

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, April 27, 2024

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Carlisle School girls' basketball team was honored with a resolution by the Henry County Board of Supervisors for their second consecutive state championship.

Board approves budget, rejects funding style change

By Taylor Boyd

Before approving the fiscal year (FY) 2024-25 budget, the Henry County Board of Supervisors denied a request from the school board to receive its funds in a lump sum instead of the traditional categorical form.

At its Tuesday meeting, the board approved a total county budget of \$207,741,852, including \$21,635,583 in county funds for the school division for its total budget of \$72,670,916.

The real estate tax rate will remain at \$0.55 per \$100 of assessed value, with personal property and machinery and tools at \$1.55 per \$100. The motor vehicle license fee is \$20.75 for cars, \$12 for motorcycles, and \$12 for trailers.

The budget includes \$4,713,769 for general governmental administration

costs and \$4,031,343 for judicial administration. Public safety's budget was \$28,660,842, and Public Works received \$5,126,205.

Health and Welfare services - like the local health department, group home services, Area Agency on Aging, and others - are allocated \$979,966. Education services like community colleges received \$62,414 and parks, recreation, and other cultural services received \$3,046,665.

The budget allotted \$2,693,765 to community development and \$84,414,449 to nondepartmental services like employee benefits, contingency service, transfers to other funds, and the school capital - one percent sales tax.

Other funds include \$11,222,203 to

(See Board p. 2)

Budget talks at the center of council meeting



Greg Maggard presented budget proposals to the Martinsville City Council.

By Jessica Dillon

The budget and proposals from various departments were among the topics discussed Tuesday by Martinsville City Council members.

Greg Maggard, the managing director of operations and infrastructure, presented the Public Works budget proposal of \$2,782,986.

Council member Lawrence Mitchell broached the placement of "Welcome to Martinsville" signs.

"There hasn't been a whole lot of maintenance done on equip-

ment. The personnel is not there, the budget is not there," Maggard replied.

Refuse Collection is requesting \$2,136,950, and is expected to help pull in more revenue for the city.

"I would love to see us put on eight new accounts per year," said Maggard.

Street Maintenance is requesting \$4,442,559 and is planning to pave new roads.

"You said we are internally capable of doing two miles of road. Is there a way to upgrade our

(See Budget p. 3)

Infinity Acres Ranch unveils slate of summer programs

By Jessica Dillon

Infinity Acres Ranch, a 502(c)3 educational non-profit located in Ridgeway, recently released a sampling of summer activities. The events are open to the community, and aim to raise money for the ranch.

The first is a 5k Ranch Run on May 4. The route loops around the ranch, offering participants interactions and photo ops with animals. Early registration is \$25, and registration on the day of the race is \$30.

Funds raised through the event will benefit Friends of Infinity Acres Ranch education activities and animal-based assisted therapy.

"We have people dress up as Star Wars and have animals out on the trail, the runners go through the woods, they go through the animal pastures, and you can't do that anywhere else," said Laura Steere, who owns and operates the ranch along with her husband, Rick Steere.

An Animal Adventure Camp, for ages six to 17, will be held throughout July, with the first session set for July 8. The program's cost is \$300, but qualified families can sign their children up for free. The day camp offers animal experiences, crafts, and games for children.



Laura Steere poses with one of Infinity Acres's many residents.

A pond concert series also will be offered this year, and the Steeres plan to attend community events, such as the recent Books and Bunnies Easter celebration held at the Smith River Sports Complex. The ranch will also be putting a gem mining truck on the road.

The two also discussed the ENABLE program, which serves adults with intellectual disabilities by allowing them to come work on the ranch each day. Participants use animal husbandry to provide a per-



Laura Steere with guest of honor Demi Spina at the Special Prom.

son-centric approach, and work on their fine motor skills, teamwork, and self-esteem.

The end goal is to enhance participants' quality of life, Laura Steere said of the daily cheer of ENABLE participants. "At Infinity Acres, with these people, I feel safe, and I feel loved, Team Infinity."

The couple also talked about the success of the Special Prom. Laura Steere said the crowd at the venue - which was the Virginia Museum of Natural History - was at capacity.



Rick Steere with guest of honor Cathy Ginter at the Special Prom.

She noted several steps were taken to make the event comfortable, such as calming areas for prom attendees and ensuring that the guests of honor were the first to have their choice of food at the event. Volunteers came together to ensure the night went off without a hitch.

The prom "isn't about our volunteers or chaperones to sit around and have a meal. This is all about our special guests of honor," Laura Steere said.

(See Infinity Acres Ranch p. 3)



(Left to Right) Lucy Shumate, Walter Thompson, Laura Thompson, Howard Huff, John Thompson dress in costume for High Tea.

Bee Flight Festival takes wing

By Jessica Dillon

Although the Reptile Festival was the centerpiece of a celebration held April 19 and 20 in Martinsville, the inaugural Bee Flight Festival hosted by Bee City USA was in a class of its own.

"We are trying to do all we can to educate people on bees, beekeeping, and how important bees are to humans and to the environment as a whole," said Mark Prescott. Bee City included beekeepers educating attendees about the importance of pollinators.

A live hive was displayed, and signs were placed around the events to offer information about bees. "We've seen a lot of

kids, and we are trying to open their eyes to how important bees are," said Prescott.

Prescott also provided information about 'Hives for Heroes,' a program for veterans interested in beekeeping.

Participants "will learn how to become a beekeeper over a year. At the start of the year, the mentor will then gift the veteran a hive of bees." Interested veterans can check out the program at www.hivesforheroes.com.

Bee City set up a scavenger hunt to encourage families to search out several locations across Starling Ave., where the other events were taking place.

(See Bee Flight p. 2)

Parents file federal lawsuit after son's in-custody death

By Taylor Boyd

The parents of Bradley S. Hensley, a former inmate at the Henry County Adult Detention Center, filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging their son died while an inmate in 2022 due to negligence.

The two count, 24-page suit, was filed by Robert and Robin Hensley on April 12 in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia. As administrators of their son's estate, Hensley's parents are asking for a jury trial to determine compensatory and punitive damages, with the amount to be determined at trial, as well as attorney fees and costs.

The first count of the filing alleges state law negligence/gross negligence/willful and wanton negligence and wrongful death. The second count alleges a Fourteenth Amendment Violation, or in the alternative, an Eighth Amendment Violation.

The suit states that on Aug. 2, 2022, Brad Hensley, 42, entered the Henry County Adult Detention Center (HCADC) as a pre-trial detainee on charges of petty larceny and possession of burglary tools.

Upon entry, he "immediately and promptly informed defendants of a serious, potentially fatal adrenal disorder and strict regimen of prescribed medications" that he needed to take daily to prevent a life-threatening, adrenal crisis, the filing alleged.

Brad Hensley had been diagnosed with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), also known as "salt wasting" disorder, according to the filing. The National Institute of Health describes the condition as a hereditary disorder of the adrenal glands, which produce hormones that affect metabolism,

(See Lawsuit p. 5)

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 FOR MORE UPDATES



Board

(cont. from page 1)



The board approved a proclamation declaring May 11-17 as National Peace Officers Memorial Week in Henry County.

the Henry-Martinsville Social Services, \$14,538,800 to the self-insurance fund, \$2,850,125 to the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), \$6,465,965 to the Children's Services Act (CSA) fund.

In an April 18 letter from attorney Michael Gardner, of Woods Rogers Vandeventer Blacks PLC, the school board formally requested the board of supervisors consider transitioning the funding of the school board's annual operating budget from an allocation by category to lump sum funding.

At the meeting, Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, asked County Administrator Dale Wagoner and Gardner to cite some of the pros and cons of the proposed funding change before a decision was made.

Wagoner said he was not familiar, nor does he have experience, with anything besides categorical funding.

"Without adequate time to do my research, I can't deliberate the pros and cons of the practice of lump sum versus categorical. I have some hypotheticals. I think I know, but I've not done my research prior to this meeting," he said.

Gardner said the Code of Virginia gives boards of supervisors the option to choose the funding option.

"For the school board, this approach (of lump sum funding) is something that we would like to try. I would like to emphasize this is not a one time you vote and then it will be this way forever. We can try this for a year," he said.

Gardner said one advantage the school board sees is the budget is a little tighter this year, and if there's an issue that requires funding to be moved across classifications, it cannot be done without the approval of the board of supervisors if its funded categorical.

"For instance, the maintenance budget's going to be pretty tight this year from what I understand. If there were to be a significant maintenance issue that requires more funding than what's in the maintenance budget, or a series of them, we can't even begin to fix it unless we get your permission to do so by pulling money from other classifications," he said.

Gardner said lump sum funding would allow flexibility for the school board to respond to problems quickly.

"One of the aspects that I think is important to convey is we still have to be fully transparent. We can't spend more than what you have authorized," he said.

The superintendent would still have to provide a detailed estimate across the categories under the Code of Virginia. Expenditures would still have to be posted and could be reviewed by the board of supervisors, he said.

"It's all still out there. This is a little bit more simply about giving the school board the tools to be flexible and address needs as they arise, especially where the money is a little bit tighter

and we may be looking at having to dig into certain classifications to fund others, depending on what circumstances arise," he said.

A potential con to the proposal, Gardner said, is the county losing the opportunity to deny the school board the ability the move funds around classifications in the midst of the year if the school board had a history of asking for changes to classifications or moving funds to different classifications.

"My understanding is that hasn't been the history of the interactions between the school board and the board of supervisors in categorical funding. But that is the con. You lose a degree of immediacy if you don't like what we're asking for you to do," he said.

Jim Adams, chairman and of the Blackberry District, asked if there was ever a time when the board didn't transfer requested funds through the proper channels.

In his research, Gardner said he did not have any citable examples.

"The concern is more, I think, the flexibility and timing aspect of it," he said.

Joe Bryant, vice-chairman and of the Collinsville District, said he didn't know of a time the supervisors failed to fund anything the school board requested.

"Our budget is uncertain right now, especially when it comes to schools. We just don't know exactly what we're going to get," he said, adding a budget adjustment is likely once the state approves its budget.

Bryant said Tuesday was the first time he'd seen the request. "I've had no time to do any background research on lump sum funding," he said.

Dillard asked if this issue could be revisited later once a decision is made.

County Attorney Goerge Lyle said he didn't see why the decision couldn't be amended at a later date.

"During the year, it might be logistically difficult, but I don't think there's a legal obstacle to amending the budget in any of the ways," he said.

Travis Puritt, of the Ridgeway District, asked what other localities use lump sum funding.

Gardner said he believes Danville and Richmond use lump sum funding, while Pittsylvania County and Roanoke use categorical fundings.

Henry County Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administrative Services Dr. Benjamin Boone said categories in a lump sum budget.

"You still have the instructional budget, a maintenance budget, a technology budget, but the lump sum funding, it just enables us to move categories. The categories aren't going anywhere. It will all still be transparent, it's on all of our board meeting documents," he said.

"I am listening, and I am glad that



Schools Superintendent Dr. Amy Blake-Lewis and Attorney Michael Gardner, of Woods Rogers Vandeventer Blacks PLC, spoke about lump sum funding and categorical funding.

the communication is opening and good communication with the board of supervisors and the school board. Again, I just want to say that I am listening and looking for more information," Pam Collier, of the Reed Creek District, said.

Debra Buchanan, of the Horsepasture District, said she believes being able to see the categorical funding and the transfer of money gives the public a little bit of an idea of where things are being moved and how.

"It's not to say that the school board is going to move anything around with lump sum that we don't agree with or have an opportunity to, but I think that with categorical it gives us a little bit more transparency," she said.

Schools superintendent Dr. Amy Blake-Lewis said the county can always see how the school board moves money as it transacts all of its business in MUNIS, the same platform used by the county.

"While we can't see what the county does and how you move money, you are always able to see how we move money. So, there is transparency there," Blake-Lewis said. "As to the question of the transparency also, anytime we would move money it would be publicized as part of our monthly board meeting, so the transparency is still going to be there."

Blake-Lewis said the school board is simply asking for permission to receive its funds as a lump sum, which would give the school board the authority and power to move it around as "we see fit in terms of a timeframe."

In other matters, the board:

*Voted against a motion 2-4 made by Collier to fund a request by Carlisle School for \$20,000 to cover 40 percent, or 120 students who live in the county, with the funds used to help cover the cost of a School Resource Officer (SRO).

*Approved the items of consent.

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

*Heard the monthly delinquent tax collection efforts report.

*Heard an update from the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp.

*Accepted a resolution honoring the Carlisle School girls' basketball team for their second consecutive state championship.

*Approved the proposed Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) secondary road plan.

*Approved a resolution recognizing the 150th anniversary of Mayo Missionary Baptist Church.

*Appropriated an additional \$4,279 to the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office for the purchase of Adobe software and office equipment, using state asset forfeiture funds.

*Appropriated an additional \$12,000



The 150th anniversary of Mayo Missionary Baptist Church was recognized by the board.

received from the Harvest Foundation and \$10,513 from the board's contingency fund to buy an entrance gate for the Monogram Foods Smith River Sports Complex.

*Awarded a \$74,961 contract to Carolina Recording Systems to replace the 911 recording system, with funds from a Virginia Department of Emergency Management grant and the FY24 capital improvement program.

*Approved an additional \$250,000 to the School Nutrition budget for the Summer Food Services Program. Funding for this program is provided in the form of a reimbursement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

*Approved the transfer of \$1,495,000 from FY24 funds to purchase various capital items.

*Approved an additional \$215,000 to address unsafe structures and property clean-up throughout the county. These funds were received as reimbursement from the demolition of unsafe structures, and from funds in excess of taxes on property sales.

*Approved a request to rezone approximately 1.68-acres in the Blackberry District for the applicant to place a double-wide manufactured home on the property.

*Approved a request to rezone approximately 0.344-acres in the Blackberry District for the applicant to place a manufactured home on the property.

*Approved a request to rezone approximately 0.366-acres in the Horsepasture District for the applicant to place an office on the property.

*Approved a request to rezone approximately 0.989-acres in the Iriswood District for the applicant to sell the property for the placement of a double-wide manufactured home.

*Reappointed Paul Kennedy and Lillian Holland to the Henry-Martinsville Social Services Board for four-year terms scheduled to expire on May 31, 2028.

Bee Flight

(cont. from page 1)

The Martinsville YMCA hosted Healthy Family Day, while Piedmont Arts hosted Earth Day Family Day.

The Beegins With You charity hosted an event to benefit children's mental health.

Once the scavenger hunt was completed, participants could enter into a drawing.

"Some kids were more interested in the bees than in the reptiles," Elizabeth Bailey, the United Way's Communica-

tions and Outreach Coordinator, said.

The Reptile Fest, an annual event hosted by the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH), attracted 841 visitors on Friday and 2,227 on Saturday. The total represented an uptick from the 2023 fest. In the museum parking lot, tables were set up with live displays, including hands-on interaction with several reptiles. Children were encouraged to learn more about reptiles and the exhibits already on display at the museum.



T'keyah Hines with a live hive.

"The main point of having Bee City here was to have a new vendor and to give them a ready-made audience," said Robbie Hendrix, events manager for the VMNH. Hendrix was delighted with the inclusion of Bee City and said the bees were a great addition to the reptile festival.

"Just having them here at our Reptile Festival is really nice," Hendrix said.

Youngsters were the main focus of the festivities, with opportunities to craft



Boucher Janet makes crafts at the Gravely-Lester Art Garden for children.

at the Gravely-Lester Art Garden, with additional activities and some healthy snacks offered nearby.

The final event of the day was High Tea, an Alice in Wonderland-themed charity event put on by Beegins With You.

"It's money for the community," Walter Thompson said of the event that began two hours after the rest of the events closed and attracted more than 50 guests.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Meetings

Thursday, May 2

Henry County School Board School Board Monthly Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Summerlin Room County Admin Building, 3300 Kings Mountain Rd, Martinsville

Events

Saturday, April 27

Opening Day of Martinsville Farmers' Market, 7:30 a.m. to noon, 65 West Main Street, Martinsville.

Free Shred Day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Martinsville Speedway, 340 Speedway Road, Ridgeway.

Auditions for House Band Music Revue, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., TheatreWorks, 44 Franklin Street, Martinsville

Drug Take Back Day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Martinsville Fire Department, 65 W Church St., Martinsville.

Bingo Fundraiser, 4 p.m., Heritage Event Center (former Bassett Country Club), 1230 Oak Level Road, Bassett. Proceeds to benefit the expansion of the Bassett Library. Door prizes; Silent Auction items; & concessions.

Get Fit Kickoff, 10 a.m., Martinsville High School Dan Greene Memorial Stadium, 351 Commonwealth Blvd E, Martinsville.

Sunday, April 28

Woodland Plants of the Area: History, Ecology, and Uses, Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum, 1 E Main St, Martinsville.

Auditions for House Band Music Revue, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., TheatreWorks, 44 Franklin Street, Martinsville.

Monday, April 29

Smith River Singers under the direction of Dr. Pamela Randall, present 'Love is in the air'

2024 Spring concert, featuring Beth Chapma, pianist and the select ensemble, Still Water, 7 p.m., Galilean House of Worship, 5078 A L Philpott Hwy, Martinsville.

Friday, May 3

Sounds on The Square Opening Night with the Andy Burnette Trio, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1 East Main Street, Martinsville.

Saturday, May 4

Storytime, 10 a.m., Spencer-Penn Center, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer.

Monday, May 27

Henry County Memorial Day Ruck 22, 10 a.m., 1094 Virginia Ave, Martinsville

ONGOING

Bassett Train Station Farmers' Market will be open on Tuesdays, 5-7 p.m., April 30 through September 24.

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.

The Bassett Ruritan Club hosts breakfast on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 6 - 10 a.m. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children under 12. All you can eat sausage, fried bologna, eggs, cooked apples, sausage gravy, made from scratch biscuits, made to order pancakes, coffee and juice. Dine in or carry out.

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.

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.

Neighbors in the Know. Join staff and volunteers in the Hylton Library at the Spencer Penn Centre for activities and socializing on the first and third Monday of each month. A different presentation and activity weekly, followed by a way to get you moving. The program is an hour long and activities for children will be provided. Every third Monday, 10-11 a.m., a music program will be provided. This free program is perfect for all ages.

Budget

(cont. from page 1)

equipment or people and get reimbursed by the state to do such a thing," Vice Mayor Aaron Rawls asked.

"It's contracted out," said Maggard. "We are going to go out to bid in probably August of this year for fiscal year 2025. So that we can get twice as much."

Questions about reappropriations also were raised.

"Do we have a limit for each department within their budget when there is carry-over?" Mayor LC Jones asked.

"You have to reappropriate it. There's no such thing as real carryover," City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides said. "There's no limit to what you can carry over, except what you want to. It's not really carry-over, it's reappropriation in the next fiscal year."

Director of Telecommunications Mike Scaffidi addressed the budget for the telecommunications department, and noted his goal for the year is visibility.

"A lot of people know us. They know what we are doing, and they're looking forward to having us in their area," Scaffidi said.

MiNet, Martinsville's internet service, currently has a total of 373 customers, including both residential and business accounts.

"We believe that initially, we are going to penetrate 40 percent of the market," Scaffidi said. The department's proposed budget is \$2,280,031. The major increase in the budget for telecommunications is due to salaries and training.

Durwin Joyce, director of the Elec-

tric Department, presented a request of \$24,435,068.

"We have pretty much depleted the fund balance, and we've got to work on building that backup, and part of it is making sure that the rates are breaking," Ferrell-Benavides said in response to a coming rate increase.

Deputy Registrar Sara Workman noted her department's requested budget of \$221,189, with a planned new equipment purchase due to a company buyout of DemTech.

Fire Chief Dan Howell presented the fire department's requested budget of \$3,414,507. A major new expense is coming from the way that drug boxes are handled in the state.

"For decades, we've been able to just go to the hospital and just exchange the box. Free of charge," said Howell, but that process is changing. The EMS Council is currently looking into purchasing agreements to help reduce the cost of buying drug boxes.

The council scheduled two public hearings on the upcoming budget.

"You have to schedule a public hearing, which is basically a week in advance, and you cannot adopt the budget to the week following that," Ferrell-Benavides said. The first hearing will be held on May 9, with the second reading scheduled for May 16. "There will not be a tax rate increase."

The city school budget also is a work in progress due to the state working on the budget.

In other matters, the council:

*Heard a presentation from Keith Holland, director of Community Development, about murals for the second meeting in a row.

Rawls expressed concern about mural upkeep. "All the cost, material, and upkeep is encoded to the property owner," Rawls asked.

"Yes, there will be no cost associated with the city," Holland said.

Mitchell commented on a complaint about a mural that separates 'Martins' from 'Ville' already painted in the city.

"Why is Martinsville separated" and why is it "not one word," Mitchell asked.

*Voted to remove building height restrictions on buildings.

"Building heights have been historically tied to how big of a ladder truck you had in your fire department," said Holland. "With current building designs fire safety standards, you do not need to have the kind of restriction." The current height restriction clashes with the proposed Holiday Inn Express.

The restriction also will remove handicap space requirements. "We really don't need to spell that out. That's in the state building code," said Holland. Zoning amendment procedures would also see a change.

*Heard a presentation during the work session from Ariel Johnson.

*Recognized National Correctional Officers and Employees Week.

*Recognized National Public Safety Telecommunications Week.

Infinity Acres Ranch

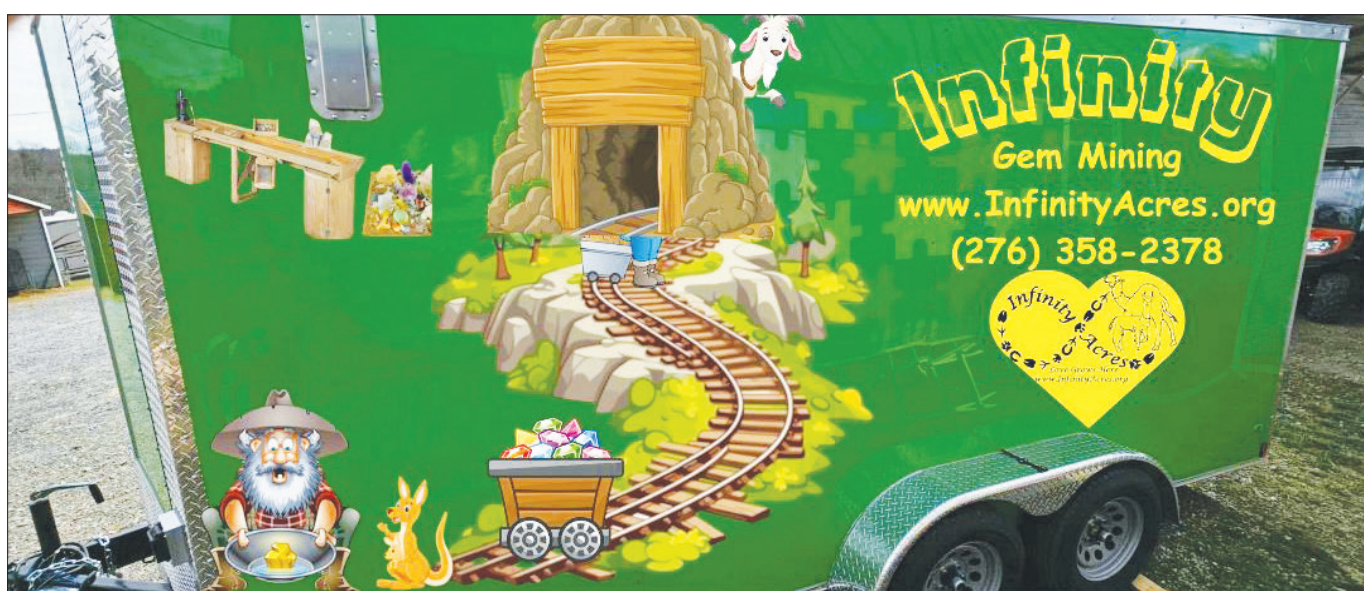
(cont. from page 1)

The ranch offers programs that specialize in helping adults with disabilities. In addition to the various programs, tours also are available. Ranch hours for schools, organizations, and churches are also available. Infinity Acres also offers mobile exhibits and entertains birthday parties for those looking for an experience that will travel.

Family members and health professionals interested in signing up can do so by calling (276) 358-2378. Transportation will be provided by Infinity Acres Ranch, and the program will be daily from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The ranch is currently accepting volunteers to help with both the ENABLE program and the care of ranch animals. A volunteer form can be found on the website, and interested parties will need to complete a screening process that includes a background check.

The ranch also hopes to fill three part-time zoo caretaker positions.



Infinity Acres's upcoming gem mining truck. (Contributed photos)

See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

OPINION

An unintended end to privacy

We are bound by chains and haunted by boogymen wherever we go these days, and there is no shaking them.

It's a factor of technology, which is causing the various aspects of our lives to overlap in ways that range from a hassle to complete mortification.

This has affected me drastically since I have left my old job after 18 years and moved somewhere new.

In the stability and isolation from some new developments that long-term employment brings, I had never encountered "OneDrive."

OneDrive snuck into my life last winter when I bought the first new home computer I had purchased in many years. I had no idea what it was, other than a real pain in the neck. When I'd save documents or pictures, they wouldn't end up where I had expected they should on the computer. I lost things, seemingly forever, then I found them when I least expected to.

After several sessions of this I caught on that there was something called "OneDrive" that was always popping up as the default when all I wanted to do was save things on folders on my desktop. You have to go around your butt to get to your elbow to save things where they should be saved instead of losing them in the ether with OneDrive.

I still didn't know what OneDrive was, though, until I was working a summer job. There I was, wearing my suit, hair fixed properly, typing away professionally, and going into the computer's Pictures files to get some work-related photos when up popped personal pictures of all sorts that had no place in a workplace.

That was alarming. How did they get there?

Another time, again in the office, I went for a business report and came upon a file full of personal papers that should not be out of the house at all, much less in a shared office.



Holly Kozelsky

What in the world was going on?

It was OneDrive, that Big Brother that haunts us wherever we go, crossing lines from personal to business and back again, two worlds that should not have that overlap.

OneDrive is the end to privacy as we know it.

It was eerie and unsettling to have lost that privacy and have everything jumbled up as it should not be. I didn't understand the black magic that caused it.

Until one day it occurred to me: During the first few days of my summer job, I did not have company email set up for me yet on the company computer, so I had to use my personal email. It was using my personal email on my work computer that let the demon of OneDrive into the office and comingled all my stuff.

OneDrive went on to haunt me in the job I have now, executive director of the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society, though at least this time I recognized what was going on when it happened. The cause was the same, too: I had been using my personal email for the job before I had gotten signed in to the museum's email account.

So far, I haven't found a way to go back to the old way of just saving things onto the computer they are meant to be on as the default. I deactivated OneDrive on my home computer, but even so, every time I go to save something, OneDrive still comes up as the default and it takes maneuvering through several layers of confusing folders just to get to where it used to go automatically.

The age of technology means everything follows you around everywhere, all the time.

Academy Day

Last weekend, I hosted my annual Service Academy Day at the New River Community College in Dublin.

I enjoy these events as they provide great opportunities for high school students, parents and educators to learn about Service Academies, Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), and other programs.

I take pride in allowing students in Southwest Virginia to have access to opportunities to admirably pursue a career in military service.

The Ninth District is home to many patriotic men and women, and we also have a rich tradition of service.

A major piece of our history involves the D-Day invasion of Normandy during World War II. When Company A stormed Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944, there were 35 soldiers from Bedford. By the end of the campaign, 23 would be dead, making Bedford, Virginia, the town with the highest per capita deaths.

Bedford commemorates this sacrifice by true Virginia heroes with its National D-Day Memorial.

Bedford is Virginia's only WWII Heritage City.

I am honored that it is in the Ninth District.

Given our rich heritage, I host Service Academy Days to tap into the patriotic spirit of our youth. Families and children travel from across the Ninth District to attend and get more information. Some even attend from other states.

Invited guests typically include representatives from the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Virginia Military Institute, Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, Virginia Tech ROTC, and Emory & Henry ROTC.

The representatives from these programs consist of current and former cadets, admissions officers and ROTC directors and students who actively engage with interested individuals and discuss their options for a college military experience.

As a Congressman, I am permitted to fill five vacancies over a four-year period at each Academy, with the exception of U.S. Merchant Marine.

While U.S. Merchant Marine is not a popular selection for many in Southwest Virginia, I can fill ten vacancies each year there.

Once the U.S. Merchant Marine program is completed, the participant becomes eligible for commission into any branch of the U.S. military, provided that they are in good standing.

ROTC programs are another option. They are great at providing leadership and physical training exercises for students while they continue their academic studies at their university or college.



Morgan Griffith
Representative

Some historians trace the roots of ROTC programs to the Morrill Act of 1862, also known as the Land Grant Act of 1862. This was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln.

At the time, there was a stark decline in the numbers of trained engineers present in American colleges and universities.

The Land Grant Act laid the groundwork for a national system of state universities. The bill granted 30,000 acres of public land to each state for the establishment of institutions of scientific learning. The land grant institutions reciprocated by offering military tactics courses.

Virginia Tech maintains a strong record in this space. Their campus features a War Memorial Court, dedicated to the eight VT alumni who are medal of honor recipients. Close to the War Memorial Chapel is a marble cenotaph with their names etched into it.

VT sponsors a ROTC program, as well as VT Corps of Cadets.

The mission of the VT Corps of Cadets program is to nurture and create great leaders. The four-year program draws upon exercises that target teamwork, character and problem-solving skills. This is designed to develop leadership qualities among our brave servicemen and women and shape future leaders within our military.

The VT Corps of Cadets prides itself in giving back to the community. In the 2022-2023 academic school year, cadets collected over 2,000 hours of community service.

I was proud to hear that my alma mater, Emory & Henry College, relaunched their own Army ROTC program in 2018 after nearly a century.

As of 2018, Emory & Henry became one of only five private institutions in Virginia to offer an ROTC program.

Another Virginia private institution that comes to my event is VMI.

VMI has an extensive recruitment network. VMI excels in showcasing their opportunities and highlighting their illustrious history of producing exceptional military talents, the likes of whom include former U.S. Secretary of Defense, George C. Marshall, Jr.

If you or someone you know is interested in applying to attend one of our academies, please contact Josh Hess at josh.hess@mail.house.gov or (540) 381-5671.

Call my offices with questions, concerns, or comments: Abingdon, (276) 525-1405; Christiansburg, (540) 381-5671, or via email at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

Super Crossword

SOLVING DA PUZZLE

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| ACROSS | 48 Pre-TiVo machine | 88 Raconteur's offering | 3 Ladd or Alda | 41 High-voltage transformer | 76 Bigger than med. |
| 1 Theater district | 49 — Lanka | 90 "... and — it all over again!" | 4 Pot cover | 42 Cloudland | 77 Suffix with Ecuador |
| 7 Butcher's cleaver | 50 Comparable in humility to one particular sorority member? | 91 Young boy | 5 Petit four and Sally Lunn | 43 Peppermint — (York treat) | 80 Groove for receiving the end of a board |
| 14 Winter melon variety | 53 Quick glance | 93 Complained petulantly | 6 Piercing spot, often | 44 "Bring it on!" | 81 Not worth — (valueless) |
| 20 Replacing, with "of" | 55 Not durable | 94 Lion's hunting recollections? | 7 Prefix with air | 45 Nuggets' org. | 83 Perplex |
| 21 Privy person | 57 Groups of four | 102 River in central Jersey | 8 Coop up | 46 Unusual | 84 Structured frameworks |
| 22 Ill-willed sorts | 58 Underscore | 103 Certain shade | 9 Fireplace receptacle | 47 "Stillmatic" rapper | 88 Big fuss |
| 23 Arranged cheddar brands in order of sharpness? | 61 Law school beginner | 104 Certain shade | 10 Secure with string, say | 50 Prized Chinese vases | 89 Belittle, informally |
| 25 Arctic jacket | 62 Think up | 109 Reversible fabric used during operations? | 11 Skilled | 51 The "E" of FEMA: Abbr. | 90 Ill-fated flier of myth |
| 26 Capitol fig. | 64 Big Steinway played by your father's father? | 105 Chinese chairman | 12 Ballot marks | 52 Big jumps | 91 Actor Joseph Gordon- — |
| 27 Collectible cartoon frame | 69 Condo policy about animals | 108 More asinine | 13 Afire | 54 Eisenhower's successor | 92 "Cocoon" co-star Don |
| 28 Per each unit | 70 Dime, e.g. | 109 Reversible fabric used during operations? | 14 Lon of old horror films | 56 Politico Trent | 94 Bluenoses |
| 29 Set to move forward, as a car | 71 Passover feasts | 113 Rich, filled pastry | 15 Classic root beer brand | 59 Floor- scrubbing robot brand | 95 Charged toward |
| 30 Boldly courageous after January 1? | 73 Canonized seventh-cen. pope | 114 Daughter on "Bewitched" | 16 Raconteur's offering | 60 Old photo tint | 96 Poet's Muse |
| 34 Second shoot of a scene | 76 Hotel bar | 115 And others, to Caesar | 17 Eagle's nest | 62 Carding at a club, e.g. | 97 Casual eatery |
| 37 Nevertheless | 78 Tug sharply | 116 Rages | 18 Cry to a prima donna | 63 "Well, shoot!" | 98 Best players |
| 38 "— daisy!" | 79 Wrapping a wound on the noggin? | 117 — & Gamble | 19 Interrogator | 65 Held back | 99 —Croatian |
| 39 Paleolithic period | 82 Sit-up targets | 118 Confirm officially | 20 Part of REO | 66 Adjective follower, often | 100 Sorcery |
| 41 Letter-shaped track in metalworking | 85 Chou En- — | 119 — | 24 Put into office | 67 Comedian Kevin | 101 Family mem. |
| 43 Attach, as to a lapel | 86 2003 #1 hit for OutKast | 120 Nasser's feud. | 30 Ex-veep Quayle | 68 Very fancy | 105 African nation |
| | 87 Artist's stand | 121 Large trucks | 31 "Science Guy" Bill | 72 Did the slopes | 106 "Not likely!" |
| | | 122 Apropos of | 32 Island dance | 73 "Quit talking!" | 107 Thumbs-up |
| | | | 33 Heroic poetry | 74 No-frills | 109 Motor oil additive brand |
| | | | 34 Answers an evite, e.g. | 75 Set (down) | 110 Nasser's feud. |
| | | | 35 "And so on and so on": Abbr. | | 111 River of Bern |
| | | | 36 Bullfight hero | | 112 Yoga surface |
| | | | 40 PC image file | | |

Letters To The Editor

Trump & Abortion

This is the opinion page — my opinion is that election years are the worst. Most citizens haven't a clue how the American Republic functions, but they know what they are mad about.

Republicans are currently mad that Donald Trump appears to be waffling on the abortion question. In a recent video President Trump said that abortion was a state issue, and that he is opposed to abortion with three exceptions: rape, incest, and when the mother's life is in danger.

It does not matter what a sitting, or hopeful, President thinks about abortion once the Supreme Court rules on the issue. A President cannot undo a Supreme Court ruling. During the state of the Union President Biden said, "If Congress tries to pass a national ban on abortion, I will veto it!" The room roared for his tough stance. Well, a President's veto can be vetoed by a two-thirds vote in both House and Senate.

I view abortion the same way I do gun crimes: it's a heart problem. In the same way criminals will always manage to get guns, women will always find a way to abort (kill) the child if they want to. Don't get me wrong: I'd rather it be criminalized. However, legislation against a thing always creates a "black market". Prohibition did not work, gun control does not work, nor will criminalizing abortion. How do we fix the problem then?

First, we must agree that there's a problem. Recently Bill Maher said, "Abortion is kind of murder — I'm just ok with it." I'm asking how to fix a

problem, but Maher does not even see it as a problem.

When a man and woman have sex during the woman's ovulation, his sperm and her egg make? Scar tissue? A clump of cells? No, a baby. When the woman realizes she's pregnant the OBGYN searches for? A heartbeat. What has a heartbeat? A living thing. This 'thing' was made by two humans so it must be a human, and if 'it' has a heartbeat then it's a 'living human'.

When paramedics arrive at an accident they check for heartbeats. Why? To see if the person is living. The baby in the womb has a heartbeat, therefore the baby is alive, and the premeditated decision to take innocent life is murder. Again, Bill Maher admits abortion is murder - he's just ok with it.

America does not have an abortion problem, it has a fornication problem. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1Corinthians 7:2). The CDC reported that in 2021 87% of abortions were performed on unmarried women.

If you don't want a baby, then wait till marriage. If you don't want to wait until marriage, then wear 'protection'. If you don't want to wear 'protection,' then get on the pill. If they can't do that much then I question their IQ. An education problem in America? Yes. A moral problem in America? Absolutely.

Caleb Robertson, Martinsville

Sports Schedule

Following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of April 29-May 4:

4/29 4:30p Girls Tennis Bassett at Magna Vista
 4:30p Girls Tennis Halifax County at Martinsville
 4:30p Boys Tennis Magna Vista at Bassett
 4:30p Boys Tennis Martinsville at Halifax County
 4:30p Girls Soccer Carlisle at Virginia Episcopal School
 7pm Girls Soccer Patrick County at Bassett
 7pm Boys Soccer Bassett at Patrick County

4/30 4:30p Girls Tennis George Washington at Martinsville
 4:30p Boys Tennis Martinsville at George Washington
 4:30p Boys Tennis New Covenant at Carlisle
 4:30p Girls Soccer Roanoke Catholic at Carlisle
 4:30p Baseball SMLCA at Carlisle
 5pm Baseball Martinsville at Bassett
 6pm Baseball Magna Vista at Tunstall

6pm Softball Magna Vista at Tunstall
 6pm Girls Soccer Bassett at Martinsville
 7pm Girls Soccer Tunstall at Magna Vista (Smith River Complex)
 7pm Boys Soccer Martinsville at Bassett
 7pm Boys Soccer Magna Vista at Tunstall
 4:30p Girls Tennis Halifax County at Bassett
 4:30p Girls Tennis Magna Vista at George Washington
 4:30p Boys Tennis Bassett at Halifax County
 4:30p Boys Tennis George Washington at Magna Vista
 5pm Baseball Bassett at Patrick County
 5pm Baseball Martinsville at Magna Vista
 4:30p Boys Tennis Eastern Mennonite at Carlisle
 4:30p Baseball Fishburne Military at Carlisle
 5pm Track Bassett at Mecklenburg County
 5pm Track Magna Vista at Mecklenburg
 5pm Track Martinsville at Mecklenburg County
 5pm Girls Soccer Carlisle at New Covenant

6pm Girls Soccer Bassett at George Washington
 7pm Girls Soccer Mecklenburg County at Magna Vista (Smith River Complex)
 4:30p Baseball Carlisle at MSA
 4:30p Girls Soccer The Covenant at Carlisle
 5pm Baseball Magna Vista at Mecklenburg County
 5pm Softball Magna Vista at Mecklenburg County
 5:30p Baseball Martinsville at Halifax County
 6pm Baseball Bassett at Tunstall
 6pm Softball Tunstall at Bassett
 6pm Girls Soccer Tunstall at Bassett
 7pm Girls Soccer Halifax County at Martinsville
 7pm Boys Soccer Bassett at Tunstall
 7pm Boys Soccer Magna Vista at Mecklenburg County
 7pm Boys Soccer Halifax County at Martinsville

OPINION

Your discount CEO

Did you know that the average S&P 500 CEO makes nearly \$20 million per year? Did you know that these same CEOs are making almost 300 percent as much as their average employee?

There's a market to be tapped here, and it's high time someone did it.

Hi, I'm Ben R. Williams, and I'm formally announcing my availability as an affordable CEO for YOUR high-profile corporation!

Now look, I get it: you're on the board of a powerful company and you wanted to bring in the very best CEO that money can buy, so you paid a pile of cash to some clean-cut old white dude in a \$10,000 suit to sit in a chair and look out a window all day. Sure, everybody's doing it, but isn't it time for a better way?

I may not have a history of running companies, but if you make me the CEO of your company, I can make you two iron-clad guarantees:

Guarantee 1: I will only charge you a one-time fee of \$50,000. I have never seen \$50,000 in one place before so this will be very exciting for me.

Guarantee 2: There is absolutely nothing that the average CEO can do that I cannot also do.

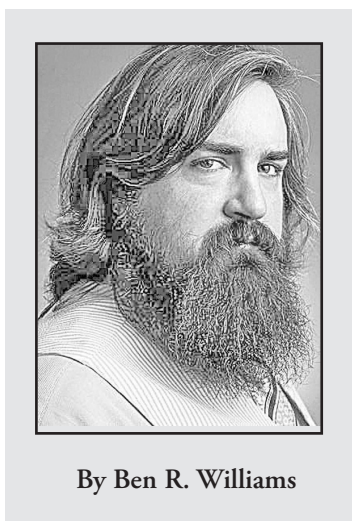
Don't believe me? Consider the following: Elon Musk has made literally tens of billions of dollars running Tesla. You know who else can come up with an idea for a hideous truck that rusts overnight and gets totaled if it drives through a deep puddle? That's right, me. Give me a 12-pack of beer and a sketch pad and I'll bang out two ugly death trucks in a weekend for you. You can take that to the bank!

Dave Calhoun received \$33 million in stock awards last year for being the CEO of Boeing, a position he's held since 2020. You know who else can ruin the reputation of a once-respected aeronautics corporation? That's right, me. And I bet I can do it in less than four years if I put my back into it.

If you select me as your next CEO, I stand by the following iron-clad promises (not to be confused with the iron-clad guarantees):

Promise 1: I will not require a golden parachute in the event that I'm let go. Why do these CEOs always get paid handsomely after ruining a company? That's not a rhetorical question, I genuinely don't understand why that happens.

Promise 2: I WILL wear a suit if requested. It will be purchased from my favorite haberdashery, Suit City. I will buy two suits if



By Ben R. Williams

they are running a sale. Once I'm wearing the suit, you can take a photo of me while I do my best to look important, and then you can post that photo on your website or whatever.

Promise 3: If someone attempts to save the lives of children who are trapped in a cave, I will NOT call him a pedophile on Twitter. In fact, the only thing I will post on Twitter is that your company is doing great work and I'm proud to be its CEO. Elon Musk has proven that airing your toxic opinions on social media is a good way to get people to hate your product; in contrast, I will be a bland blank slate that occasionally uses the word "synergy."

Promise 4: I will NOT actually do anything unless specifically asked. Nothing does more damage to a company than a CEO with an exciting new idea; I will not be bringing any of these to the table. Just tell everybody I said to keep up the good work.

"But Ben," you ask, "all of this sounds great, but how do you plan to make ends meet with a flat rate of just \$50,000?"

That's easy: I'm in the volume business. Based on my analysis, I believe I can serve as the acting CEO of anywhere from 2 to 2,500 companies simultaneously, as long as they don't mind if I'm wearing the same suit in another company's website photo. As your discount CEO, your board and employees will be relieved to know that I'm not going to be in the office every day micromanaging every little decision and embarrassing you on the national stage. In fact, I won't ever be in the office at all. But everyone can take comfort in the fact that somewhere, there's a distant, aloof figure with a hand on the tiller.

That reminds me, I'm also announcing my availability as a discount religious deity.

Nominees for NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2025 announced

NASCAR announced the 15 nominees for the NASCAR Hall of Fame's Class of 2025 and the five nominees for the Landmark Award for Outstanding Contributions to NASCAR.

Greg Biffle, the first driver to win both the NASCAR Xfinity Series and NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series championship joins the Modern Era ballot alongside legendary engine builder Randy Dorton and three-time NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series champion Jack Sprague. "Mr. Modified" Ray Hendrick and three-time Convertible Division champion Bob Welborn join the Pioneer ballot for the first time. In addition, Larry Phillips was nominated to the Pioneer ballot after appearing on the Modern Era ballot the maximum 10 times.

Two Modern Era candidates and one Pioneer candidate will be elected as the Class of 2025. The Pioneer ballot honors those whose careers began more than 60 years ago.

Dr. Dean Sickling, who invented the SAFER (Steel and Foam Energy Reduction) barrier which has saved countless lives, joins the Landmark Award ballot for the first time. The Landmark Award honors those who made significant contributions to the growth and esteem of NASCAR.

The NASCAR Hall of Fame Voting Panel will meet in person to discuss and vote for the Class of 2025 and Landmark Award on Tuesday, May 21. The winners of a NASCAR.com Fan Vote (www.nascar.com/halloffame) will comprise the final ballot tallied. The Fan Vote is currently open and will close on May 19 at 12 p.m. ET.

The Modern Era Ballot and Landmark Award nominees were selected by the Nomination Committee, which consists of representatives from NASCAR and the NASCAR Hall of Fame, track owners from major facilities and historic short tracks. The Honors Committee, largely comprised of all living Hall of Famers, Landmark Award winners and Squier-Hall Award winners, selected the Pioneer Ballot.

Following are the NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2025 nominees and Landmark Award nominees:

Modern Era Ballot

Greg Biffle, 2000 NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series champion and 2002 Xfinity Series champion

Neil Bonnett, won 18 times in the NASCAR Cup Series including consecutive Coca-Cola 600 victories

Tim Brewer, two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion crew chief

Jeff Burton, won 21 times in the NASCAR Cup Series including the Southern 500 and two Coca-Cola 600s

Randy Dorton, built engines that won nine championships across NASCAR's national series

Carl Edwards, winner of 28 NASCAR Cup Series races and 2007 Xfinity Series champion

Harry Gant, winner of 18 NASCAR Cup Series races, including two Southern 500 victories

Harry Hyde, 1970 NASCAR Cup Series championship crew chief

Ricky Rudd, won 23 times in NASCAR Cup Series, including the 1997 Brickyard 400

Jack Sprague, three-time NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series champion

Pioneer Ballot

Ray Hendrick, won over 700 times in NASCAR Modified and Late Model Sportsman

Banjo Matthews, built cars that won more than 250 NASCAR Cup Series races and three championships

Ralph Moody, two-time NASCAR Cup Series owner champion as mechanical genius of Holman-Moody

Larry Phillips, first five-time NASCAR weekly series national champion

Bob Welborn, three-time Convertible Division champion

Landmark Award

Alvin Hawkins, NASCAR's first flagman; established NASCAR racing at Bowman Gray Stadium with Bill France Sr.

Lesa France Kennedy, NASCAR Executive Vice Chair and one of the most influential women in sports

Dr. Joseph Mattioli, founder of Pocono Raceway

Dr. Dean Sickling, inventor of the SAFER (Steel and Foam Energy Reduction) barrier

Les Richter, long-time NASCAR executive oversaw competition, helped grow the sport on the West Coast

Lawsuit

(cont. from page 1)

blood sugar regulation, blood pressure and other essential functions, according to online information.

Regular doses of Prednisone and Fludrocortisone are used to manage the condition, according to the lawsuit, which stated that Hensley was required to take the prescribed medications twice everyday.

Although Hensley had explained his condition during his intake at the center, the suit alleges that his medications were delayed and denied, and he "became sick with adrenal crisis and

attendant physiological distress, could not eat, and decompensated into plain helplessness and deathly illness.

"Despite pleas by Brad, his family, fellow detainees, and others," the filing alleges that the defendants "ignored his distress and refused him the necessary medication and eventual emergent care that he needed," as well as refusing "the assessments, monitoring, and care required by the standards of care and their own protocols.

"Even worse, one or more of them fabricated false records to

conceal the breaches, and they failed to keep other contemporaneous records of Brad's medical condition and events while he was a pretrial detainee," the lawsuit alleges. "As a result of multiple breaches of their duties" Brad Hensley died "a predictable, painful, but easily preventable death in the jail" on August 6, 2022.

Retired Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry, Sheriff's Lt. Dean Shumate, and Wellpath, LLC, are named as defendants, along with eight healthcare workers - Sarah Eves, PA, Christopher

Adkins, RN, Deborah Damron, LPN, Megan Adkins, RN, Raven Martin LNA, Jacqueline Hall, LNA, Kassie Vanhousen, RN and Sierra Glenn, LNA. The center contracts with Wellpath to provide medical care to inmates.

Damron was indicted by a Henry County grand jury on March 20, 2023, on one count of involuntary manslaughter in connection with the incident. She was arrested April 5, according to Henry County Circuit Court records. Her trial date is expected to be set on May 28.

CLASSIFIED

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Boyd selected as new Assistant Principal at Patrick Henry Elementary School



Boyd with her children Bailey Young (middle) and Gavyn Young. Stephanie Boyd

Stephanie Boyd was selected as the new Assistant Principal of Patrick Henry Elementary School, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. Boyd will take over the role from Linda Littlejohn, who is retiring at the end of this school year after a distinguished career in education.

Cameron Cooper, principal, said was excited to welcome Boyd to the team.

"Mrs. Littlejohn has been a valuable partner and friend to me while we served as administrators together," Cooper said. "The Assistant Principal is a vital part of our student success as well as maintaining a positive culture and climate for students and staff. I look forward to working with Ms. Boyd to continue to support our positive school climate and push students to higher successes."

Boyd brings 16 years of experience with the Martinsville school division to her new position. She started as a 5th grade teacher at Albert Harris Elementary in 2008 before serving in various roles at Martinsville Middle School, including 6th grade science and English teacher, 7th and 8th grade English teacher, and most recently as the Instructional Coordinator since 2020.

"I am extremely excited and honored to be joining the Patrick Henry Elementary School family as Assistant Principal," said Boyd. "I look forward to working alongside the principal, teachers, staff, students, and families to build upon the school's culture and traditions of academic excellence to ensure the success of every child."

A veteran educator committed to student achievement, Boyd was named Martinsville City Schools' District Teacher of the Year for the 2019-2020 school year. She holds a bachelor's degree from Ferrum College, a Master's in Curriculum & Instruction from Averett University, and a master's in administration and Supervision from Hampton University.

"I am thrilled to have Ms. Boyd joining the Patrick Henry Elementary family," said Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley. "With her impressive academic background and her passion for educating our students, I know she will do an excellent job in her new role."

Originally from Rocky Mount, Virginia, Boyd has made Martinsville her home since 2010 after being drawn to the engaged community during her first teaching job at Albert Harris Elementary.

"Throughout my career here, I have consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to building relationships, student achievement, academic excellence, and the overall well-being of our students," Boyd said. "Being an educator is my calling and passion - there is no greater honor than uplifting, inspiring, and empowering the minds and hearts of our future leaders."

Social Security Scams

One of the most popular ways for criminals to steal money and sensitive information is by impersonating a trusted source — often a government agency. According to the Federal Trade Commission, victims of government impostor scams reported theft of nearly \$617 million in 2023.

A frequently impersonated agency is the Social Security Administration. Here's what you need to know to spot and stop a Social Security impostor scam.

Criminals rely on getting their target into a heightened emotional state, such as fear, panic or excitement. They know high emotions can block access to logical thinking. Social Security impostors tend to use fear (your number has been suspended, call immediately) or excitement (you are eligible for a higher monthly benefit).

If you get a call claiming to be from Social Security and you are not already engaged with them on a specific matter, hang up. Concerned?

Look up the number to your local office at ssa.gov/locator and find out if the agency has been trying to reach you.

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

LEGAL

**TOWN OF RIDGEWAY
FY 2024-2025
Proposed Budget**

Pursuant to Code 15-2506 of the 1950 Code of Virginia as amended, and Federal Regulation 31 CFR51.14, a public hearing will be held by the Ridgeway Town Council on the 2024-2025 proposed budget to receive citizen comments and suggestions on Tuesday May 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Ridgeway Mayors Office, Ridgeway, Virginia. Town Council will consider any public input received prior to taking final action on the budget. Copies of the proposed budget are on file in the Office of the Mayor at 806 Main Street, Ridgeway, VA.
Craig A. O'Der, Jr.
Mayor

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1069 SICKLE COURT, MONETA, VA 24121



Chapter presents living history in Spencer

The Col. George Waller chapter was invited to set up a living history demonstration at the 13th annual Pig Cooking held April 20 at the Spencer-Penn Centre in Spencer, Virginia. The event was the first time the chapter had attended in several years and the first living history demonstration performed by the chapter since before the pandemic. The demonstration was well received by young and old alike, attracting many visitors and hopefully potential members.

The demonstration included several soldiers' tents set up, many musket firing demonstrations, and colonial attire for kids to try on. The chapter hopes to make this an annual event as the event was well attended by the community. Chapter members attending and pictured included President Jarred Marlowe, 1st VP Andy Doss, 2nd VP Jud Leviner, W.C. Fowlkes, Arlen Doss, Gene Reamey, Mark Leviner, and soon to be inducted Donn Shumate.

Celebrate Earth Week with DRBA

The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) is offering events to celebrate Earth Week.

On Friday, April 26, DRBA will offer the Tails on Trails Sunset Hike at Lake Reidsville, 630 Water Works Road, Reidsville, N.C. at 6 p.m.

The first Tails on Trails Hike this year is sponsored by Purina. Bring your hiking shoes and your furry friend for some

paw-tastic smells and views. All dogs need to be leashed for the hike.

Light refreshments will be provided for both people and pets and some free trail pet accessory giveaways.

You don't need to have a pup to come out for the sunset hike, but will need to feel comfortable around a lot of furry kids.

See more at

www.henrycountyenterprise.com

Cruise In to start for the season on May 18

The Bassett Cruise In season gets underway May 18, from 3 to 7 p.m. in Downtown Bassett.

The events continue on the third Saturday of each month through October.

Sponsors for this season are Rooster's Automotive Refinishes, Daniels Auto Glass & Tint, Lee's Tire & Wheels, Bryant Radio, B99.9, and Papa's Pizzeria.

Kiwanis' annual fundraiser set for Saturday

The Kiwanis Club of Bassett will hold its annual Ticket Drawdown event on Saturday, April 27, at the HJDB Event Center in Bassett. Tickets are available by contacting any Bassett or Martinsville Kiwanis Club member.

Funds raised at the event are used to provide community service projects for children.

One example is an annual service project that is in line with the Kiwanis's mission to serving youth and children in the area. During this project, a book is selected to be read to Kindergarten and First Grade students at the three area elementary schools - Stanleytown, Campbell Court, and Sanville.

This year, three Kiwanis Club members were joined at each school by Dr. Pam Cobler, who is a local children's book author and a former teacher at Campbell Court. Dr. Cobler joined the Kiwanians to read her book "Manners Matter: Kuddle Kitty Book 1."

Dr. Cobler said it was a joy to be

back in the classroom with these young students and be involved in this program. "The Kiwanis Club does a lot for this community. I appreciate the service of the Kiwanis Club and I was pleased to support this project. It was a joy to read my book and see happy children, and to see the school where I loved my Campbell Court Family."

In addition to reading the book, the Kiwanis Club donated a copy of the "Manners Matter" book to each classroom and also provided the teachers with a selection of books to allow each of the students to take home two new books.

Kiwanis Club of Bassett President Craig McCroskey said, "The children were so excited to see Pam's picture on the back of the book and realize she was the author. Pam's classroom and teaching experience were so helpful in engaging the students to enjoy the story and practice good manners. We appreciate the community support that makes this possible."

NC3 National Signing Day prompts local students to commit

The 10th annual National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3) National CTE Letter of Intent signing day was held on Thursday, April 18, with 45 local students participating at Patrick & Henry Community College, which hosted the event.

Twenty-eight students from Henry County and Martinsville schools signed letters of intent at P&HCC's MET Complex. These students will go on to pursue additional training and careers in the fields of HVAC, Industrial Electronics Technology, Motorsports Technology, Power Line Worker, Residential/Commercial Electrician, and Welding.

Seventeen students from Patrick County Schools signed letters of intent at P&HCC's Patrick County site. These students will go on to pursue additional training and careers in the fields of Motorsports Technology, Power Line Worker, and Welding.

Additionally, Patrick County senior David Hernandez was



Dr. Greg Hodges, P&HCC president, congratulated David Hernandez, a Patrick County High School senior who was among 20 students around the nation to receive the \$1,000 Skilled Trades - 3M Transformational Scholarship.

one of 20 students from around the nation awarded the \$1,000 Skilled Trades - 3M Transformational Scholarship.

Before signing their letters of intent, students heard words of motivation and encouragement from Michael Scales, Business Analyst for Longwood University Small

Business Development Center for MHC and Patrick County

and Keith Simpson, Director for Mid-Atlantic Education with Bluegrass Educational Technologies.

P&HCC president Dr. Greg Hodges welcomed students to the PHfamily and congratulated them on their commitment to the future.

Regional employers were available at both events to discuss career opportunities with their companies.

Online Psychology Graduate Program Listed In Forbes

Ferrum College's graduate psychology program was featured in Forbes Advisor among the "Best Online Psychology Master's Degrees Of 2024."

Forbes Advisor stated their education editors are committed to producing unbiased rankings and informative articles with their ranking methodologies using data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Ferrum College offers a total of six graduate programs, all of the programs are 100% online, and are now accepting new applicants for Fall 2024.



The Ferrum College Master of Science in Psychology can be completed in one year and features courses in ethics, research methods, and applied statistics. Students choose to complete a thesis or practicum and the curriculum is designed to help graduates advance in a variety of professional settings by applying an understanding of their colleagues and clients.

The College recently added the Master of Science in Clinical and Counseling Psychology where faculty guide

students through completing requirements to become Licensed Psychological Associates (LPAs*) or Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs*) in multiple states. Designed as a 24 month or 60 credit online program, the MS CCP as well as all Ferrum Graduate and Online programs feature small learning cohorts with supportive faculty with diverse research interests who truly know their students and mentor them throughout the curriculum.

Assistant Professor of Psychology Dr. Ryan Cooper says these characteristics as well as affordability are why he believes the program was selected for the Forbes Advisor listing.

"We are committed to fostering a supportive learning community with the flexibility of asynchronous design. Ferrum College has been providing such accessible learning opportunities for over one hundred years, and our online programs continue that legacy through online learning that still feels like a family. Start earning your degree with us in Fall 2024."

	Henry County STATE PRIMARY ELECTION Tuesday, June 18, 2024	
THIS IS A REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ELECTION FOR:		
Member U. S. Senate		
<small>SAMPLE BALLOTS ARE AVAILABLE</small>		
AN APPROPRIATE ID IS REQUIRED TO VOTE AT THE POLLS		
Please verify your voter registration, polling place, and VALID ID before voting! vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation		
POLLS OPEN 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.		
Tuesday May 29, 2024: Last day to register to vote or change your voter registration information for this election. Mailed voter registration applications must be sent to the Henry County Voter Registration and Elections Office postmarked on or before the deadline.		
IN-PERSON ABSENTEE (EARLY) VOTING		
Henry County Registrar's Office located at the Henry County Administration Building 3300 Kings Mountain Road Martinsville, Virginia 24112 Monday - Friday, May 3-June 14, 2024: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturdays, June 8, and June 15, 2024: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturday, June 15, 2024: Last day to vote an In-Person (early) Absentee Ballot at the Henry County Registrar's Office		
MAIL ABSENTEE VOTING		
Request an Absentee ballot application: vote@henrycountyva.gov or https://www.elections.virginia.gov/citizen-portal/ Absentee ballots ARE counted		
Friday, June 7, 2024: Last day to request an absentee ballot by mail. Applications must be received in the Registrar's Office by 5 p.m.		
Tuesday, June 18, 2024: Election Day ALL DROPPED OFF Absentee voted ballots must be returned to the Registrar's Office by 7 p.m. (Virginia/Eastern Standard Time) to be counted.		
Friday June 21, 2024: ALL Absentee voted ballots that are returned via mail must be post marked on or before election day and received in the Registrar's Office by NOON (Virginia time) to be counted.		
BALLOT DROP OFF STATIONS		
Monday - Friday, May 3 - June 15, 2024: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturdays, June 8 & 15, 2024: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Henry County Registrar & Elections Office Henry County Administration Building 3300 Kings Mountain Road #103 Martinsville, Virginia 24112 On Election Day Only: All polling places and the Henry County Registrar's Office		
Dawn Stultz-Vaughn, Director of Elections & General Registrar 3300 KINGS MOUNTAIN ROAD #103 MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA 24112 TELEPHONE: 276-634-4698 FAX: 276-632-8278		
Email: vote@henrycountyva.gov www.henrycountyva.gov/178/Elections-Registrar		

NCI's STAGS Team 1262 celebrates successful conclusion of season

STAGS Team 1262, New College Institute's (NCI's) FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) team, announced the successful conclusion of its 2024 competitive season. The team showcased exceptional talent, dedication, and innovation throughout the season, culminating in a series of remarkable achievements.

The STAGS ranked 35th in the FIRST Chesapeake District out of 109 competing teams this season from across Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. This is a significant increase compared to the 2023 season where they placed 59th.

The STAGS competed in two regular season competitions this season: Blacksburg, VA from March 1 – 3, and Glen Allen, VA, from March 15 – 17. They were awarded the Team Spirit Award and Safety Award in Blacksburg, and they were awarded the Gracious Professionalism Award in Glen Allen.

FIRST Robotics describes these awards as follows: The Team Spirit Award "celebrates extraordinary enthusiasm and spirit through exceptional partnership and teamwork furthering the objectives of FIRST."

The Gracious Professionalism Award "celebrates outstanding demonstration of FIRST Core Values such as continuous Gracious Professionalism and working together both on and off the playing field."

The Safety Award "recognizes the safety practices, training, and achievements on and off the field."

The STAGS ended their season by competing in the FIRST Chesapeake FIRST Robotics Competition District Championship in Chesapeake, VA from April 3 – 5, and finished 29th out of 55 teams.

Trevor Martin, Head Mentor of the team, said, "My first season as Head Mentor for the STAGS has been incredible. This team, comprised of 87% rookie members, learned and executed the skills necessary to build a robot competitive enough for District Championships, all in less than 8 weeks.

"Each student has put in extraordinary amounts of time and effort this season and I am very proud of all of them. I'd like to thank my students, their families, our sponsors, and our host organizations for giving me the opportunity to work with this wonderful group. Always remember, FEAR THE DEER," he added.

STAGS Team 1262 includes 15 high school students from across the region:

- Adam Aguilar Jr. - Martinsville High School - 11th Grade
- Aidan Amos - Home School
- Charley Amos - Home School
- Jordan Draper - Martinsville High School - 10th Grade
- Evan Hodges - Bassett High School - 9th Grade
- Jonas Hollingsworth - Home School
- Aidan Hood - Martinsville High School - 11th Grade
- William Morrison - Magna Vista High School - 12th Grade
- Jun Olea - Martinsville High School - 10th Grade
- Elijah Pickett - Martinsville High School - 12th Grade
- Alan Sanchez-Garcia - Bassett High School - 9th Grade
- Jeras Travis - Magna Vista High School - 10th Grade

Abigail Walton - Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School - 8th Grade

Ronald Walton - Bassett High School - 9th Grade
Connor Wotring - Magna Vista High School - 9th Grade

The STAGS have two graduating seniors this year, Elijah Pickett and William Morrison, who will continue their education in STEM.

"I plan to attend Virginia Tech to obtain a degree in Mechanical Engineering," Pickett said. "I have been with the STAGS for 5 years, and through the program, I have learned how to design, prototype, and build robots, something that I never would have seen myself doing beforehand. I have also had the opportunity to meet with people from all over the state at both competitions and through visits from members of the VA government, even meeting Governor Glenn Youngkin."

Morrison said he plans to attend Virginia Tech "to further study Mechanical Engineering. I have gained a lot of experience through robotics, such as learning CAD, a basic understanding of CNC, learning about machines, and a whole variety of tools and even meeting Governor Glenn Youngkin. With the help of robotics and 'The STAGS' I now have the opportunity to pursue my dreams and have a chance to make the world a better place."

Students and mentors are now being recruited for the 2025 season. Participation on the team is free due to grants and sponsorships. For more information, visit <https://newcollegeinstitute.org/degrees-and-training/k-12-programs/robotics/>.

P&HCC Productions Opens 9 to 5

Patrick & Henry Community College and P&HCC Productions invite the community to experience 9 to 5, The Musical, the college's 41st production to date. 9 to 5 is the story of three unlikely friends who take control of their office and learn there is nothing they can't do, even in a man's world. Based on the seminal 1980 hit movie, this show brilliantly captures the journey of transformation that the office environment undergoes, from hostile and oppressive to open and supportive - once the women have hogtied their boss.

"With a big helping of humor and a roast of toxic male leadership, this musical comedy inspires a serious look at how workspaces can use an update of feminist perspective, making life better for everyone. We hope this show inspires you to think about how your work-life balance might change for the better, but mostly we aim to send you out of the Walker Theatre with a big smile on your face," said artistic director Devin Pendleton.

The show will run April 25-27 and May 2-4 at 7 p.m., and April 27 and May 5 at 2 p.m. Performances are in the Walker Theatre on the college's main campus.

To purchase tickets, visit www.phccpatriot-players.com/tickets.

CAST

Violet Newstead LIZ ASHBY
Doralee Rhodes DEMI CHAPMAN
Judy Bernly ANNA LOCKLEAR
Franklin Hart, Jr. CHRIS EVERHART
Roz Keith..... LIDIA HAIRSTON
Joe..... LONDON GEORGE



Anna Locklear (Judy Bemly), Liz Ashby (Violet Newstead), Chris Everhart (Franklin Hart, Jr), and Demi Chapman (Doralee Rhodes) will headline P&HCC Productions' 9 to 5. (Photo by Nadia Kriger)

Dwayne ETHAN GOINS
Dick/Cop BRIAN SEAY
Josh TITUS RODRIGUEZ
Margaret ANNA BEACH
Maria MORGAN YOUNG
Kathy..... SARAH DAVIS
Bob Enright/Doctor JUSTIN KLINE
Missy..... KIMBERLY EVERHART
Tinsworthy..... ETHAN GOINS
Candy Striper/New Employee ... LYN GRIGGS

Detective..... MICHAEL ARTHUR
Rozettes MICHAEL ARTHUR,
BAILEY HENDRICKS, JUSTIN KLINE and
MORGAN YOUNG

Ensemble MICHAEL ARTHUR,
ANNA BEACH, SARAH DAVIS, KIMBERLY
EVERHART, LONDON GEORGE, ETHAN
GOINS, LYN GRIGGS, BAILEY HENDRICKS,
JUSTIN KLINE, TITUS RODRIGUEZ, BRIAN
SEAY, and MORGAN YOUNG.

Revised USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map can help growers increase yields, diversify landscapes

As spring sowing gets into full swing, Virginia farmers and gardeners can utilize the U.S. Department of Agriculture's updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map to make the most out of their plantings.

Gardeners and growers have long used the PHZM to decide which perennial, woody and herbaceous plants will likely survive and thrive in their environment, explained Sanjun Gu, Virginia Cooperative Extension horticulture specialist.

"For all plant lovers, farmers and home gardeners alike, the release of the updated plant hardiness zone map is something they will find invaluable," Gu remarked.

Released in November 2023, the revised map is based on the average annual extreme minimum winter temperature. It is based on weather data from 1991 to 2020 and findings from 13,412 weather stations across the U.S. The map provides greater accuracy than the 2012 version, which used data from 1976 to 2005 and 7,983 stations.

The 2023 map consists of 13 areas across the U.S. displayed as 10-degree zones and 5-degree half-zones. About half the country shifted to the next warmer half zone—including a majority of Virginia.

"Simply put, the higher extreme minimum temperatures allow more plant species to survive Virginia's winters and help adapted species thrive long term," Gu explained.

Gardeners and growers can incorporate more flowers, shrubs, trees and other plants that would not previously have survived winter. Additionally, annual cold-har-

dy vegetables have a longer harvest season, some flower bulbs may not require removal before winter, and winter cover crops have more flexible sowing dates.

"Typically, when you have warmer temperatures, your last frost date will be advanced," Gu noted. "Assume that in most regions of Virginia, you can probably plant about 7-10 days ahead of a regular planting date."

He added that gardeners and growers should monitor regional weather forecasts about 10-15 days in advance of planting. The map is only a reference tool and can't provide a guaranteed forecast for future variations in weather.

Additionally, climate change can result in more fluctuations in temperatures that threaten plants. Because climate changes are assessed based on data from 50 to 100 years, the PHZM does not take global warming into consideration.

"Just be cautious before planting things outside," Gu warned. "If you're not careful with looking at the long-term forecast and run into some frost issues, your plants may not survive."

Home gardeners and smaller-scale farmers can protect plants from overnight frost injury by covering them with row covers, moving pots inside or utilizing other short-term methods.

Farmers and gardeners can expect to encounter bugs, disease pathogens and weeds that typically would be killed or weakened in colder winters.

"If you run into some bugs you're not familiar with, reach out to Ex-

tension and they will find the answer for you," Gu added.

Visit planthardiness.ars.usda.gov to access the updated map, and

enter your ZIP code into the search bar. Additional instructions on using the map and other related resources also are available.

Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band first in concert lineup

Key West—The Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band will kick off the first night of music at the 4th annual Henry County Fair. Key West is heralded for their high-energy and Caribbean-influenced music. The band was voted "Best Local Band" by The Roanoke Magazine in 1997 and for six-consecutive years, from 2000-2005.

Rounding out the concert series are Jack and Davis Reid, who will take the stage on Sept. 26 for B99.9 Night. As the grandsons of the Statler Brothers' Don and Harold Reid and the sons of Wilson Fairchild's Langdon and Wil Reid, the duo comes from a long line of music success. While Jack and Davis Reid stay true to their country roots with their music, they've also branched out to include rock and roll in their repertoire.

Jordan Feliz will conclude the concert series on Spirit FM Night. Feliz is an American Christian

musician, who plays a folk rock and soul style of Christian pop. He has released four studio albums that have all charted, along with several singles, on various Billboard charts.

The fair will be held Sept. 25-28 at the Mar-

tsville Speedway. The concerts will take place on the Bassett Furniture Stage and the fair is being presented by Visit-Martinsville.

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

Virtual voter registration training sessions scheduled

The Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) has scheduled 10 virtual training sessions for organizations planning to conduct voter registration drives.

One session will be held before the June 18, primary election. The remaining sessions will focus on the Nov. 5 general election and will include updated information on newly enacted laws that go into effect July 1, including an updated registration application.

Each session is scheduled to be held virtually for one hour and will be led by an instructor from ELECT. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions during each live session. A link to join the virtual training sessions will be provided on the Virginia Department of Elections' website. Department of Elections registration training.

Dates and times for the virtual training sessions are:

April 25	10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
July 2	2 p.m. to 3 p.m.
July 9	10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
July 11	7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Aug. 21	2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Aug. 24	10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Sept. 7	10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Sept. 10	10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Sept. 12	7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Oct. 3	7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Virginia Department of Elections provides additional options for individuals to complete ELECT-certified voter registration drive training.

A self-paced, interactive course is available online at any time. Voter Registration Training.

For instructor-led, classroom training at local voter registration offices, contact your local general registrar's office.

Organizations with more than 40 confirmed participants may request large group training led by ELECT. Email Tanya.Pruett@elections.virginia.gov or call (804) 864-8931.

Any group or individual requesting 25 or more voter registration applications is required to register with ELECT and complete voter registration drive training. Certification expires each year on June 30 and can be renewed by completing training annually after July 1.

Wikstrom selected for the Aspen Institute's Rising Presidents Fellowship

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program (Aspen) this month announced that Dr. Chris Wikstrom, Vice President of Academic & Student Success Services Patrick & Henry Community College, is one of 40 leaders selected for the 2024-25 Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship.

Applying lessons from over a dozen years researching exceptional community colleges, the Aspen fellowship aims to select and prepare the next generation of presidents who can lead institutions to higher and more equitable levels of student success.

Many sitting community college presidents plan to retire in the next decade, creating an opportunity for college trustees and system heads to select leaders who have the skills and knowledge to achieve better outcomes for students. Aspen Presidential Fellows represent the next generation of college leadership: this incoming class of Aspen Rising Presidents Fellows is 58 percent women, and 55 percent are people of color. The institutions they represent are also diverse, located in 20 states, from small rural colleges to large urban campuses.

The fellows, selected through a competitive process, will work closely with highly accomplished community college presidents and thought leaders over ten months to learn from field-leading research, examine demographic and labor market conditions in their communities, assess student outcomes at their colleges, and advance a clear vision for excellent and equitable outcomes for students while in college and after they graduate.

"With so many community college presidents taking or nearing retirement, Aspen has a heightened sense of urgency to develop new leaders who are committed to systemic change," said Josh Wyrer, executive director of the College Excellence Program. "Community colleges have a unique opportunity to advance the talent communities need and enable the economic mobility that draws so many students to higher education. I am confident that these



Dr. Chris Wikstrom, Vice President of Academic & Student Success Services Patrick & Henry Community College.

fellows can realize that promise—and in turn advance the entire field—by taking the lessons from the highest performing colleges and preparing to bring those lessons to their first presidencies."

"Dr. Wikstrom has been an innovative leader at Patrick & Henry for 12 years. We are elated to have his passion for student success recognized in this manner and look forward to supporting him as he works to further enhance what it truly means to be PHamily for our campus community," said P&HCC president Dr. Greg Hodges.

Rising Presidents Fellows aspire to enter a college presidency within five years of completing the fellowship. As fellows, they join a network of over 350 forward-thinking peers—175 of whom are sitting college presidents—who are applying concrete, grounded, and innovative strategies to meet student success challenges in their colleges.

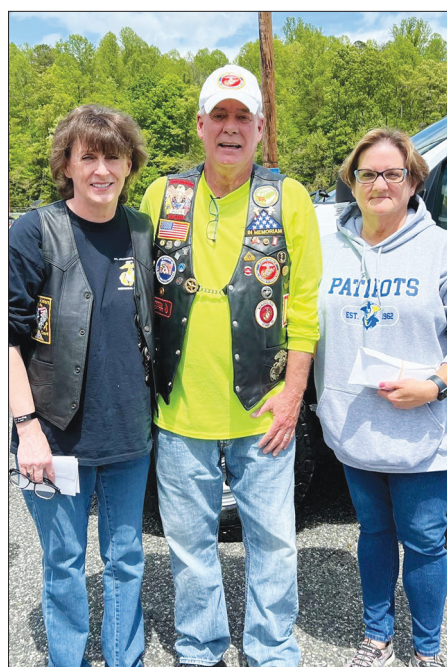
The Aspen Rising Presidents Fellowship is made possible by the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Burton Family Foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the College Futures Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and JPMorgan Chase.

Final Bowling scholarship ride set for Saturday

"Give us a wave as we go by one last time," Darrell Bowling.



Marine Cpl. Jonathan W. Bowling



Rita and Darrell Bowling (from left to right), present P&HCC Foundation executive assistant Letitia Pulliam with a donation from the ride in 2023.

the last twenty years is a testament to Corporal Bowling's life and memory and has ensured that Patrick County students will have the opportunity to carry his legacy into the future."

Jon Bowling also was a volunteer firefighter, an elder at his church, and an avid motorcycle rider. The Chapter 11 Red Knights Motorcycle Club instituted an annual bike ride to honor his memory.

Each year, "we've got riders coming from as far away as Canada to participate in the ride," Darrell Bowling said, adding many others come from Texas and other states.

"And they will continue to come," he said, adding that "every person that comes to the ride" notices and comments about the support, both in Patrick and Henry counties and in the City of Martinsville.

Darrell Bowling noted that many people line the road at various places along the route, from Patrick County High School down U.S. 58 to Martinsville and Bassett, with some along the portion of the route on Virginia 57, leading to Jon Bowling's grave in Woolwine.

Community support "is the thing that keeps them coming. That and to honor Jon," Darrell Bowling said. "They are amazed at how the communities support the ride."

Since this event marks the final year, "we'd like to ask, as the people are standing along the road, to give us a wave as we go by one last time," Darrell Bowling said, and added that while this marks the final organized event, Jon Bowling will not be forgotten.

"We'll still get together to honor Jon on the last Saturday in April. Family and friends will continue to ride and remember Jon each year for as long as I live," Darrell Bowling said. He added there will not be an annual organized event because "our dreams of his scholarship becoming perpetual have been met."

All proceeds from Saturday's ride will benefit the scholarship. To learn more about the ride, the scholarship, or Bowling's life, visit www.cpljonathanbowling.us.

Fieldale Pool is seeking volunteers for the summer season

By Jessica Dillon

The Fieldale Heritage Festival Committee is seeking volunteers to help keep the community pool running during the 2024 summer season.

A pre-opening workday is set for Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with hotdogs served from 12:30 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Food and drinks are being donated by Food Lion in Stanleytown, with condiments donated by Fieldale Cafe, and ice buckets by Fort Trial Baptist Church.

May 11 is the rain date, with work sessions needed to get the pool ready to open for the season on May 25.

An estimated 10,000 people visit the Fieldale Pool each summer. Opening and maintaining the pool costs \$10,000 to \$11,000 each year.

"We are the only public pool around," said Michael Jarrett, who is helping with the project. "I met people at the pool last year from Rocky Mount, Axton, and locals, of course. Maybe even a couple from North Carolina coming to the pool. The Fieldale Pool has been open consistently, and they've done well."

Lifeguards are needed so the pool can stay open. "Typically, we carry eight or nine, just so we can rotate through because we have to have three to keep the pools guarded," said Andrew Kahle. The pay for lifeguards is above minimum wage.

The pool will work with families with a limited budget. Low-income families can contact the recreation center for reduced rates.

"We are a non-profit, and our goal is to help serve," said Kahle. "We don't want to price ourselves out of the pools being available."

The membership rates are calculated by the number of people

that will be visiting the pool. Memberships can include non-household members, with costs that start at \$200 for a single person; day passes are \$8 Mondays through Saturday, and \$4 on Sundays. The pool also can be booked for birthday parties for a fee of \$150.

The Fieldale Recreation Center also is being renovated, and currently is in the design phase.

"We should advertise for the construction here at any time of the next couple of months," Kahle said, and explained the center received \$1.5 million to help redo the HVAC system, pay for a new gym floor, and add additional offices.

"We also have the Fieldale School Apartments, our new neighbors," Kahle said, and added that the auditorium is still open for events.

Kahle also hopes that concerts will return to the center.

"It's a great fundraiser. It's a good opportunity to bring people to Fieldale who wouldn't normally come here," he said. One of the restrictions to booking a single concert is insurance cost.

"It's cheaper if you can get a concert or five concerts," said Kahle, who hopes to get a discount by booking multiple acts. During concerts, a restricted area is used for adult beverages.

"We are a non-profit, 501-c3, we would welcome with open arms anyone who wants to be part of our committee, part of our group," said Kahle, and both added that members also are needed for committees.

For more information, or to volunteer, call Jarrett at (757) 237-5644 or email mcjarrett4833@gmail.com.

Those interested in a lifeguard position may call (276) 201-9913 or (276) 340-7226.

Food ministry now offers help for those aged 60 and over



Jimmy Willard said food boxes include the cereal, pasta, shelf-stable milk, canned vegetables, and other items.



Volunteers load food boxes in the waiting vehicles of the drive-thru line on distribution days.



The Disaster Relief Food Ministry partnered with Feeding America to get a truck to transport food boxes during distribution days.

By Taylor Boyd

The Disaster Relief Food Ministry, a local nonprofit organization, works to distribute food boxes to those in need in Henry and Patrick counties.

Jimmy Willard, founder of the organization, said he started the food ministry in 2011 after he began driving a school bus, and seeing that “people were just in need.”

Willard, who said he had been addicted to “crystal meth for about 20 years,” noted that this year marks 23 years “I’ve been clean. When I got clean, I wanted to do something to give back,” he said.

When he first started, Willard said he gave two food boxes to a family that lived on Bull Mountain in Patrick County. Now, “we’re up to probably 1,500 to 1,600 families every month,” he said.

Each box “can sustain a family of four for about two weeks,” Willard said, adding the nonprofit also recently started a senior citizen program for those 60-years-old or older that meet the income guidelines.

“It’s fixed where you and your spouse can get a box, and we’re giving out 650 of them,” he said.

The senior distribution in Henry County is the second Tuesday of each month, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The regular distribution is the fourth Tuesday of the month, from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Both distributions are held at the agency’s warehouse in Bassett where the organization is based.

The senior distribution in Patrick County is the second Thursday, from 3:30-5 p.m., and the regular distribution is the third Thursday, from 12:30-3:30 p.m. in Stuart.

There, boxes are put together and stored in the warehouse, where they can be loaded for transport or loaded into waiting vehicles. Each box includes everything a person needs from the five food groups - cereal, pasta, shelf-stable milk, raisins, green beans, cheese, a frozen food item, and other types of food.

Those in need of food can sign up to get boxes in the drive thru, Willard said.

“They sign up, and then once you get signed in the system, it’s all handled” electronically. “Then when you come through the next time someone will check your name off of the list,” he said.

“There’s no requirements other than the se-

nior boxes, you got to be over 60 and meet the income guidelines,” he said. “For the regular box, that’s an income guideline, but nobody never is close to it. We can’t ask for any proof, any ID, or anything like that,” he said.

Willard often partners with Feeding America, which helped facilitate a grant for a food distribution truck for a mobile food pantry. Feeding Southwest Virginia, a food bank that offers subsidized food for people to purchase, also sets up regularly. It works with grocery stores and others to offer self-stable food at a reduced cost to those in need.

Willard said he sometimes leaves his debit card with when that agency sets up to ensure customers are able to purchase the food they need, regardless of their financial situation.

“I don’t want anybody to leave without any food,” he said.

For more information, call Willard at (276) 229-6272 or email him at drfm.inc@gmail.com. To donate, visit www.drfminc.com and click on the donate tab, or mail a check to P.O. Box 993 Stuart, VA, 24171.

For more information, visit [Facebook.com/DisasterReliefFoodMinistryInc](https://www.facebook.com/DisasterReliefFoodMinistryInc).

New Gift Shop opens at Philpott Lake

The first Gift Shop opened on Earth Day, April 22, at the Visitor Center at Philpott Lake. The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and Army Corps of Engineers announced the opening. The Gift Shop will sell Philpott Lake souvenir items and profits from sales will support DRBA’s environmental education programs for youth and adults. The starting capital for the Gift Shop was funded by the Eco Ambassador Council (EAC).

“The EAC was thrilled to provide start-up funding to start the first Gift Shop at Philpott Lake that will multiply our impact over time,” said Heather Francis, Marketing Manager, Hooker Furnishings and EAC chairman. “This project is just one of more than a dozen projects the EAC has supported in the region.”

The EAC is a coalition of regional businesses that combine their investment to protect, promote and preserve the environment in the Dan River Basin. Current EAC members include Blair Construction, Carter Bank & Trust, Clark Gas & Oil, Frith Construction, The Lester Group, Hooker Furnishings and Jones & DeShon Orthodontics and Pickle & Ash. Each business pledges an annual donation and a commitment to encourage their employees to participate in EAC projects. The EAC started in 2020 and is open to all businesses in the Dan River Basin that want to make a visible impact in the region.

“Visitors to Philpott Lake can now take home a souvenir commemorating their visit,” said Dillon Brown, Interpretive Ranger at Philpott Lake. “There’s something for every age and budget – stuffed animal, keychain, water bottle, dry bag and more. We are so pleased to be able to support environmental education programming in the region with this retail enterprise.”

The Gift Shop was conceived as a solution to DRBA’s challenge of having a waiting-list of teachers wanting DRBA’s environmental education programs, but not having funding to provide them. With over 500,000 visitors annually to Philpott Lake, the Gift Shop has potential to support



This is just one of the souvenirs now available at Philpott Lake.

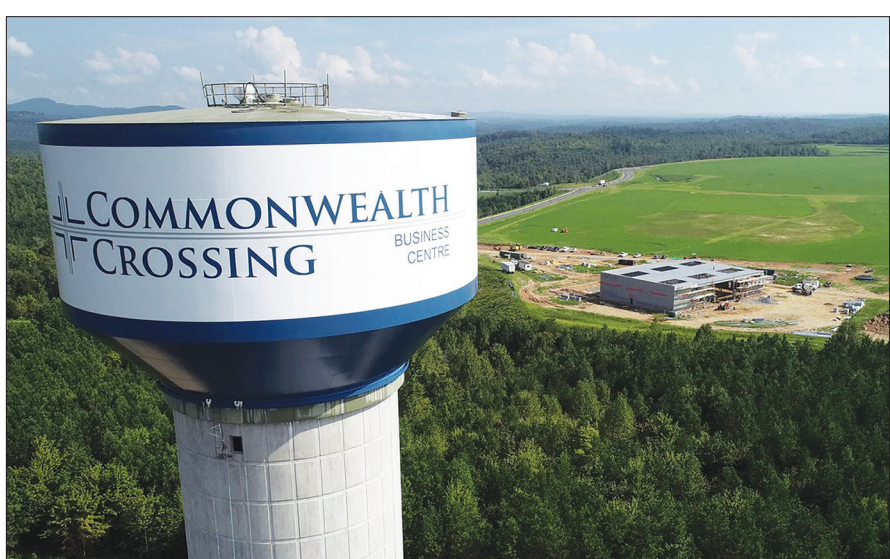
educational programs for thousands of youngsters.

“I get several calls and emails weekly from teachers asking for DRBA programs in their classrooms, but I have to turn down more than half of them because there isn’t enough funding,” said Krista Hodges, DRBA’s Environmental Education Outreach Manager. “It’s difficult to find funding for programs that reach students of all ages and can be flexible about when and how it’s used. My hope is that this Gift Shop will provide a dependable and consistent funding stream to support educational programs in the region.”

The Philpott Lake Visitor Center is located at Philpott Dam Road, Bassett, and will be open during Visitor Center hours.

The Dan River Basin Association is an environmental non-profit that protects the region’s natural assets such as the Dan River and its tributaries. DRBA is working to promote tourism as well as healthy lifestyles. DRBA assists localities in creating community parks, trails and access to local rivers and streams. Our mission is to protect and promote the Dan River Basin through recreation, education and stewardship.

Visit www.danriver.org to learn more about protecting and conserving our local natural resources and how you can get involved in your community.



Henry County greenlights large industrial development project

After months of environmental research and site permitting, Henry County is ready to begin construction activities on Lot #2 of Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre.

On Tuesday, the Henry County Board of Supervisors awarded a \$24 million contract to Haymes Brothers, Inc., to begin grading the lot in early summer of this year. Grading refers to an engineering process that changes the slope and soil elevation around a construction site before building.

“This is a crucial step in our economic development efforts as it ensures we have a site ready for prospective industries who wish to locate in Henry County,” said Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors. “We are thankful to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership’s Site Readiness Pro-

gram and the Harvest Foundation for their financial support for this project. This investment will pay dividends for our residents and taxpayers through job creation and a sizable capital investment.”

The county received \$22,237,705 from the site readiness program in 2023 and the Harvest Foundation provided a \$6 million matching grant later in the year. The bid by Haymes Brothers, Inc., was the lowest of eight bidders on the project.

It is estimated that the project could take up to two years to complete; however, the timeline could be expedited should a prospective industry wish to purchase the property.

Once grading of the lot is complete, it will be the only site in Virginia with more than 150 acres with full utilities and rail access.

Fieldale woman dies in crash

The Virginia State Police are investigating a single-vehicle crash, which resulted in a fatality. The crash occurred Thursday, April 18, at 4:36 p.m. on Fairystone Park Highway, just south of Woody Circle in Henry County.

A 2003 Dodge Neon was traveling on Fairystone Park Highway, when the ve-

hicle allegedly ran off the right side of the roadway and struck a tree.

Kristina Rouse Janey, 41, of Fieldale, a passenger in the Dodge, was not wearing her seatbelt and died at the scene, according to a release from the Virginia State Police.

The crash remains under investigation.

Pilot was sole occupant at time of crash

A Cessna 172E was attempting to land on runway #36 at the Pace Airport, located at 200 Pace Airport Road in Henry County, on April 22, around 6 p.m., according to a release from the Virginia State Police.

As the plane made contact with the ground, it began to “porpoise” and started bouncing up and down, the release stated. The pilot realized it was no longer safe to land and attempted to regain altitude.

The pilot ran out of runway before the plane could gain flight, according to the release. The plane tipped over an embankment at the end of the runway, and came

to rest.

There were no injuries, the release added.

The pilot was the sole occupant at the time of the incident, which occurred during a solo flight for training purposes. Weather conditions were clear and not found to affect this particular flight, the release stated. It was not an emergency landing.

This flight was traveling from Blue Ridge Airport, which is located in Spencer, with the intention of landing at Pace Airport.

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

Governor says jobs numbers support economic momentum

Data from the BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (“LAUS” or “the household survey”) showed that the number of employed Virginians increased by 2,758 in March to 4,454,530 and nearly 204,000 more Virginians employed since January 2022, according to Gov. Glenn Youngkin. Non-farm payroll employment grew by 16,500 in the month, the largest month of gains in over a year.

“Since day one, our pro-growth policies have led to consistent job growth in the Commonwealth – bringing the total to nearly 204,000 more Virginians working. When Virginians do well, Virginia does well, and strong job growth continues to fuel record revenues for the Commonwealth,” said Youngkin. “The economic momentum we’re seeing in Virginia comes from the supportive environment we have for individuals and businesses to thrive. We will continue to build on the progress that’s yielding proven results as we work together to expand investments in education and workforce development, robust infrastructure, safe communities and economic development opportunities.”

According to BLS LAUS, Virginia’s season-

ally adjusted unemployment rate in March decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 2.9 percent, 0.9 percentage points below the national rate. The labor force decreased by 2,914 to 4,588,603, and the labor force participation rate decreased 0.1 percent to 66.5 percent, while the number of unemployed residents decreased by 5,672 to 134,073. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population aged 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

“It is not surprising that the Commonwealth is a leader in employment growth based on the policies we have been pushing forward to add more people to the workforce and develop a strong, skill-based talent pool,” said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater. “We will continue to build on this progress and keep Virginia a great place for individuals and businesses.”

“March’s employment figures suggest that Virginia’s economy has been expanding at a solid pace,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. “In a little over two years into the Youngkin administration, the Commonwealth has added a record number of new jobs and the highest level of labor par-

ticipation in more than a decade.”

BLS publishes an additional employment figure from its Current Employment Statistics Survey (“CES” or “establishment survey”). 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. Establishment survey data reflects changes for updated seasonal adjustment factors, and industry classification conversions (NAICS), as part of the annual benchmarking process.

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.

Hospital nurses encourage civility amid growing challenge of health care workplace violence incidents

Nurses from hospitals across Virginia urge people to behave respectfully during visits to health care facilities so clinicians can stay focused on providing patient care.

That message is at the heart of the ongoing “Help Us, Help You” public awareness and education campaign from the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA), which draws attention to the heightened risk of workplace violence faced by health care professionals. Workplace violence is a serious challenge in health care settings. Health care workers are five times more likely to experience a workplace violence injury compared to workers in other industries, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data also suggests instances of workplace violence against health care professionals are rising. This is a concern for the safety of clinical staff as well as patients because the disruption of workplace violence can impact patients’ ability to access timely care.

The latest VHHA videos in the “Help Us, Help You” initiative feature hospital nurses explaining why directing verbal abuse towards clinical staff doing their jobs is inappropriate because it can cause distractions that impede their ability to care for patients. The same is true of physically assaulting or threatening to harm clinical

staff providing care. Such conduct is illegal in Virginia and may carry serious criminal penalties. Nurses featured in the videos offer advice on proper conduct in health care settings – telling viewers not to bring weapons into a hospital and to refrain from verbal outbursts and improper physical contact with staff in clinical environments – and share strategies for patients and visitors to appropriately address concerns by asking questions and sharing feedback in a respectful manner.

“It is imperative that patients, families, and visitors conduct themselves appropriately at health care facilities. That is the best way to ensure all patients have access to timely medical care, which can be disrupted when people berate, threaten to harm, or physically assault health care providers,” said VHHA President and CEO Sean T. Connaughton.

“People pursue health care careers because they care about others and want to help. Their focus is on providing care and comfort to patients in need. Delivering clinical care is important and often time-sensitive work. So, our message to the public is clear: please behave respectfully and appropriately in the presence of health care professionals performing their jobs,” she added.

This current effort follows a previous public

awareness campaign on this subject featuring a series of videos VHHA released in June 2023 highlighting the raw, emotional stories of hospital nurses from Central Virginia, Northern Virginia, and Southwest Virginia about their firsthand experience with workplace violence in clinical settings.

In addition to advancing the “Help Us, Help You” public awareness campaign, VHHA and hospital members have worked with the Virginia General Assembly in recent years to strengthen protections for health care professionals performing their jobs. Under state law, it is a class 1 misdemeanor to threaten to kill or harm health care professionals rendering care in all health care settings. On the federal level, legislation pending in the U.S. Congress – the Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act – would give hospital staff enhanced legal protection against workplace assault and intimidation if enacted into law. VHHA also has a Workplace Safety Task Force and has developed a Workplace Violence Prevention Toolkit with information about applicable state laws, background information on the topic, and detailed guidelines to support organizations in developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining workplace violence prevention programs.

Lawmakers reconvene to tackle governor’s changes; set budget special session date

By Vali Jamal

Capital News Service

The General Assembly reconvened April 17 for legislators to address 116 of the governor’s bill recommendations, and decide how to tackle his 242 budget amendments.

Democrats did not attempt to override any of the 153 vetoes made by Gov. Glenn Youngkin, as they lacked the necessary two-thirds majority in each chamber.

Democratic priorities such as a minimum wage increase will not have an accelerated timeline, a retail market for cannabis won’t be established, and an assault weapons ban is off the table, along with other initiatives the party advanced this session.

No vetoes, just amendments

Lawmakers instead focused on the amendments the governor put forth. Both chambers voted to adopt or reject Youngkin’s amendments.

The Senate rejected in party-line votes several of Youngkin’s amendments to bills, including safe storage of firearms, ensured access to contraceptives and data privacy for children. The proposed changes would require reenactment of the gun storage bill, provide religious and ethical exemptions to the contraception bill and update the data privacy act with new language.

Youngkin’s changes to Senate Bill 212 were controversial. Skills games would be banned from operation within 35 miles of schools, casinos and houses of worship. His amendments also raised the tax rate from 25% to 35% of the profits.

Dozens of small business owners protested outside the State Capitol the morning of the reconvene session. They argued the amendments hurt their businesses by preventing skill games in most of the state.

A 34-6 bipartisan majority rejected the governor’s changes. Two Democrats and four Republicans voted for the governor’s amendment.

Del. Cliff Hayes Jr., D-Chesapeake, spoke to the crowd of protesters and praised their hard work and dedication.

“I think it’s only right that we have a level playing field and that we allow the small businesses, which are



the lifeblood of our communities and the commonwealth, that we give them an opportunity to do the same,” Hayes said after his interaction with protesters.

Lawmakers approved Youngkin’s changes to House Bill 34, but on a narrow 52-48 vote. The amendment changed the statute of limitations for medical debt. It was extended from three years after the first invoice to three years after the final invoice, unless the debtor signs a contract establishing a payment plan that goes beyond that time.

There was 56-41 support for his changes to HB 215 with a unanimous concurring opinion from the Senate. The original bill required schools to provide ninth and 10th grade students with sexual harassment prevention training. The amended version gives local school boards the option to adopt the standards.

The governor next can either sign or veto a bill returned to him from a reconvened session, per the state constitution. Any veto would stand. If he does not act on the bill within 30 days of the reconvened session, the bill becomes law even without his signature.

Budget battle continues

The governor had 242 budget recommendations lawmakers need to resolve. Youngkin called it the “common ground budget.” In the early afternoon during the reconvened session, Youngkin announced he was calling a special budget session to start May 13. The session will be followed by a vote two days later.

Prior to the session, Sen. Mark Peake, R-Lynchburg, said he didn’t expect both sides to come together

over the budget during the one-day reconvene session and he expected lawmakers might be back at the Capitol in June.

“It doesn’t sound like there’s been a lot of progress on the things that I’ve read in the media,” Peake said. “The Democrats don’t think much of his amendments to the budget and I don’t think they’re going to accept them.”

A source of contention was the governor’s removal of \$2.6 billion in proposed tax increases. Youngkin’s compromise was that he would not offer tax cuts, and there would be no tax increases.

His amended two-year budget keeps \$21.3 billion in K-12 education, caps tuition increases at 3%, includes 3% pay raises for teachers and state employees in each year and boosts investments in health and human resources by \$3.2 billion over the biennium.

House Minority Leader Todd Gilbert, R-Shenandoah, was slightly more optimistic about the budget.

“I think it’s shaping up that we’re gonna get a budget, certainly not today, but I do believe that talks are beginning in earnest to finally get us to a place where we need to be,” Gilbert said.

House Republicans appreciate that Youngkin is leaning into his role as governor, according to Gilbert.

“Sometimes it’s tense with the other side, but I think right now we have a real opportunity to come to the table and work together for all Virginians,” Gilbert said.

Pointed politics

House Democrats took aim at Youngkin’s vetoes and amendments

on a number of issues.

Del. Candi Mundon King, D-Prince William, blasted Youngkin’s amendments on bills related to the expansion of contraception access. She also emphasized the importance of combating Black maternal mortality, which the White House declared a health crisis.

“Some said earlier today, Mr. Speaker, that the governor has the right to his opinions,” Mundon King said. “Well Mr. Speaker, his opinions are killing us.”

House Majority Leader Charniele Herring, D-Alexandria, said Youngkin did not want to work with the Democrats, and he went on a “vanity tour” after the session to promote his agenda.

Republicans fired back and accused Democrats of hypocrisy.

Democrats also toured the state to promote their agenda, Gilbert said.

Del. Nick Freitas, R-Culpeper, criticized Democrats for hyperbolic debates, which he admitted he has also done. Decorum and respect are a two-way street, he said.

“I know I’m obnoxious,” Freitas said. “But the people I represent, the people that all of us represent, expect us to come here and actually advocate for what they believe.”

An olive branch

Despite clashes, both sides offered an olive branch to help tackle looming future issues.

“I want the chamber to know, the governor did sit down with us, today, this morning,” Herring said.

Youngkin wants to find a way forward and work for a better commonwealth, Herring said.

Gilbert also seemed optimistic about room for compromise, or at least the need for it.

“Maybe we’re in a position today where the work can actually begin in earnest to find that common ground,” Gilbert said. “Everybody’s had their tours, everybody’s had their tweets, everybody’s had their posturing, we gotta get this done.”

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.

Localities reap benefits of inmate workforce

By Taylor Boyd

Henry County, the City of Martinsville and other localities use inmate labor to help save tax dollars, encourage inmates to remain productive and ensure work in the area is completed on a timely basis, authorities said of their inmate labor forces.

Henry County

Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis estimated 40 inmates are a part of the trustee work program in his office. Participating trustees average 7 to 8 hours of work a day, seven days a week.

“You would be looking at roughly about 320-340 hours of inmate labor a day,” Davis said. That’s about 2,200 hours of inmate labor a week for “at least 30 full-time employees.”

Davis said about \$3,800 per day is performed in inmate labor, which is “approximately \$1 million in inmate labor” annually “if that labor was performed at a minimum wage rate.”

When determining who can be a trustee, Davis said the office first looks at what the inmate is currently charged with, previous criminal history, and previous behavioral history if they’ve been incarcerated before.

“We make a determination based on those factors - whether they would make a good fit as trustee or not. Obviously, we don’t want someone who’s dangerous and/or any potential risk for escape,” he said.

While trustees work both outside and inside the jail, Davis said the majority work inside the facility.

“They assist with cleaning the facility, they assist with preparing all the meals for the inmates, kitchen work, they assist with serving those meals to the inmates, cleaning up the kitchen,” he said.

Working in the facility’s kitchen is a big task because it has a daily population of more than 250 inmates, Davis said. Thirteen trustees work in the kitchen, and their work days are 10-hours long.

“They get three meals a day, it takes a tremendous amount of labor to ensure that they’re all fed, and the vast majority of labor comes to trustee work,” he said.

Outside the facility, Davis said a four-man trustee trash crew is out and about picking up trash on the streets and/or roads nearly every day.

“They pick up hundreds of bags of waste a week along our highways,” he said.

Another four inmates help to maintain and take care of the Dick & Willie Trail, and two inmates maintain the grass and outdoor landscaping around the Adult Detention Center and the Public Safety compounds, the sheriff said.

Two trustees are assigned to the county maintenance department, where they’re responsible for assisting in mowing the grounds around the Henry County Courthouse and Administration Building, and keeping up with landscaping duties.

Those crews recently participated in putting in all the mulch around the Henry County Administration Building, Davis said, and added that one trustee goes out daily with the Gateway Streetscape Foundation to help with beautification projects around Henry County.

“We have inmate labor who takes care of all the custodial needs in the sheriff’s office, as far as cleaning the sheriff’s office, keeping it maintained as well. There also is inmate labor washing our patrol vehicles and keeping those looking nice,” he said.

Davis said trustees are not paid for their work.

“Anyone who is incarcerated in the Adult Detention Center has a daily rate that they have

to pay back to help cover the cost of their incarceration. Those who are trustees are obviously afforded additional freedoms and opportunities, and they are not required to pay their daily rate back to the county. The daily rate is waived for all trustees,” he said.

When trustees work for county departments during the work program, Davis said his office is responsible for feeding them, and they leave the center with a prepared meal each work day.

“They only eat one meal outside the detention center,” he said. “Obviously, they eat breakfast before they leave, they take a prepared meal with them, and then they eat another meal once they get back in the evening.”

City of Martinsville Sheriff’s Office

Martinsville Sheriff’s Maj. Laura Hopkins said there are 29 trustees in the city’s program.

In February, Hopkins said trustees completed 4,448 hours of work. In 2021-2023, trustees averaged 34,000 hours a year.

If the city didn’t do the trustee work program, 17 employees would need to be hired full-time to fulfill the 34,000 hours worked a year.

Hopkins said at the minimum wage of \$12 an hour and without benefits, the cost to hire those employees would be \$408,000 a year.

Hopkins said trustees are inmates who don’t have violent charges, are not a flight risk, and have usually been sentenced.

“We have some who qualify to go out only under the gun, which means they have to be with an officer, and then we have a few that qualify to go that aren’t under the gun,” she said.

Ten of the trustees are at the main jail and only work inside the facility. At the Martinsville City Jail Annex, Hopkins said only two trustees work inside while 17 can work inside or outside the Annex.

“Our primary works crews come out of our Annex. They’re the ones who go out and mow and do things like that,” she said.

Hopkins said the work trustees do depends on the department requests they get.

“They’ve done work for the police department, they’ve done work in our office buildings over the years. They’ve torn down walls, put up walls, they’ve put windows in the building years ago,” she said.

Hopkins said trustees also mow and landscape, help clean up city lots, help with bulk trash, work at Hooker Field, and help board up properties.

“They do work for the city as far as painting offices, building shelves, a couple of years ago they actually rebuilt the judges’ bench in General District Court. They help the health department move things when they need to be moved, they will cut trees that have fallen for our wood program,” she said. “I mean it’s just a large list of things that they’ve done.”

Trustees also do work for 11 non-profit organizations including the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Christmas Cheer, and ANCHOR House.

For their work, trustees are paid \$2 per day.

Hopkins said the only cost for the work program is the cost of housing inmates in the facility.

“There’s costs associated with the fact that they’re in jail, and then there’s food, medical, clothing, hygiene, and all the supplies that they need to do the various jobs that they do,” she said.

When trustees do work outside of the facility, for the work program, Hopkins said the Sheriff’s Office is still responsible for feeding them.

“We have to feed all of the inmates. Depending on what they’re doing sometimes they take their lunch with them,” she said. “Our menus have to be approved by a dietician, but they

probably get sandwiches at lunchtime if they’re not coming back to the building to eat. They pack a lunch.”

Patrick County

Trustee inmates at the Patrick County Jail save the county an estimated \$180,000 annually by performing work with the Animal Control Shelter, Maintenance, and Parks and Recreation Departments and within the jail.

Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said trustees are inmates who are not convicted of violent crimes.

“They go through a screening process and are considered low risk inmates and are not considered dangerous,” he said.

While the exact number of trustees fluctuates depending on who’s eligible, Smith said the number averages around 12.

“Most of them are in charge of maintaining, cleaning, preparing food, doing laundry inside the jail in the sheriff’s office,” he said.

Four trustees are allowed to leave the facility and work with the county departments.

“Typically, every day Monday through Friday, they are used at the Animal Control Shelter, county maintenance, and county rec department,” Smith said. Crews perform “maintenance, mowing, weed eating, cleaning, and cleaning the dog kennels. They assist those departments that they’re working with.”

Some trustees also work at the Transfer Station and with the Patrick County Alzheimer’s Association, LLC, he said, and added that depending on the inmates’ skills, they also do carpentry, plumbing, and other general maintenance work.

When trustees are working at county departments, Smith said the departments are responsible for feeding the trustees.

“During the summer, SRO deputies (School Resource Officers) will take inmates to specific schools to assist in maintenance at the school when the school is out of session,” he said.

Smith said trustees also built the mountain bike trail system at I.C. DeHart Memorial Park in Woolwine. The more than 20-mile trail system was started in 2008 and completed in 2016.

“That draws lots of visitors to the county every weekend, it’s a regional attraction. It’s a huge deal for people in the mountain biking circuit,” Smith said.

The trustee work program has been going on for decades, “long before I was a sheriff,” Smith said, adding the trustees basically work 40 hours a week, or the equivalent of full-time jobs, while in jail.

“They leave around 8:30 in the morning and they come back around 4:30 in the afternoon,” he said.

The hours translate into an average of at least four full-time positions that the county does not have to fill or provide salaries, benefits and the like.

Smith said four trustees typically go out each day, though sometimes more go out depending on the need. Trustees are not paid for doing the work program.

The county does not pay for the program, and participating inmates are not charged the daily fee allowed by the state, Smith said.

“There is no cost to the program,” Smith said, and he believes the trustee program is a win-win for residents, inmates and the county.

The program “provides valuable resources for the county, and it’s an efficient use of inmate labor,” he said. “In my opinion, it assists in the rehabilitation of the inmates because they’re basically” working “as part of the repayment of their debt to society,” Smith said. “I do believe it plays a significant role in their reintegration back into society once they’re released.”

Two indicted on federal charges in alleged scheme

Federal grand jurors seated in Roanoke indicted a pair of Central Virginia men in connection with multiple federal crimes related to a 2023 drug robbery and murder where one defendant allegedly sought to dispose of the victim’s body by setting it aflame.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

In an indictment returned April 11, the grand jury alleges that Joseph Richard Walker, a.k.a. “Joe,” 30, of Roanoke, and Garrett Isaac Williams, a.k.a. “Gary,” “Taz,” and “Tez,” 21, of Lynchburg, conspired to traffic marijuana; committed robbery; and conspired to commit robbery. Additionally, the indictment alleges Walker discharged a firearm to further the drug trafficking and robbery; possessed firearms as a prohibited person; and committed arson.

According to court records and public documents, beginning around January 2023, Walker and Williams conspired to sell large amounts of marijuana that they bought from the victim in York, Pennsylvania. By early April 2023, the defendants allegedly had accrued a \$40,000 drug debt to the victim. Rather than pay the debt, they allegedly arranged a final marijuana delivery from the victim and planned to rob him when he arrived. On April 17, 2023, the victim traveled to Walker’s house in southeast Roanoke, where the victim was shot twice in the head and the marijuana stolen. After killing the victim, his body was loaded into the trunk of the car and transported to a rural road

in Bedford County where the car was set on fire.

The Virginia State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the United States Marshals Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Brevard County Sheriff’s Office, the Roanoke City Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office, the Roanoke City Police Department, the Roanoke County Police Department, the City of Lynchburg Police Department, and the Bedford County Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office are investigating the case.

The Star City Drug and Violent Crime Task Force also aided in the investigation and is comprised of officers from the Roanoke City Police Department, Roanoke County Police Department, City of Salem Virginia Police Department, the Vinton Police Department, and Virginia State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation’s Salem Field Office.

“There is no higher priority for my Office than keeping our communities safe by prosecuting violent crime,” United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh said today. “The federal charges brought in this case show the determination of the United States Attorney’s Office — and our local, state, and federal partners — to hold those who commit these acts accountable.”

FBI Richmond Special Agent in Charge Stanley M. Meador said, “This indictment highlights the steadfast commitment of federal, state, and local partners to hold violent criminals accountable.”

“These two arrests are the result of

the exceptional and relentless investigative work of law enforcement from a myriad of agencies,” said Colonel Gary T. Settle, Virginia State Police Superintendent. “Within 48 hours, our special agents had identified the murder suspects and had state charges placed thanks to the collaborative efforts” of several law enforcement agencies.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Drew O. Inman and M. Coleman Adams are prosecuting the case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing

together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

Toddler among those injured in vehicle crash

The Virginia State Police reported that a 2006 Ford Mustang was traveling on Foggy Ridge Road in Franklin County, when the vehicle ran off the roadway and into a home.

The crash occurred Tuesday, at 8:51 p.m., according to a release. The home was occupied, and several were injured, including children, it added.

A total of seven people were injured, including the vehicle driver.

Those with injuries were transported to several hospitals, the VPS said in a Wednesday release.

Those who suffered non-life-threatening injuries were two women, one aged 28 and the other aged 69, along with an 8-year-old boy and an 8-year-old girl. A 2-year-old

boy sustained life-threatening injuries in the incident, according to a Thursday release.

The driver of the vehicle, a 32-year-old man, was wearing his seatbelt at the time of the crash. He was also transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, the state police reported.

The Virginia State Police Crash Reconstruction Team was called to assist with the crash, which remains under investigation, according to the release.

When the investigation is completed, the investigating trooper will consult with the Franklin County Commonwealth Attorney’s Office to determine any charges that may be placed, the release added.

Dance Español blends language and dance



Fourth graders from Patrick Henry Elementary students.



Albert Harris Elementary students participated in Dance Español.

By Jessica Dillon

Fourth graders from Patrick Henry and Albert Harris elementary schools recently performed Dance Español in a class taught in conjunction with Piedmont Arts, a non-profit agency.

The week-long dance class that combined movement with the Spanish language was taught by Southwest-Virginia director instructor Pedro Szalay.

“It’s an honor to share what we love, dance, it’s a beautiful art form,” said Szalay, who came up with the idea for the project and has been teaching the program to students for several years. “It’s a beautiful art form that lets them express themselves.”

The program’s goal is to help inspire students to learn another language as well as help them with spatial awareness and music appreciation. Students fol-

lowed along with Szalay’s moves as he led, with students performing different dances while announcing Spanish words to help with memorization.

“It is so important to learn other languages. Learning other languages is important so that we can be good neighbors,” Szalay said of the program that emphasizes teaching students respect and giving them confidence to perform in front of their peers.

Each student wore a special shirt as part of their costume. The Spanish text printed on each translated to “self-awareness and mental health through dance.”

Another performance was held earlier, performed by Campbell Court and Meadow View elementary school in Henry County.

Dance Español is set to return next year to instruct a new group



Pedro Szalay received flowers and a T-shirt as thanks for instructing Dance Español.

of students in dance and to help ignite their interest in learning a second language.

Hooker Furniture, The Lester Group, and Piedmont Arts were among the program’s sponsors.

Reptiles get warm reception at annual event



Reptile lovers of all ages gathered at the Virginia Museum of Natural History for this year’s Reptile Fest. The event, held on April 19-20, gave attendees a chance to get up close to, and learn about, reptiles of all kinds. (By Pat Delaney)



Youngsters attending the Virginia Museum of Natural History’s annual Reptile Fest could see and even pet some of the live reptiles. Museum staff shared information to help youngsters learn, and visitors participated in fun, interactive activities.



Initial unemployment claims dip slightly

The number of weekly initial unemployment insurance claims dipped more than 2 percent in the most recent filing period, according to Virginia Works. The agency reported that 2,238 were filed during the week ending April 13, which is 2.2 percent lower than last week’s 2,288 claims and 27.2 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (1,760).

Nearly 82 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (61 percent) were Administrative and Support and Waste Management (257); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (249); Retail Trade (203); Health Care and Social Assistance (182); and Manufacturing (171).

Continued weeks claims (15,263) were 0.6 percent lower than last week (15,351) and were 30.8 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (11,672). Nearly 93 percent of claimants self-report-

ed an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (58 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (2,276); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,102); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,337); Manufacturing (1,329); and Retail Trade (1,199).

In the week ending April 13, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 212,000, unchanged from the previous week’s revised level. The previous week’s level was revised up by 1,000 from 211,000 to 212,000. The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 208,509 in the week ending April 13, a decrease of 6,756 (or 3.1 percent) from the previous week. The seasonal factors had expected a decrease of 6,369 (or 3.0 percent) from the previous week. There were 216,740 initial claims in the comparable week in 2023.

Revenues in March remain ahead of forecast

General fund revenues for March 2024 remain slightly ahead of the revenue forecast and reinforce the Common Ground Budget forecast, Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced last week. For the month of March, total general fund revenues increased 5.0 percent versus the same period last year.

“Strong employment growth continues to drive consistent outperformance versus our prudent near-term and long-term forecasts,” said Youngkin. “With a record number of Virginians working, and record state revenues, Virginia has never been financially stronger. As the majority of Virginians complete their state tax filings by May 1, we’ll have stronger confidence in the fourth quarter outlook by May 15. That being said, March’s solid results provide stable ground for us to work together to land a budget that meets our collective goals.”

“The Commonwealth’s results have consistently exceeded fore-

cast, which confirms that our forecast is prudent, and Virginia’s economy remains strong,” said Secretary of Finance Stephen Cummings. “With two fewer deposit days in March compared to last year, payroll withholding declined 5.6 percent year-over-year, but this was accounted for in our monthly projections. Payroll withholding exceeded projections for March and is ahead of plan for the year driven by steady job gains.”

Through March, year-to-date collections are up 6.2 percent compared to last year and are running ahead of projections assumed in the Governor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2024 amended budget. Excluding nonwithholding and refunds, which continue to be distorted due to payments and refunds related to the recently enacted elective Pass-Through Entity Tax, year-to-date collections in core revenue sources are ahead of plan by \$399.2 million, a variance of 2.2 percent.

Summer camps at Piedmont Arts provide fun and opportunities for young artists



Students enjoy the sunshine and learning lines at Curtains Up! Theatre Camp.

If you are looking for a fun and exciting creative outlet for your children this summer, look no further than Piedmont Arts' summer day camps. With four sessions running through June and July for grades K-5, there is something exciting for everyone to try and avenues for all kinds of self-expression. Camp choices this year include Art Camp and the Curtains Up! Theatre Camp. Each camp is \$80 for members and \$90 for non-members.

In Art Camp, campers will explore a variety of artistic techniques, styles and materials. Every day they will create new work

showcasing these techniques. An art show will take place at the end of camp, showcasing campers' work for their families to enjoy. For grades K-2, class meets daily June 10 - 14 from 9 a.m. to noon each day. For grades 3-5, camp meets daily June 17-21 from 9 a.m. to noon. Advanced registration is required.

At the museum's Curtains Up! Theater Camp, children will get an opportunity to learn everything they need to take center stage. Theatre is an art rooted in creative self-expression and creative imagination. Campers will learn



Students explore a variety of artistic mediums at Art Camp.

the foundation of theatre skills that will culminate in a small performance for friends and families at the end of the week. For grades K-2, camp meets daily July 15-19 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. For grades 3-5, camp meets daily July 22-26 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Advanced registration is required.

For more information and registration forms, visit www.piedmontarts.org. E-mail Education Coordinator Christiana Jarrett at CJarrett@PiedmontArts.org with any questions.



Students learn all kinds of skills for artistic expression, and create points of pride.



Costume creation is just one of many skills taught at Curtains Up! Theatre Camp.

More than 30 city high school students inducted into National Technical Honor Society

During a ceremony last week, Martinsville High School inducted 36 students into the National Technical Honor Society, one of the highest honors for students in career and technical education (CTE).

The NTHS slogan is "Excellence in America's workforce begins with excellence in workforce education," and these 36 outstanding students have exemplified excellence during their time at Martinsville High School.

MHS CTE teacher and NTHS advisor Jennifer Wall welcomed

students and their families to the induction ceremony saying, "The National Technical Honor Society believes in empowering each of our students in their journey to develop the skills they will need to build a career they will love."

The 36 city high school students inducted into the National Technical Honor Society are:

Juniors

Adam Aguilar
Keara Carter
Dale Cochran
Ana Compton
Abigail Haske

Kimberly Hernandez
Aidan Hood
Isabella Hood
Kamryn Kirby
Jacey Pamintuan
Naun Paredes
Mary Smith
Yadira Carrillo Tamayo
Isabella Vega
Seniors
Tyler Carr
Johnny Clerc
Kaitlynn Daughtry
Ryan DiMingo
Aleeyah Galloway
Latrell Hairston

Gabriel Haley
Arlette Jaramillo Mata
LynAsshia King
Mallori Lowe
Adam Mounkaila
Nayti Patel
Elijah Pickett
Cortay Price
John Ratliff II
Kaylee Rea
Skyler Spence
Christopher Talley II
Tyra Valentine
Ahmyr Washington
Destiny Witcher
Reagan Wright



Meet Our Providers

The full **SPECTRUM** of Musculoskeletal services in an integrated system... offering the **FUTURE** of Healthcare today.

Dr. Stephen Ernst joined the Spectrum Medical team in July 2023. After growing up in Charlottesville, he attended the University of Virginia.

Dr. Ernst specializes in surgical and non-operative management of all levels of shoulder and elbow issues. His most frequently performed surgeries include shoulder replacement, rotator cuff repairs, shoulder stabilization, minimally invasive elbow surgery, tendon repairs, nerve decompression and fracture care in the upper extremity. He looks forward to using his advanced orthopaedic training to widen the scope of orthopaedic services offered in southern Virginia.

STEPHEN M.C. ERNST, M.D.



- ORTHOPEDICS
- RHEUMATOLOGY
- PAIN MANAGEMENT
- FAMILY MEDICINE
- SPINE CARE
- CLINICAL RESEARCH
- SPORTS MEDICINE OUTREACH
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MARTINSVILLE
1075 Spruce Street
276-790-3233

MONDAY - FRIDAY 08:00 AM - 4:30 PM