

# HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, July 2, 2022

(USPS-6)

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**Tim Hall retired as Henry County's Administrator on Thursday. He joined Henry County in Dec. 1998 as its Public Information officer and took the top job in Aug. 2012.**

## Hall's retirement marks the end of a legacy

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

"Life's what happens when you're busy making other plans," Henry County Administrator Tim Hall said, quoting John Lennon, as he reflected back on the career trajectory that brought him into public service.

The quote is an appropriate one. Hall never planned on a career in public service.

After more than two decades serving Henry County, including 10 years as County Administrator, Hall retired on June 30.

As Hall's decades-long career in service to the county, a career he never envisioned, drew to a close, he reflected on the roads that led him to his current role, and the people who helped shape him along the way.

Hall was born in Lee County in far southwest Virginia. His family moved to Martinsville when he was 9 or 10 years old when

his father, who worked in A.M. radio, took a job in the area. "Back in that day," Hall recalled, "A.M. radio was the icon." People tuned in to hear his father deliver the day's news.

Hall credits his parents with instilling in him a strong work ethic, a healthy dose of humility, and the idea of "taking responsibility when it's your screw-up and doing your best to fix it," lessons that Hall returned to several times when reflecting on his tenure with the county.

Hall graduated Martinsville High School in 1977 and, following in his father's footsteps, studied journalism and communications at James Madison University (JMU). As a student, he worked for newspapers in Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, and even his college's student newspaper.

Hall recalled submitting his first article for his college paper and receiving a

See **End of a Legacy**, page 3



**Del. Danny Marshall, R-Danville, presents House Joint Resolution No. 399 to retiring County Administrator Tim Hall (left).**

## Good and faithful servant: retiring County Administrator honored

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Tim Hall's time as County Administrator and Public Service Authority (PSA) General Manager for Henry County ended Thursday, June 30. At his final meeting of the Henry County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Hall was honored with two resolutions.

Del. Danny Marshall, R-Danville, attended the

meeting to present House Joint Resolution No. 399 commending Hall who, he said, "has ably served the residents of Henry County for nearly a decade" in his dual roles.

The resolution stated that "during Tim Hall's tenure, Henry County announced more than \$500 million in capital investments representing more than 3,600 new jobs in the region" and that Hall "has served the

## County administrator speaks out against "disinformation" regarding deputy pay

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

At his final meeting of the Henry County Board of Supervisors as County Administrator, Tim Hall addressed what he termed disinformation regarding pay rates for Henry County Sheriff's deputies on Tuesday.

Despite posts on social media and other claims to the contrary, "the county is not absorbing, diverting, or otherwise taking the Comp Board money away for other uses," Hall said.

"Lately there has been significant social media chatter about Henry County deputies being denied their Commonwealth of Virginia raises of 5 percent, effective July 1," Hall told the board.



**Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry was among several members of law enforcement to discuss the need for increased pay during the May meeting of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.**

"Much of the chatter says the same thing—that Henry County absorbed this state money, and Henry County is not giving it to the deputies. This allegation is absolutely false."

See **County Administrator speaks out**, page 4

## Contract once again under scrutiny in city

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

The contract of City Attorney Eric Monday was once again the subject of heated debate at the June 28 meeting of the Martinsville City Council. Council members Danny Turner and Tammy Pearson were united in their determination to discuss the issue publicly, while the rest of council were adamantly opposed.

The subject was broached by Pearson during comments from council as the public meeting was drawing to a close.

In reviewing minutes from the previous council meeting, Pearson said that Turner brought up a motion to review Monday's contract as City Attorney.

At that June 14 meeting, Turner requested council consider reviewing Monday's contract "to clean it up and make it solely a Martinsville contract."

A copy of the contract later provided by Turner, dated 2007, stated that Monday's employment agreement was made between the Patrick County Board of Supervisors and Martinsville City Council and employed Monday as Patrick's county attorney and Martinsville's city attorney.

It further noted that, should Monday be terminated for reasons other than real or suspected malfeasance or the commission of a crime, he would be paid a \$100,000 severance.



**City Council Member Tammy Pearson (far left) argues that City Attorney Eric Monday's contract can be discussed outside of closed session as council has a fiduciary responsibility to the city and Monday's contract is paid using public funds. Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles (center) and Mayor Kathy Lawson (right) both voted against Pearson's motion to use unexpended budget funds to have outside council review Monday's contract.**

Turner argued that, as Monday no longer worked for Patrick County, the contract should be rewritten.

"I know we said we were tabling that for closed session," Pearson said Tuesday night. "I understand that from a negotiation perspective, but I would like to go ahead and continue that motion to see where we go with the next steps."

"Again, that's an HR (human resources) issue," said Council Member Chad Martin, echoing an argument from last meeting that personnel matters should not be discussed in open session.

"No, it's not," Pearson said sharply,

before Martin finished his sentence. "We have a fiduciary responsibility to the city since this is utilizing public funds for a contract and the contract is under time for renewal. I would like to see us make a motion whether we are going to go forward with the renewal, whether we terminate it now, or what we do going forward. It is something we can do in public."

"We had that motion and a second and it was discussed," Mayor Kathy Lawson said.

"No, it wasn't discussed," said Turner. "It was not."

"It wasn't discussed," Pearson agreed.

See **Contract Under Scrutiny**, page 7

## New ideas percolating for uptown coffee shop

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Things are perking up at The Ground Floor Coffee Shop in the historic Holt Building in Uptown Martinsville. Since the coffee shop came to town last year, it's obvious

that Martinsville is waking up to new possibilities.

"We didn't start a coffee shop for what Martinsville is — we started it for what Martinsville can be," The Ground Floor owner Josh Blancas said. "One of the key motivating

factors for opening our business here was the amount of hope and expectation we have for the City of Martinsville."

Longwood Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Business Analyst Michael Scales,

See **Ground Floor Coffee Shop**, page 10



**Josh Blancas, owner of The Ground Floor in Uptown Martinsville. The former Exxon executive opened his coffee shop in 2021 and has since added breakfast and lunch items to his menu, with plans to expand the offerings even more.**

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See **County Administrator Honored**, page 4



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Event information/calendar items must be received by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the desired publication date. Email to news-reporter@theenterprise.net)

## Saturday, July 2

Calling all lovers of board games! Come by the Martinsville branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library (310 East Church Street) between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. for a monthly Board Game Day. Bring your friends and your favorite games or try one out of the games on hand at the library. Monthly Board Game Days will be held the first Saturday of every month and are free and open to the public.

The Dan River Basin Association will host its monthly First Saturday Outing (FSO) with a 4-mile paddle on Philpott Lake from Ryan's Branch Recreation Area to Calico Rock. To enjoy cool morning temperatures, participants will meet at 9 a.m. at the Ryan's Branch launch on Fairy Stone Park Road (GPS 36.850780, -80.100160). Participants are asked to dress in layers of quick-drying fabric, to expect to get wet, to provide their own boat, paddles, life jacket for each boater, lunch and water, and are required to sign a waiver. For more information, contact Wayne Kirkpatrick at wynbtyk@embarqmail.com or at (540) 570-3511.

Slick Jr. & The Reactors will perform a free concert at the Ridgeway Jaycee's Centennial Park (Morehead Ave, 404 VA-87, Ridgeway). Music begins around 7 p.m.

## Saturday, July 9

Come learn all about canning at the Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer) with instructor Melanie Barrow. This hands-on preservation workshop will teach you how to safely preserve your fresh foods for year-round enjoyment using proper pressure canning and boiling water bath techniques. You'll learn the science behind these techniques and receive step by step guidance on how to do them at home. All supplies are provided. \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. Call the Centre to register by Friday July 1 at (276) 957-5757.

## Sunday, July 10 - Friday, July 15

Fort Trial Baptist Church will hold a Vacation Bible School. School will be held from 6:15-8 p.m. for children ages 2-5, from 6:15-8:30 p.m. for grades K-12, and adult sessions will begin at 7 p.m. Each night will have a different emphasis. For more information or to register, visit [www.forttrialbaptist.com/events](http://www.forttrialbaptist.com/events).

## Monday, July 11 through Friday, July 29

Patrick & Henry Community College and Verizon are preparing the next generation for a future filled with opportunities with the Verizon Innovative Learning STEM Achievers program— an engaging, hands-on program developed to enrich learning through design thinking, 3D printing, augmented reality, social entrepreneurship and mentorship. This program creates a more diverse pipeline for future careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields; no prior knowledge or experience is required. The program is for rising 6th-8th-grade students and is held Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Lunch and transportation are provided. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/STEMAchievers>. For more information, contact Amy Reed at [areed@patrickhenry.edu](mailto:areed@patrickhenry.edu) or 276-656-5461.

## Tuesday, July 12

Join Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) for a Workforce Programs Open House beginning at 6 p.m. in the Frith Exhibit Hall on the P&HCC campus. At this free informational session, learn about the short-term workforce training programs offered at the college and the funding assistance available. For more information, call (276) 656-0260 or visit [ph.augusoft.net](http://ph.augusoft.net).

## Thursday, July 14

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) will host a continuing education for gas fitter course from 5-6 p.m. Journeymen, master plumbers, electricians, HVAC

mechanics, and gas fitters are required by the Virginia Board of Contractors to take a pre-determined number of continuing education hours specific to their trade. This course covers code changes, general requirements, impacts on the job, and special equipment included in the codes. The cost for the course is \$65. Pre-registration is required. To register or learn more, call (276) 656-0260 or visit [ph.augusoft.net](http://ph.augusoft.net).

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) will host a continuing education for plumber course from 6-9 p.m. Journeymen, master plumbers, electricians, HVAC mechanics, and gas fitters are required by the Virginia Board of Contractors to take a pre-determined number of continuing education hours specific to their trade. This course covers code changes, general requirements, impacts on the job, and special equipment included in the codes. The cost for the course is \$125. Pre-registration is required. To register or learn more, call (276) 656-0260 or visit [ph.augusoft.net](http://ph.augusoft.net).

## Friday, July 15

Henry County Parks and Recreation invites you to enjoy the movie "Space Jam: A New Legacy" at Jack Dalton Park! Admission is free for all. Drinks, snacks, and candy will be available for purchase. The movie begins at 8:55 p.m.

## Thursday, July 21

Uptown Partnership presents Third Thursdays in Uptown in collaboration with the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The events will be held in the Franklin Street/Depot Street parking lot in Martinsville. Food trucks will be on-site with entertainment from DJ What and beer sales from Mountain Valley Brewing from 5-9 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) will host a continuing education for electrician course from 6-9 p.m. Journeymen, master plumbers, electricians, HVAC mechanics, and gas fitters are required by the Virginia Board of Contractors to take a pre-determined number of continu-

ing education hours specific to their trade. This course covers code changes, general requirements, impacts on the job, and special equipment included in the codes. The cost for the course is \$125. Pre-registration is required. To register or learn more, call (276) 656-0260 or visit [ph.augusoft.net](http://ph.augusoft.net).

## Friday, July 22-Saturday, July 23

Dino Fest returns to The Virginia Museum of Natural History (21 Starling Avenue, Martinsville)! The event features life-size dinosaur cast skeletons & skulls, a wide variety of dinosaur fossils, dino-themed games & crafts, and all of the festivities you'd expect at a VMNH Science Festival! Dino Fest takes place from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For more information, visit [www.vmnh.net](http://www.vmnh.net).

## Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24

TheatreWorks Community Players will hold auditions for the drama "12 Angry Jurors" Saturday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. and Sunday from 2-4 p.m. Auditions will be held at the Black Box theatre at 44 Franklin Street, Martinsville. The play requires a mixed cast of 13 men and women, all adults (over 18-years old.) Show dates are Sept. 8-11 and 15-17. Those auditioning must be available for all show dates. All cast and crew members must be completely vaccinated for COVID-19. For more information, visit [www.twcp.net](http://www.twcp.net).

## ONGOING

The Martinsville Farmers' Market is open Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. through November 20, and Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. through September 29. Shop with SNAP/EBT and receive up to \$20 in free fruits and vegetables each week. To shop market vendors online, visit [martinsvilleuptown.com](http://martinsvilleuptown.com).

The Louise R. Lester Spay/Neuter Clinic is hosting wellness clinics on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each

month. Clinics are by appointment only—no walk-ins will be accepted. Call (276) 638-7297 to schedule your appointment.

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](http://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. Call (276) 647-9585.

## Turner graduates from Shenandoah University

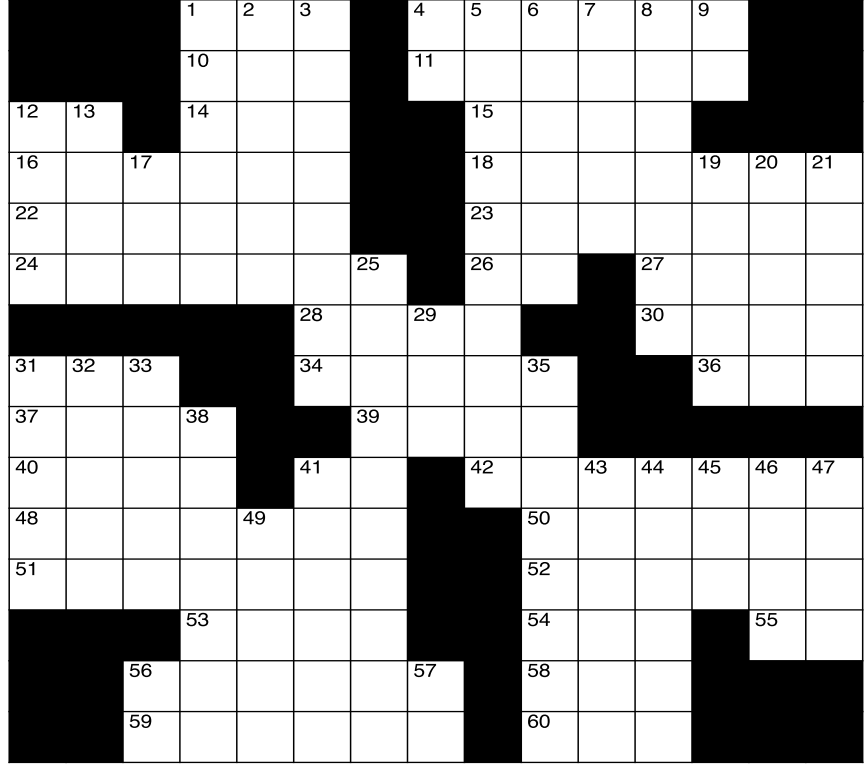
Hailey Turner, of Bassett, was among the 1,204 students who graduated from Shenandoah University during the

2021-22 academic year. Turner earned a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. Shenandoah had 236

August 2021 graduates, 332 December 2021 graduates and 636 May 2022 graduates. Shenandoah's 2022 com-

mencement ceremony took place on May 21 in the James R. Wilkins, Jr. Athletics and Events Center.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>CLUES ACROSS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basics</li> <li>4. In a new way</li> <li>10. ___ Paulo, city</li> <li>11. Jailhouse</li> <li>12. Expresses surprise</li> <li>14. Trigraph</li> <li>15. A small stream</li> <li>16. Dissimilar</li> <li>18. Promote</li> <li>22. Gives a boost</li> <li>23. Lawmaker</li> <li>24. Orthodox Jews</li> <li>26. Actor Harris</li> <li>27. Wild cherry</li> <li>28. Participate in democracy</li> <li>30. Opposite of begins</li> <li>31. A Brit's mother</li> <li>34. Set of moral principles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>36. Very fast airplane</li> <li>37. Czech river</li> <li>39. Private school in New York</li> <li>40. Israeli dance</li> <li>41. Electron volt</li> <li>42. Adjusting</li> <li>48. Duct by the bladder</li> <li>50. Small burger</li> <li>51. Begin again</li> <li>52. Unstuck</li> <li>53. Jai ___, sport</li> <li>54. Get free of</li> <li>55. For instance</li> <li>56. Hotel chain</li> <li>58. A team's best pitcher</li> <li>59. Extracts from various sources</li> <li>60. Indefinite period of time</li> </ul> | <p><b>CLUES DOWN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St. Francis of ___</li> <li>2. Supported</li> <li>3. United in working</li> <li>4. It cools your home</li> <li>5. Predicting</li> <li>6. Irritated</li> <li>7. Popular talk show host</li> <li>8. Fabric edge</li> <li>9. A resource for employees</li> <li>12. Broadway's Jackman</li> <li>13. Small water buffalo</li> <li>17. City of Angels: ___ Angeles</li> <li>19. Asteroids</li> <li>20. Tailless amphibians</li> <li>21. German expressionist painter</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25. What drives you</li> <li>29. N. Vietnamese ethnic group</li> <li>31. Gold coin used in British India</li> <li>32. Have deep affection for</li> <li>33. Ponds</li> <li>35. Breaks between words</li> <li>38. Hairstyle</li> <li>41. Print errors</li> <li>43. Family of iron alloys</li> <li>44. Sidelined in bed</li> <li>45. Many couples say it</li> <li>46. Brazilian hoopster</li> <li>47. Allman Brothers late frontman</li> <li>49. German city</li> <li>56. One hundred grams (abbr.)</li> <li>57. One billionth of a second (abbr.)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|---|

## Martial Arts students win in Battle of Baltimore



Students from Rutter's Martial Arts' Taekwondo and Japanese Shotokan Karate classes traveled to compete in the Battle of Baltimore World Championships on June 4. After a long day of events, the group came away with 7 world titles and several second, third, and fourth place trophies.

Caleb Ragans, a brown-belt Taekwondo student from the Bassett location, placed 2nd in sparring, 1st in forms, and 1st in weapons.

Austin Kiernan, a yellow-belt Shotokan karate student from the Stuart location, placed 3rd in sparring, 1st in weapons, and 2nd in stick fighting.

Andrew Kiernan, an orange-belt Shotokan karate student from the Stuart location, placed 2nd in forms and 3rd in

weapons.

Jason Shepherd, a yellow-belt Shotokan karate student from the Stuart location, placed 1st in sparring, 3rd in forms, and 1st in weapons.

Michael Bundy, a yellow-belt Shotokan karate student from the Floyd location, placed 3rd in sparring, 1st in forms, and 2nd in weapons.

Sydney Spurrell, an orange-belt Shotokan karate student from the Floyd location, placed 2nd in sparring and 4th in weapons.

Kaden Shepherd, a black-belt Taekwondo student from the Stuart location, placed 4th in forms, 3rd in weapons, 1st in the teen stick fighting division, 2nd in the adult stick fighting division, and 2nd in continuous sparring.

# End of a Legacy

from page 1

check for \$25. Thinking it was a mistake, he said, he returned it. When he discovered the money was, indeed, his, he swiftly determined to write and submit even more.

After graduation, Hall was hired on as a reporter for a Lynchburg paper, eventually moving from sports writing to news, mainly due to the easier schedule, which was important for the newlywed, who married his wife Mary in the summer of 1989.

Six months after his wedding, Hall's father passed away.

"In my family," Hall recalled, "my parents were golden. I had the greatest parents, a very tight family, and my dad was the patriarch." After he passed, "I just felt like I needed to come home to help with the transition."

Hall returned to the area and, despite having never done radio before, took over his father's job. "I just felt like I needed to do it," he said.

Moving back proved a fortuitous decision.

"From covering school board meetings, the Henry County (Schools) Superintendent at that time was a man named Virgil Poore, and he liked the way I covered meetings," Hall recalled. "He said, 'we're going to create a public information officer (PIO) at the school system. Would you be interested?' and I said, 'sure, what is that?'"

Hall took the job. He also worked as a coach and taught journalism to middle school students after earning his teaching certificate.

The 7-years he spent working as PIO and teaching for Henry County was "the hardest job I ever had," Hall said. "Knowing what teachers had to do even then, I have always had a lifelong admiration for teachers."

While difficult, the job also was rewarding.

"I felt good about the kids that learned the value of asking questions," he said.

In 1998, the Henry County PIO Bill Farrar took Hall to lunch to tell him he was leaving the county for a job in Richmond and was recommending Hall take his place. In Dec. 1998, Hall went to work as the PIO for Henry County, and has worked in public service ever since.

"I never worried about what was coming next," Hall said of the various turns his career path took before leading him to the county. "I always figured something would come next. I was happy being a reporter. I was happy teaching school. I was happy just doing what was in front of me, but things get presented as opportunities, and I just decided to roll the dice a couple of times and see what happens."

Hall was hired as PIO for Henry County by then-County Administrator Sid Clower. He served in that role until March 26, 2002, when Clower walked into the woods with a gun in his hand, threatening suicide, as investigators zeroed in on a years-long embezzling scheme, during which an estimated \$800,000 was taken from

the Henry County Public Service Authority (PSA).

Clower was disarmed and arrested. The Board of Supervisors immediately appointed then-Deputy County Administrator Benny Summerlin to the top job and Hall, the former journalist who never envisioned a life in public service, became his deputy.

Hall said the entire period of the Clower episode and the fallout from it "was just a fog." Hall said he wrestled with doubt. "Did I not know that person? Because he never gave me that impression. Did I not know him? Is that on me? And if it is on me, should I even be in this chain (of succession)? If I wasn't aware of what he was doing, and clearly, I missed it, does that mean I need to move on?"

However, Hall recalled, there was no time for either he or Summerlin to second guess. "We had to do it because there was a chasm there. So, you jump in, and you work."

The year following was a blur. "We just plowed through that," he recalled.

When Clower was fired in March, he had not begun work on the budget for the next fiscal year which began in July, Hall recalled. "As we're going through this whole episode with him and trying to get our footing under us, we also had to put together a budget."

Beyond that immediate work, there were some broader tasks he and Summerlin had to tackle.

"One, you try to fix whatever is wrong that allowed him (Clower) to do it. You try to see if there are other landmines that you need to figure out. And then you need to figure out, 'am I the one that should stay or not?' and then, four, you have to try to rebuild the public's trust, which took a long time. Both Benny and I got accused of being in with Sid, that we stole money too, but you just put your head down and get through it because somebody's got to do the work."

To rebuild the public trust, "you make yourself available," Hall said. "The multitude of civic groups and TV interviews and being out in the community, most of the interactions were good." Hall recalled people telling him and Summerlin that they knew they were in a difficult position and that they were thinking about them. "Some of it was accusatory, but the only way you arrest that is by being available and by telling the truth ... You can knock over a wall with a bulldozer, (but) you've got to build that back brick by brick. That's what we had to do."

Even after all this time, Hall said he still is not sure the work of rebuilding trust is done.

"I'm not sure there's 100 percent conviction in the community that it's all fixed," he said, adding that mentions of Clower's name from residents is still a monthly occurrence, particularly at the PSA window.

After the first year passed, Hall said he and Summerlin realized, "maybe this place needs us to kind of smooth the waters. So that's how we

approached it" moving forward.

In making the move from PIO to deputy, Hall said he relied heavily on Summerlin, his former Martinsville High classmate, "because he had been in the system since he graduated from ODU (Old Dominion University)."

Summerlin, Hall said, was "a great boss. Very level-headed. He could explain things in detail that I could understand."

While working as deputy, Hall returned to school, enrolling at Averett University to get his master's degree in business administration.

"Benny authorized it," he recalled. "He said, 'I think at some point, you're going to want to sit in my seat.'"

Hall and his wife had just returned home with their son, who they adopted from Kazakhstan. Their daughter also is adopted, but from the U.S.

"He (my son) was 7-years-old, didn't speak English. Why not go back to school," he said and laughed.

"My wife was a school teacher. She worked a thousand hours a day. We would get the kids down at 9:30 or 10 and I would do my school work until 2, grab some sleep, and go to work."

Ultimately the work paid off and Hall earned his degree.

Then Summerlin got sick.

Hall recalled being called into Summerlin's office to hear the news—the county administrator had stage 4 cancer.

"To watch him deal with that with dignity and grace, he never allowed it to impact what he did for the county," Hall recalled. For a year and a half, Summerlin struggled with his treatments, but through it all, "he was Benny."

"The last six months, every day he deteriorated. The last day he was in the office, he could barely move," Hall recalled. "I remember we got somebody to back his car up to the loading dock and I walked him out to his car. He said, 'I appreciate it. I don't know if I'll be in tomorrow.' And he went home, and he passed away at his home. He worked until the very last second, and not for the fame or fortune. He worked because that's what he was. He wanted to do the very best, and I have tried to emulate that."

In Aug. 2012, Hall became County Administrator, meaning "you transition from making suggestions to decisions. Following the example set by Summerlin's selfless service and the strong sense of humility instilled in him by his parents, Hall wants no spotlight on himself.

"Everything we do is from a team aspect," he said. "I just happen to be the guy that has to say, 'yes, we're doing that' or 'no we're not doing that, let's figure out something else.' The staff know they have absolute authority to bring something to me that they feel passionate about."

Hall, it seems, wants no sole credit for any of the county's successes dur-



**Tim Hall with former County Administrator Benny Summerlin (left). Hall served as Summerlin's deputy and said he spent his time as administrator trying to emulate Summerlin's example.**

ing his tenure, but knows he must bear the weight of responsibility for those things that go wrong, another lesson learned from his parents.

"There's no absolute," he said. "If you think you're king, you're not. There are no kings. There's a team effort, but if something goes wrong, that's on me, because I'm the last level and I'll take responsibility ... If something works, you give credit to other people. If something doesn't, that's what they pay me for."

The missteps during his tenure as administrator that Hall dwells on, however, are not broad-ranging errors, but day-to-day business—an interaction with an employee that was not handled well or getting a call from a resident at the end of a long day and not treating them as they should have been treated, or being not as willing as he feels he should be to hear what they have to say.

Hall admits that he has struggled with his temper and with impatience, but hopes that he has improved on both fronts over the years.

"I used to have a really volatile temper," he said, "and I could show that temper before I had to explain it."

Putting on a face for the public, he said, took some getting used to. Realizing, thanks to his wife, that even his facial expressions carried more weight once he was in the public eye, Hall said that over the years he has worked to be as stoic as possible.

"I've grown up" since becoming administrator, he said. "I've grown up from thinking I'm the smartest guy in the room to knowing I'm not the smartest guy in the room. It wasn't from arrogance, I just thought the way I was doing it was the way to do it. Once you realize that's not the case, that's when I started to grow."

Of the county's successes during Hall's tenure, economic development tops the list, but even there, he takes little credit.

"We went 36-months with double digit unemployment. We could not get people back to work," he said, adding that the efforts of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. and its President and CEO Mark Heath, "the EDC board's work and our Board of Supervisors, who showed the foresight 15-years ago to purchase the land that is now Commonwealth Crossing, and to purchase the land that's across the

street from the Patriot Center," Henry County began to turn around.

Eventually, Press Glass "showed the confidence in us for their first huge manufacturing facility in the United States. The hardest thing is getting the first one."

The second was Crown Holdings.

"Press Glass took about a year. Crown took 6-weeks to get done. Thanksgiving 2019 was when we first met with Crown. The third week in December, they announced they were coming, and that was the largest single-day announcement in the history of the community."

Hall fondly recalled joining Crown executives and other representatives from Henry County for a 21 golf ball salute after a successful meeting that left everyone feeling confident the county would be Crown's new home.

That memory and the announcements of new jobs "are the days that you keep," Hall said. "It's not a complaint about water bills. It's not 'my neighbor's grass is too high.'" The big announcements, both of new industries and the expansions of existing ones, "those are the ones that you remember."

As he departs, Hall said there is still work left undone.

"I would like to see wages go up," he said. "We did a really good job of getting people employment opportunities after the 36 months. We wanted to get them a job. We've transitioned to wanting to get them a better job," which is still a work in progress.

The issue is one Hall is passionate about.

"You shouldn't have to work two jobs," he said. "If you're working a full-time job, you shouldn't have to work a part-time job to pay your rent. I'm proud of the fact that the manufacturing wage has gone from \$16 to almost \$22 an hour over the last few years."

"If we can put a person into a position where they make \$20 or more, that enables them to not have a second job. It allows them to work and then

go home. They take their kid to t-ball practice or to the park. That's where the benefit to the community comes in. You've freed up that parent who was working themselves to death to provide the basics. You've given them that time."

Hall said the county has had such success in attracting industries that they have turned some away, including some "that would have hired a lot of people but would have paid them \$12 or 13 an hour. That's not a living wage."

Now, he said, county officials can tell companies who want to come here that "you've got to step it up. You want to have a plant here, you can come. We're not going to incentivize you and you need to pay more. You need to have a benefits package. And we've said no to some that didn't fit. I think that's growth when you can say no."

While Hall has not worked for a newspaper for many years now, to him, his successes throughout his entire career all trace back to journalism.

"It all goes back to journalism," he said. "The curiosity and not being afraid to make a mistake, because I'm still making them. But I truly do believe that every mistake you make is an opportunity to get better, to figure out what you should have done and that's what you do moving forward."

Hall sees many of those same qualities in his successor, Dale Wagoner, who took the helm July 1, with long-time Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center Director J.R. Powell to serve as his deputy.

"Dale will be great. He may be the smartest guy in the room. He's sharp, he's curious, he's inquisitive, he's opinionated, which is good. He'll be great. The place will be in great hands."

Hall said he would be around, should Wagoner have any questions, but other than that, "I've given it all I can give since December 1998, and I'm at peace knowing I did the very best I could."

## P&HCC, Verizon partner to offer summer program


Patrick & Henry Community College and Verizon are preparing the next generation for a future filled with opportunities. Every student deserves access to a better future. That's why the two launched the Verizon Innovative Learning STEM Achievers program— an engaging, hands-on program developed to enrich learning through design thinking, 3D printing, augmented reality, social entrepreneurship and mentorship. This program creates a more diverse pipeline for future careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields; no prior knowledge or experience is required.

The program is for rising 6-8th grade students. It is FREE for students, is inclusive and welcomes all genders and nonbinary youth. Lunch and transportation will be provided.

The program is available Monday-Friday, July 11-29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Students can take the program at the P&HCC Patrick County Site, 212 Wood Brothers Drive, Stuart; or the P&HCC Dalton IDEA Center, 26 Fayette Street, Martinsville.

To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/STEMAchievers>. For more information, email [areed@patrick-henry.edu](mailto:areed@patrick-henry.edu) or (276) 656-5461



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## OPINION

## More thoughts on the gathering darkness

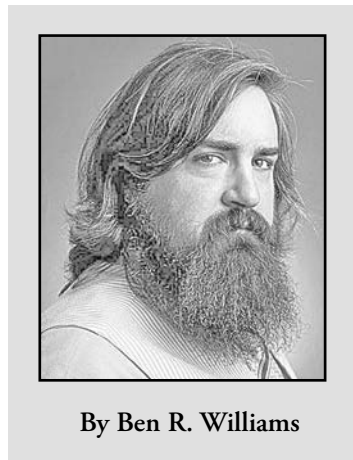
While there are plenty of things I would much rather be doing — experiencing dental surgery without the benefit of anesthetic, for example — I feel obligated to write about *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the recent Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

Back in early May when the draft decision first leaked, I wrote a column about what was going to happen next. I wrote that “trigger laws” in 18 states were going to quickly go into effect, barring women in those states from receiving abortions; that’s already happened in 13 states, probably more by the time you read this. I wrote that many women were going to die due to receiving back-alley or DIY abortions, not to mention

due to nonviable pregnancies that they will be forced to carry to term.

I also wrote that because *Roe v. Wade* hinges on the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment, many other rights once guaranteed based on the clause could also fall by the wayside, including gay marriage, interracial marriage, and the right to buy contraceptives without government restriction.

I still stand by all of that, and I still encourage any same-sex or interracial couples to get married while you still can. The cynic in me predicts that pre-existing interracial marriages will be grandfathered in after a ban takes place solely because Justice Clarence Thomas himself is in an interracial marriage,



By Ben R. Williams

and “rules for thee but not for me” is about the only thing we can count on these days.

Maybe all of that sounds alarmist, but for the better part of the last decade, I have assumed the worst about our United States government and it has never failed to lower itself to my expectations. There is no rock bottom. Frankly, I’ll be pleasantly surprised if women are still allowed to own property a decade from now.

Based on decades of poll-

ing, the majority of Americans — anywhere from about 58 to 70 percent — did not want *Roe v. Wade* overturned. Oddly enough, most evangelical Christians didn’t even care about *Roe v. Wade* when it passed in ’73; they viewed it as a Catholic issue. The pro-life movement truly began when the IRS started pulling tax-exempt status from church-funded segregated private schools in the 1970s. Evangelical leaders of the time like Jerry Falwell realized that it would be hard to mobilize their voters against “government intrusion” on the basis of defending racial segregation, but they discovered that when framed correctly, the abortion issue could get grassroots voters out to the polls and win elections for the Religious Right. By his own admission, Falwell didn’t even preach an anti-abortion sermon until 1978. That was about the time it became politically expedient to do so.

And now here we are, hurtling toward a theocracy in a

country that once prided itself on the separation of church and state.

The word “theocracy” is a funny thing. The majority of the people who are cheering this Supreme Court decision believe that we’re a Christian nation and that our laws should be based in Christianity, but they don’t like the word “theocracy.” That’s a bit like if I invited you over to my house and served you a big scoop of vanilla ice cream with chocolate syrup, whipped cream, and a cherry on top, and then I got angry at you when you called it a “sundae.”

I know some people celebrating this decision, overjoyed that many women will now have no choice but to celebrate the blessing of motherhood. How wonderful it will be for thousands of children to be born into homes that cannot afford them, homes where they will grow up unwanted, homes where they will never know love.

If that’s a blessing, I’d hate to see a curse.

County Administrator speaks out from page 1

Hall said that the budget for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23, which the board approved and appropriated earlier in the meeting, “includes at least a 6 percent raise for local law enforcement. This includes the 5 percent from the (State) Compensation Board.”

Hall said that the average raise for local law enforcement was 9.6 percent, which was “well above the state-mandated 5 percent. That gap between those two numbers is completely funded by local money.”

While he said there he had not been involved in any direct conversation about the matter, he speculated that “perhaps some of the confusion is based on the supplement the Board of Supervisors provided for law enforcement that was effective Jan. 1, 2022.”

That money, Hall reminded the board, was requested in Oct. 2021 by the Sheriff’s Office as a mid-year financial adjustment “and was presented as a way to encourage employees to stay with the department.”

He said the supplement, taken from one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds was “roughly the equivalent to a \$2 per hour per eligible Sheriff’s (Office) employee (raise) from Jan. 1 to June 30, 2022.”

“To reiterate, this was a supplement, one-time money,” Hall said. “It came from the one-time ARPA allocation. This was not a salary increase, and that was explicitly driven home by the fact that no sheriff’s department employee had this money added to their base salary which is reported to the Virginia Retirement System.”

Hall said that “the supplement was a lump-sum amount paid monthly and was not based on the number of hours worked. All deputies got the same amount, no matter how many hours they worked or what their base salaries were. This was clear.”

Hall said that staff did not know “whether these details were relayed to the rank-and-file employees of

the Sheriff’s (Office) because that is not a conversation we would ever be a part of.”

Perhaps some of the confusion about whether deputies had already received a raise came from a press release issued after the board’s Oct. 26, 2021, meeting. The headline stated, “Henry County approves pay increase for law enforcement and public safety.”

The release refers to the board’s October action as approving a salary increase several times, and states, in part, that “American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be used to provide a \$2 per hour hazard duty supplement to law enforcement and public safety personnel from January 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022. The supplement results in an annualized salary increase of \$4,160 for each deputy” and that “the additional revenue needed to cover these pay raises in the future will be equivalent to a 3.9-cents increase on the real estate tax.”

The phrase “pay increase” appears several other times throughout the document. For instance, “Following the pay increase, the starting salary for a deputy in Henry County will be \$43,160,” and “By approving the request, the board has now given the seventh pay increase to deputies since 2017, including a \$3,000 bonus that will be paid on Nov. 15, 2021.”

Regardless, Hall reiterated that, effective Friday, July 1, “all local law enforcement personnel are getting at least a 6 percent raise, and many are getting more than that. This includes the 5 percent from the Comp Board and at least 1 percent from Henry County.”

He further noted the recently-approved state budget “provides additional pay for law enforcement to address compression issues,” another problem broached by Perry. “This adjustment,” Hall said, “will be effective Aug. 1, and most likely will come with a local responsibility as part of that well.”

Hall also noted that the state mandates 200 posi-

tions with the Sheriff’s Office, but pays only a portion of their salaries, with the remainder being covered by Henry County.

“However,” he said, “there are an additional 26 employees in law enforcement that are not mandated but are fully-funded by Henry County. Even though the Comp Board raises are not mandated for these local positions, Henry County matches that state raise for these local positions.”

“These are the facts,” Hall stated. “We’re not absorbing the Comp Board money. That was never the intent. We couldn’t do it if we wanted to.”

Hall said he was “hopeful that facts mattered, and that social media could be chilled a bit. We’re not taking anybody’s money. In fact, we’re giving them more than the state compensation board told us we had to give.”

Hall acknowledged that “local law enforcement has an incredibly difficult and dangerous job ... they all deserve more money. Teachers deserve more money. PSA (Public Service Authority) employees deserve more money. County employees deserve more money. We can only take it from one place, and that’s the taxpayer’s pocket.”

Finally, Hall said, since Aug. 2020, “Sheriff’s Deputies have received an average of \$8,281 in one-time stipends or supplements, and that includes the ARPA money from Jan. 1 to June 30. Again, this is in addition to any salary increases that they have received.

“Is it enough? No. Is it what they deserve? No.”

No one who works in public service makes enough, Hall said. “That’s a debate that should continue after I leave on Thursday. I’m hopeful that you will continue to address that. But I do hope, as I get out of here, that future conversations can be based on fact and not on misinformation.”

County Administrator Honored from page 1

**Longtime County Administrator Tim Hall (center) receives a joint resolution from the Henry County Board of Supervisors and Henry County Public Service Authority (PSA). From left: Horsepasture District Supervisor Debra Buchanan, Chairman and Blackberry District Supervisor Jim Adams, PSA Board Chairman Gerald Lawicki, Reed Creek District Supervisor Tommy Slaughter, Ridgeway District Supervisor Ryan Zehr, Vice-Chairman and Collinsville District Supervisor Joe Bryant, and Iriswood District Supervisor Garrett Dillard.**

Henry County community with the utmost dedication, integrity, and distinction.”

Horsepasture District Supervisor Debra Buchanan read a joint resolution of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and the PSA honoring Hall who, the resolution noted, retired after “31 years of combined service with Henry County, Henry County Public Schools, and the Henry County Public Service Authority.”

“Not only did Mr. Hall dedicate himself to public service professionally, but he also proved himself as a community champion through his involvement with numerous boards and committees,” Buchanan read.

The resolution stated that “initiatives led by Mr. Hall have added to the quality of life for our citizens, from the expansion of Public Safety through additional ambulances to the extension of water lines to several underserved communities” and that Hall “has been instrumental to the economic development of Henry County.”

“The seismic impact of Mr. Hall’s tenure as County Administrator and PSA General Manager can visibly be seen in the changing landscape of Henry County through the development of Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre, the Dick & Willie Trail, the Philpott Marina and Campground, Meadow View Elementary School and the Adult Detention Center,” the resolution stated.

“The true measure of a leader’s legacy doesn’t merely lie in the creation of tangible objects but rather in the hearts and minds of those they have left behind to complete a vision once thought to be nothing more than a dream,” Buchanan read.

“Now, therefore be it jointly resolved, that the Henry County Board of Supervisors and the Henry County Public Service Authority hereby congratulates Tim Hall on his retirement and thanks him for his many years of dedicated service to the people of Henry County.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Vice-chairman Joe Bryant said, “I have had the privilege to serve with Mr. Hall for more than 13 years,” and recalled that he came onto the board at “a quite trying time,” when unemployment in the county was in double digits and progress on Commonwealth Crossings was hitting roadblock after roadblock.

Bryant shared a quote from Chinese philosopher Confucius. “It doesn’t matter how slow you go, so long as you don’t stop,” he quoted. “There were several times in that process that we could have stopped, could have thrown in the towel and said there were too many regulations. Through the guidance of Tim Hall and his staff and us as supervisors, we managed to overcome that.”

Bryant commended the great leadership in the county’s administration.

“My hat’s off to you, Mr. Hall,” he said.

Buchanan said that she served on the interview panel when Hall was hired as the county’s Public Information Officer in 1998.

“I can honestly say that, above and beyond, he stood out. We were fortunate enough then to hire him as our county administrator. I think anyone that serves in public service in a leadership position knows that they cannot always please everyone and that’s just part of the job, but I think you’ve handled it well. You’ve done an outstanding job in Henry County and we’re certainly going to miss you.”

“It’s been a good ride,” said Chairman Jim Adams, noting that he would get emotional saying more.

“I don’t like pomp and circumstance when it involves me,” Hall told the board. “So, I’ll just say this: thank you.”

Here he paused, collecting himself, as his eyes welled with tears.

“It’s been an honor to work for you and with you and with the people in this room.”

Hall was met with a standing ovation.

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# Memorial blood drive set for next weekend

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

When Brenda Riggins found out she had cancer, “literally the first thing she said was, ‘I’m not eligible to give blood anymore,’” recalled nephew Teddy Martin. Riggins passed away in 2014, but Martin and his family have worked since then to honor her memory with the Brenda Riggins Memorial Blood Drive, which has been held twice annually since 2015.

Now entering its eighth year, the next blood drive is scheduled for Saturday, July 9, at Stanleytown Elementary School from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

“It felt like it devastated her more that she couldn’t give blood than that she had cancer,” Martin recalled. “I couldn’t believe that, but knowing her and how much she cared for people, that’s who she was.”

Though Riggins was his aunt, Martin said he always called her Granny Riggins. He recalled that she had taken him to his Little League games, babysat him, and “just did everything for me when I was a little kid.”

Riggins, Martin recalled, “donated to the Red Cross pretty much every time she could,” and encouraged others to donate as well, even offering to drive them to the donation site.

Hearing just how much the inability to continue donating affected his beloved aunt, Martin said he decided, “if it means this much to her, I want to help her with this.”

Martin made his first ever blood donation after Riggins’ diagnosis, telling her, “you might not be able to, but I can.”

When he compared his one donation to the 16-gallons Riggins donated during her lifetime, Martin said he realized he would need to do more to help truly carry on her legacy. Ultimately, he and his family organized annual events to honor the woman who was “very much at the center of our family.”

Two drives are held each year in Riggins’ honor, one in July and another in December.

“She loved Christmas,” Martin recalled. “She wanted to celebrate Christmas in July because she knew she wouldn’t make it to December.”

Donors at each July event will notice Riggins’ Christmas decorations lending a festive atmosphere to the site, along with holiday music playing.

“It’s us trying to honor her last wishes,” Martin said.

Over the past seven years, Martin said more than 650 donations have been collected from more than 600 unique



**Brenda Riggins (left) loved Christmas, according to nephew Teddy Martin, who serves as vice-chairman of the Henry County School Board. The upcoming blood drive will feature some of her Christmas decorations as well as holiday music, honoring one of her final wishes to celebrate Christmas in July with her family, as she knew she would not make it to December.**



**Brenda Riggins donated 16 gallons of blood to the American Red Cross. When she passed away in 2014 following a battle with cancer, her family organized a memorial blood drive to carry on her legacy. The next Brenda Riggins Memorial Blood Drive will be held Sat., July 9, at Stanleytown Elementary School.**

donors.

“The (the Red Cross) say it’s the biggest drive in the region,” outside of those held at Virginia Military Institute or Virginia Tech, Martin said.

“Part of her would love how many people have donated in her memory, but there would also be part of her that doesn’t want all that attention. That’s just who she was,” Martin said.

Though he admitted he never spoke to Riggins about why donating blood was so important to her, he speculated that it might have come, at least in part, from his family’s history with cancer. Besides claiming Riggins, he said his father also succumbed to cancer just before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We had our dad longer because he was able to get (blood) transfusions because of Red Cross donations,” he said.

“Every donation can save up to three lives, so that means about 2,000 people have potentially been helped or saved

by Brenda. The ripple effect of that comment of hers, ‘I won’t be able to give blood anymore,’ all this came from that,” he said.

“I don’t know anybody who was more giving and selfless than her, and I think it’s a wonderful testament that so many people have come out, donated, and carried on this tradition. I can’t overstate how kind, giving, generous, and selfless this lady was. She lives on through this.”

The Brenda Riggins Memorial Blood Drive is scheduled from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 9 at Stanleytown Elementary School, 74 Edgewood Drive, Stanleytown. As of Sunday, June 26, a little more than 40 donations had been scheduled, still shy of the Red Cross’s 60-donation goal.

To schedule an appointment, visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org). While walk-ins are welcome, appointments are given priority. For more information, visit the Brenda Riggins Memorial Blood Drive Facebook event page. To read more about Riggins, visit [www.brendasbutterflies.org](http://www.brendasbutterflies.org).

# Henry County moves closer to universal broadband coverage

The Henry County Board of Supervisors authorized a contract with RiverStreet Networks on Tuesday that would expand internet services to underserved areas in Henry County.

As part of the project, which is largely funded through a \$33,571,073 grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development’s (DHCD) Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI), every part of the county will have access to broadband.

Henry County partnered with the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC), Patrick and Franklin counties, RiverStreet Networks and Appalachian Power to secure the grant.

The grant funds will be used to supplement construction costs by RiverStreet Networks. In turn, RiverStreet will serve as the primary contractor and will perform, supervise and manage the construction and installation of a fiber-to-the-home network to consist of up to 349.74 miles of fiber optic cable, including necessary hardware and software to provide the internet service.

“In Henry County, this project will provide broadband services to 3,058 locations,” County Administrator Tim Hall told the board on Tuesday.

Approval of the contract marks a significant step in the long march toward broadband for all in the county.

Deputy County Administrator Dale Wagoner previously stated that a local broadband planning team was formed in April 2020, consisting of representatives from government, healthcare, education, industry, and county residents who, he said Wednesday, have “an ambitious goal for broad-

band.”

This first phase of the effort aims to “provide fiber to the home or business of anyone that currently has no access to broadband,” he said.

The contract with RiverStreet states that “the project shall be completed within three years from the date RiverStreet commences construction,” but no targeted start date is given.

Wagoner, who became County Administrator on Friday, said “once all of the contracts are in place” with Henry, Patrick, and Franklin counties, the WPPDC, Appalachian Power and RiverStreet, “commencement will officially begin. We anticipate that occurring within the next three months. However, the vendors (Appalachian Power and RiverStreet) have already started procuring supplied even though there has not been an official commencement.”

To receive the grant funding, the county must provide a financial match of approximately \$3.9 million.

The Henry County School Board previously pledged \$1 million of its federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds toward the project, as broadband expansion benefits county students. However, the money was contingent upon the county securing funds from a third local source (other than the county and school board.)

On Wednesday, Wagoner said that the Board of Supervisors committed up to \$4 million for broadband. “If a portion of additional funding does not come from other sources,” like the school board or a private foundation, “then the entire match will be covered by the Board of Supervisors.”

Ultimately, “the more local money that we can get committed to this project (from sources like the school board and private foundations), the more likely we will be successful with securing the large blocks of money from state and federal grants that will be needed to implement phases 2 and 3 fully,” Wagoner said. “The county has already submitted a letter of intent to apply to VATI for funding for phase two” which will extend fiber to homes and business with internet but “not very good internet.”

Phase 3, Wagoner said, “will extend fiber to anyone that wants it.”

In other matters, the board: \*Appropriated an additional \$540,991 to cover items that exceeded the budget of the Sheriff’s Office. Those items include the cost of housing inmates at other facilities, providing medical care to inmates and fuel.

According to a release from county Public Information Officer Brandon Martin, “one major factor in the construction of the new Adult Detention Center was to avoid costs associated with housing inmates in other facilities. While the ADC opened on March 25, deputies did not complete the transfer of outside inmates until June 8. To cover the costs of the overages ... approximately \$523,235 will be transferred from other budget-related items, and another \$17,756 will be taken from the county’s reserve fund.”

\*Appropriated \$2,537 received from the Virginia State Police Help Eliminate Auto Theft Program to fund the cost of two deputies to attend the week-long training course.

\*Approved an additional appropriation of \$24,858

received as reimbursement from the Sheriff’s Office providing security and patrol services. The funds will be used to pay overtime for deputies providing those services.

\*Awarded a contract of \$157,036 to RK Chevrolet in Virginia Beach for four police-rated 2022 Chevrolet Tahoe vehicles.

\*Awarded a contract to J.L. Culpepper & Company, Inc., to supply food for the Adult Detention Center. The contract does not specify a number due to the fluctuation of the number of inmates. Sheriff Lane Perry estimates the cost to be more than \$360,000.

\*Appropriated the fiscal year 2022-2023 total county budget and school budget.

\*Established a capital replacement fund using money that was freed up by using ARPA funds to replace revenue loss during the pandemic. The capital replacement fund will be used to cover expenses related to one-time capital needs by the county.

\*Approved a stipend of \$1,200 for each full-time county employee, and \$600 for each part-time employee, who has been employed with the county for at least a year, as of June 30. Employees who previously received a stipend in November 2021 will not be eligible.

\*Approved a performance agreement with VF Corporation that requires the company to invest \$10.2 million at its facility in the Patriot Centre and create 82 new jobs.

\*Approved a transfer appropriation of \$30,000 from the Public Safety Department to the Bassett Volunteer Fire Department to buy additional equipment for an aerial fire apparatus.

\*Approved a transfer appropriation of \$427,000 to cover overages in the Children’s Service Act Program, legal fees, COVID-19 testing expenses, vaccine expenses and accrued leave payouts.

\*Held a public hearing and rezoned approximately 1.8-acres in the Horsepasture District from Suburban Residential (S-R) to Agricultural (A-1). The rezoning will give the applicant the flexibility to keep a recently constructed accessory building.

\*Held a public hearing and rezoned approximately 103-acres from Industrial (I-1) to Agricultural (A-1). The applicant wishes to construct a home on the property.

\*Held a public hearing and approved the sale of land to the Blue Ridge Regional Airport Authority for the expansion of the airport’s runway.

\*Reappointed Michael Ward to the Roanoke River Basin Association for a one-year term set to expire August 31, 2023.

\*Approved an additional appropriation of \$102,579 to the Henry County School Board’s special grants category from funds received from the Virginia Department of Education. The funds are part of the Students with Intensive Support Needs grant program.

\*Approved a categorical transfer from the school board to move \$121,429 from the Administration/Attendance and Health budget to the Nutrition budget to provide employee bonuses to eligible school nutrition workers. The schools had enough unused local funding in its budget to provide the bonus of \$1,200 for all eligible full-time and part-time employees. The total in excess school funds used to pay for the bonuses equates to \$1,493,041

# Carter Bank & Trust offers limited time ‘Take Your Pick’ promotion

For a limited time, Carter Bank & Trust (NASDAQ: CARE) is offering both individuals and businesses long and short-term alternatives for increasing their savings and growing their money, through its Take Your Pick savings promotion.

Starting June 27, when customers open a checking account with Carter Bank & Trust, they can choose one or both of the following special interest rate savings options:

- 11-month Certificate of Deposit with an interest rate of 1.25%
- 23-month Certificate of Deposit with an inter-

est rate of 1.50% “We’re excited to provide options that help customers grow their savings with a premium rate of return, along with safety and security peace-of-mind,” Carter Bank & Trust President Brad Langs said. “As a well-capitalized bank, we’re strongly positioned to offer short and long-term savings solutions to meet individual needs.”

As an FDIC member, accounts with Carter Bank & Trust are federally insured up to \$250,000.

Any account opened as part of the Take Your Pick promotion must be

funded with money not currently associated with a Carter Bank & Trust account.

For more information or to take advantage of the Take Your Pick promotion, visit a local Carter

Bank & Trust branch, call 833.ASK.CBAT or visit <https://www.cbtcare.com/cdspecial/>.

Headquartered in Martinsville, Carter Bank & Trust is a \$4.1 billion, state-chartered commu-

nity bank with branches in Stuart and other areas of Virginia and North Carolina.

**CROSSWORD ANSWERS**

	A	B	C	A	F	R	E	S	H			
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## OBITUARIES

## Virginia "Ginger" Kiefer

Virginia "Ginger" Kiefer, 53, of Stuart, Virginia passed away Sunday, June 26, 2022, at her home. She was born February 1, 1969, in Port Jefferson, Long Island, New York to Ed Kiefer and Mary Ann Kaiser Kiefer Clark. She had worked for The Department of Transportation as a Customer Service Representative, enjoyed riding boats, helping others and was a very generous person.

In addition to her parents, she is survived by a sister, Amy VanRijsewijk (Aaron); brother, Bill Kiefer (Cheryl);



nieces, Raechel Kiefer and Rebekah Shumaker (Landon) and great niece Claire Judith Shumaker.

A funeral will be held on Friday, July 1, 2022, at 11 a.m. at Wright Funeral Service Chapel, with Pastor Paul Hooker officiating. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service. Burial will be at Fair Haven Memorial Park, Spencer, Virginia.

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

## Iris Rosie Lewis Wilson

Iris Rosie Lewis Wilson, 90, of Irisburg, peacefully passed away surrounded by family on June 23, 2022. She was born in Patrick County, VA on October 29, 1931, to the late Early Cline Lewis and Edna Boyd Lewis. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her loving husband of 63 years, Johnnie Bema Wilson; son, Michael Ray Wilson; sister, Gerolean Webb; and three brothers, Garry Lewis, Arzie Lewis and Frank Lewis.

Mrs. Wilson is survived by her daughter, Karen Wilson Parrish and husband, Lewis Michael Parrish of Melbourne, FL; daughter, Linda Wilson Cox and husband, James Franklin Cox, Jr. of Irisburg; and daughter-in-law, Rhonda Wilson Scott and husband, Robert Eddie Scott of Irisburg.

She was the proud grandmother of seven grandchildren: Benjamin Parrish and wife, Jennifer of FL; Jordan Parrish and wife, Lauren of FL; James Cox, III and wife, Ashley of Irisburg; Katelyn Peters and husband, Benjamin of Irisburg; Lindsey Puckett and husband, Kyle of Stuart; Emily Norman and husband, Joseph of IL; and Zachary Wilson of Irisburg. She also very much treasured her great grandchildren: Bernadette and Benjamin Parrish, Chloe and Anna Parrish, Lila and Maylee Cox, Caleb, Luke and Seth Peters, and Korbin and Krew Puckett.

Mrs. Wilson has one sister, Annie Salmons of Woolwine, one brother, John "Mac" Lewis of Meadows of Dan; and several nieces and nephews. She



was lovingly cared for by her friends Susan Penn, Margaret Harris and Joyce Sowers, SOVAH Home Health and Mountain Valley Hospice.

Mrs. Wilson retired from CSI in Ridgeway, VA. She was a faithful member of Irisburg United Methodist Church where she was a Sunday School teacher and a member of the United Methodist Women's Group. She dedicated a great deal of her time to helping her community through the church. Mrs. Wilson enjoyed sewing, crocheting and listening to music. She had a green thumb and loved spending time admiring her flowers and working in her yard. Affectionately known as "Granny", she was a wonderful cook who often got requests from family and friends for their favorites - Banana Pudding, German Chocolate Cake and many others. She was a strong and humble woman who devoted her life to serving God, her family and friends.

The funeral was held at Norris Funeral Services - Martinsville Chapel on Saturday, June 25, 2022. The Rev. Brian Mallory officiated, with Eulogist Frankie Cox. Mrs. Wilson's grandsons served as pallbearers. Burial was at Roselawn Burial Park, Martinsville, VA.

Memorials may be made to the Irisburg United Methodist Church Women's Group, Mountain Valley Hospice or a charity of your choice.

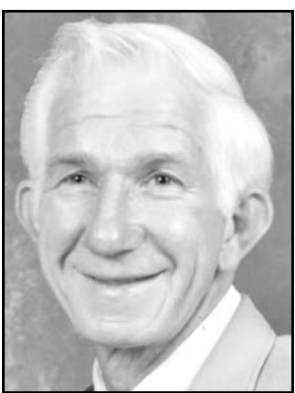
Norris Funeral Services, Inc. and Crematory - Martinsville, VA is serving the Wilson family. Online condolences may be made at [www.NorrisFuneral.com](http://www.NorrisFuneral.com).

## Curtis Lee Manning

Curtis Lee Manning, 94, of Bassett, VA passed away on Saturday, June 25, 2022, at his home. He was born on May 12, 1928, in Bassett, VA to the late Walter Manning and Dollie Craig Manning. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his wife, Naomi Corrine Manning; son, Rodney Manning; sisters, Hattie France, and Christine Fain; and his brother, Herbert "Hut" Manning.

Mr. Manning was a member of Pocahontas Bassett Baptist Church and he served in the United States Army.

He is survived by his daughters, Donna Dupree, and Sandra Blevins; son, Randy



Manning (Karen); daughter-in-law, Leah Manning; grandchildren, India Manning, CJ Manning, Matthew Manning, Trent Manning, Tanner Gilbert, and Amy Linkous.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, July 1, 2022, at 2 p.m. at Pocahontas Bassett Baptist Church with Susan Spangenberg officiating. Visitation will be held from

1 to 2 p.m. at Pocahontas Bassett Baptist Church on Friday, July 1, 2022.

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

## Pamela Lee Vernon Riddle

Pamela Lee Vernon Riddle, 69, of Collinsville, Virginia passed away Tuesday, June 28, 2022, at Mulberry Creek Nursing Home. She was born April 29, 1953, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Johnnie Samuel Vernon, Sr. and Zella Parks Vernon. She was a member of Mercy Crossing, formerly Martinsville Church of God.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a brother, Johnnie Samuel Vernon, Jr.

She is survived by her aunt, Betty

Parks Austin; uncle, Orley B. Parks; several cousins; and special friend, Betsy Bishop.

A funeral will be held on Friday, July 1, 2022, at 3 p.m. at Wright Funeral Service Chapel with Pastor Bill Bingham officiating. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service. Burial will be private.

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

## Lynwood Alvin Turner

Lynwood Alvin Turner, 66, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away Sunday, June 26, 2022, at his home. He was born June 10, 1956, in Henry County, Virginia to the late George and Maxine Ross Turner. He had worked for American Furniture for over thirty years and attended Refuge Temple Ministries. He was "Mr. Fix It" and enjoyed working on cars and working in his yard.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, James Turner.

He is survived by daughters, Roshannon Preston and Brittany Hairston; son, Andra Preston (April); sisters, Dorothy Turner,

Sharon Turner, Mays Turner, Barbara Turner and Juanita Carter; brother, George Turner; thirteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A funeral will be held on Saturday, July 2, 2022, at 1 p.m. at Wright Funeral Service Chapel, with visitation thirty minutes prior to the service. Burial will follow at Carver Memorial Gardens. A floating visitation will be held on Friday, July 1, 2022, from 1 to 5 p.m. at Wright Funeral Service Chapel.

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

## Comments by federal, state officials show stark partisan divide in Roe v. Wade ruling

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

On Friday, June 24, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) issued a 6-3 decision in the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, overturning Roe v. Wade. The landmark 1973 decision held that women in the U.S. had a fundamental right to choose whether to have an abortion, protected by the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of a right to privacy. The Dobbs decision found that "The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; Roe and Casey (Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey) are overruled, and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives."

A flurry of statements, social media posts, and speeches following the ruling showed a stark, party-line contrast in reactions of local, state, and federal leaders to the historic decision.

Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart, on Friday issued a statement saying, "The iron curtain of death has crumbled. In America today, the people and their representatives

now have the power to protect unborn children. This will go down as one of the greatest days in American history."

He called the decision "the biggest win for life, liberty, and limited government—and Goodness—that we have ever seen in America, since the Emancipation and the fall of Jim Crow. I applaud the justices for standing firm in their opinion, in the face of a historic leak attacking SCOTUS's integrity, a failed assassination attempt, and relentless pressure and threats from the media, Democrat (sic) politicians, and far-Left activists."

State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta, shared a news release from the Virginia Senate Republican Caucus, for which he serves as whip, on his official social media page. The release included a statement attributed collectively to Stanley and other top Republicans in the State Senate.

"This reversal of the Court's previous decisions undoubtedly will result in lawmakers of both parties introducing legislation for the General Assembly to consider during its 2023 regular session," it stated. "Senate Republicans stand ready to fulfill our duty by giving a fair hearing to legisla-

tion related to all perspectives on this and every issue.

"Regrettably, we are not confident our Democratic colleagues share that commitment. During the 2022 regular session, the majority bottled up the Born Alive Infant Protection Act ... sending it on a sub-committee and committee merry-go-round before eventually defeating the measure in a committee on which they hold a severely disproportionate ... partisan average," which was denounced as "reprehensible" and an act that "diminished the Senate of Virginia."

The Republican leadership stated that, "going forward, we hope our Democratic colleagues will reconsider their extremism on the issue of life, and join us in restoring practical, sensible, and reasonable policies that ensure the health and safety of mothers and protect the lives of our most vulnerable Virginians."

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin lauded the ruling and, within hours of the decision, announced that he would seek to ban most abortions in Virginia after 15-weeks of pregnancy.

"The Supreme Court of the United States has rightfully returned power to the people and their elected representatives in the state," Youngkin said. "I'm proud to be a pro-life Governor and plan to take every action I can to protect life. The truth is, Virginians want fewer abortions, not more abortions."

He said he had tasked Sens. Siobhan Dunnivant, R-Henrico, Steve Newman, R-Forest, and Dels. Kathy Byron, R-Lynchburg, and Margaret Ransone, R-Kinsale, to "find areas where we can agree and chart the most successful path forward" and to "be prepared to introduce legislation when the General Assembly returns in January."

U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, on social media shortly after the ruling called Roe v. Wade a "constitutional error that has produced decades of tragedy. The Supreme Court got the law right today in Dobbs ... Our task going forward from this decision is to carry on the hard but rewarding work of building a culture that protects, respects, and cherishes life."

Lawmakers from across the political isle took a different stance.

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Alexandria, posted a statement on Twitter Friday saying that the SCOTUS decision "jeopardizes the health and autonomy of millions of American women and turns back the clock on nearly 50 years of settled and reaffirmed law—reflecting a Court that has increasingly issued politicized rulings that undermine the fundamental rights of Americans. This decision will take control over personal health care decisions away from individuals and give it to politicians in state legislatures across the country."

"I am heartbroken for generations of women who now have fewer rights than when they were born, many of whom will be forced into life-threatening or prohibitively expensive circumstances to access health care as a result of this radical decision."

He pledged to continue working to protect "needed access to safe, legal abortion."

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Richmond, decried the decision on social media. He said the decision "flies in the face of decades of precedent protecting women's rights to make fundamental personal decisions without needless government interference." He called on Congress to take action to protect those rights.

Pres. Joe Biden called the decision "a sad day for the Court and for the country."

During remarks on Friday, Biden said that SCOTUS "expressly took away a constitutional right from the American people that it had already recognized. They didn't limit it. They simply took it away. That's never been done to a right so important to so many Americans."

Roe, he said, "reaffirmed the basic principles of equality—that women have the power to control their own destiny—and it reinforced the fundamental right of privacy—the right of each of us to choose how to live our lives."

With Roe overturned, Biden said, "the health and life of women in this nation are at risk." With the decision, "the conservative majority of the Supreme Court shows how extreme it is, how far removed they are from the majority of this country. They have made the United States an outlier among developed nations in the world. But this decision must not be the final word."

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### COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **July 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following this public hearing, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the application to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing on the following application on **July 26, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia.

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

#### Case R-22-11 Mark S. and Deborah L. Minter

The property is located at 78 Robertson Ridge Rd, in the Iriswood District. The Tax Map number is 45.9/93. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of an approximately 5-acre lot from Rural Residential District R-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to construct accessory buildings that exceed the square footage limitations. The application for this request may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.  
Lee H. Clark, AICP  
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

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

## Contract under scrutiny from page 1

"You didn't let me finish," Lawson continued. "It was stated that this is a personnel matter, and we will have this discussion in closed session where it is appropriate to do so."

"We'll make the determination in open session in an open vote because that's what you have to do," Turner responded.

"That's what you have to do," Lawson agreed, "but the discussion of a personnel matter is in closed session."

Pearson then made a motion "that city council use the unexpended professional services line item of \$5,000 in this year's budget to obtain outside council to review the City Attorney's contract before it automatically renews at the end of the 60 days of this year, and I'd like to go ahead and move forward with that motion, so we don't just let it auto-renew."

Turner seconded the motion.

"I think it's a very wise decision to have outside people look at this contract and determine who it's in the best interest of—the city or, if it's in the city's best interest," he said.

During discussion on the motion, Turner noted as he had in the previous meeting, that Monday's contract "has all kinds of added stuff to it that makes no sense, does not pertain to this current situation. To take you back to an earlier contract there, he goes to court, and we get burned for \$70, \$80, \$90,000 there. In this situation, the writer of the contract is Eric, so he's the only one in a court of law that can address what did the writer of the contract mean. This is a chance to get out of it, write a decent contract that looks out for the best interest of both Eric and the citizens of Martinsville."

Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles said that, while she respects the opinions of her colleagues, "typically having discussions about contracts in a public session is just a vicious attack on a person regardless of who this person is. It doesn't matter that it's Eric, it doesn't matter that it's (City Manager) Leon (Towarnicki), I don't think we should ever discuss a public contract in this way. I think these conversations that you wanted to have, you could have requested to have a personnel matter, you could have requested to clean up the contract. I don't know why this is coming up in public."

"Jennifer, I have talked to members of council, I have talked to the City Attorney, nobody wants to talk about it," Turner replied. "This isn't a backhoe operator down at the city shop. The only two people we hire are the City Attorney and the City Manager. That's the only two we hire."

"I completely understand the process of who we hire and who we have author-

ity over," Bowles responded. "The City Attorney and the City Manager serve at the pleasure of council. It's just, Danny, I don't ever remember you talking about this other than right now."

"Three years ago, I certainly brought it up," Turner countered.

"I will say that I don't recall it," Bowles said, and Martin agreed.

"I'm not trying to say whether you did or not, I just don't recall," she continued, "because we would have had this conversation in closed session, as we typically do."

"It would not have been brought up," Pearson said. "It would just auto-renew. I actually had to ask for the contract to even see when it renews."

"I'm not saying anything about auto-renewing," said Bowles. "I'm saying these conversations that we're having in public could have been discussed in closed session and we could have had this personnel conversation."

"Well, let's go into closed session and talk about it," Turner said, as other members of council spoke over each other.

Martin warned that continuing to discuss the matter could "potentially open us up for litigation if we keep talking about HR stuff."

Lawson called for a vote on Pearson's original motion. The motion failed, with only Pearson and Turner voting in favor.

At the end of an hour-long public meeting, council returned to closed session (begun prior to the 7 p.m. public meeting), in part to continue interviewing candidates for the city school board.

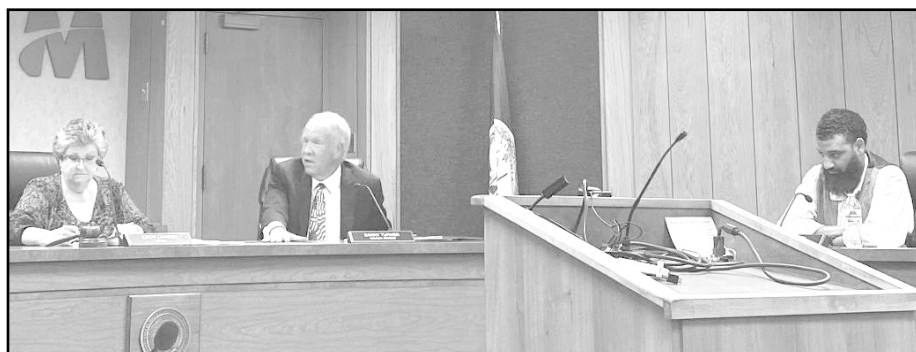
When council returned from closed session at nearly 9:30 p.m., Turner attempted another motion regarding Monday's contract.

"Madam Mayor, I'd like to make a motion that we end the City Attorney's contract and keep him employed and get an outside lawyer to make a contract of employment that extends with a one-year buyout of \$50,000."

Pearson seconded the motion, opening it up for discussion.

"I think we should just have this discussion in closed session," Bowles said. "It alleviates the 30-day period you guys (Pearson and Turner) continue to discuss. We could talk about it in closed session at the next meeting rather than making these motions."

To which Turner responded, "Jennifer, if we do that and let it just continue on after 30 days, then it becomes a 3-year contract that is convoluted with all kinds of tax payment receipts and it's a contract that I guarantee no city or county in the state of Virginia would allow to be so out of control."



**Council Member Danny Turner (center) expressed frustration with his fellow council members, recalling that he brought up the issue of City Attorney Eric Monday's contract three years ago and "no one wants to talk about it."**

"And we can always rewrite that contract at any point in time," Lawson said. "I think you're concerned with the 30 days."

"After 30 days, it rolls over for 3 years," Turner responded.

"But we can rewrite it at any point in time, so if it does roll over, we can rewrite it," Lawson countered.

"With the City Attorney's permission," Turner said.

"Then we would have to do a payment if he disagrees with doing that," added Pearson.

When Lawson called for a vote, again only Turner and Pearson voted in favor of the measure.

"Motion fails," Lawson declared.

After the meeting, Bowles expressed her disappointment with the manner in which Pearson and Turner presented the issue.

"I think in any professional setting for city council, it's not following Robert's Rules of Order or proper decorum to ever discuss a contract in public session. When you look across the state, you see people have closed-session debates. You can make your comments about that particular person, but not necessarily in public about voting for the contract. It's either a vote to fire that person or a vote to hire that person." She added that, "prior to councils voting to terminate an employee, there is a performance review conducted."

In other matters, the council:

\*Heard from Michael Sanguedolce of Starling Avenue during matters presented by the public. Sanguedolce expressed concern about the large tractor trailers travelling along Church Street and Starling Avenue, creating hazardous conditions for vehicles, pedestrians, and property. In speaking with Public Works employees, he said he learned about numerous collisions with road signs and utility poles by the trucks. He noted that the majority of the trucks travelling those roads could take alternate roadways and proposed eliminating truck traffic on Church at Fairy Street and all of Starling to Memorial Boulevard.

\*Heard from Keith Owens of Meadowview Lane who inquired about where the city stood with the creation of committees to review allocation of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds. Lawson told him the committee had not yet been formed.

"We are working through some logistics, applications. We will have the Uptown group present at the next meeting. They've had a strategic planning session, so we're interested in seeing what they are looking at as far as the Uptown."

Owens previously spoke to council during its public input session on ARPA funding, requesting that some money be directed toward the creation of a permanent homeless shelter in the city.

Bowles reminded Owens that the funds do not have to be allocated until 2024.

\*Heard an overview of the June 27 Northside neighborhood tour and meeting from Towarnicki.

\*Approved minutes from the May 23 West End Neighborhood meeting and the May 24 and June 14 council meetings.

\*Heard and update from Courtney Hairston, sports director of the Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA regarding the City/YMCA contract for services related to city parks and recreation programs.

\*Unanimously approved and adopted the 2021 update of the West Piedmont Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

\*Appointed Ann Gibson to the Piedmont Regional Community Services Board for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2025.

\*Reappointed Jonathan Martin, Austin Robertson, and Joseph Martin to the Planning Commission for 4-year terms all ending June 30, 2026.

## Four counts of attempted murder among charges filed

Authorities in Henry County charged a Bassett woman with four counts of attempted murder of a law enforcement officer and use of a firearm during the commission of a felony in connection with a June 22 incident.

According to a release from the Henry County Sheriff's Office, the Martinsville-Henry County Emergency 911 Center received a call June 22, 2022, at approximately 9:20 p.m., reporting a person at 695 Pine Valley Dr., Bassett, was hearing voices. The caller reported the person was armed with a handgun and was outside the home in an unknown location.

Four deputies arrived at the scene, the release stated. As they approached the house, someone allegedly opened fire on them from a wooded area in what was described as an ambush-style attack.

Multiple rounds were fired at the deputies and then the shooter allegedly retreated into the woods. As the deputies sought a position of cover, the alleged shooter moved through the woods, sporadically firing additional shots for about 20 minutes, according

to the release.

A tactical team from the Henry County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene, and located the person in a wooded area. She was taken into custody without incident at 11 p.m.

Heather L. Hart, 26, of 695 Pine Valley Dr., Bassett, is currently held in the Henry County Adult Detention Center without bond in connection with the incident.



**Heather L. Hart, of Bassett, is being held without bond on multiple charges.**

## Tickets now on-sale for Henry County Fair

Tickets are now on-sale for the 2nd Annual Henry County Fair, with special discounts for the unlimited all-inclusive ticket.

Presented by VisitMartinsville, the fair will be held September 21 - 24 at Martinsville Speedway. Discounted all-inclusive tickets are now available by visiting <https://colerides.com/tickets>.

The all-inclusive tickets are available for \$30 and are good for any night of the fair. The ticket includes gate admission, concerts, unlimited rides, The Pompeyo Family Amazing Dog Show, Rock N Circus Show and interactive animal exhibits.

"The concerts alone are worth the price of admission," said Roger Adams fair director.

The fair will feature local favorites, The TC Carter Band on Wednesday night. Thursday night will be Spirit FM Night, as We Are Messengers take the stage. Friday will be B99.9 night as rising country star Celeste

Kellogg will bring her fun and high energy show to the fair.

Call Henry County Parks and Recreation at (276) 634-4640 for more information.



**September 21 - 24**



# Two organizations partner to create the Butler Legacy Fund

T & Lindley Butler, long-time residents of Wentworth, N.C., are being honored by the Museum of Archives of Rockingham County (MARC) and the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA). The two organizations have joined together to create the Butler Legacy Fund, to support projects that have both historical and environmental relevance in Rockingham County, N.C.

"I am honored by the MARC and DRBA's desire to establish the Butler Legacy Fund," said T Butler. "My husband and I both believed in the amazing potential of Rockingham County, and I am thrilled that the fund will enable these two outstanding organizations to continue making a difference for the people who live, work and play in the place that nurtured us for over fifty years."

The Butlers have accomplished more than most can only dream of, they were founders of both the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and the Museum & Archives of Rockingham County (MARC).

"It is hard to imagine a more appropriate way to honor Lindley and T Butler than something that combines their passions the way the Butler Legacy Fund does," said Jeffrey Bullins, President of the Board of Directors of the MARC. "The MARC Board of Directors look forward to working with DRBA on completing projects using the Butler Legacy Fund that will continue achieving the vision the Butlers have had regarding North Carolina history and environment."

The Butlers have made an enormous contribution to Rockingham County, NC and the surrounding region. They have given their time, talent and treasure to dozens of organizations and projects that have made a positive, tangible impact for the people in the entire region and continue to make a difference today. Sadly, Lindley Butler passed away in May, 2022.

The first project of the Butler Legacy Fund will be to restore and renovate the Batteau Exhibit at the MARC.

"The batteau replica at the MARC highlights the importance of Dan River commerce in the nineteenth century, where skilled boatmen transported agricultural products from Stokes and Rockingham counties downriver to markets, then brought finished goods back upstream," said T Butler. "The expert batteau crews were almost exclusively enslaved Africans before the Civil War, and free Blacks after the war. The mural depicts a batteau at Leaksville Landing."

Almost two decades ago, one of DRBA's first projects was to highlight the historical relevance of the batteau system in Rockingham County. The organization held events on a replica batteau and took passengers up and down rivers in the Dan River Basin. Not only did these events put people at ease about recreating on the river, it was an opportunity for DRBA to promote protection of the local natural resources. That replica now resides in an exhibit at the MARC.

"This restoration project is the perfect project to inaugurate the Butler Legacy Fund," said Tiffany Haworth, DRBA's Executive Director. "It combines both DRBA and the MARC's missions. Neither organization would be here today without T and Lindley's foresight and leadership. Every person that lives and visits Rockingham County – in fact, in the entire Dan River watershed – owes a huge debt of gratitude to this amazing couple."

The Butler Legacy Fund is accepting donations now for this project. The project includes weather-proofing the replica batteau and building a structure around it for protection, installing a batteau mural, and installing new, updated informational signage at the exhibit. The estimated cost of the project is \$10,000.00. Once the funds are raised, the project can begin.

"Completing the batteau exhibit by installing the mural was one of Lindley's fondest wishes," said T Butler. "He would be delighted that this was selected as the first Butler Legacy Fund project."

To donate to the Butler Legacy Fund, visit



**T & Lindley Butler, founders of the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA), honored with creation of new fund.**

<https://www.themarconline.org/the-butler-legacy-fund.html> or <https://www.danriver.org/form/donate>

To learn more about the Dan River Basin Association, visit [www.danriver.org](http://www.danriver.org) and to learn more about the MARC, visit <https://www.themarconline.org/>.

## Free meals are available this summer for children

The Superintendent of Public Instruction issued a reminder to Virginia families that free nutritious meals this summer through two summer meals programs.

The Summer Food Service Program and the Seamless Summer Option operate at schools, public housing centers, community centers, playgrounds, camps, parks and houses of worship. Last summer, meals were served under the two programs at approximately 1,000 locations in the commonwealth.

"Thousands of Virginia students rely on nutritious free or reduced-priced meals during the school year. The Summer Food Service Program ensures that students receive proper nutrition for their developing minds and bodies, even when they aren't in school," said Jillian Balow, superintendent. "I am appreciative of all our summer meals sponsors and partners who work to help reduce food insecurity when school is not in session."

Children ages 18 and under may receive nutritious meals at participating locations with no proof of identity required. Children receiving Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefits are also eligible to access nutritious summer meals at Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option sites.

Families may use the online USDA Meals for Kids Site Finder to find nearby summer meals program locations. Parents and others may also text "food" or "comida" to 304-304 to receive a list of nearby feeding centers.

The summer meals programs, which are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, allow organizations to combine feeding programs with other activities in communities where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

## DMV offers additional resource for customers

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has added a new communication device to its service centers to help DMV employees better serve customers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The wireless electronic device, called UbiDuo, consists of two small screens attached to keyboards that allow a customer and an employee to communicate across the service counter by typing a conversation in real time. This resource is available at all 75 DMV customer service centers across the Commonwealth. DMV will continue to offer sign language interpreter arrangements if customers prefer to use that service.

"Our goal is to provide superior service and we are pleased to expand our resources in partnership with sComm, the creators of UbiDuo," said Acting DMV Commissioner Linda Ford. "Providing this new electronic device will improve face-to-face communication for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing and make their DMV experience even more efficient."

The DMV purchased the UbiDuo devices via a federal grant from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

UbiDuo details are posted at the information desk in each customer service center to inform customers that the device is available.

## Five ABC-related laws are now in effect

Starting July 1, five laws impacting the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC), its licensees and applicants for ABC licenses, went into effect. The Virginia General Assembly passed the following Virginia ABC-related legislative proposals during the 2022 session, and Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed them into law.

**Third-Party Delivery License/Cocktails To-Go** – Both bills create a third-party delivery license which will be necessary to deliver alcoholic beverages purchased by consumers from retail licensees. Created to address safety issues including age verification and food requirements, the new license requires delivery personnel to pass an alcohol delivery safety and responsibility course and certify their compliance with the regulations annually. In addition, the bills extend from July 1 to July 1, 2024, the sunset of prior legislation that allowed certain licensees to sell mixed beverages for off-premises consumption.

**Alcohol Licenses for Casinos** – Both bills create a new mixed beverage casino

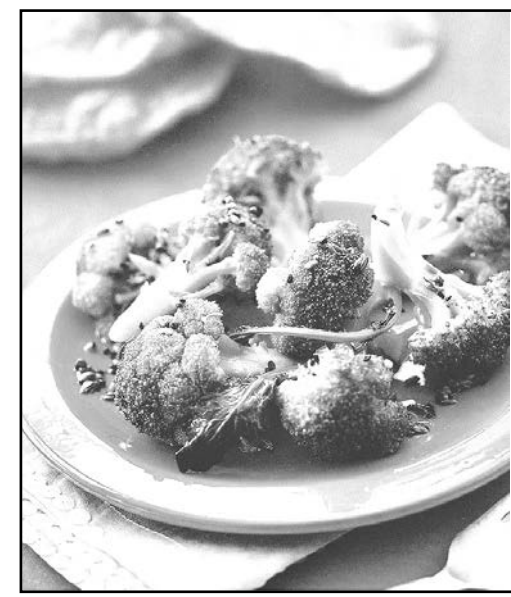
license for the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption in areas designated by ABC during all hours of operation. It also authorizes the licensee to provide gifts of alcoholic beverages to patrons and establish loyalty or reward credit programs under certain conditions.

**Funding for Virginia Distilleries to Market their Products** – Both bills allocate from the General Fund an amount equal to 20% of the 20% tax levied on the sale of Virginia-distilled spirits to the Virginia Spirits Promotion Fund.

**Bringing Alcohol from Out of State** – This law increases the amount of alcoholic beverages that a person may transport into the commonwealth from one gallon to three gallons.

**Removing Sunset Clause for the Sale of Grain Alcohol** – This bill removes the sunset clause from the authorization for the sale of neutral grain spirits or alcohol up to a proof limit of 151 in ABC stores.

## Get your greens with this delicious recipe

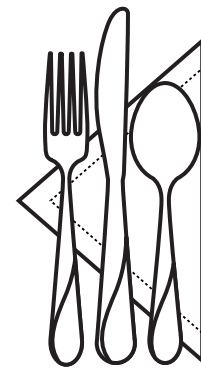


Vegetables are vital components of a healthy diets. Unfortunately, people do not often consume enough servings of vegetables to meet the recommended daily values. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says only around one in 10 people eat enough fruits and vegetables. According to guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average adult should consume between 2 to 4 cups of vegetables daily.

Revamping meal plans can ensure that individuals and families enjoy more vegetables, including broccoli, each day. Healthline says broccoli is rich in several vitamins and minerals. Broccoli also has high levels of antioxidants that can ward off chronic diseases. Broccoli doesn't have to be boring, either. This recipe for "Broccoli with Five Spices" from "India's Vegetarian Cooking" (Kyle Books) by Monisha Bharadwaj imparts an aromatic punch to broccoli. It can be the ideal accompaniment to any meal, including Indian cuisine.

**Broccoli with Five Spices**  
Serves 4  
2 tablespoons sunflower oil  
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds  
1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds  
1/2 teaspoon fenugreek seeds  
1/2 teaspoon black mustard seeds  
1/2 teaspoon black onion seeds (kalonji)  
1 1/4 pounds broccoli, cut into florets  
1 teaspoon turmeric  
1 teaspoon chili powder  
Salt to taste  
1 teaspoon lemon juice

1. Heat the oil and add all the spice seeds.  
2. As they pop and darken, add the broccoli, turmeric, and chili powder, and salt. Mix well and pour in a few tablespoons of water. Bring to a sizzle, then reduce the heat and cook until the broccoli is tender but still holds its shape.  
3. Raise the heat to get rid of any liquid that remains. Drizzle in the lemon juice and serve hot





# Swimmers, boaters encouraged to know the risks Of electric shock drowning in pools and at marinas

With summer here and the July 4th holiday weekend just around the corner, the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) is reminding people about potential electrical hazards that exist in swimming pools and hot tubs, onboard boats, on docks and piers, and in waters surrounding boats, marinas, and launch ramps.

While most people are unaware of electrical dangers posed in water environments such as electric shock drowning (ESD), each year people are injured or killed from these hazards. ESD can occur when improperly installed or maintained electrical systems within marinas or boat electrical systems result in electrical current in the water, which can then pass through a person's body, causing a level of paralysis that can ultimately cause serious injury or drowning.

"Continued education about the presence of electrical hazards in water can help reduce the risk of electric shock drowning from happening in pools and waterways," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA's vice president of Outreach & Advocacy. "Have a qualified electrician inspect your boat, swimming pool equipment, hot tub, and spa before engaging in any water activities, and make sure they are regularly maintained to ensure all life-saving measures and protection systems are functioning properly."

Following are tips for swimmers, and pool and boat owners:

## Swimmers

\*Never swim near a marina, dock, or boyard.

\*While in a pool or hot tub look out for underwater lights that are not working properly, flicker, or work intermittently.

\*If you feel a tingling sensation while in a pool, immediately stop swimming in the direction you are heading. Try and swim in a direction where you had not felt the tingling. Exit the water as quickly as possible; avoid using metal ladders or rails. Touching metal may increase the risk of shock.

## Pool owners

\*If you are putting in a new pool or hot tub, be sure the wiring is performed by an electrician experienced in the special safety requirements for these types of installations and that the completed work is inspected by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

\*Have a qualified electrician periodically inspect and — where necessary — replace or upgrade the electrical devices or equipment that keep your pool or hot tub electrically safe. Have the electrician show you how to turn off all power in case of an emergency.

\*If there are overhead electrical lines, make sure they have proper clearance over the pool and other structures, such as a diving board. If you have any doubts, contact a qualified electrician or your local utility company to make sure power lines are a safe distance away.

## Boat owners

\*Avoid entering the water when launching or loading a boat. These areas can contain stray electrical currents in the water, possibly leading to electric shock drowning or injury from shock, including death.

\*Each year, have the boat's electrical system inspected by a qualified marine electrician to be sure it meets the required codes of your area, including those set by the American Boat & Yacht Council. Make the necessary repairs, if recommended. Follow the same steps after any major storm that affects the boat.

\*Check with the marina owner to let you know if the marina's electrical system has recently been inspected to meet the required codes of your area, including the National Electrical Code® (NEC®).

\*Have ground fault circuit protection (GFCI and GFPE) installed on circuits supplying the boat; use only portable GFCIs or shore power cords (including "Y" adapters) that bear the proper listing mark for marine applications when using electricity near water. Test GFCIs monthly.

\*NEVER modify the electrical system on a boat or shore power to make something work. The code-required safety mechanisms in place are intended to alert people if something is wrong with the boat and with shore power. Find a licensed, qualified professional to help determine the cause of the problem.

NFPA has resources for swimmers, boat and pool owners, including videos, tip sheets, and checklists, that can be downloaded and shared. Please visit [www.nfpa.org/watersafety](http://www.nfpa.org/watersafety).

## Regional Agritourism, Agribusiness Development Program to launch

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) was awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC), to launch a Regional Agritourism and Agribusiness Development Program to collectively market and brand the region's agritourism and agribusiness sites and activities.

"During the development of the West Piedmont Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan, some of our local jurisdictions and partner organizations made us aware of the need to assist our agritourism and small farm businesses that had suffered financially during the Covid-19 shutdowns," said Michael Armbrister, executive director of the WPPDC. "We have already worked with some of our Farmers' Markets and their vendors through other projects. We are excited to expand on those relationships with this project while helping them increase their farm income."

The program will identify agricultural businesses and create a regional

inventory, which will include locations, as well as products and services offered. The inventory will then be used to create a regional interactive agribusiness website that will allow users to search specific products, services, and activities.

A group of agritourism and agribusiness owners and agriculture stakeholders will be formed to guide the program development and sustainability. As a part of the program, the planning commission also will conduct an Economic Impact Study to determine the impact of agriculture and agritourism on the region's economy.

While the primary purpose of the study is to determine the value of agricultural products and agritourism, it also will include the number of jobs supported by the agriculture sector and an assessment of future market growth potential.

The WPPDC serves the counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania; the cities of Danville and Martinsville; and the Town of Rocky Mount.

## Amherst County veterinarian sentenced for opioid theft

A former veterinarian, who admitted to stealing opioids, was sentenced recently in federal court to eight months in federal prison.

Patrick Gries, 54, of Madison Heights, Virginia, pleaded guilty in January 2022 to one count of adulteration of a drug held for sale after shipment in interstate commerce and one count of distribution of a controlled substance without a written prescription.

"When health care professionals put the well-being of others at risk, they violate the trust placed in them by the public and will be held accountable. My Office will continue to prioritize these cases throughout the Western District of Virginia," United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh said.

"Health care professionals, including veterinarians, who take needed medications from their patients not only harm the patients but also put at risk the trust that consumers have in those who provide medical care to their companion animals," said Special Agent in Charge George Scavdis, FDA Office of Criminal Investigations - Metro Washington Field Office. "We will continue to investigate and bring to justice those who put the safety and health of pets at risk by tampering with their patients' medications."

According to court documents, from 1994 through 2021, Gries practiced as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at VCA Amherst Animal Hospital in Amherst County, Virginia. The animal hospital maintained supplies of Dilaudid, an opioid generically known as hydromorphone, primarily for use in treating pain in animal patients following surgeries.

As the hospital's primary surgeon, Gries had full access to the hospital's supply of hydromorphone and began withdrawing a portion of the highly addictive drug from the vials and injecting it into himself. He would replace the stolen hydromorphone with another substance, usually either saline or butorphanol, and then return the altered narcotic back to the hospital inventory.

The Food and Drug Administration - Office of Criminal Investigations, the Drug Enforcement Administration - Diversion Control Division, and the Virginia State Police investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Baudinet prosecuted the case.

## More than 18,000 Virginians gained employment in May

Gov. Glenn Youngkin recently announced the number of employed Virginians expanded to more than 4.2 million workers in May. Virginia has added nearly 80,000 since February. Virginia's unemployment rate held steady at 3 percent in May. This continues to be below the national rate, which was unchanged at 3.6 percent. The Commonwealth's labor force participation rate, measuring the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work, rose by 0.3 percent to 63.8 percent in May.

According to BLS household survey data, the number of employed residents rose by 18,134 to 4,218,336. In recent months, employment growth has accelerated. April's employment growth was the eighth-largest monthly increase, while May's was the tenth-largest going back to 1976. The Commonwealth's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3 percent is 1.1 percentage points below the rate from a year ago. The labor force increased by 17,175 to 4,347,177, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 959 to 128,841.

"I'm encouraged, after one of the worst job recov-

eries from the pandemic in the nation, nearly 80,000 more Virginians are working today than when I took office," said Youngkin. "Virginia is heading in the right direction. We are focused on getting Virginians back to work and expanding opportunity across the Commonwealth. While our labor force participation continues to increase, with fewer people working than before the pandemic there is still plenty of room for growth."

"Since the height of pandemic unemployment in April 2020, the number of unemployed residents has decreased by over 385,500," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "This undoubtedly shows that Virginians are getting back to work, and that the state economy is improving."

"The May unemployment rate of 3.0% is approaching the near historically low pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 2.7%" said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater. "We are also encouraged by the continued increase of employed Virginians."

Virginia nonfarm payrolls increased by 7,000 to 4,044,400 in May. From May 2021 to May 2022, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia gained

125,000 jobs, an increase of 3.2%. In May, the private sector recorded an over-the-year gain of 110,300 jobs, while the public sector gained 14,700 jobs.

Compared to a year ago, on a seasonally adjusted basis, nine of eleven major industry divisions experienced employment increases while two saw employment decreases. The largest over-the-year job gain occurred in Leisure and Hospitality, up 64,000 jobs (+18.8%). The second-largest over-the-year job gain occurred in Education and Health Services, up 20,500 jobs (+3.8%). The third largest over-the-year job gain occurred in Government, up 14,700 jobs (+2.1%). Other job gains occurred in Professional and Business Services (+12,500 jobs), Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+8,700 jobs), Miscellaneous Services (+6,300 jobs), Information (+2,700 jobs), Manufacturing (+600 jobs), and Mining and Logging (+200 jobs).

Within Government, Local (+10,400 jobs), State (+4,300 jobs), and Federal employment held steady. The job losses occurred in Finance (-4,200 jobs) to 205,700 and Construction, with a decrease of 1,000 jobs to 205,100.

## Challenges, opportunities discussed at meat processing listening session

Farmers and agricultural experts gathered at a listening session in Buckingham County on June 15 to discuss opportunities and challenges related to Virginia's meat processing industry.

The forum was one in a series of sessions designed to give the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services an opportunity to receive feedback from producers and processors. The results will be used to develop a 5-year strategic plan to increase meat processing in the commonwealth.

"Everybody has done a tremendous job promoting our products, and the consumer is demanding it, but we're having a hard time getting it to them because of this bottleneck," said Brandon Schmitt, a Campbell County cattle farmer who attended the session. "Having more meat processing facilities in the state would greatly enhance our ability to direct market to consumers."

During the session, farmers said more local small- and mid-size facilities would be ideal, but cost is a barrier. Establishing a business that complies with U.S. Department of Agriculture food safety regulations to sell directly to consumers requires significant capital investment and time.

"For smaller plants like what I'm trying to do, to be able to come up with the tools and equipment to facilitate that is really challenging," said Sekou Abdus-Sabur, a Prince Edward County sheep producer who attended the ses-

sion.

Abdus-Sabur is working to open a meat processing facility in Farmville. He said that while grants are available to help with funding, the application process can be "a weedy, quarrelsome mess." He and other producers voiced a disconnect between available financial assistance and their ability to access it.

Stephen Versen, manager of the VDACS Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development, said programs through VDACS and the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation and Rural Sustainability can help those interested in starting a meat processing business navigate the process.

"It's our job to help producers and agribusinesses take advantage of different programs that are out there," Versen said.

Participants in the forum also discussed potential opportunities to establish more local cold storage facilities to store processed meat, as well as possibly creating new incentives for current processors to expand their operations.

The listening sessions are sponsored by Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, the Virginia Cattlemen's Association and the Virginia Agribusiness Council. For producers or meat processors interested in attending, the final listening session will be held June 27 from 7-9 p.m. at the Wytheville Meeting Center, 333 Community Blvd. in Wytheville.



# Ground Floor Coffee Shop

from page 1

who advised Blancas as he got his business started, agreed.

"The upper floors in Blancas' building are filling up with apartments, as are other buildings in town," Scales added. "In three to five years, the foot traffic for successful business will definitely be here."

Blancas and his wife, Morgan, began planning a move from Houston, Texas, to Martinsville in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic. Blancas had always dreamt of opening a coffee shop with the mission of impacting a community for the better. In 2020 the perfect opportunity came along.

"During the pandemic I reevaluated my life and decided to start a business that would make a difference," the former Exxon executive related. "I had family and friends in Martinsville, so we decided to go for it."

A friend, who owned the historic Holt Building in town, happened to mention that the ground floor was available. However, Blancas soon learned that starting a business from the ground up would require some business expertise.

"When I decided to take this leap and start this journey, I had no idea what I was doing," Blancas said with a laugh. "I had never owned a business before."

Though he had written business plans in college and had taken business courses, "it's a whole different ballgame actually putting rubber to the road and setting out on the journey for yourself, so I was looking for all the advice I could get."

Over several months, Blancas said he had conversations with officials in the city. "That's when I was introduced to Michael Scales at the SBDC."

Since then, Scales has been his right-hand man.

"One of the key relationships I developed at the beginning of my journey was with the SBDC," Blancas said.

Blancas said Scales "was really one of the first guys who I had the chance to sit down with and talk through the details of my business plan and the strategy behind the shop."

Scales helped Blancas develop a 40-page business plan that was essential in obtaining funds for renovating the 1914-era building. The project was focused on adding a modern feel while retaining historic features like the original hardwood floors and decorative tin ceiling tiles.

"The relationship (with Scales) is invaluable to me," Blancas said. He said he still references the business plan he developed with Scales to this day.

Scales also encouraged Blancas to enroll in two entrepreneurial development programs, the Uptown Partnership Community Business Launch (CBL) and the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce Grow Program that includes a four-week boot camp for expanding companies.

"The Grow Program was created for established businesses to introduce a need to help that business grow," Blancas noted. "We're requesting \$9,000 to expand our kitchen, currently about the size of a walk-in closet."

Next on the agenda for The Ground Floor is expanding their current food service. What started with weekday breakfast burritos has expanded into lunch options (complete with lettuces and other greens grown in-shop in its hydroponic plant tower) and, most recently, a Saturday brunch menu, but Blancas said he plans to expand the shop's food options even farther.

He said he hopes to expand the kitchen in late summer or early fall of this year.

"Once we do that expansion, I want to do a pretty different menu that goes beyond the traditional café-style sandwiches, soups, and salads. I want to do an emphasis on healthier food."

That menu, he said, likely will include a variety of bowls including grain bowls and acai bowls.

"Pretty soon we're going to start doing some healthier grab-and-go options like overnight oats, parfaits, fruit cups, and personal charcuterie boards," Blancas added.

"I'm also extremely thankful for the Uptown Partnership in Martinsville," Blancas noted. "In addition to funding, there's training, mentorship guidance and general counsel on how to be successful. They're chartered to define the vision for Martinsville's future growth."

Blancas is pleased with the growth he's seen in the city since he opened for business



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Josh Blancas, owner of The Ground Floor, and Michael Scales, business analyst for Longwood Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Scales helped Blancas with his initial business plan which Blancas said he still references to this day.**

in May 2021.

Prior to opening, he admitted he had his doubts. "Will Martinsville (residents) pay \$5, \$6, \$7 for specialty coffee? Will we have enough business to sustain us? Will we have enough traffic?"

However, when he sold more than 500 cups of coffee on opening day—numbers he says are more typical of a busy coffee shop in New York City or San Francisco—those doubts began to be assuaged.

"Ever since we opened, we've been pleasantly surprised in every aspect. We've surpassed every single goal that we set for ourselves in our initial business plan."

Ultimately, Blancas said, "just being a coffee shop isn't the goal. The goal is being a gathering place ... whatever we can do to get people in the door and create a space for people, we want to do that."

"It's an exciting time," he concluded. "The infrastructure and the people are already here. I feel sure that something special is about to happen in Martinsville, and I definitely want The Ground Floor to be a part of it."

As a small business resource for over 30 years, the Longwood SBDC's core mission is to provide education, consulting and economic research to support potential and existing small business owners throughout Southern Virginia. Longwood SBDC works with local sponsors to provide consulting services free of charge. For more information visit [www.sbdc-longwood.com](http://www.sbdc-longwood.com).

## New trail opens at Jack Dalton Park

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

The new Nature Detour Trail located at Jack Dalton Park in Henry County is now open to the public. This natural surface trail, created through a partnership with the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and the Rotary Clubs of Martinsville and Henry County, is designed to inspire people to immerse themselves in nature and learn more about native plants.

"This was a vision of DRBA for a long time, and the Rotary Clubs of Martinsville and Henry County really helped us make this a reality," DRBA Executive Director Tiffany Haworth said at the Tuesday ribbon cutting.

DRBA's North Carolina Programs Manager Anna Wheeler said it had been on DRBA's Henry County master plan since 2019. Work began last summer.

The park is used for walking, biking, picnicking and sporting events. Before the trail was built, the experience at the park was fully on pavement, with little shelter from the sun.

The Nature Detour Trail gives walkers and runners an opportunity to step into a wooded area and learn something new about their local environment. Plant markers identify the plants along the trail so people can learn more about what native plants look like.

"It also has an educational component," Haworth said.

"The Nature Detour Trail adds an exciting recreational opportunity for the thousands of people that visit Jack Dalton Park every year," said Roger Adams, director of Henry County Parks & Recreation. "We are grateful to the Rotary Clubs and Dan River Basin Association for creating a way for people to take a detour from pavement for a few minutes and enjoy nature."

The Nature Detour Trail was funded by the Martinsville Uptown Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Martinsville, and the Henry County Rotary Club in partnership with DRBA and with additional support from David Jones, of Jones & DeShon Orthodontics in Martinsville, and his son, David Jones, of Roanoke Valley Orthodontics.

Haworth said the local Rotary clubs matched a \$2,000 grant from Rotary International to make a total \$4,000 contribution to the project. The funds, she said, were used to hire a contractor to build the trail, which included the stone walkway, a kiosk to welcome visitors, and the native plants.

Rotary Club members volunteered at the site to construct the trail and plant the native species along the trail.

"Not only did you help, not only did you fund the project, but you also got dirty and got out here and put your hands in the dirt and help make the trail and the plants happen," said Haworth.

"The Rotary Clubs worked together to make this new trail a reality for the people who live in our community," said Jim Woods of the Rotary Clubs of Martinsville and Henry County. "We hope everyone gets the chance to walk this short trail and get inspired to enjoy other trails in the region. In addition, we hope that people learn something about the importance of native plants and protection of our natural resources."

Rotary Area Governor Brad Kinkema said the environment is one of Rotary's areas of focus. "This is a great addition to the park and serves Martinsville and Henry County. We could also volunteer, which is important to Rotarians, and we could also contribute money."

DRBA Education Outreach Manager Krista Hodges said DRBA partners with local organizations on

projects like the new trail because, "these are organizations that are in our basin. I think getting those organizations involved directly with what we're doing is the best way to see the community being a part of all of it—everybody being a part of the solution to building these trails, making the county better. Just coming together to get it done."

"We love this park," Haworth said, but added that the project aimed to offer a different option for park visitors. "We felt that people who come here may be more accustomed and comfortable being on pavement out in the hot sun and we wanted to introduce people to getting off pavement and into the woods in a very short, safe little stroll, and realize that it can be fun to take a detour through nature and learn a little something about the importance of planting native in our area."

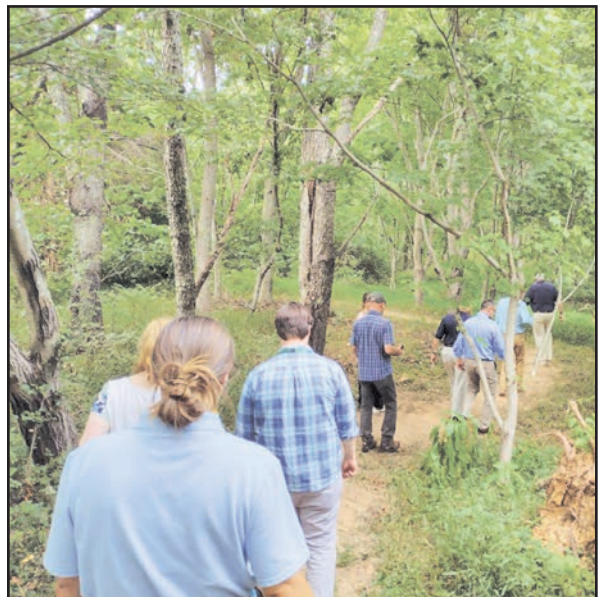
DRBA helps plan and construct trails, parks and river access points in the 3,300 square miles of the Dan River Basin watershed. To learn more about DRBA and its recreation, education and stewardship programs that protect and preserve our local natural resources, visit [www.danriver.org](http://www.danriver.org).



**Informational signage at six different stations along the new Nature Detour Trail help educate walkers about various native plants.**



**A kiosk at the head of the new Nature Detour Trail at Jack Dalton Park in Henry County showcases the various types of native plants walkers might encounter along the easy, shaded loop trail and informs visitors to the trail about the importance of native plantings.**



COURTESY OF DRBA

**Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) staff, members of the Rotary Clubs of Martinsville and Henry County, and others take an inaugural walk along the new Nature Detour Trail. Rotary partnered with DRBA to secure funding for the trail and members volunteered time to work on building the trail.**

## Franks and Dranks returns for a night of music and food

Join Piedmont Arts for Franks + Dranks, a cook out-themed summer party, Friday, July 8 from 6-9 p.m. in the Gravelly-Lester Art Garden.

DJ What will bring the jams, spinning a mix of hip hop, R&B, pop and country. Hylton's Wood Cooking Grill will provide hot dogs and sides. Food, water and lemonade are all included in the ticket price. Beer and wine will be available at the cash bar. In celebration of educators, all teachers with ID will receive one complimentary drink ticket. Newcomers are also invited to

mingle with the community at a special mixer hosted by Martinsville Made.

Bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating. No outside food or drinks are allowed at this event. In case of rain, Franks + Dranks will be held at Piedmont Arts.

Tickets are \$20 general admission and are on sale now at Piedmont Arts and [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org).

Franks + Dranks is sponsored by Blue Ridge Bank and Martinsville Made. The Gravelly-Lester Art Garden is located at 207 Starling Avenue, Martinsville, Virginia.

