

# HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, December 23, 2023

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## IDA approves contract for new shell building

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) approved a real estate contract and development agreement with the Marlboro Development Team (MDT) for the construction of a shell building on Lot #2 at the Patriot Centre Industrial Park at its December 19 meeting.

This is the first time the county has entered into an agreement with a private developer to construct and market an industrial site.

“The real estate contract will facilitate the transfer of approximately 20 acres of land on Lot #2 to MDT Inc.,” County Administrator Dale Wagoner said. “MDT will be responsible for all costs related to the construction and will also assist with marketing the building to prospective industries.”

Wagoner said the agreement obligates the IDA to share in the carrying costs of the building once it is constructed until it is sold or leased to an industry.

“The IDA will be responsible for 50



A rendering of the new shell building. Construction is expected to start in 2024 and be completed in the spring of 2025.

percent of the carrying costs and MDT will be responsible for 50 percent of the carrying costs” for the 105,000-square-foot building, he said.

Wagoner said the arrangement is a win-win for the community.

“We will be able to leverage MDT’s expertise in marketing speculative buildings and construction administration, while MDT will be able to expand their footprint into Virginia,” he said.

William Fleming, president and CEO of MDT, said the company is excited to extend its speculative building program into Virginia.

“Martinsville, Henry County, Virginia, has proven to embody the precise characteristics of a community we seek to establish relationships with, fostering the pursuit of advanced manufacturing through the development of market-ready buildings,” he said.

The IDA also entered into a funding agreement with the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as it relates to the carrying costs of the shell building.

Wagoner said the EDC is committing to paying the IDA’s share of the carrying costs annually as long as it continues to receive funding from the Harvest (See IDA p. 2)

## County ends the year with a positive audit report



Andrew Nester, Commonwealth's Attorney.



Wayne Davis, Sheriff



Scott Grindstaff, Treasurer

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Board of Supervisors adopted the comprehensive fiscal year 2023 audit report at its December 19 meeting.

Kim Jackson, of Creedle, Jones, and Associates, said the county is doing well with a strong fund balance.

The county’s total fund balance for the

general fund is approximately \$106 million.

“An increase of \$38 million from the prior fiscal year,” she said.

Jackson said the statement of revenue, expenditures, and changes in fund balance shows an increase that is primarily due to Virginia’s reimbursement of approximately \$19 million of the Adult

Detention Center (ADC) construction, \$8 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and interest income of \$2 million.

The county also has an unassigned fund balance of \$38 million, which is nearly 36 percent of the county’s \$106 million fund balance. The unassigned fund balance also is nearly 58 percent of

the total general fund expenditures.

“This is the portion of the fund balance that has not been assigned, committed, or restricted for a specific purpose,” she said. “The unassigned fund balance at the end of the previous fiscal year was approximately \$32 million, (for) an increase of \$5.5 million.”

(See County p. 2)



Frances Wade celebrated with her family and Clerk's Office coworkers.

## Ceremony held to honor Wade's long career

By Taylor Boyd

After 41 years of service to the Henry County Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Frances Wade, Master Chief Deputy Clerk, has officially retired.

To celebrate her retirement, Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta, presented Wade with a Virginia flag on behalf of the Senate.

“This flag was flown over the Commonwealth of Virginia’s capital in Richmond, Virginia for you and in your honor, and for one moment in time, we stopped what we did in the Commonwealth so we could honor you this way,” he said.

Stanley also filed a commending resolution to be heard in the Senate once it returns to session. He plans to present it to Wade in April.

Stanley said one of the duties and responsibilities of a state senator is making sure great Virginians are recognized.

“I am reminded today as I sit next to this lovely lady that when I was in my early 20s, I was working for a gentleman named Gil Davis. Gil would file a motion or two, or maybe 50, and he would make sure that he did it at the last minute and right before the offices closed,” he said.

Stanley, who was a law clerk at that time, would be the one to bring those motions and stacks of papers to the Clerk's Office.

“I would come in, and I was not your favorite person to see in the Clerk's Office at that time. But with a smile on her face, you were always as sweet as could be, and that was my first memory with you,” he said.

Anytime he had to go to the Clerk's Office, Stanley said he made a beeline for Wade because he knows her great (See Wade p. 3)

## Phillips wins GOP nomination, questions process

By Debbie Hall

Eric Phillips secured the GOP nomination for the 48th District in a contest against Will Pace, a former Chatham mayor, in a hastily scheduled mass meeting in Chatham.

Noting that the district that includes the City of Martinsville and portions of Henry and Pittsylvania counties, Phillips was concerned that the location and day – a Thursday afternoon – would keep some voters from participating.

Phillips, a local businessman, also is

the chairman of the Henry County-Martinsville Republican Committee.

Pace is chairman of the Pittsylvania County Republican Committee.

Because of that, both men selected a proxy to attend the GOP's Legislative District Committee (LDC) meeting to decide the nomination process, Phillips said, adding that he learned about the mass meeting a little more than 24 hours before it was to take place.

“We were handed a letter, called ‘A

(See Phillips p. 2)

## Holiday deadlines, closing set

The Henry County Enterprise office in Stuart will close for the holidays at 5 p.m. on Friday, December 22. During this time, we will be available on a limited basis via email to submissions@theenterprise.net or dhall@theenterprise.net.

The office will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 2. We wish you a bright holiday season with your loved ones and appreciate your support throughout the year.

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# IDA

(cont. from page 1)

Foundation that can be used for that purpose. “The cost of construction has increased significantly since 2014,” said James McClain, chairman of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. (EDC). “However, shell buildings remain an essential part of our economic development strategy. “They provide turnkey options for businesses, allowing them to cut costs, save valuable time, and streamline their production process. This partnership with MDT will allow us to” offer that option once again to prospective businesses, he said.

The last time a shell building was constructed in the county was in 2014. Construction of that facility cost approximately \$3.2 million. Later Tuesday at its December 19 meeting, the Henry County Board of Supervisors also approved the real estate contract, the development agreement, and the shared funding agreement. “Our team is always looking for innovative ways to position Henry County as a leader in the advanced manufacturing sector,” Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, said. “We are confident that this new

shell building will be a valuable asset to our community, and we are grateful for the partnership with MDT.” Wagoner said the goal is to start the project in spring 2024 and finish it in spring 2025. In other matters, the authority: \*Approved the September 13 meeting minutes. \*Approved the accounts payable. \*Heard updates on the Dick & Willie Trail. \*Approved the recommended changes to the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre (CCBC) Revenue Sharing Agreement.

# County

(cont. from page 1)



**Tiffany Hairston, Commissioner of the Revenue.**



**Debra Buchanan, Horsepasture District, Henry County Board of Supervisors.**



**Pam Cobler, Reed Creek District, Henry County Board of Supervisors.**



**Travis Pruitt, Ridgeway District, Henry County Board of Supervisors.**



**Robert Clark, of the Board of Zoning Appeals, was presented a resolution in honor of his 34 years of service. He is flanked by Jim Adams (left), and George Lyle.**



**Master Chief Deputy Clerk Frances Wade was honored with a resolution presented by Debra Buchanan (left), and Henry County Circuit Court Clerk Jennifer Ashworth.**



**Outgoing supervisor Tommy Slaughter was recognized for his service. He is pictured with members of the board and his family.**



**Linda Love (center) holds a resolution in honor of her 33 years of service to the county. She is pictured with board members Debra Buchanan and Joe Bryant.**



**Kim Jackson, of Creedle, Jones, and Associates, presented the county's audit.**

Funds in the unassigned fund balance are available to be spent at the county's discretion. To maintain its bond rating, the county has self-imposed a limit on its unassigned fund balance that reserves a minimum of 15 percent of the fund for emergency savings. This percentage equates to roughly \$24 million. When subtracted from the overall unassigned fund balance, that leaves approximately \$14 million in the county's discretionary fund available for one-time expenses. In other matters, the board: • Observed the swearing-in ceremony for those elected during the Nov. 7 election. • Recognized outgoing Reed Creek Supervisor Tommy Slaughter and Ridgeway Supervisor Ryan Zehr. • Approved the items of consent. • Heard the monthly report on delinquent tax collection efforts. • Approved a resolution honoring Robert Clark for his 34 years of service on the Board of Zoning Appeals.

- Approved a resolution honoring Commissioner of Revenue Linda Love for her 33 years of service.
- Heard an update from the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. (EDC).
- Approved a resolution honoring Master Chief Deputy Clerk Frances Wade for her 41 years of service in the Henry County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.
- Set January 9 at 5 p.m. for the 2024 organizational meeting.
- Approved asking the General Assembly to reimburse \$35,000 to the county for the special election on January 9.
- Awarded a \$53,640 contract to Quality Seal Coating & Sports Surfaces for the resurfacing and lining of tennis courts at Jaycee Park to accommodate the sport of pickleball.
- Approved an additional appropriation of \$299,600 from the one percent sales tax fund for architectural and engineering services related to the installation of elevators at Campbell Court, Drewry Mason, and G.W. Carver

elementary schools. • Appointed Kathrynn Whitley to serve on the Parks and Recreation Board for an unexpired term ending June 30, 2025; appointed Pam Cobler to serve on the West Piedmont Planning District Commission for an unexpired term ending Dec. 31, 2025; and appointed Tim Chitwood to serve on the Patrick & Henry Community College Board for an unexpired term ending June 30, 2027. • Awarded a \$58,046 contract to RK Chevrolet to purchase a Chevrolet Tahoe special service vehicle for the Sheriff's Office. • Conducted a public hearing and approved a request to rezone approximately 1.9 acres of the Collinsville District from Suburban Residential District (S-R) to Mixed Residential District (M-R). The applicant wishes to place a double-wide manufactured home on the property. Zehr did not attend the meeting.

# Phillips

(cont. from page 1)



**Will Pace (left) and Eric Phillips are pictured after a mass meeting in Pittsylvania County. (Photos by Ray Reynolds)**



**Del. Danny Marshall, R-Danville, encouraged those attending to support Eric Phillips.**



**A portion of those attending the mass meeting.**

Call,' and we find out at 1 p.m." the day before the meeting was to be held, he said. Phillips rented two Motorcoach buses and three 15-passenger vans to provide transportation from Martinsville and Henry County to Chatham for local voters who wanted to participate. Removing himself and Pace from the equation, Phillips asked, "Is this a fair process for the voters in Henry County and Martinsville ... It is an absolute travesty and people ought to be ticked off about it." Phillips said his feelings had "nothing to do with who's running. This has to do with fundamental fairness." The process, he said, must be changed. After the meeting concluded, Pace congratulated and pledged to support Phillips. "While I didn't have the money and resources to win this election, I know that I had the people's support and for that, I am grateful, especially to those from Pittsylvania County," Pace wrote and also addressed the scheduling of the mass

meeting. "As for the timing and location of the mass meeting, I will say these two things. The law only allows us a certain time to select nominees in a special election and the Republican Party of Virginia Plan of Organization is very flexible of when it can be held within that short time frame," Pace wrote. "I also have found that in the many years I have been involved in the Republican Party, there are two types of campaign consultants," he wrote. "The first kind are your campaign consultants who care about their candidates and want to see our candidates and the Republican Party and the Conservative Cause to be successful. The second kind are those consultants who care about wealth and power and are willing to throw fellow Republicans under the bus to obtain such wealth and power. I will let my fellow Republicans draw their own conclusions to this." Phillips said, "There's got to be some updates that do not allow for people who are power hungry to manipulate a process" in a way "that solely benefits themselves."

For those in Henry County and Martinsville to "go to a singular spot" on a Thursday afternoon to cast a ballot represents a hardship, Phillips said, adding that a party canvass, also known as a firehouse primary, would have been a fairer alternative because votes could be cast at sites in multiple locations. It also is the process often used in special elections held outside of a general election in November. Holding a mass meeting in a more central location, like Brosville, or scheduling it for a Saturday when more people would be off work and could participate, would have been more acceptable options than the one selected, Phillips said. "It's totally unfair," Phillips said, of the process selected. This has been a Chatham seat for a long time. I want to represent the whole area. I don't know why we couldn't have a fair process." Gov. Glenn Youngkin set the special election for January 9. Candidates had until December 18 to file the necessary paperwork with the state Board of Elections.

# 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](mailto:dhall@theenterprise.net).)

## Meetings

Thursday, January 4

The Henry County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. on the 1st Floor, in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building in Collinsville. The board will meet in closed session after the public meeting.

## Events

Tuesday, December 26

Chix with Sticks, 10:30 a.m. Knitters are invited to work together in the Piedmont Arts classroom on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Sessions are self-guided and provide a space to socialize while creating. Bring your own supplies. Advanced registration required. Free to members, \$5 for nonmembers who will pay at the door.

Tuesdays in December (19, and 26)

Senior Studio, 1 p.m., Piedmont Arts. Seniors are invited to craft and create together in the Piedmont Arts classroom. Sessions are self-guided and provide a space to socialize while creating artwork. Bring your own supplies. Free for members; \$5 for non-members.

## ONGOING

The Martinsville-Henry County Lions Club regularly meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Pacific Bay Restaurant, 530 Commonwealth Blvd, Martinsville.

AWANA meets at Blackberry Baptist Church on Sundays, from 4-6 p.m.

TOPS FIELDALE VA 0626 meets each Tuesday at 5:45 pm at the Rangeley Ruritan Building on 134 Calloway Drive, Fieldale, VA. New members are welcome. For more information, call Patti at (276) 358-0489.

The Bassett Ruritan Club hosts Rook Music & More on Fridays from 10 a.m. - noon. Play Rook, work puzzles, make a craft and listen to a mixture of bluegrass, country & gospel music by different bands each week. If you want, bring a snack to share. This event is free to the public. Any donations received will go to the Bassett Ruritan Club to pay for electricity etc.

The Blue Ridge Regional Library offers free one-day passes to the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Henry County YMCA with your library card. The passes are good for one day and exclude special events. There is a wait period before you can check out the pass again. For more details and exclusions, visit [brrl.lib.va.us](http://brrl.lib.va.us).

[lib.va.us](http://lib.va.us).

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

Book Bingo on the 4th Tuesday of the month at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, 11 a.m. to noon. Call (276) 403-5430 to register.

Medicaid eligibility renewals have resumed. Martinsville-Henry County Coalition for Health and Wellness (MHCCHW) offers Medicaid/FAMIS application and renewal assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64 years of age in-person: Wednesdays 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Community Storehouse, 128 E. Church St (lower level of the old Leggett Building) in Martinsville, or by phone, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MHCCHW's specially trained Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Advocate is available to help. Call or text Ann Walker at (276) 732-0509 to learn more or for an appointment.

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. Call (276) 647-9585.

## Wade

(cont. from page 1)

mood spreads joy to those entering the office, even on the tough days, "because it did for a small, little law clerk back in the early 90s.

"Most certainly, with your attitude, with your smiling face every day, and your hard work and dedication to purpose, you have made this place better," he said.

"In some small measure, I stand here as you Virginia State Senator, and I still feel like that 24-year-old that handed a bunch of documents. But I want to say thank you on behalf of a grateful Commonwealth of Virginia," he said.

Wade said the flag was a big deal to her, and credited "God because without

him I wouldn't be able to do it. I'm very grateful for all the knowledge He's allowed me to be able to obtain down through the years, and I pray that each of you will take your jobs seriously."

Wade said she's enjoyed working with all the Clerk's Office staff and being able to watch her coworkers' children, and now grandchildren, grow up.

When the position came open in 1982, one of Wade's professors at Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) pushed her to apply for it.

"It was 94 applicants, and I thought, 'it's no way I'd get that job, I'm not even going to try and go.' She kept after me, she said, 'you need to go, you are needed



Wade's family were among those attending the ceremony.

there," Wade said. "So, I put in my application, and we went back and forth for a couple of months, and then finally I was hired."

Wade said she is grateful this is where

God ordained her to be, and thanked her family for their support, as well as the staff in the office, who treat her "like the momma of the gang."

"And I just eat it up," she added.



Sen. Bill Stanley presented a Virginia state flag to Wade on December 18, as Circuit Court Judge James McGarry looked on.



Wade's family were among those attending the ceremony.



When honoring Frances Wade last week, Sen. Bill Stanley, who was a law clerk in the 1990s, recalled "I was not your favorite person to see" coming into the clerk's office.

## Christmas cheer spreads through Preschool in the Galleries



Children got to participate by playing characters in some of Santa's stories at Preschool in the Gallery.

Preschoolers, teachers, and trusted adults gathered in the Piedmont Arts galleries earlier this week for Christmas-themed songs and stories. The Storytelling Santa Claus (Gale Buck) entertained the crowds of children with lovely stories of reindeer, elves, and Christmas bells. In between those stories, the Campbell Court Elementary School Choir donned festive outfits and sang upbeat holiday songs. Over 200 students from local preschools and early education centers clapped and sang along while the choir entertained them. Preschool in the Galleries is one of many ways that Piedmont Arts offers free arts experiences



Santa Claus shakes the hand of a little girl in the audience.

and education to local children.

Preschool in the Galleries is a monthly series of programs for pre-K students designed to foster a love of the performing and visual arts at a young age. Performances are free of charge to students and schools and feature performers from various arts organiza-



The Campbell Court Elementary School choir sang classic holiday songs to entertain the younger children.

tions and schools in Martinsville-Henry County. A full schedule of events is available on [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org). Reservations for Preschool in the Galleries can be made by contacting Education Coordinator Christiana Jarrett at [CJarrett@PiedmontArts.org](mailto:CJarrett@PiedmontArts.org).

## Dates announced for Alcohol Education and Prevention Grant Applications

In an effort to eliminate underage and high-risk drinking, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) will begin accepting applications for the 2024-2025 Alcohol Education and Prevention Grant program on Jan. 1.

This is the ninth year Virginia ABC is offering grants to support alcohol education and prevention programs and projects across the commonwealth.

Since 2013, Virginia ABC has awarded an average of \$80,000 each year through its grant program to Virginia organizations working to prevent underage and high-risk drinking. Organizations are eligible to

receive up to \$10,000 each to support evidence-based programs that have a long-lasting impact and encourage partnerships between organizations. Community coalitions, law enforcement, nonprofits, schools, government entities, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations and prevention-related groups are encouraged to apply. Proposed projects must address prevention in one or more of the following focus areas:

- underage drinking
- providing or serving alcohol to youth
- high-risk drinking

"We strive to support and work collaboratively with organizations that share our mission to strengthen the commonwealth through public safety and education," said Katie Crumble, director of Virginia ABC Community Health and Engagement.

Applications are available online, with a convenient online platform for submission. Virginia ABC has provided an application guide to assist applicants and provide more information about the program. This grant application guide and the grant application are at [www.abc.virginia.gov/education/grants](http://www.abc.virginia.gov/education/grants).

Applications are due by 5 p.m. on March 1, 2024.

See more at [www.henrycountyenterprise.com](http://www.henrycountyenterprise.com)

# OPINION

## Alternative Energy; or, The Whale

(The following is excerpted from the editorial page of "The Boston Daily Advertiser" Dec. 18, 1870)

Dear Editor,  
I read with great interest and no small amount of incredulity your recent article regarding the expanding oilfields of Texas and the value of the petroleum gushing forth from that blighted Neptunian landscape of scrub brush and horny toads, not to mention the continually rising interest in the crude oil issuing from the Drake Well in Pennsylvania.

The supposed futurist you interviewed — your term, while I prefer "dilettante" or "carpetbagger" — seems to believe that petroleum distillate is our future, and that soon enough, our lanterns will burn nought but kerosene and ground oil will be the sole lubricant of our machinery.

While I commend your man's inventiveness, perhaps his talents would be better suited to the realm of science fiction. A world operated on petroleum? Gash and codsocks, says I!

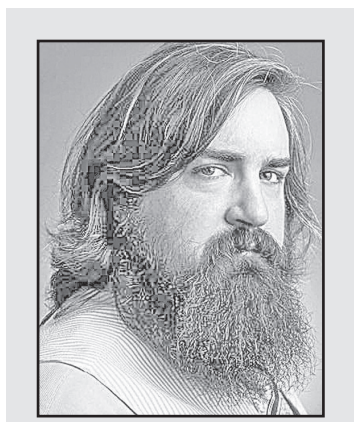
Lest you question my judgment, allow me to list my bonafides: my name is Captain Balthazar Ballard, and I've been a whaler my whole life. My nativity took place on a whaling ship, and my conception too. I've performed every job to be done aboard a whaler, from stirring the try pots to hoisting a harpoon to donning an evening gown and dancing for the men when spirits sink low. Today, I captain one of the finest whaling vessels Massachusetts has ever produced, The Unctuous Deacon, and my men and I have sailed the breadth of the Atlantic in our hunts.

Over the years, we've laid low bowheads and rights and taken many a Nantucket sleighride as a zealous sperm whale has tried to drag us to our graves. We've bested them all, though not without a few missing arms and legs here and there, and the fruit of our labor has been the oil that burns in your lamps and keeps your sewing machines purring.

For better than a hundred years, whaling has kept the lights burning in this great nation, and now I'm to understand we're to dismantle the whole industry due to these new upstarts and the filthy black grime they pump from the depths of Sheol? One cannot help but laugh!

Petroleum shall never overtake whale oil, and I have but one word to prove it: Infrastructure.

Sure, the Texan can pump his oil from the ground and bandy it about for all to see, his great twitching mustache concealing the lack of philtrum that indicates he was born to several generations of hardened dipsomaniacs, but how will he refine it and get it to the consumer? A pipe stretching across the nation?



By Ben R. Williams

That I'd like to see!

Who will bottle this oil? Who will stock it on the store shelves? It's an unknown product, not like whale oil.

While the Texan may lack infrastructure, you know who has it in spades? That's right; I do.

How do I procure my oil? By assembling a team of vicious, unlettered men who are united in their shared desire to kill the biggest things on the planet as payback for the state of their lives. How do I get my product to the bottling plant? By putting it on a cart led by a man named Chester and his two stout horses. How does it get to the stores? I don't know that part, but it gets there just the same. That's called infrastructure.

And what if the Texan's claim should run dry? What will he burn to light his cabin, and what will he use to lubricate his drill? That's right: whale oil. It seems to me that if whale oil's supposed replacement should be required to use whale oil during any part of its genesis or evolution, then it is clearly a sign that this replacement should be thrown out wholesale and abandoned.

Our Founding Fathers, wise men that they were, relied heavily on whale oil. Whale oil is one of the building blocks of our nation. Should we turn our back on it, we might as well light our homes by burning the Stars and Stripes while saluting Tsar Alexander II.

To conclude, dear Editor, I will say that while I chuckled at your recent work of speculative fiction, I have not lost sleep over it. Whale oil has been with us for more than a century, and there is little doubt in my mind that it will remain the dominant energy solution 100 years hence.

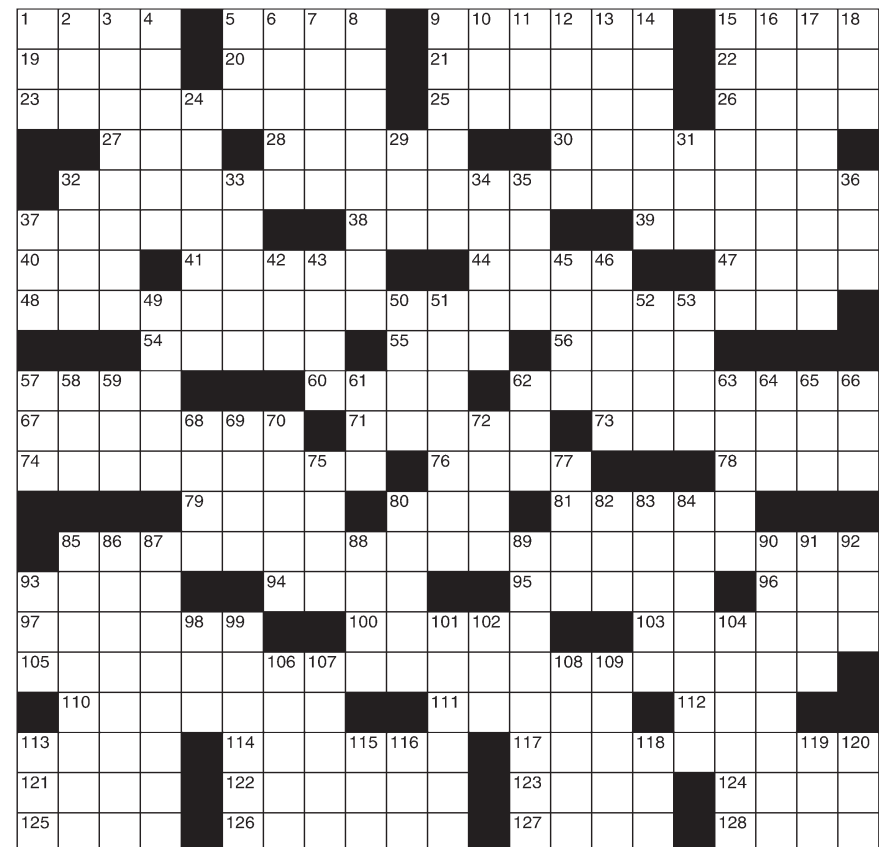
Alas, I must close my letter and mail it quick as we are hastening to leave port once more. It's like to be a long voyage; these great crafty fish get cleverer at hiding from our watchman every year!

Sincerely,  
Capt. Balthazar Ballard

## Super Crossword

MAKING 20 OUT OF 9

- |  |  |   |                              |
|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>  | <b>DOWN</b>  | <b>ACROSS</b>   | <b>DOWN</b>                  |
| 1 Pueblo dweller   | 40 Stephen of "Angie"  | 94 Words of woe   | 2 Bobby in the Hockey 1-Down |
| 5 Sound of an "air kiss"   | 41 Humongous   | 95 Desert haven   | 3 Leguminous side dish       |
| 9 Forensic facility in Quantico, for short                         | 44 Foot, in verse  | 96 Sch. founded by Thomas Jefferson                       | 4 Low pelvic bones           |
| 15 Gig hookups   | 47 Tattered  | 97 December mall temps                                    | 5 Hosp. test in a big tube   |
| 19 Refined finds   | 48 Novel   | 100 Consumer the letters in                               | 6 "Mrs. Dalloway" novelist   |
| 20 Civil rights leader Parks                                       | 49 whose name consists entirely of the letters in                | 103 Very talented   | 7 Ed of "Lou Grant"          |
| 21 In an uncivil way   | 54 Others, in Oviedo   | 105 Setups whose name consists entirely of the letters in | 8 Is trustful                |
| 22 Lawn mower brand  | 55 Last letter, in Leeds   | 106 Consumer the letters in                               | 9 Citrusy diet soft drink    |
| 23 Parts of wholes   | 56 Trig function   | 107 Very  | 10 Idling type               |
| 25 Key related to G major  | 57 Arab nation   | 108 Some legumes  | 11 Cruel Amin                |
| 26 "Jurassic Park" dino  | 60 Titanic sinker  | 111 Lindsay of "Liz & Dick"                               | 12 Slower than andante       |
| 27 "Billions" channel, in brief                                    | 62 Didn't type or text, perhaps                                  | 112 Be in debt to   | 13 Socially distant          |
| 28 Some boxing blows   | 67 Relating to an eye layer                                      | 113 Imp Simpson   | 14 Side street               |
| 30 Horn blowers  | 71 Corn, to a Brit   | 114 Throat tissue   | 15 Give proof of             |
| 32 Person whose name consists entirely of the letters in 23-Across | 73 Neighbor of Latvia  | 117 Lawbreaker  | 16 Novelist Toni             |
| 37 Los Angeles neighborhood  | 74 Relatives of terraces   | 121 — fixe  | 17 Strong-arm                |
| 38 "I knew — along!"   | 76 Silent performer  | 122 Menu offering   | 18 Boston Red —              |
| 39 Old Nissan brand  | 77 Consumer  | 123 In — (stuck)  | 24 This evening              |
|  | 79 Coup d'—  | 124 Lasting mark  | 29 Building-blasting stuff   |
|  | 80 Attain  | 125 Betting info  | 31 Bag-screening org.        |
|  | 81 Exit  | 126 "Mad" Carroll character                               | 32 Gotten sight of           |
|  | 85 Film whose name consists entirely of the letters in 74-Across | 127 Some votes in Congress                                | 33 Attempter                 |
|  | 93 Verve   | 128 Those folks   | 34 Fibber's admission        |



# A Christmas Hearing

Field Hearing on the Biden Administration's Effects on Santa's Toy Delivery

House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Chair Morgan Griffith (R-VA) today announced a field hearing on how the Biden Administration's green agenda has affected Santa and Rudolph's delivery of toys on December 22, 2023. The hearing will include a host of witnesses who are involved in the toy making and delivery process.



Morgan Griffith  
Representative

"The Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee has been committed to examining the implementation of government programs and whether they have been successful," said Chair Griffith. "This includes the new policies and regulations resulting from the Biden Administration's rush to green energy and its consequences on not only Santa's preparation for Christmas, but his journey around the world delivering gifts with Rudolph. I look forward to learning more from our witnesses during what I'm sure will be an exciting and informative hearing."

Chair Griffith will be particularly interested in learning more about: Have there been any delays in getting materials to the North Pole via fossil fuel driven planes, trains, and automobiles, and therefore, in toy assembly at Santa's workshop, given the restrictions on coal and oil by the Administration?

How will Santa be able to deliver the toys to all of the little girls and boys once he is forced to purchase an electric sleigh, given reindeer will soon be banned as they are known producers of methane?

Chair Griffith worries the cold weather and distance Santa must travel to deliver toys might significantly delay his overnight delivery as an electric sleigh is estimated to only get 150 miles in arctic conditions and at the equator and 300 miles in between, coupled with a 1.5 hour charging time for the battery.

How will Mrs. Claus continue to make her famous Christmas cookies once gas ovens are officially outlawed by the Administration? Further, Chair Griffith worries that some families won't be able to make cookies for Santa's visit if all of the Biden energy policies are put into place.

Subcommittee hearing titled "An Examination of the Biden Administration's Green Policies and Their Effects on Santa's Toy Delivery."

WHAT: A field hearing to discuss how the Biden Administration's green energy agenda has affected Santa and Rudolph's delivery of toys

DATE: Friday, December 22, 2023  
TIME: 8:00 PM ET  
LOCATION: The North Pole  
Alternative location: Santa's Official Post Office in Rovaniemi, Finland

\*For those last-minute package wrappers, red tape will be made available by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services

WITNESSES:  
Mrs. Clause, Wife, Santa Claus Bernard, Head Elf, Santa's Workshop Rudolph, Lead Reindeer, Santa's Sleigh (until electric sleighs are mandated)

Chair Griffith would like to note: Santa Claus is unable to be with us for this hearing as he is busy ensuring that everything will be ready for Christmas. He would like us to share that, despite protests by the left, he will in fact be delivering Red Ryder BB guns to all the good children who request one, but warns them "not to shoot their eye out."

All members of the Energy and Commerce Committee are welcome to attend. The hearing will be open to the public and press and will be live streamed online.

**The Birth of Jesus**  
While it is fun to joke about the absurd consequences of Biden's green energy policies, the reason for the Christmas season, for Christians like me, is the birth of Jesus Christ.

Two thousand years ago, when a young woman, Mary, and her husband, Joseph, were turned away from an inn, Mary was forced to give birth to a baby in a manger. That baby, Jesus, was born by immaculate conception. And as the son of God, Jesus was sent to Earth to save his people from their sins.

Jesus shared God's message of forgiveness and grace to mankind. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)."

Though not everyone celebrates Christmas and the birth of Jesus, the message of this season rings true through all communities and faiths. That message of forgiveness and grace, love and hope, is something I think we should all be reminded of a bit more frequently.

I wish everyone, whether you celebrate Christmas or not, peace during this holiday season.

And to echo Clement Moore in 'Twas the Night Before Christmas: "Happy Christmas to All and to All a Good Night."

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, call my Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, my Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, my Washington office at (202) 225-3861, or via email at [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](mailto:www.morgangriffith.house.gov).

## Standards of the Christmas season

I finally got the Christmas decoration tubs put back in the crawl space a grand four days before Christmas.

Some years it's just much harder to get it together for the holidays, isn't it?

Those tubs had been blocking the upstairs hall for two weeks. We had to suck in our tummies and walk on tiptoes to get to either of the bedrooms. On laundry days, it was a major feat to get around them with the clothes basket.

The morning I put them away, the stacks had grown even taller with the addition of the wreath storage bags. They came from my bedroom where they had been balanced on top of the quilt rack for those two weeks. In fact, I had to pick up a stack of folded laundry to get to them, by the time I decided to do anything about them.

When I bought some fresh wreaths at the tree lot in Koehler when we bought the trees, I had forgotten that last year we had bought fake wreaths at an after-Christmas sale. Last year we sort of gave in. I realized we were getting busier and busier, and I'd have to sacrifice making homemade wreaths if I didn't want to go completely insane, so I prepared for this year, then forgot about it.

It's the year of no free time, between working all day and activities and meetings every night. On the rare occasions we are home, we are working on house projects. On a 100-year-old house, there's always a project, but this one is worse than most. We are putting back the gleaming, beautiful old chestnut floorboards board by board. There are 74 rows of boards, and each row may have up to four boards in it, though there are some impressive 15-foot lengths among them.

This job doesn't go as smoothly as laying down new flooring would, because these boards are reshaped with age and with the banging around they got when they were being taken up over the summer. Plus, getting around in the house is a real hassle because the wall boards also have been down and are going back up into place slowly.

I couldn't face decorating for Christmas



Holly Kozelsky

when the house was in upheaval with construction. There wasn't even any place to put a Christmas tree, and we always have had two, one in front of the window on each side of the front door.

But it was my teenaged daughter telling me we shouldn't bother decorating for Christmas this year because it seemed not worth the difficulty that really lit a fire under my butt. Something had to happen, and fast.

Two weeks before Christmas became my deadline for finishing the floor. Then I became adaptable: Just as long as we could make a little bit of floor space, we could put our Christmas trees.

We were two weeks late in decorating, but finally, we went to the tree lot, where this time we got the two smallest trees they had. One was put in the living room, which is crowded also with the dining room furniture. The other was put in the dining room, where the floor is being replaced. The tree sits on the 3-foot section that has been finished. As we move boards into the room, we have to be careful not to bump any ornaments off the tree with them, and as we cut, some sawdust floats up onto our tins.

But we did it. It's not lavish like it normally is, but we've maintained the minimum of our standards. I almost didn't bother putting away the tubs that we had left out. Why go through the trouble of moving the furniture to get to the crawlspace access door, then crawling around on my knees, when I'll just have to get them back out in a few days anyway?

Standards, standards. Must maintain the standards.

And now that we are on the weekend of Christmas, it was all worth it.

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# OPINION

## Memories of Christmases long ago...

By Pat Delaney

My family and I were listening to Christmas music on a drive the other day when "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" came on. When Andy Williams sang, "and tales of the glories of Christmases long, long ago," it got me thinking.

My daughter in the backseat has seen seven Christmases, while I have seen... over seven. I asked her about what she remembers about Christmases past, and the answer was predictable for an eight-year-old. She remembers opening up her new tablet and other gifts, as you would expect.

When she asked me about what I remembered from when I was her age, one memory came racing to the front of the line. Like her, it involved a gift, but the memory really wasn't about the gift exactly.

It was Christmas Eve, many years ago, and my parents had sent my brother and I to bed with the, "the sooner you go to sleep, the sooner Santa can arrive," line I'm sure many of you have heard as kids, or used on your kids. Well, it worked for me, and off to sleep I went.

At some point, I woke, knowing from the dark sky in my window that it was still night time. I really don't remember why I went downstairs, but I don't think it was to see if Santa had arrived, though I won't rule it out.

As I neared the bottom of the stairs, I heard a scream that made me nearly fall down the remaining stairs. I looked to my right to see my mother throwing herself bodily over something large and round she had been wrapping, while yelling, "go back to bed! Go back to bed." My father leaped into action from whatever he had been doing near the

tree and gathered me into his arms and carried me up the stairs. After dropping me onto my bed, he pleaded with me to not come downstairs until the sun was up, and to yell if I needed something.

The next morning, I figured out the gift my mother had tried to shield from me was a basketball-sized globe (yes; I was an eight-year-old who wanted a globe). It had a decorative post where the axis came out of the north pole that had to have hurt like crazy when she pounced on it. I know it was more important for her boys to be surprised on Christmas morning than any bruises caused by diving on a present.

I learned a lesson that Christmas, though one I would not realize until my daughter was born. Christmas is an often-enormous effort for parents, but one willingly taken on, even if it means possible bodily harm from a globe.

I had the globe for many years, but it isn't the globe I remember. It was my parents' effort to make Christmas memories for their boys. That's what I remember. Years later, I found myself still up at 3 a.m. on Christmas Eve, getting everything ready under the tree, wrapping presents (ok, there was some lack of planning on our part, but not repeated, thank goodness), and had it been necessary, a willingness to throw myself atop a gift if needed to help make a Christmas memory for my daughter.

I think what all parents want in the end is the creation of lasting memories. Kids outgrow toys. Tech gifts become 'outdated' way too quick. But the memory of "Christmases long, long ago" for our kids when they become parents, is the best gift of all.

*(Delaney is our office manager and a staff writer.)*



## Year-End Giving 2023

As we prepare to end 2023, I reflect on the work of anthropologist Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

I am thankful for the small group of citizens who formed the Historical Society in 1996 and saved the Historic Henry County Courthouse. I am also thankful for the small groups of citizens who have served on the Board of Directors and volunteered through the past 27 years.

I wonder if the original, small group of Historical Society members ever envisioned this past year – beginning construction of our 13,000-square feet museum annex; hiring a full-time executive director; and sponsoring Sounds on the Square, the premier Uptown Martinsville concert series which is a finalist for Family Friendly Festival of the Best of the Blue Ridge 2024. We are extremely blessed that these endeavors are fully funded through private donors and sponsorships.

For regular programming, however,

the Historical Society depends upon your financial support to continue growing. Being a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

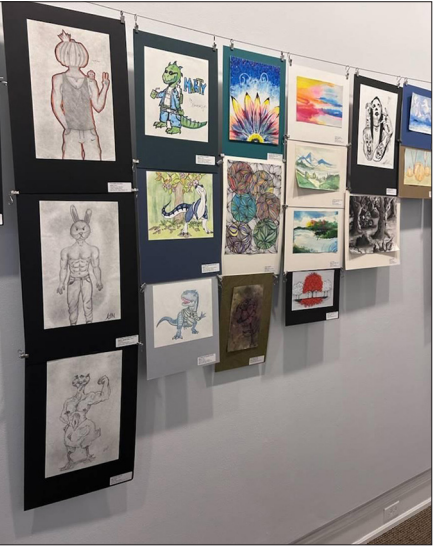
allows all donations to be tax-deductible. We encourage you to donate today to ensure the future of the Historical Society, the Historic Henry County Courthouse, and the Heritage Center & Museum. Donations may be mailed to or dropped off at 1 East Main Street, Martinsville, VA 24112. To make a donation via credit card, please call the office at (276) 403-5361.

Our board of directors and staff serve you and the community using the belief of David McCullough, historian and two-time Pulitzer Prize recipient, "To me, history ought to be a source of pleasure. It isn't just part of our civic responsibility. To me, it's an enlargement of the experience of being alive, just the way literature or art or music is." It is truly our pleasure to provide the many activities of the Historical Society.

John Phillips,  
Board president



A selection of colorful artwork created by students at Magna Vista High School.



A wall of artwork by Martinsville High School students, including the Uptown Partnership city mascot award winner created by Brooklyn Sneed.

## High school artists are on display at Piedmont Arts

Artwork by students from Bassett High School, Martinsville High School, and Magna Vista High School will be on display through January 16 in Piedmont Arts' Foster Gallery. A reception will be held for exhibiting students and their families, Tuesday, Jan. 9 from 4-6 p.m. at the museum. Piedmont Arts is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Piedmont Arts is known for hosting amazing and innovative exhibits. Nowhere is that truer than in the Foster Gallery. Exhibits are curated every six to eight weeks, allowing work by students from all 19 schools in Martinsville-Henry County to be displayed during the year.

Curated by Charity League of

Martinsville and Henry County, the Foster Gallery is an important part of Piedmont Arts' community programming, encouraging young people to participate in the arts and giving the public the opportunity to experience the wealth of talent in the area. Piedmont Arts and Charity League believe that the arts are a vital part of an excellent education, and both are pleased to take an active role in arts education in the community.

Piedmont Arts is a nonprofit art museum, located at 215 Starling Ave., Martinsville. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. Learn more at PiedmontArts.org.

## Hundreds of students recognized for academic excellence

Ferrum College announced 304 full-time students were recognized for their academic excellence during fall semester 2023.

The 121 full-time students named to the President's List earned a semester GPA of 4.0 and the 183 full-time students named to the Dean's List earned a semester GPA of at least 3.4.

"We are incredibly proud of each student who earned these academic achievements," said College President Dr. Mirra Martin. "Fall semester 2023 will be forever demarcated by this bright moment celebrating their dedication to their academic journey."

"Due to their unwavering determination and relentless pursuit of excellence, they have conquered the challenges that lay before them, proving that hard work and perseverance are the keys to success. We celebrate with these students and are Panther Proud of each Ferrum College student's achievements this semester," she said.

To view the Ferrum College Fall 2023 President's and Dean's Lists, visit:

<https://www.ferrum.edu/blog/304-ferrum-college-students-achieve-academic-success-during-fall-2023-semester/>.

## Danville native selected as Grand Master of Masons

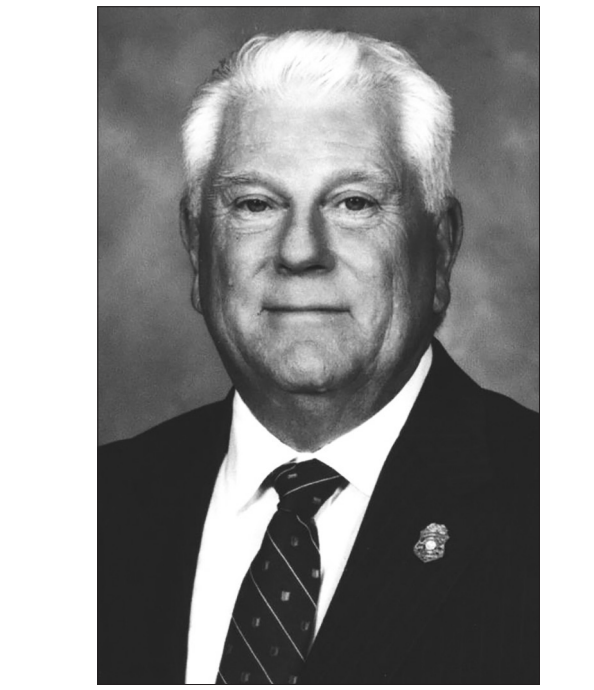
The Grand Lodge of Virginia, on Saturday, November 11, 2023, during its 245th Annual Communication, elected Jack Kayle Lewis, of Blairs, Virginia, to serve as its 178th Grand Master during 2023-2024.

Jack Kayle Lewis was born on August 6, 1954 in Danville, Virginia, the son of the late Ben Barker Lewis and Violet Newton Lewis. Young Jack grew up near Danville in Pittsylvania County with his parents and two sisters, Pat and Kristie. He attended Dan River Elementary and then Dan River High School, where Jack graduated in June of 1972 as class president.

On January 4, 1976, Jack married his High School sweetheart, Barbara Faye Holland. Their son, John Benjamin Lewis, was born in 1981, and they are the proud grandparents of Charlotte Paige Lewis, Jackson Bennett Lewis and Holland Angeline Lewis.

After high school, Jack enrolled in Danville Community College in 1973. Over the next thirty years, he attended four colleges and universities. He was awarded an associate degree in Police Science from Danville Community College, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration from Averett College and master's degree in Sociology from Longwood College in May 2002.

Brother Lewis began his law enforcement career with the North Carolina Department of Corrections in 1974. The following year, he was appointed a police officer for the City of Danville and named "Police Officer of the Year" in January 1977. In 1978, he was employed by the Lynchburg Police Department, serving in a variety of assignments until his retirement as Deputy Chief of Police in 2005. On March 28, 2005, Brother Lewis was sworn in as the Chief of Police for the town of



Apex, North Carolina, and served that community until his retirement in 2013.

Brother Lewis was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in Kent Lodge No. 305 on April 28, 1980. Jack served as Worshipful Master in 1984, 1988 and 2013, and as District Deputy Grand Master for the 38th Masonic District in 2014. He then served the 38th District from

2015-2018 as the District Educational Officer and as Lodge Secretary from 2015-2022. At the Grand Annual Communication in November 2017, Brother Lewis was elected Grand Junior Deacon. His Masonic services since that day have been extensive.

During the tenure of Jack Kayle Lewis, his emphasis will be, "Freemasonry - Building Better Leaders."

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## ADVERTISE!

# Installation of new sign complete



The installation of a new entrance sign for Philpott Lake and Marina was completed earlier this month.

## Miller receives Pilot of the Year award

Andy Miller was selected as Blue Ridge Regional Airport's Pilot of the Year. A pilot for AirCare 3, a twin-engine Airbus EC135 helicopter based at the airport, Miller has flown more than 450 patient flights.

Miller, a United States Army Veteran, has received multiple awards for his service to his country, including

the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

He also is a published author of "Pamir 62: Heroes are Forever," which chronicles the deployment leading up to the events of Sept. 7, 2013, when he and his Afghan trainee were critically wounded by an IED near Shindand Air Base.



Jason Davis (right), managing director at the Blue Ridge Regional Airport, presents the Pilot of the Year award to Andy Miller.



Pilot of the Year award recipient Andy Miller (left) and Jason Davis.

# Youth can apply for 2023 State Fair exhibitor scholarships

The State Fair of Virginia is pleased to announce the 2023 applied scholarship program. Applications are being accepted through Jan. 24, 2023.

Youth who exhibited beef cattle, sheep, meat goats or swine in the Youth Livestock Show at the 2023 State Fair are eligible to apply for 22 scholarships totaling \$36,090.64. Of those 22 scholarships, seven are open to all youth who participated in the 2023 livestock shows or 2023 non-livestock youth competitions. They include a \$1,000 scholarship from the Gatewood Holland Stoneman Endowment, a \$1,000 Farm Credit Scholarship and five \$2,000 youth development scholarship opportunities.

The 15 scholarships for 2023 livestock exhibitors will be offered in three age groups: Juniors (9-12); Intermediate (13-15); and Seniors (16 and older). Groups are based on exhibitors' ages as of Sept. 30, 2023.

Funds allocated for the scholarships represent a portion of the proceeds from the ninth annual Youth Livestock Sale of Champions auction, held Sept. 30; the annual Black Tie

& Boots Gala, held Sept. 22; and general donations to the scholarship program.

Details and applications can be found in the "Scholarship" section of the fair's website at StateFairVa.org. Applications must be completed electronically and received by 5 p.m. on Jan. 24, 2024.

Since 2013, the State Fair has awarded 2,069 scholarships and has given over \$732,500 to support youth education. The fair offers youth more than \$100,000 each year in scholarship funds through 4-H, FFA and vocational competitions and specific equine, fine arts and horticulture competitions.

The 2024 State Fair of Virginia will run from Sept. 27 through Oct. 6. Information is available at StateFairVa.org.

The State Fair is held each fall at its permanent home at The Meadow Event Park in Caroline County and attracts 250,000 fairgoers. The event celebrates the best of Virginia's past, present and future through scholarship initiatives, creative programming and a focus on the commonwealth's agriculture and natural resources industries.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104  
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT  
3160 KINGS MOUNTAIN RD, 3RD FL., MARTINSVILLE, VA 24112  
JAVIER SARABIA LOPEZ v. ELIA PEREZ GARCIA  
AV. BORDO DO XOCHIACA,  
MEXICAN IO LOTE 35  
Esado de Mexico 56353

The object of this suit is to:  
TO OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII  
It is ORDERED that ELIA PEREZ GARCIA  
appear at the above-named court and protect her interests on or before  
FEBRUARY 11, 2024  
DECEMBER 13, 2023

*Janifer Adams*  
[ ] JUDGE [X] CLERK

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

## Jackson receives prestigious award



Doug Jackson was named the Fontaine Ruritan Club's Ruritan of the Year. He is pictured with the plaque in his honor.

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## Sports Schedule

12/27 3:30p Girls Basketball Magna Vista at Salem  
TBA Girls Basketball Martinsville  
(Tournament at Bonner MS)  
4pm Boys Basketball Martinsville  
(Tournament at Bonner MS)

12/28 TBA Girls Basketball Bassett (Tournament at Rockingham HS)  
TBA Girls Basketball Martinsville  
(Tournament at Bonner MS)

TBA Boys Basketball Bassett (Tournament at Rockingham HS)  
TBA Boys Basketball Martinsville  
(Tournament at Bonner MS)  
2pm Girls Basketball North Stokes vs Carlisle

12/29 TBA Boys Basketball Bassett (Tournament at Rockingham HS)  
TBA Girls Basketball Martinsville  
(Tournament at Bonner MS)  
TBA Girls Basketball Bassett (Tournament at

Rockingham HS)  
TBA Boys Basketball Martinsville  
(Tournament at Bonner MS)  
TBA Wrestling Bassett at (Tournament at Abingdon HS)

12/30 10a Wrestling Magna Vista vs multiple schools  
(at Lord Botetourt HS)  
TBA Wrestling Bassett at (Tournament at Abingdon HS)

## Additional funding, waiver slots will enhance support for Virginians with Developmental Disabilities

Gov. Glenn Youngkin recently announced an additional \$300 million over the biennium to fund enough priority one waiver slots for every Virginian with a developmental disability on the waitlist today. There are currently over 3,400 Virginians on the priority one waiting list for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Developmental Disability (DD) waiver slots, meaning these individuals urgently need the services and supports offered by the waiver in a year or less.

Increasing waiver slots and reducing the waitlist has been a key priority in Governor Youngkin's transformational Right Help, Right Now plan and the administration continues to deliver on those commitments today. Earlier this year, Governor Youngkin signed a budget funding 500 new waiver slots, on top of the 600 new slots that were approved in the FY 2024 budget by the General Assembly.

"One year ago, I promised to enhance our support for Virginians with developmental disabilities and their families," said Youngkin. "Today, I am proud to announce we are one step closer to the goal of providing enough priority one slots for everyone in urgent need of services by the end of my term. Through

these improvements, we are giving Virginians with disabilities the supports and services they need to live their best lives in their communities."

"We've heard from Virginians and their families about the important difference a DD waiver can have in their life or the life of a loved one," said Secretary of Health and Human Resources John Littel. "Whether it be paying for in-home care or the kind of assistive technology that can help an individual avoid living in a hospital, nursing home, or other institution, we know that these waivers can change lives."

Waivers can cover services such as medical care, employment support, assistance for community living, behavioral interventions, and other items like medical goods and assistive technology.

DD Waivers are administered jointly by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). Virginia has three waivers for individuals with a developmental disability: Building Independence for individuals 18 and older; Family & Individual Support; and Community Living. There is a waiting

list for these waivers, and the slots are assigned based on urgency of need. Local community services board (CSB) staff assesses each individual that meets the criteria for a waiver to establish their priority needs level of 1, 2, or 3 on the waitlist.

"We have been making plans through Right Help, Right Now to address the priority one waitlist, and we believe community providers will have the capacity to deliver services for this critical infusion of waiver slots," said DBHDS Commissioner Nelson Smith. "Waiting for urgently needed help on a long list is unacceptable – we are working hard to get these families the help they desperately need."

Launched in December 2022, Governor Youngkin's Right Help, Right Now plan is a comprehensive approach to improving Virginia's behavioral health and developmental disability systems. The plan is built on six pillars, sets clear and achievable three-year goals, and includes immediate action to get people the "right help, right now." Addressing the priority one waitlist is a goal of Workstream Three, which seeks to expand the capacity of community services to better serve individuals with mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities.

## Application deadline for assistance approaches

Specialty crop growers are reminded that assistance is available for producers who incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses to obtain or renew a food safety certification through the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) program. Producers can apply for assistance on their calendar year 2023 expenses through Jan. 31, 2024.

The FSCSC assists specialty crop operations that incurred eligible on-farm food safety certification and related expenses pertaining to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar year 2023. FSCSC covers a percentage of the specialty crop operation's cost of obtaining or renewing its certification, as well as a portion of related expenses.

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must be a specialty crop operation, meet the definition of a

small business or very small business; and have paid eligible expenses related to the 2023 certification.

Specialty crop operations may receive assistance for the following costs:

Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification.

Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan.

Food safety certification.

Certification upload fees.

Microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water.

Training

FSCSC payments are calculated separately for each category of eligible costs. A higher payment rate has been set for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning and veteran farmers and ranchers. Details about the payment rates and limitations

can be found at [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety).

The FSCSC application period for 2023 closes Jan. 31, 2024. FSA will issue payments after the application period closes. If calculated payments exceed the amount of available funding, payments will be prorated.

Interested specialty crop producers can apply by completing the FSA-888, Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) application. The application, along with other required documents, can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery or via electronic means.

Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to assist. Visit [farmers.gov/food-safety](https://farmers.gov/food-safety) for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

## Gas Prices to Rise Slightly Before Christmas Holiday

As millions of Americans hit the road for the Christmas holiday, many will reap the gift of lower gas prices, with nearly 100,000 stations offering gasoline at \$2.99 or less. The national average price of gas is projected to be \$3.09 on Christmas Day according to GasBuddy, the leading fuel savings platform saving North American drivers the most money on fuel. Prices over the holiday weekend will have dropped nearly 80¢ per gallon compared to what they were paying earlier this fall, when the national average reached \$3.85 per gallon.

Though a \$2.99 national average seemed to be on the horizon, a sudden surge, propelled by the Federal Reserve hinting that interest rate cuts could

be coming next year and Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea caused oil prices to rebound in the run up to the holidays. While the rise may last a week or two, increases should be fairly mundane, with over half the nation's states likely to stay close to a \$3 per gallon average. Another window of opportunity for lower gas prices could arrive in January or February, as refiners start to liquidate winter gasoline ahead of the transition to summer fuels.

"For the second straight year, we've seen the national average stop just short of falling below the \$3 per gallon mark, though tens of thousands of gas stations around the U.S. will still have prices at \$2.99 or lower," said Patrick De Haan, head of

petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "While most are just trying to get through the holidays, we've been crunching numbers for what motorists can expect for 2024. Our annual Fuel Outlook, to be released in the coming days, offers some hope of lower prices for the year ahead."

GasBuddy projects prices to continue to slowly rise through the end of 2023, with some relief arriving again depending on economic conditions in mid-January, lasting through mid-February. To save more money on gas, GasBuddy recommends motorists sign up for the free Pay with GasBuddy card, which can save users up to 25¢ per gallon on every fill up.

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## Initial unemployment claims trend downward

The number of initial unemployment insurance claims decreased in the latest filing week to 1,669 but remained slightly below typical pre-pandemic volumes experienced in 2019, according to the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (DWDVA).

For the filing week ending December 9, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims for unemployment insurance in Virginia was 1,669, which was a decrease of 276 claimants from the previous week. Continued weeks claimed totaled 12,007, which was little changed from the previous week but an increase of 39% from the 8,620 continued claims from the comparable week last year. An industry was reported for ninety-three percent of continued claims. Of those, over half (51 percent) of continued claims were from professional, scientific, and technical services (1,759), administrative and support and waste management (1,701), manufacturing (1,172), and health care and social assistance (1,071). 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 9, the advance U.S. figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 202,000, a decrease of 19,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 1,000 from 220,000 to 221,000. The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 248,299 in the week ending December 9, a decrease of 46,316 (or -15.7 percent) from the previous week. There were 250,038 initial claims in the comparable week in 2022. Looking at

preliminary data, most U.S. states reported decreases on a seasonally unadjusted basis. New York's preliminary weekly change (-6,581) was the largest decrease. Pennsylvania's preliminary weekly change (-4,362) was the second largest decrease. Texas's preliminary weekly change (-4,333) was the third largest decrease. Oregon's preliminary weekly change (-3,750) was the fourth largest decrease. Virginia had the 18th largest decrease (-527).

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# More state funds could better help English learners, educators say

By Chloe Sutterfield

Capital News Service

The state needs to better fund the education of English language learners, despite recent budget increases, teachers in the field say.

Educators report that English learners have increased needs since the COVID-19 pandemic began, but there are not enough teachers or allocated funds, according to a Joint Legislative Audit and Commission review this year of Virginia's K-12 funding. The commission evaluates state agencies and writes policy analysis at the request of the state legislature.

The state Standards of Quality formula used to calculate staffing does not adequately account for higher needs students. It underestimates the number of second language teachers needed. The state's calculation of teachers needed was 47% of the number estimated as needed by workgroups that contributed to the JLARC report.

The state's ratio is one teacher per 50 English learner students. However, the average school division employed one English as a second language teacher for every 19.5 students. Workgroups still estimated that more teachers were needed.

One workgroup member described "excessively high caseloads" of over 100 English learner students per teacher, according to the JLARC report.

Virginia school divisions serve over 117,000 students whose primary language is not English, or about 10% of the student population, according to the Virginia Department of Education.

ESL program funding

State ESL funding has increased since 2019. The General Assembly appropriated \$106.86 million for ESL this fiscal year to support 20 instructional positions per 1,000 English learner students. Local school divisions provide a match, based on an ability-to-pay index.

There are a couple of factors that play into ESL program funding.

Laura Goren is the director of research and education policy at the Commonwealth Institute, a public policy advocacy group.

Virginia has struggled to fund education for a number of years, especially for English learner programs, Goren said.

"We have not made as much progress in increasing funding for English language learners," Goren said. "I think that's an area where Virginia needs to do a whole lot more and we haven't made the progress we

need to make."

Local governments have to provide funding to make up for inadequate state support, Goren said.

"Some local governments are much more able to pick up the slack and fund the schools than other local governments."

English learners had the most significant drop in state achievement scores of any student groups measured for state reading, math and science tests in 2021, according to the Commonwealth Institute.

But, Virginia ESL proficiency rates had already dropped 11.3% for fourth grade learners from 2009 to 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

The state has just started to lift a cap on support positions that has been in place over a decade.

But advocates say that English learners require more funding per pupil. English learners need up to 2 to 2.5 times more funding than other students, according to a study cited in a VPM report last year.

Jo-el Cox is the VDOE coordinator for English learner instruction. She provides technical assistance to educators, supports state and federal programming initiatives, and relays information on how to best support ESL students.

VDOE offers multiple training opportunities for ESL teachers to learn how to work with their students. They also have tools that help students and their families.

"This year we created a course in Canvas where individuals can log in and learn about the program models," Cox said.

There are five U.S. Department of Education's Language Instruction Educational Program, or LIEP, program modules in Virginia: transitional bilingual, dual immersion, English language development, content with integrated support and newcomer programs.

ESL programs are still recovering from COVID-19, in terms of student growth and student gains, according to Cox.

"I think not having that face-to-face in-person interaction consistently during COVID in some of our school divisions, really didn't do anything to support their learning and further their learning," Cox said.

The importance of ESL programs

More people are coming to the U.S. from other countries, according to Sarah Modrak. She is an LIEP education specialist.

Immigrant naturalization dipped in 2020 with borders and offices closed because of the pandemic. But since 2022, U.S. citizenship has increased by numbers

not seen for more than a decade, according to Pew Research.

Modrak is also the supervisor for the Welcome Center at Tucker High School in Henrico County. The center helps ESL students register for school. Henrico County Public Schools has a variety of resources to support ESL students, Modrak said.

The Welcome Center was created to support students and their families through the transition to a new school.

"It's not easy for a family who has just arrived to kind of go through that registration process, to get all of the paperwork and documents that are required," Modrak said. "So it was a place where we could really spend more time in getting that process started as well."

The Welcome Center was impacted by COVID-19, according to Modrak. When everything moved online the center needed a new registration system so families had more options to get into schools.

Allyn Pritchard is a secondary lead LIEP teacher in Henrico. She teaches in multiple languages to cater to her students' primary language. Pritchard also helps teachers by assisting them with accommodations.

English learner programs look different now as a result of the pandemic, but not all of the changes have been negative. Schools are now able to connect with students and families in more convenient ways, according to Pritchard. She could not say if the changes have been easier or harder -- just different.

"I feel like there are more resources now than maybe we had before COVID to meet students where they are," Pritchard said. "The other thing is to be able to meet with families if we can't see families face to face."

ESL students want to learn, and it is important to have a variety of resources to support them in all aspects of their lives, Pritchard said.

"I definitely find there are more 'aha' moments," Pritchard said. "When students are learning English out of necessity, it's a great sense of accomplishment when a student comes in for the first time and they greet you before you greet them."

VCU InSight journalist Jason Tejada Molina contributed to this report.

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia. VCU InSight is the capstone broadcast news program.

## From China to Appalachia to perform concert in the Piedmont Arts galleries

Piedmont Arts' first event of the new year will be a unique concert with a live painting demonstration. From China to Appalachia, a traditional Appalachian and Chinese folk music trio, will perform in the galleries on Saturday, Jan. 13. There will be a reception before the concert at 6:30 p.m. and the concert will start at 7. Tickets are on sale for \$20 for general admission and \$10 for students at the museum and on PiedmontArts.org. The first act will be comprised of the band's original and beautiful folk arrangements and the second act will feature an improvised piece of music to accompany a live painting demonstration by Z.L. Feng, a Chinese-born and Virginia-based watercolor painter whose works are currently on display in the Piedmont Arts galleries.

GRAMMY Award-winning American roots artists Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer join with Chinese classical hammered dulcimer player Chao Tian in a show that combines music from China to Appalachia and beyond. Instrumentation includes yangqin (Chinese hammered dulcimer), gourd banjo, five-string banjo,

ukulele, guitars, dumbek, cello-banjo and mandolin.

The group's repertoire includes traditional Chinese and Appalachian music as well as contemporary and traditional music from around the world. Unusual combinations explore new arrangements to old music, such as "Dark Eyes." Ukulele, yangqin and guitar create a new pallet for this Russian folk song turned jazz manouche tune. Cathy and Marcy join Chao in singing a Chinese lullaby, "Nani Wan" and Chao easily adds her love of American old-time music to fiddle tunes and songs. From China to Appalachia was borne of a friendship and mutual love of musical exploration experienced in jam sessions that inspired a show speaking to the power of music to connect cultures.

In addition to their performance at Piedmont Arts, From China to Appalachia will be in residency at Piedmont Arts on Friday, Jan. 12, teaching workshops for local high school students. Part workshop, part masterclass, the school programs will give a brief introduction to the instruments the band uses and their backgrounds. The band will demonstrate their musi-

cal traditions separately and then come back together to show how they fuse their eclectic instruments and ideas for both arranged and improvised music.

Z.L. Feng, the artist who will be featured in the musical program, currently has an exhibit up at Piedmont Arts. Feng grew up in Shanghai, China, where he began painting at age seven. Before coming to the U.S. in 1986, he received his BFA from Shanghai Teacher's University. He completed an MFA at Radford University in 1989 and went on to teach there for more than 30 years. Feng's watercolors and illustrations have been exhibited in juried shows around the world. An artist-signature member of the American Watercolor Society, the National Watercolor Society and the Pastel Society of America, Feng has won more than 200 national and international awards and has been recognized at numerous watercolor exhibitions. The exhibit will close following the performance on Jan. 13, so the concert will be the last chance to see his ethereal watercolor landscapes in the Piedmont Arts galleries.

## Tips to kick the common cold

The common cold is appropriately named. According to the American Lung Association, adults get an average of two to four colds per year while children typically get between six and eight colds annually. Colds indeed seem an inevitable part of life, and that may be even more so during winter.

Though colds can strike at any time, Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that the increased incidence rates of colds during cold seasons like fall and winter may be attributable to the increased amount of time people spend indoors. Extra time indoors means individuals spend more time in tight quarters with other people, which is notable because colds are highly contagious. There might not be a way to avoid colds this winter, but Johns Hopkins notes there are some strategies that can help treat a cold and potentially lessen its severity.

- Hydrate. A concerted effort to stay hydrated can help your body fight the cold and potentially make you feel better by easing congestion. When a cold strikes, make sure you drink plenty of the right fluids, which include water, decaffeinated tea with lemon, and broth. Caffeine can cause dehydration, so avoid coffee and caffeinated teas and sodas. Throat-soothing warm liquids like tea and broth can serve dual functions for those whose colds include a sore or dry throat.

- Gargle with salt water. Though it may seem like an old wives' tale, gargling with salt water can effectively alleviate the pain and swelling of a sore throat. Johns Hopkins recommends a saltwater gargle with about one teaspoon of salt per cup of warm water.

- Utilize a humidifier. Johns Hopkins notes that cold hair holds less moisture than dry air. Dry air can worsen symptoms associated with sore throat, so a humidifier can be used to make indoor air more moist and therefore more soothing to a sore throat. Johns Hopkins also reports that dry nos-



Johns Hopkins notes there are some strategies that can help treat a cold and potentially lessen its severity.

trils are more vulnerable to viruses, so employing a humidifier in winter may help your body more effectively fend off cold viruses.

- Get plenty of rest. Sleep helps to strengthen the body's immune system, making it more effective at fighting off and overcoming the cold virus. Johns Hopkins recommends adults get between eight and 10 hours of sleep when they come down with a cold.

- Avoid unproven "treatments". Some cold treatment techniques are ineffective at combatting cold viruses. Johns Hopkins notes that antibiotics are designed to treat bacterial infections, not viruses. In addition, there is little evidence suggesting zinc and vitamin C have any impact on cold viruses.

Colds may be inevitable, but knowing what to do when a cold strikes may help reduce the severity and length of the common cold.





## Fun ways to enjoy the start of winter

Winter begins on December 21, 2023, and ends on March 19, 2024. Many people lament the arrival of winter, perhaps thinking the colder temperatures and shorter hours of sunlight will compromise their chances to have fun. Even though particularly chilly thermostat readings or stormy conditions can hamper some plans, when people dig deeper they may find that even the coldest days present opportunities for enjoyment.

When winter begins, the following activities can make for an entertaining way to celebrate the arrival of the season.

- Build a snow creation. Use the first significant snowfall of the season to organize a snowman, snowwoman, or snow-animal-making event or contest. Waterproof gloves are a necessary piece of equipment, as are buckets for moving snow, shovels, carving and shaping tools (which can be plastic cutlery), and accessories to dress up the final product.

- Go sledding on the best hills. Sledding is a popular wintertime activity that doesn't require too much equipment. Sleds can be purchased at sporting goods stores or toy stores. Sledders of all ages should consider wearing helmets to protect against injury if they will be traversing especially steep hills.

- Host a winter block party. Many cities and towns across North America participate in WinterFest events, which run the gamut from food and craft festivals to sporting

events. Individuals can take cues from these type of activities and plan neighborhood festivals right on their streets. Neighbors can wheel out their fire pits or utilize outdoor propane heaters to keep spots cozy. Hot cocoa and cider stations and warm treats can keep everyone from feeling too cold. Electric slow cookers can keep everything from soups to chilis to stews warm and participants can enjoy a buffet of hearty foods.

- Visit an ice rink. Whether a rink is indoors or outside, ice skating is a quintessential wintertime activity. Skaters of all skill levels can take to the ice and enjoy some exercise and laughs. Check local rink schedules to take advantage of open skate times when hockey games or practices are not dominating the ice.

- Mark the winter solstice. The winter solstice, also known as the start of astronomical winter, is the shortest day of sunlight on the calendar. It occurs when either of the Earth's poles reaches maximum tilt away from the sun. In the Northern Hemisphere, this occurs on December 21, 2023. Because there will be only roughly seven hours of daylight, take steps to make the fact that the sun will set at its earliest a little easier to swallow. Kids can run around outdoors with glow sticks, while adults can deck their homes in twinkle lights if they are not decorated for Christmas. Lanterns, campfires and candles can be lit, and everyone can gather outdoors to chat and socialize.

## Drive Sober campaign on a mission this season

Virginia's Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over DUI enforcement and public education campaign is on a mission to keep Virginia's roads safe from drunk drivers this holiday season. Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over combines high visibility law enforcement efforts with research-based outreach to remind Virginians to plan for a safe ride home after drinking.

"Tragedies from drunk driving are 100% avoidable, yet year after year families and friends mourn the loss of their loved ones due to this negligent behavior," said Gov. Glenn Youngkin. "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over is working to prevent drunk driving and protect Virginians this holiday season, which is why law enforcement will be ramping up patrolling and checkpoints across the Commonwealth over the next couple weeks. We're asking everyone to help our efforts by planning a safe ride home if they've been drinking."

Between Thanksgiving 2022 and New Year's Day 2023, 432 Virginians were injured and 23 Virginians lost their lives because of alcohol-related crashes, representing a 77% increase in alcohol-related crash fatalities from the previous holiday season.

The Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign is particularly concerned with reaching males between the ages of 21 and 35, who are statistically at the highest risk for drunk driving. During the 2022 holiday season, 91% of alcohol-related crash

fatalities were males. The campaign's latest local public opinion survey found that 63% of young men admit to driving after having a few drinks, getting in a car with a driver who has been drinking, or both.

"We're thankful for the law enforcement officers who often risk their lives to protect Virginia's roadways and healthcare workers who work tirelessly to save lives in the aftermath of drunk driving tragedies," said Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Gerald Lackey. "We need to eliminate alcohol-related crashes at the source. If you plan on drinking, don't get behind the wheel."

Between December 14, 2023, and January 1, 2024, 145 Virginia law enforcement agencies will participate in the holiday wave of Virginia's Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign. Law enforcement officers will conduct 646 individual saturation patrols and 71 sobriety checkpoints across the Commonwealth.

In addition, Virginia State Police personnel will work through the holiday as part of Operation CARE – the Crash Awareness Reduction Effort. CARE is a nationwide, state-sponsored traffic safety program that aims to reduce traffic crashes, fatalities and injuries caused by impaired driving, speeding, and failing to use occupant restraints. Virginia State Police's participation in the program will begin December 22, 2023, and run through January 1, 2024.



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# Annual Shoes For The Soul project

Partnering with local churches, businesses & individuals, the 23rd annual Shoes For The Soul pur-

chased more than 130 pairs of brand new tennis shoes for children in Henry County schools.

Debra Buchanan, Horsepasture District Supervisor, started the project in 2000.



Rich Acres Elementary School, (left to right), Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate, Holly Haygood - Rich Acres School Counselor, Beth Nance - Grace Baptist Church (sponsor), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor.



Sanville Elementary School (left to right) Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Esther Johnson - Fort Trial Christian Church (sponsor), Kristen Fridal - Sanville Elementary School Counselor, Becky Hale - Fort Trial, Peggy Campbell - Fort Trial, Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate, Ann Yale - Fort Trial, Ethylene Tatum - Fort Trial.



Carver Elementary School (left to right), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Kathy Davis - Mt. Olive East Christian Church (sponsor), Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate, Jane Eggleston - Fieldale Baptist Church (sponsor), Harriet Copeland - Fieldale Methodist Church (sponsor), Pastor Randy Aldridge - Hillcrest Baptist Church (sponsor).



Fieldale Collinsville Middle School, (Left to Right), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Melody Hall - New Day Church (sponsor), Deborah Vaughn - Teacher @ FC Middle School, Elizabeth Clifton - Teacher @ FC Middle School, Barbara Mabe (sponsor), Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate.



Stanleytown Elementary School, (Left to Right), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Rebecca Phillips - Phillips Group - (sponsor), Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate.



Campbell Court Elementary School, (Left to Right), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Brian Glidewell - BR Superior Concrete - (sponsor), Cheryl Carter - BR Superior Concrete - (sponsor), Joel Bunn - Campbell Court Elementary School Counselor, Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate, Tammy Teegan - Walmart Associate.



Meadowview Elementary School, (Left to Right), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate, Pam Hopkins - Mercy Crossing Church - (sponsor), Charity Brimmer - Meadow View Elementary School Counselor, Tammy Teegan - Walmart Associate.



Axton Elementary School - Laurel Park Middle School - Mt. Olivet Elementary School, (Left to right), Debra Buchanan - Horsepasture District Supervisor, Jill Thompson - Walmart Associate, Tiffanie Hairston - Laurel Park Middle School Counselor, Daphne Bullock - Axton Elementary School Counselor, Reba Lindsay - Mt. Olivet Elementary School Counselor, Pastor Robert Smith - Jerusalem Christian Church DOC - (sponsor), Dr. Valenica Eggleston Clark - Christ Temple Holy Church - (sponsor), Leonard Boyce - Jerusalem Christian Church DOC - (sponsor), Pastor Leonard Thompson - Christ Temple Holy Church - (sponsor).

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