

County meets lobbyists, hears audit report

Staff Reports

The Henry County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday was introduced to lobbyists from Cozen O’Conner Public Strategies, which will help ensure the county’s legislative agenda is heard with the Virginia General Assembly.

County Administrator Dale Wagoner described the lobbyists as the “boots on the ground in Richmond,” when introducing Julia Hammond and Heidi Hertz, of the firm.

Hammond said she has spent her career around the Virginia General Assembly “in the public sector working for members of the General Assembly, delegates in their offices, I was the lobbyist for former governor Bob McDonnell.

Hammond said Cozen has many different clients, including businesses, non-profits, healthcare, and local businesses. Their Virginia office is based in Richmond.

Hertz is from Lunenburg County, Virginia and joined Cozen in January. She said she



Julia Hammond (right) and Heidi Hertz (left) are two lobbyists with Cozen O’Conner Public Strategies.

See **Lobbyists**, page 5

Monday to step down Jan. 2

Staff Reports

Eric Monday, Martinsville’s City Attorney and Assistant City Manager is set to retire from the city Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, a day after the celebration of his 20th year with the city.

“It is a genuine honor, and most days, a pleasure to serve as city attorney for the people of Martinsville,” Monday said, and added that he wishes residents and the next council success in the upcoming year and the years that will follow.

Later, Monday addressed the council members.

While he and councilman Danny Turner have “not always seen eye to eye on issues,” Monday said he has enormous respect for Turner and his love for the city.

“Particularly in your service as mayor you did all the things a mayor is supposed to do and a lot of our mayors in the past haven’t done. Every tree planting, every ribbon cutting, every flag raising, every ceremony, every recognition of a veteran, and opening of a small business you were there,” he said.

Monday said working with Jennifer Bowles, who he considers a friend, has been a pleasure.

“Your commitment and love for this city has also come through consistently through your eight years of service here,” he said.

Monday said what Bowles has done for the city’s Black community is notable.

“It was you that enabled Martinsville to be the very first community in this entire state that got every historic black cemetery



Assistant City Manager and City Attorney Eric Monday will step down from his post effective Jan. 2.

recognized,” he said.

One of his true pleasures was helping Bowles address what he considered to be more than 70-years of injustice by recognizing the Martinsville Seven.

“I hope there has been a little bit of balm poured into a wound that has been in our community entirely too long,” Monday said.

He made the comments after the Martinsville City Council voted to terminate his contract, effective January 2.

At the Dec. 13 meeting, Bowles cited plans of the new council as the reason for her motion. She added that she did not believe there was any wrongdoing on Monday’s part.

“You’ve been hardworking, for me, ethical, understanding, during all the time I’ve worked with you these past eight years. I reflect back on our most recent collaboration with the Martinsville Seven. We had very honest and direct

conversation on how we wanted to see our city progress and move forward and I’m just thankful that you worked with me, and we were able to get that done. Our new council has indicated they want to go in a different direction.

Mayor Kathy Lawson said that at the Virginia Municipal League Conference in October, she asked the VML Attorney a question and was asked which city she represented. When she responded, the VML attorney said, “Oh, you have Eric Monday. You have the best.”

“Eric has served the city with honesty and integrity and has been nothing but outstanding as he has served us,” Lawson said. “He gave up his private practice to serve our city. He is in the top one percent of attorneys in the Commonwealth, having been chosen as a Virginia

See **Monday to Step Down**, page 4

Key city positions to change in 2023

Staff Reports

The Martinsville Police Chief, Martinsville Fire Chief and Martinsville Circuit Court Clerk announced their respective retirements and/or addressed members of the Martinsville City Council on Tuesday.

Assistant City Manager and City Attorney Eric Monday also will retire effective Jan. 2. (See related story)

Eddie Cassady will retire as chief of police, Ted Anderson will retire from his post as fire chief,

and Ashby Pritchett will retire as clerk.

Throughout his 37-year career, Pritchett said “I always thought we could work together” with the various members of council and other city officials, “and we did. My office was always successful because we believed in the city.

“God bless the City of Martinsville. I hope that it prospers,” he said.

“I’ve been blessed throughout my career,” Cassady, 58, said Tuesday when addressing members of city council.

See **Key City Positions**, page 4

Maddy Oliver Staff writer

Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry said the new

Henry County Adult Detention Center provides more services to inmates while remediating many of the issues associ-

ated with the former jail. And now more than ever, inmates find the help and support they need to beat the issues that led to their

incarceration.

Like corrections officials and some inmates, Perry recalled the conditions in the former jail,

which was originally built to house 67 inmates.

It was expanded in the mid-90s to contain 126 beds, but the size of the

building did not change, officials have said.

“There was a time where we got up to about

See **New Detention Center**, page 5



Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry stands in the doorway of a classroom in the Adult Detention Center. The classroom can be used for a number of activities, but it is mainly used by inmates who take advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them. Staff in the facility are working to provide more offerings and services to inmates.



Many of the facilities in Henry County’s new Adult Detention Center are upgraded from the old jail facility, including visitation rooms.

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 FOR MORE UPDATES



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Friday, December 16

New College Institute's Innovation Lab will celebrate its grand opening and holiday celebration from 6 to 8 p.m. The lab encourages learning through creative inquiry and experimentation. Food, drink, and gingerbread house fixings will be provided.

Saturday, December 17

A free toy give away, sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club and Performance 276, will take place at Performance 276, 714 Memorial Boulevard, Martinsville. There will also be a toy ride. Drivers must bring a toy for a boy and girl in order to participate. Drivers will meet at 11 a.m. at 100 Fair Oaks Drive, Stanleytown.

Gingerbread House Decorating, Ridgeway Library, 900 Vista View Lane Ridgeway. Graham-cracker "gingerbread"

houses will be provided, assembled and ready to decorate with an assortment of sweets and treats. All ages are welcomed. Pre-registration is required by calling (276) 403-5430.

Sunday, December 18

Come to the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society Historic Henry County Courthouse for an afternoon of Christmas music. Music will begin at 3 p.m. Those in attendance are encouraged to wear festive attire.

Blood Drives will be held Dec. 17 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Mt. Hermon Church of the Brethren; Dec. 23 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Martinsville Elks Lodge; Dec. 29 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Martinsville Elks Lodge; Dec. 31, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Martinsville Elks Lodge.

ONGOING

*The Briarpatch Amateur Radio Club serves amateur radio operators in southwest Virginia and northwest North Carolina. Anyone interested is invited to the on-air weekly net held each Tuesday

night at 8 p.m. with a frequency of 147.090 + with 103.5 tone. Additional information can be found at www.http://vaemcommdb.org/BARC/, and their BARC Facebook page.

*The Louise R. Lester Spay/Neuter Clinic is hosting wellness clinics every second and fourth Tuesday. 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.

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

*MHC Coalition for Health and Wellness (MHCCHW) continues to offer "no-touch" Medicaid/FAMIS application assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64 years of age. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deductibles. Call or text Ann Walker at (276) 732-0509 to see if you may 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.

Eight bands join lineup for Rooster Walk 13 festival at Pop's Farm in Martinsville

Critically acclaimed soul stars St. Paul & The Broken Bones top a list of eight bands added to the 13th annual Rooster Walk Music & Arts Festival lineup, festival organizers announced today. The multi-genre, family-friendly festival will take place May 25-28, at Pop's Farm in Martinsville, Va.

Also joining SPBB in today's lineup announcement are: Neo-soul crusader Neal Francis, Daniel Donato's Cosmic County, Brandon "Taz" Niederauer (rock/blues), The Stews (southern rock), Jon Stickley Trio (jazzgrass), Sanctum Sully (rock), and Jules & The Agreeables (rock).

Those eight artists will coalesce with the 16 bands that were added to Rooster Walk's lineup last month: overall festival headliner Greensky Bluegrass (progressive bluegrass), The Marshall Tucker Band (southern rock icons), Trouble No More (all-star collective paying tribute to The Allman Brothers Band), Doom Flamingo (a six-piece synthwave beast), Kitchen Dwellers (progressive bluegrass), Yarn (roots rock), Neighbor (jam), Mike & The Moonpies (neotraditional country), Crawford & Power (red-clay country), Sol Driven Train (rock), The Wilson Springs

Hotel (country/western/swing/bluegrass), Isaac Hadden Organ Trio (rock/funk), Sneezy (R&B/Soul/Jam), TC Carter Band (blues/rock), Big Fat Gap (bluegrass) and Pirates of the Piedmont (musical marauders). More than 20 additional bands will be added to the lineup, headed by Greensky Bluegrass, in the coming weeks and months.

Tickets for Rooster Walk 13 are now on sale and going fast at the newly redesigned website, www.roosterwalk.com, which also features all the information needed to plan for an amazing experience: band bios and music, ticket descriptions, festival experiences, frequently asked questions, a venue map and more.

The festival will take place Thursday-Sunday of Memorial Day weekend in the rolling foothills surrounding Martinsville, Va. Rooster Walk is a 4-day festival celebrating music, art, and the great outdoors at the idyllic Pop's Farm venue. With roughly 50 bands performing on 6 different stages, an amazing roster of stellar music steers the Rooster Walk experience.

In addition to approximately 80 sets of live music, the family-friendly Rooster Walk will offer a wide

variety of kids' activities, craft beer, great food, arts and numerous opportunities to enjoy Virginia's great outdoors with kayak river floats, bike rides, yoga, a disc golf course and beautiful on-site camping.

Rooster Walk has been named one of the Top 5 festivals in the state by the Richmond-Times Dispatch. It also was voted the region's Most Creative Charitable Eve Magazine for three consecutive years. The festival was created in memory of late Martinsville natives Edwin "The Rooster" Penn and Walker Shank, who graduated from Martinsville High School in 2000.

A portion of proceeds from the festival will be donated to local and regional charities, including Rooster Walk's own Penn-Shank Memorial Endowment Scholarship Fund for students at Martinsville High School, and the Rooster Walk Music Instrument Program for public band programs in the local city and county school systems.

The festival is produced by Rooster Walk Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to promoting music, arts and education in its home of Martinsville-Henry County. Since 2009, Rooster Walk Inc. has donated more than \$270,000 to local and regional charities.



time to schedule

Don't delay your annual screenings. Make the most of your insurance benefits.

If you haven't already scheduled your annual wellness check-up and any recommended screenings and immunizations, do it today. Taking care of these items before the end of the year is a great way to take care of yourself, and a great way to make the most of your health insurance benefits before deductibles reset in January!

Screenings include:

Annual Check-Up ■ Bone Density Test ■ Colonoscopy
Immunizations ■ Mammogram
Sleep Study Test ■ Well Woman Exam


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Two new members inducted during winter muster



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pictured are (from left to right), Riley Woodell, Michael Nemeč, Del. Les Adams, Chapter President Jarred Marlowe, VASSAR 1st VP Ernie Coggins.

The Colonel George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution held their winter muster on December 3, at the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center and Museum. Guest speakers for the muster were Del. Les Adams (VA-16th), and Virginia Society

Sons of the American Revolution (VASSAR) 1st Vice President Ernie Coggins. The meeting was well attended and also included the induction of two new Col. George Waller Chapter members, Michael Nemeč and Riley Woodell.

ajirel **New Year's 2023**

Worship by
LeAnne Naff, John Heiss, and Ben McClaren


NEW DAY CHURCH
705 Liberty Street
Martinsville, Va

Dec 30, 6:30PM
Dec 31, 5PM
Jan 1, 10:30AM



Project Hope grantees celebrate as Harvest announces intent for 2023 program

This year's Project Hope recipients gathered at Piedmont Arts on Dec. 7 to celebrate their upcoming projects and the 20th Anniversary of The Harvest Foundation.

The Project Hope grants initiative, announced Aug. 16 on Harvest's 20th Anniversary, not only celebrates the occasion but it's also designed to plant seeds of hope for the future and develop opportunities to strengthen relationships among neighbors through grassroots organizing and engagement.

Throughout the foundation's extensive strategic planning process in 2021, Program Officer India Brown said it was clear that community engagement and community voice were necessary to spark real hope in Martinsville-Henry County.

"What better way to kick off the Harvest Foundation's 20th anniversary than to provide an opportunity for residents to take action on building a better community where we all live, work, and play?" Brown said.

A group of local "hope builders" worked on Project Hope from developing the RFP (request for proposals) to vetting projects and allocating funding. Committee members include Kendall Davis, Cameron Brummitt, Brandon Martin, Autumn Morris, Kimberly Keller, Beverly P. Lyle, Larissa Rash, Sarah Short, DeShanta Hairston, and Viola Rich.

"I am inspired and impressed by the Project Hope grant recipients this year, and I'm excited to see their ideas brought to life in our community," Lyle said. "My hope for the future is that Project Hope continues next year and that we will see more and more citizens engaged in it. Harvest has provided a support system for grassroots visioning (whether the idea is big or small), organizing, and implementation. Let's all encourage and facilitate this and continue to see the hopes of our citizens realized and celebrated."

Joyce Staples, chair of the Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) board of directors, received funding for her proposal to create a Hope Book Club for Middle School Girls. When she envisioned a book club for middle school girls a year ago, she said she had no idea how her dream would manifest into reality.

"My sincere thanks to the Harvest Foundation for this opportunity to allow young ladies to have an enriching experience with books, to find their voices, and hopefully develop a lifelong love of reading," Staples said. "We're developing a group of critical thinkers and a more literate society, and we're building and engaging the community."

According to Staples, the Hope Book Club has 22 girls registered, seven more than anticipated in her proposal. Club members will receive a bag of goodies that include a reading journal and a copy of the first book they plan to read, "A Long Walk to Water," by Linda Sue Park.

Harvest announced five approved grants totaling \$44,525, while two are pending. Approved proposals include:

*Greater Bassett Area Community (GBAC) received \$10,000 for the Carson Lane School Restoration Project;

*Piedmont Arts received \$9,180 to fund a Pollinator Garden and Art Trail;

*The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber's Partnership for Economic Growth received \$10,000 to fund a "Rooting" for the Same Hope Mural; the

*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers received \$10,000 to fund trail improvements at Philpott Lake; and

*Fayette Area Historical Initiative received \$5,345 to fund the Hope Book Club for Middle School Girls.

Visit www.theharvestfoundation.org to find out more about Project Hope.



Project Hope grant recipients, pictured from left, include Chris Powell, operations project manager at Philpott Lake, Clifford Stone, treasurer of Greater Bassett Area Community (GBAC), GBAC President John Thomas "Smokey" Pegram, Pastor CJ Martin of House of Purpose Ministries, GBAC Coordinator Ruby Davis, Joyce Staples, chair of the Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) board of directors, Heidi Pinkston, executive director of Piedmont Arts, and Lauren Ellis, programs and public relations coordinator at Piedmont Arts.



Members of the Project Hope Committee include (from left) Larissa Rash, DeShanta Hairston, Beverly P. Lyle, Brandon Martin, Cameron Brummitt, Autumn Morris, and Sarah Short.

Administrative Support, Waste Management lead unemployment claims

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) announced last week that the number of initial claims increased in the latest filing week to 1,211, returning to a level typically seen earlier in the year.

For the filing week ending December 3, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims in Virginia was 1,211, which is an increase of 723 claimants from the previous week. Over half of initial claims with a self-reported industry from administrative support and waste management, professional, scientific, and technical services, retail trade, manufacturing, and construction. Continued weeks claimed totaled 7,899, which was an increase of 552 claims from the previous week,

but a reduction of 46% from the 14,598 continued claims from the comparable week last year.

Eligibility for benefits is determined on a weekly basis, and so not all weekly claims filed result in a benefit payment. This is because the initial claims numbers represent claim applications; claims are then reviewed for eligibility and legitimacy.

In the week ending December 3, the advance U.S. figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 230,000, an increase of 4,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 1,000 from 225,000 to 226,000. The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unad-

justed, totaled 286,436 in the week ending December 3, an increase of 87,113 (or 43.7 percent) from the previous week. There were 283,935 initial claims in the comparable week in 2021. Looking at preliminary data, most U.S. states reported increases on a seasonally unadjusted basis. California's preliminary weekly change (+16,057) was the largest increase. New York's weekly change (+9,162) was the second largest increase. Texas's preliminary weekly change (+7,904) was the third largest increase. Georgia's weekly change (+7,576) was the fourth largest increase. Virginia's preliminary weekly change (+974) was the 23rd largest increase.

Water line rehab project slated to begin Dec. 19

A project to replace portions of the water infrastructure in Collinsville is scheduled to get underway on Monday, Dec. 19. The construction, which is expected to take approximately eight weeks, will be concentrated along John Redd Boulevard and Second Street.

The Henry County Public Service Authority (PSA) hired Prillaman & Pace, Inc., to install the new water lines.

PSA customers may experience water outages for the duration of the construction. Every effort will be made to keep any outages to a minimum. Additionally, there will be traffic control measures put in place to minimize through traffic around the project area.

For any questions or concerns regarding the project, call the PSA's Project Inspector Jay Blair at (276) 806-1531 or the Engineering & Mapping Department at (276) 634-4776.

Wallace among Youngkin's appointees

Gov. Glenn Youngkin on Friday announced additional key administration and board appointments.

Dr. Jerry Wallace of Danville, president of Danville Community College, was among those appointed.

He will serve on to the A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Board of Trustees.

"I am pleased to welcome these new appointees to service in the Commonwealth," said Youngkin. "I look forward to their contributions to their respective teams and I thank them for their willingness to join public service."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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CLUES ACROSS

1. A people of Eastern Afghanistan
5. Supervises interstate commerce
8. Touch lightly
11. Relating to bees
13. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
14. Mosuo culture religion
15. Italian village
16. Stiff bristle
17. Wealthy enclave in Rio
18. Cause to lose courage
20. Examines animals
21. Ethnic group of Laos and Thailand
22. Gets rid of
25. Having easily perceived thoughts
30. Removed surgically
31. Principle underlying the universe

32. Popular airline
33. Antelopes
38. Peacock network
41. Utter repeatedly
43. One from the Golden
45. Photographers
48. Father
49. Popular BBQ dish
50. Cavalry sword
55. Ancient Greek sophist
56. Atomic mass unit
57. Afflicted in mind or body
59. Indian mythological figure
60. Mild expression of surprise
61. Jewish spiritual leader
62. Brew
63. Doctor of Education
64. Impudence

CLUES DOWN

1. State attorneys
2. Imitated
3. Latvian capital
4. Irish goddess
5. Taste
6. Dried
7. Spanish saloon
8. Mother of Perseus
9. Evergreen coniferous trees
10. Refuse to comply
12. Negative
14. Hyphen
19. A way to record
23. Not good
24. One who tends the furnace
25. Small amount
26. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
27. The whole quantity
28. __ King Cole, musician

29. One's opinion
34. Holds ashes
35. Stablecoin cryptocurrency
36. Side-blotched lizards genus
37. Legislator (abbr.)
39. Concentrated bombardment
40. Took for oneself
41. Nigerian City
42. Thousands of pounds
44. Inspired
45. Secret clique
46. Expression
47. Dough made from corn flour
48. Comedian Carvey
51. Swiss river
52. Prejudice
53. Actor Idris
54. Resistance fighters
58. Criticize

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OPINION

Regarding terrorism

Imagine, if you will, that you live in a fairly rural community not unlike Martinsville and Henry County.

One cold December evening, you're watching TV on the couch when the power suddenly goes out. You look out the window and notice your neighbors are without power, too. You check Facebook looking for information and discover that homes are without power all over the county, tens of thousands of them.

You go to bed, and you probably don't sleep that well unless you have a fireplace; it's a cold night. The following morning, you find out that this power outage was no accident.

It was the result of a terrorist attack.

A group of unknown terrorists drove to two different unmanned electrical distribution substations and opened fire on them with high-powered rifles, knocking out power to 40,000 homes and businesses. It will be days before power can be restored.

In the meantime, your house gets colder each day. Area hospi-

tals and nursing homes are running on backup power. Grocery stores are forced to throw out perishable food. Area storefronts, hoping to make some money by selling Christmas presents, have no choice but to shutter their doors and hope the outage ends soon.

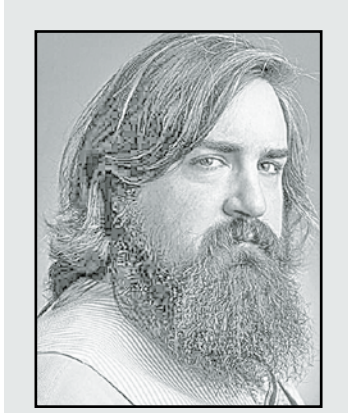
All this because of an act of terrorism.

To make matters worse, no arrests have been made. No perpetrators have come forward. The terrorists could be anywhere. Your next door neighbor could be one of them.

It's a chilling thought, the sort of thing that should be at the very top of the news cycle for days if not weeks on end, a terrorist attack on rural American soil.

And it happened a couple of weeks ago in Moore County, North Carolina.

You may have seen some stories about the incident; in my opinion, it didn't get nearly the coverage it deserved. On Dec. 3, two electrical substations in Moore County were riddled with gunfire, causing 40,000 homes and businesses



By Ben R. Williams

to lose electricity for days on end in freezing temperatures. This wasn't a prank; according to Moore County law enforcement, it was a targeted attack by individuals who knew exactly what they were doing.

Why was this attack carried out? There has been a great deal of speculation that the motive may have been to disrupt a drag show taking place in a nearby town that evening, and the power outage did indeed disrupt the show.

Every source is quick to point out that as of now, there's no concrete link between the substation attack and the drag show. I suppose the attack

could have been related to another prominent location in Moore County. Maybe the terrorists lost a lot of money betting on the 2014 U.S. Open and decided it was finally time to send a message to Pinehurst No. 2.

Personally, I'm leaning towards the drag show.

Less than two weeks before the attack, the FBI had released a report warning that there was an uptick in reported threats to electric infrastructure from people who held "racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist ideology." The FBI had gleaned this information from the encrypted instant messaging service Telegram, a favorite of far-right white supremacist hate groups. You might remember Telegram as being a favorite service of the Proud Boys that was used extensively during the 2021 Capitol attack.

Apparently, a 14-page document was making the rounds on Telegram; according to the Department of Homeland Security, it featured "a white supremacist instruction guide to low-tech attacks meant to bring chaos, including how to attack a power grid with guns."

That sure sounds like terror-

ism to me.

When someone mentions the word "terrorism," I think most people — especially those of us who vividly remember 9/11/2001 — think of Muslim extremists attacking our country from the outside.

Lately though — to quote a classic of 1970s horror cinema — the calls are coming from inside the house. We have more than enough domestic terrorism to go around.

The bitter irony is that while our home-grown terrorists would likely hate the idea of being lumped in with Islamic extremists, there is far more that unites them than divides them. Both are motivated by extremely conservative religious ideology. Both are committing acts of terrorism to combat a perceived moral decline in society. Both use fear and violence to try to impose their will on the majority. It's tempting to say that Islamic extremism and Christian extremism are two sides of the same coin, but realistically, they're more like the same side of the same coin.

In fact, there's only one real difference between them.

In my rural community, I'm not worried about Muslim extremists.

Key City Positions from page 1

Echoing a remark previously made by Ashby Prichett, who also retired as Martinsville Circuit Court Clerk, Cassidy said "Ashby said it the best. It's about the employees and everybody here working together.

"We couldn't do it alone. And our citizens. It's all about our citizens and all our departments working together," Cassidy said.

Anderson said, "it's truly been an honor and a blessing to be a servant of the citizens of Martinsville."

Given his "humble beginnings from a country boy from Halifax County, I still can't believe this has happened. I've had some great guidance from current council members, former council members, and I know that oncoming council members will do the same."

Anderson also noted that "the friends I've made, the influences that have guided me to be where I am today, my family, my friends, I just can't say enough about it. All of the influences and lessons I've learned, I've been kept around for a reason.

"It will be interesting to see what God has in store for me," he said. "I don't deserve anything that I've been given. I truly feel blessed to be the servant that I am, so thank you to the community and to the citizens that have allowed me this opportunity."

"I feel very grateful—feel the citizens are going to be in even better hands than they were with myself," he said, and announced the "January 1 Fire Chief," as R.D. "Dan" Howell.

"I turn the reins over to" Howell, Anderson said, and added "we are very fortunate to have had several great candidates to choose from. It was a tough decision, but it's in this gentleman's bloodline. He's an extremely smart person, and I feel great about" selecting Howell as the new chief.

Howell briefly addressed the council.

"Thank you to Martinsville for giving me an opportunity in 1996 to serve at the fire department," Howell said. "It's going to be my continued commitment to the city to continue to serve the citizens and do the best I can" going forward.

Cassidy, who has served as the Martinsville Chief of Police since 2017,

announced that he will retire from the post effective January 1.

After beginning his career with the department in 1985, Cassidy said he has worked in "pretty much every division of the department," during his 37-year tenure. That includes working as a patrol officer, patrol supervisor, narcotics investigator, SWAT Team Commander, supervisor of the narcotics unit, captain, and deputy chief before being named to his current post.

The reason for his retirement after 37 years in the department, "was nothing pressing, I just feel it's time for me to enter into another stage of my life," he said.

Cassidy considers his biggest accomplishment is the relationship he and the department have built with the community, and in part attributes that relationship as a factor in the success of keeping the crime rate down.

"I think that our continued (efforts) building a relationship with our community has been one of our biggest accomplishments," Cassidy said. "Just continue to do that and that's really it in a nutshell, because that's really important to keeping our crime rates down. And we've been successful doing that over the last few years."

Throughout his career, Cassidy also encouraged police professionalism. During his time as chief, the department earned reaccreditation for a sixth four-year term.

However, Cassidy said his successful career would not have been possible without the people who have given him advice along the way, and those who have helped him implement his ideas.

"I have to give a lot of the credit for my success to the past chiefs. I've had mentors in my career, whether they're state, local, or federal, that have helped me in my career, and I give a lot of credit to the hard-working men and women of the Martinsville Police Department," he said.

As far as what he plans to do now, Cassidy plans to lay low for a while, but he suspects that will not last for long.

"I don't have anything pressing right now. I'm just going to take some time off, do a few things for myself, and then I like to be outside and do a lot of stuff," he said, laughing. "I figure I won't be able to sit still for long."

Monday to Step Down from page 1

Law Foundation Fellow. I agree with Jennifer, we do need to wipe the slate clean because we've all heard the rumors."

Monday, Lawson said, is "going to be a very valuable employee for someone, and it will be with remorse that I make my vote."

Turner, a former mayor, asked how long the city would have to find a new city attorney, since it is a legally required position.

Monday said the new council can appoint any city officers it deems necessary at its organizational meeting in January.

Council member Chad Martin said his vote was not cast lightly. He added that one of his first experiences with Monday was sharing his frustrations about council, to which Monday pulled him to the side and "talked to me straight up."

"There are some people who do not like the truth and when you are a person that shoots straight from the hip, they do not know how to handle that," Martin said. "I appreciate your honesty. I appreciate you being straightforward. You don't have to guess what's on your mind because you say what's on your

mind, and that is so refreshing.

"You have had very wise counsel which I appreciate more than anything else. You have come to be somebody that I consider to be a friend," Martin said, and expressed remarks similar to those made by Lawson.

"To find out that other city attorneys call him for his opinion on matters in their cities speaks volumes to who you are," Martin said.

The vote was unanimous.

"In my position, the one thing I appreciate more than anything is when I ask a question, I get an answer," City Manager Leon Towarnicki said. "Sometimes, it's not exactly what I want to hear, but it's the answer and I know it's the truth. And in my line of work and whoever sits in position it is critical to have that kind of interaction with your attorney."

Monday said it was a pleasure to work with Towarnicki and each council member during his 20 year tenure.

He noted that Towarnicki "is the most drama free man I have ever seen, and there's been a lot of drama in the city manager's office in the

past. So, it has been a genuine honor to work with him."

Then, addressing the council and city residents, Monday said, "it has been a genuine honor and, most days, a pleasure to serve as city attorney for the people of Martinsville. This is my hometown, I do love it, and I wish the citizens and the next council every success in the coming year and every year to come."

In other matters, the council:

*Heard a favorably report from Robinson Farmer Cox Associates about the audit from the last fiscal year that ended June 30.

*Recognized outgoing council members with resolutions/plaques to Danny Turner and Jennifer Bowles, for their service and contributions to the city, as well as Ashby Prichett, who will retire at the end of the year from his elected position as Martinsville Circuit Court Clerk; retiring Martinsville Police Chief Eddie Cassidy and Ted Anderson, who is retiring at the end of the year as the city's fire chief.

*Recognized the Anchor Commission for its 50-years of service to the community.

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

Christmas Trivia Contest

To celebrate the season, the Henry County Enterprise is sponsoring a Christmas Trivia Contest from Dec. 3 to Dec. 24.

- The Henry County Enterprise is sponsoring a "Who Am I" trivia contest, from Dec. 3 to Dec. 24.
- To participate, email answers by Dec. 31 to submissions@theenterprise.net.
- The first entry to correctly answer all four questions will win a prize package valued at more than \$100, with prizes that include a two-year digital subscription to the Henry County Enterprise, (one to keep and one to share), a one-year print subscription to the Henry County Enterprise, and two free classified ads
- (35 words or less).

Subscription prizes must be claimed by Jan. 15, 2023.

Classified ads must be published by June 30, 2023.

Back in 1957,
I sang about a
"Blue Christmas"
without you.
Who Am I?

Lobbyists

from page 1

has worked in many sectors with state agencies, but most recently in former Gov. Ralph Northam's administration as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry.

In updating their efforts during the upcoming General Assembly session that begins January 11, "We are in the throes of session preparation. We have a little housekeeping business to do before it starts. We have two special elections coming up. One, to fill the seat for Del. Mark Keam in Northern Virginia who joined the Biden Administration, and then the senate seat vacated by Sen. Jen Kiggans," Hammond said.

She predicted there will also be one if not two more additional special elections before session ends, which is roughly the end of February.

Hammond said the firm keeps an eye out on news that affects the county when making decisions about lobbying tactics and focuses.

"We will keep an eye to make sure any impacts to Henry County are positive," she said, and added that "this week, the biggest news will be delivered by the governor when he delivers his budget to the joint money committees."

"He's been very slowly rolling out some of those items. Some of the biggest ones of note for Henry County is the \$350 million he plans to invest in site ready initiatives. He has also been kind of slow rolling out the workforce readiness changes. There will have to be a lot of budget items on that too," Hammond said.

Hertz reiterated Wagoner's 'boots on the ground' comment.

"We will be watching for any of the items that are in your legislative package when they show up in the variety of different forms that they will. We'll be watching in education for the New College Institute, looking to lean in and support whenever the discussions lean that way," Hertz said.

"Throughout session, we will be providing Dale and however you'd like us to disseminate information on bill tracking, budget items, where they stand in the process," Hammond said. "There may be questions that you get from constituents on completely unrelated things to what is included in the legislative package."

Iriswood district board member Garrett Dillard asked how the lobbyists will ensure that Henry County's voice is heard just as much as those in areas like Northern Virginia and the Tidewater.

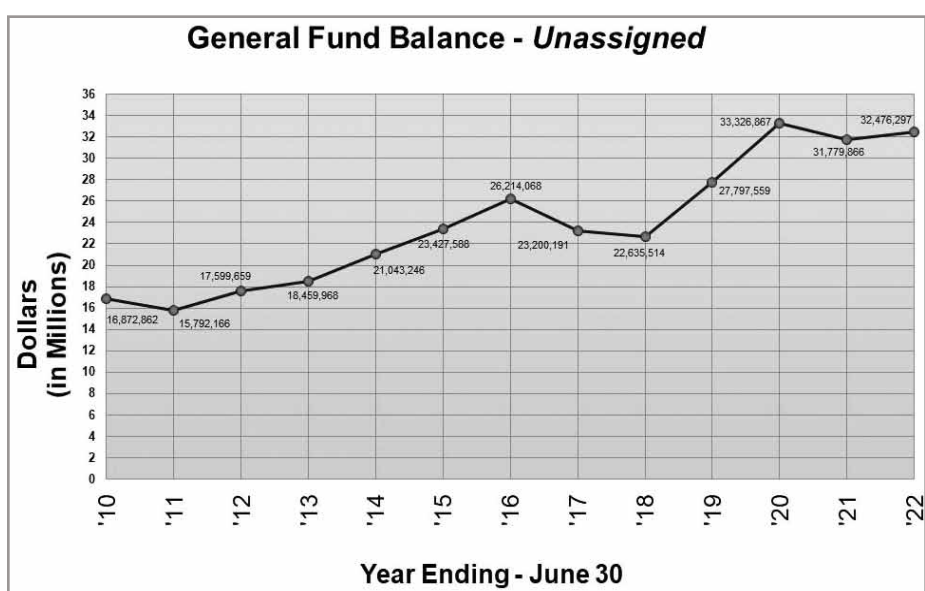
Hammond said that those areas do indeed have more legislators, but rural Virginia has two things going for them.

"You have very passionate, very senior members of the House and Senate, and they hold a great deal of sway, and we are friends and have worked with them. You also have through this administration, not just the governor, but his appointees. They understand that rural Virginia did really deliver the Commonwealth to Governor Youngkin and his team, and they are constantly looking for opportunities to show their thanks and their gratitude," she said.

In other matters, the board: Heard a report from the accounting firm of Creedle, Jones and Alga, P.C., which gave an unmodified opinion on its audit of the county's financial records for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2022.

Kim Jackson, a representative of the firm, told the board that an unmodified opinion means the county adhered to the Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. A review of financial statements found that the unassigned fund balance increased by \$696,431 during the year, bringing the overall unassigned fund balance to \$32,476,297. The unassigned fund balance is similar to a savings account.

The county's financial policy requires



The attached graph shows the General Fund Balance.

it to maintain a minimum unassigned fund balance. The county has now exceeded that minimum by \$9.1 million. Revenues from governmental activities outpaced expenditures during the fiscal year by approximately \$5.7 million. Total revenues for the year were about \$72.3 million. General property taxes comprise the largest source of those revenues, making up about 41.89 percent of all government activities revenue.

The total cost of all governmental activities for the fiscal year was nearly \$66.6 million, with law enforcement and public safety among the county's largest. Expenses totaled \$21,199,420. Education, which totals about \$17.6 million, represented the second largest expense.

- Approved a one-time \$1,000 stipend for full-time County employees using savings realized from unpaid salaries for vacant positions.

- Approved two categorical transfers from the school's budget to purchase five school buses, two passenger vans

and to increase the school's fuel budget. Transfers to the Pupil Transportation category included \$888,600 from the Instruction category and \$210,000 from the Administration, Attendance and Health category.

- Approved an additional appropriation of \$1,491,500 received from the Harvest Foundation for the County's universal broadband project.

- Scheduled the board's 2023 Organizational Meeting for Jan. 9 at 5 p.m.

- Conducted a public hearing and adopted an electrical fee schedule for solar building permits.

- Conducted a public hearing and denied a request to rezone approximately 2-acres of the Blackberry District from Suburban Residential District to Commercial District.

- Appointed Curtis Millner to the Public Service Authority Board of Directors for a four-year term scheduled to end on January 5, 2027, and reappointed Stuart Bowman to the same term.

New Detention Center

from page 1

215 inmates inside a place that was originally designed for 67," the sheriff said, adding that the new detention center was built out of necessity.

County officials have said the former jail will be demolished after all of the equipment it houses is repurposed, refurbished and/or sold at auction.

In addition to the conditions in the outdated facility, overpopulation in the old jail led to a number of problems, including fights and trying to find ways to separate inmates who could not get along with each other, according to Perry and previous reports.

"We really had a problem with, we call them the 'keep-aways.' This inmate can't get along with this inmate, and so we were having fights inside the cells. Now, we can spread them out," Perry said.

The new detention center includes multiple wings. It is divided into minimum, medium, and maximum security.

"The ones that run the most risk, either by the violence they've committed or the risk to the officers or to the other inmates," are housed in the maximum security wing, Perry said. "If they're bound and determined they're going to" cause problems, "they wind up back there and have very little movement" or freedom in the center.

The majority of inmates, however, are housed in the minimum or medium security wings.

"Most of them, you can house all together and give them a lot of freedoms," Perry said. "They can move around, they aren't in the small cells, they can sit at the table and play cards if they want to."

The process for building the new detention center, which can house up to 400 inmates, began in 2015 with a Community-based Corrections Plan, Perry said.

"That's where they took all of our data and the increase in inmates, and they put a plan together. Because the state is paying for 25 percent of this building," Perry said.

The state looked at the projected growth in inmate population to arrive at the 400 bed facility, he said. The county was then tasked with finalizing plans for a new center, touring other detention centers to get design ideas.

The total cost of the detention center was \$78 mil-

lion, with the county responsible for \$51 million, and the state funding the remainder.

Currently, 249 inmates are housed in the facility. Inmates began moving into the new center on March 25.

The detention center offers a wide variety of programs and services to inmates housed there, Perry said, with upgraded services and technology, health care and even continuing education classes available to most of the center's current inmates.

Currently, there are two classrooms in the detention center that can be used for educational services, such as allowing inmates to work towards their GED.

"We are just starting the GED program," Perry said. "A lot of young people, they didn't have good environments they were raised in. There are a number of young people, they never had a mom or dad structure, anything like that. They didn't have anybody to help keep them focused with education and stuff, and there's a part of that that's not their fault."

"But when they get inside here and get settled down, we actually have people that come in that work with them on their GED, and we're also trying to line up some things that may even get to some college related classes," Perry said.

iPads are used for a wide variety of services such as mail, education, and more.

"The iPad technology is another thing that we have. We don't have an iPad for every inmate, they wind up sharing them," Perry said. "There are multiple parts to that. One, we do a lot of training through that. They can take the training. They can take anger management, substance abuse. They can take educational classes, work on their GED, work on training skills and things."

Inmates also can study the academic parts of trades, such as welding. The iPads are also how the inmates receive their mail, which cut down on the issue of drugs being smuggled into the facility. That was an ongoing issue in the former facility, he said.

"We do not have mail that comes into this place anymore. We were having problems," with "soaking the paper in suboxone, fentanyl, things like that. The inmates would rip it up and chew it if they knew it was

on there. So, all of their mail goes to a place outside of Virginia," Perry said.

There, the mail "is scanned and they are sent an email. They can read it, but they do not have paper. It really cut down on the risk to the facility," Perry said.

There also are TV screens in the center that are capable of offering a multitude of services, many of which are in the works.

"We can actually do hearings with the court. It's called group counseling, we can do individual counseling, and then we can also do tele-psychiatry. We can do some tele-med, but most of that needs to be done in person," Perry said.

There is also a mental health wing for inmates battling severe mental illnesses, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Inmates receive services from Piedmont Community Services.

"When people fight mental illnesses, they sometimes have little quirks and habits that agitate other people, who are just mean," and often pick on those having issues, Perry said.

"It's constantly a problem," Perry said. "Now, we can separate the" inmates into a more controlled population. "Most of the people they will be around, they all know they're fighting something."

Also new is a well-equipped medical wing now handles all but the more serious medical problems.

"We only have to take people out if there's a serious medical problem. We have Wellpath, which provides medical services here," Perry said, and added nurses are staffed "around the clock."

During the day, the company provides "a physician's assistant or a nurse practitioner, and then they also have a doctor that comes through at various times," Perry said. "If you need someone who needs specialized care, you actually have staff right there. It's not a hospital, but it's pretty close to it to an extent."

Staff in the center are always working on more services that can be added to help rehabilitate inmates, such as a law library.

"A lot of the inmates, when you get them in, when you get the drugs and alcohol out of their system, they aren't bad people," Perry said. "They just have an addiction" or some other issue "that they're trying to fight."

Historical Society to host "Christmas Music at the Historic Courthouse"

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will host "Christmas Music at the Historic Courthouse" on Sunday, December 18, at 3 p.m., at the Historic Henry County Courthouse, 1 East Main Street, Uptown Martinsville.

Featured musicians will include John Fulcher, Baxter Jennings, Virginia King, Joanne Linscott, Lynn Pritchett, Davis Scott, and Briana Tatum.

The Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum will be open before and following the performance. The annual event is free, made possible by corporate sponsors, Carter Bank & Trust and the Lester Group. The Historic Henry County Courthouse is fully handicapped accessible.

John Phillips, Historical Society president, said, "Spend the afternoon in Uptown Martinsville for all of your holiday needs. In between shopping and dining, join

the Historical Society to celebrate Christmas through music. Support local – business, talent, and non-profit – in just one stop!"



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OBITUARIES

Nena "Tippy" McMillan Lovell

Nena "Tippy" McMillan Lovell, 70, of Axton, Va. passed away Thursday, December 8, 2022. She was born in Martinsville, Va. March 14, 1952 to the late John Coleman McMillan and Lena Jones McMillan.



She is survived by her son, Michael Joseph Lovell; grandchildren, Tabbetha and Sydney Lovell; sister, Dana M. Glass (Max); niece, Elizabeth Marsh (Clinton); nephew, Max Glass, Jr. (Mollie); great nephews, Sam Marsh and Jaxson Marsh.

Nena was a 1970 graduate of Drewry Mason High School and a 1972 graduate of Danville Community College. She worked at Piedmont Trust Bank and BB&T as a trust officer for 29 years.

Nena's ministry later in life was sending cards to all of her many friends and family on every special occasion in their life. She loved reaching out to people and letting them know she

was thinking about them. She also loved feeding her birds, watching NASCAR racing, and was an avid reader.

A memorial Service was held on Wednesday, December 14, 2022, officiated by Ministers Jonathan Beavers and Gary Hollandsworth. Interment followed at Roselawn Burial Park.

The family extends their sincere appreciation for the love and support Dawn and Spencer Cross gave to Tippy throughout the years.

Memorials may be made to Axton Community Volunteer Fire Department, 55 Mountain Valley Rd. Axton VA 24054 or to the Martinsville Henry County SPCA, 132 Joseph Martin Hwy, Martinsville, VA 24112.

McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the family.

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

John Shackelford Draper

John Shackelford Draper, 84, of Axton, Va. passed away on Saturday, December 10, 2022. He was born October 9, 1938 in Martinsville, Va. to Edgar Harrison Draper and Fannie Hensley Draper.



In addition to his parents, John was preceded in death by his wife, Martha Dyches Draper; brothers, Gerard and Tommy Draper; sister, Frances Walston (Jack).

He is survived by his daughters, Bettie D. Bowles (Gene) and Nancy D. Oakes (Joey); grandchildren, Sherri Shively (Brandon), Stevan Bowles (Shenika), Sylvia Oakes, and Marshall Bowles; great grandchildren, Colton Bowles, Reagan Shively and Grayson Shively; brother-in-law, John Dyches (Joan); sisters-in-law, Patsy Draper and Florence Draper; also many beloved

nieces and nephews.

Mr. Draper was the owner operator of Draper's barbershop for over sixty years.

He was a member of McCabe Memorial Church. John enjoyed hunting and playing golf.

Funeral services were held on Friday, December 16, 2022, at McKee-Stone Funeral, officiated by Reverend Dr. G. H. Vaughn. Interment was at Oakwood Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to McCabe Memorial Baptist Church, 107 Clearview Drive, Martinsville, VA 24112.

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

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

Federal REAL ID enforcement deadline extended

The deadline to obtain a REAL ID compliant driver's license or identification card has been extended for two years before federal identification requirements change at America's airports.

In a news release, the federal government announced the extension of the enforcement deadline for REAL ID to May 7, 2025. The REAL ID enforcement deadline was May 3, 2023.

Nearly 2.8 million Virginians now have a REAL ID compliant driver's license or identification card.

The new enforcement deadline means that, beginning May 7, 2025, Virginians who want to use their state-issued driver's license or identification card to board a domestic flight will have to present a REAL ID compliant version of the credential, displaying a small star in the upper-right corner, when passing through Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screenings. Several other forms of ID, including a U.S. Passport, a Passport Card, and some military IDs, will also be accepted for federal identification.

"Although the deadline has been extended, we still encourage Virginians interested in REAL ID to apply sooner rather than later. If your driver's license or ID expires before May 7, 2025, that's a great time to upgrade," said Acting DMV Commissioner Linda Ford. "Visit dmvNOW.com/REALID to prepare the documents you need for service, complete your application online and make an appointment to come see us at your convenience."

To obtain a REAL ID, customers must visit DMV in person with certain documents which show proof of:

- Identity and Legal Presence (e.g. unexpired U.S. passport, U.S. birth certificate or unexpired permanent resident card);
- Social Security Number (e.g. Social Security card or W-2 form displaying full nine digits). Note: If you've lost your Social Security card but know the number, DMV may be able to verify the number electronically;
- Residency – two proofs required and must

display name and current Virginia residential street address (e.g. recent utility bills, mortgage statements, valid Virginia driver's license); and

- Any name changes (e.g. marriage certificates or divorce decrees). Note: If the name on your identity document is different from your legal name, you must show proof of your name change. Multiple documents may be necessary if your name has changed more than once.

There are a variety of acceptable documents; a complete list is available at dmvNOW.com/REALID. You may also use DMV's interactive document guide.

REAL ID also impacts access to secure federal facilities and military bases. Because these facilities have the ability to set their own entry requirements, DMV advises Virginians to verify the identification needed for access prior to their visit.

For more information, visit dmvNOW.com/REALID.

Authorities seek information in Sunday pursuit, deputy uninjured in accident

The Henry County Sheriff's Office received a call on Sunday, December 11, around 9:37 p.m., to check on a vehicle that had been parked for some time at the Fas Mart, 1015 Fairystone Park Highway, Stanleytown.

Upon arrival, the vehicle in question pulled off at a high rate of speed. The deputy activated his lights and siren and a pursuit ensued. The pursuit lasted approximately 4.34 miles, ending in Fieldale.

The driver of the vehicle fled the scene on foot.

The vehicle being pursued was stolen from Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, N.C. Deputies seized a firearm, marijuana and U.S. currency from the vehicle. As the investigation continues, officers are working on information that is leading to the identity of the driver.

During the course of the pursuit, an assisting deputy lost control of their vehicle when responding. The accident occurred at the intersection of Kings Mountain Road and Virginia Avenue. The deputy did not sustain any injuries as a result of the accident.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or the Crimestoppers Program at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers Program offers rewards up to \$2,500 for information related to crime. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information determine the amount of reward paid.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF BTW21)

A Henry County Sheriff's deputy lost control of their patrol vehicle on Sunday when responding to a pursuit. The deputy was uninjured in the crash. Deputies seized a firearm, marijuana and U.S. currency from the vehicle that was pursued. It was allegedly stolen from Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, N.C.

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CDC grant to support public health infrastructure in Virginia

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded Virginia more than \$67.5 million to support public health infrastructure. Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced the five-year grant that will help increase the public health workforce, improve organizational systems and modernize data infrastructure.

"As Virginians continue to return to the office and social settings, and classrooms this grant will help us rebuild, reinforce and retain our public health workforce and system that was strained during the pandemic," said Youngkin. "From the first days of my administration, we have sought out ways to improve health outcomes for all Virginians and this grant will assist us get the necessary help needed to all Virginians across the Commonwealth."

"This grant offers a most timely opportunity to support critical public health infrastructure in the Commonwealth," said State Health Commissioner Collin Greene, M.D., MPH. "The funding will allow us to invest in our outstanding public health profes-

sionals and provide Virginians with enhanced systems to protect the health and promote the well-being of all."

The grant is part of the American Rescue Plan Act. The funding will help awardees address a range of infrastructure needs, based on the needs of their communities. The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) is one of the recipients of the multi-million dollar funding.

"As we work to enhance Virginia's behavioral health and developmental disability systems of care, one of our key focuses is modernizing systems and processes that leverage best practices and technology to drive and sustain high-quality service outcomes," said DBHDS Commissioner Nelson Smith. "The funding from this grant will help enable us to continue our system modernization and ensure that we are providing the best care possible for the Virginians we serve."

"This funding will help recruit, train and develop scientists who are on the front lines of Virginia's

response to emerging diseases, environmental disasters and other public health threats," said Joe Damico, DGS Director. "This workforce is critical to ensuring Virginia's public health partners have access to high-quality, timely, cutting-edge laboratory data for disease surveillance and emergency surge response."

VDH is one of 107 jurisdictions nationally to receive grant funding. The Virginia Beach Department of Public Health was awarded approximately \$6 million from the same grant, and was the sole eligible locality in Virginia. CDC awarded a total of \$3.2 billion to state, localities and jurisdictions across the nation. Recipients are expected to use the funding to achieve key short-term and long-term outcomes that involve workforce recruiting and support; improved processes, and policies; and develop efficient and sustainable technologies. The grant is the first of its kind that specifically targets overarching public health infrastructure and systems.

The VDH is coordinating this statewide public health grant.

Youngkin announces end of COVID-19 related fines, penalties

Gov. Glenn Youngkin issued an Executive Order last week directing enforcement agencies, boards, and commissions to report all fines, fees, suspensions related to the COVID-19 shutdown violations. The Governor also announced he will direct agencies to halt further collection and enforcement action in his upcoming budget to be delivered on December 15th. The budget will also direct the Secretary of Finance to work with agencies to develop a reimbursement process for individuals and businesses who paid unjust COVID-19 fines and fees.

"I am today requiring a statewide review of COVID-19 related penalties imposed by the Northam administration. The fact that businesses are still dealing with COVID-19 related penalties and fines is infuriating. Livelihoods are on the line,"

said Youngkin. "In the previous administration, we saw our government shut down businesses, close our schools, and separate us from each other. While we can't undo the damage done during the Northam administration, we are taking action going forward to end COVID-era draconian overreach."

"I look forward to working with the General Assembly to address this, forgive COVID fines and fees and restore licenses that were unjustly suspended," he added.

The budget language will not apply to instances where the violation was in relation to practices, guidelines, rules or operating procedures intended to protect the health and safety of individuals, patients, residents, and staff of hospitals, nursing homes, certified nursing facilities, hospices, or assisted living facilities.

Virginia State's 'Off-the-Grid' High Tunnel Showcases Benefits of Out-of-the-Box Approaches

Comparing Virginia State University's "high tech high tunnel" to an ordinary hoop house is a little like comparing a bicycle to the Batmobile. This one-of-a-kind structure at Randolph Farm is showing Virginia farmers just what's possible with this fairly familiar farm implement.

"Our one rule in designing it," said William Crutchfield, director of VSU's Small Farm Outreach program, "is that any bell or whistle anyone wanted was included. We don't have a wide-screen TV in there, but we could power it up if we did."

Like most visionary ideas, this project took a lot of time, effort and coordination before bearing fruit. Former VSU College of Agriculture Dean Jewel Bronaugh was one of the first to see the value of the concept. She gave Crutchfield the green light to develop a proposal for the unique demonstration project in 2017. Funding was one of many hurdles the team encountered in designing the prototype.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service was one of several partners making investments in this showcase for next-level high tunnel production. The proposal was a perfect fit for the agency's Conservation Innovation Grant program (CIG), which is designed to evaluate and accelerate adoption of new approaches to natural resource protection.

Nothing like it had ever been built anywhere else, so the team wasn't exactly surprised when members experienced setbacks and challenges soon after construction began in April of 2020. The first delays were COVID-related. Then, a fire melted several plastic roof and side panels and the first activation resulted in multiple system failures.

"It took almost a year and a half to build," Crutchfield said. "When you're doing something new, you can expect the unexpected."

The list of "extras and options" for this 21st-century tunnel includes an adjacent solar array and wind turbine used to power everything inside, from irrigation to lighting to climate control. The structure can be heated on cold days and ventilated on hot ones using electric motors that raise and lower the side panels. Gutters feed two giant cisterns that capture rainwater coming off the roof for reuse and automated watering settings can be adjusted based on the temperature and humidity levels inside.

Visitors walking through the 2,880-square foot structure can see the future of high tunnel production. While Crutchfield doesn't expect to see Virginia farmers building their own versions of this \$750,000 project, he does hope they will be inspired to consider smaller enhancements.

"People walk through it and say, 'This is so great, but I could never afford it,'" he said. "I tell them. 'No, but you may be able to afford to buy the pieces of it that would help you the most on your farm.'"

"That's exactly what we've always liked about the project," said Dr. Edwin Martinez, NRCS' state conservationist for Virginia. "It's aspirational. You can add one feature now and maybe put another on a 'to-do' list for later. The idea is to expand people's ideas of what can be done with a high tunnel."

While the rainwater recapturing system tends to spark the most interest from visiting farmers, Crutchfield also sees the tunnel as an advertisement for the use of wind and solar power in agriculture.

"It can open small farmers' eyes to the possibilities of solar power," Crutchfield said. "Maybe it's not practical for an individual farmer to build an array like ours but one solar panel can often power a single system, or even power security lights that make it safe to walk to or go inside the tunnel in the dark."

The tunnel is designed to operate entirely "off the grid," as the 24-panel solar array and the wind turbine charge storage batteries that power every function. A generator has also been installed for use if these power sources are unavailable. Tunnel manager Grace Summers is careful to add that the additional features don't change the underlying function of the structure.

"The goal is the same as with any high tunnel," Summers said. "You can use it to extend your growing season and to get produce to market at favorable times when whatever you're growing might be in short supply. I've been around high tunnels for more than 15 years and this one can do just about everything you'd ever want it to do."



Virginia State University's \$750,000 "High Tech High Tunnel" with side panels raised for maximum air flow (Photos by John Markon, Virginia NRCS).



Clockwise from top left: Grace Summers leads a tunnel tour; VSU's Bill Crutchfield goes over the tunnel control panel; A 24-panel solar array helps power all tunnel functions; Cisterns conserve rainwater running off the tunnel roof.

The high tunnel has occasionally challenged the VSU team's ability to adapt in managing the system. Remote controls developed after a total systems failure on a holiday break now permit Crutchfield and Summers to monitor and change settings using their cell phones.

As tours continue, Crutchfield is also aware that the VSU's tunnel's one-of-a-kind status may eventually be lost.

"We've had visitors from other colleges that have shown interest in building something a lot like it," he said. "That's the most likely possibility for building another one. It's exciting to think about that happening. Maybe they'll think of something we left out."

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