Red fluorescent dye
- Engineering group
- Female sibling
- Adjacent

- CLUES DOWN**
- What a thespian does
 - Footwear
 - Adjust spacing between
 - Witnesses
 - Who shows excessive fondness
 - Distinct form of a plant
 - National capital
 - Hunting expedition
 - Related to medulla oblongata
 - European country
 - Cola
 - Excluded from use or mention
 - Speak
 - Bloodshot
 - Make better
 - Keyboard key
 - Type of degree
 - Paddle
 - Peacock network

- Not young
- Baseball stat
- One's grandmother
- Breakfast food
- Disease-causing bacterium
- NY ballplayer
- Got up
- Prophet
- Part of the mouth
- Unnatural
- Acronym for brain science study
- Three are famous
- Languages spoken in Patagonia
- Freedom from difficulty
- Widely used OS
- Many people pay it

Northam

from page 1

a reason for panic," he said, adding that though case numbers have been one of the defining data points used throughout the pandemic, data should now be examined differently given the wide availability of vaccines.

Noting that "almost no one" had gotten a shot a year ago, Northam said more than 14 million doses have been administered statewide. Nearly 90 percent of the adult population has had at least one dose, and "only nine states have given more shots and they are all larger states than Virginia," he said.

"Vaccinations are keeping people safer even as the omicron variant spreads," Northam said. "Data from around the world for nearly a year now shows that if someone is vaccinated and they get COVID, the symptoms are likely to be minor."

He noted data that indicates lower numbers of those vaccinated are hospitalized, and even fewer die from the virus.

"That is how vaccines are designed to work," Northam said, and cited a statistic from Ballad Health, based in southwest Virginia, which reported last week that 97 percent of its COVID patients who are relying on ventilators are unvaccinated.

Northam acknowledged the increased demand for testing considering omicron's rapid spread. He said that last week, the state averaged 50,000 tests daily, likely not accounting for the number of self-administered, at-home tests.

National demand for rapid tests is outpacing supply, he said, adding that PCR tests are still readily available.

Northam said the nine new testing sites recently announced would be able to process around 500 tests daily, with the three larger sites eventually able to handle about 1,000 tests each day. Additionally, he said the federal government is in the process of making 500 million free, at-home tests available later this month.

Durden

from page 1

the new role, other board members have been helpful and welcoming.

Overall, "it's been really reassuring to see just how much (the other board members) really do care, and how much they bear the weight on their shoulders of the decisions that are being made. They're not made lightheartedly," Durden said.

Due to the pandemic, the board is navigating through "new, uncharted territory," Durden said, and added that over the next few years, she plans to give it her all in service of the students, parents, teachers, and staff of the school system.

Through her work, she hopes that students will continue to thrive and be successful, and that teachers and staff can reflect upon her tenure and say, "I feel valued by the school board and taken care of," Durden said.

When her term ends (she has not yet decided if she will run for a second term), Durden said she "would love to look back and have the community say they feel like they had a voice in regard to our school system."

New Community Testing Centers to bolster access

Nine new Community Testing Centers (CTCs) to increase COVID-19 testing will open across the commonwealth, according to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

The centers will be near or on the same property as existing VDH Community Vaccination Centers (CVCs) in Charlottesville, Chesterfield, Fairfax, Fredericksburg, Newport News, Norfolk, Prince William, Richmond and Roanoke that have been operating since October, a press release states.

In Patrick County, local test sites include Walgreens, 140 S. Main St., Stuart.

In Henry County and Martinsville, the VHD website lists several new testing sites:

Armory, 315 Commonwealth Blvd. (look for large signs outside for dates; often Fridays, 3-7 p.m.)

Walgreens, 103 Commonwealth Blvd.

CVS, 2725 Greensboro Road

CVS, 3011 Virginia Ave.

PATHS, 287 Commonwealth Blvd.
Ridgeway Family Medicine, 4944 Greensboro Road

Walgreens, 2707 Greensboro Road

Walgreens, 3590 Virginia Ave.

Local libraries (but call first to arrange to pick up an at-home test)

The centers will offer Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests, the most reliable form of testing for COVID-19 and will supplement numerous locally coordinated Community Testing Events.

CTC test results will be automatically sent via text or email message to individuals being tested, based on the information provided in the appointment system.

The website notes that free testing is primarily for those who are uninsured, underinsured, or receive Medicare or Medicaid; contact the testing center for more information.

The new centers are expected to administer more

than 50,000 tests this month.

The centers will be funded with an initial \$5 million from the VDH, which is seeking FEMA funding to reimburse expenses and continue testing deployment.

The VDH urges people to get tested if they have symptoms, or if they have come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. VDH recommends testing on day 5 after exposure, although testing on days 3-5 is also acceptable.

Because of the high demand on testing and on the health system, if you do not have symptoms or a known exposure, VDH encourages people to postpone any non-essential travel or events that would prompt them to test beforehand.

To find a site near you, visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/protect-yourself/covid-19-testing/covid-19-testing-sites/>.

Sovah Health scaling back some elective and non-urgent surgical cases

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Expressing concern about the most recent spike in COVID-19 cases, Sovah Health on January 7 said it is rescheduling elective and non-urgent surgical cases and procedures requiring hospital admission on both its Martinsville and Danville campuses for a period of two weeks.

According to a release from the agency, no other surgeries or procedures will be affected. Decisions about which procedures can safely move forward “will be made by working with our clinical teams to carefully evaluate each patient’s needs.”

The change comes as the rising number of COVID cases indicates substantial spread in the community, which is both disheartening and concerning, the release stated.

“The low vaccination rates in our regions leave our community incredibly vulnerable to severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Sovah Health cannot stress enough how important it is that we

continue to remain vigilant in our fight against COVID-19,” according to the release.

“The new COVID variant looks to be far more contagious than previous variants and appears to be having more breakthrough capability among vaccinated people. The impact is now hitting our hospital and impacting our ability to care for our community,” it added.

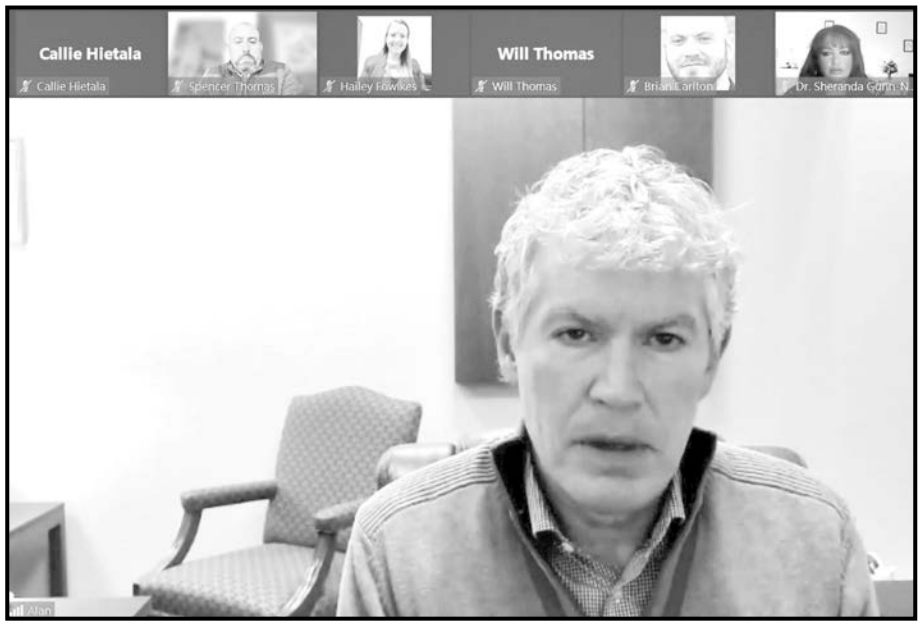
Alan Larson, market president of Sovah Health and CEO of Sovah Health-Danville, said that other medical facilities across the state have made similar announcements.

“We’ve been here before,” Larson said. “We have experience on surges, and our responses seem to be effective in helping us manage our resources.”

The two-week timeframe should help both facilities catch up and prepare to resume normal operations. “We hope that’s the case,” he said.

However, “we’re disappointed that we

See **Sovah Health**, page 4



Alan Larson, market president of Sovah Health and CEO of Sovah Health-Danville, said the health system’s responses to COVID surges seems to be effective in helping to manage resources. He expects the current pause to last about two weeks.

C-PEG secures grant to grow small business program

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce’s Partnership for Economic Growth (C-PEG) received a \$103,575 grant from the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission to expand its Startup and Grow Martinsville-Henry County program.

Startup and Grow is a mentoring program that helps establish new businesses and grow existing ones through intensive boot camp programs lasting eight weeks for startups and four weeks for growing companies. The boot camps are delivered through partnerships with Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC), Longwood’s Small Business Development Center, SCORE, and the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation (EDC.) Staff from both city and county as well as local entrepreneurs and business experts provide insight during the boot camps as well.

Lisa Watkins, president of the chamber, said the organization has up to 3 years to utilize the funding that is specifically intended to support businesses outside of the retail and service industries. That means beneficiaries could include businesses focused on technology, healthcare, agribusiness, manufacturing, or small batch production.

According to a press release, the funding will allow C-PEG to serve more entrepreneurs, provide



Rhonda Hodges (far left), Vice President, Workforce, Economic & Community Development at Patrick & Henry Community College; Carolyn Byrd of Imagination Lavender Farm; Kendall Davis of BAG Productions; Clay Campbell of the Campbell Family Group; and Lisa Watkins, president of the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce at 2021’s Startup MHC awards ceremony.

additional training, and make more investments in viable business concepts.

Since its inception in 2015, the initiative has graduated 231 individuals from its training program and awarded 35 businesses with over \$204,750 in cash and in-kind funding. In turn, those businesses have created over \$1,450,000 in new capital invest-

ment and created 125 new jobs in Martinsville and Henry County, the release stated.

Cocoa Trail Chocolates, Books and Crannies book shop, CharmCat Creative LLC, and Imagination Lavender Farm are among the successful locally owned businesses to benefit from the program in recent years.

Rabies concern reported in Danville

To protect the health of residents and visitors, the Pittsylvania-Danville Health District is issuing a notice about a dog that may be positive for rabies at or around 649 Jefferson St. in Danville.

On December 29, 2021, a dog was reported to have bitten a woman in the vicinity of 649 Jefferson St. in Danville. It is unknown if the dog has rabies. It cannot be found. Since the dog cannot be found and confined, the Pittsylvania - Danville Health District asks anyone who may have come into contact with or seen a dog matching the description of a black and white pit bull mix in the area of 649 Jefferson St. to call the health department at (434) 766-9828.

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. Rabies can be prevented in cats, dogs, ferrets and some livestock with a rabies vaccination. Rabies kills almost any mammal or human that gets sick from it. The rabies virus is mainly in the saliva and brain tissue of rabid animals. It can be transmitted through a bite or by getting saliva or brain tissue in a wound or in the eye or mouth.

Steps to the Spread of Rabies:

To protect pets and their owners from rabies, Virginia law requires that all dogs and cats four months of age and older be vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian, and that vaccinations be kept current.

The Pittsylvania-Danville Health District is reminding the public to avoid contact with bats, feral cats, stray dogs and wild animals, particularly in the area where the dog bite occurred. See

additional precautions below.

Additional Steps to Protect Against Rabies Exposure:

- Do not feed stray animals. Avoid wild animals, especially raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks. Feed your pets indoors and do not let them wander.
- Make sure your pets are vaccinated against rabies and their shots are up-to-date. By law, all dogs, cats and ferrets must be vaccinated against rabies.
- Teach children to avoid contact with wild animals and pets they are not familiar with.
- Do not handle sick, injured or dead animals.
- Keep wild animals out of homes by capping chimneys with screens and blocking openings in attics, cellars and porches. Ensure trash cans have tight fitting lids.
- If you observe any stray animals in the area, contact the Danville Animal Control for assistance at 434-799-5111. Please do not try to trap or handle stray and wild animals.
- If you are bitten by a wild or stray animal, do not panic. Wash the wound(s) thoroughly with warm soapy water and contact animal control, your doctor or the Pittsylvania-Danville Health District for further recommendations.

For additional information, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-epidemiology/animal-contact-human-health/ or call the Pittsylvania-Danville Health District at (434) 766-9828.

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:
www.springlakeauctions.com.

Please feel free to call us at
(540) 297-1707.

We appreciate your business!
1069 SICKLE COURT, MONETA, VA 24121

Submit your community news and photos to newsreporter@theenterprise.net

OPINION

A statement from the CDC

Hello, it's me, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As you may have heard, the CDC has recently changed its recommended protocols regarding COVID-19. If you test positive for COVID-19, we now recommend that you stay home for five days. If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after five days, you may leave your home. We ask that you also continue to wear a mask around others for five additional days.

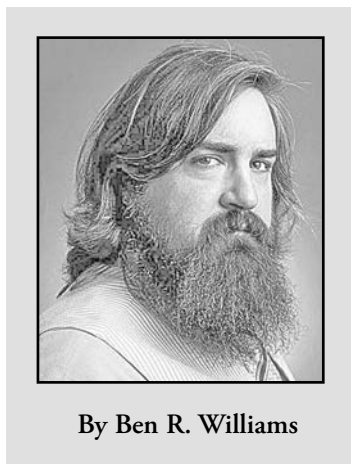
I realize that to many, these new guidelines may seem unusual. Not long ago, wasn't the recommendation to stay at home for at least ten days and then another three after your symptoms subsided? Wasn't the recommendation also to wear a mask whether you had COVID or not? Doesn't it seem like these new protocols are surprisingly

lax?

You're absolutely right, so please allow me to explain how we arrived at these new protocols:

Frankly, we've had it with you people.

Now, I know that may seem harsh, but put yourself in my shoes. Imagine working your entire life to not only become a respected doctor, but to become the Director of the CDC. Now imagine that a deadly pandemic has swept the planet, and it's your job to guide the people to safety. And now imagine that after working hard to provide the American people with sober, level-headed guidance on how to best avoid contracting and spreading this disease, a quarter of the people argue with you about basic germ theory that's been accepted for more than 150 years while another quarter insist the disease isn't even real.



By Ben R. Williams

What are you supposed to do with that? Tell me.

Meanwhile, you've got all these industries raging about how we're cutting into their workforce by advocating for basic medical science, and you've got businesses forcing employees to come in and make sure the trains run on time

whether they're connected to a ventilator or not.

And THEN, you've got people complaining about how they're so sick of all this COVID nonsense and they're ready for things to return to normal despite the fact that they NEVER stopped acting like things were normal and spent every weekend going to massive super-spreader events like Sturgis so they could have the once-in-a-lifetime experience of a guy named Catfish sneezing directly into their open mouth.

So yeah, if you catch COVID, stay home for five days. What the heck, make it three days. If you want, just walk directly into an old folks' home and cough right in an old man's eyeballs. What do I care? It doesn't matter what I recommend, you people are going to do whatever you want anyway.

"bUt I dOn'T wAnT tO gEt JaBbed!" Good Lord, it's three shots. They barely hurt. You ever seen the size of the needles

on an ECMO machine? You could drive a Buick through them! Of course, you need big needles for a machine that pumps all the blood out of your body, adds oxygen to it, and then pumps it back in. But I guess that's preferable to having a sweet little old lady at the drug store give you a tiny pinprick while calling you "sugar."

"bUt YoU cAn StIll gEt CoViD iF yOu'Re VaXxEd!" Yeah, and me and Mike Tyson can both throw a punch, but his will knock your head clean off. Why am I even still arguing? It doesn't matter. No one cares. Logic and reason are dead. I need a drink.

Anyway, stay home for five days or whatever if you catch COVID. I give up. Here's one last CDC recommendation: cross the street if you see me coming, you filthy plague rats.

Love,
The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Isernia from page 1

smooth transition of their care. Letters went out to all patients last week and more information can be found on our website" at <http://sovahphysicians.com/sovah-internal-medicine---martinsville-suite-201>, according to the statement.

The group directly affected by Isernia's departure is not silent—his former patients.

Trina Wells, who said she was treated by Isernia for at least 20 years, started a Facebook group, JusticeForDrJimmy, soon after she heard about the issue from a friend.

The news, she said, "spread like wild-fire."

And the group, which has since been made private, grew quickly. It currently has more than 1,400 members.

"There's this huge outcry," said Wells. "He's not just a doctor to most of us, he's (Isernia's) our friend. He's taken care of our family members when they're on their deathbed. He's come to family members' homes when they can't come to him. He is as passionate about his patients as we are about him."

Wells said she considers both Isernia and his wife family.

She fondly recalled a call from Michelle (or Chelle, as she calls her) when Wells' mother passed away. She said that Chelle just wanted to hear her voice, to see how she was doing.

"How many people would do that," Wells asked, and added the Isernias both attended the visitation.

"They showed up together. He had worked all day, was still in a lab coat, but he came," she said.

As the creator of the Facebook page, Wells said she has become the public face of the movement to get "justice for Dr. Jimmy." People within the group, former patients of Isernia's, have reached out to her with questions about their care. The predominate concerns are where they will be able to find a new primary care physician and whether they will still be able to get prescriptions refilled.

"One lady called me just absolutely bawling," she said, illustrating the level of concern and uncertainty the situation has created among patients.

Wells said the situation was not handled properly, in her opinion.

"If they knew they were going to terminate Dr. Isernia, it looks like they would have assigned a physician" to take his place during the transition, she said.

The webpage linked in Sovah's statement says that the hospital is "taking the appropriate steps to notify patients as we work to secure new primary care providers for the office. In the interim, to ensure there is no disruption in your care, our office will continue to provide chronic care management and medication management, as applicable, through February 10."

Wells said that while she does not know how many patients Isernia was treating, she estimated the number exceeded 1,000.



A rally to support of Dr. James Isernia recently was held along Commonwealth Boulevard, organized through the Facebook group JusticeforDrJimmy, which has more than 1,400 members.

Many of Isernia's supporters participated in a rally last week. Wells estimated 120 people stood along Commonwealth Boulevard, the main thoroughfare leading to Sovah's Martinsville site, in 20-degree temperatures, waving signs to show their support of their doctor.

Without an official reason for Isernia's separation from Sovah, Wells said she has heard "plenty of rumors," including that he refused to get the COVID-19 vaccine which, she said, is untrue.

Wells said she also heard that the action might have stemmed from over-prescribing narcotics, though she said she does not believe that is accurate either.

That rumor stems from a 2020 order from the Virginia Board of Medicine formally reprimanding Isernia for violating Virginia code and "the Board's

Regulations Governing the Prescribing of Opioids and Buprenorphine ... from approximately March 2017 through January 2019."

That order was signed by Isernia in May 2020, and by July, a letter was issued acknowledging Isernia's compliance with the consent order and lifting the terms and conditions placed on his license.

While questions abound about the circumstances around Isernia's departure from Sovah, what is crystal clear is the passion he inspires in his patients, as evidenced by the daily postings in the social media group.

Wells said the outpouring of support came as no surprise.

Isernia is "a hero to a lot of us," she said.

Sovah Health from page 3

have to make this response. We feel that our responsibility as a hospital is to provide care for all of our patients but unfortunately, to take care of a few that are spiking and have increased need, primarily those with COVID, we are required to reduce our services for those who are elective and not urgent," Larson said.

He emphasized that both facilities remain capable of caring for urgent and emergent cases, such as those experiencing heart attacks or strokes.

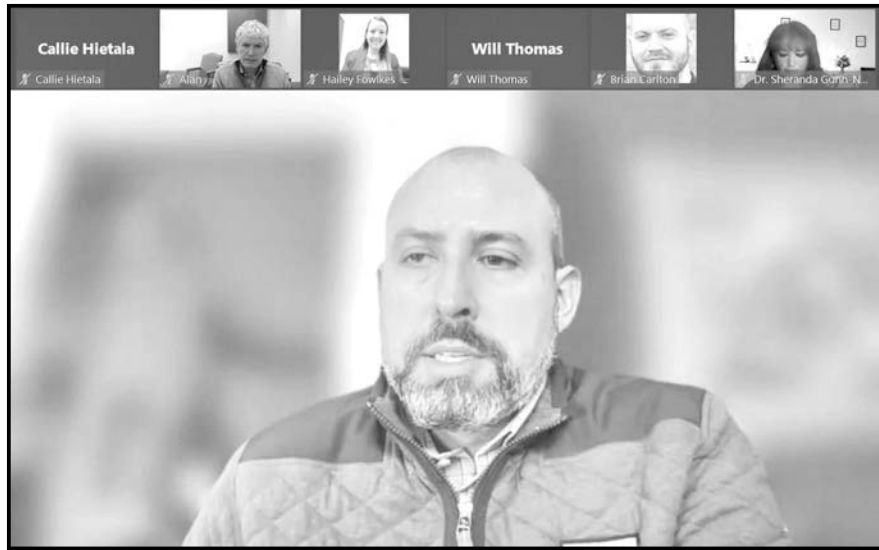
Spencer Thomas, CEO of Sovah Health-Martinsville, said "it's been probably more than a year since we've had to do this on the Martinsville campus, but we feel like it's the right and appropriate thing to do to make sure we have the resources to take care of our patients."

"It's unfortunate that we must again take this action to pause elective surgeries," said Dr. Sheranda Gunn-Nolan,

Sovah Health Market Chief Medical Officer. "We would also like to acknowledge the tireless work our team has provided to what equates to over 600 days of a global pandemic. Together, we will get through this."

Larson said that the increased pressures on medical staff since the beginning of the pandemic are causing a great deal of frustration. He recently read a report indicating that more than 500,000 healthcare workers across the country have left their jobs out of frustration.

"We would appreciate some help from the community so we can do our jobs better and not have to continue to focus on taking care of COVID patients," he said.



Spencer Thomas, CEO of Sovah Health-Martinsville, said he was disappointed by the level of community spread of COVID-19, which necessitated the pause in elective and non-urgent surgical cases.

Becerra earns high honors

Fabiola Vazquez Becerra, of Martinsville, is one of 1,024 students who earned a spot on the Dean's List at Shenandoah University for the Fall 2021 semester.

To be considered for the Dean's List, students must complete at least 12 semester hours and earn a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Becerra also is one of 428 students at Shenandoah University who made the President's List for the Fall 2021 semester. Students who achieved this prestigious academic recognition attained a grade point average of at least 3.90.

Collinsville native named to SRU's fall 2021 dean's list

Elizabeth Ferguson, of Collinsville, was recognized on Slippery Rock University's dean's list for the fall 2021 semester. The dean's list consists of SRU under-

graduate students who earned an adjusted semester grade-point average of 3.5 or higher, based on a schedule of at least 12 newly attempted and earned credits.

Akers earns a spot on the Dean's List at CCU

Nearly 2,500 undergraduate students at Coastal Carolina University were named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2021 semester, including Tyler Akers, an Intelligence & National Security Studies Pre-Major major from Martinsville.

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COVID Spike from page 1

Total # of Employees	New Staff Cases for 12/17-1/7	Total # of Students	New Student Cases for 12/17-1/7
1191	56	6909	174

Data from the HCPS COVID-19 dashboard indicates that 56 new cases have been reported among school staff between Dec. 17 and Jan. 7. In that same period, 174 new student cases were reported.

demically,” Schools Superintendent Sandy Strayer said. “We had very few students and staff members that were out with COVID exposure or positive test results. Obviously, in our community, it’s spreading rampantly right now. Our numbers are very high.

“Exploding” would be the most accurate word to describe the sharp increase, Strayer said, adding that she hopes “once we get back in school, we can get our numbers to go down.”

Although more buildings in the system reported cases Thursday than on Monday, Hatchett said “each building’s case numbers are lower than they were on Monday and Tuesday. We know that our mitigation strategies do work.”

When students are in school, Hatchett said they are encouraged to wash their hands. Additionally, buildings are regularly sanitized, and COVID protocols are followed.

“It is helping to alleviate some of” the spread, she said.

An important part of the school system’s plan to mitigate the spread is a robust testing program, Strayer said.

Hatchett said the division has free, self-administered Binax COVID tests for staff, students, and their families. Anyone who is symptomatic and would like to use one of the tests may call the school’s nurse line to receive one. Test results must be reported to the respective school.

The tests are paid for through the grant-funded Virginia School Screening Testing for Assurance (ViSSTA) testing program.

Strayer credited the testing kits with helping to keep caseloads down.

“That’s why, I think, when we were leaving school in December, we had so few cases and we really had a handle on it. We’re hoping to get back to that,” she said.

The school system is preparing to order batch of tests, Hatchett said,

and told the board it received “quite a number” of tests for the fall, but many were not distributed. As a result, “far fewer” were ordered than officials now believe will be needed, hence the need for a second order.

Hatchett explained that the school system will phase in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) updated guidelines, which now reflect a 5-day quarantine period “for certain positive cases or exposures.”

The new guidelines will begin applying to staff the week of Jan. 10 and to students the following week, she added.

Anyone who has gotten a booster or who received a COVID-19 vaccine in the last 6 months would be asked to quarantine for five days versus the 10 to 14 days for anyone who is unvaccinated, Hatchett said. Those who quarantine for five days must stringently follow mask-wearing guidelines upon their return.

In other matters, the board:
*Elected Thomas Aufer of the Blackberry District and Teddy Martin of the Reed Creek District chairman and vice-chairman. (See related story.)

*Adopted the 2022 Code of Conduct for school board members.

*Appointed Dr. David Scott, assistant superintendent for operations and administrative services, as superintendent designee to attend meetings of the board in the absence of the superintendent.

*Set its meeting dates for 2022: Feb. 3 (9 a.m.), March 3 (6 p.m.), April 7 (9 a.m.), May 5 (6 p.m.), June 9 (9 a.m.), July 14 (9 a.m.), Aug. 4 (9 a.m.), Sept. 1 (6 p.m.), Oct. 6 (6 p.m.), Nov. 3 (9 a.m.), Dec. 1 (6 p.m.), Jan. 5, 2023 (6 p.m.).

*Read a proclamation from Gov. Ralph Northam recognizing Jan. 8-14 as Virginia School Principal Appreciation Week.

*Cancelled the Jan. 20 meeting for public hearing on budget priori-

ties. and rescheduled it for 5 p.m. on Feb. 17.

*Approved the consent agenda.

*Approved 2022-2023 school year calendar.

*Approved the 2022-2023 high school and middle school programs of study.

*Awarded a \$244,923 Intranet services contract to GCR Telecommunications, Inc. The funds qualify for a 90 percent (\$220,430.70) reimbursement from federal e-Rate funding, meaning the school division is responsible for \$24,492.30, which will be paid through a FY22 Technology State Reimbursement grant.

*Awarded a \$56,400 internet services contract to GCR Telecommunications, Inc. The funds qualify for a 90 percent (\$50,760) reimbursement from federal e-Rate funding. The school division is responsible for \$5,640 which will be paid through a FY22 Technology State Reimbursement grant.

*Approved a School Bus Driver Incentive Grant Program funded through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (CRRSA Act ESSER II). The school system is eligible for an additional estimated \$50,000 of reimbursable funds to use for recruitment and retention of bus drivers.

Scott said the grant allows for a one-time retention bonus for bus drivers. A second part of the grant will pay third-party trainers for people coming to them to earn a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), while a third part will fund sign-on bonuses for those who come to the school system to earn a CDL, if they are hired as a driver by the school system. Currently, Scott said, that while some come to the schools for CDL licensing,

Axton Elementary	12	33
Axton Annex	0	0
Bassett High	37	84
Campbell Court Elementary	12	28
Career Academy	3	3
Center for Community Learning	2	3
Central Office	3	3
Drewry Mason Elementary	9	23
Facilities Maintenance	1	1
FC Middle	22	66
GW Carver Elementary	14	48
Laurel Park Middle	28	71
Magna Vista High	39	89
Meadow View Elementary	22	67
Mt Olivet Elementary	6	20
Outside Programs (MMS, TDP)	0	2
Pupil Transportation	3	4
Rich Acres Elementary	7	31
Sanville Elementary	4	23
Stanleytown Elementary	6	30

The dashboard was updated on Jan. 7 to reflect the number of COVID cases (left column) and quarantines (right column) reported between Dec. 17 and Jan. 7. The dashboard also keeps a running tally of total cases and quarantines since Nov. 6, 2020.

“that does not materialize as a hire for us.” He said the biggest cost to a perspective driver is the time spent earning the CDL.

The appropriation will be forwarded to the Henry County Board of Supervisors.

*Approved an additional appropriation of \$294,248 to the School Nutrition budget for USDA Emergency Operation Costs. The request will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

*Approved the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) grant of \$42,450.82. The funds are specifically targeted to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

*Heard Strayer’s monthly highlights report.

School Board from page 1

renovations of the G.W. Carver Elementary cafeteria.

Board members also will work to address various items on its 2022 legislative agenda, Aufer said.

Martin added that will largely be achieved through advocacy at scheduled events during the year.

He said there also will be several questions the board and the school division must grapple with in the coming year, including how the issue with the county’s use of its 1 percent sales tax increase is resolved. As previously reported, the Henry County Board of Supervisors voted to use some of the proceeds from the voter-approved tax hike to pay down previously incurred school debt from past construction rather than putting the full amount toward new capital improvement projects, as Virginia’s attorney general recently advised it was intended.

Martin said he hopes that issue will be resolved in the schools’ favor “so we could take care of some of these big capital improvement projects that our schools need,” such as a new roof at Laurel Park and field houses for athletics.

The ongoing issue of reversion presents a whole host of questions, namely if it will still occur and, if so, to what extent the school systems might the school systems be included in the process, Martin said.

He noted the school system is still addressing the “explosion” of COVID-19 cases and all the uncertainties that presents.

“How do you manage safe operation of schools and the pandemic learning loss? Social-emotional learning,” Martin asked, and added that the number one priority

is to make sure the board and the schools are caring for students’ physical and emotional wellbeing.

“I don’t think there’s a bigger, more important time for what the schools do. We are the home away from home for many of our students, so we have to try to address those issues,” Martin said.

One of the issues concerning parents during the pandemic is the current school mask mandate. Parents have spoken both for and against masking in schools and previous meetings of the school board. This new year brings with it a new governor, Glenn Youngkin.

Part of his campaign was a promise that on the first day of his administration, he would lift the mask mandate for Virginia’s schools.

If Youngkin “comes in with a mandate to take the masks off, then I would think the board would do that without a bit of a problem,” Aufer said.

However, “we have to remember that it’s not just those that are coming to school, but it’s also the parents and other people that may come into contact with COVID” so, given the uncertainties, “it may have to be that it is by choice as to whether or not to wear the mask,” he said.

The VSBA believes the issue should be a matter of local control, Martin said.

Explaining why a statewide mandate may not be the right solution for every school district, Martin said, “Virginia’s such a diverse, huge state.”

Particularly now, when vaccines are readily available, Martin said he believes masks should be a matter of choice, as should vaccination itself. He said that while he

strongly encourages people to get vaccinated and boosted, and to wear masks, the notion of telling someone that must take any of those actions gives him pause.

“If you want to take these protective measures, you have the absolute right to do so and we will support you,” Martin said. “Conversely, if you don’t want to, and as long as you’re not harming someone else directly, I’m okay with that.”

While he believes in giving parents and others the freedom to make personal choices for themselves and their children while navigating the pandemic, Martin added that “freedom also comes with responsibility.”

Limited free drive thru testing to be offered in Martinsville

The West Piedmont Health District on Monday announced a series of community testing events to provide free Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing for COVID-19 to increase availability in response to public demand.

“The PCR test is a diagnostic test recommended for persons who have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or are asymptomatic with a history of exposure to a COVID-19 case,” said Dr. Kerry Gateley, District Director. “Conditions who have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 should seek testing immediately. Also, any person who is asymptomatic, regardless of its vaccination status, and has a history of

exposure to COVID-19 case(s) can seek testing.”

The events will be held at the Martinsville National Guard Armory parking lot at 315 Commonwealth Blvd., on the following dates and times.

- January 19 12:30 - 4 p.m.
- January 26 12:30 - 4 p.m.
- February 2 12:30 - 4 p.m.
- February 9 12:30 - 4 p.m.
- February 16 12:30 - 4 p.m.
- February 23 12:30 - 4 p.m.

The tests are free of charge and limited to the first 100 people.

To learn more about COVID-19 testing, visit the VDH COVID-19 Testing webpage at vdh.virginia.gov. For questions about the testing events,

contact Gloria Martinez at the Henry-Martinsville Health Department (gloria.martinez@vdh.virginia.gov).

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

A	S	K	S	D	E	C	S	B	I	C				
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Call center contract addresses communication during power outages

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Martinsville's Electric Department is contracting with a call center to interact with customers, particularly during power outages.

Members of Martinsville City Council learned about the new service from Durwin Joyce, director of the city's electric department at a Jan. 11 meeting.

Joyce said the department has contracted with Daupler to operate a new after-hours call center to respond to the influx of calls received from customers during a power outage.

He expects the service to be operational by March or April.

Joyce said his department knows that residents often experience issues getting through when calling during an outage. The new system will allow two-way communication with the customer, who must opt in to use the free service. Customers will be able to call, text, and even send photos, and the department will be able to respond directly to that customer.

Those who opt in will receive any relevant notifications in the event of an outage, Joyce said, but cautioned the notifications would not be instant.

Sometimes, he said, his department begins receiving calls from customers asking what happened and when power will be restored mere minutes after an outage occurs.

"Five minutes after it (outage) happened, I don't have an answer for that," Joyce said.

It takes time for the department to gather data and to provide information to customers, Joyce said. The department's ability to convey accurate information depends on several circumstances, including the cause of the outage. If the issue is something like a downed tree, and there is a single point of failure, the department will be able to

share information and an estimated restoration time more quickly.

However, he said, if an outage occurs in the evening, it takes time for a crew to assemble, get to the site, and assess the damage. Even then, the crew may need to call in additional members or a supervisor to fully assess the situation.

"It can still easily be 1 to 2 hours before we can send out a notice that says, 'we estimate your power to be restored by 8 p.m. tonight,'" Joyce said, adding that the new service will provide the capability to at least send a notice to affected customers, assuring them the city is aware of an outage and is working to assess the damage.

Mayor Kathy Lawson said the new system was a "100 percent better system than what we currently have." She expects residents will appreciate having a direct way to communicate when the power is out.

More details about the system will be sent to the city's electric customers via inserts in a future utility bill.

In other matters, the council:

*Recognized city employees who are eligible for service awards for Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2021, including: Christopher Sigman, Refuse Collection (5 years); Jayme Clark and David Koger, Police Department (5 years each); Joshua Lawson (5 years) and Wayne Moore (10 years), Wastewater Plant; Emily Tongue, Utility Billing (5 years); Brian Mays, Central Garage (5 years); Rodney Pritchett and Ashley Duncan, Sheriff's Office (5 years each); and James Hopkins, Fire Department (20 years.)

*Heard from Assistant Director of Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services, April Evans, about the CarePortal project, which will be implemented soon.

*Approved the consent agenda and the minutes for the Dec. 14 meeting.



Martinsville Electric Department Director Durwin Joyce told city council that the department has contracted with Daupler, a call center company, to implement a new two-way communication system with customers affected by power outages. The new service is expected to go live in March or April.

Science of Flight exhibit prepares to soar

Humans may rule the air today, but our ability to take flight wouldn't have been possible without studying the first masters of the air: birds, bats, reptiles and insects. On Saturday, January 22, the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) will unveil The Science of Flight, an original, multilingual, special exhibit providing visitors an in-depth look into the many different methods animals take to the air and how studying the animal kingdom provided the basis for humans' ability to take flight. To celebrate opening day, the museum is hosting The Science of Flight Festival, featuring additional, one-day-only, flight-themed offerings, including live birds of prey.

Featuring a multitude of scientific specimens from the museum's collections of birds, mammals, insects and fossils, the exhibit explores a variety of topics ranging from the aerodynamics of flight to the unique wing mechanics of different animal species, both living and extinct.

"We hope visitors will leave with a better understanding of the science behind animal flight, as well as a greater appreciation for the amazing diversity of animals that can fly," said VMNH Curator of Mammalogy Dr. Nancy Moncrief, one of several museum curators who helped develop the exhibit.

While much of the exhibit focuses on animals of today, VMNH Assistant Curator of Paleontology Dr. Adam Pritchard lent his expertise during the development of the exhibit to make sure

fly and gliding creatures long since extinct get their proper due.

"Powered flight and gliding have left their traces in the fossil record of the past 300 million years," said Pritchard. "Virginia is actually the home of one of the strangest gliders in the fossil record; a long-necked reptile with slender ribs that supported gliding wings. Named Mecistotrachelos, this glider is only known from the Solite Quarry site southeast of Danville, Virginia."

Insects play a prominent role in the exhibit, with VMNH Associate Curator of Recent Invertebrates Dr. Kal Ivanov not only providing fascinating specimens from the museum's insect collections, but also his expertise of the insect world to supply visitors with compelling realities about insect flight. Among other facts, visitors will learn that insects are the only modern invertebrates (animals without a vertebral column) that have the ability to fly and that, today, the majority of the estimated 1,000,000 described species of insects can fly.

With accessibility in mind, The Science of Flight will also mark the first VMNH special exhibit to be featured in both English and Spanish.

"The museum is proud to offer The Science of Flight in both languages as part of our ongoing efforts to achieve greater levels of accessibility throughout the museum experience," said VMNH Deputy Director Ryan Barber. "Thanks to a grant provided by the Harvest Foundation and United Way of Henry County & Martinsville, this self-guided

exhibit will include text displays explaining each aspect of the exhibit to visitors in both English and Spanish."

In celebration of opening day, the museum is hosting The Science of Flight Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, January 22, with special one-day-only, flight-themed offerings, including live birds of prey.

"It's been two years since we unveiled our last special exhibit and we're looking forward to offering museum visitors and members a fresh new experience with The Science of Flight," said Barber. "While we believe the exhibit will be an experience in and of itself, we're excited to provide attendees with an additional lineup of flight-themed offerings to celebrate opening day."

Planned festival offerings include:
Live birds of prey (falcon and barn owls) with licensed Master Falconer and Raptor Expert Robb Herbst
Balloon animals
Food trucks (lunch and snack items available for purchase)
A variety of flight-themed activities and crafts, including a maker space mini-parachute creation activity
Special flight-themed displays presented by museum curators and researchers
Animal flight-themed books and activities hosted by Blue Ridge Regional Library
A free giveaway for the first 500 children in attendance
Specifically for adults, the museum is offering "The Flight" from 1 to 4 p.m. Featuring Twin Creeks Distillery and

Mountain Valley Brewing, both entities will be providing a limited number of 3 ounce pours of their select products to visitors 21 and older. Additional fees will apply.

To attend, VMNH is requiring visitors to wear face coverings while inside the museum. Visitors will need to provide their own face coverings.

Admission to the special exhibit and opening day festival is included in the price of general museum admission, which is \$10 for adults ages 18-59, and \$5 for children and youth ages 3-17, as well as seniors 60+ and college students. Admission is free for children under 3, VMNH Members, and members of ASTC Passport participating institutions.

Through the Institute of Museum and Library Services' Museum's for All program and additional funding provided by Hooker Furnishings, museum admission is also free for all EBT cardholders now through April 2022. To qualify for this free admission program, visitors must present their EBT card and accompanying photo ID at the museum box office.

The Science of Flight exhibit and opening day festival are made possible thanks to the support of Carter Bank & Trust, The Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, the United Way of Henry County & Martinsville, and the Harvest Foundation.

To learn more, visit www.vmnh.net/exhibits.

Submit your
community news
and photos to
newsreporter@theenterprise.net

OBITUARIES

Bobby Gene McFadin

Bobby Gene McFadin, 89, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away January 10, 2022. He was born April 21, 1932, in Franklin, Kentucky to the late Robert and Dossie McFadin.

Bobby, aka BG, Dad, Daddy, Pa or Granddaddy, is survived by the love of his life, Cheryl C. McFadin and daughters, Ann Faddis (Mac Driskill), Laura McFadin, and Tonya Carter (Gil). He also had 5 grandchildren Nikki and Will Faddis (Sara), Josh McFadin, and Jessica and Justin Morris as well as 4 great grandchildren, Isaiah and Briyana, Amelia and Wyatt. He is also survived by his sister-in-law and dear friends Betty and Bobby Branch.

In the 3rd grade, Bobby moved to Martinsville from Seaford Delaware with his family when his father was transferred by DuPont. He graduated from Martinsville High School and enlisted in the National Guard in which he was honorably discharged in 1961. Bobby too worked at DuPont as a maintenance supervisor and retired



with over 30 years of service. He was also a member of Starling Avenue Baptist Church.

Like his mother, Bobby loved the outdoors and all nature had to offer. B.G. enjoyed tinkering with projects, a competitive game of dominos, playing games on his I-Pad, weekly board meetings with friends at McDonald's and splitting a bottle of beer with Squirrel. He enjoyed his family, cracking jokes and making funny faces to the little ones. He was a special person who never met a stranger and was always willing to help those in need.

A graveside service was held at 11 a.m. on Friday, January 14, in Roselawn Burial Park. The family requests memorial donations be made to the Starling Avenue Baptist Church or Mountain Valley Hospice, Martinsville.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, VA.

To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckeeastonemartinsville.com.

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Troop participates in Coats project



Girl Scout Brownie Troop 9384, which meets at Carlisle School, sponsored a service project and collected gently used and new coats, hats, mittens and gloves to donate to Debra Buchanan's coat drive, Coats4Kids. Buchanan visited the troop at their meeting and talked to them about the project and its importance. This troop was formed in October 2021 and consists of 12 enthusiastic girls and two leaders. Pictured (front row) is, Natalia Sharp, Lilly Birkheimer, Zoey Scott, Josie Farrar, Adelina Farrar, Lucy McClain. Second row, Shreya Suther, Sanvi Suther, Debra Buchanan, Julia Bowles, Zara Banerjee, Ally Lacy, Sally Vaughn. Leaders Meredith Vaughn and Susan Henderson are not pictured. (Contributed photo.)

Kiwanis support school with donation



The Kiwanis Club of Bassett donated \$250 at its January 6 meeting to Campbell Court Elementary School for equipment to be used in the Autism Room at the school. Bassett club member Craig McCroskey, left, is shown presenting the check to Michelle Fulcher, right, from the school.

Marketing funds available for exporters of Virginia forestry, wood products

Virginia forestry and wood product companies are encouraged to apply for a program that will provide up to 50 percent reimbursement of costs associated with promoting their brand in foreign markets. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Office of International Marketing is pleased to announce that funding through the Southern United States Trade Association's 50 percent CostShare program is now available to all Virginia forestry and wood product companies.

Virginia forestry and wood product companies must apply for the 50% CostShare program annually. Program participants can receive reimbursement for up to 50% of eligible international marketing expenses aimed at increasing their exports. Eligible reimbursement activities for the promotion of a business to foreign buyers, distributors, consumers, and press include advertising, in-store sampling, exhibiting at international trade shows, and much more. Additional information is available in the 50% CostShare Program manual and within this pre-recorded webinar.

VDACS sponsors exhibits at several international forest product trade shows throughout the year and also has international trade representatives available to provide on-site support to exhibiting companies. The 50 percent CostShare program can assist Virginia forestry companies with expenses related to these trade shows. VDACS will sponsor booth space at the following trade shows in 2022:

- Dubai WoodShow, March 15-17, 2022
- International Furniture Manufacturing Component Exhibition, Indonesia, September 21-24, 2022
- VietnamWood, October 18-21, 2022

Virginia forestry and wood product companies that are interested in participating in any of these shows may contact Amy Miller, VDACS' International Marketing Specialist, at amy.miller@vdacs.virginia.gov.

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COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **January 26, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of a Special Use Permit for the following case:

Case S-22-01 Rocky Ford Solar Energy, LLC

A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-1801 through 21-1808; and 21-302 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of a Large Scale Solar Energy Facility. The properties are located generally in the north east vicinity of Mountain Valley Road and Dees Road, and along Summerset Drive and Rufus Road. The proposal is to develop a 90MW facility covering approximately 378-acres, in the Iriswood District and shown on Tax Maps 46.1/4,7A;45.3/79,79A; 34.7/24,25,25A,26; 46.1(1)/7X; and 46.1/5. The properties are zoned Agricultural District A-1. The application for this request may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Lee H. Clark, AICP
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

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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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DMV seeks participants for new highway safety campaign

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) seeks Virginians willing to share their stories for a new highway safety campaign aspiring to persuade unsafe drivers to change their behaviors behind the wheel.



“Stories of heartbreak and loss are never easy to share, but many are willing to tell theirs to try to prevent future tragedies from occurring,” said DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb, the Governor’s

The campaign centers around four brief videos on important highway safety topics: drunk driving prevention, seat belt safety, speeding prevention, and distracted driving awareness. Virginians who have been affected by a crash involving one of these factors and are willing to share their story are asked to fill out a form at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf0BL29BNTm4Jt4dG2JdEqX4mMo-xyjLNVaDnFvnA4rmvfA9g/view-form>. All submissions will be carefully considered for possible participation.

Highway Safety Representative. “We hope that by seeing and hearing how unsafe drivers so drastically affect other people’s lives, other drivers will be compelled to do the right thing - buckling up and following a safe speed, and never driving impaired or distracted. Simple, purposeful actions save lives.”

Videos will be shared on social media and TZDVA.org, the Commonwealth’s highway safety website, as well as promoted through a news media campaign and other tactics.

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