

# HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2024 (USPS-6) www.henrycountyenterprise.com • \$1.00

## 'Mardi Gras Christmas with Lights' ushers in holiday season Saturday

**By Jessica Dillon**  
The streets of Uptown Martinsville will come alive with holiday cheer on Saturday, Nov. 23, as Star News hosts the annual Martinsville-Henry County Christmas Parade. This year's event, sponsored by Crown Brand Building-Packaging, will feature a 'Mardi Gras Christmas with Lights' theme and promises to deliver festive entertainment for all ages.  
"Crown is super excited to be a part of the parade," said Kim Trifari, human resources manager at Crown Cork and Seal. "It's my first time doing this, the second or third time for others, and I'm thrilled to see the process from start to finish. I'm also excited to explore Martinsville and be part of this celebration."  
The parade, which costs more than \$10,000 to produce, is free to attend. Star News carefully vets all entries to ensure a high-quality experience. Local businesses, community groups, and marching bands will bring the festivities to life.  
**Honoring Thanksgiving**  
Charles Roark, owner of Star News, emphasized the importance of recognizing Thanksgiving alongside the holiday season. "We always get criticized for having the parade before Thanksgiving, so this year, the very first float will feature a turkey to celebrate the holiday," Roark said. The float, built atop a car, reflects Roark's effort to pay homage



The 2023 Crown Brand Building-Packaging Christmas Parade float. (Contributed)



Sovah Health's entry at the 2023 Christmas Parade. (Contributed)

to the holiday while maintaining the parade's festive spirit.  
**Growing Participation**  
This year's parade will feature a record number of participants, with nearly 150 groups, including some newcomers. "We've (See Mardi Gras p. 2)

## Pregnancy Center schedules open house

**By Jessica Dillon**  
For more than a decade, the Pregnancy Center of MHC has quietly provided essential resources and support to expectant mothers, fathers, and families in need, but on Tuesday, December 3, it is hosting an open house, from 4 to 7 p.m.  
The event is needed, in part, because despite its long-standing presence, the center is often referred to as the area's "Best Kept Secret," a sentiment echoed by Interim Executive Director Paula Woods.  
"We want to get our name out there more," Woods said, emphasizing the center's commitment to increasing awareness about its free services and resources for the community.  
The Pregnancy Center offers a range of free services starting with pregnancy tests and ultrasounds to confirm viable pregnancies. From there, the center continues to provide care throughout the pregnancy  
(See Pregnancy Center p. 2)



Paula Woods serves as the interim executive director of the Pregnancy Center. The center is hosting an open house from 4 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3.



The ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the opening of the new Fitness Court at the Smith River Sports Complex.

## Smith River Sports Complex Debuts Free Fitness Court

**By Jessica Dillon**  
A new fitness court at the Smith River Sports Complex is now open to the public, offering free access to workout equipment aimed at promoting healthier lifestyles. Sponsored by Aetna, the court is part of a statewide initiative to provide accessible fitness opportunities for residents 14 years and older.  
The facility officially opened on Nov. 19 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a friendly fitness challenge between Patrick & Henry

Community College athletes and members of the Henry County Sheriff's Office.  
"It's truly a special day here in Henry County," said Roger Adams, director of Henry County Parks and Recreation. The county is among the first in Virginia to launch this type of fitness court, which focuses on body weight exercises and integrates with a mobile fitness app.  
The court was developed to combat rising health concerns. Ac-  
(See Smith River p. 2)



Members of the Martinsville City Electrical Department were recognized for the relief efforts they provided to Hurricane Helene victims.

## Council appropriates remaining ARPA funds, hears safety concerns at meeting

**By Jessica Dillon**  
Martinsville City Council members heard from Alexis Heavner, and decided the fate of the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds at a meeting on November 19. The remaining funds had to be appropriated by December 31.  
The council approved \$400,000 for an IT, Security and Network update, with \$85,000 for a SCADA system update for water and sewer. An additional \$250,000 will help fund the youth program for FY25. This program helps to fund meaningful summer employment opportunities for youth.  
"You can build schools, or you can

build jails," Aaron Rawls, vice mayor said.  
The council approved \$85,000 for a Law Clerk position requested for FY25 funding, and the remaining \$140,000 for the Economic Development Authority (EDA).  
When Heavner, the aunt of Ivian Dandridge who was killed on July 7, addressed the council, she discussed policing in the city.  
So far, no arrests have been made in the case. However, Martinsville Police Chief Rob Fincher has said a task force of local, state and federal investigators are working to resolve the case.  
(See City Council p. 2)

## County to consider legislative agenda for upcoming year

**By Debbie Hall**  
The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hear an update and consider its legislative agenda for next year at its 3 p.m. meeting on Tuesday, November 26 in the Summerlin Room.  
The three page document includes a core agenda, with several broad areas highlighted: land use and preservation of the locality's authority to address all aspects and options related to utility-scale installations of solar power, wind power, and energy storage facilities; economic development, and increased funding for recruitment incentives and site development; transportation, and funding improvements to U.S. 220, South of Martinsville to N.C. line; education, and providing dedicat-

ed funding for School Resource Officers.  
Housing, and providing incentives to help with the development of workforce housing; recreation, building Mayo River State Park; Children's Services Act, and increased state funding for mandated services such as residential and foster care; and public safety, and providing funding support for local fire and E.M.S. as recommended by the workgroup created by the 2023 HB2175.  
The county continues to use Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies (CPS) lobbyists to advocate for its interests in Richmond, particularly with respect to items outlined in the legislative agenda. Julia Hammond and Heidi Hertz with Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies will attend

the meeting to provide updates and answer any questions. Following the presentation, staff requests that the Board provide input and approve the legislative agenda for 2025.  
In other matters, the board will consider:  
(See County p. 2)

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# Mardi Gras

(cont. from page 1)

got Bassett Furniture joining for the first time, along with New South Metals,” Roark said. “Sovah Health always goes all out, and we’re excited to have them back.”

The event will include all three local high school bands and numerous creative floats. Roark has also worked to reduce the number of plain vehicles in the parade, encouraging participants to decorate their cars for a more engaging and festive display.

## Behind the Scenes

Organizing the parade is no small task. On the day of the event, Star News staff will hand out numbers and line up participants, ensuring everything runs smoothly. “It’s hectic—nobody knows what to do,” Roark said. “But we always tell everyone, a parade goes forward, and that’s what you’ve got to focus on.”

Despite the challenges, Roark remains optimistic about this year’s event. “I think it’s going to be the biggest and the best,” he said. “The weather looks pretty decent, and I want to thank my team for their hard work. It’s

# Pregnancy Center

(cont. from page 1)

and beyond.

“We support women at every stage,” Woods explained. “After the baby is born, we provide items like formula, car seats, and clothing for both the child and mother.”

Additionally, the center offers parenting classes for both mothers and fathers to help them prepare for parenthood.

The center’s mission is rooted in encouraging women to choose life for their babies. “We try to help them make a decision that’s in the best interest of their baby,” Woods said, noting that the center also connects women with adoption agencies when needed.

One of the center’s goals is to provide support to

# Smith River

(cont. from page 1)

cording to Garrett Dillard, supervisor of the Iriswood District, Henry County ranks 119th out of 133 counties in Virginia for health outcomes, with a life expectancy nearly five years below the state average. Additionally, 42% of the population is classified as obese, and only 22% report having access to fitness facilities.

“Yes, we have a fair share of health problems, but we also have an opportunity to solve them if we work together,” said Dillard. He encouraged residents to embrace healthier lifestyles and challenged local employers to support employee fitness through incentives.

# City Council

(cont. from page 1)

Heavner said she feels that safety isn’t being taken seriously enough. “The police are supposed to be here to protect everyone in Martinsville. I don’t see the police, I don’t see the safety, I don’t see it being taken seriously.” Heavner said that she feels like “no one cares” and that she wants to see more safety for the black community.

Mayor LC Jones asked Heavner and her family to stay after the meeting to talk to himself and Fincher about safety changes. Jones said that he and Fincher wanted to address safety in the area.

“We did a community walk in the same community, we went door to door in the area,” Jones said, and also promoted a Citizen’s Police Academy to help with safety and for citizens to speak with the police about their concerns. “We have to work together.”

# County

(cont. from page 1)

\*A request from Commonwealth’s Attorney Andrew Nester to approve an additional appropriation of \$66,200, received through a grant managed by Piedmont Community Services, to cover personnel and office-related expenses for the drug court program, including \$59,490 to cover personnel costs of a new attorney and \$6,710 to cover various onboarding expenses for this new attorney such as office equipment, office expenses and dues.

\*The school board is requesting an additional appropriation of \$50,000 to the School Nutrition Budget from funds received through the reallocated of a FY2022-23 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant to buy a walk-in freezer for Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School.

\*The school board is requesting an additional appropriation of \$332,701 received from an Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III – Grow Your Own – Teacher Apprenticeship Grant Program. Funds would provide an opportunity for current Henry County Public School employees to complete their bachelor’s degree and teacher certification through Longwood University.

\*The Henry County Purchasing Department currently has a request for bids for the renovation of six bathrooms on the first floor of the Administration Building. The existing bathrooms are original to the building construction of 1974 and are not compliant with guidelines set by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The deadline for the bid submittals is Thursday, November 21. County staff intend to request the board award a contract on Tuesday, and noted that funding for the renovations is included in the Capital Discretionary Fund.

\*Staff is asking the board to approve the carryover of committed funds from the FY24 budget year to the current FY25 budget, and prepared the attached list of carryover items by cost center. Items on the carryover list are committed items

really a thankless job, but it’s a great day for the community.”

Roark highlighted the positive atmosphere the parade fosters, calling it “the most positive day of the year. You’ve got to smile.” His team works to keep the event cheerful, addressing any issues quickly to maintain a joyful experience for all involved.

## Parade Details

Lineup for the parade begins at 2 p.m. on Cleveland Avenue. The parade kicks off with a pre-show at 4:30 p.m. in front of The Big Chair, followed by the main event at 5 p.m.

The route winds through Uptown Martinsville and will be hosted by Martinsville City Council member Tammy Pearson and Patrick & Henry Community College’s productions artistic director Devin Pendleton.

The Martinsville-Henry County Christmas Parade continues to be a beloved tradition, bringing the community together to celebrate the holiday season. For more details or to register for the parade, call Jessica at (276) 656-3900 between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.



STAR NEWS  
Star News’ owner Charles Roark got in the Christmas spirit early, and had a makeover in time for Saturday’s annual Martinsville-Henry County Christmas Parade.

connecting local women with out-of-town resources and offering services to ease the burden.

The Pregnancy Center operates entirely on donations and is always seeking support from the community. It accepts maternity and baby items and welcomes volunteers to assist with its programs.

“We rely on donations to keep our services completely free,” Woods said.

The Pregnancy Center is open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with appointments available at other times. It is located at 314 Fairy Street Extension, Suite E, in Martinsville. For more information about the center and its programs, visit [www.pregcc.com](http://www.pregcc.com) or call (276) 634-5433.

feated sheriff’s deputies by just over a second. Sheriff Wayne Davis praised the court as a valuable addition to the community. “We are really thankful to have this here in Henry County,” Davis said. “We encourage people to come out and focus on their health and well-being.”

The fitness court was made possible with support from the Harvest Foundation and Boxley Materials Company, along with contributions from county staff.

The Smith River Sports Complex is located at 1000 Irisburg Road in Axton.

“I think we need to be more vocal and public for everyone,” said council member Tammy Pearson.

Rawls said the hot spots, which are for parties, are known.

The council agreed that it needs to work on a pathway forward to stop violence in the city.

“The reality is that this thing is here among us,” said Rawls who urged race to be put aside and the community to come back together as one. “The tearing people apart based on skin color that we’ve seen people doing the last 90 days. Stop with that.”

More action needs to be taken to get help from outside sources like the state police, Rawls said. “We need to be better informed as a council for addressing this stuff. So, we know the pathway.”

“We can’t have a Mexican restaurant without it getting shot up, what’s going on? It’s violent,” said

Heavner. Rawls said that there were warnings at eateries Rooskies and El Nortino before the shootings happened.

Heavner says that she is willing to help as a citizen, and is open to any suggestions that will make the city safer.

In other matters, the council:

- \* Set a public hearing for a minor charter change on December 17 to remove a line that sets a time limit for the city attorney stating that they must have five years of service to receive additional jobs. This is in response to the attorney shortage in Virginia.

- \* Approved Heat and Ceasefire grants, as requested by Fincher.

- \* Recognized Martinsville City Electrical Department for their Hurricane Helene relief assistance.

encumbered or obligated from the prior budget year, but the item was not received, or the service was not performed, before June 30. It also includes unspent grant funds that may have been awarded in the prior fiscal year and other commitments not completed before June 30. This year’s carryover request totals \$94,453,402.40, which includes inter-fund transfers of \$14,507,318.80.

\*In July, the board approved revisions to the Henry County Investment Policy, which allowed the county to maximize investment returns while remaining within the parameters established by Virginia. As part of this ongoing effort to maximize county investments, staff is seeking approval of the county’s participation in the Virginia Municipal Investment Trust (“VaMINT”), a local government investment pool (LGIP). An LGIP is a short-term investment fund that allows public entities to pool their money and invest it together. LGIPs are designed to provide safe, liquid, and competitive investment options for governments. By joining the trust, the County will have access to lower fees and more investment options, even if it does not put county funds into the trust.

\*Meeting in closed session to discuss appointees to the Public Service Authority, Anchor Commission, Building Code Board of Appeals, Fire Code Board of Appeals, and Ninth District Development Financing, Inc.; pending legal matters; the acquisition/disposal of real estate; and as-yet unannounced industries.

At the 6 p.m. meeting, the board will:

- \* Hear a report on general highway matters from Lisa Hughes, Resident Engineer for the Virginia Department of Transportation.

- \* Consider a rezoning application filed by Edwin and Iris Gillispie for property located on the south side of Valley Dr, between the addresses of 217 & 319 Valley Dr, in the Blackberry District. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately

2.67-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1, with plans to use the property for agricultural purposes.

- \* Consider a rezoning application filed by John K. Adams for property located in the south east corner of the intersection of Stones Dairy Rd and Bittersweet Dr, in the Blackberry District. Adams is requesting the rezoning of this lot from Suburban Residential District S-R to Rural Residential District R-R, with plans to place a manufactured home on the property.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Meetings

**Tuesday, November 26**  
The Henry County Board of Supervisors meet at 3 and 6 p.m., in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building.

**Wednesday, November 27**  
Henry County Board of Zoning Appeals meets at 9 a.m., County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Road, Collinsville.

## Events

**Saturday, November 23**  
2024 MHC Christmas Parade, 4:30 p.m., Uptown Martinsville Big Chair Parking Lot.

Winter Supply Drive, 9 a.m. to noon, Blue Ridge Bank, Imperial Plaza, 1 E Market St, Martinsville.

Bassett Ruritan Club will be making Brunswick Stew, \$9 per quart. Preorder by calling 276 358-0489 for pickup between 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Monday, November 25  
The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research is hosting the Expanding Talent through Registered Apprenticeship (ExTRA) Awards breakfast. Attendees will hear from Virginia Works Commissioner Nicole Overlay, hear success stories, learn best practices and celebrate the winners of the 2024 ExTRA Awards.

Saturday, November 30  
Martinsville Uptown Small Business Saturday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Uptown Martinsville.

Tuesday, December 3  
Open house, 4 to 7 p.m., at the Pregnancy Center of MHC, 314 Fairy Street Extension, Suite E, Martinsville. For more information, visit [www.pregcc.com](http://www.pregcc.com) or call (276) 634-5433.

Thursday, December 5  
Christmas Tree Lighting, 4 p.m., Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave. Martinsville.

Saturday, December 7  
Bow Making Class at the New College Institute, 9 a.m. to noon. Cost is \$20. Registration

required by Dec. 2 at <https://newcollegeinstitute.org/event/life-bow-making>, or call (276) 403-5605.

Sunday, December 8  
Roanoke Symphony Holiday Pops, 3 p.m., Martinsville High School Auditorium. David Stewart Wiley conducts the Holiday Pops. Lobby and box office will open at 1 p.m., the auditorium opens at 2 p.m., and the concert begins at 3 p.m. Altrusa will collect non-perishable food items for Grace Network in the lobby during the symphony's performance. Tickets are on sale for \$30 for reserved seating, \$20 for general admission, and \$10 for K-12 students. Family or individual adult WIC cardholders with ID receive free general admission. Tickets can be purchased online or at [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org).

Friday, December 13  
First ever Christmas Extravaganza, Spencer Penn Centre, 5-9 p.m. Free admission and free photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. More than 20 vendors. Live music, tree lighting, other activities.

## ONGOING

All branches of the Blue Ridge Regional Library are hosting the annual "Food for Fines Food Drive," with \$1 waived from overdue fines for each non-perishable food item donated. All food items collected will be donated to the Salvation Army of Martinsville VA, Service Center and the Patrick County Food Bank. This will run through November 30.

Fruit Fundraiser for Martinsville Band, purchase fruit to support the band through November 12. Orders can be placed at [www.thebulldogband.com](http://www.thebulldogband.com) or by calling (276) 403-5870.

Book sale, hosted by the Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, in the basement of the main branch, 310 E. Church St., Martinsville. The "Members Only" portion of the sale is Friday, Dec. 6, 2-5 p.m. (those interested may join at the door), and Saturday's sale, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. on Dec. 7, is open to the public. Civil war, children's books, and puzzles are among those highlighted, with a special sale on shelved hardback and paperback fiction-buy 2/get 1 free. Each group of 3 must be either hardback or all paperback. All proceeds go back into the library system.

The 29th annual Coats for Kids Drive is underway through Nov. 29. For more information, call Debra Buchanan, (276) 358-1463. Drop off new or gently used coats at Hollywood Cinema or One-Hour Martinizing on Rives Road, Martinsville.

Uptown Farmers Market is open Saturdays 7:30 a.m. to noon through November 16.

The Martinsville-Henry County Lions Club regularly meets on the second and fourth Tuesday 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.

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

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


TOPS FIELDDALE VA 0626 meets on Tuesdays at 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairystone Hwy, Bassett. New members are welcome. For more information, please call Patti Farmer (276) 358-0489.

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.

## Citizens Holiday Academy Edition set for December

The holiday-themed session of the Citizens Holiday Academy Edition scheduled for December 11 will provide valuable insights on crucial topics related to fire safety, covering essential areas such as Christmas tree safety, portable heaters, grease fires, and other fire hazards. Additionally, speakers will highlight the importance of animal safety during the colder months. As temperatures drop, it's essential to understand how to protect your pets and be well-

versed in state and local animal control laws. This session is held from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Contact Benjamin Rea, the director of Piedmont Justice Regional Academy, by calling (276) 226-6609 to reserve your spot and ensure your safety this holiday season. Hosted by Piedmont Regional Criminal Justice Academy 1024 Dupont Road, Martinsville.



### CITIZENS Holiday ACADEMY Edition

December 11, 2024  
8:00AM-4:30PM

**CURRICULUM:**

- Fire Safety
- Animal Control

TO SIGN UP CONTACT  
DIRECTOR BENJAMIN REA  
276.226.6609

## Hairston attains rank of corporal

Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis announced Markevias Hairston had been promoted to the rank of corporal. Hairston works in corrections at the Adult Detention Center and has been a dedicated member of the HCSO team for 2.5 years.



Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis (left) congratulated Corp. Markevias Hairston on his recent promotion.

## Congressional staff to visit

Congressman Morgan Griffith's Ninth District staff will be available locally on November 25.  
**Henry County:** 10 – 11:30 a.m., Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin Room - Board of Supervisors Meeting Chambers, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.  
**Patrick County:** 12:30 2 p.m., Patrick County Administration Building, Conference Room, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart.

In the event of inclement weather (heavy snow, sleet, icy rain, etc.), traveling office hours may be rescheduled to avoid putting constituents at risk. If schools are closed, then office hours will be closed as well. Please contact the Christiansburg Office at (540) 381-5671 or the Abingdon Office at (276) 525-1405 with any questions or to schedule an appointment time in the event of an office hour closure.

## Health Notes

*From the West Piedmont Health District (WPHD):*  
**Obesity and Loneliness**  
\*Spike seen in US heart disease deaths related to obesity. Obesity-related deaths among U.S. adults with clogged heart arteries increased by 180% between 1999 and 2020, according to data released in advance of the American Heart Association scientific meeting. In men, ischemic heart disease deaths associated with obesity rose from 2.1 per 100,000 people in 1999 to 7.2 per 100,000 in 2020, an increase of 243%, researchers found. In women, the rate increased by 131%, from 1.6 deaths per 100,000 people in 1999 to 3.7 per 100,000 in 2020.  
\*According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 1 in 3 adults in the United States report feeling lonely, and about 1 in 4 U.S. adults report not having social and emotional support. Loneliness and social isolation may be shaped by conditions in the environments where people are born, live, work, learn, worship and play. These conditions can affect the ability to connect socially and can lead to many negative health impacts. People with meaningful social connections see many health benefits. Highlights of the study include small acts to build social connections can make a difference; improving social connections can be simple, but meaningful; each of us can work to build valuable connections; there are ways to create new and stronger relationships to improve health and well-being.

The CDC notes that making social connections can be hard, especially if you are in poor health, having problems with money, or living alone. But a few small acts of connection can build supportive, meaningful relationships. We can do simple things like reaching out and checking on one another. There is power in a simple check-in with a friend to let them know you're thinking about them. Even though no official guidelines exist, below are some suggestions for what you can do to improve social connections. A list of suggestions and other information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/improving>. How to check restaurant inspections Planning a holiday gathering at a local restaurant? Know before you go. Restaurant health inspection scores are online and easy to access. This website is the centralized place to view health inspection results conducted by Environmental Health Specialists across Virginia. Inspection results can be found numerous ways, from searching for an individual establishment, to seeing the most recent inspections conducted over a specific time period, and more. Each Health District in Virginia has its sub-site where you can find the inspection results, each of which can be found on <https://inspections.myhealthdepartment.com/> page. For results in the WPHD, visit <https://inspections.myhealthdepartment.com/va-west-piedmont>.



OPINION

Trump Already Affecting  
Border Security

After the election of President-elect Trump, one change expected for the incoming Administration is the reversal of the Biden-Harris Administration's open borders policies.

During Trump's first term, securing the border was a priority. Thanks to the institution of policies like the Migrant Protection Protocols, better known as the "Remain in Mexico" policy, Trump stemmed the tide of illegal immigration across our southern border.

According to a report from the chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security (Mark Green), between Fiscal Years 2017 and 2020 under Trump, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported 3 million illegal alien encounters nationwide.

Under Biden-Harris, these policies were discarded or allowed to expire. As a result, illegal immigration across the U.S.-Mexico border has exploded.

Moreover, catch-and-release practices under Biden's Administration contributed to the release of millions into the interior of the United States without sufficient vetting or screening, heightening public and national security concerns.

Since Biden's inauguration in January 2021, there have been more than 10.4 million illegal alien encounters nationwide, according to CBP data.

These millions of illegal aliens receive benefits in the forms of significant medical attention and health care, access to education and enrollment in social service programs like SNAP, at the expense of American taxpayers at the local, state and federal levels.

This is unsustainable, and Americans sent an overwhelming message this year that border security must be taken more seriously.

With a change in



Morgan  
Griffith

Representative

White House leadership, House Republicans and some Democrats are committed to working with President Trump to strengthen our border and equip border patrol authorities with the necessary tools and resources to stem the flow of illegal immigration.

Although not yet in office, Trump's election is sending shockwaves to illegal aliens.

Reuters News highlights a migrant caravan traveling through Mexico in November that has shrunk in size following news of his election.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas met with heads of CBP as well as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to discuss operational readiness in the event of a migrant influx. In other words, preparing for a rush across the border before it is too late.

NBC News cites the operator of a migrant shelter in Tijuana, Mexico, who predicts smugglers will pressure immigrants to start crossing now before it is too late.

The operator of the shelter might call them smugglers, but the rest of us know them as "coyotes" who work for the illicit Mexican cartels.

President-elect Trump has announced he will tap his former acting ICE director, Tom Holman, as his border czar.

Holman will work to reverse Biden-Harris open borders policies and activate immigration enforcement, and that includes migrant deportations, starting with those who have committed crimes.

The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank, also estimates that there are roughly 1.3 million immigrants who have already been issued removal orders but remain in the United States.

States will have a hand in contributing to the deportation effort. Governor Youngkin understands the importance of this subject. Virginia communities, including rural ones like some in the Ninth District, have seen the threats posed by gang-related activity and drug trafficking.

Back in 2017, Lynchburg teen Raymond Wood was abducted and brutally murdered in Bedford County by members of MS-13, a mainly Salvadoran gang. Six men were charged and convicted. The Mexican-based New Generation Jalisco Cartel had roots in towns such as Axton in Henry County, where they stored and distributed drugs.

As the fentanyl crisis, fueled by Mexican cartels, upends American communities, it will be essential to stem illegal drugs from coming across the border. And we must curtail the cartel's side business of bringing illegal immigrants here.

Some Democratic governors are already objecting to the idea of working with the incoming Trump Administration to assist deportation efforts. Interestingly, some of the same people were requesting assistance with the overwhelming surge in migration to their states earlier this year!

Is deportation new? No!

President Obama oversaw the deportation of more than five million people as commander-in-chief (although that number pales in comparison to the Administrations of Presidents Clinton and Bush, who deported more than 10 million each).

Mexico must also co-operate fully with the Trump Administration to curb illegal immigration. Days after the election, Mexico's newly elected President Claudia Sheinbaum called Trump.

Because of the Biden Administration, every community in America is a border community. This trend must be reversed, and I will do whatever I can to support President-elect Trump's goal in closing the border.

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

A classic, unspoken  
parenting tool

By Holly Kozelsky

A few years ago, when my elementary-school aged daughter was carrying on beyond what I had the patience for, I remembered The Look and wondered - "Should I?"



Holly  
Kozelsky

How could I have forgotten The Look? It terrified me throughout my childhood. Yet once I was a mother, I tried various ways to deal with temper tantrums and misbehaviors, such as the "time out" that became the norm, but The Look never occurred to me.

The Look seemed fully and completely and exclusively in my own mother's realm. It was just as much a part of her as red hair was, and creativity, and talking too much, and artistic flair.

When my sister or I got out of hand, and sometimes, in my opinion, when our mother was just feeling extra cranky or tired, Mom brought us into line immediately with The Look.

Her face changed magically and completely, from welcoming friendliness to terror-inducing steeliness. Her forehead creased with lines, her eyebrows knotted up, and her piercing blue eyes shot laser beams into our souls. Her nostrils flared above her mouth clenched in a hardened line.

It would make any foe wither and whimper at her feet. It certainly pummeled her girls into complete, heart-arresting submission.

I already had tried reasoning with my daughter, and then I flat out told her to stop and to be quiet and that I had had enough. Nothing was working; her fussing was unstoppable.

As she was yakkity yakkity yacking, the options of "What do I do next?" were running through my mind: Time out? Take away a privilege? Make her do a chore? Etc.

Then I remembered The Look. During my 10 years of motherhood, how could I have forgotten something that once was such a major part of my life?

I decided to try it. I poked my mouth forward a bit and pursed my lips; I tried to get my nostrils to flare; I wrinkled my brow and moved around the muscles around my eyes to try to make them look steely.

My daughter stopped mid-fuss and looked at me in surprise which quickly evolved into shock and then terror.

My insides began laughing at how quickly this worked, but I forced my outsides to continue The Look. The muscles of my face were clenched and moved outward.

She stood there, mouth agape, stunned. I watched in wonder that I tried not to let show as she backed away slowly.

I asked her if she was finished fussing. She meekly said, "Yes. Sorry, Mama."

She backed carefully away from me and then settled into appropriate behavior.

I walked away trying not to show my surprise: Surprise that The Look was so easy to do and so effective, and also surprised with the realization that maybe our mother wasn't so actually terrifying after all. Maybe she, too, was just a woman who had run through her mind the options of how to handle a bad kid before she just decided to shape her face into The Look first and see if that would do it.

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North Pole Jingle

December 6

5PM-7PM

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5PM-7PM

WHERE: UPTOWN MARTINSVILLE

HOW TO PARTICIPATE: CONTACT KIMBERLY AT  
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The North Pole Jingle will be held in Uptown Martinsville on Dec. 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. It is open to all merchants, and includes Holidays at the Uptown Martinsville Farmers' Market, a Tree Lighting Ceremony, and Activities & Shopping to Support Local Uptown Businesses. To learn more, call (276) 632-6401.

Summers is city's newest  
law enforcement officer

Cody Summers took his oath to serve and protect on Nov. 14 during a swearing-in ceremony in the Martinsville General District Courtroom. Martinsville Police Chief Rob Fincher (right) welcomed Cody Summers (left) to the Martinsville Police Department last week.

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Published Each Saturday

USPS - 6

PUBLISHER

Michael Showell

EDITOR

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(276) 694-3101

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

The Henry County Enterprise (USPS-6) is published weekly for \$52 per year in state, \$53 per year out of state, by Virginia Media, Inc., P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Periodical postage paid at Martinsville, VA.



# OPINION

## Regarding Elon Musk, the immigrant coming to take our jobs

Over the last few weeks, America has somehow had even more exposure to Elon Musk than usual thanks to his new role as, apparently, our nation’s unelected co-President.

Musk, the richest man in the world, is widely considered a genius, a modern-day Nikola Tesla furiously driven to invent electric cars, artificial intelligence, rocket ships, and dozens upon dozens of neglected offspring.

I will be the first to admit that Elon Musk is a very good businessman who had the good fortune to inherit a great deal of money and the good timing to invest it in the right places at the right time. But he is not a Nikola Tesla nor a Thomas Edison. He’s more of a Thomas Midgley Jr., the man who gifted the world leaded gasoline and chlorofluorocarbons and then died when he became strangled in the invention he used to get himself out of bed.

To explain, let’s make like a line of ketamine and take a brief journey through Elon Musk.

Born in 1971 in Pretoria, South Africa, Musk began his business career in 1995 when he cofounded the Global Link Information Network with his brother Kimball and a man named Greg Kouri. The company was later renamed Zip2. The three worked out of a rented office in Palo Alto and Musk spent a great deal of time coding the website, which was essentially an online city guide that provided maps and lists of area businesses. I won’t get into the backstory of how he got from Pretoria to Palo Alto, but according to his brother Kimball, they were working in our country as illegal immigrants at the time.

Zip2 obtained contracts with a couple of major newspapers and was ultimately acquired by Compaq for \$307 million in 1999. The capital from the sale allowed Musk to co-found X.com, an online financial services and e-mail payment company. You might hear people claim that Musk invented PayPal; this is not true. However, X.com saw some success and ultimately merged with Confinity, which owned and operated PayPal. PayPal was the more popular online payment system and the merger was intended to eliminate potential competition from X.com.

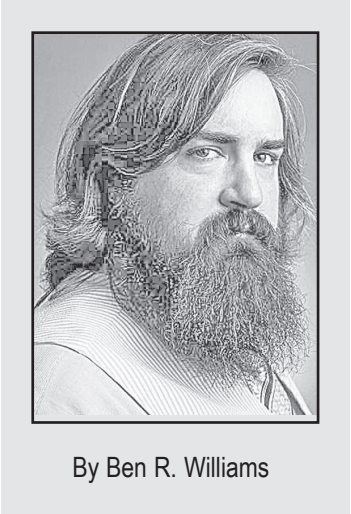
In 2002, eBay acquired PayPal and Musk received \$176 million in the deal, which he was able to use as capital to fund his other ventures. He invested \$100 million of his own money to create SpaceX in 2002. After a few setbacks and a few major wins, SpaceX began receiving the massive government contracts that have kept it afloat ever since.

What of Tesla Motors? Musk didn’t found it; it was founded by Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning in 2003. Musk invested heavily in the company and eventually bought his way into a leadership position in 2008, whereupon he became CEO and “product architect.”

There are a few other companies Musk has founded, such as The Boring Company, which is intended to construct massive tunnels, and Neuralink, which is intended to create man-made horrors beyond our comprehension. But if I may editorialize a bit, here’s Elon Musk’s basic career trajectory:

1. Create some early web-based map software and an early online banking company. These achievements are nothing to sneeze at and likely represent the last time Musk actually did hard work largely by himself.
2. Have the good fortune to create these companies during the height of the dot com bubble, when you could write “waffles.com” on a cocktail napkin and sell the idea to a cocaine-addled tech bro for \$500 million.
3. Use the money from selling his early companies to either invest heavily in an existing company and become the face of it or create a new company and hire competent staff to manage the day to day operations of it.

My point here is that Musk is — depending on how charitable you’re feeling — either a brilliant businessman or the world’s most successful gambler. But he is not



By Ben R. Williams

designing electric motors for Tesla, or figuring out how to make a more efficient rocket engine, or personally soldering wires into a monkey’s brain over at Neuralink. He’s an inventor in the same way as the late Steve Jobs; he can tell a bunch of people in his employ what he wants a product to do, and then they have to figure out how to do it.

It’s a good thing that Musk isn’t more hands-on considering that when he went all-in on a pet project at Tesla, the end result was the CyberTruck, an uninsurable boat anchor with the reliability of a second-hand Yugo. And I say that as someone who likes electric vehicles.

Honestly, it’s easy to prove that Musk doesn’t do much of anything at the companies he oversees. There’s absolutely no way that a single human being could run about seven different companies while also being glued to Twitter all day. Sure, he’s freed up a lot of time by being an absent father to his 12 children, but still, there just aren’t enough hours in the day.

At this point, it’s safe to say that Musk’s most successful business venture was buying Twitter. Sure, everyone laughed when he spent \$44 billion on a website and then immediately introduced new ideas that caused it to hemorrhage value, but we weren’t seeing the bigger picture. The end goal was to turn one of the world’s largest and most successful social media sites into a right-wing echo chamber in order to disseminate propaganda and gain cachet with Donald Trump.

Clearly, Musk accomplished that goal with flying colors. In the last two weeks, Musk has spent more time with Trump than Melania has during the entire course of their marriage, and Trump has appointed him to oversee (with Vivek Ramaswamy) the newly-minted Department of Government Efficiency.

First off, there is a wonderful irony in creating a department to eliminate inefficiency and then giving it two leaders. Second, it’s supposed to take an act of Congress to create a new federal agency, but we’re living in a world where rules don’t matter and consequences are nonexistent, so never mind.

If you’re not concerned about the Department of Government Efficiency, you should be. What happens when you take a guy who only cares about money, has a bunch of government contracts, believes strongly in the privatization of government, and then put him at the head of a government agency designed to root out inefficiency? The answer is likely to be a level of corruption almost impossible to fathom.

Elon Musk would like you to think that he’s a genius inventor, the youthful father of a new age. In reality, he’s a second-tier Bond villain with a deep, gnawing desire for everyone to think that he’s really cool and hip and funny (“Live and Let Try-Hard” would be a good name for the movie).

There is, however, a potential silver lining here. According to reports from anonymous leakers, Musk is allegedly so annoying that Trump and his inner circle are getting tired of him hanging around Mar-a-Lago in his self-described role as “First Buddy.” With a little luck, maybe Trump will get tired of sharing the spotlight with Musk’s enormous ego and kick him to the curb.

If that does happen, it will be the most poetic ending to Musk’s story: he had all the money in the world, but he couldn’t buy a likable personality.

## The Latest on Veteran Scams

Fraud cost veterans, service members, and their families \$477 million in 2023, according to the latest Federal Trade Commission (FTC) data, and this only includes fraud that was reported. With over 85% of veterans having encountered service-related scams in the last 12 months, now is a great time to review some of the most prevalent scams targeting current and former service members.

Scammers employ vet-focused twists on impersonation scams, investment fraud, and more. Criminals frequently impersonate the VA, often threatening to cut off benefits if you don’t provide sensi-

tive personal information or pay bogus fees. They may also contact you about investment opportunities, with low fees or special offers just for veterans. They may also claim to be a veteran.

The White House along with the VA unveiled new fraud prevention resources for veterans. Visit Vsafe.gov online or reach out to the new call center at 833-38V-SAFE (833-388-7233).

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

## Wade completes vigorous training program

Henry County Sheriff’s investigator Robbie Wade has officially graduated from the 113th Session of the Virginia Forensic Science Academy. After completing an intensive nine-week training program, Wade is now equipped with advanced skills in forensic science, including the proper methods to recognize, collect, and preserve physical evidence from crime scenes. He has also learned how to work with modern forensic labs to analyze evidence and support criminal investigations.

This training is a huge achievement for Wade and will greatly benefit the Henry County Sheriff’s Office, Capt. Sandy Hines said. Wade’s new skills will help improve how we solve cases and serve our community. Investigator Wade is now one of the few law enforcement officers in our region to have completed this specialized forensic training.

Wade’s career with the Henry County Sheriff’s Office began in November 2010, when he started in the Corrections Division. Over the years, he has worked his way up, gaining valuable experience in several key areas of law enforcement. As a Criminal Investigator, he currently handles major investigations, working independently to solve complex cases. He is known for his strong work ethic, attention to detail, and his ability to manage



Henry County Sheriff’s investigator Robbie Wade is pictured with Capt. Sandy Hines

cases efficiently and effectively. Wade’s completion of the Virginia Forensic Science Academy is “a significant milestone, not only for him but also for the Henry County Sheriff’s Office and the entire community,” Hines said. Wade’s new skills also will help the agency conduct more thorough investigations, improve case outcomes, and increase the agency’s ability to serve and protect the community.

## Metal detectors in use at MHS

The City of Martinsville’s commitment to student and staff safety continued November 19, with metal detectors at Martinsville High School entrances. The Opengate Weapons Detection System provides quick, reliable screenings, allowing students to pass through without needing to remove backpacks, keys, or cell phones. All students will pass through these detectors when they arrive at school.

In addition to enhancing security, these detectors can also help reduce pro-



hibited items, such as vape pens, on campus. The division will also use mobile detectors at home basketball and football games.

Submit your community news and photos to [dhall@theenterprise.net](mailto:dhall@theenterprise.net)

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ENTRY FEES: ☐ FLOAT/VEHICLE \$20 ☐ HORSE \$5

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DESCRIPTION OF FLOAT/VEHICLE (INCLUDING LENGTH)

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First bands announced for Rooster Walk 15

Daniel Donato's Cosmic Country, one of the hottest touring acts in the nation, is atop the initial band lineup for the 15th annual Rooster Walk Music & Arts Festival, set for May 22-25, 2025 at Pop's Farm in Martinsville, Va.  
Making their fourth consecutive appearance at Rooster Walk, DDCC is led by electric guitar virtuoso Daniel Donato. The band's combination of mind-altering musicianship, outer space jam voyages and outlaw country influences has put them on a trajectory toward international stardom.  
Also joining the first band announcement is Andy Frasco & The U.N., a rock'n'roll act of seemingly limitless energy that delivers a can-this-possibly-get-any-crazier live show each and every time. Frasco & Co., who themselves headline numerous venues and festivals across the country, will be making a return to Rooster Walk following their late-night set in 2022, at RW12.  
Other bands announced Tuesday include: Little Stranger (Charleston, S.C.), an indie hip-hop duo whose beats demand dancing; Yarn (NC/



# Rooster Walk 15

MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL

NY), roots rockers who will once again perform an original set and a festival-finishing tribute set; Hogslop String Band (Nashville, TN), an old-time influenced, high-octane string band; ShadowGrass (VA/NC), a rapidly rising progressive bluegrass band with insane musical chops; the Rooster Walk House Band (various cities), which comes together at RW every year for three stellar sets of contrasting genres; and Cool, Cool, Cool (various) a funk/house/R&B creation that causes instantaneous dance parties wherever they appear.

“This is just the start of the full band lineup, and it’s been directly shaped by the wishes and wants of our fanbase,” said Johnny Buck, executive director of Rooster Walk Inc. “We wouldn’t be here without our supporters, so it seems only logical to give them as much of what they ask for as humanly possible. Luckily for us, our fans have excellent taste.”  
More than 35 additional bands will be added to the lineup, including the top two overall headliners, in the coming months.  
Tickets and camping passes for Rooster Walk 15 are now on sale at Early Bird prices at [www.roosterwalk.com](http://www.roosterwalk.com), which also features all the information needed to plan for an amazing experience.  
The 4-day festival celebrating music, art, and the great outdoors will take place Thursday-Sunday of Memorial Day weekend at the idyllic Pop's Farm venue, Martinsville.  
A portion of proceeds from the festival will be donated to local and regional charities, including Rooster Walk's own Penn-Shank Memorial Endowment Scholarship Fund for students at Martinsville High School, and the Rooster Walk Music Instrument Program for public band programs in the local city and county school systems. In addition, a portion of every admission ticket sold before January 1, will be donated to United Way's efforts to support Hurricane Helene victims in the mid-Atlantic region.  
Rooster Walk Inc., which produces the festival, is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to promoting music, arts and education in its home of Martinsville-Henry County. Since 2009, Rooster Walk Inc. has donated more than \$330,000 to local and regional charities.

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VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104  
MARTINSVILLE CIRCUIT COURT  
55 W CHURCH STREET, MARTINSVILLE VA 24112  
HOLLEY NICHOLE WIMBISH v. MATTHEW STEPHEN WIMBISH  
The object of this suit is to:  
TO OBTAIN A DIVORCE  
It is ORDERED that MATTHEW STEPHEN WIMBISH appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before JANUARY 30, 2025.  
11/14/24

LEGAL

COUNTY OF HENRY  
REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE  
Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **December 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following this public hearing, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the application to the Board of Supervisors.  
The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing on the following application on **December 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.  
The purpose of this public hearing is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.  
**Case R-24-14 Jose Tiznado and Ma Rodriguez**  
The property is located at 37 Horsley Rd, in the Reed Creek District. The property is shown on Tax Map 5.8(10)B. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 0.23-acre from Commercial District B-1 to Mixed Residential District M-R. The property is occupied by a double wide structure that was previously used as a commercial office. The applicant wishes to bring the zoning into compliance for residential use and financing purposes.  
The application for this request may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.  
Lee H. Clark, AICP  
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection



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# Author’s Newest Book Brings Faith and Friendship to Life

**By Jessica Dillon**

Former librarian and local author Debbie Youngman has released her second book, “The True Story of the Christian Cat and the Distillery Dog,” a Christian novel inspired by the unlikely friendship between her cat, Sissy, and the dog next door, Spirit. The book uses their relationship as a lens to explore faith, companionship, and life lessons.

“This was such a fun book to write,” said Youngman, whose first book, *Laughter in the Library*, was published in 2019. The story of Sissy Cat, who loves dogs and has been around many, serves as the heart of her latest work. “This relationship amazes me,” Youngman said. “She’s not jealous of him, but he’s jealous of her. They love each other, and it’s so beautiful to watch.”

The book, described by Youngman as “quick and easy reading,” opens with a Bible verse, James 4:2: “You have not, because you ask not.” Youngman adds a whimsical touch, including versions of the quote from the perspectives of her animal characters: “You have not if you meow not,” Sissy’s version, and “You have not if you bark not,” she said of Spirit’s version.

Youngman’s inspiration for the book stems from her personal experience adopting Sissy Cat. Two years after losing her previous feline companion, Youngman initially hesitated to bring another cat into her home. “At first, I tried to keep her outside,” she said. “Then I said, ‘Come on in,’ and she made herself right at home with my other pet, Elliot.”

Reflecting on her journey with Sissy Cat, Youngman emphasizes the spiritual significance of pets in her life. “They’re such good companions. God knows exactly who to send to us,” she said. “This book is for Christian pet owners who want to see their faith reflected in the joy of their pets. No matter the type of pet, they are a gift.”

To celebrate the book’s release, Youngman held a signing event earlier



Debbie Youngman’s newest book, “The True Story of the Christian Cat and the Distillery Dog,” is available at several local merchants and online.

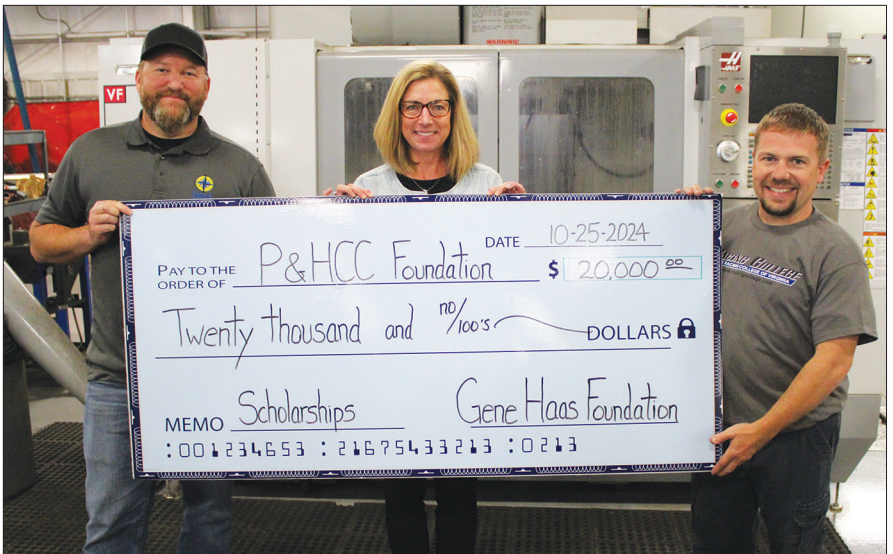
this month at the Smith River Sports Complex. Attendees were treated to ‘pawtographs’ from Sissy Cat and Spirit, further highlighting the bond between the beloved animals that inspired the story.

Youngman credits Peyton Gravely, who assisted with the book’s design and public relations, for helping bring the project to fruition. “He’s been a big help to me,” she said.

The True Story of the Christian Cat and the Distillery Dog is available at several local retailers, including Elements Salon in Martinsville, Magnolia & Main Books in Ridgeway, Reflections Salon and Spa, and Karen’s Hallmark Shop in Danville. The book is also available online through Amazon.

Youngman is actively working to expand the book’s availability to additional locations in the area.

For Youngman, the book is more than just a story about two animals; it’s a reflection of her faith and a celebration of the joy that pets bring into our lives. “They’re just a lot of fun,” she said, hoping her readers will find both inspiration and delight in the story of Sissy Cat and Spirit.



Instructors Justin Durden and Denver Smith receive a big check presented by Tiffani Underwood, P&HCC Foundation Executive Director.

## P&HCC Receives Gene Haas Foundation Grant

Patrick & Henry Community College has been awarded \$20,000 to support scholarships from the Gene Haas Foundation (GHF). Scholarships will be awarded to students who are currently enrolled or will be enrolling in a CNC Technology training or CNC machining-based engineering program and to support student participation in SkillsUSA’s CNC competitions.

P&HCC offers multiple training programs that teach CNC machine technology and/or engineering. P&HCC’s programs are designed to prepare graduates for immediate employment within advanced manufacturing including careers in motorsports, engineering technologies, advanced technology and industrial positions, and other manufacturing related positions. P&HCC is proud to prepare students for work in a high-demand, high wage field to meet the growing needs of employer partners.

“The Gene Haas Grant gives students an opportunity to excel by providing scholarships to students to assist them in completing our programs ultimately earning them important certifications and credentials. These skill sets are vital to support our region in the national mission to bring manufacturing back to the US. These jobs are in high demand, pay well, and are constantly evolving to meet the needs of local and regional manufacturers. I am very thankful to the Gene Haas Foundation for supporting our students here at P&HCC,” said Precision Machining instructor Justin Durden.

GHF’s primary goal is to build skills in the machining industry by providing scholarships for CNC machine technology students also to provide students with the experience of collaboration with a team by competing in a competition that highlights design, engineering and manufacturing with CNC machined parts as a primary component.

## Fentanyl Fighting Strategy Seizes 550 Pounds of Fentanyl

Gov. Glenn Youngkin recently announced that the Operation FREE (Fentanyl Awareness, Reduction, Enforcement and Eradication) partnership seized more than 550 pounds of illicit fentanyl in the last 45 days in Virginia. Under Youngkin’s direction and his Executive Order 26, the successful Operation FREE fentanyl fighting strategy has broken the cycle of drug trafficking and gang activity in the Commonwealth.

Operation FREE is a partnership focused on fentanyl recognition, reduction of fentanyl supply/demand, the eradication of fentanyl and the enforcement of Virginia laws related to fentanyl manufacturing, possession and distribution. Through community outreach, education and partnerships with over 175 local, state and fed-

eral agencies from 13 different states we’ve seen incredible success in combating the flow of fentanyl and drugs. Since its launch 45 days ago, the collective efforts of Operation FREE here in Virginia has led to a total of over 19,000 pounds of narcotics seized as well as 1,081 arrests and 267 firearms taken off the street.

“Our administration has developed a first-of-its-kind multi-faceted and multi-state operation to decrease the number of fentanyl poisonings through law enforcement collaboration at every level and planned seizures. I am immensely proud of the results, 550 pounds of fentanyl off our streets will undoubtedly save the lives of Virginians. I want to thank our Public Safety team and their many partners for their tireless efforts. Due to the unique collaboration frame-

work of Operation FREE and immense law enforcement dedication, Virginia is leading the nation through this whole of government approach to fight the fentanyl epidemic in our communities and breaking the cycle of drug trafficking in the Commonwealth,” said Youngkin. “We still have work to do, but we will continue to build on these efforts to make Virginians safer.”

In May 2023, Youngkin signed Executive Order 26 to help combat the fentanyl epidemic in Virginia. The order, amongst other things, directed the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to develop a strategic plan for law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth to combat illicit trafficking and the sale of fentanyl in Virginia. In response, the Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security, being led by the Virginia State Police conducted a statewide fentanyl operation focusing on increased enforcement, whole of community training, education, and partnerships to reduce supply and demand across the Commonwealth.

Led by the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Terrance Cole and the Virginia State Police, Operation FREE focused on building partnerships, enhancing intelligence sharing, improving operational strategies, and increasing community outreach to thwart the impact that fentanyl is having within the borders of the United States.

The preliminary data collected from the nationwide operation detailed significant and positive results by reducing fentanyl’s devastating impact in our communities. Operation FREE seized nearly 5,000 pounds of suspected, illicit, fentanyl. This fentanyl had the potential to generate an estimated \$4.3 billion dollars in revenue to transnational criminal organizations, and street level criminal gangs.

## County of Henry Important Tax Notice

### 2024 Real Estate Tax (Real Estate ONLY) Tax Deadline Thursday December 5, 2024

Tax bills have been mailed insofar as possible, but failure to receive bill does not relieve taxpayer of any additional charges of penalty or interest that will accrue under the law for failure to pay the tax assessment.

Payments mailed must be **postmarked December 5, 2024** to not incur a late fee.

Notice is hereby given that the Treasurer’s Office of Henry County will be open Monday thru Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to receive payment. You may **pay online at [www.henrycountyva.gov](http://www.henrycountyva.gov)**

Scott B.Grindstaff – Henry County Treasurer

## Griffith announces \$873,542 HHS Grant to health coalition

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded Martinsville-Henry Coalition for Health and Wellness a \$873,542 grant, according to Ninth District U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem.

“This September, I visited and toured the Bassett Health Center that operates as part of Connect Health + Wellness,” Griffith recalled. “This grant for more than \$873,000 helps Connect Health + Wellness provide critical health care services and treatments.”

The funding made available by this grant comes through the HHS H80 Health Center Program.

Connect Health + Wellness serves constituencies in various localities, with operating facilities extending to Bassett, Martinsville, Patrick Springs, Stuart and Ridgeway.

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



# Drugs seized, two charged execution of search warrant



Henry County Sheriff's investigators executed a search warrant on Foxtree Drive. (STAR NEWS)



The Henry County Sheriff's Office executed a narcotics search warrant Nov. 14 at 50 Foxtree Drive, Apartment 22, seizing suspected fentanyl and methamphetamine. The confiscated items are consistent with the distribution of illegal narcotics, according to authorities.

"This operation underscores the Sheriff's Office's commitment to combating the drug epidemic and ensuring the safety of our communities," the department said in a statement.

Two individuals, Trey Michael Severt, 34, and Cheree Nicole Dalton, 34, were present during the search and face multiple charges in connection with the investigation.

Severt was charged with possession with intent to distribute a Schedule I/II controlled substance, (suspected methamphetamine).

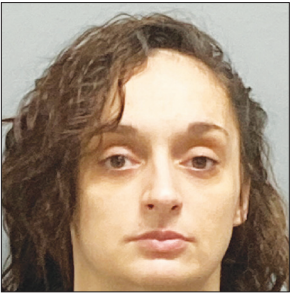
Severt is currently being held at the Henry

County Adult Detention Center without bond. He is also on probation for previous offenses, including possession of Schedule I/II drugs, possession of stolen goods, and possession of 10 grams of methamphetamine with intent to distribute.

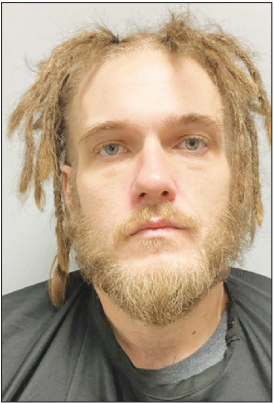
Dalton was charged with possession with intent to distribute a Schedule I/II controlled substance, (suspected methamphetamine); failure to appear — a misdemeanor from the City of Martinsville, and probation violation, a felony from Franklin County.

She is being held without bond at the Martinsville City Jail.

The investigation remains ongoing. Authorities urge anyone with information about the case to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at 276-638-8751 or Crimestoppers at



Cheree Nicole Dalton



Trey Michael Severt

63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers program offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for tips leading to arrests or convictions. The reward amount depends on the nature of the crime and the value of the information provided.

# Outdoor recreation economy plans are a focus in region

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) and Friends of Southwest Virginia (FSWVA), in collaboration with the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA), Patrick County Economic Development and Tourism, Henry County Parks and Recreation, the City of Martinsville, and other regional and local partners, are launching the Blue Ridge Outdoor Recreation Planning Project as part of the larger Gateways to Southwest Virginia: Outdoor Economy Recreation Plan.

Funded by a 2023 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Area Development Grant and a Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission grant, this project aims to create a cohesive plan to expand outdoor recreational opportunities across the region. By enhancing outdoor assets, the initiative seeks to boost community vitality and drive economic growth through tourism. The planning will focus on developing recreation areas like the Blue Ridge Parkway, Fairy Stone State Park, Philpott Lake, Mayo River Rail Trail, and local mountain biking trails. Building on successful models, the project will promote blueways, trail networks, and adventure sports, strengthening connections throughout the Blue Ridge Mountains foothills.

The larger project, Gateways to Southwest Virginia: Outdoor Economy Recreation Plan, includes two primary regions: the Blue Ridge Outdoor Recreation Planning Project, covering the City of Martinsville and Henry and Patrick counties, and the Powell and Clinch River Recreation Area Project, which spans Lee, Scott, and Wise counties, along with the City of Norton. The Blue Ridge Project specifically focuses on fostering partnerships and sustainable outdoor recreation development, including trails, mountain biking, and local business

opportunities around existing trail systems.

Key partners on the project management team include Roger Adams from Henry County, Sarah Hodges and Kelly Rowland from the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation, James Houchins with Patrick County, Hannah Powell from the City of Martinsville, Catherine Van Noy from Mill Creek Creative (representing the City of Martinsville), Brian Williams with DRBA, Kim Davis and Jen Otey from FSWVA, and Kristie Eberly and Amanda Gray from WPPDC.

"These partnerships and the strategic planning involved in this project are vital steps toward creating a stronger, more sustainable outdoor economy in our region," said Kristie Eberly, Executive Director of the WPPDC. "We're thrilled to collaborate with local and regional partners to enhance outdoor recreation amenities and enrich experiences across our region."

Following a competitive RFP process, Destination by Design (DbD) was selected as the lead consulting firm. DbD brings over 10 years of experience in creating vibrant public spaces, developing recreational opportunities, and building regional brands, with a focus on engaging local communities and leaders to guide strategic investments.

The project will kick off soon with focus groups and site visits involving regional partners and Destination by Design (DbD). Scheduled for completion in June 2024, the plan will offer a comprehensive set of recommendations for implementing future outdoor recreation projects across the region. Together, the combined efforts of WPPDC, FSWVA, DRBA, and local partners will deepen community engagement with Southwest Virginia's landscapes and foster appreciation for the region's natural

beauty.

"This regional plan focused on the outdoor economy will be an asset to Patrick County, the City of Martinsville and Henry County and everyone who lives, works and plays in the region will have an opportunity to be a part of the process," said Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director of DRBA. "We are excited to work in partnership with our established partners and looking forward to a new collaboration with FSWVA while DRBA is preparing to update the Martinsville and Henry County local Outdoor Recreation Master Plan. The combination of these local and regional master plans will provide a community-driven roadmap for outdoor recreational opportunities in this region for many years."

"The West Piedmont region unites Southern Virginia, Southwest Virginia, and the Virginia Mountains, creating a strength that benefits all of Virginia," said Kim Davis, Executive Director of Friends of Southwest Virginia. "By focusing on outdoor recreation, we're showcasing each area's unique assets, boosting local businesses, attracting tourism, and strengthening community bonds. This project exemplifies the power of partnership across regional lines, creating a strong foundation for economic growth and sustainable outdoor experiences that benefit everyone who calls these regions home."

These initiatives collectively aim to promote sustainable outdoor activities, enrich community connections, and position the region as a premier outdoor recreation destination, fostering greater community appreciation for the natural assets that define the region.

# Be mindful of risks associated with outdoor burning and campfires

The crackle of cozy campfires and the smell of burning leaves are classic signs of fall. With recent weeks of dry weather, foresters and fire investigators urge Virginians to use caution with outdoor fires.

September's Hurricane Helene brought ample moisture, reducing the drought threat in the western areas of the state. However, the Virginia Department of Forestry reports that longer-term drought concerns persist in eastern areas and in northern portions of the Shenandoah Valley.

Though the general outlook for Virginia's fall wildfire season is for normal activity, the last two fire seasons have been extremely active. Record-breaking fire seasons in the fall of 2023 resulted in 156 fires burning nearly 25,000 acres in the fall, and 411 fires burning 20,000 acres last spring.

Nine out of 10 wildfires are initiated by people, and the leading cause of wildfires in Virginia is carelessness associated with outdoor burning—"with escaped burning debris being the biggest

offender," said DOF Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. "Because these fires are accidental, this means they are also preventable."

Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. investigators have responded to many accidental fires stemming from fire pits or burning leaves and yard debris.

"In most of the fires we see, the homeowner has gone inside for various reasons and the fire grows bigger or the wind picks up," said VFBMCI senior claims investigator Todd Jones. "As a firefighter and investigator, we advise everyone, if possible, to never leave the fire unattended."

Whether tidying the landscape or enjoying friends and firelight, have at least one form of extinguishment close by, he said.

"A bucket of water, a water hose or fire extinguisher," Jones continued. "Make sure ashes are cold or watered down before leaving them. Weather changes, and they can come back to life!"

Also, become familiar with local burning laws

and permit requirements.

Miller noted the commonwealth's 4 p.m. burn law is in effect only during the spring, but Virginia residents should check in with local officials for fire restrictions or burning bans, especially during fire season.

"These (restrictions) often change with no advanced warning, based on fast-changing conditions," he added.

To prevent and reduce the number of wildfires each year, VDOF recommends:

- \*Avoid burning on dry, windy days.
- \*Keep burn piles small, in flat areas, far from flammable vegetation.
- \*Keep a rake or shovel and a water source nearby.
- \*Stay with your fire until it is completely out (Drown, stir, ensure it's cool, repeat as necessary).
- \*Completely soak cigarettes before disposing of them in a trash can.

# Virginia's Workforce Remains Strong, Unemployment Steady in October

Virginia's labor market continues to show resilience, with a steady unemployment rate and a growing labor force, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate held at 2.9% in October, a 0.1 percentage point drop from the same time last year.

The labor force grew by 3,649 to 4,575,255, while the number of employed Virginians increased by 1,404. However, nonfarm payroll employment experienced a slight decline, dropping by 3,000 jobs, according to BLS data.

"With more than \$85 billion in capital investments from companies in or moving to Virginia since we started, job opportunities continue to abound across the Commonwealth," said Gov. Glenn Youngkin. "Virginia's labor market remains strong, with continued growth in our labor force and a steadily low unemployment rate.

As more people move to Virginia than away from the other 49 states for the first time in a decade, fostering a business-friendly environment remains a key priority that attracts investment, drives job creation, and ensures that every Virginian has the opportunity to succeed."

Virginia's unemployment rate is well below the national rate of 4.1%, which also remained unchanged in October. The state's labor force participation rate, measuring those employed or actively seeking work, held steady at 66.0%.

"Virginia's stable labor force participation rate reflects the resilience and dedication of our workforce," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "With a steady demand for talent and a commitment to creating a dynamic business environment, we are positioned for continued growth and success. We remain focused on fostering innovation and expanding job opportunities across the Commonwealth."

The BLS also reported data from its Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, which tracks payroll employment. According to CES, Virginia has added 67,800 jobs over the past year and 247,400 jobs since January 2022, with total nonfarm payroll employment reaching 4,240,300 in October.

The LAUS and CES surveys provide complementary insights into employment trends. LAUS data, based on household surveys, tracks individuals as employed or unemployed. CES, derived from payroll records, measures job counts excluding self-employed individuals, unpaid volunteers, and private household workers.

These figures highlight Virginia's continued focus on fostering job creation, workforce development, and a robust economy.

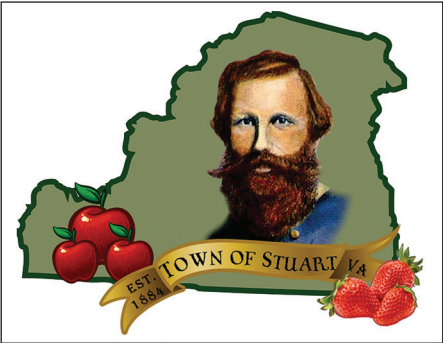
For more details, visit the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement website at <https://viriniaworks.com/>.



Crossing the Lines

News snippets from outside the city/county lines ...

Concerns about changes in Town Logo are unfounded



The Town of Stuart's former logo featured a profile of Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart.

Concerns about the removal of Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart's profile from the Town of Stuart's logo and official imagery are unfounded, according to Town Manager Bryce Simmons.

Simmons made the comments in response to former Stuart councilman Dean Goad's efforts to oppose the removal of Stuart's likeness. Goad began circulating a letter in mid-October opposing the change. He had collected about 50 signatures from residents and businesses as of Nov. 6.

Goad expressed concerns that eliminating Stuart's image could signal the start of broader changes, saying, "If you take that off the side of the vehicles," then it's going to be the tip of the iceberg of potential changes. "I just don't think we need to do away with history."

Goad plans to present his petition to the Stuart Town Council once he gathers more signatures.

The former town logo featured an image of J.E.B. Stuart set against a green map of the town, flanked by apples and strawberries. A golden banner reading "Est. 1794 Town of Stuart, VA" sat below the image.

As part of the town's Downtown Revitalization Project, a new logo was introduced. The updated design features the historic Patrick County Courthouse with a five-petaled flower underneath. The words "Stuart Virginia" appears beneath the image on a green, blue, and



The new logo, introduced as part of the Downtown Revitalization Project, highlights the Patrick County Courthouse.

dark blue background.

"We developed a new brand and logo as part of the Downtown Revitalization Project," Simmons said. "At the time, Mr. Goad was on the town council and approved the plan, including all parts of the rebranding were in it." There were opportunities for public notice and engagement, but he chose not to raise objections or speak on the matter at that time, "and in fact, voted for the plan as it was," he said.

Simmons emphasized that there has been no effort to remove J.E.B. Stuart's image from town property.

"I did remove his image from my business cards and started using the new logo in email signatures. Other than that, there has been no other discussion, recommendation, or general use of a new town logo," he said, adding there's also been no change to the town's work trucks and garbage trucks.

He added that there have been no council discussions about removing J.E.B. Stuart-related imagery or changing the town's name.

"There is absolutely nobody at the Town of Stuart that is willing to change the town's name or remove the statue or even remove Jeb Stuart's image from anything that is official," he said, adding that Goad hasn't sought him out to discuss this topic. "This is all just rumors floating around."

Schools Awarded \$300,000 Grant for Blue Ridge Elementary Renovations



The Patrick County School Board presented a resolution to Woolwine Elementary School staff in recognition of the school's VDOE Highest Achievement Exemplar Award for 2024-25.

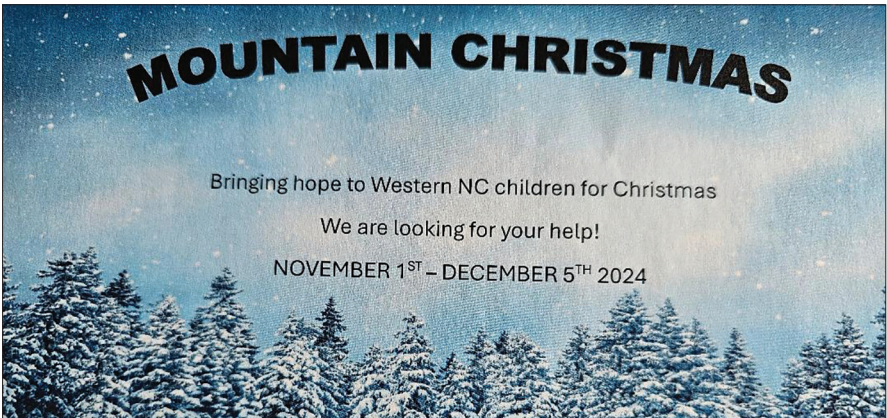
Patrick County Schools Superintendent Jason Wood announced during the School Board's meeting on Thursday, Nov. 14, that the division has received a \$300,000 grant from the School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP). The funds will support extensive renovations at Blue Ridge Elementary School.

"We applied last year and were a finalist, but we didn't

receive the award. However, about a month ago, we were notified that we were selected this year," Wood said.

The renovations will include upgrading the school's stage to meet safety codes, improving accessibility, and adding functional steps. The current steps don't meet code requirements, but once renovations are complete, they will, he noted.

Mountain Christmas Project Brings Holiday Cheer to Hurricane Victims



The Mountain Christmas project aims to bring holiday joy to children and families in Western North Carolina still recovering from Hurricane Helene.

Chris Dollarhite is on a mission to ensure that children and families in Western North Carolina affected by Hurricane Helene experience the joy of the holiday season. Through the Mountain Christmas project, he's working to provide toys, clothing, and a sense of hope to those still recovering from the devastating

Dollarhite, a member of the Patrick County Patriots, often assists with local events and non-profit initiatives. While many members of his group have been traveling to North Carolina to volunteer directly, his work commitments prevented him from joining.

"A lot of them have been volunteering and going to Western North Carolina. Some of them a week at the time, some of them a weekend. I work a lot, so I couldn't get freed up to go volunteer like I wanted to go out with a group," he said.

While he was giving donations and helping others, Dollarhite said he felt like he needed to do something else and started thinking about the future, particularly about Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"When I thought about Christmas - I'm a parent and I thought about the kids. As adults we have choices we can go and do things, but children are innocent they don't have any choice where they're stuck, where they're at,"

he said.

While volunteering, Dollarhite said some Patrick County Patriots members were in Asheville, N.C., and connected with Gashes Creek Baptist Church. Two weeks ago, the church set up a sign-up sheet for families in need. In just four days, 195 children, ranging from 1 to 17 years old, were registered to receive assistance.

"We decided" to also provide clothing, in addition to toys "because so many of them are still short on the necessities that they need just in their day-to-day life, you know coats, clothes, a house, a lot of the basics," he said.

Dollarhite said individual, unwrapped donations can be dropped off at A Little Bit of Everything, located at 25688 Jeb Stuart Highway, Stuart.

The project has set a hard deadline of Dec. 5 for all donations. Gifts will be transported to the church to be wrapped by volunteers. Deliveries will be made about two weeks before Christmas.

Monetary donations will be used to purchase clothing and toys, and can be made out to Chris Dollarhite or Caroline Jones, and mailed to 4049 South Mayo Drive, Stuart, VA 27171.

For large group donations, pickup arrangements, or additional questions, call Dollarhite at (434) 549-3397.

Worley and Stanley Families Named Grand Marshals of PC Christmas Parade



Lauren Worley and Kaylee Stanley, along with their families, will serve as grand marshals of the 52nd annual Patrick County Christmas Parade on Dec. 7.

Lauren Worley, Kaylee Stanley, and their families will lead the 52nd annual Patrick County Christmas Parade as its grand marshals, organizers announced.

The parade, hosted by One Family Productions, will take

place on Saturday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m.

Chris Prutting, executive director of One Family Productions, said the families were selected in alignment with this year's theme, "Community Through Strife."

Meadows of Dan Christmas Parade set for Nov. 30

The 15th annual Meadows of Dan Christmas Parade will take place on Saturday, Nov. 30, bringing holiday cheer to the community.

Parade organizer Trinity Goad said the festivities will begin at 3 p.m., with lineup starting at 2:30 p.m. on Light Ridge Road.

"The parade route follows Business Route 58," Goad explained. "It starts at Light Ridge Road and ends at Meadows of Dan Baptist Church."

There is no cost or deadline to join the parade.

After the parade, Meadows of Dan Baptist Church will offer complimentary refreshments, including cider, hot chocolate, and s'mores.

At 5 p.m., the Concord Primitive Baptist Church will host an old-fashioned Christmas singing to round out the evening.

For more information or to register as a participant, contact Trinity Goad at (540) 230-7943.

To read more about these and other stories, check out The Enterprise, [www.theenterprise.net](http://www.theenterprise.net).

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THE HOWLERS

1-4-7-9:15

\$5 tickets

HOLLYWOOD CINEMA beside WALMART  
Martinsville 278-858-3458



# Bassett High School Band of Distinction Wins 12th Consecutive State Title



The Bassett High School Band of Distinction, under the direction of Trey Harris, has once again proven their exceptional talent and dedication by winning their 12th consecutive state title at the 2024 Virginia Marching Band Cooperative (VMBC) Championships and Commonwealth Cup. The event was held at Liberty University, where the band competed in the Group 5 A category and emerged as the state champions.

The Band of Distinction's remarkable performance earned them top honors in multiple categories, including Music, General Effect, Color Guard, and Visual. This achievement

marks their 12th state championship, a testament to their consistent excellence and hard work.

The Bassett High School Band of Distinction's continued success highlights the importance of music education and its positive impact on students' lives. The band looks forward to continuing their tradition of excellence and inspiring future generations of musicians.

For more information, please contact Trey Harris, Band Director and Music Education Teacher, Bassett High School, 276-629-1731, trharris@henry.k12.va.us.



## IRS offers help to military members, veterans with tax needs

Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, veterans and their families may qualify for special tax benefits. Whether they have a simple or complex tax situation, the IRS provides information to make filing taxes easier to understand for those sacrificing so much for our country.

### Benefits for military members

Some of the tax benefits for service members include:

**Combat pay:** This pay is partially or fully tax-free. Service members serving in support of a combat zone or in a qualified hazardous duty area may also qualify for this exclusion.

**Combat zone tax deadline extensions:** Qualifying members of the military, such as those who serve in a combat zone or in contingency operations outside the U.S., can get additional

time to file and pay their taxes.

**Armed Forces dependency allotments:** Assistance programs for dependent care allotments contributed by the government are excludable benefits and not included in the military member's income.

**Earned Income Tax Credit:** The EITC is worth up to \$7,830 for tax year 2024. Low and moderate income service members who receive nontaxable combat pay can use specific qualifications that may increase the amount of the EITC for which they qualify, meaning they may owe less tax or get a larger refund.

**Moving expenses:** Members of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty may be eligible to deduct unreimbursed relocation expenses if their move was due to a military order and permanent

change of station. Also, allowances paid to move members of the U.S. Armed Forces for a permanent change of station aren't taxable.

For more details on benefits for military members, taxpayers can refer to the Military Family Tax Benefits page on IRS.gov.

### What to do when it's time to file

The Department of Defense provides MilTax, a suite of tax services free for members of the military, qualifying veterans and family members.

Many military installations offer free income tax assistance in person through the military Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Military service members can contact their installation's legal office for details.

## Use caution when preparing Thanksgiving feast

The National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) urges added caution when cooking on Thanksgiving Day, by far the leading day of the year for home cooking fires. In 2022, an estimated 1,610 home cooking fires were reported to U.S. fire departments on Thanksgiving Day, reflecting a 399 percent increase over the daily average. Between 2018 and 2022, there was an annual average of three and half times more cooking fires on Thanksgiving Day than on a typical day of the year.

"Thanksgiving is a hectic holiday with multiple dishes cooking and baking at the same time, along with guests, entertaining, and other distractions that can make it easy to lose sight of what's on the stove or in the oven," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA. "With all these factors at play, it's no surprise that the number of cooking fires spikes so dramatically on Thanksgiving."

Overall, cooking is the leading cause of U.S. home fires and injuries, and the second-leading cause of home fire deaths. Unattended cooking is the leading contributing factor in cooking

fires and fire deaths.

"Keeping a close eye on what's cooking and minimizing the likelihood of getting distracted can greatly reduce the risk of cooking fires," said Carli. "As simple as these preventative measures may sound, they truly can help ensure that everyone enjoys a festive, fire-free holiday."

Following are additional tips and recommendations from NFPA to help everyone cook safely on Thanksgiving:

\*Never leave the kitchen while cooking on the stovetop. Some types of cooking, especially those that involve frying or sautéing with oil, need continuous attention.

\*When cooking a turkey, remain at home and check it regularly.

\*Make use of timers to keep track of cooking times, particularly for foods that require longer cook times.

\*Keep things that can catch fire like oven mitts, wooden utensils, food wrappers, and towels at least three feet away from the cooking area.

\*Avoid long sleeves and hanging fabrics that

can come in contact with a heat source.

\*Always cook with a lid beside your pan. If a small grease fire starts, smother the flames by sliding the lid over the pan, then turn off the burner. Do not remove the cover because the fire could start again. Let the pan cool for a long time.

\*For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed. Only open the door once you're confident the fire is completely out, standing to the side as you do. If you have any doubts or concerns, contact the fire department for assistance.

\*Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried. Hot foods and liquids should be placed away from table and counter edges.

In addition, NFPA strongly discourages the use of turkey fryers that use cooking oil, which can cause devastating burns. For a safe alternative, NFPA recommends purchasing a fried turkey from a grocery store or restaurant or buying a fryer that does not use oil.

## Virginia-grown Christmas trees create real memories

There are many reasons for buying a Virginia-grown Christmas tree this season—like creating lifelong memories.

"I've talked to a lot of guys who are 70 or 80 years old and remember the first tree they cut," remarked Ben Snyder, co-owner of Firever Pines in Caroline County.

Choosing a fresh-cut Christmas tree for your holiday centerpiece means you're supporting a local farmer like Snyder, who works throughout the year to bring Christmas cheer to customers. There were 480 Virginia farms that cultivated Christmas trees, on 9,805 acres, in 2022, according to the most-recent U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Christmas trees are a strong contributor to Virginia's agricultural economy, with annual sales around \$10 million, according to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Another benefit of purchasing a live Christmas tree: It's good for the environment. Trees produce oxygen while absorbing and storing carbon, their roots reduce erosion while improving water quality, and they provide shelter for wildlife, according to the Virginia Department of Forestry.

"For every tree that's harvested, we plant an-

other two," Snyder noted.

There's a lot that goes into growing around 7,000 trees on Snyder's 9-acre Virginia farm and another 3,000 on his 5-acre Pennsylvania farm.

After planting around 1,000 to 2,000 trees each spring, the farm manages the grass while monitoring soil and tree health—routinely checking for any signs of disease or malnutrition. The trees are trimmed in the summer and cut in mid-November.

"There's also a lot of losses that go into it—whether there's a drought or too much rain," Snyder added.

Prolonged drought conditions and other challenges cut into this year's crop at Hank's Christmas Trees in Fauquier County. The farm lost 5,000 trees after planting 6,000 in the spring.

"But we still have trees to sell this year," said Cheryll Green, the farm's co-owner.

Beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving, customers can visit the farm and choose from a selection of Fraser fir, Douglas fir, blue spruce, white pine, Leyland cypress and blue ice trees to cut down themselves or with assistance. The farm also offers pre-cut Fraser firs and wreaths.

Green said "the experience" of visiting a Christmas tree farm is the No. 1 benefit. While

browsing the farm's trees or holiday shop, visitors can indulge in complementary hot chocolate or purchase hot cider, grilled cheese or a burger.

Hank's will offer Santa's Magical Train Ride on Friday and Saturday evenings by appointment only. Families can ride their own train car to Santa's Cottage, meet Santa, and enjoy free kettle corn, candy canes and "reindeer food."

Starting Nov. 23, visitors to Firever Pines can enjoy complimentary hot chocolate while browsing the farm's choose-and-cut selection of blue ice trees or pre-cut Fraser fir, Douglas fir and concolor fir—Snyder's personal favorite.

"It has a really nice blue color to it, sturdy branches and a citrus-like smell," he said.

Snyder's customers can get immersed in the holidays by exploring the farm's Elf Village and shopping for holiday goods like garlands, ornaments and handmade wreaths in the Christmas shop.

And when the season is over, customers can bring their trees back to Firever Pines to be mulched and reapplied to the soil—nourishing next year's Christmas trees.

For more information, visit fireverpines.com and hankschristmastrees.com.

To find a Virginia Christmas tree farm near you, visit virginiachristmastrees.org.



# Solar Sale Scams

The sun might be shining on solar energy, but buyers beware – costly solar panel scams could leave you in the dark with massive loans and higher bills. Here’s what you need to know to stay in the light against this scam.

The sales pitch often starts with a solar salesperson knocking on the front door, calling on the phone, or connecting on social media, offering promises of lower energy bills, reduced emissions, and increased resale value. They’ll likely push a special deal – but only if you sign right away.

Be suspicious and don’t share sensitive personal information with anyone who calls, emails, or visits you out of the blue promoting

a solar panel deal, and always read the fine print before signing any document. Know that the government does not have any program that installs solar panels on the houses of Americans for free. If you are interested in solar, research providers, get multiple estimates, and check for complaints and issues with installation companies by visiting the Better Business Bureau national business directory at [bbb.org/search](https://bbb.org/search).

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

# Retailers of Smokable or Edible Hemp Products Required to Register With VDACS

Retail locations that sell a hemp product intended for smoking or an edible hemp product must obtain a Hemp Product Retail Facility Registration before Dec. 31. The application for a retail facility registration will be available starting Nov. 15, through the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Office of Hemp Enforcement.

This registration requirement comes into effect following changes that the General Assembly made to Virginia’s Industrial Hemp Law in 2023. VDACS Office of Hemp Enforcement is publicizing this change to ensure all establishments that sell edible or smokable hemp products comply with the law.

Requirements include but are not limited to:

- A regulated Hemp Product Retail Facility Registration shall be required for each location that offers retail sales of these regulated hemp products.

- As required by law, a nonrefundable annual registration fee of \$1,000 shall be required with each application for a regulated hemp product retail facility registration.

- Each registration issued shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of issuance and may be renewed in successive

years. Each annual renewal shall require the payment of the nonrefundable annual registration fee.

In order to offer for sale a regulated hemp product in Virginia, an establishment must submit the Regulated Hemp Product Retail Facility Registration Application to VDACS and pay the \$1,000 annual fee. Applications may be submitted to the Office of Hemp Enforcement by mail or electronically. Mailed applications must include a check or money order, while online application payments can be made electronically.

Registrations will be issued in the order in which the application was received, and applicants will receive confirmation once an application and fee has been properly verified by VDACS Office of Hemp Enforcement. A hemp product retailer found to be offering for sale regulated hemp products without submitting a Hemp Product Retail Facility Registration Application after December 31, 2024, may face a civil penalty of \$2,000 initially. Retailers found to be in repeat violation of the facility registration requirement may be assessed additional, increased civil penalties.

More information can be found on the Office of Hemp Enforcement webpage.

# Traditional syrup makers tap into alternative flavors

Highland County is home to over 70% of the state’s maple syrup production, but there are other hidden syrup sources in the county’s diverse woodlands.

Sugar maples typically are tapped from January through March, as the sap requires cold nights and slightly warmer days to flow. But variable weather places pressure on the six-week harvesting window—inspiring some producers to explore alternative species.

Several different species of trees can be used to make syrup, including beech, black birch, black walnut and sycamore.

Glenn Heatwole of Sugar Tree Country Store started experimenting with black birch syrup three years ago in hopes of extending his syrup season. Birch trees are tapped once the ground warms to above 40 degrees, and then the sap “runs until it quits,” he said.

Heatwole is one of the only black birch syrup producers around—partly due to the species’ scarcity in the region. And while it takes about 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup, a gallon of birch syrup requires 250 gallons of sap.

“It’s very labor-intensive,” Heatwole noted. “You have to be on top of it, close at hand and always paying attention.”

Tonoloway Farm’s hickory syrup is made throughout the year. Hickory tree bark is harvested, boiled into a “tea” and sweetened with cane sugar to make a syrup. The farm’s store also keeps a ready supply of maple and apple cider syrups, but its black walnut syrup always sells out.

Boasting thousands of black walnut trees, Tonoloway Farm is one of the largest black walnut syrup producers in North America. From early February to late March, tubes woven throughout the woodlands funnel extracted sap from 2,000 taps into collection tanks.

“Most people don’t understand all the different byproducts you can get from black walnut trees,” noted Virginia Tech researcher Tom Hammett.

Hammett recently launched a research study with the farm’s manager, Will Shepherd, in partnership with Virginia Tech and Future Generations University in West Virginia. They conduct on-farm research exploring production efficiencies and flavor profiles for developing a walnut syrup grading system.

“A lot of the work we’re doing is very similar to some of the work that’s been done with sugar maple,” Hammett explained.

They hope their groundbreaking study will help expand the market. Many syrup producers have yet to discover the premium product—recently valued at \$320 a gallon in the wholesale market, according to Shepherd.

“We’re trying to help remove all barriers to entry so that walnut syrup becomes more of a common thing, because it’s probably the best syrup I’ve ever had,” he remarked.

Visit [sugartreecountrystore.com](https://sugartreecountrystore.com) or [tonolowayfarm.com](https://tonolowayfarm.com) for more information.

Read more in Virginia Farm Bureau’s fall Cultivate magazine at [bit.ly/4fjmUfX](https://bit.ly/4fjmUfX).

# Visits for meetings, conventions fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2023

Last week, the Virginia Tourism Corporation said that meetings and conventions in Virginia generated \$5.8 billion in direct spending in 2023, with \$2.1 billion contributed solely by visitors. Meetings and conventions visitors spent nearly \$6 million per day in Virginia last year. In 2023, 4.9 million people attended a meeting or convention in Virginia, with 2.5 million staying overnight, representing 6% of Virginia’s total overnight visitors.

Operational spending drove about \$3.7 billion, or 64%, of direct impact from meetings and conventions, a comparatively larger share of the \$5.8 billion relative to traditional visitor spending. Meetings operational spending includes hotel and venue financing and rental arrangements, staffing services, AV and production services, event management and marketing, technical support and IT services, and insurance policies sold for event coverage. The remaining 36% of impacts were from traditional tourism spending by meetings and convention visitors.

Meetings-related visitor spending grew by 14% from 2022, outpacing the total statewide visitor spending growth of 10%. Of the \$2.1 billion in meetings and conventions visitor spending, lodging captured the largest share of visitor dollars at 42%, followed by food and beverage (30%), transportation (13%), retail (10%), and recreation (5%). Lodging and food and beverage spending saw the most year-over-year growth, each increasing by 15%, followed by recreation (14%), retail (12%), and transportation (9%).

In 2023, Virginia’s meetings and conventions sector directly employed 56,703 Virginians, generating \$2.2 billion in income and driving \$335 million in state and local tax revenues. The direct impact of lodging and property taxes alone at \$157 million total in 2023 highlights the sector’s crucial role in generating revenue for local governments across the Commonwealth.

The meetings and conventions sector in Virginia experienced a significant decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 72% drop in meetings-related visitation and a 73% decrease in meetings-related travel spending. Meetings and conventions visitor volume was essentially halted for two years and sat at less than half of pre-pandemic spending and visitation levels from 2020 through 2021. The meetings and conventions sector reached 2019 levels of spending in 2022, and meetings-related visitation finally reached full recovery in 2023, playing a crucial role in

Virginia’s overall recovery from the pandemic.

“The resurgence of Virginia’s meetings and conventions sector to pre-pandemic levels is an economic impact win that should be celebrated,” said Caren Merrick, Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade. Generating \$5.8 billion in direct spending and employing more than 56,000 Virginians, this sector is vital to our Commonwealth’s prosperity. The \$335 million in state and local tax revenues further emphasizes its importance in supporting our communities and enhancing the quality of life for all Virginians.”

Northern Virginia, home to about one-third of the state’s hotel rooms and a high concentration of meeting spaces, accounts for roughly half (47%) of all meetings-related spending in Virginia. Coastal Virginia, centered around the Hampton Roads region accounts for 23%, followed by Central & Southern Virginia at 18%, which includes Richmond, Charlottesville, and Lynchburg. Western Virginia, inclusive of the Roanoke region, the Shenandoah Valley, and Southwest Virginia contributed 12% of meetings and conventions spending in the Commonwealth. However, across the regions of the study, meetings are a relatively constant share of all total regional spending. All regions benefit from meetings and conventions visitors.

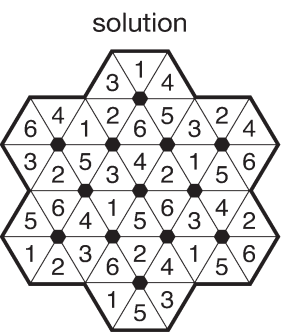
Virginia Tourism Corporation collaborated with Tourism Economics to conduct this comprehensive impact study. For purposes of this study, meetings are defined as a gathering of 10 or more participants for a minimum of four hours in a contracted venue. This includes business events but excludes social, educational (formal educational activities at primary, secondary, and university level education), and recreational activities. Consumer exhibitions are included.

The economic impact of meetings and conventions was estimated using the regional Input-Output (I-O) model based on a customized IMPLAN model for Virginia, which also subdivided the Commonwealth into four regional areas for further measurement. The results of this study show the scope of the meetings and conventions sector’s impact in terms of direct visitor spending and operations, as well as total economic impacts, including employment, household income, and fiscal (tax) impacts.

For more information on VTC’s Economic Impact of Meetings & Conventions in Virginia and Future Outlook study, visit [vatc.org/research/meetings-impact](https://vatc.org/research/meetings-impact).

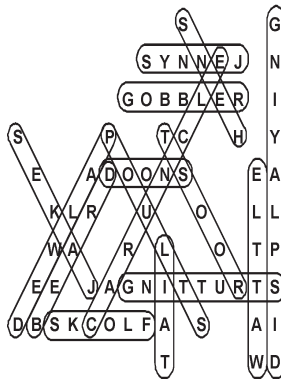
# Puzzle Answers!

## SNOWFLAKES



P	A	P	E	R	S		A	D	I	D	A	S		H	E	A	D	I	E	R
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## TURKEY TERMS



## SCRAMBLERS

solution

1. Being; 2. Adrift;

3. Refuse; 4. Sport

Today's Word

AROUND

## FEAR & THE KNIGHT

answer

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W	I	S	H			
A				O		
R	H	I	N	O		
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## Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

8	3	7	2	6	9	1	4	5
6	1	9	8	4	5	2	3	7
4	2	5	1	7	3	8	9	6
3	9	8	6	5	2	4	7	1
5	4	2	7	3	1	6	8	9
7	6	1	4	9	8	5	2	3
1	5	4	3	2	7	9	6	8
9	7	6	5	8	4	3	1	2
2	8	3	9	1	6	7	5	4

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







# Hike the Tobacco Heritage Trail with DRBA

The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) invites you to hike the Tobacco Heritage Trail in South Boston, Virginia, on Saturday, December 7. The organization’s First Saturday Outing will take advantage of the rail-to-trail with a 5.2-mile round trip walk between South Boston and the Berry Hill Resort. Participants will meet at 10 a.m. at the Cotton Mill Park trailhead, 196 Railroad Avenue, South Boston, VA. The compacted crushed stone surface of the trail makes it an

easy walk, and, like most rail trails, the path is relatively level.

**The History of the Trail**

DRBA enjoyed a preliminary walk on the rail bed back in 2008 before it was improved for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians.

The pathway is clearly marked with the trail’s logo, a golden tobacco leaf in a red circle. The trail is part of a system planned ultimately to stretch 150 miles across Southern Virginia.

According to Tom McLaughlin of SoVaNow, the trail has “scenery that’s more subtle than spectacular” and “exudes an aura of peace.” A small clearing high on the river bank enables one to pause and contemplate the flowing waters of the Dan.

Closer to Berry Hill Resort is a duck impoundment habitat funded by the Game Commission and dedicated to the memory of the late Biggie Hunt. Naturally, sightings of waterfowl are common here.

Construction of the trail was funded by the Virginia Department of Transportation along a former right of way of the Richmond Danville Spur Trail. At the old Halifax Cotton Mill, owned by the Town of South Boston, a botanical garden is planned for what will be Cotton Mill Park, near the trailhead.

Tobacco Heritage Trail Coordinator Heather Susee recently met with interested volunteers in South Boston to establish a Halifax County chapter of “Friends of the Tobacco Heritage Trail.”

Participants in DRBA’s outing are asked to bring lunch and water. Dress in layers of synthetic fabric or wool, wear hiking boots or walking shoes, and be prepared for wind or rain. If desired, bring a walking stick or poles. All participants



Courtesy of DRBA

are asked to sign a waiver.

### Directions

To reach the trailhead from the south, take US 58/US 360 to South Boston. Turn north onto US 501 (Main Street). Continue onto Broad Street and cross the Dan River. Take the first left onto Factory Street. Take the second left onto Seymour Drive. Seymour Drive will cross, then parallel, the railroad. Turn right onto Railroad Drive into the parking lot near the trailhead.

From the north, take US 501 (Halifax Road) to South Boston. Continue onto Wilborn Avenue for 0.9 mile. Turn right onto Edmunds Street, and continue for 0.4 mile. Turn left onto Railroad Drive, and continue for 0.4 mile to the parking lot near the trailhead.

**NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING**  
**HOLIDAY HAVOC 2**  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2024**  
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**645 Patriot Ave, Martinsville, VA 24112**

**ADVANCE TICKETS:**  
**ADULTS: \$12**  
**KIDS: \$10**  
**5 & UNDER: FREE**

**DOORS OPEN: 6PM**  
**BELL TIME: 7PM**  
**P&HCC STUDENTS & STAFF: \$8**

**DOOR TICKETS:**  
**ADULTS: \$15**  
**KIDS: \$12**  
**5 & UNDER: FREE**

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**"BAM BAM" LANCE ERIKSON VS. MIKE MARS**

**NICW MID-ATLANTIC HERITAGE CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**BOBBY YELA VS. CHASE BENNETT**

**NICW CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP**  
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## SPECTRUM MEDICAL

### A clinical research study for people with obesity or overweight and type 2 diabetes



LAA2 is a new clinical research study from Eli Lilly and Company. It is testing if an investigational medicine (a medicine being studied) may help treat people with obesity or overweight and type 2 diabetes.

### Can I join this study?

Yes, you may be able to join the research study if you:

- Are aged 18 to 75 years
- Have a BMI of 27 kg/m2 or more
- Have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes for at least 6 months
- Have not taken part in a clinical research study for obesity or overweight in the past year

BMI stands for body mass index. It is a number that compares a person’s weight to their height. It can be used to tell if a person may be at risk of some health conditions.

For more information:

Scan the QR code below or visit:  
<https://e.lilly/3VVoy0l>



Use the camera or QR code scanner app on your phone to scan the QR code

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