



Joe Collins is the chaplain of the local division of the Good News Jail and Prison Ministry. (Photo courtesy of Joe Collins)

Community supported ministry brings Good News to those behind bars

Maddy Oliver
Staff writer

Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, which began in 1961 in Fairfax, VA, aims to spread the word of God to inmates in the Martinsville-Henry County area. It is active within 22 states, 25 countries, and one U.S. territory with about 400 active chaplains.

The Martinsville-Henry County chaplain is Joe Collins, who grew up in Washington County and felt called to ministry in 1982. In 1988, he said God "really impressed upon him it was time to prepare for the ministry," leading to him going to Nashville's Belmont University at 29 years old. There, he pastored a small church and eventually received a call asking him to begin preaching in the jails. This led to his involvement with the Good News ministry in 1997.

"I just thought it would be a temporary thing as I was heading to seminary to prepare for the pastorate. Once I got into it, I saw the difference it made in the lives of the men and women in jail, saw the need for that and how God was working and just stayed," Collins said. "From there, it's been just a great ride."

Collins served in Tennessee and Louisiana before returning to Virginia eight years ago. He came to Martinsville three and a half years ago. Martinsville and Henry County have had Good News Jail Ministry within their jails since 1980. At any given time, the ministry serves 350 to 400 inmates in the area.

"They've had a chaplain in their jails in Martinsville and Henry County for the past 43 years, and so I follow a great legacy of chaplains there. I'm glad to be a part of that," Collins said.

According to Collins, "in the jail, ministry is a very complex ministry. It begins with prayer, praying for the ministry, praying for the inmates, praying for the staff."

One of the biggest things Good News aims for is to be a "ministry of presence," simply offering inmates someone to listen to them and somebody they know cares about them.

"It's a crisis ministry, and people are looking for help," Collins said. "Sometimes it's just sitting and listening, and letting them realize they have a voice, letting them realize what they have to say is important."

The ministry also focuses on evangelism and helping inmates to become saved. "Good News believes, and I believe, that as a Christian, that really lasting change comes with a changed heart and only Christ can do that. And so, we are an evangelistic group that promotes that," Collins said.

However, the ministry's mission does not end at converting inmates to Christians. It also helps inmates in that journey and teaches them what the Bible says about various aspects of life.

"Helping them grow in that, and not just sitting down and teaching verse by verse through the Bible, but I realize many of them need to understand 'how do I live life?' So, we talk about things like, 'How do I make good decisions? How do I set appropriate boundaries in my life so I'm not run over by everybody coming and going? How do I be a good husband, father, wife, or mother?'" Collins said.

Collins also emphasized the importance of "helping them get re-established and reconnected in the community." This includes teaching them

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Mobile Marketplace helps with food insecurity

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

Feeding Southwest Virginia (SWVA), an organization part of the national Feeding America program, is working to provide affordable food to local residents with its Mobile Marketplace program.

Wes Childress, director of Marketing and Communications, said the organization has been in the area for about 41 years.

"It covers 26 counties and nine cities throughout the service region. So, pretty much from Botetourt all the way down to Lee County to Buchanan County and all the places like that," he said.

To help address food insecurities, the organization has two distribution centers to cover the region, one in Salem and one in Abingdon.

Childress said the Mobile Marketplace was one idea to help with its goal.

"It can be an avenue for people to get food at a discounted rate and at discounted prices. It is food that we purchase ourselves and then we



The Feeding SWVA Mobile Marketplace set up in Henry County at the HJDB event center the first Thursday of every month from 12-2 p.m., and at the Martinsville City YMCA from 12-2 p.m. the third Monday of every month. It is in Patrick County the third Thursday of every month, from 12:30-3:30 p.m., at the Rotary Club in Stuart.

give back. They purchase at a lower rate than what they can find at a store," he said.

Childress said the marketplace accepts credit, debit, and EBT/SNAP benefits. "It helps stretch their dollar a little further," he added.

The marketplaces are currently set up in more than a dozen

localities, including Patrick and Henry counties, and the City of Martinsville.

Childress said the organization decides which communities to set up in based on the need.

By using a Feeding America

See Mobile Marketplace, page 2

Year in Review

The past year seems to have flown by, with many issues tackled, some resolved, and others carried over into 2023. We hope you enjoy our 2022 Year in Review.

JANUARY

Group seeks funds to reopen Bassett Community Center



A group of local volunteers hope to write a new chapter in the storied life of the Bassett Community Center, located at 119 Blackberry Road in Bassett.

Linda Crabtree, president of the Bassett Community Center board of trustees, and Michael Jarrett are members of the Save the Bassett Community Center group, which hopes to reopen the community center's pool by summer of 2022 and have the indoor facilities available by 2023.

Martinsville native bears witness to tornado's devastation



Phyllis Bowling Youngblood has lived in Mayfield, Kentucky since 1974.

"It's become my hometown," she said, though her first hometown was Martinsville.

In mid-December, the Youngblood's hometown was devastated by what Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear called "the most devastating tornado event in our state's history." Multiple tornadoes touched

down in the state. Mayfield was among the hardest hit communities.

FEBRUARY

Longtime fire chief doesn't see downside



"Junior" Lynch went to the Henry County Board of Supervisors meeting on Jan. 25 because the Bassett Fire Department was requesting items from the county.

But when other members of the fire department showed up, along with Jeb Bassett, of Bassett Furniture, and even Lynch's mother, Esther Waller, he suspected something was up.

Indeed it was. Lynch, the chief of the Bassett Fire Department for the past 19 years, was presented with the Jack Dalton Award, the "highest honor and most prestigious award" given by the board of supervisors to recognize "exemplary community service," according to its resolution honoring Lynch.

BZA approves Axton solar project



A special use permit for a new solar project has been approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. The project was previously rejected after a marathon 4-hour meeting on Nov. 24, 2021, but the applicant refiled with some major changes to the proposal.

Warren Sakey, the project development manager for Rocky Ford Solar, LLC, said the company was seeking to construct a large-scale, 90-megawatt facility in the Axton community on approximately 378 acres in the northeast vicinity of Mountain Valley Road and Dees Road and along Summerset Drive and Rufus Road.

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Area native takes on role as secretary for NCI board

Maddy Oliver
Staff writer

Eric Jones, a 1997 graduate of Laurel Park High School, will fill the role of secretary for the executive New College Institute Board.

After graduating high school, Jones went to Virginia State University and earned a bachelor's degree in information systems.

"There, I was afforded the opportunity to play basketball and golf and I kind of went on a tri-scholarship. I had an academic scholarship, golf, and basketball scholarship to Virginia State. And there's where I kind of explored my love for technology," Jones said.

Jones also holds a master's degree in information systems

and telecommunications from John Hopkins University and is a Doctoral candidate at Marymount University.

His role as secretary gives him many different responsibilities, but Jones believes that finding a new executive director should be his and the board's number one

See NCI Board, page 2



Eric Jones is the new secretary of the New College Institute's Executive Board.

VISIT [HTTP://WWW.HENRYCOUNTYENTERPRISE.COM](http://www.henrycountyenterprise.com) 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)

Sunday, January 1

Whiskey Run Hike, 10 a.m., Stuart's Knob Trailhead, Fairy Stone State Park, 967 Fairystone Lake Drive, Stuart. Includes the history of moonshining and how residents of Fayerdale used Stuart's Knob to provide for their families.

Mayo River Trails Red Bud Trail Hike, 1 p.m. at The Trails at Mayo River, 500 Pratt Road, Spencer. Hike 1.3 miles and discover the history of Native Americans who inhabited the area and the importance of William Byrd's expedition. For more details, visit www.virginiastateparks.gov/firstdayhikes.

Thursday, January 5

Henry County School Board will hold its monthly/organizational meeting at 6 p.m., in the Summerlin Room, located on the 1st Floor of the Henry County Administration Building in Collinsville.

Friday, January 13

Music Night at the Spencer-Penn

Centre with the hard drivin' oldtime dance band from Sparta, NC, Gap Civil. Gate opens at 5 p.m. and the band starts at 6:15 p.m. Admission is a \$5 cash donation. Concessions, including the ever popular Spencer Penn hot dogs and BBQ, will be sold.

Sunday, January 15

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will have speakers at the Historic Henry County Court House for "Founders Day: Lumber" in an educational program about the history of lumber in the area. The event will begin at 3 p.m.

Sunday, January 22

The Spencer-Penn Centre will host a barn quilting class from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Class will be filled on a first paid first served basis. Once payment is received by Spencer-Penn, design choice should be sent to the instructor, Lauren at misslaurenbyron@gmail.com. Registration deadline in January 13.

ONGOING

The Briarpatch Amateur Radio Club serves amateur radio operators in southwest Virginia and northwest North Carolina, with an on-air weekly net held

Tuesdays at 8 p.m. with a frequency of 147.090 + with 103.5 tone. Additional information can be found at www.http://vaemcomdb.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 brll.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!

MHCCHW's specially trained Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Advocate can answer questions about existing coverage or help you apply for new coverage by phone Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In-person application help is available on Wednesdays at Community Storehouse's new location UPTOWN at 128 East Church Street LOWER LEVEL from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call or text Ann Walker today at (276)732-0509 to see if you may qualify and get help applying.

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

Mobile Marketplace from page 1

database called Map the Meal Gap, "we know off of that information we have 12.9 percent of people in Henry County that are food insecure, that means that anyone 19 and older," he said.

For those 18 and younger, the rate of food insecurity rises to 20.8 percent.

Childress said the rates increase in Martinsville, with 18.4 percent of considered food insecure. About 2,130, or 12.1 percent, of Patrick residents also are facing food insecurity.

"We know there is a need, and we want to help be there for that need. We believe this is a great way to help be there in that area," he said.

Feeding SWVA also works with several food pantries in the area to provide food to those in need, according to Childress.

He added food available from the marketplace changes, depending on the season and where it is purchased.

"We always try to make sure we have healthy options and shelf-stable food items," Childress said. "So, we try to make sure we have good, healthy produce as well as healthy shelf-stable food anyone can buy at any point at a grocery store."

Unlike some food distributions, the marketplace allows shoppers to choose what they want.

"It's kind of set up like a farmers' market for people to go up to it, see what we have available, pick out what they like and how much they would like," he said.

This system allows shoppers to get food they like, instead of items they might not or cannot eat, he said.

Two associates are onsite to answer any questions and help, Childress said. He estimates the marketplace has been in Henry County-Martinsville for about two years.

"We will come once a month to set up and we'll bring the food from our food bank and then set up all the necessary items at the site," he said.

Childress said about 15 people attended the last event in the county and that there was more than \$500 in sales.

"We don't profit off of this. We actually lose because it's something we believe is needed for the community," Childress said.

The Feeding SWVA Mobile Marketplace will be in Patrick County the third Thursday of every month at the Rotary Club in Stuart from 12:30-3:30 p.m.

The organization will be set up in Henry County at the HJDB event center the first Thursday of every month from 12-2 p.m., and at the Martinsville City YMCA from 12-2 p.m. the third Monday of every month.

Those wishing to donate can do so at www.feedingswva.org, by calling (540) 342-3011, or sending a check to 1025 Electric Rd, Salem, VA 24153.

For more information, go to www.feedingamerica.org, or Facebook.com/FeedingSouthwestVirginia.

NCI Board from page 1

priority.

"I'm making sure we are distributing information amongst the members and also keeping a record of the progress that we're making and the decisions that we're making amongst the team. So, that's in an executive capacity, supporting Senator Stanley who's the chairman and also the vice chairman Richard Hall," Jones said. "Right now, I think our biggest charge as an executive committee, but also as a board, is really fulfilling our NCI director. Looking for that, making sure we're doing the due diligence required by the state, and also what's right for the Martinsville, Virginia area and finding the right person for that role."

Even though his background is primarily in technology, Jones believes his affinity for bringing people together has helped prepare him for this role.

"Throughout my career, technology has been my focus, but really my talent is, I think, leading people. Bringing people together to solve problems. And I've done that across a myriad of government organizations. So, not in a volunteer capacity, using my experience of bringing people together for a common cause, organizing ideas, and really pushing agendas forward for the benefit of Martinsville-Henry County and Southside Virginia, I think that's where my background really comes to play with this role," Jones said.

Jones has several goals for the board, the first of which is "recovery from the pandemic and getting a leader."

"Getting an executive director hired and getting that person indoctrinated into the successes that New College Institute continues to have, but there has been a void," he said. "We've had two interim directors, we're coming off Karen Jackson, but I think the stability is at the top. Bringing somebody in to embrace that role, be the executive director, I think that's priority one."

He also wants to continue driving forward the institute's non-traditional status. He wants to work with other higher learning institutes in the area to establish a model for education in Southside.

"New College Institute is a non-traditional institute for higher education. We don't have to be competition, but I think really fortifying to the community who we are and what we bring. When we talk about our Global Wind Program, and the safety training we have with that, and things of that nature, I think that's a big part of it. Really solidifying who we are in the community... and how we can work with Patrick and Henry, how we can work with the Danville Community College, how do we fit in that model?" he said.

Jones also believes that it is important to help reach out to those who could gain from the non-traditional learning envi-

ronment and allow them to take advantage of the resources at NCI.

"Getting engagement and getting students going in, whoever that might be. That will be sometimes in a non-traditional sense. That might be a person who has their first and second degree already accomplished, but teaming with organizations or universities for doctoral programs and things like that. So, really taking advantage of the population who could take advantage of the non-traditional education," he said.

In many ways, Jones believes the institute is doing many things well. The biggest of which is the Global Wind Program.

"Our Wind Program is state of the art with what we're doing with the safety and the training that we have with that... I think that the investment has been made and now is the time to continue to market that and get people interested in that," he said.

He also believes it's a success that companies send their workforce members to the institute for workforce development and wants to continue being this resource.

"I think that with some of the opportunities that we have, with some of the changes and things that the governor is thinking about with workforce development, having an institute or location

where companies can send employees to train and gain new skills," he said.

However, despite championing themselves as a non-traditional institute, Jones believes it's important to also give attention to the more traditional learning opportunities at NCI.

"I don't want to lose the thread of being able to partner with institutions within the Commonwealth for traditional degrees. We still want to keep the momentum going with what we have with our traditional programs. The ability to receive some kind of bachelor's or master's degrees because that is an augmented opportunity for students in the area to get access to resources in a unique way," he said.

Jones wanted to give special thanks and appreciation to the staff at NCI who have stepped up, especially in the face of a pandemic and the need for a permanent executive director.

"Christina Reed has done a remarkable job coming in and kind of providing stability for the organization while we are going through a pandemic, getting through that. She has been in constant communication with the state and Commonwealth to make sure that the things that needed to be done and all the updates to the board, I just wanted to commend the team there on the ground," he said.

Local students named to Emory & Henry's Fall 2022 Dean's List

Local students named to Emory & Henry's Fall 2022 Dean's List

Emory & Henry College congratulates students named to the fall 2022 Dean's list. To be named to the Dean's list a student must be a full-time student

and receive a 3.6 GPA for the semester.

William Clark, of Collinsville.
Tizianna Palumbo, of Martinsville.
Caitlin Barker, of Collinsville.
Madeline Bishop, of Collinsville.
Blake Wilson, of Axton.

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

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

Good News from page 1

how to rebuild relationships, build new, healthy relationships, and get connected with a church once they're out of jail.

"Mostly, we try to help them change their perspective on life," Collins said. "When they come to that point and they think they're forgotten, they think they're hopeless, they think no one cares anymore, we try to remind them that yes, God cares, we care, that's why we're here."

During the holiday season, when Collins says depression and suicide attempts skyrocket, the ministry has a few extra programs to show inmates that someone cares and help them connect with their loved ones. One of these programs includes delivering Christmas card kits to inmates so they can send cards to people they wish to.

"We're working on what we call Hope Pack. I've got tables full of things for hygiene, soap and deodorant and toothpaste, socks, also some candy, chips - things like that for the inmates. Just as a way of saying, 'You're not forgotten. We're thinking about you during this Christmas season,'" Collins said.

Good News also uses a five session Bible Study called Healing Heart Wounds, which aims to help heal inmates who have gone through traumatic experiences.

"We realize that between 85 and 95 percent of all inmates who come to jail, traumatic events in their life has served as a pathway for them coming," Collins said. "In 2017, one of our female chaplains, in looking for materials to teach in the jail where she was ministering to the women, discovered a thing through the American Bible Society called the Trauma Healing Institute. It's a

Bible study that used good mental health practices, but helps inmates heal from those wounds caused by the traumatic events in their lives."

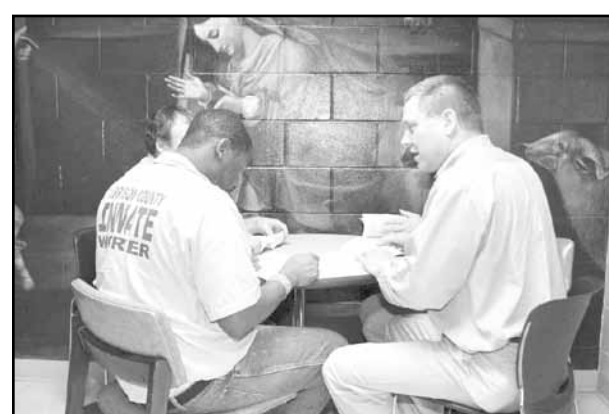
He added that "most substance abuse originates because of self-medication to try to numb the pain of those wounds they've experienced," and helping to heal those wounds makes these addictions easier to overcome.

According to Collins, a study by Baylor University proves the effectiveness of this Bible Study.

"In the study they did, 75% of the people who came into our class that we did were considered PTSD positive. Three months following having completed that course, that stood at about 42% PTSD positive, so a huge reduction," he said.

Although effects are not always obvious, Collins said he has seen the ministry affect many people in big ways and has "seen lives transformed." From ladies who come from drugs and prostitution to accept Christ, to inmates who have attempted suicide and find hope, to inmates in rough situations who go on to obtain high paying, respectable jobs - all are the results that keep Collins doing what he does.

"I see those kinds of changes happen. I think the best one is when I sat down with a young man who had been in and out of jail and went to his home afterwards," he said. "And he was sharing with me about all the work he'd done on his home and his two young boys playing ball and he had a six-month-old baby girl in his lap, making over her as only a doting father could," Collins said. "I remember his wife saying, 'Thank you, chaplain, for giving me my husband back.



Good News Jail and Prison Ministry provides many services, such as Bible studies, with inmates in Martinsville and Henry County. (Photo courtesy of Joe Collins)

It's been such a blessing."

Collins said he appreciates the community for its continued support in funding the ministry.

"I'm here because of the graces of the community. Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, each chaplain is funded in the local community they live in. And so, churches, businesses, and individuals fund this. It's not me," Collins said. "It's about the community's involvement in the ministry through prayer, through volunteering, or through financial funding... I'm just grateful to serve in a community that supports and that has for 43 years."

Feedback on internet coverage sought before Jan. 13 deadline

U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner, D-Alexandria, is calling on Virginians to provide feedback on internet coverage in their communities. Last month, after a sustained push by Warner, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a new map with their best estimates of broadband coverage across the country.

Now, Warner is asking Virginians to review the FCC map to ensure it accurately reflects the current broadband options available at their address. Funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - the bipartisan infrastructure law negotiated and written by Warner - will be allocated to states proportionally based on the number of individuals living in each state who do not have access to high-speed internet. If Virginians disagree

with the information in the map, they should challenge the map through the FCC website. While challenges will be accepted on a rolling basis, Virginians must submit their challenges by January 13, to ensure that it is adjudicated prior to the allocation of IIJA funding.

"There are folks all over rural Virginia who know that the FCC broadband map isn't always accurate," said Warner. "Now is the time to make sure that it is using the best data available, so Virginia can get the investments to which it is entitled and achieve the goal of universal broadband access."

In an email to constituents, Warner asked households to look up their address on the FCC Broadband Map website and make sure that the information available matches their broadband experience. If the FCC has incorrect

information about either the address or coverage options, individuals can submit a "Location Challenge" or "Availability Challenge" directly through the website in order to accurately reflect current accessibility.

In addition to challenges submitted by individuals, The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Office of Broadband is currently analyzing the data and is in the process of formulating a statewide challenge to the new FCC map. That challenge will include thousands of locations that are unserved but currently noted as served.

Ensuring this map is accurate is a crucial step to making sure that Virginia receives the investments needed to deploy universal broadband. Last month, Virginia received \$5 million to

help make a strategic plan to deploy coverage, courtesy of the bipartisan infrastructure law, and will be eligible for more once the initial plan is completed.

Warner has long fought to expand access to broadband in Virginia. During negotiations for the bipartisan infrastructure law, Warner secured \$65 billion in funding to help deploy broadband, increase access, and decrease costs associated with connecting to the internet. The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, created and funded through this landmark legislation, provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs in all states and territories. An accurate map will play a critical role in ensuring that this funding is used efficiently.

New tools used to identify COVID virus in wild, domestic animals

Scientists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture are developing new tests and tools to identify and track the COVID virus and its variants in wild and domestic animals.

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is currently implementing a \$300 million provision in the American Rescue Plan Act to monitor susceptible animals for the COVID virus. Through this initiative, APHIS is partnering with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) on five research projects to improve understanding of the virus and to help USDA accomplish its goal of building an early warning system to potentially prevent or limit the next zoonotic disease outbreak or global pandemic.

"This investment ensures we are taking the steps necessary to safeguard our nation's animal health—and further, public health," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Scientific research undergirds USDA's programs and policies. The new tools and data generated from this research will provide the insights necessary to accelerate our understanding of the COVID virus and help us build a more resilient national capacity to address future disease threats."

Two of the projects call for developing easy-to-use field tests to quickly identify COVID infection in wildlife and domestic animals. In two other projects, field and laboratory studies will determine how long the virus persists in deer and whether deer or elk can

serve as an intermediate animal host in which COVID virus can survive in the wild and potentially mutate into new variants. The fifth project is developing a cell line model that will let researchers better predict which animal species may act as hosts or reservoirs for COVID virus.

Through these and other efforts, USDA is working to implement a risk-based, comprehensive, integrated disease monitoring and surveillance system domestically, and enhance collaborations with national, regional, and global One Health partners to build additional capacity for zoonotic disease surveillance and prevention.

Uptown Partnership Joins DHCD's Mobilizing Main Street Program Cohort

Martinsville Uptown Partnership (UP) is joining the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) first-ever Mobilizing Main Street Program cohort-based program. This two-year program will provide the framework for targeted organizational development support to Exploring Main Street (EMS) communities interested in pursuing Advancing Virginia Main Street (VMS) designation and Main Street America accredited status.

"We are thrilled that Uptown Partnership has been selected as a member of the Mobilizing Main Street program," said Liz Harris, UP board president. "Our organization was formed in 2020 for the main purpose of pursuing this designation, and over the past three years, UP's board, staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to reengage with DHCD and the VMS program, while keeping community engagement at the forefront. I am proud to see UP and the Martinsville community advance in this program and continue this important work."

Uptown Partnership will work with DHCD staff to bolster their community for economic opportunity. The cohort will develop individualized work plans and implementation of program benchmarks and will assist with market analysis, design assessments, grant management and other essential tools for impactful success. This accelerated program is funded by the Virginia Main Street (VMS) Program.

"The Virginia Main Street program has been transforming communities for over 35 years, and it continues to be critical to economic development, small business growth and job creation across the Commonwealth," said DHCD Director Bryan Horn. "This new program will foster local and ongoing community development efforts while offering targeted support to participating organizations to ensure their future success in the Virginia Main Street program."

The MMS VMS announcement comes on the heels of Uptown Partnership's recent decision to remain an independent organization and not pursue a merger with the Chamber's Partnership for Economic Progress (C-PEG) and the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce. In discussions with state officials, it became clear that a merged structure would not meet requirements for participation and advancement in the Virginia Main Street designation and that UP should remain a free-standing agency.

"As we look ahead to 2023 and beyond, UP looks forward to working with DHCD, the City, Uptown residents and property owners and our many community partners, including the Chamber and C-PEG, to build a comprehensive Uptown revitalization program that champions grassroots leadership and preservation-based economic development," said Beverly Lyle, UP board member.

The program kicks off in mid-January and UP, along with other participating organizations and communities, will meet monthly over the next two years. For more information, visit dhcd.virginia.gov/vms.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Product or ___ (abbr.)

4. Zodiac sign

9. S. China seaport

14. Former OSS

15. Early English printer

16. Aphid genus

17. General's assistant (abbr.)

18. Aussies

20. Dissuades

22. Make law

23. Drench

24. Soak in a liquid

28. Male child

29. It cools your home

30. Small constellation

31. To call (archaic)

33. Explores beneath the Earth

37. Commercial

38. W. hemisphere organization

39. You can find it in a can

41. "Land of the free"

42. 36 inches

43. Footwear

44. Challenges

46. They hold things together

49. Of I

50. Partner to flow

51. Not connected by kinship

55. Worries

58. Garlic mayonnaise

59. A way to take by force

60. Legendary English rockers

64. Your consciousness of your own identity

65. Fencing swords

66. Silly

67. Actor DiCaprio

68. Encircles with a belt

69. Mails a message

CLUES DOWN

1. Horse mackerels

2. It can be viral

3. Prickly plants

4. Consciousness

5. Type of sarcoma

6. Tax collector

7. Sun up in New York

8. One who scorches

9. Influential psychotherapist

10. Situated at an apex

11. Communicative

12. Forearm nerve

13. Former CIA

19. Folk singer DiFranco

21. Employee stock ownership plan

24. Large-scale

25. School environment

26. Remove

27. Male parents

31. Large rodent

32. Weighed down

34. Held tightly

35. ___ route: going there

36. Explains again

40. Exclamation of surprise

41. Courteously

45. Lying down

47. Judge

48. Forcefully took

52. Loosely compacted sediment

53. High mountain

54. Portable conical tents

56. Cereal grass

57. Dining utensil

59. Thoughtful

60. Helps you walk

61. Indicates near

62. Midway between northeast and east

63. Local area network

See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

OPINION

It never leaves you

Twenty years ago, when I was 18, I was driving back home from my grandma's house one night. I was on 57 just past the turn-off to Fairy Stone State Park when a car roared up behind me. The driver had his brights on and was just a few feet from my bumper, swerving back and forth like a lunatic.

Given that it was 10 p.m. on a Saturday night, I had no doubt this was a drunk driver, and clearly a dangerous one. If I had to hit the brakes — if I slowed down at all — he would rear-end me. I opted to speed up.

I got up to almost 70 and the guy stayed right on my tail, swerving back and forth erratically. I would have pulled over if I could but there was nowhere to go. My heart was racing; I was unarmed, so if this guy was trying to run me off the road and kill me, he would probably have a pretty easy time of it.

I finally passed the county line and hit my turn signal to pull into a church parking lot and, God willing, let him pass me.

The moment he saw my turn signal, he hit his blue lights.

My dangerous drunk driver was, in actuality, a deputy from the Patrick County Sheriff's Office.

He walked to the car and

asked for my license and registration, a smirk on his face. As he reviewed my documents, he walked around my car.

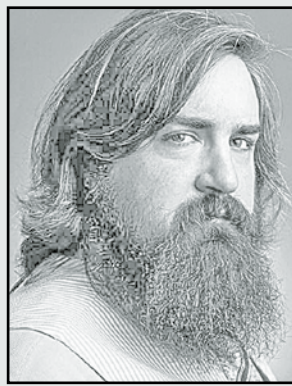
"F***ing kids," I heard him say as he stood in front of the hood.

He walked back to my window, still holding my license and registration, and asked me why I'd pulled out in front of him.

Several things went through my mind at once when he said that, and that was the moment I felt truly afraid, more afraid than I was when I thought he was just some drunken weirdo. I HADN'T pulled out in front of him, not unless he'd been driving without his lights on, and he knew it. He knew that I knew it, too. If he was brazen enough to lie to my face about something we both knew to be untrue, what would he be willing to say to a judge? Was this the kind of guy who had a baggie of drugs stashed somewhere, just waiting to deposit it in my trunk?

I don't remember what I said to him; at that moment, I was actively fighting back a panic attack while also making sure I kept my hands visible on the steering wheel. I certainly didn't challenge him; you never challenge law enforcement.

Still smiling, he began to drill down on my reckless driving. He told me I shouldn't



By Ben R. Williams

drive so fast at night. What if a deer came out of nowhere and rammied into the side of my car?

To punctuate his point, he punched my car door. Hard. I still remember wondering if his big class ring had chipped the paint. I was mostly focused on controlling my breathing.

He told me to calm down, then he walked back to his cruiser to run my information. Ten minutes later, he came back, suddenly much more polite. He told me he was letting me off with a warning and to slow down and be safe out there, then he gave me my license and registration and left.

I know exactly what happened. When he ran my info, someone at dispatch told him that my dad is a local judge.

I've never once volunteered that information in a traffic stop. Everyone who has ever said the words "Do you know

who my father is?" deserves to be punched square in the face, in my experience. But I know he found out somehow. Otherwise, that evening would have gone a whole lot worse for me.

I no longer remember that deputy's name, but I do know that he left the Patrick County Sheriff's Office shortly after that (although not because of anything I did; I just tried to forget the whole thing). Either way, this was 20 years ago; he was a pretty young guy, but he may well have pulled his 25 years and retired by now.

Nonetheless, I think about him often. I think about him every time I see a cruiser. Sometimes, if a police officer is driving behind me, I'll just pull into a nearby business and wait for them to pass before getting back on the road. Police cruisers make my palms sweaty.

Here's the thing, though: since that night 20 years ago, I've only had positive encounters with law enforcement. When I was a full-time reporter, I frequently interviewed Sheriff Lane Perry, Sheriff Steve Draper, former Police Chiefs Eddie Cassady and Mike Rogers, and Sheriff Dan Smith. I have nothing but respect for all of them, and you'll never hear me say a bad word about any of them. I've met plenty of deputies and officers that worked under them, and I never had a negative experience with any of them, either.

But despite all that, that one cocky young deputy from 20

years ago remains seared into my brain like a hot wire. When I see stories from around the country about police brutality against African-Americans or that state trooper in Arkansas who performed a PIT maneuver on a pregnant woman while she was looking for a safe place to pull over, I think of him and his smirk, the sound of his fist thudding into the side of my car.

There are, in my experience, two kinds of people who go into law enforcement. The majority are good people, folks who care about their communities and want to keep them safe.

But there are also people who enter law enforcement for much darker reasons.

I mention all of this because a video recently went viral in Martinsville. It depicted a school resource officer manhandling a Martinsville Middle School student and appearing to pull (though not fire) his TASER on him. The officer has since been terminated.

I don't know anything about this incident beyond what everyone was able to see in the video, and it's not my place to render a verdict.

But I will say this: there isn't a doubt in my mind that when that young man is my age, he's going to look back on that day the same way I look back on that frightening night in a church parking lot on the side of 57.

That feeling never leaves you.

SCC Concludes Revised Rate Review for Appalachian Power, Directs Reduction to Interim Base Rates

The State Corporation Commission (SCC) concluded a revised triennial review of the base rates for Appalachian Power Company that reduces the annual rate increase that has been in effect on an interim basis since October 1, 2022.

For a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity a month, the new rates result in a monthly charge of approximately \$6 compared to the

interim charge of \$8.55. Appalachian Power will submit revised tariffs to the SCC that recalculate the bill impact of the application of the new rates and refund the difference with interest to customers within 90 days of the Commission order.

In August, the Supreme Court of Virginia found that the SCC did not have the authority last year to decide whether it was reasonable for Appalachian Power to

include costs associated with the closure of several coal-fired plants in its accounting expenses between 2017 and 2019. The Commission had found that the costs, called an asset impairment charge, were unreasonable.

The Court directed the SCC to revise its final decision in the triennial review and remanded the case to the Commission for further proceedings.

Youngkin announces funding to expand childcare access

Gov. Glenn Youngkin last week announced \$1.2 million in grant funding to support the Ready SWVA project for increased childcare options in Southwest Virginia. Ready SWVA is an economic development project specifically targeted toward workforce expansion.

Support from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Governor's Set-Aside funds will enable Ready SWVA to create a new early childhood system to expand access to affordable childcare and strengthen the current network of providers.

"Finding quality, affordable and available childcare options for working families in Virginia has been an enduring challenge," said Youngkin. "Expanding access to providers while strengthening the current network is a necessary step in the right direction."

"Removing barriers that keep people out of the workforce is a key focus of the administration and childcare is a prime example," said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater. "By supporting the childcare services network in Southwest Virginia, we can empower people to confidently enter the workforce and grow the economy in Southwest Virginia."

"Working parents deserve childcare options that are affordable and reliable," said Ninth District U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith. "And I was pleased to vote for the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which provides for today's grant to help fund workforce development resources and expand access to childcare in Southwest Virginia."

"Childcare is the critical infrastructure needed to support comprehensive economic development strate-

gies to attract new talent, young families, and higher-paying jobs to our region," said Travis Staton, President and CEO of the United Way of Southwest Virginia. "In addition to helping parents re-enter the workforce, we see Ready SWVA as a dual-generation investment. Through this public-private partnership, we will not only grow the number of teachers in the childcare industry, but we will be providing tomorrow's workforce, our youngest citizens with more opportunities to learn and grow in a healthy environment."

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law on July 22, 2014. Under the ACT, Title I funds are available to states for the development and support programs that provide job search, education, and training activities for adult, youth, and dislocated workers seeking to gain or improve their employment prospects. Funds are also used to establish the one-stop delivery system for workforce development services.

Each year, the Governor has discretion over a portion of the funds that may be distributed to projects based on a competitive grant process. The exact cost of the Ready SWVA Childcare Initiative grant award is \$1,240,316 and is 100 percent funded through a U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration grant.

Permitting process streamlined, more transparent

Last week, Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced the release of a new platform at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to streamline and provide transparency to the public on the permitting process.

The DEQ platform will enable permit applicants, as well as the public, to track pending permits and will provide current information about the critical steps and permitting schedules associated with obtaining permit approvals. Permit applicants, agency staff, and the public will be able to access information about pending permits online in real time.

"This first of its kind transparency provides our citizens with the government service they deserve," said Youngkin. "An open and efficient online process where all of the permitting decisions are made for everyone to see. Virginians deserve to know the status of the permits in their communities and Virginian businesses need to be able to track the progress of their permit applications."

"While this is just the start at DEQ, we plan to add additional permitting programs throughout the next year and transform the platform to cover significant permits across the entire state government," said Acting Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources Travis Voyles. "This puts Virginia as best-in class, bringing transparency that will help the Commonwealth prove that we can have economic growth and ensure environmental protection."

By the end of 2023, DEQ plans to incorporate all of the agency's significant permits and ensure transparency on all relevant approval processes.

"Previously, there has been no easy method for permit applicants or the public to track the progress of their permit applications," said DEQ Director Mike Rolband. "With this platform, Virginians and businesses will be able to quickly and easily follow the status of a permit request as it is being reviewed and know when permit decisions will be reached, while also bringing efficiency to DEQ staff."

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Weekly Publication

Published Each Saturday

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See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

Year in Review

from page 1

MARCH

Henry County native to provide refugee transport in Ukraine



George Metz, a Henry County native, bought a plane ticket for Germany where he will head Thursday. Upon arrival, Metz will spend time driving back and forth between Germany and Ukraine, transporting volunteers to the conflict zone and helping refugees to safety.

Metz, who works with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)—or Doctors Without Borders—spent time in the country, which is now under attack by Russian forces, and managed a team of about 20 as part of his work with MSF.

Blooms may hold promise of early spring



These early blooming trees are a sure sign that spring can't be far off. They are on the Uptown Connection trail off Franklin Street in Martinsville.

APRIL

Mementos and memories: time capsule contents revealed



After half a century encased behind a marble slab at 1 Ellsworth Street in uptown Martinsville, the contents of Piedmont Trust Bank's time capsule were revealed at an event that drew a crowd of several dozen people on Friday, April 1.

Beyond finally seeing what was inside, the event marked a reunion of sorts for employees of Piedmont Trust Bank, who made up well over half the crowd and were visibly happy to come together not only to participate in the occasion but, perhaps more importantly, to share memories of their time at the bank.

Pay raises, decreased school funding, meals tax hike proposed in county budget

The Henry County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday received a proposed budget for fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023 which included pay raises for teachers and county employees, full funding of operational requests from the school system, and a 2 percent increase in the meals tax.

This year's budget was "especially difficult," Henry County Administrator Tim Hall said. "We're taking some chances here."

MAY

Fire department drone program soars to new heights



Since 2018, Martinsville's fire department has been using some unexpected technology to help in their emergency response—drones. Now, the department has taken that program to the next level with the ability to send live drone feed to command units and other organizations, allowing more sets of eyes to assist in potentially life-saving operations.

What a difference IT makes: Bassett staff clean up community center

The ongoing effort to reopen the Bassett Community Center got a boost last Thursday when the staff of Bassett Furniture's Information Technology (IT) Department spent the day hard at work cleaning the shuttered facility.



The team spent the day weeding flower beds, painting the front entrance, pressure washing chairs, cleaning the boiler room, planting grass, and performing other tasks to help move the center's renovation efforts along, while wearing shirts emblazoned with the Bassett name and the slogan, "the difference it makes" (a play on words, referencing the IT department).

JUNE

Rooster Walk struts its stuff



Rain, severe thunderstorm warnings, and even the possible threat of a tornado did nothing to dampen the high spirits of music lovers who attended the 12th annual Rooster Walk Music and Arts Festival held last weekend in Axton.

Throughout the weekend, musicians, staff, volunteers, vendors, and festival goers alike came together on the sprawling 151-acre Pop's Farm. The venue is a place where cell phone signal is poor at best, meaning devices were largely put away, allowing the thousands in attendance to give themselves over entirely to four days of music, food, drink, and fellowship that exemplified the simple Rooster Walk ethos, appropriate for a festival named for two men who died too young: live in the moment.

Parker, Carter Bank honored at Piedmont Arts' Hooker Awards



Longtime Piedmont Arts employee and lifelong arts supporter Barbara Parker and Carter Bank & Trust, "two influential centerpieces of our community" were honored this week, joining a short list of individuals and businesses who have received Piedmont Arts prestigious Clyde Hooker Award for their shared "belief that the arts are crucial to building and sustaining a thriving community," said Piedmont Arts Executive Director Heidi Pinkston during the Tuesday night ceremony.

JULY

Good and faithful servant: retiring County Administrator honored



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.

Ancient history uncovered at VMNH dino dig



Shell, WYOMING - Nearly every day for the past few weeks, a team of instructors, students, and volunteers have made the slow journey out into the vast, seemingly endless Wyoming prairie just north of the little town of Shell, WY. Their convoy of 4-wheel drive

vehicles climb steep, dusty hills and traverse deep gullies, following a long, dusty trail that does not appear on any map. Over the course of three weeks, the team has worked beneath the unforgiving Wyoming sun in search of dinosaur bones.

AUGUST

Baseball great honored for storied career



It has been quite a week for Martinsville's Lou Whitaker.

The Detroit Tigers honored Whitaker by retiring his Number 1 in honor of his accomplishments during his 19 years with the team.

Harvest Foundation celebrates milestone with new community-based committee



At the celebration of its 20th anniversary, the Harvest Foundation announced its new Project Hope, a new project that will bridge the gap that was created by a lack of opportunity for community involvement.

The project includes a committee of community members who vote on grant proposals submitted by local residents. This committee differs from the foundation's usual grant process in that community members submit the grant proposals, and the committee members decide which proposals receive funding.

SEPTEMBER

FAHI works to expand museum, explore potential for growth



Building a sustainable organization to collect and preserve the history of Martinsville's Fayette Street Neighborhood, and African American history throughout the community is essential for one Martinsville-based nonprofit.

FAHI (Fayette Area Historical Initiative) received a three-year grant of \$254,468 from The Harvest Foundation to grow the capacity of the museum to develop and implement a targeted strategic plan. The museum also plans to invest in board development and training while creating a marketing and business plan.

Hundreds flock to Martinsville Speedway's 75th anniversary celebration



If attendance at the Martinsville Speedway's 75th anniversary last week is any indication, the legendary track is just getting a green flag, with hundreds attending the night of celebration and free fun.

H. Clay Earles founded the track in 1947. His grandson, Clay Campbell became track president in 1988, making him the longest serving president in NASCAR.

OCTOBER

City officials are urged to help build a homeless shelter



More than 40 people gathered outside the City Municipal Building before Martinsville City Council's Sept. 27 meeting to advocate for a homeless shelter in Martinsville.

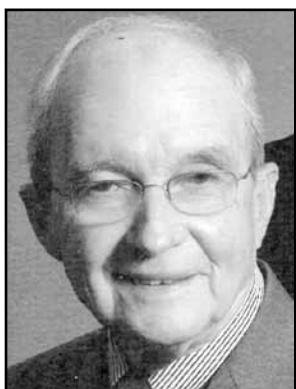
Carrying signs that read "Bless our people," "Love thy neighbor," "We need a shelter," "Help the homeless," representatives from the rally addressed council members.

OBITUARIES

R. Mastern Fuller, Jr.

Theresa Martin Wright

R. Mastern Fuller, Jr., 91, of Ridgeway, VA passed away on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at Friendship Health and Rehab Center in Roanoke, VA. He was born in Leaksville, (Eden), NC on February 3, 1931, to the late Roy M. Fuller, Sr., and the late Annie Carter Fuller Davis.



a proud member of the US Marine Corps from 1949-1951. A graduate of National Business College in Roanoke, VA, he was employed by Fieldcrest Mills for thirty-nine years retiring as Division Vice President, Controller of Bed and Bath Division. He enjoyed watching Carolina Basketball and pitching in local church league softball games.

Theresa Martin Wright, 69, of Martinsville, Va. passed away on Wednesday, December 21, 2022. She was born in Augusta, Ga. August 15, 1953 to Lowanda McGuire Martin and the late Fred Thomas Martin, Sr.



of McCabe Memorial Baptist Church where she sang in the choir. Theresa loved her family and dedicated her life to taking care of them. She was a mother figure to her nieces and nephews. She worked as the store manager for the Show Room Furniture store in uptown Martinsville.

Surviving is his wife of seventy years, Norma Greer Fuller of Ridgeway, VA; also surviving are daughters, Pam Miller (Ralph), Melissa Pace (Brian) of Ridgeway, VA, and Andi Davis (David) of Collinsville, VA; sons, Scott Mastern Fuller of Christiansburg, VA, and Todd Fuller (Lori) of Richmond, VA; brothers, Tommy Fuller (Kay) of Midlothian, VA, and Billy Joe Fuller (Lucille) of Reidsville, NC; sister-in-law, Myra Benson (Fred) of Cary, NC. He is also survived by ten grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

Mr. Fuller's funeral was held at Stone Memorial Christian Church, where he was a member, on Tuesday, December 27, 2022, with Minister Tim Wood officiating. A private family burial was held at Mountain View Cemetery.

In addition to her father, she was preceded in death by her husband of 49 years, Kent Ellis Wright and her brother, Fred Thomas "Freddie" Martin, Jr.

A funeral service was held on Wednesday, December 28, 2022 at McKee-Stone Funeral Home officiated by Reverend Lewis Harris. Interment was at Roselawn Burial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Stone Memorial Christian Church, 3030 Virginia Ave., Collinsville, VA 24078.

She is survived by her mother, Lowanda; children, Brad Allen Wright (Marcia) of Martinsville and Melody Lynn Wright of Martinsville; brother, Timothy Dean Martin and Jeffrey Porter; uncle, Horace Martin; niece, Tanya Michelle Martin; nephew, Fred Thomas Martin III (Katherine); brothers-in-law, Sammy Wright and Mark Wright;

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care, 240 Commonwealth Blvd. West, Suite 602 B, Martinsville, VA 24112

McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the family. To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckees-tonemartinsville.com.

Mr. Fuller was a 1949 graduate of Leaksville High School. He was

Norris Funeral Services, Inc. and Crematory is serving the Fuller family. Online condolences can be made at www.norrisfuneral.com.

Theresa was a graduate of Laurel Park High School. She was a member

System allows DMV customers to reserve same-day service, hold place in line

Take the stress out of fitting DMV into your busy schedule. DMV already offers convenient appointments so you can schedule your visit and skip the check-in line when you arrive. But if you'd like to walk-in for service, the DMV is pleased to now allow you to reserve your spot for same-day service, and we'll save your place in line until you arrive.

"We continue to expand our service options to make DMV quick and easy for everyone," said Acting DMV Commissioner Linda Ford. "Now, you can reserve your spot in line at your local DMV before ever leaving the house. Just scan the code or text the number to hold your place before you get to the office."

Each office has a unique code, so be sure to scan or text the code for the office you will visit.

This exciting new service option gives customers the ability to put themselves into the service queue and receive their ticket number without waiting in a physical line. It also allows you to plan your DMV visit without locking you into a specific time slot.

To save your spot for same day service, visit our Locations webpage and find your local office through a zip code search or the drop down menu on the right. When the pop-up appears on the map, click the location link to go to your local office's webpage. Scan the QR code or text the code to 89247, and follow the

Once you arrive at the DMV office, text "I am here" to activate your reservation, so you can be called for service. Customers who checked in online must be present in the office by 4:30 p.m. on the day they reserved a spot in order to be served.

Forgot to reserve your spot? Don't worry! You can still scan the QR code in our lobby when you arrive and get in line for service. Just follow the prompts and you'll receive your ticket number via text message to your phone.

November Economic Indicators Remain Mixed

The number of employed residents dropped by 7,426 in November and according to BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics ("LAUS", or "the household survey"), the labor force in Virginia showed little change, decreasing by 519 to 4,347,555, Gov. Glenn Youngkin said last week.

The number of unemployed residents increased by 6,907 to 123,790 which is 15,000 lower than January. BLS publishes an additional employment figure from its Current Employment Statistics Survey ("CES" or "establishment survey"). Virginia CES employment fell by 2,200 jobs in November to 4,095,100, which is 102,000 more jobs than in January.

The Commonwealth's labor force participation rate, which measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work, was unchanged at 63.6 percent in November from October's revised rate.

From January 2022 to November 2022, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia gained 101,500 jobs, an increase of 2.5 percent. The private sector recorded a gain of 79,700 jobs, while employment in the public sector increased by 21,800 jobs.



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The CES survey uses payroll records of establishment employers and is designed to provide a count of jobs under which the employer pays unemployment insurance. The LAUS survey is based on household interviews conducted each month for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and provides comprehensive data on the labor force, including those who are employed and unemployed.

The household survey only distinguishes between whether a person is employed or unemployed, whereas CES counts each employee that is on an employer's payroll. CES excludes business owners, self-employed persons, unpaid volunteers, and private household workers, and those on unpaid leave or not working because of a labor dispute.

"As we near the end of another turbulent year in the global economy, there are many indicators to believe that Virginia is in a position of strength," said Youngkin. "Our key challenge remains getting people who have left the labor market during the pandemic back into the workforce."

Despite the decline in household employment in the month, growth throughout the year remains strong, with changes averaging nearly 9,500 a month. This is over twice the 2021 average and a third more than the pre-pandemic average in 2019. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 2.8 percent is a half of a percentage point below the rate from a year ago.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, ten of eleven major industry divisions realized recovery in employment levels in the period while one industry experienced contraction. The largest gains in the period occurred in education and health services up 28,800 jobs (+5.3%). The second gain occurred in government, up 21,800 jobs (+2.9%). The third largest gain occurred in leisure and hospitality, up 18,800 jobs (+4.3%) Other job gains / contractions occurred in professional and business services, (+9,700 jobs), construction (+6,000 jobs), trade, transportation and utilities (+5,700 jobs), manufacturing (+5,400 jobs), information (+3,400 jobs), miscellaneous services (+3,300 jobs), and mining and logging (+500 jobs). The only job loss occurred in finance (-1,900 jobs). The only job loss occurred in finance (-1,900 jobs).

Compared to a year ago, on a seasonally adjusted basis, ten of eleven major industry divisions experienced employment increases while one saw an employment decrease. The largest absolute over-the-year job gain occurred in education and health services up 33,300 jobs (+6.2%). The second largest over-the-year job gain occurred in leisure and hospitality, up 28,400 jobs (+7.5%). The third largest over-the-year job gain occurred in government, up 12,100 jobs (+1.7%). Other job gains occurred in professional and business services (+11,400 jobs); trade, transportation, and utilities (+9,500 jobs); construction (+6,300 jobs); manufacturing (+5,000 jobs); miscellaneous services (+3,800 jobs); information (+2,700 jobs); and mining and logging (+500 jobs). The only job loss occurred in finance, with a decrease of 4,700 jobs.

"More Virginians have entered the workforce this year because they are excited by the opportunities available to them in our strong economy," said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater. "We are proud to support this through workforce education and development opportunities that help Virginians realize their potential."

"We are two and one-half years beyond the onset of the Covid pandemic and our economy continues to recover with vigor," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "The pull back in employment in November may signal a slight easing in labor markets that have been tight across the Commonwealth, even to the point of restricting growth in some areas."

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COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **January 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on each application to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **January 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.

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

Case R-23-01 Randolph C. Campbell

The property is located at 49 and 81 Tanks Prestige Avenue, in the Horsepasture District. The Tax Map numbers are 39.7/123R, 124. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of 2 lots from Agricultural District A-1 to Mixed Residential District M-R. The applicant wishes to create two additional lots out of the property.

Case R-23-02 Bryan Timbrook

The property is located in the south west corner of the intersection of Maple Leaf Rd and A.L. Philpott Hwy, in the Horsepasture District. The Tax Map numbers are 58.2/15, 16. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of 2 lots, containing a total of approximately 2 acres from Agricultural District A-1 to Commercial District B-1. The applicant wishes to market the property for commercial purposes.

Case R-23-03 Ray Reynolds

The property is located on the west side of Blackberry Rd, just behind the address of 2814 Blackberry Rd., in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map numbers are 26.5(23)/1-4. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of 4 lots, containing a total of approximately 20 acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applications for these requests may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Lee H. Clark, ACP

Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

Year in Review

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Continued community support helps arts organizations thrive after shutdown



In a time where many arts organizations are struggling to get back on their feet after COVID-19 shutdowns and trials, the community's arts organizations continue to thrive.

Scott Guebert, president of the Theatreworks Community Players board, said the theatre's recent performances of 12 Angry Jurors gives the organization hope for the future after it had to completely change due to the pandemic.

NOVEMBER

Drug treatment court seeks to keep offenders out of jails



A new drug treatment court, a collaboration between the court system and Piedmont Community Services

(PCS), is looking to take drug offenders out of the jails and into treatment. The court currently operates in Henry County with the goal of expanding into Martinsville and eventually Patrick County.

Kelly Koebel, Senior Assistant Director of Clinical Services at PCS, is the coordinator. She said there is a stark difference between treatment courts and traditional courts.

Rawls and Jones win council bids, county school board seat decided



Aaron Rawls and LC Jones handily won their bids for Martinsville City Council against incumbents Danny Turner and Jennifer Bowles.

Rawls received 1,901 votes; Jones had 1,896. Bowles received 1,806, and Turner had 1,213.

DECEMBER

Bowman has big plans for Bassett Train Station Event Center

Armed with ideas to reinvigorate the Bassett Train Station Event Center, Aubree Bowman recently took



the reins as event manager.

A Patrick County native, Bowman, who began the position on Nov. 1, is a local business owner in Martinsville.

Keatts works to fulfill goals at county shelter



Since being selected as manager of the Henry County Animal Shelter in July, Allie Keatts has already met with some success.

"Our biggest success is that we started doing adoptions directly from our facility in August," Keatts said. Before that, "we were having to really just rely on other facilities to pull (animals) from us. If they didn't pull from us, then these animals just sat here until their time was up," she said.

Step into the new year with a First Day Hike

Put your best foot forward and start off the new year with an outdoor adventure at any of the Virginia State Park locations.

First Day Hikes have become a tradition for many people and it is the perfect opportunity to get some exercise, explore outdoors and connect with nature all while enjoying the park's unique beauty this season.

Parking is free at all Virginia State Park locations on Jan. 1, and visitors to each park will receive a celebratory First Day Hike sticker while supplies last.

Whether you prefer to partake in a solo adventure or want to join in on the fun of ranger-led hikes and activities, the parks have your back with numerous ways to help elevate your experience during your visit.

Check out the full list of First Day Hikes at www.virginiastateparks.gov/firstday-hikes.

Here are some locations to consider for your First Day Hike:

If you are looking for a moderate to advanced hike to ring in the new year, Pocahontas State Park is the place for you. The park offers a New Year's Eve hike starting at 11 p.m. that explores a 2.3-mile portion of Lakeview Bike Trail, which is not commonly open to hikers. The event is free, but registration is required by calling 804-796-4472 or emailing Rebecca.whalen@dcr.virginia.gov. Additional hikes on various trails are offered at 8 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. on New Year's Day.

Sky Meadows State Park provides an opportunity for you to celebrate the new year by watching the sunrise. On January 1, the park gates on Edmonds Lane will be open at 5:30 a.m. so you can enjoy a self-guided hike from the Backcountry Trailhead to view the sunrise at one of the overlooks on the Piedmont Overlook Trail, South Ridge Trail or the Ambassador Whitehouse Trail. There are ranger-led hikes available at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Claytor Lake State Park will open at 6 a.m. on New Year's Day, giving visitors the opportunity to watch the sunrise and partake in various hikes and activities. You can join a Virginia Master Naturalists on a short hike in search of different bird species at 10 a.m., learn to make syrup at noon and take a hike to the vernal pool at 2 p.m. Relish the evening by viewing the lights on the lake from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. by taking a walk down to the gazebo behind the Howe House.

Twin Lakes State Park offers a 3-mile Otter's Path trail for First Day Hikes. You must stop by the park office first to grab the geocache list for your hike and make sure to download the geocaching app before visiting. For First Day Hikes, each

Otter's Path Trail cache will contain a card with information about people important to the history of the park, allowing guests to learn more about the story of this site while on the trail.

Natural Tunnel State Park offers a guided hike to Lovers' Leap where park rangers tell you the tale of the star-crossed lovers. The hike is around 2 miles long, begins at 9 a.m. and has several inclines and declines.

If you are in or near the Virginia Beach area, visit First Landing State Park for a guided hike on Bald Cyprus Trail. You will meet at the Trail Center picnic tables for this one-hour long hike that is offered at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., and 2 p.m. or you can enjoy a self-guided hike on the many other park trails.

York River State Park, located in Williamsburg, offers a guided hike from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. along the banks of the York River and Woodstock Pond. The hike will cover 1.5 miles through upland woods and will end along the York River shoreline. You can also enjoy a self-guided adventure along the several other hiking and multi-purpose trails.

Share your first day hike adventures with us on social media by using the hashtags #vastateparks and #firstdayhikes.



First Day Hike

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



AXTON SOLAR

Your Community, Your Solar Project

Thank you Henry County residents for providing feedback on our project. We have made changes and believe Axton Solar is now a better project thanks to your input.

Visit our website www.axtonsolarva.com to learn more
or follow us on Facebook [@AxtonSolarVA](https://www.facebook.com/AxtonSolarVA)

A Clean Energy Future, Rooted in Conservative Principles

Across Virginia, farmers are supporting the grid with a new cash crop—solar energy. Supporting solar in your community protects property rights, empowers ratepayers, promotes competition and technological innovation, fosters job growth, and encourages energy diversification and independence.

Paid for by Conservatives for Clean Energy, Virginia