



Council member Danny Turner, far right, called the recently-passed reversion legislation a political trick and said that “we have to stand up for what’s right” in discussion about whether the council should retain an additional lawyer to challenge the constitutionality of the referendum bills. Council ultimately approved the measure in a 3-2 vote.

## City to challenge reversion legislation in Supreme Court

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

The reversion issue may not rest in the hands of Martinsville voters after all, despite the recent passage of legislation in the General Assembly to that effect. Martinsville City Council voted 3-2 on Tuesday to retain attorney William Hurd, the former first solicitor general of Virginia, to “file appropriate actions with the Virginia Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of the referendum legislation.”

The motion was made by Mayor Kathy Lawson, with a second by Council Member Chad Martin. Council Member Danny Turner joined the two in voting in favor of the motion, while Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles and Council Member Tammy

Pearson voted against the measure.

During discussion, Pearson said she was distraught at the motion. “We’ve already spent over \$800,000 for our reversion attorneys, yet now we’re hiring one in addition, and I truly do not understand why our city council would fight against its own citizens’ right to vote for or against reversion because these are the people we’re representing and I do believe we should give them a voice.”

Turner said, “a Virginia governor once said, ‘no man’s life or liberty is safe as long as the Virginia General Assembly is in session,’ and there is nothing truer than this pertaining to Martinsville.”

The city “has gone through that legal process in good faith only to have the legislature and

See **Challenge Reversion**, page 4



Supervisor Garrett Dillard (center), called for increased transparency in county job searches and public posting of open positions during Tuesday’s meeting of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.

## Dillard calls for transparency, public posting of county jobs

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

Henry County Supervisor Garrett Dillard called for more transparency in the county’s job search procedures during Tuesday’s regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

His remarks come after Joyce Staples, of the Blackberry District, spoke at last month’s meeting about the lack of transparency in the process that led to the selection of Dale Wagoner as the next county administrator

after the retirement of Tim Hall later this year. She spoke, too, about the lack of diversity in Henry County leadership. Wagoner will be another in a long line of white men who have held the top spot in county administration, and no people of color currently hold leadership positions within the county staff.

Dillard, of the Iriswood District, recalled that when he ran for office, “one of my platforms was to empower citizens through transparency.”

See **Transparency**, page 5

## Proposal would increase refuse fees, holds the line on taxes

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

The city’s proposed \$108,757,787 budget for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 includes cost of living increases for employees, \$6.17 million for the school division, a 7 percent increase in all refuse collection fees, and no tax increase.

When presenting the proposal at Tuesday’s City Council meeting, City Manager Leon Towarnicki said the total represents an increase of \$10,060,248 over the current budget. He added that it maintains reserves in all utilities, except for electric, and a 10

percent reserve in the general fund, in keeping with city policy.

The proposed general fund budget for the upcoming fiscal year is \$37,406,307, compared to the FY22 general fund budget of \$34,218,454, and the FY22 revised budget of \$35,545,411.

The general fund revenue before transfers, he said, is projected to be \$30,540,346 (compared to FY22’s \$28,975,888), from taxes, fees, recovered costs, grants, and state funding which, he said, increased by 5.4 percent.

The city’s unassisted  
See **Proposal**, page 5



City Manager Leon Towarnicki shared the city’s proposed budget with city council on Tuesday night. The total proposed budget of \$108,757,787 represents an increase of \$10,060,248 over last year. While it includes no tax hikes, staff did propose a 7 percent increase on all refuse collection fees.

## Hiking, biking trails open at future Mayo River State Park



Flanked on each side by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff, Brian Williams, Virginia program coordinator of the Dan River Basin Association (second from left); Tyler Carter, chairman of the Eco Ambassador Council; the DCR Interim Deputy Director of Administration and Finance Laura Ellis; Fairy Stone State Park Manager Adam Layman; and Henry County Administrator Tim Hall cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of 3.9 miles of public access trails at the site of the future Mayo River State Park in Virginia.

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

The future site of Virginia’s newest state park in Henry County is officially open to the public.

State and local officials along with other community leaders and volunteers all gathered at the end of Pratt Road in Spencer for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the area’s newest outdoor asset on April 22, Earth Day.

Over the last year and a half, park staff and volunteers worked to convert existing farm roads into 3.9-miles of multi-use trails which can be accessed

from a newly-built parking lot. The Mayo River Trail runs 1.9-miles along the property’s main road, the Byrd’s Loop Trail extends just over a half mile from the spur to Byrd’s Ledge, and the 1.3-mile Redbud Trail encompasses the property’s northwest corner.

The 637 acres of land lies mostly between the North and South Mayo Rivers, which converge just south of the state line in North Carolina. Trekkers along the main trail will find themselves at the confluence of the two rivers, with trails from the North Carolina Mayo River State Park visible across the water.

Fairy Stone State Park Manager Adam Layman welcomed guests to the ribbon cutting, which marked “a celebration not only of the trails opening, but also of the community that joined together to make today possible.”

In addition to county officials, others involved included members of the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA), the Eco Ambassador Council (EAC), the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), a number of volunteers, and even an Eagle Scout.

“Today’s celebration is just the

See **Mayo River**, page 4

## Eagle Scout project welcomes trekkers to new trail system

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

When hikers, bikers, and kayakers visit the newly opened trails at the site of the future Mayo River State Park in Henry County, they will be greeted at the trailhead by a picturesque scene—a fenced walkway to the main trail, a wooden bench surrounded by wildflowers, and a kiosk showcasing a map of the three trails currently available to explore.

The kiosk was the service project of Eagle Scout Joseph Fincher, son of Martinsville

Deputy Police Chief Robert Fincher, who serves as Scout Master for his son’s troop.

Joseph said he learned of the project through a friend of his father who is a park ranger at Fairy Stone State Park.

“Originally, we were thinking of doing something at Fairy Stone, but then we saw in the news about the new state park they were going to be building, I was really interested because I live in Henry County (his troop is based in Ridgeway) and I love the area.”

When the ranger mentioned the idea of a kiosk, “I thought

it was a perfect idea. Everything just sort of fell into place,” he said.

The kiosk is 13-feet tall, with 3-feet sunk into the ground to hold the structure firmly in place.

Fincher estimated 20 different people worked on the project with him, totaling more than 130 manpower hours.

Before getting materials for the project (which were donated or offered at a discount by Lester Building Supply), Fincher said he spent 3- or 4-months working

See **Eagle Scout Project**, page 2



Eagle Scout Joseph Fincher (second from left) stands at the kiosk he built for the newly opened public access trail system at the future Mayo River State Park in Henry County. With him are Fairy Stone State Park Manager Adam Layman (far left), Dan River Basin Association Virginia Programs Coordinator Brian Williams, and Eco Ambassador Council Chairman Tyler Carter.

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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)

## Saturday, April 30

The Blackberry Baptist Church (3241 Stones Dairy Road, Bassett) is hosting a cruise in from 8:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. Breakfast will be provided.

The Charity League of Martinsville and Henry County is hosting a Spring Fling fundraiser at the Smith River Sports Complex (1000 Irisburg Road, Axton) to help raise money for area youth. Live music by Riggs Roberson & Co., food trucks, vendors, petting zoo, children's activities, and more! Adult tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free. Contact a Charity League member for tickets or message them on Facebook.

The Martinsville Uptown Farmers' Market opens for the season from 7 a.m. until 12 p.m. at 65 West Main Street, Martinsville. The market will be open Saturdays through Nov. 19, with additional Wednesday hours July 6 through Sept. 28.

## Sunday, May 1

Join the Henry County Bike Club in a ride at Jack Dalton Park (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Collinsville) to promote biker awareness. All bikes are welcome and all are encouraged to participate. The ride begins at 10:30 a.m.

## Tuesday, May 3

It's Bluegrass Jam Night at the Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer, with open jam in the Alumni

Hall/Spencer Room from 7-10 p.m. Free to all musicians and donations are welcomed. Refreshments will be available to purchase.

## Thursday, May 5

Visit Piedmont Arts (215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) for Art at Happy Hour. Enjoy happy hour with a self-guided tour of the museum's current exhibits along with an ekphrastic poetry open mic led by the Poetry Society of Virginia. Complimentary drinks and light snacks provided by the Piedmont Arts Guild. RSVP to bjohnson@piedmontarts.org by May 4.

## Friday, May 6

Uptown First Friday is back. Visit the historic Henry County Courthouse plaza (1 East Main Street, Martinsville) from 6-9 p.m. for open mic hosted by Kat and Dennis Calfee. Bring an instrument you play, a poem you wrote, or a stand-up routine you have been eager to try out. Admission is free, and food and a cash bar will be available. Bring a blanket or lawn chair.

## Tuesday, May 10

Join the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society for a book discussion on "Justified by Her Children" beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the courtroom of the Historic Henry County Courthouse (1 East Main Street, Martinsville). Admission is free. The building is fully handicap accessible. Joyce Staples will lead a thought-provoking and stimulating discussion on the book written by Pastor Roy Pollina.

Come join the Bassett Historical Center (3964 Fairystone Park Highway) at 10:30 a.m., as Native

American speaker, storyteller, and recently published author of the book entitled "The Poems and Stories That Fulfill the Promise," Renae "Spring Morning" Wagoner, presents a "catch-all" program consisting of legends and stories while attempting to dispel some misconceptions surrounding Native People. This program is free and open to the public and will be held in the Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room. Masks are optional.

## Wednesday, May 11

The Virginia Museum of Natural History offers children ages 3-5 the opportunity to experience science first-hand with its annual "Doodle Bugs!" program. The hour-long programs include imaginative stories, fun activities, games and crafts that spark creativity and curiosity. This is the perfect opportunity for adults and grandparents to learn and have fun with their children. The cost is \$7 per child. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

## Sunday, May 15

Join in the fun at the Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) for a sock hop from 2-5 p.m. DJ What? will provide the music and refreshments will be served. Games will be on hand for non-dancers who prefer to socialize. Admission is a \$5 donation at the door.

## Saturday, May 21

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA will be at Petsense in Martinsville (240 West Commonwealth Blvd) from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. for an adoption event. Come meet some of the furry friends available for adop-

tion from the shelter.

## ONGOING

The Magna Vista Horticulture Spring Plant Sale is open. Weekday hours are 9-3 p.m.; some additional hours will be held. For complete information, sales, and additional hours, visit the Magna Vista Horticulture Facebook page.

The Louise R. Lester Spay/Neuter Clinic is hosting wellness clinics on the second and fourth Tuesdays. Clinics are by appointment only—walk-ins are not accepted. Call (276) 638-7297 to schedule an appointment.

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 will be held from 4-5 p.m. every other Wednesday through June 22. 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 its 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.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The stalls of the Martinsville Uptown Farmers' Market will soon be stocked once again with fresh, local goods when it opens for the season on Saturday. The market will be open from 7 a.m. until 12 p.m. Saturdays through Nov. 19, and Wednesdays July 6 through Sept. 28.

## Farmers' Market opens for season

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Discerning shoppers will soon have the opportunity to stock their kitchens with fresh, locally-grown produce, locally-sourced meats, and other locally-made goodies once again. The Uptown Martinsville Farmers' Market opens for the season on Saturday, giving residents and visitors alike the opportunity to browse through stalls stocked by local farmers, bakers, crafters, and more.

Currently, 28 vendors are signed up for the 2022 season, but that number is expected to grow, with more signing on as the season progresses, said Uptown Entrepreneurial Development Director Kimberly Keller-Bonacci. "We can expect to see 40+ vendors each season."

Last year, she said more than 11,000 customers came through the market. She expects at least that many to visit this year.

Though a specific date is not known for the cre-

ation of the market, it has been going (and growing) strong since 1982, operating for more than 40 years in the uptown district. "In earlier years, the market was in another location on Fayette Street," Keller-Bonacci said, "but moved to the current space in the late 1990s."

She said the market is beneficial not only to those selling their wares, but to the vibrancy of uptown as a whole.

"The Uptown Martinsville Farmers' Market is a huge asset to Uptown and the MHC community. The market attracts many customers to the Uptown district which is wonderful for our Uptown businesses. Often times, folks make a day of visiting Uptown, starting with the farmers' market and venturing to restaurants and stores within the Uptown district. The farmers' market is a great way to attract customers to the Uptown area. This includes both local citizens and tourists,"

because the market welcomes many tourists each season.

She noted that having customers shop and support hometown farmers living in the community means dollars spent at the market remain local, and benefit the community.

The market will operate, rain or shine, from 7 a.m. until 12 p.m. on Saturdays, April 30-Nov. 19. It also will be open on Wednesdays from 7 a.m. until 12 p.m. from July 6 through Sept. 28.

The market is located at 65 West Main Street in Martinsville. For questions, call (276) 632-5688.

The 2022 market sponsors are BTW21, The Lester Group, ValleyStar Credit Union, New College Institute, OakStone Health and Nutrition, SOVAH Health-Martinsville, Uptown Music Fest, Southern Virginia Properties, and the Martinsville Henry County Coalition for Health and Wellness.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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59						60				61		

- CLUES ACROSS**
- North American people
  - Chinese surname
  - Fit in at the last minute
  - "Very" in musical terminology
  - Underwater displays
  - Crosby's bandmates
  - Belong to he
  - Informed about the latest trends (archaic)
  - Sequences of alternating turns
  - Genus of grasses
  - Satisfy
  - Petty quarrel
  - Made level
  - Ruler of Iran
  - Historical region of Syria
  - Food suitable for babies
  - Something to lend
  - Zone of oceanic trenches
  - Philippine island
  - Domesticated animal
  - Plant of the lily family
  - Bluish green
  - Tomei, actress
  - Without (French)
  - Lilly and Manning are two
  - Apply pressure to
  - Divide in half
  - Bad deed
  - Don't know when yet
  - Hollywood's greatest honor
  - Aiming to exhort
  - Faked
  - A way to pierce
  - Midway between north-east and east
  - Points
- CLUES DOWN**
- Chop up
  - Spumante (Italian wine)
  - Egyptian goddess
  - Split pulses
  - Afflict
  - Type of area rug
  - Tide
  - Affirmative
  - Sudden change
  - One picked
  - Debauched man
  - Stiff bristles
  - Famous arena
  - Established rules and methods
  - Injection
  - Father
  - Protein-rich liquids
  - He delivers gifts
  - Advanced degree
  - Fencing swords
  - Chinese mountain range
  - Shaft horsepower (abbr.)
  - Precursor to hemoglobin
  - Much \_\_\_ about nothing
  - Compound fabric (abbr.)
  - A way to act slowly on
  - Ottoman military commanders
  - Popular kids' network
  - Hard compound
  - Sympathize with
  - Northeast college
  - Blood group
  - Frosted
  - Turn away
  - Benefit
  - Dry or withered
  - Bangladeshi monetary unit
  - Reproduced
  - Contributes
  - Thrust horse power (abbr.)
  - Wear
  - Promotes retention of water (abbr.)
  - Very small

## Eagle Scout Project

from page 1

on the idea. "It's a large process, getting signatures from different companies and from the Boy Scouts, plan approval, and all that. Once that was completed, I did some fundraising, and once I actually had the materials, it was just a matter of people getting together, mostly from my troop," to build the kiosk.

That process took about a month, he estimated.

According to the Boy Scouts of American website, "Service to other people is what Scouting is all about. In many ways, your service project reflects who you are as a youth leader. Your result should be of significant impact in your community to

be special, and should represent your very best effort."

"It's great," Fincher said of having his work on the site of a future state park. "Having a state park here in Henry County, the land is beautiful. I'll definitely be hiking out here with my troop and it feels good to be a part of that process."

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# Elementary school students show work in museum's Foster Gallery

An exhibit of artwork by local elementary school students will be on display in Piedmont Arts' Foster Gallery through May 7.

The exhibit features work by students in grades 3-5 who attend Campbell Court, Meadow View, Sanville and Axton elementary schools.

Director of Programs Sarah Short said exhibits in the Foster Gallery are an important part of the museum's community programming.

"The Foster Gallery is for the display of work by young artists," she said. "By showing student work at Piedmont Arts,

we encourage young people to participate in the arts and give students' friends and families the opportunity to experience the wealth of young talent we have in our area."

For more than 25 years, Piedmont Arts' Foster Gallery has been generously curated by Charity League. Piedmont Arts and Charity League believe that fostering an early exposure to the arts is critical for a well-rounded educational experience.

Piedmont Arts is open Tuesday - Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Admission to the museum is always free of charge.



# Elementary students earn awards in state competition

Teams from Patrick Henry and Albert Harris elementary schools participated in two competitions last weekend - King's Dominion Engineering Day and Roller Coaster Challenge on April 22 and the State KidWind competition held at Virginia State University on April 23.

Students participating in the roller coaster challenge were tasked to build two roller coasters. They were scored based on aesthetics and how they recaptured energy in the coaster. Students also received a workbook to complete with various activities around the park, like looking for three-dimensional shapes and how they are used.

Students from both schools earned awards in the Roller Coaster Challenge. PHES' two teams placed first and second and AHES' team placed third at the elementary level. There were a total of 30 entries.

"I am beyond proud of the accomplishments these students achieved during the first year of Kid Wind in Martinsville City Public Schools," said PHES Principal Cameron Cooper. "I am looking forward to many more accomplishments to be achieved in the future!"

"The opportunity for the students to research and learn about force and motion, then apply their learning at Kings Dominion was awe-

some," said PHES STEM Teacher Liz Lynch. "It was so exciting to show the students what real world engineering looks like and for them to network with industry professionals."

"Our students have put their scientific knowledge and engineering know how to excellent use as they prepared for these competitions," said AHES STEM Teacher Laurie Witt. "Team members have exhibited the 5Cs of the Virginia Graduate including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and citizenship."

When students arrived at the KidWind competition, they took a knowledge quiz as a group. The quiz encompassed 10 big ideas that each had about fifteen questions. The quiz accounted for 15 percent of the overall score. After that, teams brought their devices in front of a panel of three industry professionals to discuss their design process and demonstrate how it works.

Teams were assigned to build and create a high functioning wind turbine. Students were given a gearbox and pieces for the wind turbine; however, it was up to the students to design the blades and determine the size of the turbine. After presenting to the panel, students took their turbine into a room full of fans to test the effectiveness of their design.

AHES students earned the Good Sportsmanship Award for their turbine design.

Teams were tasked with creating a solar powered model which must be connected to solar panels and do something. Teams were scored based on how much energy load they had on their solar panels, design, complexity, and aesthetics.

AHES students earned the People's Choice Award for their solar design.

"I am excited that students from AHES were allowed to compete in the Roller Coaster Challenge and State Kid Win Competition," said AHES Principal Renee Brown. "Our students and coaches dedicated lots of time and energy in preparing for these events. I am very proud of our students' accomplishments in achieving their awards. Way to go!"

The State KidWind competition is the first competition in which students have participated, as this is a new program of which students can take advantage.

"We had a wonderful experience with KidWind at Virginia State University and PHES students had an amazing rookie year," said Lynch. "During the Kid Wind competition judges remarked that the Martinsville teams were articulate, creative, and had lots of energy. The students constructed their own wind turbine,

designed blades, and improved their design to score higher. Another team designed a three-level solar treehouse with lights, a fan, and an elevator. The students cannot wait to apply their learning next year when they compete again. In fact, a fifth grade asked if we could incorporate renewable energy into summer STEM programs."

"What an amazing

group of students, coaches, teachers, and parents who helped to ensure our students were prepared for both competitions," said MCPS STEM Coordinator Jill Collins. "We would also like to thank KidWind and the Virginia Museum of Natural History for housing a wind tunnel that will be used for testing their structures in the future."

"MCPS is very proud

if the accomplishments of our engineering students," said Schools Superintendent Dr. Zeb Talley. "We will continue to involve our students in "hands-on" activities and competitions that will lead to intellectual growth and achievement. Our division will make every attempt to ensure that all students have this valuable learning opportunity."



Back: KaVaughn Muse, Kirsten Henderson, Lesley Ratcliff, Isabel Troncoso, Bridgette Brent, Arianna Ybarra, Liz Lynch (coach), Dominic Robinson. Front: Kalee Smith (coach), Samson Ray, Zyad Bayoumy, Marisol Garcia.



Luis Hernandez, YaMauria Reynolds, Janette Carrillo-Llamas, Gavin Wilson, NyShawn Walton, Michelle Alston.



Back: Janette Carrillo-Llamas, Michelle Alston, Coach Laurie Witt, Luis Hernandez, NyShawn Walton, YaMauria Reynolds, Coach Tammy Allen. Front: Gavin Wilson.



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# NCI to offer virtual program in Medical Billing and Coding

The New College Institute (NCI) announced the launch of a new health sciences credentialing program in medical billing and coding. The seven month, virtual program that begins May 9 prepares students with the knowledge and skills to become a Certified Billing and Coding Specialist (CBCS) through the National Healthcare Association (NHA) and prepares them to become employed as medical biller and coders working in hospitals, insurance companies, physician billing offices, home health agencies, and other healthcare facilities.

Students will gain knowledge in the fundamentals of medical terminology, coding, legal and ethical issues in healthcare, communication and reporting, and computer software applications. Students will also gain the skills

necessary to analyze health data and transcribe diagnostic and procedural terms and services into a coded form for analysis and billing.

The COVID-19 pandemic coupled with an aging American population has exacerbated the health science workforce challenges not only in patient care, but also in support functions such as medical billing and coding. While a college degree is needed to qualify for many front-line jobs in the industry, office support roles, such as credentialed medical billing and coding specialists are growing at a rate of over 20 percent a year, with many offering remote work options.

"NCI is excited to be offering the medical billing and coding program in a virtual format" said NCI's Interim Executive Director

Karen Jackson. "Since beginning our work with the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, the George Mason University Center for the Health Workforce, and partners across Southern Virginia to build a vibrant health sciences career pathway, it has become clear that the need for clinical support occupations is escalating and transcends geographic boundaries hence our decision to offer the program virtually. We look forward to supporting students from across Virginia and beyond."

For more information on the NCI Medical Billing and Coding program, visit <https://newcollegeinstitute.org/degrees-and-training/workforce-development/medical-billing-and-coding/> or contact Margaret Omwenga [momwenga@newcollegeinstitute.org](mailto:momwenga@newcollegeinstitute.org).

## OPINION

## Real estate round-up

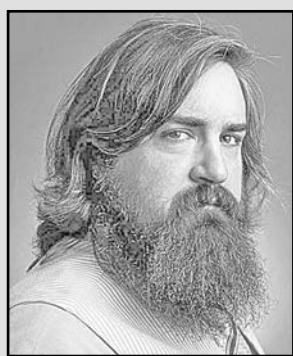
**FOR SALE** — 107 S. Blangford, 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath  
Originally built in 1910, this beautiful home was converted into three condominiums less than ten years ago, but it still feels like new construction! It features an open floor plan, high-end finishes, and wide plank, solid oak floors throughout. Originally built by a sharecropper to accommodate his small family, your family will love the third of the house that's currently for sale! Please note that the other half of the half bath is technically on your neighbor Jerry's property, but there is a privacy curtain.  
Price: \$800,000

**FOR SALE** — 13 Wintorb, 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath  
This sprawling neo-eclectic 3,500 sq. ft. home was built in 2008. Featuring a massive foyer, plenty of windows, two

enormous staircases, and a kitchen fit for a cooking show, this home was built by a former employee of Lehman Brothers who only lived in it for a few months before moving on. Everything above the first floor remains uncompleted, but the bare wood and insulation will provide a perfect canvas for personalizing your dream home. If you're a fan of the Halloween aesthetic, you'll love the tombstone in the backyard! It's the final resting place of the original owner and its placement was one of the stipulations of his divorce settlement.  
Price: \$2.3 million

**FOR SALE** — 39 Charmgate, 3 bedroom, 2 bath  
The wood paneling, shag carpeting, and sunken living room may date this property, but it offers the perfect opportunity to redecorate in your

own modern style! Located in a family-friendly suburb with little traffic, this home is the perfect place to start a family.



By Ben R. Williams

Originally purchased in 1977 for \$35,000, it can be yours for just \$1.2 million.

Price: \$1.3 million (it went up during the time it took to write the previous sentence)

**FOR RENT** — 7 Tenemiento, 1 bedroom, 1 bath

You'll never recognize the former Hanscom's Hotel for Drifters! Once offering its famous "dollar a night" guarantee, the newly remodeled building features solid floors, hand-painted walls, and a hot plate with at least one working eye!  
Price: \$2,200/month

**FOR SALE** — Corner of Stabworth and Inebrio, 1 bedroom

Looking for a good starter home? Check out this 1983 Oldsmobile Omega, conveniently located at the corner of Stabworth and Inebrio. Featuring front-wheel drive, a 2.8 liter V6, and plush velour interior, the Omega is the home of choice when your home happens to be a car. This four-door sedan gives you plenty of room to grow your family. NOTE: Air conditioning, engine are currently "fixer-uppers."  
Price: \$55,000

**FOR RENT** — The good mattress down by the tracks, 1

bedroom  
Offering up a wonderful view of the Smucktown Industrial District, the good mattress down by the tracks is a great place to raise your family. This one is going to go fast now that Wally hitched that train to Pittsburgh. Comes with multiple amenities, including a half-bottle of gin, a spoon that's been sharpened on one end, and several risqué magazines.  
Price: \$1,500/month

**FOR SALE** — Your house, on your street  
We hate that you had to find out this way, but a real estate developer just bought your house and he's kicking you out. Worse still, he's opening a bar down the street that serves something called "molecular cocktails," so there's no way you can afford to live anywhere near here. If you're nice to the new owner on your way out, he might teach you how bitcoin works.  
Price: N/A

Challenge Reversion from page 1

the executive branch insert at the eleventh hour this referendum legislation" after the city's action was already in the hands of the judiciary, he said.

"I think we need to take a stand for what's right. We are listed as the third most distressed government in Virginia, and we have done everything that was required only to have this political trick played on us at the eleventh hour," Turner said.

"I think we owe it to our citizens to know whether what was done was legal or not," Lawson said. "We followed the process, we followed the letter of the law, we exceeded the requirements that were in the constitution. We took an oath to uphold the constitution of the state of Virginia. We followed those guidelines and I think we owe it to our citizens, because I've heard from many of them saying, 'I don't think this is legal.'"

She added, "I have no problems following a pro-

cess if that process is legal."

Martin noted that City Attorney Eric Monday previously stated the council held more than 70 meetings during which residents could speak on the reversion process. "This is not hearing citizens, this is making sure about constitutional issues, making sure a larger government is not picking on a local city, making sure that we have the right to dictate our own day-to-day. I think it is very hypocritical, at least, for someone to say that we are not allowing citizens to be heard when they didn't go door-to-door themselves. I think what we're doing is the right thing to do, and I think we keep on fighting."

"If the law had changed for everyone in the state of Virginia," Lawson said, "that would be one thing, but it wasn't. It only pinpointed Martinsville. Is it right? Is it fair? Is it just? I don't believe it is, so we will let the Supreme Court decide."

Pearson said had she been on council when the reversion proceedings began in 2019, "I would have immediately made the suggestion that we let our citizens first vote on whether or not to revert. I do believe they have the right to have their voices heard, and I believe that should be a part of the process no matter what."

"It is your belief that they have not been heard and I just have to disagree with that belief," Lawson said.

Over his 13-year tenure on council, Turner said "this (reversion) is one of the most discussed things in Martinsville."

In response to the comments about certain council members not going door-to-door, Pearson asked "council member Martin (to) quit doing these personal attacks and alluding to some type of door-to-door knocking. Please stop that."

Martin said, "I didn't say a name."

As Lawson asked to refocus the conversation and Martin and Pearson spoke over each other, Turner moved to end discussion on the motion, and eventually was seconded by Martin, but only after Monday interjected to explain more about the city's position.

He said as first solicitor general, Hurd was charged

with handling all appeals on behalf of Virginia before the state Supreme Court. Hurd, Monday, and Stephen Piegrass, the attorney representing the city in reversion proceedings, have "all reviewed this legislation, we've all concluded that it is, in fact, in violation of the constitution of Virginia."

Monday said he would not go into great detail about the argument to avoid revealing litigation strategy, but he added Turner was "absolutely right."

"We filed this action in August of 2020 under existing law that had essentially been in place since 1986, unchanged. There is a state law that says once you file that action with the Commission on Local Government, the litigation has started so we've been in court since August of 2020. The General Assembly chose to change the rules of this game ... at the eleventh hour. We're very far down the road now. You don't do that in a football game, you don't do that in litigation, you don't do that under any circumstances because it's simply not fair."

Monday added, "The General Assembly also passed legislation that applied only to Martinsville, which is called special legislation. The Constitution of Virginia bars special

legislation that interferes with the jurisdiction of the court by telling them that they can't enter the final order on reversion until the referendum has occurred, which creates new election requirements and also deals with the process for dissolving a city. The Constitution of Virginia, we believe, is very clear on all of those issues, that you cannot pass a special bill that applies to one city or one person for that matter. The city is no different from any individual citizen and, frankly, if the legislature can do it to us, they can do it to anybody."

To illustrate his point, Monday said that currently in Virginia, a person who is in a car accident has 2-years to file a lawsuit. He equated the General Assembly's passage of the reversion legislation to legislators singling out and telling a person that, rather than the standard 2-year period to file suit, they had only a year.

"There's really no material difference in what they've done to this city and what they could do to an individual, so that is why your legal counsel has recommended this course of action," he said. "These laws should be made applicable to every locality across the state if that's what the legislature wants to do."

Monday said, "I think it's also very important

to note that this same General Assembly that passed this referendum requirement that applied only to Martinsville had before it, two weeks before, a bill which would have allowed for advisory referenda in every locality across the state. If there was any matter of significant importance to a locality, all local governments would have been given the opportunity to send that question to their citizens so they could express their opinion at the ballot box. And the same committee that overwhelmingly rammed this legislation through that applies solely to Martinsville voted that legislation down. So, there is an element of hypocrisy there and I suggest that it's not only hypocritical, it rises to the level of being unconstitutionally hypocritical."

Turner's motion passed 3-2, with Pearson and Bowles voting in opposition. Both also opposed Lawson's original motion to retain Hurd, which passed 3-2.

Though she did not speak during the discussion, after the meeting Bowles said that she voted against the measure because, like Pearson, she said she did not want to spend the money to retain another lawyer, and feels the city's current legal team is capable of handling the issue.

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Weekly Publication

Published Each Saturday

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Mayo River from page 1

beginning of the role that this property will play in terms of outdoor recreational access, tourism, and economic development that will be so important to Henry County, the region, the Commonwealth, and beyond," Layman said. "I'm excited for not only what the future holds for this property, but also for the opportunity to continue growing and strengthening our partnerships and working alongside you all."

Brian Williams, Virginia program manager for DRBA, said the project "has been 20 years in coming." He thanked the late Dr. Lindley Butler, one of DRBA's founding members, who, along with his wife, T, "were some of our staunchest supporters and really did the lion's share of making sure" that the state park project became a reality. "It's their work and their efforts, as far back as 2002," when they began working with North Carolina on the creation of their Mayo River State Park, that pushed the effort forward.

Eventually, the landowner of the Virginia property approached Butler about selling it, Williams said. That set him on the path of convincing Virginia legislators to make the purchase.

"We had a lot of ideas about how to make this happen, then DCR stepped up to the plate and bought the initial 3 or 400-acres," Williams said, before making additional purchases to create the 600+ acre property.

"It really is significant," Williams said. "Working through DCR, the North and South Mayo Rivers, part of them became state scenic rivers. It's a very important piece of property out here in the far southwest corner of Henry County."

Once the land is officially a state park, Williams said visitors will be able to hike or paddle from Virginia to North Carolina and still be in a contiguous state park.

"We know a lot of good things are coming," Williams told the crowd. "And now we have this place open where people can actually access it."

EAC Chairman Tyler Carter recognized the founding members of the council—Carter Bank & Trust, The Lester Group, Blair Construction, Jones and DeShon Orthodontics, Clark Gas and Oil, Frith Construction, and Hooker Furniture—all of which "have stepped up to make an annual contribution into a fund" for projects like the park and trail system. He said the Mayo River project was the council's flagship endeavor.

"As you go from here today, think about your connections in the community," Carter said. "We'd love to talk to other businesses that have shared values in this area."

Henry County Administrator Tim Hall said that looking at the site was the "absolute definitive of the wow factor. It's just phenomenal. It's an amenity for our local citizens.

"We want them to use it, we want them to benefit from it, we want them to be a healthier community and this is a way to do that. But this is also an avenue, literally, to bring in people to our community. Brian (Williams) said you can walk or you can kayak from Virginia to North Carolina. We want you to come back to Virginia and spend your money here on gas, lodging and the other incidentals," Hall said.

He added that during his career, he's heard many conversations that included the phrase, "I didn't know you guys had this." That kind of irritates me. We need people to come and see what we have, because once they see it, they're in on the secret—the beauty of this place, the people of this place and the opportunities of this place."

Hall said one of the county's top priorities is to advocate the General

Assembly to complete the park. "We need to convince the folks in Richmond we exist," he said, looking around at the sunlit trail, the rolling field, and the surrounding trees filled with birdsong.

"What a glorious day," Hall said, "What a glorious opportunity this is for the whole region."

DCR's Interim Deputy Director of Administration and Finance Laura Ellis said the event was a "prime example of investing in our planet," which was the theme for the Earth Day celebration. "What another prime example of investing in the partnerships that it has taken to get us to this point and for the partnerships that it's going to continue to take as we develop this property."

The addition of the 3.9-miles of trails on the property "increases the Virginia State Parks' trail total to more than 680-miles of hiking, biking, and multi-use trails," she said, and encouraged those who use the trails to "envision the possibilities of outdoor recreational access opportunities that are here today as well as what can come of the future as we work together through the master planning process" of the new park.

"I understand what a treasure this place is. I understand and I see and feel your passion for this area and I share in that collaborative goal with a common vision of outdoor recreational access and increasing the opportunities to experience all that Virginia has," Ellis said.

"I'm sure you're wondering what's next for this property," she said. "You continue to work with us as well as to work collectively with other partners as we go through our master planning process as prescribed by state code, as we work to develop the future Mayo River State Park ... As those partnerships continue to develop and continue to expand, the possibilities for the future of (the park) are truly endless."



# Proposal from page 1

signed fund balance, Towarnicki said, is \$7,574,286. "As we begin our budget process, that's typically one of the first numbers that we look at because that tells us how much has been returned as an unassigned fund balance. That means we can use it for just about anything."

However, applied to that is the 10 percent reserve policy put in place by council which, this year would equate to \$3,740,630, leaving the available general fund balance of \$3,833,656 available for transfer while maintaining a 10 percent reserve.

Towarnicki said the general fund budget balances with a projected \$3,865,961 fund balance and \$3 million from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, with no proposed transfers from electric, water, sewer, telecom, or refuse. "We just didn't feel that there was enough room in there to do any transfer from utilities this year," as the funds in each are nearing the cash reserve policy limits. The city also will increase all refuse collection fees by 7 percent. The rates were last adjusted in July 2013.

He noted the council earmarked \$4 million in ARPA funds to help with fund balance, with \$2 million one year and \$1 million each of the next two years. "This year, to balance we had to use \$3 million."

The electric funds have fallen below the cash reserve requirement. That utility's FY21 audited total was \$1,253,201, while the cash reserve policy threshold is \$4,446,737. However, the aggregate total of all utilities from FY21 totals \$9,548,998 - just above the total cash reserve threshold of \$8,837,256.

The largest single line item in the city's budgeted expenses, Towarnicki said, is purchased power, which represents 75.2 percent, or \$16,068,000, of the total \$21,356,332 electric budget.

Capital requests submitted by city departments for FY23 totaled \$7,529,000, with \$5,233,557 requested for utilities and \$2,295,443 requested for the general fund/capital reserve, according to Towarnicki, who added that, while utilities cover capital internally, the capital fund is consistently underfunded with remaining meals tax funds once the debt service is covered.

Towarnicki said 25 percent of the city's total budget was allocated to the schools, second only to the general fund at 35 percent. Electric was third, with 20 percent of the budget.

In total, city staff recommended \$6,170,397 in school funding, which is FY21 level funding of \$6,045,015 minus the Telecom e-rate contribution of \$99,624, plus an additional \$225,000 to offset a 16.1 percent health insurance increase for school employees.

Level funding was recommended for most outside agencies, with a recommended 2.5 percent increase in the 911 budget (from \$497,503 to \$510,101), a 12 percent increase in social services (from \$489,257 to \$548,056), a 19.8 percent reduction in Health Department funding (from \$165,654 to \$132,907), and a new request of \$10,000 for the sports complex.

Under the proposed budget, the library would receive level funding (\$295,308), \$60,000 would be directed toward small business and Uptown development, Uptown Partnership (UP) would receive \$30,000, and \$39,000 would be allocated to the management of the Martinsville Mustangs.

Additional expenses include a 5 percent cost of living adjustment for city employees and constitutional officers, an overall 16.1 percent increase in health insurance costs, a 6.5 percent increase in contributions to the Virginia Retirement System, and other market adjustments to some agencies, including the police department and the sheriff's office.

"Personnel issues this year were just substantial," Towarnicki said. "We had situations where some seasoned veterans in some of our departments were ready to leave, and we did some adjustments and thankfully saved a couple of positions."

The proposal includes the addition of several new personnel, including one person in street marking and signs and two in refuse collection. It reduces the number of positions in the police department by two, one sworn and one civilian, giving that department a total of 44 sworn and four civilian staff. A programs position with the Senior Services department also was eliminated, making it a transportation-only service.

Funding the capital reserve is recommended in the amount of \$1,450,799. Of that, \$361,349 is required for debt service and the \$1,089,450 balance will be assigned to the capital purchases on a prioritized basis by the capital review committee.

Towarnicki used a graph of past, current, and projected fiscal year rates and said, "2023, '24, '25, we're going to be hitting a period of some increases, so we'll see where that ultimately leads."

Overall, Towarnicki said the FY23 budget "continues the practice of the enterprise operations balancing internally, utility fund transfers when available to help balance in the GF (general fund), and use of FB (fund balance) as available, all while attempting to keep policy-directed minimum balances and reserves intact."

"That process, however, is getting increasingly difficult while attempting to maintain reserves without increasing revenue, reducing services, or combinations. Of particular importance is the fact that the FY23 general fund budget, if you look at the numbers there is a funding gap between revenue and expenses of \$6,865,961. That

funding gap this year is closed by use of about \$3.8 million in fund balance and \$3 million in ARPA funds."

Due to the pandemic, he said the unassigned fund balance at the end of FY21 was unusually high, around \$7.4 million. It is usually more in the area of \$1.5 to \$2 million.

"With this number here, \$6.8 million being the gap, just think about that. If we balance this year, we're pulling the fund balance down to the 10 percent reserve. Assuming that, as the '22 audit is done, we put another \$2.5 million into fund balance, and that represents what we can transfer next year to balance the FY24 budget, that's still going to leave a \$3- to \$4 million shortfall in the general fund budget, and with the inability to transfer from utilities, something's going to have to happen."

"I think this, to me, is a pretty clear picture that somewhere down the road, and it could very well be next year, we may be in a position where if you're going to balance without raising taxes, fees, or anything like that, we're going to have to cut significantly."

He noted the city's three largest expense areas are the general fund, public safety, and education and, in the general fund budget "our three biggest chunks are education, police, and fire."

Council voted to set a public hearing on the budget during its regular meeting on May 10. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in council chambers.

In other matters, the council:

\*Heard information related to the possible use of ARPA funds for Uptown renewal. City Public Information Officer Kendall Davis said the city received 122 total responses to an online survey about how people would like to see ARPA funding spent. Of those, affordable housing was the most popular, with 22.9 percent of the vote. A homeless shelter/recovery center and direct financial relief for small businesses each received 16.5 percent of the vote, while other responses, including a city rebranding campaign and minority business support, garnered fewer votes.

Monday said the city's original suggestion of allocating \$4.5 million in ARPA funds to Uptown revitalization remained the same: \$1 million for property acquisition; \$750,000 for development of a public attraction such as a park; \$500,000 for support of Uptown Partnership (UP); \$250,000 for the Chamber of Commerce and CPEG's façade improvement program; \$250,000 for Uptown property maintenance enforcement; \$25,000 for uptown parking; and \$1 million in utility waiver incentives for existing or new businesses.

He said city staff proposed the grants be administered by a committee of five, consisting of two council members, one person from a list of three submitted by UP, one from a list of three submitted by the chamber/CPEG, and one at-large appointment taken from resident applicants.

Lawson noted that two council meetings ago, "there was the misconception that the Uptown group had asked for this money. That is incorrect. It needs to be stated publicly that it is incorrect." Instead, she said, city staff asked UP to present a budget on what that organization would do if allocated the money. "Perhaps the articulation of how that information was given was done very poorly, not just on one part, on all parts, and that needs to be corrected. We as a city know that we have to invest in ourselves."

Pearson expressed concerns about what she said is the small size of the committee, which would allow only a few residents to participate. Several council members asked questions pertaining to conflicts of interest that members of the committee may encounter as entities applied for the utility waiver program.

Council took no action on the matter during the meeting.

\*Heard an overview of the April 25 Southside neighborhood tour and meeting.

\*Approved the minutes from the April 12 meeting.

\*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing the week of May 1-7, 2022 as National Correctional Officers and Employees Week.

\*Recognized May 2022 as Guillian-Barre Syndrome and Chronis Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy awareness month.

\*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing May 2022 as Building Safety Month.

\*Heard an update from Taxing Authority Consulting Services (TACS) on efforts related to delinquent tax collections and approved a resolution authorizing the city treasurer to employ the services of a private collection attorney to help collect delinquent taxes.

\*Conducted a public hearing on the 2021 update of the Martinsville-Henry County Solid Waste Management Plan, and unanimously voted to adopt the plan update, with Martin abstaining from the vote.

\*Adopted on first reading Ordinance 2022-3, enacting or amending certain sections of the city code regarding the use of electric scooters, and heard a presentation from a representative of Bird, an electric scooter rental company, about a plan to introduce scooters to the city.

\*Unanimously approved allocating \$500,000 in ARPA funds to city demolition projects.

\*Selected nominations for membership on the Virginia Municipal League 2022 Policy Committees.

# Transparency from page 1

Working in the school system, I've always learned that transparency is so important so people know what's going on. If people have questions, they get the information out front and I think it's important that we as a county operate that way. I'm not saying that we don't, but we're always looking to make improvements."

He said he would like to see "certain jobs" posted publicly. "I think that allows for transparency. That way people know what the job criteria is, when the job's open, when the job's going to close, and there may be folks who are outside of the county who may be interested in applying."

He added that process would allow "us to truly select the most qualified candidate, and I think that's always the goal. To get the most qualified candidate, especially in jobs of this nature because so many people's wellbeing, finances, lifestyles depend on that."

"I'm rooting for Dale," Dillard said of Dale Wagoner, who will become the next county administrator on July 1.

"We should all be rooting for Dale, because the more successful he is, the more successful Henry County is," Dillard said, adding Wagoner "has some big things out in front of him," with reversion, the new jail, budget challenges, the drug and crime rates, and the ever-looming threat of COVID-19.

"I think it's vital that he has the best team possible to support him because we all know that, when you're in a role like that, the team is going to determine your success as much as you are, and I think posting jobs publicly allows him to get that best team possible. I just want to go on record stating that I think any high-level jobs in Henry County are posted openly. Not just internally, but also externally."

Other supervisors did not respond.

In other matters, the board:

\*Approved a motion to send a letter to SOVAH Health expressing concern over the health system's "temporary pause providing delivery services at the SOVAH-Martinsville facility." The letter stated that "hospitals and the services they provide are part of the essential fabric of communities. More is at play than a business decision—how does each decision impact the citizens of the locality? How does the client in need of medical help get what he or she needs in a timely manner? ... A vibrant community is no longer as vibrant if its hospital reduces its services for an extended period, or

ultimately terminates those services."

The letter was addressed to Alan Larson, market president for SOVAH Health-Danville and Spencer Thomas, CEO of SOVAH Health-Martinsville.

\*Unanimously approved a motion declaring the month of May POW (Prisoners of War) Remembrance Month and to fly the POW flag alongside the American flag at county sites.

\*Awarded a \$750,000 contract to C.W Cauley & Sons, Inc. for site work on Lot #5 of the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre (CCBC).

\*Awarded an \$800,000 contract for engineering services for site work on Lot #2 of the CCBC, which coincides with a grant received from the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program to conduct the site work.

\*Appropriated \$1.38 million in grant and reserve funds to begin construction of section 6A of the Dick & Willie Passage Trail. The total amount includes \$257,251 in reserve funds for the county's match to the grant.

\*Awarded a \$1,902,470 contract to Inland Construction, Inc. for construction of a section of trail, and a \$265,000 contract to Hurt & Proffitt, Inc. for construction administration and testing services related to the project.

\*Held a public hearing and adopted an ordinance establishing a tourism zone in Henry County, mirroring the areas in the county zoned as Commercial B-1 and offering incentives similar to enterprise zone incentives for tourism-related businesses that make new capital investments in the county of at least \$500,000 and create at least five new full-time jobs.

\*Held a public hearing and approved an appropriation to replace \$2.6 million in the budget previously appropriated for school debt from the reserve funds.

\*Approved an additional appropriation of \$355,424 for the Henry County School Board. The funds, received from grants, will be used in part for a tutoring program, an after-school program, and the recruitment and retention of mental health workers.

\*Approved an additional appropriation of \$26,957 to the Sheriff's Office from State Asset Forfeiture funds, which will be used to cover costs associated with moving inmates from the old jail to the new facility and other overtime expenses associated with changes in the court mandated by the Circuit Court Judge.

\*Heard a report on

delinquent tax collection efforts from Treasurer Scott Grindstaff who said that, as of March 31, approximately 88.34 percent of 2021 personal property taxes have been collected, with \$329,984.50 received in March. As of that same date, 92.06 percent of 2021 real estate taxes have been collected with \$269,045.88 received.

\*Heard an update from Sarah Hodges, director of Tourism and Talent Development on the Martinsville Henry County Economic Development Corporation.

\*Held a public hearing and approved the updated Solid Waste Management Plan.

\*Reappointed Joshua Tucker to the Henry-Martinsville Social Services Board for a four-year term ending May 31, 2026.

\*Approved a proclamation declaring May 11-17 as National Peace Officers Memorial Week.

\*Approved a resolution in support of the Nelson Motorsports Race Team for winning the 2021 CARS Tour season championship and Virginia Triple Crown.

\*Approved a resolution honoring World War II veteran Jim Weinerth on his 100th birthday.

\*Approved a resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of Piedmont Community Services.

\*Approved a resolution recognizing the 40th anniversary of the Martinsville & Henry County Crime Stoppers program.

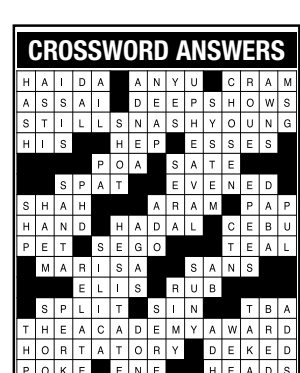
\*Approved a resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Oak Level Ruritan Club.

\*Heard from Sandra Haley, who asked the board to consider supplementing the state salaries of employees at the Public Defender's Office with local funds.

\*Heard an update from Kathy Deacon, executive director of Uptown Partnership, about the organization's revitalization efforts.

\*Heard from Roger Saunders about the lack of a local Comcast office.

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# OBITUARIES

## Linda Mae Puckett Moore

Linda Mae Puckett Moore, 93, of Martinsville, VA passed away on Sunday, April 24, 2022. She was born on January 6, 1929 in Saltville, VA to the late George Fulton Puckett and Winnie Frye Puckett. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Marvin Dewey Moore; and brothers, William Stuart Puckett and George "Nuppie" Puckett.

Mrs. Moore worked as a billing clerk for 38 years with the City of Martinsville, VA.

She is survived by her two daughters, Carolyn Moore Carr (Lonnice) of Sparta, TN and Lisa Moore McDonough (Kevin) of Ennis, MT; three sons, Michael Moore (Laura) of Clayton, NC, George Moore (Nadine) of Wirtz, VA, and Rodger Moore (Isabel) of Chesapeake, VA. Also



surviving are eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 30, 2022 at Collinsville Church of Christ, with Minister Gary Hollingsworth officiating. Burial will be at Roselawn Burial Park. Visitation will be held the night before, Friday, April 29, 2022 from 7 to

8:30 p.m. at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel. The funeral service will be livestreamed from the church's website; [ccocva.org/livestream](http://ccocva.org/livestream)

Memorial donations may be made to Disabled American Veterans, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-030.

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

## Rosie Ella Berger Trent

Rosie Ella Berger Trent, 74, of Ridgeway, Virginia passed away Friday, April 22, 2022. She was born August 13, 1947, in Franklin County, Virginia to the late Leonard Berger and Mary Elizabeth Muse Sheffield. She was a member of Mayo Missionary Baptist Church and enjoyed working with Vacation Bible School, singing in the choir, going to church and fishing.

She is survived by her husband, James E. Trent, Jr.; daughter, Drena Malloy; son, Marcus Berger; sisters, Juanita Berger, Linda Allen, Eunice Becker, June Stockton (Leroy), Shirley Brown and Verling Berger; brothers, James Berger, Marshall Berger (Florence) and Raymond



Berger (Maxine); five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

The funeral will be Friday, April 29, at 11 a.m. at Wright Funeral Service Chapel with Minister Dwight Mack officiating. Visitation will be 30 minutes prior to the service. Burial will follow at Mayo Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery. Donations may be

made to Saint Jude's Hospital, P. O. Box 1000, Department 142, Memphis, Tennessee, 38105.

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

## Peggy Anne Epperly Smart

Peggy Anne Epperly Smart, 82, of Spencer, Virginia passed away April 8, 2022 at her residence. She was born December 22, 1939 in Montgomery county to the late Carlyle and Minnie Carden Epperly. She was a graduate of Christiansburg High School Class of 1958.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Elzie Morton Smart and son, Dirk Morton Smart, Sr.; sister, Betty Jean Epperly Hines; and her brother, Donald McCandless Epperly.



She is survived by grandson, Dirk Morton Smart, Jr.; granddaughter, Leighanna ; and great-grandchild, Zaedyn Garcia and special friend, Margie Murphy.

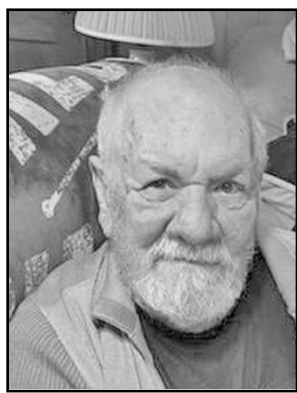
A celebration of life service was held on Monday, April 25, 2022 in the Wright Funeral Service chapel with Kelly Ratcliff officiating the service.

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

## William Franklin Carrico

William Franklin Carrico, 83, of Fieldale, VA passed away on Wednesday, April 20, 2022. He was born on May 8, 1938 to the late James Ray Carrico and Fannie Berenice Carrico. In addition to his parents, he was preceded by his wife, Connie Martin Carrico.

He is survived by his son, William Franklin Carrico II (Bonnie) of Newport



News, VA; grandchildren, William Franklin Carrico III (Emily) and Tara Carrico; and his beloved niece Vicki Whitlow. Also surviving are three great-grandchildren.

All services will be private.

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

## Alfred "Jay" Pennington

Alfred "Jay" Pennington, 65, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away Sunday, April 24, 2022, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. He was born June 10, 1956, in Lorraine, Ohio to the late Alfred Pennington and Mona Smith Pennington. He enjoyed drawing, books and playing with his grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Marsha Pennington; brothers, James Pennington, Timmy Pennington, Eddie



Pennington and Robbie Pennington.

He is survived by his wife, Katherine Wrightsel Pennington; daughters, Angela Ferguson, Danielle Wrightsel, Cristal Pennington and Marsha Pennington; brothers, Brian Pennington and Kevin Pennington; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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

## Helen Jane Cook

Helen Jane Cook, 97, of Martinsville passed away on Friday, April 22, 2022. She was born in Huntington, Indiana on October 16, 1924, to Norval Faurot, Sr. and Cecil Ham Faurot.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Ira Ernest Cook, Jr. and her brother, Norval Faurot, Jr.

She is survived by her niece, Mary Beth Draper Cole (David); nephews David Spottysyl Draper (Angie) and Carlos Faurot; great niece Amy Price Walker; great nephew James "Jamie" P. Price, IV (Jessica); 2 great great-nieces, Hailey Elizabeth Walker and Jaycee Lynn Price; and a great-great nephew James "Jayden" P. Price V.

Helen was a very active member of First United Methodist Church She was a



member of the Read Robins Sunday School Class and the bereavement committee. She loved serving others. She was active with the meals on wheels food service. She also loved to bake and cook for her family and friends.

Helen loved to exercise. She walked a lot and participated in water aerobics at the YMCA. She also loved to knit and crochet.

A private memorial service will be held for her family.

Memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church, 146 East Main Street, Martinsville, VA 24112.

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

To express condolences online, please visit [www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com](http://www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com).

## James Edward Scruggs

James Edward Scruggs, III, 78, of Axton, Virginia passed away Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at Woltz Hospice Home. He was born October 19, 1943, in Danville, Virginia to the late James Edwards Scruggs, Jr. and Laura Stephens Scruggs. He proudly served his country in the National Guard and had been employed at Goodyear. He enjoyed fishing, NASCAR racing, working on his show car, hunting and the outdoors. James did drag race in the late 60's and 70's. He had good morals and was a great dad.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Nan Cassidy.

He is survived by his wife, Joan Gibson Scruggs; sons, James Edward Scruggs, IV (Audrey) and Michael Stuart Scruggs (Brooke); and grandchildren, Sabastian, Vivian and Madeline.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at a later date.

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

## Arthur Michael Sleeper

Dr. Arthur Michael Sleeper, 77, of Martinsville, VA, passed away on April 19, 2022.

Arthur was born on September 15, 1944 to Samuel and Leah Sleeper in Worcester, MA. He graduated from the University of Miami School of Medicine in 1987 and completed his Fellowship in Oncology from the National Institute of Health in 1994. Prior to Arthur obtaining his MD in Oncology, he had a Ph.D. in Physics.

In the Spring of 1995, Arthur moved his family to Martinsville, VA where he served for 19 years as the Oncologist at the Ravenel Oncology Center at Memorial Hospital.

Arthur is survived by his wife, Sharon Sleeper; son Brendon Collins, daugh-



ter; Kasey Braun; and his grandchildren, Kieran Collins, Gwenyth Braun, and Abigail Braun; brother, Bobby Sleeper and his wife, Annie Sleeper; brother Martin Sleeper and his wife Judy Sleeper; as well as several cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Services were held at Norris Funeral Services, Inc. and Crematory, Martinsville Chapel on

Sunday, April 24, 2022.

The family requests donations be made to the Martinsville SPCA, an organization Arthur felt strongly about at 132 Joseph Martin Hwy, Martinsville, VA 24112.

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

## Randolph Gordon Cox

Randolph Gordon Cox, 57, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away April 19, 2022, at SOVAH Health of Martinsville. He was born August 25, 1964, in Franklin County, Virginia to the late Waitman Cox and Frances Cox Waller.

Randy was a professional truck driver and retired from Warren Trucking. He enjoyed spending his time with his family traveling, camping and working on things. He was known as a "Jack of all Trades." He was a loving husband, brother, father and papa. Papa was his favorite title.

He is survived by his loving wife of 28 years, Brenda Jamison Cox; daugh-



ters, Jessica Cox (Dwayne Hancock), and Jodi Hasty (Thor); son, Randy Lee Hawks; sister, Karen Harrell (John); brother, Andy Cox; mother-in-law, Frances Jamison; niece, Tyler Harrell; and grandchildren, Lilliana Hasty, Noah Alan Shuff, Jasmine Hawks, Chloe Hawks, and Zaiden Hawks; and Bubba Jay, his loving dog.

A Celebration of Life service was held on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church in Snow Creek.

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

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# 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.

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### HELP WANTED

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**P&HCC**  
Patrick & Henry Community College in Martinsville, VA has the following job openings: Welding Faculty, Industrial Electronics Technology Faculty, Janitor, Building and Grounds Technician, Workforce Grants Specialist, Workforce Grants Advisor, Science Lab Assistant, MHC After 3 Program Leader, MHC After 3 After School Instructor, and Adjunct Faculty in Communication Studies (Speech)- Patrick County and Main Campus Sites,

English, Mechatronics, NC-CER Plumbing, Nursing, and Welding. For details and application information please visit <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.

**Ferrum College - Financial Aid Counselor**  
Ferrum College is accepting applications for the entry level position of Financial Aid Counselor. The College seeks an energetic individual to become part of a successful team.

Candidates should possess the following qualifications:  
Bachelor's Degree required  
Strong Oral and written communications  
Ability to work effectively with other members of the team and with students and their families  
Ability to take initiative, work independently, and be flexible  
Proficient with good of-

fice practices such as record keeping and telephone etiquette

Knowledge and experience in database functions  
Knowledge of financial aid practices is preferred, but not required

Exceptional organizational skills and ability to multitask  
This position reports to the Director of Financial Aid. Review of applications will begin immediately. Position open until filled. Background check is required.

To apply for this position, please submit a cover letter of interest and a resume with names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references to: resumes@ferrum.edu, or Human Resources Office, Ferrum College, PO Box 1000, Ferrum, VA 24088.

**Fairy Stone State Park Now Hiring - Multiple Seasonal Positions!**  
Beach Maintenance Ranger, Beach Ranger (Life-guard), Boathouse Ranger, Contact Ranger, Food Service Ranger, Housekeeping Ranger, Maintenance Ranger.

Apply online at [www.dcr.virginia.gov/jobs](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/jobs) or at the park office, 967 Fairstone Lake Drive Stuart, VA 24171. (276) 930-2424. DCR is EOE.



# CLASSIFIEDS



## COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **May 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on each application to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **May 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia.

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

**Case R-22-05 Patrick Zane Kiser and Leighann M. Kiser**  
The property is located at 5844 Dyers Store Rd, in the Reed Creek District. The Tax Map number is 18.3/98. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of a portion of a 15-acre lot from Agricultural District A-1 to Commercial District B-1. The applicant wishes to operate a commercial auto body repair shop in a building already under construction.

**Case R-22-06 Dianna K. Brooks**  
The property is located at 51 Red Pole Hollow Dr, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 14.6/335. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of an approximately 1.5-acre lot from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to build an accessory building that exceeds the square footage limitations.

**Case R-22-07 David O. Reynolds**  
The property is located just west of 1725 Daniel Rd (Axton Post Office), in the Iriswood District. The Tax Map number is 55.3/69. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of an approximately 0.37-acre lot from Commercial District B-1 to Rural Residential District R-R. The applicant wishes to market the lot for sale as residential property.

**Case R-22-08 Sara Evans and Danyse Pirrung**  
The property is located at 87 Frith Dr, in the Ridgeway District. The Tax Map number is 52.4/34G. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of an approximately 5-acres from Industrial District I-1 to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to develop the property, pending approval of the required Special Use Permit, into an RV park campground. The applications for these requests may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.  
Lee H. Clark, AICP  
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

## CITY OF MARTINSVILLE BUDGET, FY 2022-23

Pursuant to 15.2-2506 of the Code of Virginia notice is hereby given of a Public Hearing on the proposed budget for the City of Martinsville, Virginia, for its fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Martinsville City Council will conduct the public hearing in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 55 West Church Street, on Tuesday, May 10, 2022, beginning at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as practicable. The public is encouraged to attend and comment.

The amounts listed below, except for School Funds, are recommendations from the City Council and the City Manager. The Public Hearing is being conducted to allow citizens of the community an opportunity to comment regarding the proposed budget. Following the public hearing, City Council may take action to approve the recommended budget or modify the amounts as they deem appropriate.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022-2023

FUND	PROJECTED REVENUES	BUDGETED EXPENDITURES	CHANGES FUND BALANCE
General	\$ 33,172,346	\$ 37,107,876	(\$3,935,530)
Meals Tax	\$ 2,722,721	\$ 2,722,721	\$ 0
Capital Reserve	\$ 1,451,116	\$ 1,451,116	\$ 0
Refuse	\$ 2,018,795	\$ 2,226,077	(\$207,282)
Telecom	\$ 2,183,801	\$ 2,193,309	(\$9,508)
Water	\$ 3,925,600	\$ 3,292,264	\$ 633,336
Sewer	\$ 4,597,012	\$ 6,208,661	(\$1,611,649)
Electric	\$ 20,093,563	\$ 21,350,864	(\$1,257,301)
CDBG	\$ 1,183,320	\$ 1,090,360	\$ 92,960
Cafeteria*	\$ 1,705,775	\$ 2,293,640	(\$587,865)
School Operating*	\$ 27,404,205	\$ 27,404,205	\$ 0
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 100,458,254</b>	<b>\$ 107,341,093</b>	<b>(\$6,882,839)</b>

\*Cafeteria and School Operating Funds information provided by School Personnel.

#### Tax Rates:

Real Estate: \$1.03975 per \$100 assessed value  
Personal Property: \$2.30 per \$100 assessed value (unchanged)  
Machinery/Tools: \$1.85 per \$100 assessed value (unchanged)

#### Refuse Collection Fees:

7% increase across all categories

## LEGAL NOTICE

### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF THE AMENDED APPLICATION OF AXTON SOLAR, LLC FOR CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR A NOMINAL 201.1 MEGAWATT SOLAR GENERATING FACILITY IN HENRY AND PITTSYLVANIA COUNTIES, VIRGINIA

CASE NO. PUR-2021-00085

On March 31, 2022, pursuant to Virginia Code ("Code") §§ 56-46.1 and 56-580 D, and the Filing Requirements in Support of Applications for Authority to Construct and Operate an Electric Generating Facility, 20 VAC 5-302-10 *et seq.*, Axton solar, LLC ("Axton" or "Applicant") filed an amended application and supporting documents ("Amended Application") for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPCN") with the State Corporation Commission ("Commission"). Through its Amended Application, Axton seeks to construct a nominal 201.1 megawatt ("MW") solar generating facility in Henry and Pittsylvania Counties, Virginia ("Project"). Axton anticipates starting construction of the Project on January 31, 2023, with substantial completion by December 31, 2023.

Axton represents that the Project will use photovoltaic ("PV") electric generation system technology producing solar energy, including inverters and an on-site substation. The Project will have a rated generation capacity of 201.1 MW and would consist of approximately 421,652 PV modules fitted on single axis solar trackers. The Project requires the use of an on-site collector substation to collect the power received from collector lines and convert the voltage from 34.5 kilovolts ("kV") to 138 kV.

According to the Amended Application, the Project would interconnect with the Appalachian Power Company ("APCo") transmission system via a new station cut into the Axton to Danville No. 1 138 kV transmission line. To accommodate the interconnection, a new three circuit breaker 138 kV switching station physically configured in a breaker and half bus arrangement but operated as a ring-bus will be constructed. Installation of associated protection and control equipment will also be required.

Axton represents that the Project would be located in western Pittsylvania County and eastern Henry County and consists of approximately 3,000 acres, of which approximately 1,218 acres will be used for the solar generating facility. Axton states that the Project would operate, at a minimum, for the life of a long-term Power Purchase Agreement ("PPA"). Axton further represents that the initial term of the PPA for the solar generating facility is anticipated to be 15 years with additional terms possible. The lifespan of the solar facility equipment is estimated to be 40 years.

Axton asserts that there will be minimal environmental effects associated with the Project. Axton further asserts that it will comply with all necessary conditions imposed by the regulatory agencies with regulatory responsibilities for all environmental aspects of the Project to ensure protection of public health and the environment. Axton further states the Project is a solar generation facility, and as such, it will not emit pollutants during operation and no air or pollution permits are required.

Axton states that in accordance with § 56-580 D of the Code, the Project is not contrary to the public interest. Axton avers that the Project would also promote the public interest by providing economic benefits to Pittsylvania County, Henry County, and the surrounding area. Axton further states that the Project will have no material adverse effect on the reliability of electric service provided by any regulated public utility and that only minor upgrades to the electric transmission system would be required as a result of the Project. Axton represents that it is not a regulated utility and that the business risk associated with the Project will be borne solely by it, with no impact on ratepayers in Virginia.

#### Description of the Proposed Project

The Project will be constructed across approximately 13 noncontiguous areas, including 34 privately owned parcels in Henry County and 22 privately owned parcels in Pittsylvania County. The Henry County portion of the Project site consists of approximately 1,642 acres of privately owned property. The Pittsylvania County portion of the Project site consists of approximately 1,398 acres of privately owned property.

The Project site is noncontiguous but is generally bound to the south by U.S. Route 58 (Martinsville Highway), to the northwest by State Route 57, to the north by the northern section of Medical Center Road and State Route 612, and to the east by Whispering Pines Road. The Project is in a rural area with land consisting predominately of farmland. The Project will be located on land zoned A-1, Agricultural, except for one parcel, which is zoned B1, Commercial.

The Project will include approximately 0.1 mile of 138 kV generation-tie line to interconnect with the transmission system. The line travels west from the solar facility substation to the new 138 kV switching station. No alternative routes are proposed for the Project. The maximum structure height is 100 feet, subject to final design.

All distances and directions are approximate. A sketch map of the proposed Project accompanies this notice. A more detailed map of the proposed routes may be viewed on the Commission's website: [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Transmission-Line-Projects](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Transmission-Line-Projects). A more complete description of the Proposed Application may be found in the Amended Application.

The Commission may consider Project site(s) and/or generation-tie line(s) and transmission route(s) not significantly different from the Project site and/or generation-tie line(s) and transmission route(s) described in this notice without additional notice to the public.

A Hearing Examiner's Procedural Ruling was entered in this proceeding that, among other things, scheduled public hearings on Axton's Amended Application. On August 1, 2022, at 10 a.m., the Commission will hold a telephonic hearing, with no witness present in the Commission's courtroom, for the purpose of receiving the testimony of public witnesses. On or before July 27, 2022, any person desiring to offer testimony as a public witness shall provide to the Commission (a) your name, and (b) the telephone number that you wish the Commission to call during the hearing to receive your testimony. This information may be provided to the Commission in three ways: (i) by filling out a form on the Commission's website at [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting); (ii) by completing and emailing the PDF version

of this form to [SCCInfo@scc.virginia.gov](mailto:SCCInfo@scc.virginia.gov); or (iii) by calling (804) 371-9141. This public witness hearing will be webcast at [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting).

The Commission has taken judicial notice of the ongoing public health emergency related to the spread of COVID-19, and the declarations of emergency issued at both the state and federal levels. In accordance therewith, all pleadings, briefs, or other documents required to be served if this matter should be submitted electronically to the extent authorized by 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure ("Rules of Practice"). Confidential and Extraordinarily Sensitive Information shall not be submitted electronically and should comply with 5 VAC 5-20-170, *Sensitive information*, of the Rules of Practice. For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, any person seeking to hand deliver and physically file or submit any pleading or other document shall contact the Clerk's Office Document Control Center at (804) 371-9838 to arrange the delivery.

On August 2, 2022, at 10 a.m., either in the Commission's second floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or by electronic means, the Commission will convene a hearing to receive testimony and evidence related to the Amended Application from Axton, any respondents, and the Commission's Staff. Further details on this hearing will be provided by subsequent Commission Order or Hearing Examiner's Ruling.

Copies of the Amended Application and other supporting materials may be inspected during regular business hours at the following location:

Axton Solar, LLC  
10 Franklin Road S.E.  
Suite 900  
Roanoke, Virginia 24011  
<https://axtonsolarproject.info/>

An electronic copy of the Amended Application also may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Applicant, Gregory D. Habebe, Esquire, Gentry Locke Attorneys, 919 E. Main Street, Suite 1130, Richmond, Virginia 23219. Interested persons also may download unofficial copies from the Commission's website: [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information).

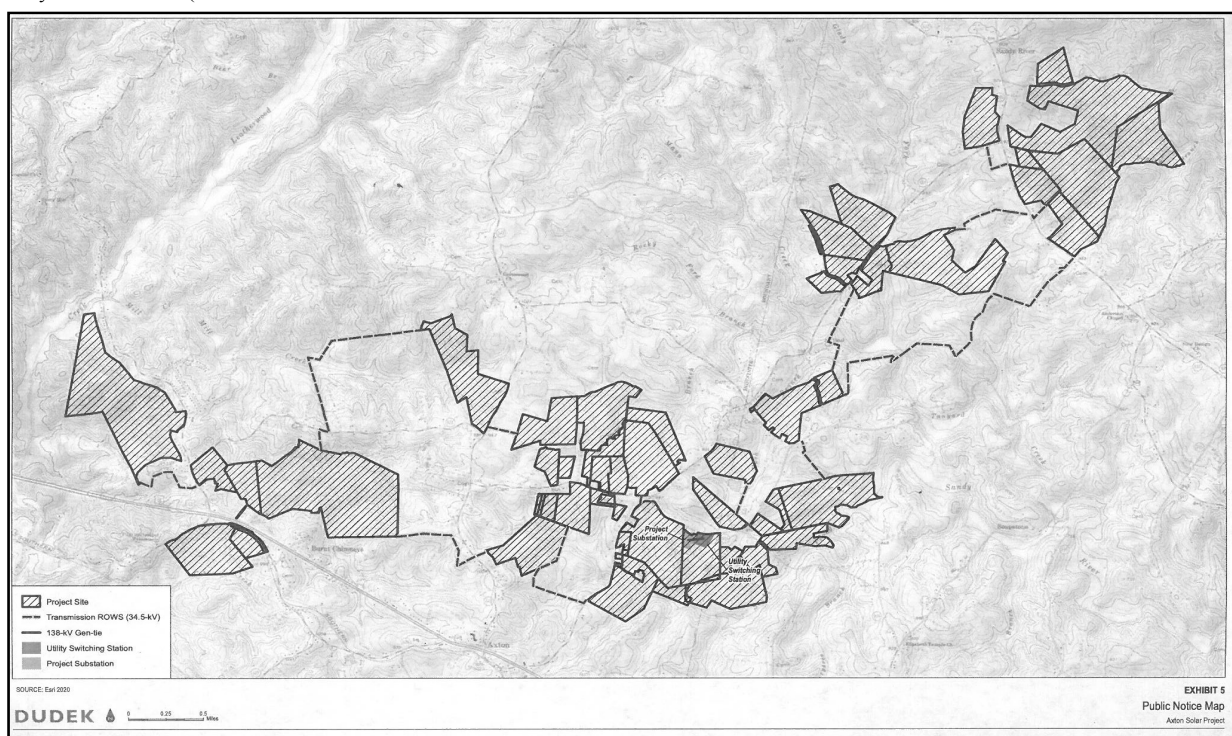
Any person or entity may participate as a respondent in this proceeding by filing, on or before June 8, 2022, a notice of participation with the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 232182118, or at [scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling](http://scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling). Notices of participation shall include the email addresses of the party or its counsel. The respondent simultaneously shall serve a copy of the notice of participation on counsel to the Applicant. Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice, any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. Any organization, corporation, or government body participating as a respondent must be represented by counsel as required by 5 VAC 5-20-30, *Counsel*, of the Rules of Practice. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2021-00085. For additional information about participation as a respondent, any person or entity should obtain a copy of the Hearing Examiner's Procedural Ruling.

On or before July 21, 2022, any interested person may file comments on the Amended Application by following the instructions found on the Commission's website: [scc.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments](http://scc.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments), or by filing such comments with the Clerk of the Commission at the physical address set forth above. All such comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2021-00085.

Any documents filed in paper form with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission in this docket may use both sides of the paper. In all other respects, except as modified by the Hearing Examiner's Protective Ruling, all filings shall comply fully with the requirements of 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice.

Axton's Amended Application, the Commission's Rules of Practice, the Hearing Examiner's Procedural Ruling, and other documents filed in the case may be viewed at [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information).

**AXTON SOLAR LLC**



# New College Institute to host AFA CyberCamp

NCI is one of the distinguished organizations selected to host an AFA CyberCamp this summer. As an AFA CyberCamp host, NCI will receive software and a hands-on curriculum kit designed to teach students about cyber safety, cyber ethics, and critical network security skills and tools. Each AFA CyberCamp culminates in an exciting team-based competition that puts the campers in the role of IT administrators tasked with finding and addressing cybersecurity vulnerabilities in simulated network environments. The local AFA CyberCamp com-

petitions will closely mimic AFA's annual CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, which will enter its fifteenth season in October. Many students have already signed up for NCI's AFA CyberCamp, which will be held July 18 to July 22, 2022 and taught by Teh-Way Lee, NCI's Manager of Technology Integration and Janet Copenhaver, Technology Instructor at NCI. Copenhaver shares, "Teenagers and young adults under the age of 25 are the most vulnerable target population for cybercrimes. Thus, it is important to keep fighting and identifying these cyber

threats. Our CyberCamp focuses on cyber threats and identifies ways to manage and secure your computer." The Air Force Association created the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Education Program in 2009 to excite K-12 students about cybersecurity and other STEM disciplines critical to our nation's future. In addition to the summer CyberCamp program, CyberPatriot offers a variety of programs aimed at educating the public about the importance of cybersecurity. These programs include the nation's largest youth cyber defense competition for high school and middle school

students, an Elementary School Cyber Education Initiative (ESCEI), a children's literature series, CyberGenerations — a senior citizen cyber safety initiative, and a Tech Caregivers program designed to encourage cyber-savvy volunteers to give back to their communities. CyberPatriot greatly benefits from the support and technical expertise of the program's presenting sponsor, Northrop Grumman Foundation, along with Cyber Diamond sponsors AT&T and the AT&T Foundation, Boeing, Cisco, Microsoft, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Cyber Gold spon-

sors Air Force Reserve, BNY Mellon, Facebook, Symantec, and the USAA Foundation; and Cyber Silver sponsors the Air Force STEM, American Military University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Gannon University, Leidos, Mastercard, and University of Maryland Global Campus. For more information about CyberPatriot, visit [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org). To learn more and register for NCI's AFA CyberCamp, visit <https://newcollegeinstitute.org/degrees-and-training/k-12/programs/cyberpatriot-cybercamp/>

# P&HCC, NCI partner to develop training following Google investment

Last week, Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced Google's pledge to invest \$300 million in Virginia. This statewide investment will have a direct impact on the Martinsville, Henry and Patrick County area as some of this money will be funneled directly into developing new technology-related training opportunities through Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) and the New College Institute (NCI). As a part of the larger investment, Google is providing a \$250,000 grant to bring computer science opportunities to students. Virginia's computer science advocacy and service provider, CodeVA will partner with Virginia's community

colleges and higher education centers (including NCI) to offer this training. In response to the news, Patrick & Henry Community College President Dr. Greg Hodges and New College Institute's Interim Executive Director Karen Jackson have initiated discussions on how the two institutions can collaborate to leverage the proposed offerings and deliver a seamless training experience for students of all ages in Martinsville, Henry and Patrick County. Together, these partners will develop a network of computer science lab schools, provide computer science professional development opportunities for instructors and

expand computer science resources for Virginia's students and workers looking to re-skill for the knowledge economy. "By aligning resources made available through this new program, learners of all ages will have a unique opportunity to gain industry relevant IT skills, seamlessly pursue credentials and/or academic credit," Jackson said. "With our two institutions in such close proximity, it is a great opportunity for us to 'double down' on the opportunity and develop an unparalleled experience for students and potential employers alike." During Google's statewide announcement event, Youngkin said, "We have to prepare this

workforce for the future. The opportunities are growing faster than we can believe." He added the partnership "will prepare the next generation of Virginia's students for careers in computer science." P&HCC and NCI will provide access to professional certification training locally to help workers and learners gain in-demand technology skills. The training opportunities are anticipated to be a boon to students, workers, and employers in the Martinsville, Henry, and Patrick County areas. According to Google's landing page for digital education, "digital tools are creating new opportunities for Americans ... 75 percent of program graduates report a posi-

tive career impact ... 78 percent of small business report that adopting digital tools over the last two years created new opportunities for their business." In rural localities, access to this training can be a crucial step for communities seeking to keep up with emerging and transforming markets. A report published in Ag Decision Maker reveals that rural communities have historically ranked below larger metropolitan areas on many benchmark markers for knowledge economy-based work. The report stated, "Despite trailing metro areas in capturing knowledge occupations, current rural job growth is being driven by high-skill industries often associ-

# Applications for Art Scholarship due May 2

Applications for Piedmont Arts' art scholarships are due Monday, May 2 by 11:59 p.m. The Museum's Nicodemus Hufford Memorial Arts Scholarship and the Harold Knowlton Work Memorial Scholarship provide funds for students from Martinsville-

Henry County to pursue a degree in the visual or performing arts at an accredited four-year institution. The Hufford Scholarship is available to graduating high school seniors who are residents of Martinsville or Henry County, or who attend

schools located in Martinsville or Henry County, who have been accepted into a visual or performing arts program at an accredited four-year institution. Hufford scholarships of up to \$1,000 are available. The Work Scholarship is available to rising college

sophomores, juniors and seniors who graduated from a high school in Martinsville or Henry County and are currently pursuing a degree in the visual or performing arts at an accredited four-year institution. Work scholarships of up to \$2,500 are available.

Applicants for both scholarships are required to attend a personal interview and audition with the Piedmont Arts Scholarship Committee. To submit a scholarship application, visit [piedmontarts.org/info/art-scholarships.cfm](http://piedmontarts.org/info/art-scholarships.cfm).

# Bumpy ride predicted even after decline in gas prices

Average gasoline prices in Virginia have fallen 4.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.93/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 19.5 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand \$1.22/g higher than a year ago. According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$3.41/g yesterday while the most expensive was

\$5.49/g, a difference of \$2.08/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$3.41/g while the highest was \$5.49/g, a difference of \$2.08/g. The national average price of gasoline has fallen 3.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.06/g today. The national average is down 21.1 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.21/g higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 mil-

lion weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country. Historical gasoline prices in Virginia and the national average going back ten years: April 18, 2021: \$2.72/g (U.S. Average: \$2.85/g) April 18, 2020: \$1.73/g (U.S. Average: \$1.78/g) April 18, 2019: \$2.59/g (U.S. Average: \$2.84/g) April 18, 2018: \$2.56/g (U.S. Average: \$2.74/g) April 18, 2017: \$2.23/g (U.S. Average: \$2.41/g)

April 18, 2016: \$1.94/g (U.S. Average: \$2.11/g) April 18, 2015: \$2.24/g (U.S. Average: \$2.44/g) April 18, 2014: \$3.49/g (U.S. Average: \$3.66/g) April 18, 2013: \$3.43/g (U.S. Average: \$3.51/g) April 18, 2012: \$3.88/g (U.S. Average: \$3.90/g) Neighboring areas and their current gas prices: Roanoke- \$3.85/g, down 4.5 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.90/g. Richmond- \$3.91/g, down 5.6 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.96/g.

West Virginia- \$3.92/g, down 5.7 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.98/g. "We've now seen the national average price of gasoline decline every week for the last month, a feat we most likely would not have expected ahead of summer and given the continued turns in Russia's war on Ukraine. However, the downturn could slow or could even reverse in the days ahead if the rally in oil prices continues," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "A barrel of crude is now \$14 higher than it was last week, as the European Union weighs placing harsher sanctions on Russia. This could further tilt the delicate balance of supply and demand in the wrong way, potentially sending oil prices up significantly if implemented. The path forward at the pump remains murky, however, with many possible outcomes, so motorists should be prepared for a bumpy ride."

# Farmer trading cards hitting it out of the park

It's baseball season, but Loudoun County

students are swapping a different set of trading

cards this spring—ones featuring local farmers.

For the sixth year, Loudoun County Economic Development and Loudoun County Public Schools' School Nutrition Services teamed up to host the popular farmer trading cards program. The program distributes the cards to county elementary students to educate them about where their food comes from and to pique their interest in future agricultural careers. Each card highlights a different farmer and their business.

farmers produce a range of commodities including animal fiber, cut flowers, hay, herbs, grains, livestock, microgreens, poultry, tea, vegetables and wool. Chris Lutman of Lutman Farm grows corn, hay, soybeans and wheat with his family on 1,300 acres. As one of the featured farmers, he hopes students will gain an interest in modern agriculture and understand that larger farms like his are "a lot more localized than you might think."

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"It's been a lot of fun to see how much the kids really do enjoy them," said Tia Walbridge, Loudoun County Farm Bureau president. "It's a really creative way to get more kids engaged and thinking about agriculture as something they might get involved in." This year's set of trading cards feature nine Loudoun farmers with a variety of operations. Showcasing the area's agricultural diversity, the

jumpstart their minds," Lutman said. "There's many different directions you can go in the agriculture community." According to the most recent Census of Agriculture, conducted in 2017, Loudoun had 1,259 farms on 121,932 acres that year, and the market value of all agricultural products sold was more than \$43 million. And while Loudoun has lost farmland over the years, farmers and their contributions remain a vital part of the county, noted Walbridge. "It's important to make sure we promote that you can have your own farm, and that you can produce food for your community," she said. "There's such a direct link to the producer of your food. These trading cards really do help show the kids that there are people right here in their community raising sheep, raising cows, and who you can buy your food from."

Even though we're a commercial operation and our grain goes into a big bin so to speak, it's fed to animals that essentially make it back to the supermarket," Lutman said. In addition to being featured on the cards, Lutman and the other farmers appear in videos that allow them to share their farms with the students. "It's a great way to



# Area students commit at P&HCC event



More than 30 high school seniors from Martinsville and Henry County participated in the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3) National Letter of Intent Signing on Tuesday, signing letters of intent to attend Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) for coursework in welding, motorsports, precision machining, and other workforce-readiness programs of study.



Of the 10 students who signaled their intent to study welding at P&HCC, one was Trinity Hylton (center), the only female student to sign that day. She discovered a love of welding while working alongside her father, a county school employee.

## Callie Hietala Staff writer

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) took part in the NC3 National Letter of Intent Signing on April 26, 2022. The event, sponsored by the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3) mirrors the NCAA's National Signing Day for athletes who commit to play sports in college. It is designed to honor students who are entering a technical field and to celebrate the vital work done in these fields.

P&HCC participated in the signing event with more than 65 institutions across the country, with two ceremonies—one in Martinsville and another in Patrick County, as students from Magna Vista, Bassett, Martinsville, and Patrick County high schools signed letters of intent to join the college this fall to focus on a workforce readiness-related area of study.

P&HCC President Greg Hodges, who welcomed attendees to the college's Manufacturing, Engineering, and Technology (MET) Complex for the Martinsville event, said the college was a national leader in the certifications that it provides.

As of April 30, for the current semester, P&HCC students have earned 232 NC3 certifications, bringing the total to 708 altogether, "which puts us among the nation's top performing schools, so you're joining an illustrious group and we are absolutely delighted to have you," he said.

The Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development

Corporation (EDC) Director of Tourism and Talent Development Sarah Hodges told the students waiting to sign their letters that the most important thing she learned during her 10 years working at Walt Disney World was that "you have to work hard and you have the opportunity to make yourself invaluable, and that's what you have done today in your pursuits and your commitment of your training and education."

In her work at the EDC, she said one of the most common requests is for talented young professionals, particularly in the career and technical trades.

"Skilled tradespeople are in high demand and are critical for our economy. Today, you all have stepped up to meet that need."

A number of local employers were set up in the hallway to discuss career opportunities with the high school students.

Steve Lehr, business development manager for Festo Didactic, said "You today, on this national signing day, are committing to your future." When an athlete signs with a school, there is only a slim chance they will go pro, with very few going on to work in the profession they signed with a school for, he said.

"You on the other hand as you commit today, more than likely will go pro in the thing that you're signing up for today. You're more likely to own a business, employ people, and earn a living that will pay you and help you to live your dream," he said.

Before the signing, Hodges presented Magna Vista student Wesley

Dyckman with a Skilled Trades – 3M Transformational Scholarship of \$1,000, provided through 3M and NC3. She said only 50 students are selected for the scholarship annually. Dyckman plans to study Industrial Electronics Technology at P&HCC.

All of the students who participated in the signing and live in Martinsville and Henry County also are eligible for the SEED program, which would allow them to attend P&HCC at no cost, providing they meet certain requirements including a minimum 2.3 grade point average.

At the end of the ceremony, Hodges congratulated each of the students and welcomed them to "a very lucrative career."

Dr. Zebedee Talley, superintendent of Martinsville City Schools, said, "I think it's critical for our young people to be able to have jobs that's going to afford them ways to take care of their families. I think it's critical for the community and I appreciate this college being here and offering viable jobs."

"It especially gives and opportunity for our young people to come back and give back to our community, to work here and attracts other industries to know we're going to have a trained workforce."

He said he appreciated the independence the training the students would receive. "They can go out and be self-employed. These skills, you can start your own company, and who knows where any of these young people will be 10 years from now."

Henry County Schools Superintendent Sandy Strayer

said, "this is just the beginning of their transition from being a K-12 student to the rest of their life. I'm proud that we've made a foundation to help the students follow their passions and be able to make a great livelihood from something they love doing. It'll never feel like work as long as you love what you're doing every day."

Among the students participating was Trinity Hylton, who was the only female student, and declared her intent to study welding.

She said she chose the field because she's always worked alongside her father, who does electrical work for the county school division. "I really enjoyed it so I thought I'd go into it professionally. It feels great being one of the only women in here doing this. I think I'll make other women proud," she added.

Hylton is not the first woman to study a trade at P&HCC, according to Hodges. "We would love to see more." He noted that women have participated in "every one of these pathways," and some have found "serious success in motorsports, welding, industrial electronics, machining. We're always delighted to see what are typically thought of as non-traditional students in these pathways, whether it's a male in nursing or a female in welding, because the careers and salaries are just fantastic."

Hodges said the college's CTE programs "continue to be diversified, both by gender and race and ethnicity, and that's very, very important to us. Our equity work here at the college is about lift-

ing our students and their families out of poverty. That is our single most important barometer, so getting first-generation, low income students of color engaged in these pathways that lead to high demand jobs with great salaries is priority number one for us."

The Martinsville and Henry County students who were recognized for their commitments to P&HCC and the pursuit of technical fields were:

Computer Aided Design and Drafting: Hailey Renee Ashworth.

General Engineering

Technology: Hunter Nicholas Eanes.

Industrial Electronics

Technology: Xavier L. Ashley, Cole D. Burgess, Kaedon Anthony Byrd, Kaden Elias Collins, Wesley M. Dyckman, John Nathan Glenn, Mason E. Newman, and Jeffrey Ethan Wallace.

Motorsports Technology:

Christopher Charlie Cline, Tiquise Jorod Fitzgerald, Shawn Foley, Omarion Hairston, Nicholas Alexander Jacobson, Christian Pounds, Dwain Jelene Ross Jr., Joshua Michael Tusinger, Steven Allen Whorley, and Chase Reid Wilson.

Precision Machining: Austin Wayne Gammons.

Welding: Bryce Boothe, Avery Harrison Brown, Austin Gammons, Kamierion Omar Haith, Jordan R. Hartssock, Trinity Grace Hylton, Rodney William Gage Ragans, William Alexander Ryan, Jake Hunter Sharpe, Nickolas Stoneman, Acoryon Quamaine Tinsley and Paxton Medlock Tucker.

## The 3 Rs of Natural Gas Safety

Knowing how to recognize, react and report natural gas emergencies can help keep you and your community safe.



### 1. RECOGNIZE:

Signs of a natural gas leak may include:

- "Rotten egg" smell
- Blowing or hissing sound
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area
- Dirt or dust blowing from a hole in the ground
- Bubbling in wet or flooded areas
- Flames, if a leak has ignited



### 2. REACT:

- Leave the area immediately, without using anything that could ignite the natural gas
- Do not use any electrical device, such as light switches, telephones /cell phones, garage door openers
- Do not use an open flame, matches or lighters
- Do not try to locate the source of the gas leak
- Do not try to shut off any natural gas valves or gas appliances
- Do not start vehicles
- Do not re-enter the building or return to the area until our employee says it's safe to do so



### 3. REPORT:

- Go to a safe location
- Then call 9-1-1 and Southwestern VA Gas **276-632-5665** any time day or night



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# Bus to Broadway heads to DPAC for 'Hamilton'

Piedmont Arts' Bus to Broadway will take guests to see the blockbuster musical "Hamilton" at Durham Performing Arts Center (DPAC) in Durham, North Carolina on Thursday, June 2.

"Hamilton" is the story of America then, told by America now. Featuring a score that blends hip-hop, jazz, R&B, and Broadway, "Hamilton" has taken the story of American founding father Alexander Hamilton and created a revolutionary moment in theatre, and a musical that has had a profound impact on culture, politics, and education. With book, music, and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda, direction by Thomas Kail, choreography by Andy Blankenbuehler, and musical supervision and orchestrations by Alex Lacamoire, "Hamilton" is based on Ron Chernow's acclaimed biography. It has won Tony, Grammy,



and Olivier Awards, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and an unprecedented special citation from the Kennedy Center Honors.

The Bus to Broadway provides transport to and from the venue. Bus departs Piedmont Arts at 5 p.m. for a 7:30 p.m.

performance at DPAC. Guests may bring food and beverages to enjoy on the bus. Boxed dinners are also available for

purchase for \$10 each. Boxed dinners must be purchased in advance.

Tickets to Bus to Broadway Hamilton

are \$155 per person, and are on sale now at Piedmont Arts or online at PiedmontArts.org

## Food insecurity, mental health are challenges for VA college students

Community college students in Virginia still face food insecurity a year after survey data shows the COVID pandemic created greater challenges due to economic and other disruptions. Data from the state's 23 community colleges in 2021 showed one in three students self-reported food insecurity, or being unsure where their next meal is coming from. While more needs to be done, said Van Wilson, associate vice

chancellor for student experience and strategic initiatives for the Virginia Community College System, food programs went online and remained available for students during the pandemic. He said that and other changes led to the discovery of a key additional service that was needed. "Exacerbated by the pandemic was the need for mental-health services," he said. "Our board had a policy that prohibited

institutions from providing those types of services, and they only could do that through community-based organizations." Last November, he said, the board reversed that policy and schools were able to deploy telehealth services for mental health. The survey also showed 42 percent of Virginia students reported housing insecurity, and 10 percent had experienced homelessness in the previous 12 months. Wilson said more needs to be

done to address college hunger, including help for students before they even get to college, such as expanding free and reduced-price lunch programs in high schools. "A student who is facing a challenge as a high school student, in order to be successful in the post-secondary environment," he said, "they need some of those same kind of services that they are accustomed to in that K-through-12 space, to sup-

port them moving forward." The nonprofit Swipe Out Hunger recently collected data from schools in every state, finding campus pantries play a more central and vital role in student life than ever, with almost half of school food pantries launching in the last five years. Virginia News Connection. Support for this reporting was provided by Lumina Foundation.

-Chance Dorland

## Kick off riding season with the Virginia Rider Training Program

Open roadways and adrenaline-pumping adventure are what motorcycle riding is all about, but when it comes to your safety, are you riding smart?

Regardless of how long you have been riding, keeping your skills sharp is essential. The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offers

training for motorcyclists of all skill levels through the Virginia Rider Training Program.

Courses are taught by certified motorcycle safety

instructors and provide the opportunity to learn new techniques and practice skills in a controlled, safe environment. Classes are offered at community colleges and other locations throughout the state.

Not only can taking a motorcycle safety course help prepare you for your motorcycle endorsement, it can also save your life. Last year in Virginia, there were 2,048 crashes involving motorcycles resulting in 102 motorcyclist deaths and 1,682 motorcyclist injuries, 737 of which were serious injuries. From 2014-2020, more than 75% of motorcyclists killed in crashes in Virginia were not properly licensed. As failure to maintain control of a motorcycle

is a leading cause of crashes, motorcyclists are urged to always obey the posted speed limit.

"Protecting yourself for the ride ahead - with the right gear and the right training - is the best way to make sure you get home safely," said Acting DMV Commissioner Linda Ford, the Governor's Highway Safety Representative. "Motorists need to look out for motorcyclists, but motorcyclists must also look out for themselves. Safety is a shared responsibility, one we all value and must take seriously."

Wearing the proper gear, from head to toe, can often save a motorcyclist's life during a crash. A helmet is the most important piece

of safety equipment that a motorcyclist can wear. In Virginia, the law requires that motorcyclists and their passengers always wear a helmet that must meet or exceed the standards as specified by the Snell Memorial Foundation, the American National Standards Institute, Inc., or the U.S. Department of Transportation. A rider without a helmet is 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal head injury than a helmeted rider.

To view DMV's safety message about the importance of gearing up before heading out on a motorcycle, click here. To learn more about the Rider Training Program, visit [https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#m\\_course.asp](https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/drivers/#m_course.asp).

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P&HCC is an EEO Institution.

## Collinsville residents die in crash

The Virginia State Police are investigating a two-vehicle crash, which resulted in the deaths of a Collinsville couple on April 21. The crash occurred at 5:29 p.m. on U.S. 220, at the intersection of Fork Mountain Road in Franklin County.

A 2017 Chevrolet Cruze was crossing U.S. 220 and failed to yield the right-of-way. The Cruze was struck by a 2007 Freightliner tractor-trailer, which was traveling north on U.S. 220, according to a release.

The driver of the

Chevrolet was identified as Wallace Lester Gusler, 90, and the passenger was identified as Ruby Zelma Gusler, 86, both of Collinsville, Va.

Both were wearing their seatbelts and both died at the scene.

No charges are pending.

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