



Martinsville Mayor LC Jones (right) is pictured presenting a plaque to mark outgoing city manager Leon Towarnicki's retirement in July 2023.

## City taps retired manager for transition support

By Jessica Dillon

The City of Martinsville is in the midst of a leadership shuffle as former interim city attorney Eric Payne moves into a newly created role with the Economic Development Authority (EDA), while retired city manager Leon Towarnicki returns part-time to help with development projects and staffing transitions.

Payne had served as the city attorney designee, under a contract that required him to pass the Virginia Bar Exam by April 1. Though already licensed in Washington, D.C., and Maryland, Mayor LC Jones said Payne faced “family (See City p. 3)

## Board to hold public hearings on road abandonment, solid waste plan

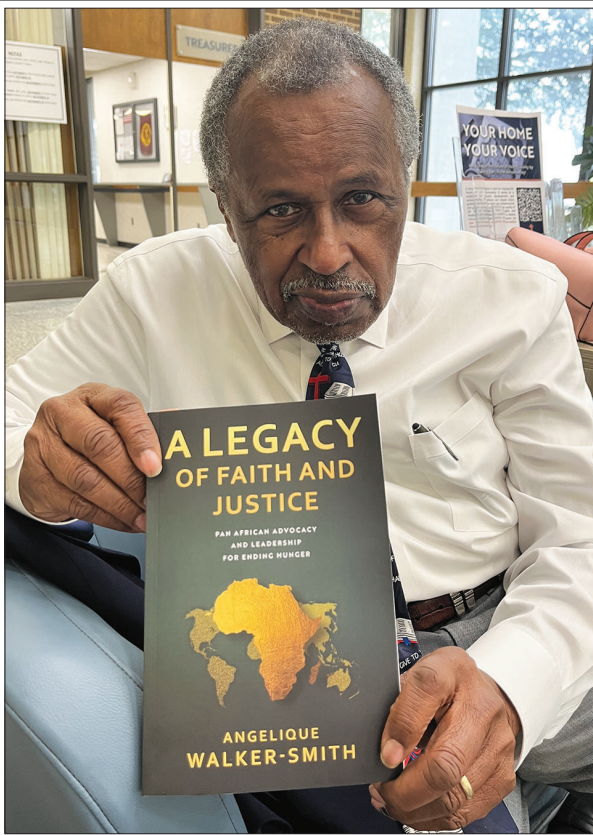
The Henry County Board of Supervisors will meet Tuesday, July 22, at 3 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building. The evening session includes public hearings on a proposed road abandonment, a regional solid waste management plan, and a rezoning request for a potential Airbnb-style rental.

A public hearing will be held on the proposed abandonment of a discontinued section of Virginia 57, Chatham Road. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is requesting the board consider the abandonment of a 0.08-mile section, just west of Stockton Road. This section road is located in the Iriswood District and was discontinued by VDOT in 1983.

Public hearings also are scheduled on:

\*A 2025 Regional Solid Waste Management Plan Update. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), through its Waste Management Board, requires each locality to develop and maintain a Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). The county is partnering with the City of Martinsville and the Town of Ridgeway in a regional SWMP. The plan outlines the long-term strategy and goals set by the three entities concerning solid waste management and requires review and update every five years. A public hearing is required before DEQ can accept the plan.

\*A rezoning application submitted by Mark Brogan / Smith River Rentals, LLC for property located at 3775 Fairystone Park Highway, in the Reed Creek District. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 0.22-acre from Commercial District B-1 to Neighborhood Commercial District B-2. The upstairs of this building (See Board p. 5)



Rev. Tyler C. Millner Sr. was recognized for his work to end world hunger during Bread for the World's 50th Advocacy Summit. He was also featured in Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith's book, “A Legacy of Faith and Justice: Pan African Advocacy and Leadership for Ending Hunger.”

## Millner recognized nationally for work to end hunger

By Taylor Boyd

Retired Morning Star Holy Church pastor Rev. Tyler Millner Sr. was recently recognized for his advocacy in ending world hunger during Bread for the World's 50th Advocacy Summit and in Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith's new book, “A Legacy of Faith and Justice: Pan African Advocacy and Leadership for Ending Hunger.” (See Millner p. 9)

## Reynolds leads drive-in cleanup in push for tourism revival



Before: Only a corner of the former Russell's Drive-In building was visible through kudzu growth.

By Jessica Dillon

Ray Reynolds recently led a cleanup effort at the site of the former Russell's Drive-In. Once known for its memorable 'Whataburger,' hot dogs and community charm, the building had fallen into disrepair and become a safety hazard. The property had developed a sinkhole and become overrun with kudzu.

Reynolds, who is seeking the Blackberry District seat on the Henry County Board of Supervisors against long-term incumbent and board chairman, Jim Adams, brought his personal crew to help begin revitalizing the property, after talking with owner Vickie Payne.

“I told her, I just couldn't watch this place keep falling apart,”



After: The building is now visible and yellow caution tape serves as a warning about the hole on the property.

Reynolds said. “You couldn't even see the building.”

His main concern was the sinkhole, which was covered in plants. After watching a car turn around, he became worried that someone might drive into it.

Payne said she was surprised someone even asked.

“He called me out of the blue. Said his dream was to bring Bas-

sett back,” she said. “I thought it was amazing—someone finally caring enough to do something.”

Jimmie Gravely, whose father, Roger, worked on the building in the 1970s and '80s, said it used to be a gathering place.

“My mother and daddy fixed this place up. We decorated the bar stools, the countertops—it was (See Reynolds p. 2)

## Lawless builds momentum with anti-litter initiative



At a recent press conference, Chris Lawless discussed metal statues designed to deter littering—some equipped with the potential to hold cameras, including a version of mascot “Lilly the Litterbug.” (Photo courtesy of Skill Wave Media)

By Jessica Dillon

Chris Lawless, a candidate for the Collinsville District seat on the Henry County Board of Supervisors, is helping lead a fast-growing cleanup initiative known as MHC Trash Pandas.

Lawless is running against incumbent Joe Bryant, who also serves as vice-chairman of the board.

The grassroots group organizes regular trash pickups across Henry County and Martinsville, including in areas as far-reaching as Spencer. What started as a small idea has grown into a movement, driven by community volunteers and the growing frustration over

roadside litter.

Lawless said the idea took off after he joined forces with Ariel Johnson, director of the MHC Warming (See Lawless p. 9)

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UPDATES





# Griffith visits Martinsville clinic, praises program



Marketing Director Brittany Anthony (from left), CFO Gina Finocchiaro, Dental Clinic Manager April Compton, CEO Marcus Stone, and U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith tour Connect Health + Wellness in Martinsville.

**By Jessica Dillon**

U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, visited Connect Health + Wellness in Martinsville to discuss rural health care and tour the organization’s dental clinic.

“The Martinsville-Henry County area is served by dedicated health care professionals, like those at Connect Health + Wellness,” Griffith said. “I am thankful for the opportunity to tour their dental facility in Martinsville. As the new chairman of the Health Subcommittee, I support finding ways that help our rural hospitals provide critical health care access to rural communities.”

During his visit, Griffith met with staff and dental students working at the clinic as part of a residency training partnership.

“At Connect Health + Wellness, we are deeply committed to expanding access to high-quality and affordable medical and dental care, particularly in the rural communities we serve,” said CEO Marcus Stone. “We are honored to welcome Representative Griffith and to have the opportunity to showcase our work as part of the ongoing conversation about strengthening rural healthcare in our region.”

Griffith privately met with staff before touring the building, where he learned about the clinic’s student dental program. The clinic partners with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to host dental students in weekly rotations.

“We have VCU dental students rotating in weekly,” Stone said. “Every week, it’s a new set, and they help us care for patients—real patients—in a real-world setting.”

Stone said the program significantly expands the clinic’s capacity.



Dorm-style housing for dental students is located above the Connect Health + Wellness dental clinic in Martinsville.

“We have two dentists, and then three students come in. We basically triple how many people we can see by having the students here,” he said.

The program is part of the National Health Service Corps and is supported through federally managed residency placement programs, some of which are governed by Congress.

“This is about more than just dental school—it’s part of a broader effort to fix provider shortages,” Stone said.

To support the student rotations, the clinic offers housing on-site. Dorm rooms are located upstairs above the clinic, where students stay during the week.

“They come in, work with us in the clinic, then go upstairs in the evenings,” Stone said. “They walk to restaurants, coffee shops, and they actually live here for a week.”

The clinic provides snacks and helps the students feel connected to the community. According to Stone, the program has already had an impact on recruitment.

“We’ve seen it already,” he said. “They do the rotation, and then some come back to live and work here.” Two former students have since committed to becoming full-time dentists at the clinic.

Griffith praised the model, calling it “exactly what rural health care needs more of.”

He noted that rural health has long been a legislative priority, particularly in Virginia’s 9th District, which has more federally qualified health centers than any other district in the state.

Griffith acknowledged ongoing challenges related to Medicaid policy and hospital funding but said programs like the one in Martinsville could play a key role in addressing long-term gaps in care.

“When you get to the Medicaid stuff, it can affect



U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith tours the Connect Health + Wellness dental facility, which hosts rotating dental students through a residency partnership.

the hospital some. It will,” Griffith said. “But we’re looking for ways that we can perhaps make some beneficial changes there. The Senate put in a \$50 billion fund—it doesn’t do a lot. But for rural hospitals, we have to get that defined.”

“I hope to work with the administration to define that so it actually helps rural hospitals, and not get sucked away like some of the other money to hospitals that are centered in a big city and might have one rural outlet. Sometimes that happens.”

Stone said the program offers something meaningful for both patients and future providers.

“You’re going to see a million patients in your career,” he said, “but the people you see here will always remember how you treated them.”

Griffith called the facility a “great asset” and commended the clinic for its ability to train and retain new dentists.



Former Ridgeway Mayor Ed Page (left) pictured with former U.S. Congressman Virgil H. Goode Jr.

## Town of Ridgeway pays tribute to former Mayor Ed Page

It is with deep sadness that the Town of Ridgeway announces the passing of former Mayor Edward M. Page, Sr., who passed away on July 9, 2025.

Mayor Page faithfully served as Ridgeway’s Mayor from 1990 to 2014, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, leadership, and community service. A tireless advocate for the people of Ridgeway, Mayor Page was a driving force behind numerous improvements that shaped the town’s development and enhanced the quality of life for its residents.

Among his many accomplishments, Mayor Page played a pivotal role in securing federal funding through a Community Development Block Grant, which enabled many Ridgeway homes to connect to the public water and sewer systems. He also worked closely with former Congressman Virgil H. Goode, Jr. to secure funding for the construction and replacement of the Ridgeway Bridge, a vital infrastructure project for the community. Mayor Page also served as a committed member of numerous state and local boards, including the Henry County Industrial Development Authority.

Even after his tenure as Mayor, Ed Page continued to serve Ridgeway with distinction as the Town’s Zoning Administrator.

Mayor Page loved the Ridgeway community and dedicated his life to public service with the goal of improving the lives of those around him. His commitment to progress, his leadership, and his generous spirit will be remembered as an inspiration to all.

Let Mayor Page’s life and service be a guiding example for us all. He was greatly loved, and he will be greatly missed.

Our deepest condolences go out to his family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched.

## Reynolds

(cont. from page 1)

beautiful,” she said. “But when the old folks pass on, sometimes the young don’t see the value until it’s gone.”

Gravely said she’s proud of Reynolds for stepping in.

“This is a good spot. It just needed someone to care.”

Payne said Bassett still has potential.

“We’ve got Philpott Lake, the Smith River—it’s beautiful here. We could be a tourism town again, just like Mount Airy.”

Reynolds agrees.

“We’ve let too much go for too long. Over 20 years, our community’s been sliding backward, and folks just got used to it,” he said. “But when people visit, they ask, ‘What happened here?’ I want to change that.”

He’s also pushing for more action in the Blackberry District.

“I’ve submitted five dangerous structures for removal. Somebody else might take the credit, but I started pushing this three years ago when I moved to Blackberry in my tiny house,” he said. “Every time I asked for help, I heard, ‘It’s not my problem.’ So, I decided, maybe it can be mine.”

Reynolds, who owns his own construction business and has for 40 years also spent 25 years as a photographer, said many families in the district know him.

“I’ve built for them, photographed their kids, done car shows,



Reynolds said he worked with the community and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), which ultimately dispatched crews to load and haul the kudzu away.



Clearing the property took several hours, as crews worked throughout the day.



Ray Reynolds led the clean-up effort at the former Russell’s Drive-In property.

pageants, the Jennifer Short ride—I’ve always given back,” he said. “And I plan to keep doing that.”

Reynolds said he

chose this location because it was among the worst, and said he sees this cleanup effort as just the beginning.

“Everything I do, I intend to finish,” Reynolds said. “We’re not just picking up trash—we’re reclaiming our community.”



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).)

<b>Meetings</b>		
<b>Monday, July 21</b> The Patrick & Henry Community College Board Legislative Committee meets at 11:30 a.m. in Room 145 in the Frith Economic Development Center, 645 Patriot Ave., Martinsville. This is a public meeting, but the committee will not receive public comment.	of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville.	rant, 530 Commonwealth Blvd, Martinsville.
<b>Tuesday, July 22</b> City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 55 W. Church St., Martinsville.	<b>Saturday, August 2</b> The Bassett Branch Library Expansion Committee and the Blue Ridge Library Foundation are hosting a BINGO Fundraising Event, to benefit the Bassett Branch Library Expansion Project, at the Historic J.D. Bassett Event Center, 3289 Riverside Dr. Doors open at 4 p.m.; BINGO starts at 6 p.m. Packets include 3 games per play; 20 games per packet. The first packet is \$20; \$10 for each extra. Prizes per game, pull tabs, door prizes, raffle and 50/50. Cash only. Concessions will be available for purchase. Check the Bassett Branch Library Expansion Project Facebook page.	The Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett, hosts breakfast on the 2nd Saturday of each month, \$9 for adults, and \$4 for children under 12. All you can eat, sausage, fried bologna, eggs, cooked apples, sausage gravy, biscuits, made-to-order pancakes, coffee, and juice. Dine in or carry out.
The Henry County Board of Supervisors meets at 3 and 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room, Henry County Administration Building.	Storytime, 10 a.m., the Hylton Library, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer. Free program. No registration is needed.	AWANA meets at Blackberry Baptist Church on Sundays, from 4-6 p.m.
<b>Events</b>	<b>Sunday, August 3</b> The Virginia 250 Symposium will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Virginia with three speakers: VA250 Executive Director Cheryl Wilson, Jeff Briggs, and Hunter Haskins. It will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, August 3, at the MHC Heritage Museum, 1 E. Main St., Martinsville. This program is part of the Sunday Afternoon Lecture Series.	Book Bingo on the 4th Tuesday of the month at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, 11 a.m. to noon. Call (276) 403-5430 to register.
<b>Friday, July 18</b> TGIF Concert Series, sponsored by Rotary Club of Martinsville and Henry County. Doors open at 6 p.m., music begins at 7 with Turn It Up Band, Bridge Street parking lot, uptown Martinsville. Concessions available. Free event.	<b>Thursday, August 7</b> Books and Brews hosted by Martinsville Library staff, 5 p.m., Scuffle Hill Brewing Company, 2550 Virginia Ave., Collinsville. “The God of the Woods” by Liz Moore will be discussed.	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. Free to the public, but donations will be used by the club to pay for electricity etc.
Franks + Dranks, 6-9 p.m., Gravely-Lester Art Garden, annual summer cookout. Jake Earles will bring a mix of country, Americana, folk and soul to the stage. Enjoy a meal of hot dogs and fixings whipped up by local all-star chefs Shane Pinkston and Will Gravely, as well as chips, cookies, soft drinks and water. Beer and wine will be available for purchase at the cash bar. Guests should bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating. In the event of inclement weather, Franks + Dranks will be held at Piedmont Arts. Admission is \$20 per person and includes food. Tickets available at <a href="http://PiedmontArts.org">PiedmontArts.org</a> . Sponsored by Burton & Company. Support provided by Food Lion on Greensboro Road.	<b>Friday, August 8</b> Music Night 2 Young 2 Old will play in the Alumni Hall at Spencer Penn Centre. Gate opens at 5 p.m., music starts at 6:30. Admission is a \$5 CASH donation. Concessions will be sold.	The Fontaine Ruritan Club hosts Bingo every Tuesday, 1903 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and games begin at 7. Money from Bingo supports community service awards, scholarships, and other community efforts.
YMCA Summer Bash, 6 - 9 p.m.,1000 Irisburg Road, Axton. Free entry. All ages welcome.	<b>ONGOING</b>  A series of four classes on genealogy research will be held on the first four Tuesdays in September (2, 9, 16, 23), from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Bassett Historical Center. There is no charge for the classes. When you sign up for the first class, you will automatically be signed up for the other three classes. The classes are limited to 12 people, so please call the Bassett Historical Center at 276-629-9191 to reserve your spot.	Bingocize at Spencer-Penn Centre. Play Bingo and prevent falls with simple exercises. This free class is offered Tuesdays at 10 a.m.
<b>Saturday, July 19</b> Grand Opening of New Moon Tattoo Studio, 12 p.m., 2618 Virginia Ave, Collinsville.	Summer Camps at Spencer-Penn Centre - through July 24; morning and afternoon sessions with snacks provided. After camp care available until 6 p.m. at no additional cost. Campers must register in advance. Call or email (276) 957-5757, <a href="mailto:spencerpenn04@gmail.com">spencerpenn04@gmail.com</a> for the registration link.	Chair Aerobics at Spencer Penn Centre, Tuesdays at 9 a.m. with Judi Perrin; \$5 fee, 45 minutes of exercise, strength building and fun.
Country breakfast, Rangeley Ruritan Club, 134 Calloway Drive, Fieldale, 7-10 a.m. Eat in or take out. Donations accepted, with proceeds used for community projects.	Monday Market at Fairy Stone State Park, Mondays, rain or shine, through Labor Day, 5-7 p.m., at Shelters #3 & #4. Cash only market. Free parking.	TOPS FIELDALE 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, call Patti Farmer (276) 358-0489.
<b>Tuesday, July 22</b> Registration for the 2025 Back2School program at all sites listed above, 6-8 p.m. The program is open to all students from Pre-K through 12th grade, and students must be present to register. Those who sign up will receive a free new pair of shoes, socks, a backpack, and school supplies on August 2. For more information, contact 276-565-8234, visit <a href="http://www.gob2s.com">www.gob2s.com</a> , or email <a href="mailto:back2school@gmail.com">back2school@gmail.com</a> .	BINGO on Mondays, Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, 17815 A.L. Philpott Highway, Ridgeway. Doors open at 5 p.m., games start at 7 p.m. Concessions are available.	The Martinsville -Henry County Republican Committee meets on its summer schedule. Watch online at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/2041797322550450">https://www.facebook.com/groups/2041797322550450</a> .
Friday, July 25 - Saturday, July 26 Dino Festival, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Virginia Museum	Uptown Pub Run, Mondays at 6p.m., meets at The Ground Floor, Martinsville.	Farmers' Market at Spencer Penn Centre, Thursdays 4-6 p.m. under the pavilion.
	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 Restau-	Chair Aerobics, Tuesdays at 9 a.m. with Judi Perrin. 45 minutes of exercise, strength building, \$5 fee, Spencer Penn Centre.
		Bingocize, Tuesdays at 10 a.m., help prevent falls with simple exercises. Free at Spencer Penn Centre.
		Neighbors in the Know. Join staff and volunteers in the Hylton Library at the Spencer Penn Centre for activities and socializing on the third Monday of each month, 10-11 a.m. This free program is perfect for all ages. Registration is not required.

City

(cont. from page 1)

medical issues” that delayed his plans.

“We would’ve had to either extend his contract or let it expire,” said Jones. “He was under city council’s authority, and when the deadline came, it just made sense to move on.”

Rather than seek an extension, Payne accepted a staff role under the EDA, where he had already been working closely on projects during his time with the city.

“He gave up those positions to take the job under the EDA,” said Jones. “He doesn’t work for council or the city manager anymore. They (EDA) have their own budget, and he’ll operate under their purview.”

City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides said the shift was discussed with both the EDA and city council.

“One of the roles Eric served was working with the EDA,” she said. “Council asked if he could be offered the opportunity to serve as their staff lead, and he accepted.”

Payne is the first to fill the role of economic development director for the EDA, which was only recently formed and has begun identifying properties for redevelopment and seeking grant opportunities.

“They needed a staff person,” said Jones. “Eric had already built relationships with them.”

To help fill the gap left by recent vacancies, the city has brought back retired manager Leon Towarnicki on a part-time basis.

“He’s being brought back on a part-time basis to help with the transition,” said Jones. “He

doesn’t need training; he can step right in.”

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson said Towarnicki is working 24 hours a week in community development and handling ongoing projects.

“He wrote a lot of the grants we’ve gotten,” she said. “I think he wrote every Brownfield grant the city’s ever received.”

Ferrell-Benavides said the city has been without a permanent community development director since Keith Holland’s departure last fall.

“There was a lot of information missing when I got here,” she said. “Leon’s helping to stabilize the department and assist with recruitment.”

Towarnicki had previously returned in a limited capacity before Ferrell-Benavides joined the city, and was already familiar with ongoing efforts like the city’s waterline project.

“When I came on and the interim left, he was willing to stay and help,” she said. “It just made sense to have someone with the background and history here.”

Jones said the scope of Towarnicki’s work is project-based.

“It’s really dependent on the projects we have going. We’ve got some good development prospects in the pipeline, and he’s helping move them along.”

Ferrell-Benavides said the city has received a few applications for the permanent community development role, but the timeline for hiring remains flexible.

“I expect him to be here for three to six months at most,” she said.

“He’s not full-time, but he’s been a big help.”

The future of the city attorney role also remains uncertain. Ferrell-Benavides confirmed that hiring an attorney is city council’s responsibility.

“The city attorney and city manager are peers who both report to council,” she said. “We’ve prepared

the RFP for legal services, but council will decide how to move forward.”

For now, the city will continue using the Sands Anderson law firm, which has served as outside counsel for the past three years.

“There’s a lot happening,” Jones said. “But the pieces are moving into place.”



Henry County Sheriff’s Deputy Brett Wimmer (center) is pictured with Capt. Tim Compton (left) and Michael Jarrett.

Wimmer selected Employee of the Month

Henry County Sheriff’s Deputy Brett Wimmer was named Henry County Sheriff’s Office Employee of the Month.

He was presented with gift certifi-

cates from Chopstix, Livy’s Ice Cream, McDonald’s, movie passes from Hollywood Cinema. Food Lion, Michael Jarrett, of Jarrett Marketing, and Star News also support the program.



# OPINION

## = Health Chair =

On July 3, I received the appointment to be the new Chair for the Health Subcommittee of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Following my appointment, I made some of my first public actions visiting rural hospitals and health centers in Southwest Virginia.

My first hospital visit took place in Pennington Gap at the Lee County Community Hospital operated by Ballad Health.

As the new Vice Chair of the Health Subcommittee, Tennessee Congresswoman Diana Harshbarger traveled from East Tennessee to the Lee County hospital to also participate in a roundtable discussion with Ballad Health leadership and staff.

As part of the Health Subcommittee, Vice Chair Harshbarger and I have the ability to influence health care policies in Congress and policymakers from executive agencies, like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Some officials expressed their concerns to us about federal changes to the Medicaid state provider tax that passed in the reconciliation act.

Many want to know the impacts of these changes on rural hospitals and their abilities to serve patients.

The topic is particularly sensitive for Lee County Community Hospital, which closed its doors in 2013, due partly to federal policies in Obamacare.

I was proud to work with Senator Warner, Senator Kaine, the community and Ballad Health to reopen the Hospital in 2021. Further, I am committed to ensuring its operations continue.

During our discussions, I made it clear that I will continue pushing policies that help improve rural health care.



Morgan Griffith

Representative

This was a consistent discussion theme throughout my hospital visits.

Following our conversations in Lee County, I drove to Richlands in Tazewell County.

The Clinch Valley Medical Center operates as part of Lifepoint Health. The obstetrics and gynecology department that helps deliver babies is the closest such location for many expectant mothers in the region, and for some the only reasonable location option.

After my discussions in Richlands, I traveled east to Giles County.

Carilion Clinic operates Pearisburg's Carilion Giles Community Hospital.

I spoke with Carilion officials and staff before heading to Blacksburg.

I concluded my Wednesday hospital visits in Blacksburg, where I visited LewisGale Hospital Montgomery.

Each of these hospitals is part of a hospital group.

The following day, I went to Martinsville and toured the Connect Health + Wellness dental facility.

Connect Health + Wellness is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). It is one of 61 FQHCs in the Ninth District, the most of any Congressional district in Virginia.

Aside from Martinsville, Connect also operates separate clinics to provide health services to local residents in Henry and Patrick Counties.

I am committed to using my position on the Health panel to work with Energy and Commerce Chairman Brett Guthrie so we can analyze the status of our rural hospitals and explore improvements to health care access for

rural communities.

I appreciate all of our rural hospital providers for their diligent work to administer health care services to our sick and healthy, young and old.

To help them in their efforts, one potential health care policy solution is increased access to telehealth.

Throughout my tenure on the Health Subcommittee, I have been a consistent proponent of telehealth measures that enable faster access to medical care for patients in rural areas.

I will also be steadfast in monitoring the impacts from the reconciliation bill. One particular provision in the bill establishes a \$50 billion rural hospital stabilization fund, but how it will be implemented remains to be seen.

It is necessary that we ensure the funds are appropriately allocated to rural areas that are underserved.

One problem for rural health care is the lack of health care providers. One idea to solve that problem is to expand utilization of money to the National Health Service Corps to pay off student loans for medical providers if they move to a rural area and stay for 2+ years. Often when young health care providers come to our region, they fall in love with the region and the people.

As I begin my chairmanship of the Health Subcommittee, I remain dedicated to improving access and costs for better rural health care. In addition, I look forward to continuing a dialogue with all our rural health care providers. I value their perspective, and that is why my first act as Chairman was to meet with them.

# The talk of the word

Last Saturday, President Donald Trump set a new personal record when he got ratioed on his own social media network for the first time.

If you're unfamiliar, getting "ratioed" is when you post something on Twitter (or Truth Social) and it gets more comments than likes or shares; this generally means that the majority of people who saw the post not only didn't like it, they wanted to stop and tell you how much they didn't like it.

Getting ratioed on the social media network you created to have your own private echo chamber and safe space is a bit like getting booed off the stage by your fan club at the concert you're headlining, but Trump managed to pull it off. His secret: telling all of his supporters to stop talking about Jeffrey Epstein and his list.

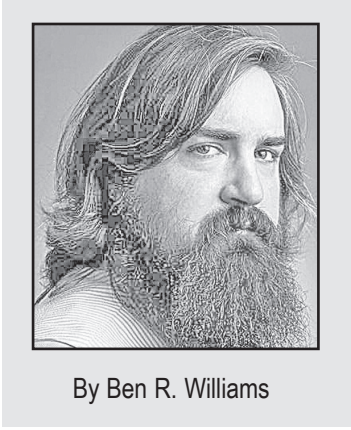
"What's going on with my 'boys' and, in some cases, 'gals?'" the post begins. "They're all going after Attorney General Pam Bondi, who is doing a FANTASTIC JOB! We're on one team, MAGA, and I don't like what's happening. We have a PERFECT Administration, THE TALK OF THE WORLD, and 'selfish people' are trying to hurt it, all over a guy who never dies, Jeffrey Epstein. For years, it's Epstein, over and over again."

It's true that many of Trump's most ardent supporters have turned on Bondi, mainly because she recently stated that the list of Jeffrey Epstein's clients who were allegedly flown around the world to sexually abuse children does not, in fact, exist. This is somewhat at odds with her Feb. 21 statement that the list was sitting on her desk.

A couple of observations: while I disagree with Trump's assessment that Bondi is doing a fantastic job and that he has a perfect administration, I agree wholeheartedly that his administration is "the talk of the world!" That much is inarguably true, in much the same way that it would be the talk of the world if giant spiders exploded from the polar ice caps and threatened to devour all of humanity.

Trump goes on to say that that the Epstein list, which his administration said days earlier was a work of fiction, was actually written by Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, James Comey, and the Biden administration. It's all a fix! "Why didn't these Radical Left Lunatics release the Epstein files?" Trump asks. "If there was ANYTHING in there that could have hurt the MAGA Movement, why didn't they use it?"

I'll take a moment to answer that one. It's because powerful political donors and politicians are on the list, and also because the Democratic Party would rather respect the rules laid out in the 1894 etiquette handbook "The Gentle McFancypants Guide to Being the Bigger Person and Appeasing Cor-



By Ben R. Williams

porate Sponsors" than ever win an election again.

Trump ends his ramble by saying, "The 2020 Election was Rigged and Stolen, and they tried to do the same thing in 2024 ... One year ago our Country was DEAD, now it's the 'HOTTEST' Country anywhere in the World. Let's keep it that way, and not waste Time and Energy on Jeffrey Epstein, somebody that nobody cares about. Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

Yes, let's stop talking about Jeffrey Epstein because no one's interested in the powerful child sex trafficker and his mysterious death; instead, let's talk about something interesting and relevant, like the stolen 2020 election!

It goes without saying that if literally any other President in American history publicly shared a statement like this, a doctor from Walter Reed would be dispatched to fire a thorazine-filled dart into his neck and an investigation would be launched to figure out which world power slipped the President psychoactive toad poison. In 2025, it is merely a normal Saturday.

To further state the obvious, Trump doesn't have much of a poker face. Chocolate-smearing toddlers being questioned about the whereabouts of the cookies have provided more convincing defenses than Trump does here. If Trump says that there's nothing in the Epstein files and they should be forgotten, that clearly means there's something significant in the Epstein files and they should be examined closely.

What's odd to me is that we've known for years now that Trump is in those files. That knowledge certainly didn't hurt him in the last election. I've seen more photos of Trump and Epstein hanging out together than I've seen of Trump and his daughter Tiffany.

The question, then, is what does this mean? Why this sudden, panicked call to the base to just forget all about that Epstein guy?

All I can say is this: if I had a list of famous people who had committed crimes against children, and everyone thought I was on that list, I wouldn't keep the list a secret. I'd release it and clear my name.

As the old saying goes, if it can be destroyed by the truth, it deserves to be destroyed by the truth.

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink

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# HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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## A week in the woods, a lifetime in the heart

Crunch of tires on gravel and leaves. Cramped, achy people emerging, reaching for the sky, bending down to the ground, twisting, stretching.

Ahhh. Joyous greetings: grandparents and grandchildren running toward each other open-armed. Hugs, handshakes, pats on the back. Outstretched hands reaching for luggage, bags, miscellany.

Sliding between crisp sheets: The eternity of a week promising unlimited companionship, conversation, adventures, love and joy.

Gentle weight of quilts keeping out the refreshing chill of night air.

Wooden walls gleaming golden under the glow of the sun. Aromas of coffee and bacon. Murmured con-



Holly Kozelsky

versations on the back porch, watching the birds at sunrise, soaking in the trees and the pond and the mist and the mountains.

Hikes. Walks in the woods. Bug bites. Flowers, frogs and interesting rocks.

Fireflies. Fern beds. Moss-covered rocks. Creeks, streams, rivers and lakes.

Campfires. Golden toasted marshmallows melting between chocolate and graham crackers.

Steaks, salads and veggie burgers. Choco-

late chip cookies. Cool sweet well water, gin & tonics, Labatt's Blue.

The boat, the canoe, the four-wheeler.

Hiking boots, Crocs, sandals.

Band-Aids, Neosporin, bug spray and Itch Blocker.

Puzzles, board games and crosswords.

Laughter, chuckles and whispers. Stories and legends, advice and jokes.

Blink.

Sudden shock: the final full day, which rapidly and cruelly turns into the final night.

Procrastination around the campfire: too tired to stay up, but don't want the day to end.

Blink.

Beds stripped, floors swept, final checks under beds and behind dressers.

Suitcases, water bottles, fishing poles, tackle bags. Phones, wallets, glasses and books.

Car packed and repacked. Breakfast dishes washed and dried.

Hovering in the porch. Red-rimmed eyes holding back tears. Hugs.

Long highway stretching ahead, faced by the jaded travelers with grand surprise.

Gradually, barely suppressed tears giving way to stunned silence as the physical distance from family once again expands by the mile.

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# Letters To The Editor

## Kornna Kitchen: The Politics of Food.

In a small town like Martinsville, it's a struggle for a business to survive with an unchanging population. It is tough in the restaurant business where people and prices come into play. Success or failure can be calculated by the restaurant's reputation and the people who patronize the establishment.

There are not many diverse restaurants in Martinsville and Henry County. Hot dogs, chicken, pork barbecue, Mexican, Chinese, and seafood, if you want to call it that. What happens when you take a failed restaurant location and turn it into a successful restaurant destination? The words "jealousy" and "envy" come to mind.

There was a location in Uptown Martinsville that had a history of being the local ABC store. It was purchased and renovated into a restaurant called Shindig. The place survived for a short period, eventually closing due to low attendance, allegations of discrimination, and limited pedestrian traffic in the uptown area. The location was then rented and turned into the Kornna Kitchen. The owner rented the building from the previous owner, who is a competitor. Then came the politics of food. A failed restaurant location that became the most diverse food establishment led to jealousy.

The demise of the Kornna Kitchen marked the end of an era. The stories in the local news are a diary of envy, jealousy, survival, and an uptown establishment that didn't want the

restaurant to succeed. Businesses can be brutal when there are limitations and a lack of vision.

Henry County has more success in food establishments due to its size. Martinsville is limited in its locations due to availability and a smaller population. That brings it back to jealousy, where restaurant owners don't like other restaurants taking away their patrons. These places have calculated their spreadsheet and know what keeps them afloat. Some restaurants, like Tequila and TAD Space, are surviving only because they own their places. When you rent in Martinsville, you are at the will of the owners.

In many major cities, there is a restaurant row where a diverse array of restaurants coexist side by side, helping one another succeed. You won't find that in Martinsville. How many used clothing and furniture stores can exist in a small environment? Diversity is the key to success in a city, but not in Martinsville.

In Martinsville, businesses generate revenue from rent and prefer to be landlords. Landlords are takers and not visionary developers. Until the families who own come to realize that their deteriorated structures need to be sold to genuine visionaries, the weekend ghost town of Martinsville will continue to exist. Kornna Kitchen was just one example of uptown businesses not working together.

Lawrence Mitchell,  
Martinsville

# Board

(cont. from page 1)

already contains two grandfathered apartments. If the rezoning is successful, the applicant has filed for the required Special Use Permit to allow for the conversion of the downstairs into an Air Bed and Breakfast (Airbnb) apartment.

At the 3 p.m. meeting, the board will:

- \*Consider a Resolution Honoring Public Safety Director Matt Tatum, who plans to retire July 31. Tatum's career with the county has spanned more than over 22 years.
- \*County Treasurer Scott Grindstaff will provide an update on delinquent tax collection efforts.
- \*Mark Heath, president/CEO of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp., will make his monthly update to the Board of Supervisors.
- \*Penny Hall of the West Piedmont Health District requested time on the agenda for introductions, after recently being hired as the district's Health Director.
- \*Sheriff Wayne Davis is asking the board to approve two appropriations totaling \$25,223 from State Asset Forfeiture funds. The first is for \$13,223 to purchase departmental uniform patches. Davis said the department is in the process of transitioning to new uniforms and this appropriation will allow for the purchase of the newly designed patch for the uniforms. He is also requesting a \$12,000 appropriation to support community events sponsored by and or attended by his office, with funds e used to aid in the cost of the various community engagement events and purchases for the events.
- \*Davis also is asking the board to appropriate \$30,000 of grant funds received from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) through its Office of First Responder

Wellness grant program. Davis intends to use the funds to purchase cold plunge tubs and dry saunas to install in the male and female locker rooms at the Adult Detention Center to assist in improving recovery, resilience, and overall well-being among the deputies. The grant does not require a local match.

- \*Commonwealth's Attorney Andrew Nester is asking the board to approve an additional appropriation of \$23,597 from State Asset Forfeiture funds. Nester said \$23,000 is requested to cover fiscal year 2026 travel expenses for the office, and \$597 is requested to purchase file storage shelving.
- \*Public Safety Director Matt Tatum is asking the board to consider an additional \$30,797 appropriation for the Fieldale-Collinsville Volunteer Rescue Squad (FCVRS) to provide funding for a grant match requirement. Tatum said Public Safety staff assisted FCVRS with applying for a grant through the Rescue Squad Assistance Fund to help buy two 12-Lead Heart Monitors. The total grant awarded was \$82,760.09, which requires a local match of \$37,796.85. The squad has stated it intends to trade in two existing monitors to receive a \$7,000 credit towards the match, leaving \$30,797 needed to meet the remaining local match requirement.
- \*Consider meeting in closed session to discuss appointees to the Blue Ridge Regional Library Board, Patrick & Henry Community College Board, and Roanoke River Basin Association; pending legal matters, the acquisition/disposal of real estate, and as-yet unannounced industries.
- \* Consider a Resolution Recognizing the 75th Anniversary of the Ridge-way Ruritan Club, initially chartered in 1950.
- \* Hear a report from VDOT about general highway matters.

# Sunday Afternoon Lecture to feature "American Flags"



Scott Koebel, of Woodmen of the World, will present the program "American Flags" as July's Sunday Afternoon Lecture, 3 p.m. Sunday, July 20, at the MHC Heritage Museum in the courtroom.



Loury Lester air strip. (Photo taken by Jarred Marlowe)

# Community Chronicles

**By Jarred Marlowe**

When residents of Martinsville and Henry County think of local airports, the Blue Ridge Airport in Spencer is usually the first that comes to mind. However, tucked away just a few miles northeast of the city is another airport with a story that is both unusual and fascinating.

The Loury Lester Airport was the result of a simple idea among four aviation enthusiasts in the late 1970s. Larry Washington, Arnold Prillaman, Paul Stanley, and Rick Harris shared a love for flying but were frustrated by the long drive across the county to reach the Blue Ridge Airport. Rather than let inconvenience ground their passion, the men decided to create their own solution.

Pooling their resources, the group purchased land off Barrows Mill Road, about three miles from Martinsville. On this property they envisioned more than just a runway. They planned an entire residential community built around aviation. The idea was that each home would include its own hangar, allowing residents to step out of their front doors, taxi their planes directly from their garages, and take to the skies within minutes.

The original runway stretched 3,800 feet in length and 100 feet in width, but records from the Federal Aviation Administration now list it at 4,000 feet. At one time there were plans to extend it even further to 6,000 feet. To help fund the construction, the men decided to sell additional lots for private homes. The only requirement for buyers was that any house built had to be at least 1,500 square feet.

Although the concept appealed to pilots, it was not universally welcomed. When permits for the project were filed in August 1979, some

residents voiced concerns. One issue raised was the airport's close proximity to Beaver Creek Reservoir, which lies less than a mile away. Citizens worried that construction might cause erosion and runoff that could affect the water supply. Another concern came from those loyal to the Blue Ridge Airport, who feared the new airstrip might compete with existing services, drawing pilots away due to its convenient location near the city.

Washington, Prillaman, Stanley, and Harris worked to ease these fears. They assured officials and residents that the new airport would not offer competing services and that erosion would not pose a threat to the reservoir. With these promises, the project moved forward.

Construction of the runway and nearby homes began in the fall of 1979. By March 1980 the Loury Lester Airport officially opened. Its name honors Lowry Lawson Lester, the father of Ralph C. Lester, who founded Nationwide Homes and had been a World War II pilot.

Today, the airport remains active. It is used by pilots flying small planes such as Cessnas, often for practice touch-and-go landings. It also serves a vital role in emergencies, offering a landing site for life flight helicopters.

Though it may not be widely known, the Loury Lester Airport continues to be a quiet but important part of Henry County's aviation landscape.

Jarred Marlowe is a local resident and historian. He is a member of the Col. George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Blue & Gray Education Society, and the committee chair for the Martinsville-Henry County 250 Committee. He may be reached at marloweja15@gmail.com.

# Creasy named Deputy of the Quarter



Deputy Charles Creasy is pictured with Sheriff Steve Draper, command staff and Michael Jarrett, of Jarrett Marketing LLC.

Martinsville Sheriff's Deputy Charles Creasy was selected as the Deputy of the Quarter. Martinsville City Sheriff Steve Draper said Creasy was selected by the command staff.

Draper said Creasy was selected "because of the commitment he's always given us ... He's always stepped up to the plate and been there for us. It's a pleasure to be able to present this to him."

Creasy, who was presented with a certificate of recognition and a Challenge Coin, Creasy received gift certificates from Chopstix, Livy's Ice Cream, McDonald's,



Martinsville City Sheriff Steve Draper (left), and Deputy Charles Creasy.

movie passes from Hollywood Cinema. Food Lion provided refreshments at the ceremony. Michael Jarrett, of Jarrett Marketing LLC, and Star News, spearheaded the event.

Thank You for reading  
Henry County Enterprise



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Customers can receive free hot dogs with purchase

Sheetz, a major Mid-Atlantic restaurant and convenience chain, will celebrate National Hot Dog Day by giving away two free hot dogs to customers. Customers must purchase a minimum of 10 gallons of any fuel grade in a single transaction to redeem this offer.

This special offer will be available on National Hot Dog Day through Tuesday, July 22. This promotion will be valid for customers at all of Sheetz's 780+ locations that offer fuel by adding it under the OFFERZ tab on the Sheetz app. The offer excludes extras and add-ons to the hot dogs.

The Sheetz app, available on Apple and Android devices, is built to power customers through their Sheetz run, allowing customers to find their closest Sheetz store, add their My Sheetz Rewardz®, buy a gift card, get mobile offers and more. To download the Sheetz app, customers can visit [www.sheetz.com/app](http://www.sheetz.com/app).

Grant program accepting applications from large animal veterinarians

A new grant program aims to remedy critical shortages in large animal veterinary care across Virginia.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Large Animal Veterinary Grant Program is now accepting applications from large animal veterinarians who provide services for livestock, poultry or horses.

The program was recommended by a two-year work group authorized by the Virginia General Assembly last year to help address shortages of large animal veterinarians throughout the commonwealth. Organized by the Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine, the work group includes Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, VDACS and other livestock and veterinary groups.

"The grant program is not a silver bullet, but it's something we think will help move the needle for veterinary care across Virginia," explained Jake Tabor, legislative specialist for VFBB governmental relations.

Earlier this year, the work group solicited feedback from livestock producers statewide on how their operations have been impacted by the perceived shortage of veterinary care. Only 52% of the 1,600-plus producers surveyed felt they were being adequately served to meet their veterinary needs.

"Large animal veterinarians are integral to our farming communities and the security of our food supply chain," said VFBB President Scott Sink. "The VDACS Large Animal Veterinary Grant was devel-

oped as part of a lengthy study of the shortage of large animal veterinary services in Virginia, and we are pleased to see this grant come into effect. We hope this program provides meaningful support to the large animal veterinarians who need it."

Virginia is the latest state to tackle widespread large animal veterinarian shortages. Around 27 states offer loan repayment programs to get veterinarians into rural and underserved areas, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

VDACS will provide four recipients with up to \$110,000, disbursed over three years to support large animal veterinary services across the commonwealth.

The Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission is working alongside VDACS to further extend large animal veterinarian incentives in Southern and Southwest Virginia. Up to two applicants from the pool will be awarded Tobacco Commission grants up to \$150,000 over five years to practice in those areas.

The grants can be used to purchase equipment, pay staff, repay student loans, cover service area travel expenses and other practice needs.

Grant recipients will be chosen by a panel of industry representatives using a standardized scoring rubric. The judging panel will include the State Veterinarian and representatives from VFBB, the Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Academy of Food Animal Practitioners, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association and the Tobacco Commission.

The deadline for grant applications is Sept. 1. Complete details, contact information and the application form can be found on the VDACS website.

Piedmont Arts exhibit closes July 25

"Expressions 2025" will close to the public at 5 p.m., Friday, July 25 at Piedmont Arts. Guests may visit the galleries to vote for the People's Choice Award until the exhibit closes.

Artists with work on display in the exhibit should pick up their work between 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, July 26 at Piedmont Arts.

Piedmont Arts will not assume responsibility for artwork that is left in the gallery after the designated pick up date. Any artwork, including that which has been purchased, will be removed from the premises if unclaimed after 30 days. All work must remain on display for the duration of the exhibit. If any artist is unable to pick up their work on the

designated date, they should email Director of Exhibitions and Marketing Bernadette Moore at [bmoore@piedmontarts.org](mailto:bmoore@piedmontarts.org) to arrange a pick up date.

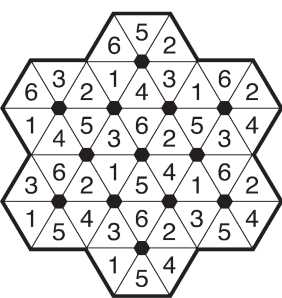
"Expressions" is an annual open-entry exhibition presented by Lynwood Artists and Piedmont Arts. This year's exhibit showcases 207 works by 117 artists from Southern Virginia and the surrounding regions. The People's Choice Award will be announced Saturday, July 26. The exhibit is sponsored by Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, King's Grant, Sovah Health and What's Your Sign.

For more information on exhibits and events, visit [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org).

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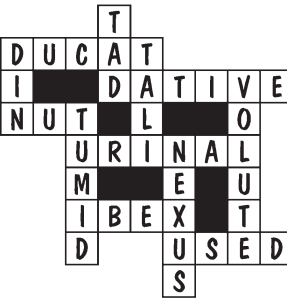
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3. Ramble; 4. Habit

Today's Word

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answer



Weekly SUDOKU

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Crossing the Lines

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

Hospital renovation clears key hurdle

Braden Health, an organization dedicated to revitalizing rural hospitals, has announced a significant update on the ongoing renovation of Stuart Community Hospital. After a thorough review with the state of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has confirmed that the facility is now prepared for its first round of life safety inspections. This achievement highlights the project's steady progress toward reopening and restoring vital medical services to Patrick County residents.

Braden Health thanked the State Office of Rural Health of Virginia, the Office of Health Equity, the Virginia Department of Health, and Del. Wren



After renovations inside and out, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has confirmed the local hospital project is now ready for its first round of life safety inspections. To keep the process uninterrupted, public tours of the facility will not be offered during the inspection. Tours will resume once the inspections conclude.

Williams for providing stellar communication, ease of access, and assistance in restoring essential healthcare services to Patrick County.

The restoration, aimed at modernizing

the long-shuttered hospital, has prioritized infrastructure upgrades, safety enhancements, and compliance with current standards. To date, crews have completed a wide array of critical tasks.

Father shares daughter's recovery journey in new book

Chris Worley's debut book, "And I Was Delivered from the Lion's Mouth: The Lauren Worley Story," details his daughter Lauren's journey from her December 2023 car accident through her recovery, which he and many others have described as a miracle.

Lauren and her then-boyfriend, Micah Underwood, were traveling in a vehicle when they were struck in a head-on collision. She was hospitalized with severe brain injuries and underwent numerous surgeries to help her recover.

Now, more than a year after what he describes as every parent's worst nightmare, Worley said he felt compelled to finish the book.

"I was the one that just put all the updates" on social media "and I documented her journey the whole time. So, when she started healing, and I begged God to save her that night, when she started healing and He saved her, I just felt this overwhelming desire to finish the book and see it to its completion," he said.

The 223-page book is told through Worley's eyes. He tried to be as



Chris Worley and his daughter, Lauren.

visual as possible to fully describe everything for the reader.

Worley said the book follows a chronological order from the accident through Lauren's recovery.

"It's an introduction to Lauren and then it goes over the night of the accident, the first 24 hours, the critical phases, and then each chapter is just a steady progression of Lauren's progress. I talk about her steady progressions and milestones as they come across. There are a lot of key events in the book, a lot of community events, I did talk about all the local fundraisers," he said.

Copies can also be

purchased at The Honey Pot on Main Street in Stuart. If there's enough interest, Worley plans to bring more books to the store.

"Several other places have reached out to me and asked me if they could sell the book. There's a bookstore in Ridgeway, there's one in Floyd, so there's several other people that have asked," he said.

He also hired a marketing firm to upload the book to Barnes & Noble, Google Books, and other websites that sell books.

For more information, visit [www.deliveredfromthelionsmouth.com](http://www.deliveredfromthelionsmouth.com).

6U Coach Pitch Team to Represent Virginia at DYB World Series



Bottom Row Left To Right: Elden Marshall, Rhyatt Jones, Carter Jones, Westyn Sheppard; Middle Row Left to Right: Amyn Tabor, Hunter Milligan, Dekker Belcher, Cash Hall, David Woodall, Trae Nowlin, Paul Morrison; Top Row Left to Right: Coach Tom Tabor, Coach Sterlin Jones, Coach Courtney Nowlin, Coach Dillon Hall. (Contributed)

Hitting the big time in youth baseball, Patrick County's 6U coach pitch team has clinched a spot in the prestigious Diamond Youth Baseball (DYB) World Series, proudly representing the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The tournament is set to take place July 25–29 in Dunn, North Carolina, featuring the top 6U teams from across the nation. The team secured their World Series berth with a standout performance at the Virginia DYB State Tournament, held at Southside Park in Martinsville on July 4. Competing in the *Division I 6U Coach Pitch bracket. Upcoming Tournament Details*

Event: 2025 DYB World Series – 6U Division Dates: July 25–29, 2025 Location: Dunn, North Carolina.

For budding athletes on the 6U squad, the World Series represents

a rare opportunity to compete at a national level and showcase their skills on a larger stage. Parents, coaches, and local fans are eagerly anticipating every pitch and swing, buzzing with pride as the team prepares to take on elite competition.

Coaches praise their players' dedication, teamwork, and composure throughout the state tournament. Their success underscores the strength of Patrick County's youth baseball program—and signals more potential to come. These kids showed grit, heart, and true sportsmanship. They are honored to carry Virginia's flag in Dunn and thankful for the community's support. Patrick County, VA is behind you all the way! Wishing the 6U team the best of luck as they hit the national stage and swing for glory at Dunn!

Write-in candidate throws hat in ring for Smith River Seat

Jackson Iacovone is perhaps the youngest person in modern history to seek a position on the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, with his write-in campaign for the Smith River District in the November election.

Iacovone, who is currently 17, will turn 18 — the minimum age required to be on the ballot—on July 30.

He will face Malcolm Roach Sr. and Rick Swink in the election. Their names will appear on the ballot, while Iacovone's must be written in to count as a formal vote.

Iacovone said he decided to seek the position because he believes someone younger needs to be on the board.

Besides himself, he noted, the youngest candidate is Swink, who is 40.

"I mean we need someone who's going to be able to empower the younger generations but also knows. I mean, I can tell you exactly what a lot of these younger generations want, and I feel

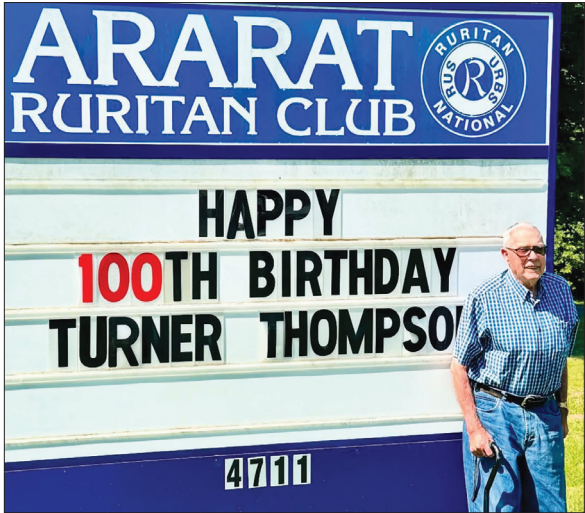


Jackson Iacovone is running for the Smith River District seat on the Board of Supervisors as a write-in candidate.

that's something these older people won't be able to provide," he said.

After reviewing the county's budget reports, Iacovone said he believes there is some excess.

WWII Veteran and Ararat native Turner Thompson turns 100




The community helps celebrate Turner Thompson's 100th birthday.

"On December 7, 1941, sixteen-year-old Turner Thompson, born July 3, 1925, was walking near the Doe Run section at the foot of Groundhog Mountain in Ararat, Virginia, carrying his family's laundry to be washed by another local family, when he encountered Sam Boyd, who told Turner about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. World War II changed the lives of Turner Thompson and many others. Turner went to school with Theodore Gynn, who served on the USS Princeton, Dr. Eric Jarrell, who was a US Marine medic in the Pacific, and others such as Emily Clement, daughter of Carrie Sue Culler."

"Turner was one of ten children—three girls: Mildred Glenn, Mattie Young, and Maybelle Smith, the latter two were teachers at Blue Ridge High and Elementary School. The seven boys: Alvis, who had diabetes and

couldn't serve in World War II; Claude, who was too young to serve during WWII but later served in the Army Air Corps; Turner, Lawrence, and Benton, who went to Europe; and Ralph and Fred, who went to the Pacific. They all came back alive. The Thompsons were one of the earliest families to settle near Jar Gap, where Thompson Creek flows into the Ararat River. Turner said his family came to Ararat via Norfolk, Richmond, and the top of the Blue Ridge before descending back down into the Piedmont. While interviewing Turner in May of this year at Boyd's Restaurant, I discovered that Rodney Boyd was Turner's cousin about three generations back through the McMilians. I remembered and told Turner that my paternal great-grandmother was a Thompson, and we might be cousins, too, even though she lived outside Augusta, Georgia."



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15

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PUZZLE TIME



FEAR KNIGHT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

NDI  
LUVTOE  
MUDTI  
BXIE  
NULRIA  
ADT  
♥ESDU  
CDTUA  
♥UTN  
VEDIAT  
XSUEN  
♥ILTA

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE** ). Prepare to use only **ONE** word from any marked ( ♥ ) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥**RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART** ). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

HOCUS - FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Freezer handle is wider. 2. Upper cabinet is wider. 3. Sandwich is larger. 4. Cookie jar is smaller. 5. Fridge door is not as wide. 6. Countertop is thicker.

MAGIC MAZE ● — WALL

NBYVSPAMJHEBYLV  
TQOLKEIGDBYWTAG  
RPMCSXGSKI FDBNY  
WUOTH TSN NQOMI IK  
GROI RE T NIA I N F M D  
BNZXWRSUSBIQOON  
ERIFLIJTHAMRFDD  
CAYLWOYATVTIDBS  
QPGNIRAEBD A O L A N  
LKIHDARRELT S A C H  
FECBZYWG W V U S R Q P

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally  
Unlisted clue hint: ROYAL FORTIFICATION

Abdominal  
Chest  
Climbing  
Dry

Exterior  
Fire  
Great  
Hadrian's

Interior  
Load-bearing  
Retaining  
Rock

Sea  
Stone  
Wailing

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Super Crossword

AMERICAN CINEMA

ACROSS

1 Gender-inclusive pronoun phrase  
8 Recording on a cassette  
14 Drab military wear  
20 Jostled, in a way  
21 Fill with love  
22 Wear away  
23 1991 Nicolas Cage crime comedy  
25 Evening party  
26 Second-string sports squad  
27 Screw up  
28 Reverend Fr. woman  
30 Singer Anita  
31 "Absolutely!"  
32 1991 Denzel Washington drama  
39 Certain Slav  
40 Novelist Gay  
41 "Help!" asea  
42 1999 Russell Crowe comedy-drama  
47 Tango move  
49 Actor Linden  
52 Wear away  
53 Cribbage pins  
54 Voluntarily

56 Messy sort  
57 Executive nix  
59 1961 Elvis Presley romantic comedy  
61 Take an ax to  
62 Amigo  
63 Got close to  
66 Ronstadt of song  
67 1978 Maggie Smith comedy  
71 Pretend to be  
74 Pontificated  
75 "— Miniver"  
76 37-Down container  
79 1984 Harry Dean Stanton road movie  
82 Maple fluids  
84 Jestng Jay  
85 Tablelands, French-style  
86 Org. looking for aliens  
88 Deserve  
89 Ecol. or biol.  
90 Film bomb  
91 2004 Olsen twins teen comedy  
95 "General" on a Chinese menu  
97 Even (with)

99 Fleming and McKellen  
100 1991 River Phoenix drama  
105 Morning times, in brief  
108 — avis  
109 Dusting cloth  
110 Talking- (lectures)  
111 Smack the baseball hard  
113 Flaxen-haired woman  
115 Fictitious college whose name would be fitting for this puzzle  
121 Apple media player  
122 Quiz show  
123 Designed to fit most people  
124 Argon and radon  
125 Shiny fabrics  
126 Ingredient in emollients

DOWN

1 Well-seasoned, in a way  
2 Fill with joy  
3 Some theater awards  
4 Parks who stayed put  
5 Pool contest  
6 Pullet, e.g.  
7 Slips past carefully  
8 Naturalist Irwin  
9 DiFranco of song  
10 La —, Bolivia  
11 "I believe," to a texter  
12 Prefix with profit  
13 Holds firmly  
14 DJ Casey  
15 "Watchmen" network  
16 Melodious  
17 Reality TV family name  
18 Paragon  
19 "Adios!"  
24 Skill, to Cato  
29 Many a '60s T-shirt  
33 Sale bin abbr.  
34 Antlered deer  
35 Get lippy with  
36 Sort  
37 Soup veggie  
38 Road paving materials  
39 Wild guess  
42 Net fabric  
43 Harvard rival  
44 Pack away  
45 Germane  
46 "Il Trovatore" heroine  
48 German "I"  
50 Caustic liquid  
51 Sister of Luke  
54 Amigos  
55 Tot's injury  
57 Kilmer of film  
58 Director Roth  
59 Soft cheese  
60 Brings about  
62 Relayed  
64 Epochs  
65 Wee colonist  
67 Reality star Jenner, familiarly  
68 Actor Jamie  
69 Sports arbiter  
70 TeleTax org.  
71 Downloads for iDevices  
72 Class taken after trig  
73 Like turncoats  
76 Land of Lima  
77 Tending to the matter  
78 Lavish love (on)  
80 Fraternity "T"  
81 Writer Welty  
83 Inhaled stuff  
84 Eye part  
86 Smack hard  
87 Literary Jane  
88 Studies as a secondary focus  
91 Like sailors' mil. branch  
92 Ecol. monitor  
93 South Korean compact car  
94 —jongg  
96 "— Way" (Proust novel volume)  
98 Dark periods  
100 Head honcho  
101 Crimean port  
102 Part of UPI  
103 "— my pleasure"  
104 "Cook-a-doodle- —!"  
105 "... to fetch — of water"  
106 Actress Gaynor or McCall  
107 Artist Jan  
112 "You never had — good!"  
114 Bad grade  
116 — pro nobis  
117 Ignited  
118 VII octupled  
119 Yang's partner  
120 Genetic ID

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• The word "cereal" comes from "Ceres," the Roman goddess of harvest and agriculture.

• A UC Berkeley study found that people who drove luxury cars, in particular BMWs and Mercedes, were much more likely to cut off other drivers at intersections than folks driving non-luxury cars.

• Popes can't be organ donors, since their bodies belong to the Vatican when they die.

• Ranch dressing, America's best-selling salad dressing since 1992, was created by an Alaskan plumber in the 1950s.

• It would take 19 minutes to fall to the center of the earth.

• Kim Kardashian has a "glam clause" in her will stipulating that if she's ever in a position where she can't get herself ready, is unable to communicate or is unconscious, someone will ensure that her hair, makeup and nails are still perfect.

• Venus is the only planet to spin clockwise.

• Bamboo is the fastest-growing woody plant in the world, with an ability to sprout up to 35 inches in a single day.

• The world's largest bowling alley is in Japan, with a whopping 116 lanes.

• A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.

• Need a natural remedy for a blocked nose? Try an onion. Its sulfur content is thought to draw mucus from the body.

• A dog that is a cross between a Chihuahua and a miniature dachshund is known as a chiweenie.

• The word "mortgage" comes from a French word meaning "death contract."

• According to the Guinness World Records, the world's hottest chili pepper is the Pepper X, rating at an average of 2,693,000 Scoville Heat Units.

• Panda bears have been known to eat for 12 hours straight.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "One cannot and must not try to erase the past merely because it does not fit the present."  
— Golda Meir

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Weekly SUDOKU

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦ Difficult

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

PLAY YOUR TEE SHOTS AWAY FROM THE WORST HAZARDS.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THERE'S OUT-OF-BOUNDS ONE SIDE OF A FAIRWAY AND BUNKERS THE OTHER SIDE, TEE UP ON AND HIT AWAY FROM THE OB SIDE.

HITTING INTO THE SAND WILL PROBABLY COST YOU ONE SHOT AT MOST. WHEREAS GOING OB PENALIZES YOU TWO SHOTS FOR SURE (STROKE AND DISTANCE).

SO GET INTO THE HABIT OF EVALUATING HAZARDS IN PLANNING ALL YOUR TEE SHOTS.

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Pretense  
CHEADAR  
Soak  
SUEDO  
Traipse  
BLAMER  
Custom  
IBATH

"I ran into your old flame today. Looks much younger than I do, but then, of course, he never \_\_\_\_\_."

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# Millner

(cont. from page 1)

can Advocacy and Leadership for Ending Hunger.”

Millner said Bread for the World is a national Christian nonprofit organization that works to end hunger around the globe.

“A big part of that is advocating for the need to end hunger,” Millner said. “Then the second is getting the government to make the kind of decision that will, for a lack of a better word, help move us towards that on the premise that the pantry, however much we may put in it, will not end hunger.”

Millner said efforts like the federal farm bill, food stamps, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and other nutrition aid are crucial to making progress.

“The advocacy is to get government to make the kind of decisions that will help eradicate hunger,” he said, adding that cutting food assistance is not a policy that will achieve that goal.

While he was unable to attend the 50th summit due to health reasons, Millner said he was surprised and honored to be recognized. He was also humbled by his inclusion in Walker-Smith’s book.

“I was extremely appreciative to be counted among those, and it’s extremely humbling,” he said. “To me it said what we’ve done at least has made some impact to be considered an advo-

cate for justice in some official capacity, but all I tried to do is do what I could. I tell the young folk, ‘You don’t work for honor, you work to do good, and somewhere along the way it may or may not be recognized.’”

According to its synopsis, A Legacy of Faith and Justice “sheds light on the untold stories of Pan-African people of faith in the global fight to end hunger.” The book highlights leaders and their role in developing and implementing practices and policies to eradicate hunger, many of whom have been part of Bread for the World’s history.

### Bread for the World Advocacy Summit

At the organization’s annual summit, a central theme is selected to guide advocacy efforts. One past theme, “Nurturing Our Future,” focused on shaping a hunger-free world for the next generation.

Millner said the organization also embraces the concept of a “table where everybody belongs.”

“If you look at it in terms of hungry folk, they need a seat at the table. Or if you look at it from the standpoint of bread, we need to have everybody at the table so that the policies, what we promote and what have you, will have the broadest appeal,” he said.

He said special caucuses, such as African or

Pan-American caucuses, are also held to strategize and share information. Guests receive hunger data updates, and the organization works toward achieving long-term targets through the “millennium goal,” a benchmark for reducing global hunger.

“They set a target: ‘We hope to get rid of major hunger by these targets.’ So part of their work is to keep score as to how we are doing toward that,” Millner said.

Morning Star Holy Church became a covenant church due to its ongoing donations. While the congregation typically donates around \$500 annually, Millner said it contributed \$1,200 in 2023.

### Letter Writing as Advocacy

Millner said Bread for the World encourages grassroots advocacy, especially letter writing to members of Congress.

“So we’re going to be host for letter writing on the fourth Sunday of this month,” he said. “They said that is one of the most effective strategies to influence the Congress. Now they’ve got more than 100 places in the next several months to be a host to write letters, and you usually write your Congressman. The letters are collected and then presented to them.”

For more information about Bread for the World, visit [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org).

www.henrycountyenterprise.com

## LEGAL

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION** Case No. CJ25-15  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE §8.01-316  
HENRY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT  
3160 Kings Mountain Rd, 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112  
Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* AVA MAY BOWDEN  
HENRY-MARTINSVILLE v. ALISHA M. BOWDEN  
SOCIAL SERVICES  
The object of this suit is to:  
TERMINATE THE RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS OF ALISHA M. BOWDEN TO HER DAUGHTER AVA MAY BOWDEN, BORN DEC. 28, 2020, PURSUANT TO VA CODE SECTION 16-1-283.  
IT IS ORDERED that the defendant ALISHA M. BOWDEN appear at the above-named Court and protect her interests on or before July 24, 2025 at 11 a.m.  
JUNE 23, 2025

## LEGAL

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION** Case No. CL25000858-00  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104  
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT  
3160 KINGS MOUNTAIN ROAD, 3RD FL, MARTINSVILLE, VA 24112  
MEREDITH HADEN LOVELL v. TERRY MARSHALL LOVELL  
61 STANLEY MAIN ST,  
STANLEYTOWN, VA 24168  
The object of this suit is to:  
TO OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII  
It is ORDERED that TERRY MARSHALL LOVELL appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before AUGUST 19, 2025.  
June 20, 2025

## LEGAL

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION** Case No. CJ25-16  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE §8.01-316  
HENRY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT  
3160 Kings Mountain Rd, 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112  
Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* MIA MAY BOWDEN  
HENRY-MARTINSVILLE v. ALISHA M. BOWDEN  
SOCIAL SERVICES  
The object of this suit is to:  
TERMINATE THE RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS OF ALISHA M. BOWDEN TO HER DAUGHTER MIA MAY BOWDEN, BORN FEB. 27, 2024, PURSUANT TO VA CODE SECTION 16-1-283.  
IT IS ORDERED that the defendant ALISHA M. BOWDEN appear at the above-named Court and protect her interests on or before July 24, 2025 at 11 a.m.  
JUNE 23, 2025

## LEGAL

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION** Case No. CL25000155-00  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104  
Martinsville Circuit Court, 55 W Church Street, Martinsville, VA 24112  
VALLIE W. HYLTON v. JOHN DOE, JANE DOE, UNKNOWN HEIRS  
The object of this suit is to:  
FOR THE COURT TO DETERMINE WHO IS THE OWNER OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 411 FAYETTE ST., CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA. THE DESCENDANTS OF JAMES WILLIAM HODGE, JR., DECEASED, AND JAMES CHRISTOPHER HODGE MAY OWN AN INTEREST IN THIS PROPERTY. TO DETERMINE WHO OWNS THIS PROPERTY THE PLAINTIFF IN THIS CASE IS ASKING THE COURT TO RENDER AN INTERPRETATION OF THE WILL OF LUCILLE HODGE, DECEASED. IN ORDER TO ASSERT AND PROTECT THEIR POTENTIAL RIGHTS OF INHERITANCE, ANY PERSON WHO BELIEVES HE IS SHE IS AN HEIR OF JAMES WILLIAM HODGE, JR. AND/OR JAMES CHRISTOPHER HODGE. It is ORDERED that JOHN DOE, JANE DOE & UNKNOWN HEIRS OF JAMES W HODGE appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before August 5, 2025.  
June 5, 2025

## LEGAL

**NOTICE OF RESOLUTION NO. 2025-3  
A RESOLUTION TO MOVE THE REGULARLY  
SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING  
FROM JULY 8, 2025 TO JULY 22, 2025**  
WHEREAS, the Martinsville City Council, in accordance with the Martinsville City Charter, sets a calendar of regular meetings during its organizational meeting each January, in accordance with §15.2-1416 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended; and  
WHEREAS, the regular meeting of Council was previously set for Tuesday, July 8, 2025; and  
WHEREAS, the Council Chambers will be unavailable due to facility maintenance on that date, and no alternative venue has been identified that would ensure full public accessibility and legal compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); and  
WHEREAS, the next regularly scheduled Council meeting is set for Tuesday, July 22, 2025, as previously adopted by Council in its 2025 meeting schedule;  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia:  
1. That the July 8, 2025 regular meeting of the Martinsville City Council is hereby canceled, and  
2. That all agenda items originally scheduled for July 8 shall be moved to the next regular meeting date, July 22, 2025, unless otherwise reassigned or postponed by Council action.  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Clerk shall provide public notice of this change in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, § 2.2-3707 (C) of the Code of Virginia.  
Adopted this 7th day of July 2025.

## Lawless

(cont. from page 1)

Center.

“She had started the group, but it just wasn’t getting the traction,” he said. “I reached out and said, ‘Can I help?’ and that’s when it really started to take off.”

Trash quickly proved to be a top concern among residents. The group now organizes cleanups every other Saturday.

“We started with Koehler Road by Sportlanes. There were maybe four of us at first, but it’s grown. Now we usually have eight to ten regulars,” Lawless said.

The group rotates cleanup locations every two weeks, based on previous sites that need maintenance or roads flagged by residents.

“People text or call and say, ‘Hey, this road’s bad,’ and we’ll head that way next,” he said.

Trash Pandas has evolved through trial and error. Early cleanups took place around noon, but summer heat forced a change to 8 a.m.

“You couldn’t get people to come out in the heat,” Lawless said. “We adjusted.”

The group is also working to involve young people, with ideas like educational materials, litter awareness signs, and cartoon mascots such as “Lilly the Litterbug.”

Lawless said the worst areas they’ve cleaned tend to be remote places where people feel they’re not being watched.

“People dump in curves or from the back of trucks,” he said.

Lawless has been researching enforcement policy and wants to see stronger accountability. Sheriff “Wayne Davis told me you have to catch them in the act to fine them, but I don’t agree with that,” Lawless said. “With speeding tickets, the owner of the car is responsible. Why can’t it be the same for litter?”

He believes community service could be more

effective than fines.

“You don’t always have to fine people who don’t have the money. Make them pick it up. Let the judge send them to us for an hour or two,” he said.

Trash Pandas is now part of Engage, a broader volunteer organization led by Lawless’ wife, Brandie. By combining efforts, they hope to streamline volunteer sign-ups and expand outreach.

“A lot of people want to help but don’t know how,” Lawless said.

To keep momentum going, he’s proposed creative incentives like “Trash Cash”—a scavenger-style game where a hidden object at cleanup sites could win a participant a cash prize.

He hopes to fund the incentives through community fundraisers, which could also help elderly residents with yard care.

“People used to volunteer just to help,” he said. “Now they’re burnt out or can’t afford to give up their time. So you have to incentivize — not always with money, but with recognition, appreciation, something.”

Lawless said culture and consistency are key.

“You need to build a team feeling. Take them out to Carowinds, give them pizza, tell them ‘thank you.’ You’ve got to create that family feel or they’ll stop showing up.”

The effort has already reached areas like Ridgeway, Spencer, Martinsville, and Collinsville—but Lawless said there’s more to be done.

“We don’t have anyone for Axton or Irisburg yet,” he said. “But we’ll get there.”

Ultimately, Lawless said Trash Pandas is about more than just litter.

“It’s not just about picking up trash,” he said. “It’s about showing people they can be part of something that makes a difference.”

# Gilbert named to 2024-25 ODAC All-Academic Team

Jacob Gilbert, of Collinsville, was one of a school-record 358 Shenandoah University student-athletes named to the 2024-25 Old Dominion Athletic Conference All-Academic Team in selections announced by the conference on July 9.

This year marked the second straight that Shenandoah has had over 300 ODAC All-Academic honorees, and this year’s total is 29 more than SU had in 2023-24.

The Hornets trailed only Washington and Lee (539)

in total ODAC All-Academic honorees, and was one of three schools to eclipse 300 (Lynchburg had 341). In all, the ODAC had 3,364 honorees and topped 3,000 for the second straight year.

Eligibility for the ODAC All-Academic Team is open to any student-athlete who competes in a conference-sponsored sport, regardless of academic class. Prospective honorees must achieve at least a 3.25 grade point average for the academic year to be considered for ODAC All-Academic Team recognition.

## DRBA receives VA NAP credits

The Dan River Basin Association has received tax credits from the Virginia Department of Social Services’ Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP). This program allows Virginia taxpayers to receive state tax credits for up to 65 percent of their donation to approved non-profit organizations.

Virginia taxpayers who donate to DRBA a minimum of \$500.00 between July 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025 are eligible to earn these Virginia state tax credits. These credits can be used to reduce your state tax responsibilities for 2025. All NAP donations require special documentation that will be provided by DRBA upon a NAP donation.

The first step is to let DRBA know if you are interested in making a donation of \$500 or more to receive NAP credits. Please confirm your interest and donation amount by August 15, 2025 by emailing [thaworth@danriver.org](mailto:thaworth@danriver.org). Please

note, there are a limited amount of credits available to us and award of these credits and the percentage of credit received is based on first-come, first-served policy.

For additional information, please contact Tiffany Haworth via email [thaworth@danriver.org](mailto:thaworth@danriver.org).

## Griffith staff to hold office hours locally on July 23

Ninth District staff for U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith will hold office hours in Henry and Patrick counties on Tuesday, July 23.

In 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.

For questions, call Griffith’s offices in Christiansburg at 540-381-5671 or in Abingdon at 276-525-1405.

email us  
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# Fieldale Recreation Center to add Pickleball Courts with \$25K grant

New pickleball courts are coming to the Fieldale Recreation Center, funded in part by a \$25,000 grant from The Harvest Foundation’s PUP Small Grants program.

“The Harvest Foundation’s investment in new pickleball courts in Fieldale is about more than just the sport — it represents a meaningful commitment to the community,” said India Brown, program officer at The Harvest Foundation. “By expanding recreation opportunities and creating welcoming spaces, this project helps strengthen community ties, promote healthy living, and provide residents of all ages with a place to gather, connect, and enjoy being active together.”

This investment is part of Fieldale Heritage Inc.’s vision to enhance community health, connection, and vitality by modernizing the historic Fieldale Recreation Center and Pool complex.

“We’re incredibly grateful to receive the \$25,000 PUP grant, which allows us to transform a basketball court into three pickleball courts,” said John Garland, president of the Fieldale Heritage board of directors. “This project is a huge win for the Fieldale community. It promotes active living, encourages social connection, and provides a much-needed recreational outlet for residents of all ages. Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in the coun-



Pictured are before photos of the current tennis/basketball courts at the Fieldale Recreation Center.

try, and now Fieldale will be part of that movement. This investment will not only revitalize an underused space, but also brings people together in a fun, healthy, and engaging way. “

Garland is also a partner in the Martinsville-Henry Historic Collective, renovating historic properties across the community, and an engineering staff member of Garland Properties.

Fieldale Heritage Inc. has already raised an additional \$6,000 from local sponsor Ace Northwest Hardware to assist with fencing and court surface improvements. Strategic partnerships with the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, MHC After



Pictured are Harvest Program Officer India Brown and John Garland on the current tennis/basketball courts at the Fieldale Recreation Center.

3, and local churches will ensure that the new courts are used for youth programming, inter-generational events, and league play.

The new pickleball courts are expected to be completed by this summer and will join a growing list of upgrades at the Fieldale Recreation Center, including the recently restored public pool, the only one of its kind still operating in Martinsville-Henry County.

For more information about the project or to get involved, follow the Fieldale Recreation Center on Facebook.



## Fairy Stone volunteer group growing, planning for 2026

Friends of Fairy Stone State Park is a dynamic new group of volunteers organizing events and improvement projects to support the park and enhance the experience for visitors.

Ongoing projects include building a permanent outdoor home for the park’s resident box turtle and installing pet waste stations at trailheads. A New Year’s Eve party is in the works to welcome 2026, and a 5K run/walk is being

planned for next spring on the park’s roads and trails.

The group also supports Fairy Stone’s busy calendar of programs and special events.

To learn more, visit the Friends’ table at the Monday Fairy Stone Farmers Market from 5 to 7 p.m., or check out the Friends of Fairy Stone State Park Facebook page to find out how to join or support the group.

## Yeatts named Environmental Education Coordinator

The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) announced that Kensley Yeatts was appointed as the new Environmental Education Coordinator. Yeatts graduated from Liberty University in May with a B.S. in Zoo & Wildlife Biology. Yeatts interned with DRBA in the education department over the last six months as part of her senior internship with Liberty.

“We are thrilled to welcome Kensley Yeatts as the Environmental Education Coordinator of the Dan River Basin Association. Yeatts’ internship with DRBA over the last six months as a Volunteer Environmental Educator and Citizen Water Quality Monitor will benefit her greatly in her transition as the new education coordinator. Kensley also has experience in aquatic ecosystem fieldwork and conservation that will be an asset to DRBA’s education programs. We look forward to expanding DRBA’s reach and capacity in the Dan River basin through Kensley’s efforts,” said Krista Hodges, director of Environmental Education of the Dan River Basin Association.

Yeatts will work under direction of the Director of Environmental Education alongside the Volunteer Environmental Educators and As-

sistant Educator to incorporate inquiry-based learning, hands-on activities, standards correlation and place-based content for students in the Dan River basin. Her primary focus as the Environmental Education Coordinator will be in Martinsville and Henry County working on the Green Leaves Investigations sponsored by the Harvest Foundation.

“I’m honored to take on the role of Environmental Education Coordinator with DRBA,” Yeatts said. “This position allows me to share my passion for wildlife conservation, environmental stewardship, and science education, while raising awareness about the importance of protecting our environment. I have worked with Danville Parks & Recreation as an Outdoor Recreation Leader since 2023.

“This past spring, I interned with DRBA as a Volunteer Environmental Educator and Citizen Water Quality Monitor, assisting in programs like Trout in the Classroom, Tub of Bugs, Dirt Babies, Monarch Waystation plantings, and more. I also had the chance to participate in outreach events including the Earth Day Expo in Franklin County, Festival in the Park in Danville, and the Bee City Celebration



Kensley Yeatts, Environmental Education Coordinator of the Dan River Basin Association.

in Ridgeway. My time with DRBA has already been incredibly rewarding, and I’m excited to continue supporting its mission and growing with this team,” she added.

During Yeatts’ time at Liberty, she completed fieldwork and research on the Candy Darter, the effects of DDT pesticide use, and population trends of macroinvertebrates, freshwater fish, and newts in local aquatic ecosystems. She also participated in owl banding, tracking the migration patterns of Northern saw-whet owls. Yeatts has also helped lead sustainable agriculture workshops in Guatemala, both teaching and per-

forming agrarian tasks alongside women in need.

The mission of the Dan River Basin Association is to promote and protect the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River Basin through education, recreation, and stewardship. DRBA works to fulfill that mission by building river accesses and trails, educating people of all ages about protecting our natural resources, and protecting our water resources through water quality monitoring, cleanups and master planning. The Dan River basin is 3,300 square miles including sixteen counties throughout Virginia and North Carolina.

## Report shows housing costs for renters, homebuyers continues to rise



**By Zamone Perez**  
*Virginia News Connection*

Rising housing costs are putting pressure on renting and home-owning Virginians alike, according to a new report.

The report by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University finds cost burdens for renters across the Commonwealth hit another record high. In suburbs in Washington, D.C., coastal communities in Virginia Beach and Norfolk and major cities like Charlottesville and Richmond, renters pay nearly 50% or more of their income on rent.

Alexander Hermann, senior research associate at the center, said rising costs have exacerbated affordability issues which were already challenging for renters and even prospective homebuyers.

“That means that homebuyers, in terms of the barriers they’re facing, need both a high level of cash to afford a down payment but also really high incomes to afford the ongoing payments on new homes,” Hermann outlined.

In places like Arlington and Alexandria in Northern Virginia, a household needs an income of more than \$190,000 to buy a median priced home in the area. Households in places like Roanoke and Bristol require a household income of less than \$100,000 to afford the median home.

For households facing increasingly high barriers to homeownership, Hermann noted they are losing out on key wealth-building opportunities. Homeownership rates declined for the first time in eight years to a little more than 65% in the first quarter of 2025.

“These households who have been unable to access homeownership are much less likely to accrue equity in their home,” Hermann pointed out. “Which is the largest source of wealth for many households or most households across the country, especially those who can own homes.”

Nationally, limited housing inventory and ongoing affordability challenges sent home sale rates to a 30-year low in 2024.

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# Dino Festival Roars into Virginia Museum of Natural History July 25–26



The museum’s Harvest Foundation Hall of Ancient Life will be teeming with life-size skeletons once again during this year’s Dino Festival.



Triceratops stands tall inside the museum’s newest special exhibit, The Age of Dinosaurs, which visitors can experience during this year’s Dino Festival. Triceratops will be one of many life-size skeletons visitors will see at this year’s event.

A two-day fossil extravaganza is set to take place at the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) in Martinsville, as the museum hosts Dino Festival on Friday, July 25, and Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

Featuring a trove of fossils from the museum’s scientific collections, new interactive science stations hosted by museum researchers, life-size displays of iconic prehistoric creatures, animatronic dinosaurs, access to the museum’s newest special exhibit The Age of Dinosaurs, and a wide variety of dinosaur-themed activities and crafts, the annual event is designed to give visitors a glimpse into a time when Earth was inhabited by unique and extraordinary life.

“A prehistoric adventure awaits everyone who visits the museum on July 25 and 26,” said Robbie Hendrix-Wirt, VMNH visitor services and events manager. “From the instant visitors step foot on museum grounds, they’ll be transported to a time when our planet was inhabited by amazing creatures long since extinct.”

One such creature is Torvosaurus, a large carnivorous dinosaur from the Jurassic period of Wyoming, whose rare fossil remains will make their Dino Festival debut this year.

“The museum’s paleontology team is eager to offer visitors new and unique experiences during this year’s edition of Dino Festival,” said Dr. Adam Pritchard, VMNH associate curator of paleontology, who is currently in the midst of a weeks-long dinosaur fossil dig in Wyoming. “Among this year’s new additions will be the Meat-eater Station, where museum researchers are ready to show off the incredibly rare fossils of Torvosaurus, the remains of which we have never placed on public exhibit.”

Also new this year is the Fossil Prep Station, where attendees can watch up close as a museum scientist prepares a field jacket filled with dinosaur fossils, describes the preparation process, and fields questions from visitors about life in the ancient past.

“What really separates Dino Festival from so many other dinosaur-themed events is our ability to provide the power of real to our visitors,” said Hendrix-Wirt. “From unveiling fossils that haven’t been seen since they were excavated from the earth by museum researchers, to the exhibition of the only known fossil evidence that Triceratops survived a brutal battle with Tyrannosaurus rex, visitors will not only be presented with an incredible array of real fossils, but they’ll also be able to interact directly with museum experts who are eager to share riveting stories about the specimens on display.”

This year’s festival will also mark the VMNH debut of a full-size adult mammoth skeleton, comprised of approximately 50 percent fossilized bone. The specimen will anchor a new section of the festival that explores life after the dinosaurs.

“After the Dinosaurs is being introduced this year to give visitors a look into how mammals filled the empty spaces in the ecosystems left by the extinction of dinosaurs,” said Bethany Fisher, museum experiences manager. “The debut of the mammoth skeleton will draw a great deal of attention, but it will also be accompanied by experts exhibiting other fascinating specimens from the museum’s collections.”

New hands-on experiences are also on tap for this year’s event.

“It’s exciting to watch scientists work with incredible fossils and listen to them share their knowledge of the specimens, but it can be just as fun working with fossils yourself,” said Hendrix-Wirt. “One of this year’s new offerings is Reptile Jaw Microscopy, where attendees can examine the jaws of ancient lizard-like reptiles under museum microscopes and match the jaws to their owners from over 200 million years ago.



Costumed dinosaurs kept the festivities going at last year’s Dino Festival.



VMNH Associate Curator of Paleontology Dr. Adam Pritchard readies a fossil for a field jacket (protective casing) during fieldwork in Wyoming. Visitors to this year’s Dino Festival will have the opportunity to watch a museum scientist open a field jacket and prepare the fossils within.

It’s fun, educational, and the type of activity you’ll be hard-pressed to find elsewhere.”

Many hands-on elements will be featured throughout the festival, including the dino dig pit, which will be located inside the museum’s newest special exhibit, The Age of Dinosaurs.

“Visitors to Dino Festival will have access to all of the museum’s galleries, including The Age of Dinosaurs special exhibit,” said Hendrix-Wirt. “Here, visitors will find everything from fossilized dinosaur skin and footprints to animatronic dinosaur displays and the dino dig pit, which is designed to replicate an actual field site that museum scientists excavate every summer in Wyoming.”

Of course, no Dino Festival would be complete without an impressive lineup of life-size cast skeletons and skulls of not just dinosaurs, but other ancient life—some of which lived long before the first dinosaurs.

“Visitors will be met by a variety of life-size displays, many of which have accompanying fossil specimens that can be found on exhibit throughout the museum,” said Fisher. “For instance, visitors will not only be able to view a full-size Triceratops skeleton, but they’ll also have access to the incredibly well-preserved fossil remains of a massive Triceratops skull, which will be presented to visitors as they were discovered in the field.”

“The museum conducts world-class research every day, and Dino Festival is a great venue for highlighting the variety of research taking place,” said Hendrix-Wirt. “While insects might not be the first thing that pops into mind at an event focused on ancient life, they have actually been around for hundreds of millions of years and even pre-date dinosaurs.”

Festivalgoers will also enjoy traditional family-friendly offerings such as face painting, balloon animals, children’s crafts and activities, and the Dino Fest Photo Booth—all included with the price of admission. The Museum Store will be open both days of the event, offering a variety of dinosaur-themed merchandise and souvenirs.

“We want visitors to come to Dino Festival for an exciting adventure, and we want them to leave with a memory they’ll keep for years to come,” said Hendrix-Wirt. “We think this year’s edition will provide attendees with just that.”

Dino Festival highlights include skeletons, science and snacks

- Life-size Skeletons and Skulls**  
Visitors to this year’s Dino Festival at the Virginia Museum of Natural History will encounter a stunning array of life-size skeletons and skulls representing prehistoric creatures from land and sea, including:
  - \* **Stegosaurus** – A large, plant-eating dinosaur recognized by two rows of bony plates along its back. Lived during the Late Jurassic, about 155 to 150 million years ago.
  - \* **Acrocanthosaurus** – A massive, meat-eating theropod that lived in North America during the Early Cretaceous, about 125 to 100 million years ago.
  - \* **Allosaurus** – A large carnivorous theropod of the Late Jurassic period, living about 155 to 150 million years ago.
  - \* **Eoraptor** – One of the earliest known dinosaurs, this small, carnivorous theropod was about the size of a deer.
  - \* **Platecarpus tympaniticus** – A giant, sea-going reptile from the Cretaceous period that lived roughly 84 to 81 million years ago.
  - \* **Tyrannosaurus rex** – One of the most iconic dinosaurs, T. rex lived about 68 to 66 million years ago in what is now western North America.

- \* **Dromaeosaurus** – A medium-sized carnivore and close relative of Velociraptor. Lived about 77 to 74 million years ago.
- \* **Albertosaurus** – A tyrannosaurid theropod from western North America, dating to around 70 million years ago.
- \* **Edmontosaurus** – A duck-billed dinosaur that lived between 73 and 66 million years ago.
- \* **Dunkleosteus** – An armored placoderm fish that ruled the seas approximately 380 to 360 million years ago.
- \* **Tylosaurus** – A gigantic marine predator and relative of modern lizards, among the largest ocean-dwelling hunters ever known.

**Science Beyond Dinosaurs**  
While paleontologists will take center stage, the festival will also feature scientists from other disciplines. Experts in invertebrate zoology and ornithology will showcase specimens—including some live ones—from the museum’s broader collections. Guests from Virginia Tech’s Museum of Geosciences and the Danville Science Center will also be on-site, engaging visitors in hands-on science demonstrations that connect the prehistoric past to present-day discovery.

**Food Truck Alley**  
Festivalgoers can refuel at Dino Fest Food Truck Alley, featuring a range of lunch and snack options from:

- Bahama Sno-Shack
- Birrieria La Vaca
- Chick-fil-A
- Factory Roast
- Jen’s Cakes with Personality
- Kona Ice
- MalloyDogz
- Palumbo’s Hoagie House

It’s a sentiment echoed by Pritchard. “We’re especially looking forward to presenting visitors with new experiences, highlighted by incredible specimens that we’ve never exhibited before,” said Pritchard. “From the Meat-eater Station and the rare fossil remains of Torvosaurus, to the Fossil Prep Station, where visitors will literally be the first people ever to see that particular dinosaur fossil emerge from the ground, to the Reptile Microscopy Station and the tiny reptile jaws showing how reptiles big and small were utterly strange during the Age of Dinosaurs, this year’s edition of Dino Festival is ready to offer visitors a one-of-a-kind experience.”

**Festival Details**  
Dino Festival takes place at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville on Friday, July 25, and Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Admission is \$15 for adults ages 18–59, and \$10 for youth ages 3–17, seniors 60+, and college students. Admission is free for children under 3, museum members, and members of ASTC Passport Program institutions. Attendees who visit on Friday can return on Saturday at no additional cost.

The museum also participates in Museums for All, offering free admission to EBT cardholders and up to five immediate family members from the same household. This is made possible through funding from Hooker Furnishings, Carter Bank, and the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia.

**Sponsors**  
Dino Festival is sponsored by Atlantic Union Bank, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Carter Bank, Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia, Hooker Furnishings, and The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust.

For more information, visit [www.vmnh.net/events/dino-festival](http://www.vmnh.net/events/dino-festival).

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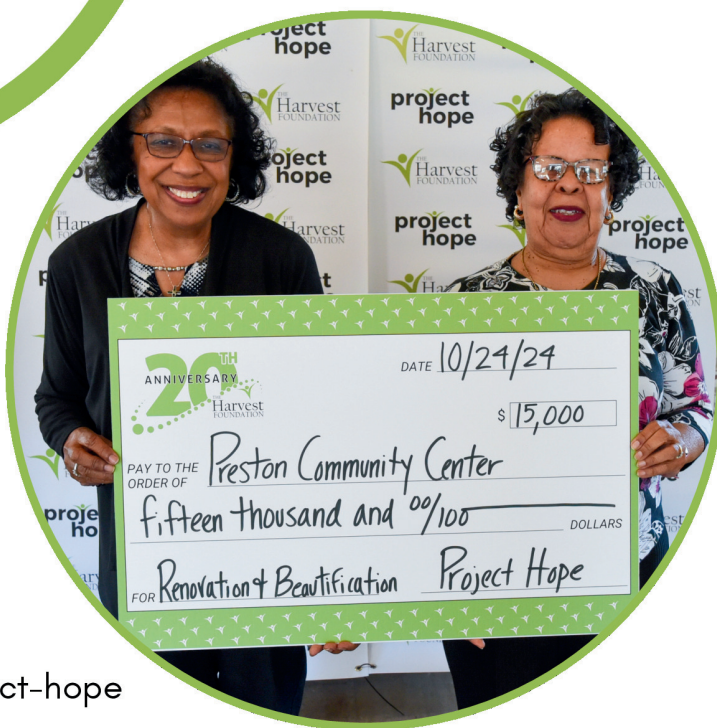


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