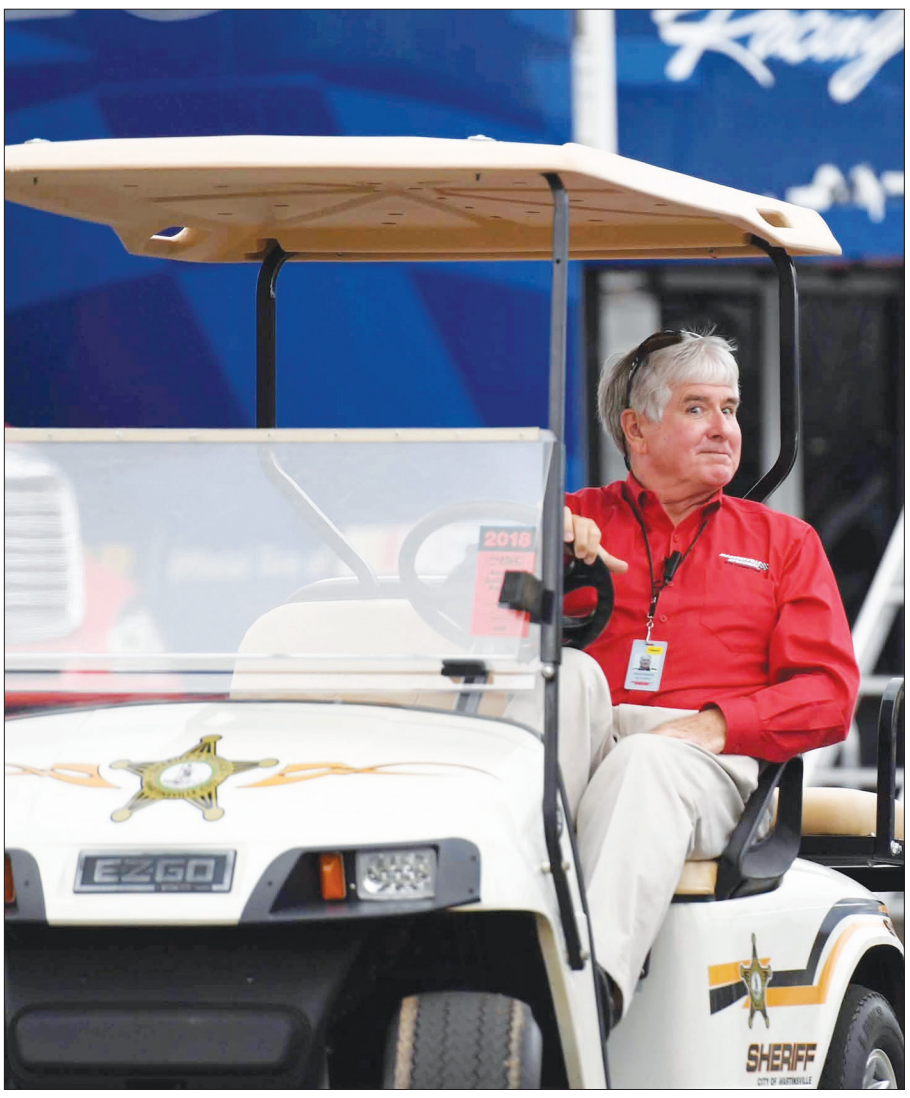
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Draper leaves legacy of service in Martinsville



Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper was a familiar face at Martinsville Speedway. Photo courtesy of Ray Reynolds



Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper works on a mural with Melody Cartwright and Tony Davis. Draper left his mark on the city and beyond, Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis said. "There's not a sheriff in the state that didn't know Sheriff Draper."

By Taylor Boyd

Martinsville Sheriff Stephen "Steve" Madison Draper, who served as the city's sheriff for more than three decades, died Saturday, Aug. 29, following a terminal pulmonary illness. He was 73.

Draper's celebration of life was scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 2.

In lieu of flowers, Draper's family requested that memorials be made to the Martinsville City Sheriff's Department Benevolent Fund, P.O. Box 1326, Martinsville, VA 24112.

Draper began working with the Martinsville Sheriff's Office in 1973 and was elected sheriff in 1993.

Having served as sheriff for more than three decades, Draper was the longest-serving sheriff in Virginia history.

Draper previously served as president of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association and had been a member of Martinsville City Council.

Martinsville City Manager Rob Fincher said Draper was a great friend and an outstanding leader who always had advice and encouragement to offer.

"Steve was elected sheriff and as-

(See Draper p. 11)

Law appointed Martinsville sheriff after Draper's death

Michael Law was appointed Martinsville sheriff Monday, Aug. 31, by Circuit Court Judge G. Carter Greer following the sudden death of Sheriff Steve Draper on Saturday.

State law requires the city to appoint a sheriff to serve until a special election is held. Law has 19 years of experience with the Martinsville Sheriff's Office.



Michael Law, a 19-year veteran of the Martinsville Sheriff's Office, was appointed Martinsville sheriff on Monday.

"It is a bittersweet moment for me as I've always pictured this moment to take place with Sheriff Draper by my side," Law said. "However, I look forward to building on the strong foundation he laid ahead of us, serving with integrity, professionalism, and dedication."

A special election will be held Nov. 2, 2027, to elect a sheriff to serve the remainder of the current term.

Supervisors approve data center ordinance

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a revised data center ordinance Aug. 25, establishing a process and extensive requirements for any data center proposed in the county.

County Attorney George Lyle and Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, emphasized that approval of the ordinance does not mean a data center has been approved for construction.

"This is approving an ordinance so that if anyone wants to request a data center, this is the process they would have to go through. To my

(See Supervisors p. 10)



County Attorney George Lyle discussed the specifics of the data center ordinance while members of the Henry County Board of Supervisors listened. Pam Cobler, of the Reed Creek District, is seated to the left.

Board approves budget amendments, retains $532K in carryover funds

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Board of Supervisors approved fiscal year 2026-27 budget amendments Aug. 25 that include using $532,239 in fiscal year 2024-25 local carryover funds to help meet the county's increased required local contribution for public education.

The decision came after several residents, including Henry County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Amy Blake-Lewis, asked the board to return the carryover funds to the school division.

County Administrator Dale Wagoner said the budget passed by the General Assembly earlier this year includes $2,152,791 for public education, resulting in an increase of $615,261 in required local matching funds.

To balance the FY27 budget, Wagoner said county staff recommended using $532,239 from FY25 local carryover funds to help meet the local requirement for public education.

"In addition it was suggested that the county delay hiring for several positions and utilize vacancy savings in order to cover the budget gap," Wagoner said.

Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, asked County Attorney George Lyle whether retaining the $532,239 was legal.

Lyle said that, based on his review of the county's audit, local funds that were unencumbered or unexpended at the end of the pre-

(See Board p. 9)

Council hears arts and culture plan, Five Points update

By Jessica Dillon

The Martinsville City Council heard updates on the city's arts and culture master plan and the Five Point Neighborhood during its Aug. 25 meeting.

The Arts and Culture Committee presented its master plan, described as a community-driven roadmap outlining a vision, priorities and actions for using arts and culture to strengthen the community's identity and quality of life.

The plan defines arts and culture broadly to include visual, performing and literary arts;

(See Council p. 11)

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Agency warns increased beef imports could harm Virginia cattle herd recovery

A federal plan to allow an additional 300,000 metric tons of imported ground beef into the U.S. market is drawing concern from farm leaders who say short-term efforts to lower grocery prices could create long-term damage for cattle farmers and the nation's food supply.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said the proposal would come as the U.S. already is importing beef at record levels. He warned the added volume would represent nearly a 60% increase in imports over the next 90 days, further pressuring U.S. cattle markets impacted by resumption of Mexican cattle imports and the recent closure of several large, domestic beef processing plants.

"Further undercutting a fragile recovery by swamping markets with foreign products and attempting to manipulate prices threatens to wipe out any progress that has been made," Duvall said.

Virginia's cattle producers understand the pressure families face from higher grocery costs, said Virginia Farm Bureau Federation President Scott Sink. However, he continued, increasing imports does not address the supply challenges contributing to those prices or strengthen the domestic cattle industry.

"Increasing beef imports without addressing the underlying challenges facing the U.S. cattle industry is not a long-term solution," Sink said. "Strong cattle prices are providing much-needed stability and giving producers an opportunity to rebuild their herds. Policies that create uncertainty or artificially pressure cattle prices could undermine that progress and make it more difficult for farmers to invest in the future."

Beef cattle are raised in every Virginia county, with approximately 575,000 head statewide. The Virginia Beef Industry Council notes the average Virginia herd size is just 30 head. Sink said this underscores how many small, family-operated farms would be affected by policies that disrupt cattle markets.

In a recent letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger voiced opposition to suspending tariffs on foreign-produced beef to be sold at 25% below the market rate.

"This handout to foreign competitors has already caused a negative reaction in cattle markets," she wrote, "While providing no guarantee of retail price relief for consumers."

Both state and national Farm Bureau leaders warned that greater reliance on foreign beef could create more vulnerability in the food supply chain. Duvall said dependence on foreign-grown food could ultimately lead to higher costs and greater reliance on other nations for food security.

"Virginia's farmers stand ready to work with the administration on solutions that support consumers while strengthening the American cattle industry," Sink said. "A strong domestic food supply benefits everyone."

Ferrum College Posts Highest Enrollment in Six Years

Ferrum College is celebrating another milestone in its remarkable transformation as the college begins the 2026–2027 academic year with its highest enrollment in six years, highlighted by a more than 20 percent increase in returning undergraduate students. The enrollment gains reflect growing confidence in Ferrum College's mission, academic excellence, strengthened financial position, student experience, and long-term sustainability.

Scott Showalter, chairman of the Ferrum College Board of Trustees, praised the college's continued momentum and the collaborative efforts that have positioned Ferrum College for continued success.

"The Ferrum College Board of Trustees applauds the progress Ferrum College has made over the past several years," Showalter said. "Through disciplined financial stewardship, thoughtful governance, and strategic planning, Ferrum College has significantly strengthened its financial position while remaining steadfast in its mission. The College is well positioned for long-term sustainability through strategic growth, allowing us to continue investing confidently in our people, our academic programs, our facilities, and our future. These enrollment gains are evidence that students and families recognize that strength and the extraordinary value of a Ferrum College education. The Board is excited about the momentum created by the collective efforts of everyone who works at the College and the resulting opportunities that lie ahead for the College and our students."

Overall enrollment increased by more than 10 percent over the previous year. Most significantly, returning undergraduate enrollment increased by more than 20 percent, representing the College's largest returning class in five years and underscoring Ferrum College's unwavering commitment to student success, engagement, and persistence.

These enrollment gains come during a period of extraordinary institutional progress. Over the past three years, Ferrum College has significantly strengthened its financial position through disciplined stewardship and strategic investments while simultaneously expanding academic offerings, enhancing student support services, investing in campus facilities, launching innovative academic and workforce programs, strengthening partnerships with business and industry, successfully transitioning to NCAA Division II athletics, and making a Ferrum College education more accessible and affordable for students and families.

Strategic investments in student success initiatives, experiential learning, career readiness, enrollment management, and operational excellence have positioned the College for sustainable growth. Today, Ferrum College has significantly strengthened its financial foundation and is well positioned to continue investing in its students, faculty, staff, facilities, and academic future.

Dr. Mirta M. Martin, president of Ferrum College, said the enrollment milestone reflects the confidence that students and families have placed in the institution.

"Our enrollment reflects far more than numbers," Martin said. "It represents lives transformed, opportunities created, and a growing confidence in Ferrum College. For more than a century, we have been the College of Opportunity, preparing students not only for successful careers, but for lives of leadership, service, and purpose. Every student who chooses Ferrum College affirms our belief that education opens doors, awakens potential, transforms lives and communities, and empowers people to change the world."

Martin noted that Ferrum College's progress is rooted in a clear institutional vision and a steadfast commitment to serving students.

"This achievement belongs to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, donors, and community partners," she added. "Together, we have embraced a bold vision for Ferrum College—one that honors our rich heritage while courageously embracing innovation and opportunity. Every advancement we celebrate is the result of countless individuals working together with one purpose: creating opportunities for our students to succeed. Equally important, we have done so while strengthening the College's financial future, ensuring that Ferrum College remains a place of opportunity for generations of students yet to come. We remain steadfast in our commitment to preparing graduates who enter with promise, leave with purpose, and transform the world."

Dr. Richard Grant, Ferrum College's Provost, credited the College's faculty and staff for creating an environment where students thrive academically and personally.

"These results reflect the dedication of our faculty and staff, who invest in our students every day and remain deeply committed to their success," Grant said. "At Ferrum College, student success is not the responsibility of one office or division; it is a commitment shared across our entire campus community. The growth we are seeing in both enrollment and student retention demonstrates what is possible when faculty and staff work together to create an environment where students are challenged, supported, and encouraged to achieve their goals. I am grateful

(SeeFerrum p. 12)

Heavy traffic expected at Hillsville Flea Market

Drivers should expect heavy traffic and delays in Hillsville during the Labor Day weekend flea market, scheduled for Sept. 4-7 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, according to a release from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Thousands of visitors are expected along a one-mile section of U.S. 58 Business, resulting sidewalks crowded with pedestrians and bumper-to-bumper traffic that is expected to move at a crawl throughout the area, according to VDOT.

Drivers who are not attending the flea market are encouraged to avoid the area.

Motorists traveling through the area should use caution, watch for police directing traffic and follow electronic message boards.

For current traffic and road work information, call 511 or visit 511 Virginia.



Ready-to-eat meals, pasta, and multi-ingredient packaged foods have the most recalls, followed by fresh produce and dairy products. (Adobe Stock)

Despite increase in food recalls, Virginia consumers don't panic

By Zamone Perez
Virginia News Connection

A wide range of food products have been the target of recalls in the U.S. this year, including eggs, salsa, lettuce and baby formula. Despite the rise in such warnings, a new report highlighted most consumers are not changing their habits in response.

The U.S. has seen 162 combined warnings from the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture this year, according to the report "Food for Thought 2026."

Teresa Murray, consumer watchdog director for the Public Interest Research Group Education Fund, said the report raises questions about the lack of clear information about life-threatening outbreaks. However, panic and worry often evolve into ambivalence about the overall safety of the U.S. food supply. Murray explained the shock value of food warnings has dwindled over time due to recall fatigue.

"There can be this feeling that there's just nothing safe out there and that's not a good place to be. We all have to eat. You can't constantly think that there's some kind of bacteria boogeyman living in your refrigerator or in your pantry," Murray emphasized.

Food contamination alerts still grab headlines, especially if they are attached to a well-known or recognizable brand or if the warnings result in mass illnesses, Murray pointed out. A leading example was the cyclosporiasis outbreak this summer. Murray added some consumers may take recalls more seriously if they affect products they frequently buy.

Some experts and lawmakers argued federal funding cuts have affected food safety programs and put Americans at further risk of foodborne illness. Food safety accountability could be channeled in several directions and examining the food supply chain is one place to start, Murray argued.

"Are some of these companies taking the steps that they should be taking to make sure that the products that they're selling to others downstream are safe? Clearly, not enough is being done because otherwise we wouldn't have all this stuff," Murray contended.

One of the latest food safety warnings in Virginia concerns consuming frozen blueberries and mixed berries from Publix locations, which threaten exposure to E. coli. According to an update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in late July, the outbreak sickened more than a dozen people.

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Community calendar

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

Meetings

Thursday, September 3
Henry County School Board Regular School Board Meeting - 5:30.m. Followed by Closed Session, Henry County Administration Building, 3rd Floor Boardroom, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

Tuesday, September 8
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 55 West Church St., Martinsville.

Tuesday, September 29
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 55 West Church St., Martinsville.

Henry County Board of Supervisors meet at 3 and 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room, Henry County Administration Building, 3300 King's Mountain Road, Martinsville.

Events

Friday, September 4
Sounds on the Square with Rosebud Band, 7 – 10 p.m. Food and drinks will be available for purchase, and admission to the MHC Heritage Museum will be half price. The Floyd-based band draws inspiration from long-form improvisation. Rosebud stretches each tune into a living, breathing experience. Members are Ryan Thaw on bass, William Hairston on guitar, Colin Cospel on guitar, Blaine Kaiser on drums and Will Tillery on keyboards.

Sunday September 6
Open Mic/Jam Session, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett. Admission is free.

Tuesday, September 15
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Ridgeway Branch Library/Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Wednesday, September 16
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Collinsville Branch Library, to attend Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Thursday, September 17
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Bassett Branch Library, for event at Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Friday, September 18
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Martinsville Main Library, event at Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Savory September: 6:30-9:30 p.m., at Piedmont Arts. Big city flavors meet small town charm at this New York-themed fundraiser for the arts. Admission tickets are $65 per person and include food and drinks. 50/50 raffle tickets are $20 each or $100 for six. Admission and raffle tickets are available at Piedmont Arts and piedmontarts.org. 215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville.

Saturday, September 19
Rangeley Ruritan Club Fish Fry, includes 2 fish, slaw, hushpuppies, dessert and drink, $15 a plate. Proceeds go toward community projects, 134 Calloway Drive Fieldale, VA. 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, September 20
Sunday Afternoon Lectures, 1 E Main St, Martinsville, 3 p.m. Henry County 250. MHC Historical Society Executive Director Holly Kozelsky will talk about the formation of Henry County.

Thursday, September 24
Looted Art: An Opening Journey to Resolution, 6:30 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. talk, Thursday, Sept. 24, Piedmont Arts. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Senior Manager of Provenance Research Karen Daly will discuss art looted during World War II. This event is free and open to the public. RSVP by Wednesday, Sept. 23, to 276-632-3221 or online at PiedmontArts.org. 215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville.

Saturday, October 3
Oktoberfest, 11 a .m. to 4 p.m., Uptown Martinsville.

Blue Jeans & Bling. The Historical Society's signature social event, dinner and silent auction fundraiser, begins with a social at 6 p.m. Pulled-pork BBQ dinner served at 6:30. The event will feature a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle, a cash bar, museum tours and entertainment by Jake Earles. The cost is $50/person or $350/Table of 8. Call 276-403-5361 or come by the museum to reserve your spot. 1 E Main St., Martinsville.

Ongoing

A series of four classes on genealogical research will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Bassett Historical Center on the first four Tuesdays in September (1, 8, 15, 22). There is no charge for the classes. The classes are limited to 12. Call the Bassett Historical Center 276-629-9191 to reserve a spot.

Lynwood Artists meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Piedmont Arts.

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

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.

Piedmont Arts Guild meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, except in November and December, at 11:45 a.m. at Piedmont Arts.

Virginia Foothills Quilters Guild daytime group meets on the first Tuesday of each month from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at Piedmont Arts and on the third Friday of each month in January, March, May, July, September, and November, from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at Piedmont Arts. Virginia Foothills Quilters Guild evening group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-9 p.m. at Piedmont Arts.

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.

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

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.

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, but donations will be used by the club to pay for electricity etc.

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.

TOPS FIELDALE VA 0626 meets on Mondays 4-5 p.m. at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairystone Hwy, Bassett. New members welcome. For more information call Patti Farmer (276) 358-0489.

Student Briefs

Area students among JMU's incoming Class of 2030

Local students are among the incoming Class of 2030 at James Madison University, which is welcoming students from across the United States and around the world. Local students include:

- Journey Porter of Martinsville has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in Biology - BS.
- Gabrielle Fountain of Axton has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in Economics - BA.
- Nathan Davis of Martinsville has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in English - BA.
- Lucas Soqui of Martinsville has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in Exploratory.
- Bryson Mosley of Martinsville has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in History - BA.
- Lillie Sapp of Martinsville has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in Kinesiology - BS.
- Lexus Owen of Bassett has enrolled at James Madison University and plans to major in Psychology - BA.

The incoming class includes students from 40 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 20 countries and territories outside the United States.

JMU welcomes local transfer students

James Madison University welcomed new transfer students to campus for the fall 2026 semester:

- Rachel Hairston of Martinsville plans to major in Media Arts and Design - BS.
- Juan Soto Raygoza of Axton plans to major in Accounting - BBA.
- Dylan Johnston of Martinsville plans to major in History - BA.

The incoming transfers represent an accomplished, diverse group of individuals who hail from 21 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and three countries.

Emergency pipe replacement on U.S. 58 prompts traffic shift

A section of eastbound U.S. 58 Business (A. L. Philpott Highway) in Henry County was closed on Monday, August 31 for continued work on an emergency pipe replacement.

All traffic will now be shifted onto the westbound lanes, with one lane for each direction, as crews complete the pipe replacement. Barrels will separate opposing traffic, and the speed limit will continue to be reduced to 35 mph within the traffic shift.

The new traffic shift will begin at Virginia 1747 (Summit Road) and Virginia 1746 (Machinery Drive), and end at Club House Road. Motorists entering U.S. 58 Business from Summit Road, Machinery Drive, Dug Mountain Road, Club House Road or any homes or businesses within the traffic shift will be limited to right turns for the duration of the closure.

Drivers should pay attention to message boards and signs in the area. Work is expected to be completed by 5 p.m. Friday, September 11, weather permitting.

For the latest road conditions in Virginia, use VDOT's 511 free mobile app, visit 511 Virginia and follow the VDOT Salem District on Facebook or X.

July unemployment, labor force participation rates decreased

Virginia Works – the Commonwealth's Department of Workforce Development and Advancement – last week announced that, according to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in July decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 3.7 percent, which is 0.4 percentage points above the rate from a year ago. This rate is 0.4 percentage points below the national unemployment rate, which decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 4.1 percent.

The Commonwealth's labor force participation rate decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 63 percent in July. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

Month-over-month industry

In July's Current Employment Statistics Survey, Virginia's nonagricultural employment decreased by 9,600 to 4,232,200. June's preliminary estimate of employment, after revision, decreased by 1,900 to 4,241,800. In July, private sector employment decreased by 3,000 to 3,474,500 while government employment decreased by 6,600 to 757,700. Within that sector, federal government jobs decreased by 600 to 169,900, state government employment decreased by 200 to 168,200, and local government decreased by 5,800 to 419,600 over the month.

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is produced for eleven industry sectors. In July, four experienced over-the-month job gains, and seven experienced a decline. The largest job gain occurred in Leisure and Hospitality (+2,500) to 423,300. The second largest job gain occurred in Financial Activities (+1,300) to 221,500. The third largest job gain occurred in Education and Health Services (+600) to 629,600. The other gain was in Manufacturing (+400) to 229,000.

The largest job loss occurred in Government (-6,600) to 757,700. The second largest job loss occurred in Professional and Business Services (-3,400) to 784,700. The third largest job loss occurred in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-1,400) to 692,800. The other losses were in Construction (-1,300) to 224,800; Miscellaneous Services (-1,300) to 197,300; Information (-300) to 65,100; and Mining and Logging (-100) to 6,400.

OPINION

Labor Day and Memories of Tragedy



Morgan Griffith

Representative

On September 7, Americans will celebrate Labor Day.

The American worker serves as a backbone for our economy. Thanks to the fruits of their labor, our communities reap the rewards of more opportunity, business growth and expanded access to goods and services.

Even in times of hardship where industries face new challenges, and when innovative technologies emerge, the American workforce shows resilience by adapting.

This resilience takes shape in the belief that hard work is central to our communities. We see numerous investments that drive this belief for our region's workforce.

In the last year, Henry County celebrated various company investments resulting in a cumulative total of more than $100 million.

There is also Narro Trucks which recently launched in Pulaski County. The electric utility vehicle company will power new jobs for the New River Valley.

Further, thanks to a new industrial investment, Bland County's Virginia Steel and Fabrication is set to expand operational capabilities.

Earlier this year, I toured the Virginia Steel plant in Bastian to receive updates on its operations and leadership.

These industry decisions, among others, will support regional job, generate friendly climates for small businesses and deliver renewed hope for our communities.

Because these investments mean so much, I am an advocate for federal policies that help the American worker access opportunity for work.

From job programs, including ones that develop skills, to friendly tax environments, we can use policy to strengthen this access.

As we rest for Labor Day weekend, join me in celebrating the American worker.

Days after Labor Day, I will join our communities to recognize solemn occasions.

September 10 marks the one-year anniversary of the assassination of a conservative icon. In broad daylight on a college campus, Turning Point USA CEO Charlie Kirk was murdered by an individual seemingly indoctrinated by radical gender ideology.

My family shared the shock and grief with millions of Americans stunned by Kirk's murder.

Following the slaying, I supported Kirk's legacy and memory, visiting Virginia Tech with Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears for a candlelight vigil.

Outside of my DC office along with countless other Congressional offices, I displayed a poster of Kirk.

Additionally, I voted with 309 of my House colleagues to honor Kirk's life and legacy. It was disappointing to see more than 100 Democrats refrain from supporting the House resolution, but I remain committed to protecting the conservative values and freedoms that Kirk constantly worked to defend.

Perhaps nothing meant more to Kirk's movement than the freedom of speech, a cornerstone of our country's founding and the U.S. Constitution.

We must never forget that disagreements, discourse and debate are healthy for our government. Kirk provided a venue for our younger generations to recognize this fundamental truth.

Silencing Americans is never a solution. I will continue to support policies that protect the freedom of speech.

Please join me on September 10 to not only pray for Charlie, but to ask that God helps with healing for Charlie's widow, Erika, their two young children and the entire Kirk family.

Americans will also reflect on the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

To this day, the attacks are a painful memory for millions of Americans as well as many across the entire world.

I have the memory of working that morning in my law office when my bookkeeper, Terry Haynie, grabbed my attention. She informed me that a plane struck a Tower of the World Trade Center.

After turning our eyes to the television to see the events live, we watched the second plane crash into the South Tower.

The Pentagon was also hit, while a thwarted attempt resulted in a plane crash in Pennsylvania.

When passengers of Flight 93 knew the end was coming, they would not allow that plane to be used to attack America. It is believed that plane was headed for the U.S. Capitol where I now work.

In total, more than 3,000 innocent lives were taken from us that day.

While the terrorists sought to strike fear, they failed to break the enduring spirit of the American people.

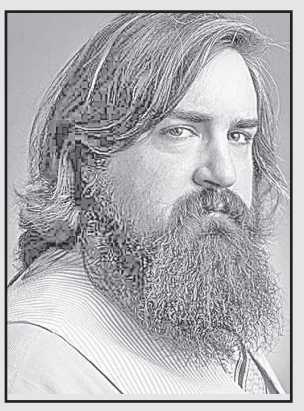
Following the tragedy, I drove to Salem's Kmart store to buy an American flag. I proudly displayed it outside my office.

I plan to attend a 9/11 wreath laying with former Governor Glenn Youngkin at the National D-Day Memorial.

With these events on the horizon, it will be an emotional time for many.

But over the Labor Day weekend, we will rejoice that the American worker is the most efficient, hardworking labor force in the world.

You can't take it with you



By Ben R. Williams

I was at work when my fiancée Lauren texted me that Dolly Parton had passed away.

Within minutes, I began to hear my coworkers in the hallway muttering to each other about the news, and I could hear the surprise and sorrow in their voices. It didn't feel like the response to a celebrity death; it felt like the aftershocks immediately following a national tragedy.

Gallons of ink have already been spilled remembering Dolly Parton. She had a career without parallel. The Queen of Country Music, she had multiple multiplatinum albums, 11 Grammy Awards, was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, received the National Medal of Arts, turned down the Presidential Medal of Freedom three times, and was even named a Kentucky Colonel, and not only does that barely scratch the surface of her music career, I didn't even mention her acting career.

What's remarkable about Dolly Parton's success is that she produced a staggeringly large and critically acclaimed body of work, and yet many of her fans have never even watched one of her movies or listened to a note of one of her songs. Her artistic career is one of the most impressive of all time and she somehow managed to outshine it through the strength of her humanitarian work.

She created Dollywood to bring jobs to her hometown of Sevierville, Tennessee. She funded countless scholarships. She founded Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to put free books in the hands of children, and the program has served more than 120 million children since its founding in 1995.

Whenever a famous person dies, there are always folks who dig through their lives to find their mistakes, the things they did wrong or the things they could have done better. I have yet to see anyone speak ill of Dolly Parton in the wake of her death. She lived a life that left nary a toehold for criticism.

In the wake of her passing, there are some who have said that one thing they loved about Dolly Parton was that she "wasn't political." That's not exactly true. She didn't speak openly about politics, but she supported the LGBTQ community and transgender rights and donated money to help fund the development of the COVID-19 vaccine. I don't think those should be political issues, but the people who claim Parton was apolitical would probably feel differently.

Dolly Parton felt like an immortal presence, less a human being than a symbol of kindness and decency, and her absence is keenly felt. But she has left us with a valuable lesson.

According to multiple sources, at the time of her death, Dolly Parton had a net worth of roughly $450 million. Had it not been for her incredible philanthropy, it's estimated she would have had a net worth of around $9 billion.

I don't know about you, but I can't imagine ever thinking, "Man, I'd love to make that purchase, but unfortunately I only have half a billion dollars instead of nine billion dollars." Dolly Parton left this world with more money than she could ever spend even after giving most of it away.

As a result, she never popped up on the Forbes Top 100 list of billionaires. She never had as much money as Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos or Mark Zuckerberg. She never got the chance to be, even for a brief period of time, the richest human being on the planet.

Instead, she got a consolation prize: universal respect and adoration, elevation to the status of informal sainthood, and the ability to leave our world secure in the knowledge that she had improved it, in ways both large and small, for tens of millions of people for generations to come.

That seems way more satisfying than being sandwiched between two tech bros on some dumb list.

It's been said that there are no ethical billionaires and Dolly Parton was proof. She was a deeply ethical and compassionate person, and because of that, she was never a billionaire. When you have more money than you could spend in a dozen lifetimes, how can an ethical person sleep knowing that families around the nation are living out of cars and their children are starving?

Maybe Dolly had more compassion than most because she came from extreme poverty herself. Maybe it was just the way she was wired, an extremely shrewd businesswoman with a bottomless heart for the vulnerable.

Whatever the case, she served as living proof that billions of dollars can't buy the love and respect that she cultivated among her countless fans. The legacy she leaves is one of kindness and compassion and it will last far into the future.

Barring a Christmas Eve visit from three ghosts, it's safe to say that the same will never be said of her wealthy contemporaries.

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OPINION

Are you Team Iron or Team Wrinkle?



Holly Kozelsky

By Holly Kozelsky

There are two kinds of people in life - those who iron clothes (or had the luck of someone to iron their clothes), and those who don't.

There used to be a whole lot more people who ironed clothes. In fact, wearing ironed clothes was the norm through much of the last century. That's in part because dress was more formal and much less casual then. Even a laborer who now would wear jeans or work pants and a T-shirt used to would have worn trousers and a button-up shirt.

One never dressed casually for the office. It was men in ties and ladies in well coordinated outfits, mostly in fabrics that required a good pressing before being ready to wear.

The demise of ironing came down to two factors: the development of wrinkle-free fabrics, and the switch from business to casual attire at work.

Steve Draper, who used to run the classy Draper and Ferrell's Clothiers on Main Street, had an additional theory to the demise of dressing up for work.

His shop, which opened in 1975, was a mainstay of the business district and the fashion scene. I interviewed him for another newspaper when his store closed in 2020.

He told me that dressing up for work reached its end back when local businesses were bought out by conglomerates.

Throughout the history of Martinsville, until local businesses were bought by large corporations, decisions were made locally, Steve said. If you needed a loan, you went to the bank and talked directly with the one who would make that decision. The movers and the shakers were right here, in our community, part of us -- and they dressed the part, sharp in their business suits.

Since the powerful people worked in the same buildings as everyone else, all the employees felt the need to be presentable. They all dressed up, following the leaders' examples.

When the huge corporations bought out our local banks, and other significant local businesses, the leaders and decision-makers were no longer in the same building. They weren't anywhere near Martinsville. There was no one left to set the standard, no one left to impress, so employees stopped dressing up as much.

When Casual Friday became a thing in the 1990s, it eventually made its way to the rest of the week. People who dressed to the nines Mondays through Thursdays suddenly could wear a polo shirt and *gasp* jeans, or at least a nice pair of chinos, on Fridays.

Steve said he never would have imagined selling jeans in his store, but he started to in 2015.

Jeans, of course, don't need to be ironed.

It's no surprise that people who were tired of ironing in the 1980s and 1990s now proudly proclaim their freedom from it. They haven't ironed in years, many tell me cheerfully.

Don't get me wrong. Ironing is tedious. If you are in an ironing household, then not ironing is even worse than the ironing, because clothes build up in messy piles, and the closets offer fewer and fewer choices of what to wear, until you get around to it.

When it comes down to people who do iron, they divide into two camps: those who iron everything all at once, and those who only iron a garment when it is needed.

Each one admires the other.

"Wow, how do you make time to iron all your laundry at once!" the daily camp exclaims in admiration.

"How in the world do you have time to iron your clothes in the morning before work?" the other replies, equally impressed.

Blue Ridge Folklife Festival returns Oct. 24

The Blue Ridge Folklife Festival will return to the Ferrum College campus Oct. 24, with a new arts and crafts show among this year's additions.

The festival, now in its 53rd year, will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free, although parking costs $20 per family vehicle, $50 for vans or shuttles and $100 for buses.

Produced by Ferrum College's Blue Ridge Institute & Museum for more than 50 years, the festival celebrates the traditional music, crafts, food and customs of the Blue Ridge region.

More than 100 artisans are expected to participate in the new arts and crafts show, featuring jewelry, folk art, woodworking, pottery, textiles and other handmade items.

The festival also will feature four stages of live music, storytelling sessions with Henry Lee Law & Friends, folklife demonstrations and children's activities.

Traditional demonstrations will include horse pulls, mule-jumping contests, coon dog races and antique tractors. The Thunder in the Blue Ridge Car Show also will return.

The Children's Area will include a petting zoo, face painting, cornhole, a mechanical bull and a fair-style ride. The Agriculture Student Showcase will feature projects and produce from Ferrum College students.

Festival activities will be spread across the campus, including the lakeside area and the 1800s-style farm museum, as well as Franklin Hall, Bassett Field and the Franklin Hall Quad.

Ferrum College President Mirta Martin said the festival provides an opportunity to preserve regional traditions while introducing new artisans and activities.

The festival was named a 2026 Best of the Mountains award winner by Blue Ridge Country Magazine.

More information is available at ferrum.edu/blueridgefolklifefestival.





Applications accepted for Beehive Distribution Program

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is accepting applications for its annual Beehive Distribution Program through Sept. 9. The program provides free beehive assembly equipment to Virginia residents, to help expand the number of actively managed honey bee colonies throughout the Commonwealth. Recipients of the equipment are selected at random from qualifying applications received during the application period.

Applicants and prospective beekeepers are strongly encouraged to take an introductory beekeeping course prior to starting a colony to ensure successful hive management. Recipients of beehive units must assemble the equipment and occupy it with a colony of honey bees within one year of receiving the equipment. VDACS does not provide honey bees or tools for managing the hives, such as personal safety equipment or honey processing equipment.

Only residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia, aged 18 years or older at the time of application, qualify for the random drawing. Entities such as businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies are not eligible to receive beehive units. Multiple individuals with the same mailing and/or physical address (household) may apply to the program; however, distribution of beehive units will be limited to no more than three beehive units per household or mailing address in the same fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

"Honey bees are valued pollinators for our ecosystems and agricultural operations across the Commonwealth," said State Apiarist Keith Tignor. "The Beehive Distribution Program provides residents with an engaging way to participate in increasing the number of pollinators and enhancing the quality of our environment for present and future generations."

VDACS distributes approximately 1,000 beehives to 400 or more individuals across the state each year. The program received more than 6,400 applications in 2025, and distributed 1,002 hives to 415 individuals. Individuals who receive beehive equipment have access to education programs, support, and technical skills sharing through Virginia Cooperative Extension and local beekeeping organizations across the state.

To learn more about the Beehive Distribution Program or to submit an application on or before Sept. 9, please visit the Virginia Beehive Distribution Program webpage. Individuals interested in applying to receive beehive units through the program should review the complete application instructions within the Guidelines and Requirements.

For more information about the Beehive Distribution Program, contact the VDACS Office of Plant Industry Services at (804) 786-8938 or email vabees@vdacs.virginia.gov.

Entries sought for 2026 Veterans Day Student Essay Contest

The Virginia War Memorial in Richmond is now seeking entries for its Virginia War Memorial 2026 Veterans Day Student Essay Contest. This annual competition is open to all Virginia middle and high school age public, private, and homeschooled students. One winner will be selected from among all middle school entries (grades 6-8) and one from high school entries (grades 9-12).

This year's essay topic is "A Virginian Who Served in The Military Who Inspires Me." Students may consider a member of their family, of their community, or any Virginian who served in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, anywhere in the world, from World War II to present day as their subject.

The two winners will be invited to come and participate in the Commonwealth's 70th annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond on Wednesday, November 11, 2026. Each winning student will also receive a $500 cash prize donated by the nonprofit Virginia War Memorial Foundation.

Essays should be 500-750 words in length and utilize interviews and primary sources whenever possible. Students may contact Sylvia Marshall, Virginia War Memorial Archivist (Sylvia.Marshall@dvs.virginia.gov) for additional resources regarding Virginia military veterans. Entries will be judged on clarity of thought, adherence to the contest theme and guidelines, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Detailed information regarding rules, guidelines and how to enter are available online at https://vawarmemorial.org/learn/contests-scholarships/essay/.

All entries must be submitted through the Virginia War Memorial website by 11:59 p.m., Monday, October 12. For additional information or questions, please contact Elizabeth Oglesby, the Memorial's Education Outreach & Programs Manager, at Elizabeth.Oglesby@dvs.virginia.gov or by calling 804-786-9700.

Martinsville student among three to receive scholarship

Francisco Alvarez of Martinsville, is among three southwest Virginia students to receive a Claude Moore Opportunities Regional Scholarship.

Alvarez, who is enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Patrick and Henry Community College, said "Throughout my career, I hope to not only improve my community and help make a difference in patients' lives, but also assist those who wish to follow in my footsteps," said Alvarez. "This scholarship will allow me to purchase a laptop for schoolwork and other supplies I need in completing my last semester."

Students from Danville and Burkeville also will receive scholarships.

"Claude Moore is so proud to be supporting this tremendous group of Virginia students in their journey toward fulfilling careers that serve the healthcare needs of their communities," said Dr. Bill Hazel, CEO of Claude Moore Opportunities and former Virginia Secretary of Health. "This year's recipients are incredibly impressive and dedicated to building a meaningful career while providing care for their neighbors. Costs can be a real barrier for those seeking the education, training, and credentials required for a healthcare career, so we hope these scholarships will make their path a little easier."

Scholarships have been funded and distributed through the Virginia Partnership for Health Science Careers, a new statewide initiative from Claude Moore Opportunities to promote regional coordination between education institutions, workforce agencies, and healthcare providers to address Virginia's healthcare workforce crisis.

In addition to the Southern Virginia scholarships, Claude Moore Opportunities and its regional partners have awarded a total of seventeen $2,500 scholarships to healthcare students in every region of the state. In order to qualify, applicants had to be enrolled or enrolling in a healthcare career training program at a Virginia community college, and recipients were chosen by leadership of the VPHSC regional partnership in their area from a pool of several dozen applicants.

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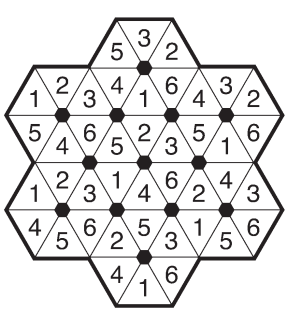




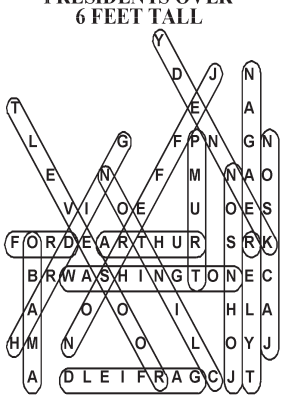
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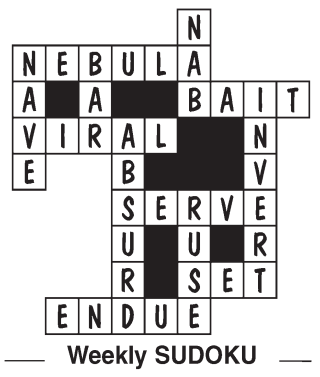


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9	1	6	4	7	2	5	8	3

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THANK YOU FOR READING

Enterprise Exchange

In the spirit of partnership, we're sharing highlights from our sister newsroom at The Enterprise (www.theenterprise.net) to help keep our readers in Henry County and Martinsville informed.

Blue dye reaches Stuart wastewater plant



An influent grab sample from the sewer plant laboratory on Aug. 12.



As of Aug. 18, no blue or blue-green color remained.

By Taylor Boyd

Blue dye entered the Town of Stuart's wastewater treatment plant last month after a reported discharge from Faith Mulch into the town's sanitary sewer system, according to a report submitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

In an email to DEQ, Stuart Town Manager Bryce Simmons said wastewater treatment plant staff observed strongly colored blue influent arriving at the plant Aug. 12.

Simmons said the colored influent diminished markedly Aug. 14, and a sample collected Aug. 15 was colorless. As of Aug. 18, no blue or blue-green color remained in the effluent.

Reynolds Homestead recommended for $700,000 ARC grant



A groundbreaking for the shared-use kitchen and agribusiness incubator was held during the homestead's anniversary celebration in June 2022. Among those attending were Virginia Tech and Reynolds Homestead representatives, along with members of the Reynolds family. The project was recently recommended for a $700,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant.

By Debbie Hall

The Reynolds Homestead in Critz has been recommended for a $700,000 grant to support development of a 1,500-square-foot Shared-use Kitchen and Agribusiness Incubator facility.

The funding is part of $8.4 million in grants announced Aug. 27 by Gov. Abigail Spanberger through Virginia's Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) program.

"The governor's recommendation does not guarantee funding - the final funding will be approved and announced by the federal director of the Appalachian Region Commission, and grant awards will be announced later this year," Julie Walters-Steele, director of the Reynolds Homestead, said.

PCPS ranks ninth in state for SOL scores

By Taylor Boyd

Patrick County Public Schools ranked ninth among Virginia school divisions in Standards of Learning performance, marking the fifth consecutive year the division has ranked among the state's top 10.

Superintendent Dr. Jason Wood credited the division's teachers, staff, students and families for the continued performance.

"It's a combination of outstanding teachers, but also the care and support that any of our staff members give them from the warm smile from the bus driver and a cafeteria employee to the custodian checking in on everyone. Definitely the relationships that our staff members bring and build with our students is one of the keys to our success," he said.

PCHS grad takes Patrick County roots to Broadway



PCHS graduate Jeb Kreager recently completed a Broadway run in "The Fear of 13." Photo by Tricia Baron.

By Taylor Boyd

Patrick County High School graduate Jeb Kreager recently wrapped up a 16-week Broadway run of "The Fear of 13," a production based on the true story of a man who spent more than two decades on death row for a crime he did not commit.

Kreager, who moved to Patrick County with his family as a baby, graduated from PCHS in 1993.

"The Fear of 13" tells the story of Nick Yarris, who spent 22 years on Pennsylvania's death row before being exonerated by DNA evidence.

"In fact, he was one of the first inmates in the state of Pennsylvania to be exonerated by DNA," Kreager said.

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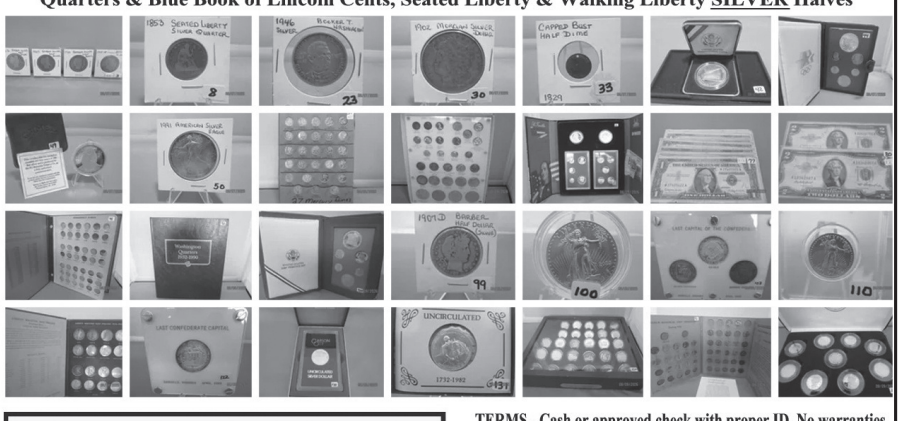
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IRS issues reminder to extension filers

The Internal Revenue Service today encouraged taxpayers who requested an extension to file their 2025 federal tax return as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the Oct. 15 deadline.

IRS Free File remains available through Oct. 15, 2026, and offers free guided tax preparation for taxpayers with an adjusted gross income of $89,000 or less in 2025. Taxpayers can prepare and e-file federal returns securely with IRS trusted partners at no cost. Taxpayers with income above the threshold can use Free File Fillable Forms if they are comfortable preparing their own tax returns.

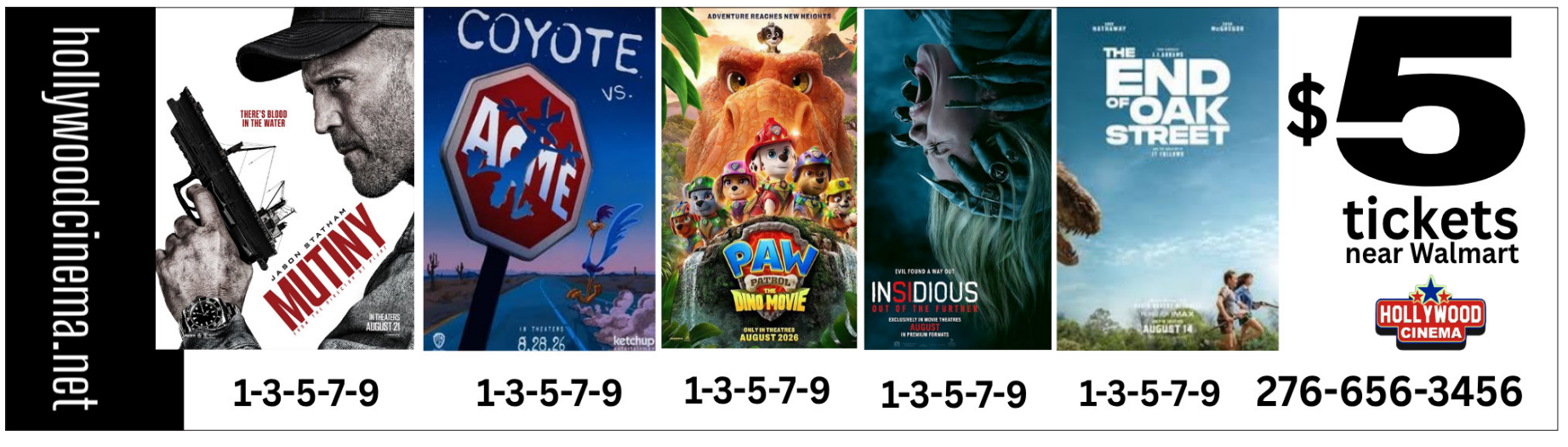
Filing over the summer helps taxpayers avoid the fall rush and gives them more time to resolve issues or arrange payments, if needed. An extension gives taxpayers more time to file but not more time to pay. Taxpayers who owe tax should pay as much as they can as soon as possible to limit penalties and interest.

IRS Free File provides a secure, convenient way to file from home. The guided software includes step-by-step instructions and built-in error checks, and some trusted partners also offer free state tax return preparation and filing for eligible taxpayers.

Taxpayers who are due a refund can get their refund faster by filing electronically and choosing direct deposit.

To get started, visit IRS Free File: Do Your Taxes For Free on IRS.gov.

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



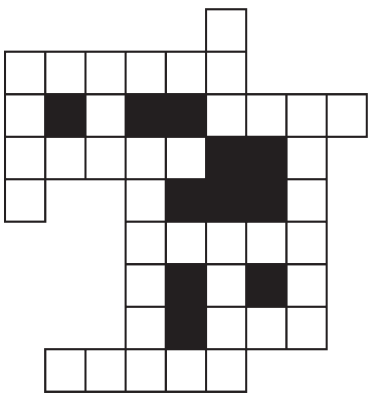
PUZZLE TIME

FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

TSE
RADBUS
♥ RSVEE
♥ EVNA
VIRTEN
♥ ABR
ATBI
DEENU
♥ NBA
♥ BALUNE
♥ AIRLV
♥ ESRU

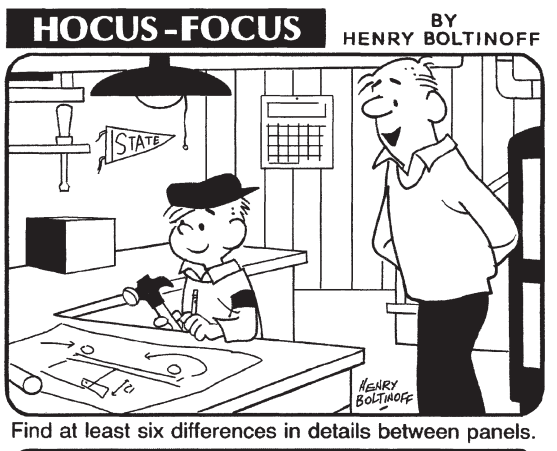


Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE**). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥ **RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART**). Fit each string's word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

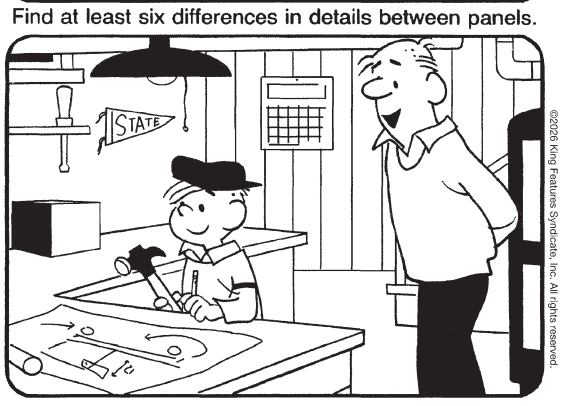
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Arm is not showing. 2. Hammer is longer. 3. Box is moved. 4. Cap is tilted back. 5. Lightbulb is smaller. 6. Stripe on sleeve is smaller.

MAGIC MAZE ● PRESIDENTS OVER 6 FEET TALL

P B Y W T R O L Y J G E B Y W
U R P N K I G D B D Z J X N V
T S Q N L O C N I L E O M A K
I L G E C A G Y W F P N U G N
S Q E P N N L J F H M F N A O
E C A V I Y O E X V U U O E S
F O R D E A R T H U R S S R K
Q B R W A S H I N G T O N E C
P A N M O K O J H I F E H L A
H M C N B Z Y O X V L U O Y J
T A R D L E I F R A G C J T Q

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

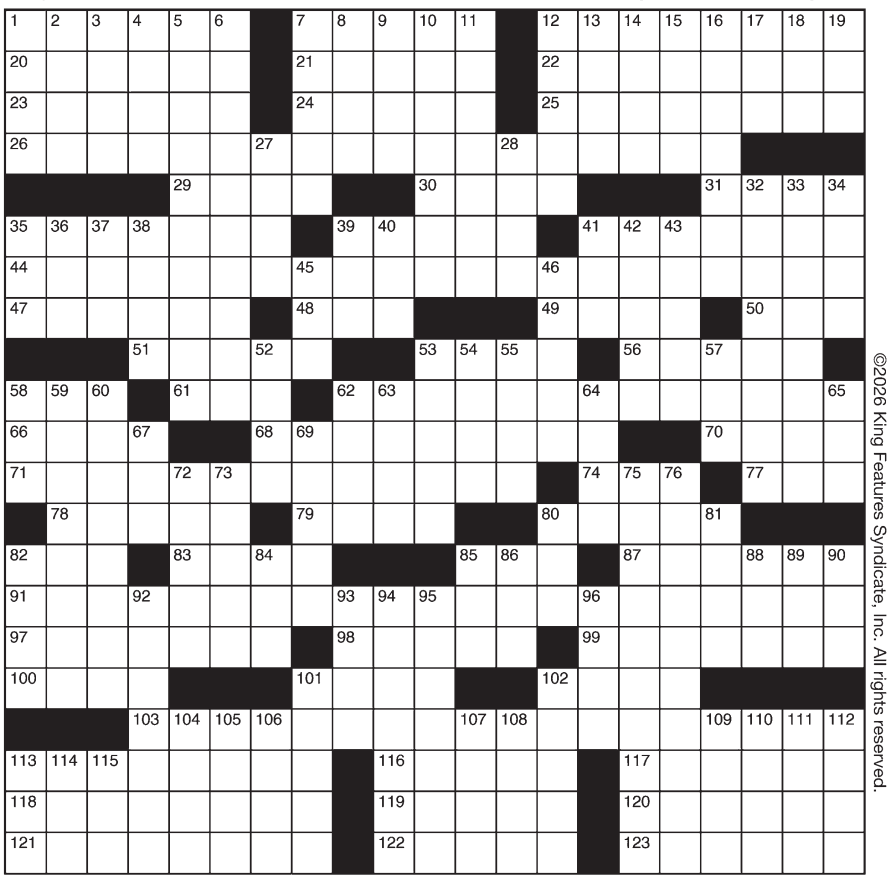
Arthur
Clinton
Ford
Garfield
Harding
Jackson
Jefferson
Johnson
Kennedy
Obama
Reagan
Roosevelt
Trump
Tyler
Washington

Super Crossword

FELINE FROM AFAR

ACROSS
1 More serious, as a matter
7 It's hidden by head hair
12 Quivered
20 Sure to succeed, as a proposition
21 Marisa of "Cyrus"
22 César Ritz or Conrad Hilton
23 Immediately
24 Of the hipbone
25 With great happiness
26 Start of a riddle
29 Breathe hard and fast
30 Seat of Kansas' Allen County
31 Whale like Shamu
35 Bouncer's age-verifying duty
39 — Park (site of Edison's lab)
41 Shock absorbers, of sorts
44 Riddle, part 2
47 Overly affected
48 Two, in Spain
49 Certain blood type, in brief
50 Quantity: Abbr.
51 Egyptian sun god
53 Fiber-yielding plant
56 Charlotte — (rich dessert)
58 Erwin of old films
61 Web portal since '95
62 Riddle, part 3
66 Mailed, e.g.
68 Pen name
70 Tiny, informally
71 Riddle, part 4
74 Really binges, briefly
77 Atlanta-to-Tampa dir.
78 Dog's tether
79 Edict
80 Expend all of
82 Lay (down)
83 84-Down of Bart Simpson
85 "Indubitably!"
87 Dazzling effects
91 End of the riddle
97 Signs up
98 Fishing line attachments
99 Private school
100 Personal manner
101 Chimney stuff
102 Skewed view
103 Riddle's answer
113 Egyptian carrier until 2021
116 Makes level
117 Disappear without —
118 Least narrow
119 Fix, as a bow
120 Papal crowns
121 Cutting parts of some cutting tools
122 Sulky states
123 Accompany for security

DOWN
1 Chew like a rat
2 Horror film director Eli
3 Emollient plant juice
4 Gold-winning skier Lindsey
5 Locked place where people solve puzzles to find the key
6 People staging old battles, say
7 Clown's leg lengthener
8 E. — (bacterium)
9 Lady friend, in France
10 On a slant
11 Small flute
12 Iota preceder
13 Do deep massage therapy on
14 And the like: Abbr.
15 Portion (out)
16 Ignored, informally
17 Pan topper
18 Sinuous fish
19 Parched
27 Egyptian sacred cross
28 Truckloads
32 Goes over, as old issues
33 Sevastopol natives, e.g.
34 Deputy: Abbr.
35 Hairy TV cousin
36 Whoop-de-—
37 Co. VIP
38 Owns, to Shakespeare
39 L-P link
40 Mag VIPs
41 Big Mac base
42 Wombs
43 Fill with steam
45 Mag revenue sources
46 Cry to a baby who makes a boo-boo
52 Potentially offensive, in brief
53 Attacked aggressively
54 Business coll. subject
55 Repair
57 Neighbor of Nor. and Fin.
58 Dir. 45 degrees from 77-Across
59 "Madam Secretary" star
60 Perturb
62 Rig on a road
63 Panther
64 Med. insurers
65 "Ready Player One" co-star Sheridan
67 "J to — L-O!" (Lopez album)
69 Until now
72 Dots on ocean maps
73 Switch gears
75 Become less intense
76 In the current state
80 Land with a 50-star flag
81 Said "guilty" or "not guilty"
82 Apple discard
84 Bro's sibling
85 Hearty laugh
86 Three in "maximum"
88 "Botch- —" (1952 hit)
89 Pro — (for now)
90 Pigs' hangout
92 Makes an allusion to
93 Sneaker, e.g.
94 Horn honkers
95 A baker may wear a mitt to handle one
96 Longtime depilatory brand
101 Singer Patti or Sam
102 Greyhound transports
104 Deputy
105 Body part with a cap
106 Brooklyn Bridge's river
107 Legendary snow beast
108 Doing the task
109 — II (Gillette razor)
110 Starchy tropical root
111 Plug-in auto
112 Repose
113 Sit-up targets
114 Lyricist Gershwin
115 Seating tier



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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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: ◆◆◆

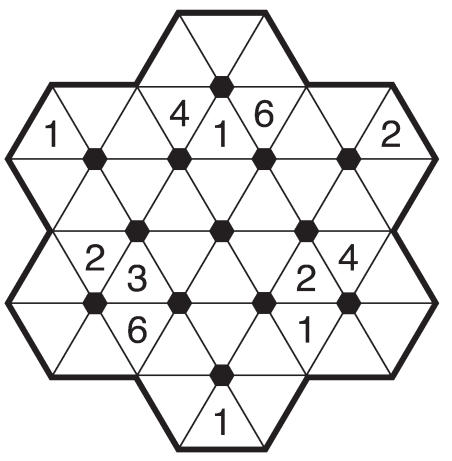
◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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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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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• An isolated Israeli city with a high rate of deafness created their own sign language as a way of communicating.

• Pakistan was the first official Muslim nation in the world.

• An emoji of a building underneath a pink heart originally symbolized an invitation to meet at a Japanese "love hotel," where rooms can be rented by the hour.

• At many European operas, whistling actually means boo.

• The Aetherius Society, a UFO religion, was founded by George King in 1955 after he claimed interplanetary sources instructed him to become "the Voice of Interplanetary Parliament."

• Cats have more bones than humans.

• According to several legends, if someone was bitten by a suspected vampire, he or she should drink the ashes of a burned vampire.

• Rock climbing can improve emotional or attention problems, such as anxiety and ADHD.

• First performed in 1999, the Sandpaper Ballet includes a musical number that sounds just like someone scratching sandpaper.

• An EF-3 tornado near Pampa, Texas, was so strong that it drove a corn stalk into a car's radiator.

• A mother admitted to attending her clique's "chickenpox party," a social gathering where parents expose unvaccinated children to the virus, even though her daughter had been vaccinated, because she feared rejection by the group if she didn't show up.

• Nearly 90% of London's police officers don't carry firearms.

• Before the invention of electricity, the only electromagnetic wavelengths present on Earth in any significant amount were those corresponding to the colors seen in a rainbow.

• In 2005, former Washington, D.C., administrative law judge Roy Pearson Jr. sued his neighborhood dry cleaners for $67 million after a pair of his suit pants was accidentally sent to another location. (No, he didn't win.)

***

Thought for the Day: "The first wealth is health." — *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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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!

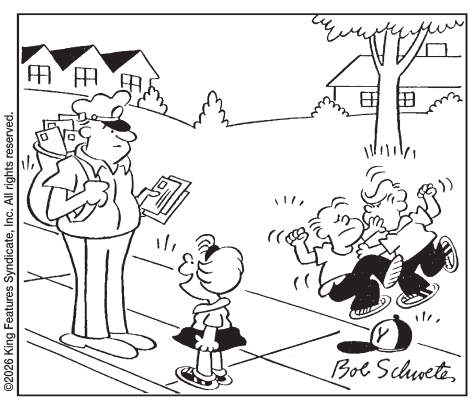
Restore
PRARIE ___ ___ ☐ ___ ☐ ___

Virtue
REMIT ☐ ☐ ___ ___ ___

Rancor
RUGGED ___ ☐ ☐ ___ ___ ___

Tether
SHALE ___ ___ ___ ☐ ___

TODAY'S WORD ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___



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"No, they're not playing cops and robbers — they're playing baseball players and ———————."

Advertise With Us!

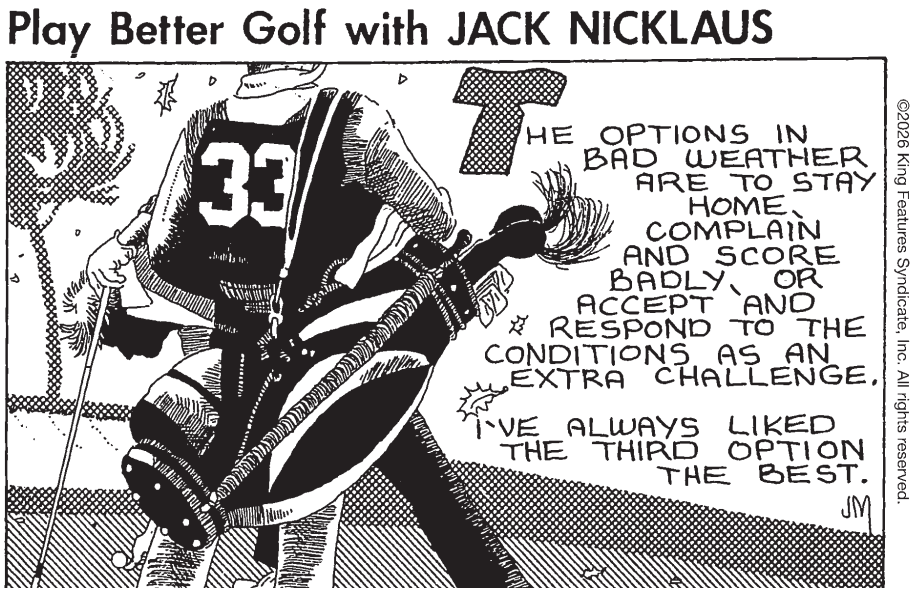
What we offer:
- Flexible pricing
- Highly Customizable Packages that include print, digital or both
- Deeply discounted rates
- Seasonal Specials

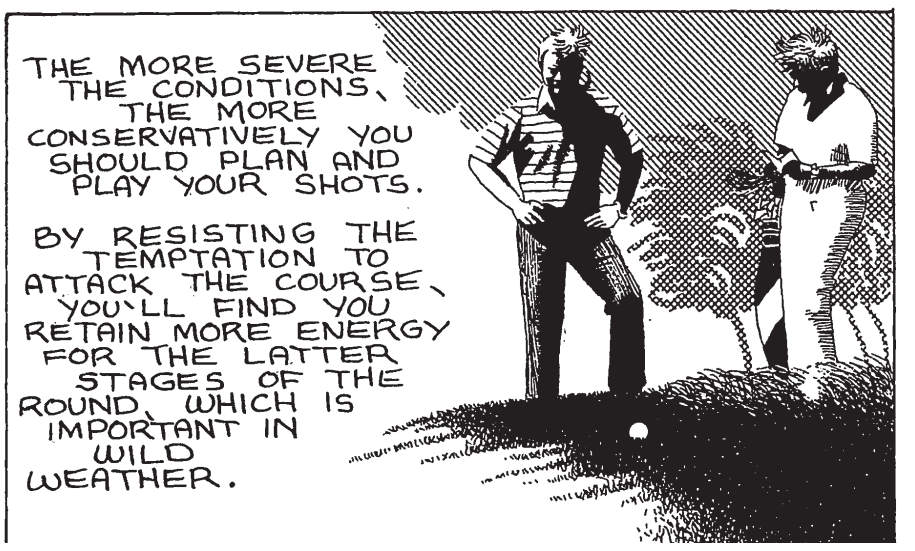
What we have:
- A team of Advertising Specialists who will work with you to customize a package, *STRETCH* your advertising dollars, and accomplish your advertising goals
- A talented team of designers who will work to help you reach your base.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





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LEGAL

COUNTY OF HENRY
REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings have been scheduled for **September 9, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make recommendations on the applications to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **September 22, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.

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

Case R-26-17 Kenneth Darin Lewis

The property is located in the northwest corner of the intersection of A.L. Philpott Hwy and Stoney Mountain Rd, in the Iriswood District. The property is shown on Tax Map 44.9/53A,53H and 45.7/9G. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 40.34-acres from Rural Residential District R-R to Limited Industrial District I-2. The applicant states that he wishes to develop a self-storage facility and potentially a restaurant on the property.

Case R-26-18 The Lester Group

The property is located on the east side of Kings Manor Dr, in the Reed Creek District. The property is shown on Tax Map 29.2/25U. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.937-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Commercial District B-1. The applicant wishes to develop 2 additional apartment building consisting of 12 units each, for a total of 24 additional units.

The applications for these requests may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Lee H. Clark, AICP
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. 26000977-00
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT
3160 Kings Mountain Road, 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112
Michael Timothy Riley, Jr. v. Brittany Dale Burnette Riley
Address Unknown

The object of this suit is to:
DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE
It is ORDERED that Brittany Dale Burnette Riley appear at the above-named court and protect her interests on or before October 2, 2026.

AUGUST 3, 2026
Katherine Salgado
[X] CLERK [ ] JUDGE

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. CL26001306-00
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT
3160 Kings Mountain Road, 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112
CRYSTAL ANN RIGNEY v. HUMBERTO ZUNIGA ROLDAN
123 Moctezume St
Ayala Morelos, Mexico

The object of this suit is to:
OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII
It is ORDERED that HUMBERTO ZUNIGA ROLDAN appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before October 20, 2026.

AUGUST 21, 2026
Katherine Salgado
[X] CLERK [ ] JUDGE

LEGAL

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

ADVERTISEMENT FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT SERVICES WITH OPERATOR SIGNUP

The Virginia Department of Transportation invites heavy equipment owners to sign up for the rental of their equipment with operators for SNOW & ICE REMOVAL purposes in Martinsville Residency which includes the counties of Henry, Patrick and Carroll during the winter of 2026-2027. Price per hour shall include operators, fuel, tire chains, supplies and required insurance. VDOT will need dump trucks, pickups with plows, motorgraders, backhoes, dozers, track loaders, tractors, rubber-tire loaders and farm tractors. All equipment shall be equipped for night work and be in good mechanical condition to ensure a safe and dependable 24/7 operation. VDOT reserves the right to determine acceptability of equipment size and condition for the task. Contractors submitting prices meeting the requirements of the Agreement may be contracted with and may be eligible to receive a bonus payment and a minimum guaranteed payment for the season.

Contractors must submit their application on the electronic M7B bidding site at https://plow4va.vdot.virginia.gov. All new and returning Contractors must be active in the Virginia eProcurement Portal (eVA) in order to do business with the Commonwealth of Virginia (https://eva.virginia.gov).

Applications received by 7:00 PM on Friday September 18, 2026 may be eligible for a bonus payment. See the EVA posting for additional information, including contract requirements.

Questions can be directed to the Martinsville
Residency from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday - Friday.
Phone: 276-629-2582
Email: SalemDistrictSnow@vdot.virginia.gov

EEO/AA Employer

LEGAL

NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF FEE-FOR-SERVICE REMOTE PATIENT CARE SERVICES

CopilotIQ will permanently end its fee-for-service remote patient monitoring (RPM) services on October 15, 2026.

This affects only patients receiving RPM on a fee-for-service basis; patients enrolled through a health plan are unaffected and will continue without interruption. Affected patients should arrange alternative care before that date.

For a copy of your records, submit a written request to the address below; to transfer records to another provider, submit a written authorization including the provider name and address.

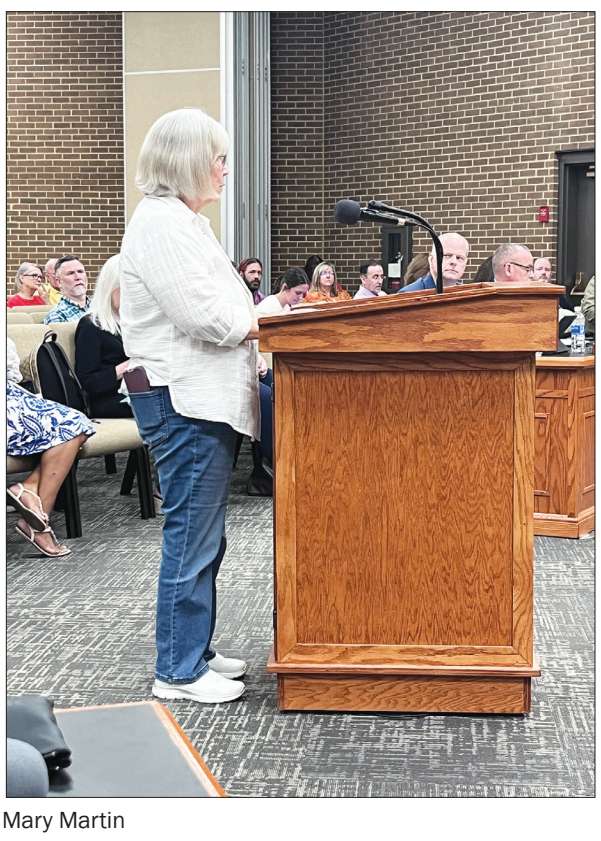
CopilotIQ
40 Burton Hills, Suite 200
Nashville, TN 37215
Phone: (800) 930-5144

Board

(cont. from page 1)



Schools Superintendent Dr. Amy Blake-Lewis requested the $532,239 be returned to the school division.



Mary Martin



West Piedmont Higher Education Center Board of Directors Chairman Dr. Eric Jones spoke about the center's goals and educational opportunities.

vious fiscal year could be returned to the county.

"My understanding is this same question came up at the end of the 2024 budget year, and the independent auditor made the same conclusion. When they prepared this budget they specifically asked the school board for documentation of unexpended state funds and there was some grants that were carried over, but they found that the money in question at the end of June 30, 2025 was local funds," Lyle said.

Lyle said auditors have traditionally marked unexpended funds as local funds because unexpended state funds would have to be returned to the state.

"But in recent years, I think in part of the budget bill, the state has said if there's unexpended state education money the school boards can keep it. I think it still has to be reappropriated by this board, but you don't have to send it back to Richmond," he said.

Lyle said the school system identified some of the unexpended funds as state funds in 2024, but the auditor did not agree.

"The auditor has said all of the money is local tax dollars. You always have the discretion to reappropriate it, but according to the auditor, there is no unexpended state funds outside of some grant situations to be carried over specifically for school use," Lyle said.

Dillard asked what other options county staff considered besides using the $532,239 to meet the increased required local match for education.

Wagoner said that without changing the county's tax rate, which was set at 50 cents, the funds would have to come from somewhere.

"On the county side, we delayed hiring several positions and used vacancy savings to fill the gaps. It was staff's recommendation to move these funds to meet that budget gap without changing the tax rate or dipping into the savings account. We've done that these last couple of years and we didn't think it was prudent to continue to dip into the savings account," Wagoner said.

Before the board voted, speakers addressed the decision not to return the carryover funds to the school division.

Mary Martin said she believes the $532,239 should have been returned to the school system.

"It is not intended to plug your budget holes this year, and if you check the reading of the law on that you'll see the school is correct in asking it not be used for that. This is not a way to educate our children, and this is not the way to keep up good schools," she said.

Martin said she believes the school board should consider legal action if the issue cannot be resolved.

"And we'll take it in front of a judge and let him explain the law to you because apparently, it's not being explained right, you don't understand it, or you just disregard it," she said.

Blake-Lewis said she recognizes that both boards have significant responsibilities to Henry County residents and will not always agree, "but our students and taxpayers deserve a relationship grounded in mutual respect, transparency, and a shared commitment to the future of this community."

Blake-Lewis said the school system takes its responsibility for taxpayer dollars seriously.

"Ending a fiscal year with unspent funds should not automatically be evidence that a school division was overfunded - it is evidence of careful management. We have previously requested that unspent funds be reappropriated for identified needs including significant capital needs," she said, noting that Virginia Code provides a mechanism for unspent funds to be placed in a capital reserve fund specifically for capital needs.

Blake-Lewis said the division's repeated experience has been that carryforward requests are not supported.

"I have heard questions in the past suggesting that as a fiscal closeout approaches, the school division is simply 'finding something to spend money on.' We do not spend money simply for the sake of spending it, we work hard to be responsible stewards of public funds. But when a school division knows that dollars responsibly saved at year end are unlikely to be reappropriated at year end for legitimate school needs, the system is unintentionally creating an incentive to spend rather than to save. That is not good public policy, it is not the behavior we should be encouraging from any publicly funded organization," Blake-Lewis said.

The board ultimately approved the budget amendments as presented.

In other business, the board:

*Heard from Daryl Holland, who requested that the board consider phasing out the local tax on farm equipment.

*Heard from Gordon Metz, who spoke about cattle and grain prices.

*Heard from Lillian Turner about the need for an ordinance for battery energy storage systems.

*Heard from Melody Cartwright, who spoke against data centers.

*Heard from Linda Smith, who said she appreciates the data center ordinance and believes anyone who wants to build a data center in the county should have to hold a meeting to answer questions from county residents.

*Heard from Sherry Mitchell about the need for battery energy storage site protections. Mitchell also spoke against data centers.

*Heard from Naomi Hodge-Muse, who thanked the board for listening to residents and adding provisions to the county's data center ordinance.

*Heard from school board member Ben Gravely, of the Iriswood District, about the relationship between the school board and Board of Supervisors and the decision not to return the FY25 carryover funds to the school system.

*Approved an additional appropriation of $54,672 received from the Virginia Department of Health's Return to Locality Fund. The funds will be used to purchase standardized medical supplies and maintain the EMS pharmacy for all EMS agencies in Henry County.

*Approved an additional appropriation of $15,958 received from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services to cover overtime pay for deputies in the Sheriff's Office providing high-impact law enforcement activities in areas experiencing an increase in crime.

*Awarded a $111,600 contract to Sarver Cleaning Services for custodial cleaning services at the courthouse. Funding for the project is included in the FY27 courthouse maintenance budget.

*Approved an additional appropriation of $235,425 received from the Virginia Department of Education to fund the fresh fruit and vegetable program in the county's elementary schools.

*Approved the consent agenda.

*Heard the monthly report on delinquent tax collection efforts.

*Heard the Piedmont Community Services' 2025 annual report.

*Heard an update on the Blue Ridge Regional Library from Director Melissa Chapman.

*Heard an update on the West Piedmont Higher Education Center, formerly the New College Institute, from Board of Directors Chairman Dr. Eric Jones.

*Approved allocating $6,000 in district impact funds to A&J Lawncare to mow areas along Business 220.

*Heard an update on general highway matters from Virginia Department of Transportation Residency Administrator Robin Keeler.

Supervisors

(cont. from page 1)



The Henry County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the data center ordinance with a 6-0 vote.

knowledge and understanding, as of now no one has requested a data center to be built in Henry County," Dillard said.

The Planning Commission previously held a public hearing on zoning amendments, including initial data center standards, on April 15. No public comments were offered at that meeting.

The Board of Supervisors held a public hearing July 28, when nearly 40 residents spoke against data centers and called for stricter regulations. The board declined to approve the proposed ordinance at that meeting.

Under the revised ordinance, county staff created a Data Center District, or D-C, where data centers could be constructed only with a special-use permit.

"The D-C District is not anywhere on the current zoning map, and any future location would require rezoning and a special use permit," Lyle said.

The process would include public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as part of the rezoning process. If the rezoning is approved, the property owner would then have to seek a special-use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals, which would hold another public hearing.

If a landowner wants to develop a data center, the property first would have to be rezoned to the D-C district.

"If a landowner in Henry County wants to develop a data center he would apply for a rezoning, which means going to the Planning Commission. A public hearing before the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission would make a recommendation to the board of supervisors, and the board of supervisors would hold a public hearing and decide if they were going to rezone land in Henry County to make it a Data Center zone from whatever it was previously zoned. If the board said 'no, we're not going to rezone the land,' that would be the end of the case, and there would be no additional public hearings, no additional actions, and a data center could not be constructed," Lyle said.

If the board approves the rezoning, the landowner would have to apply for a special-use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals, which would hold its own public hearing.

The ordinance establishes a 100-foot front setback from any street right of way. Side and rear setbacks would be 500 feet when adjoining industrial zones and 1,000 feet when adjoining nonindustrial zones.

"A maximum building height would be 75 feet from grade. Taller structures would be allowed only with a special use permit from the BZA," Lyle said.

The ordinance also establishes extensive application requirements, Lyle said that county staff incorporated suggestions made by residents during the July 28 public hearing into the expanded requirements.

"We have a detailed project narrative identifying the applicant, owner, operator, and describing the proposed data center and location. A comprehensive site plan showing property lines, setback lines, buildings, access roads, parking, entrances, and making sure they meet all of the VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) requirements," he said.

Applicants would also be required to submit a third-party water supply impact study addressing demand, cooling technology, water sources, groundwater analysis, cumulative impacts, drought modeling, recycling and release of water, wastewater treatment and storage.

An electrical infrastructure impact analysis also would be required, including demand, redundancy, impacts on existing infrastructure, necessary upgrades and documentation of utility capacity approval.

Applicants would also have to provide a photometric lighting plan meeting new lighting standards and an acoustical impact analysis by a professional engineer. The analysis would address modeled sound levels, tonal characteristics, mitigation measures and compliance with county noise ordinances.

The ordinance also requires an evaluation of emergency power technologies to identify systems with the lowest practical environmental impact, Lyle said.

Applicants would have to provide documentation of the right to use the property and a detailed decommissioning plan with required financial security.

Operational noise would be limited to 50 decibels at the exterior property line. Mechanical equipment also would be prohibited from producing a clearly audible pure tone at or beyond residentially zoned property lines.

Exterior lighting would have to be downward-directed, full-cutoff and fully shielded to minimize glare, light trespass and skyglow, with color temperatures of 3,000K or less.

Generators, cooling systems and mechanical infrastructure would have to be enclosed and screened from adjacent streets and uses.

Ground-mounted equipment would be prohibited in front yards, while refuse areas would have to be fully screened.

Principal facades would have to use differentiated surfaces and consistent architectural design to maintain community character along public roads and adjacent residential areas.

Lyle said the ordinance also places restrictions on cooling technology.

"Some other new ones, and I think this is one that was a lot of discussion- cooling technology is restricted to a closed-loop system, so evaporative cooling techniques and cooling towers are not permitted and this is an effort to greatly reduce water consumption. Decommission must begin within 12-months after permanent cessation of operations or a year of inactivity, and be completed within 24 months unless the BZA grants an extension, and the county may draw on financial assurances to complete decommissioning if the owner fails to meet the approved plan, with costs reviews at least every three years to adjust the security amount," Lyle said.

After construction, the owner would be required to submit a post-construction acoustical study demonstrating compliance with noise standards within 90 days of full operations or another approved time. Similar verification would be required after completion of each phase.

"Annual noise testing must be conducted and submitted to the administrator by July 1 each year, and a 48-hour period to remedy any violations before operations must cease," he said.

Lyle said an emergency response plan must be prepared in consultation with the Henry County Department of Public Safety to identify hazards, emergency contacts, access procedures, utility shutoffs, fire suppression, hazardous materials, and emergency power systems.

An emergency response plan also would be required.

Lyle said the plan must be prepared in consultation with the Henry County Department of Public Safety and identify hazards, emergency contacts, access procedures, utility shutoffs, fire suppression, hazardous materials and emergency power systems.

The plan must be updated at least every three years and after material facility modifications.

An orientation session for public safety personnel also would be required before issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

When asked by Chairman Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, for his opinion of the ordinance, Lyle said he believes it creates a more transparent and rigorous process.

"I think it's a more rigorous ordinance, there's more requirements to even apply. It's the only district that we have created that is not on the map in Henry County, which means the elected body must have two public hearings before considering rezoning, and it would have to be a rezoning before anyone could even apply to build a data center," he said.

Lyle also said he believes the ordinance provides a fair process for landowners who want to develop a data center.

"But it's going to require a serious commitment of resources, a serious commitment of time and expertise to be able to apply for the rezoning and to be able to apply for a special use permit and try to go forward with developing a center. I think it's fair for landowners in Henry County, I think it's fair to the public. There'll be a lot of transparency and a lot of opportunity for public input," he said.

Adams asked Lyle about the strength of requiring multiple public hearings and rezoning.

Lyle said rezoning is a legislative matter and that courts give significant deference to elected bodies when reviewing such decisions.

"On a legislative matter like rezoning, courts are going to give great deference to the elected body. The decision of the board will be given great weight," Lyle said.

If the rezoning project is rejected, and "the developer wants to challenge that in court, I think it will be a difficult decision to overturn. It's all fact specific; what is said at public hearings and what the board says in making their decision, but I think that when you consider rezoning, you look at things like the comp plan, the future of the county, the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the general health and welfare of the citizens near the rezoning, it's a lot of subjective things that are considered by an elected body when they rezone land," he said.

Vice Chairman Travis Pruitt, of the Ridgeway District, asked Lyle why the county should not consider a potential moratorium on data centers.

Lyle said he believes a moratorium could create legal risks because an elected body would need a factual basis for such a decision.

"That's the decision that courts will overturn an elected body and say, 'well, that's no facts to support why they did that, there's no good reason to support that. It doesn't sound like a fair process to the landowners, it doesn't sound like a fair process to people who own property in this county who might want to do a lawful activity," he said.

While he acknowledged that data centers can have a significant impact on a locality, Lyle said he believes the ordinance provides sufficient protections while allowing landowners to pursue the development process.

"I would defend that decision if I had to go to court, but it's not something I think is a great position to be in. I think the ordinance is enough. I think it's fair, transparent, rigorous, I think it's enough that we can protect the community and still allow a fair process to take place. I think a moratorium at first just sounds like something that's harder to defend in court if someone challenges it, and it's an expensive thing to defend," Lyle said.

Adams said he believes county staff incorporated concerns raised during the July 28 public hearing, when hundreds of residents attended and 37 residents requested stricter regulations on data centers.

Pam Cobler, of the Reed Creek District, said she was satisfied with the changes made by staff.

"This has brought us a much better option and a much better ordinance," Cobler said.

NRCS Application Deadline Set for Oct. 30

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to put Farmers First through a historic investment in conservation on agricultural lands through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a result of the conservation funding provided by the Working Families Tax Cuts Act.

"Virginia agriculture is incredibly diverse and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to conservation," said NRCS Virginia State Conservationist Dr. Edwin Martinez Martinez. "Our job is to listen, bring the right technical expertise to the table and work alongside producers to find solutions that strengthen their operations while conserving the natural resources we all depend on."

While NRCS accepts applications year-round, interested agricultural producers in Virginia should apply by Oct. 30, 2026, to be considered for funding during Fiscal Year 2027. Programs include:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): This component of ACEP enables producers to protect their agricultural land from development by enrolling it in a permanent Agricultural Land Easement. The Wetland Reserve Easement component of ACEP helps landowners protect, restore and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): CSP helps producers build on existing conservation efforts while strengthening their operations.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): EQIP provides producers with the technical and financial resources they need to address resources concerns on their land including improved water and air quality, increased soil health, reduced soil erosion, improved natural vitality and more.

NRCS is also providing additional financial assistance nationwide through the Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP), which enables producers to implement whole-farm regenerative practices by making a single application for EQIP and CSP.

Additionally, producers can apply to participate in a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project by Oct. 30, 2026.

- RCPP 2462 - Virginia Headwaters Restoration Initiative (Trout Unlimited)
- RCPP 2381 - Preserving Working Farms and Securing Urban Ag (Capital Region Land Conservancy)

Draper

(cont. from page 1)

sumed office in 1994 and I also began my law enforcement career in 1994, so we had that connection. Although he had many years of service before then, it was just kind of a thing that he's always been there to offer assistance and work with," said Fincher, who formerly served as the city's police chief.

Fincher said the working relationship between the Martinsville Police Department and Sheriff's Office was unmatched under Draper.

"He was just an outstanding leader and an outstanding person, and I'm truly going to miss him. He was a good friend, we had a lot of fun together, and I'm going to miss those times," he said.

Fincher said some of the most fun he and Draper had together involved their work with law enforcement motorcycles.

"Where I was a motor officer and he had motorcycles, we would ride together doing different events, like the race or an escort. Those were always a lot of fun, we really enjoyed doing it," he said.

One memory Fincher has of Draper was an uprising at the Martinsville City Jail.

"He was able to negotiate that, and I was there to try and assist him. He had called for help from the police department, and we came in, and he pretty much handled everything and didn't require people going in by force and stuff like you see so much. He was able to talk everyone into compliance. I remember looking up to him at that point and thinking, 'Wow, this guy's got some really good people skills. He's definitely in the right job, and he deserves to be sheriff,'" Fincher said.

Because Draper was so well loved, Fincher said his death is difficult for many people.

"His legacy will last forever," he said.

Fincher said Michael Law, who was sworn in as interim sheriff Aug. 31, was Draper's choice of successor "because he knew that this was approaching."

"We look forward to working with Sheriff Law. I know that he's going to do his best to uphold the good work that Sheriff Draper did," he said.

In an interview with WDBJ7, Martinsville Police Chief Chad Rhoads said Draper was a mentor and friend to many city residents.

"He took me under his wing, he introduced me to a lot of people I know, and he just wanted people to feel comfortable around the community members. He's just one of those guys that everybody loves, even the inmates love the sheriff," Rhoads said.

Former council member Gene Teague said he first met Draper in 1994, when Teague was elected to fill Draper's seat on City Council following Draper's election as sheriff.

"I picked up the phone and called him and started talking to him about what I needed to do. I was a newly elected city council member and I just wanted to talk to him about how to get up to speed, so we developed a friendship starting from there," he said.

During his 21 years on City Council, Teague said he developed a close working relationship with Draper.

"More importantly he was a friend because we started working together with the 500 Committee, he got me on the 500 Committee with the Martinsville Speedway, so we became good friends, got to spend a lot of time at the speedway together and have a lot of conversations," Teague said.

As sheriff, Teague said Draper did many things to take the office beyond his traditional duties.

"He really focused on how could he make the lives of the citizens better and do a better job for the city. He started the prison farm, got that going back up, and for many years, used that as a method to not only house prisoners, but to grow food and provide an incremental space," he said.

Teague said Draper also led the department through construction of the jail's annex, which allowed more inmates to be housed, and started the city's inmate work crew.

"Over the decades it's been in existence, it has provided probably millions of dollars of benefit to the city, and plus giving an opportunity to the prisoners to get out and do some work. That expanded into Henry County and he was running that in the county at some point," he said.

Teague said Draper's love for Martinsville was unmatched.

"He cared deeply about all aspects of the city. Every council member that's probably served at some point has had conversations with Steve not only about the sheriff's office, but about the city. Steve always went out of his way to engage council members and make sure they were up to speed. He was an outstanding sheriff, but a better person. He's going to be missed, and he's going to be hard to replace," Teague said.

Martinsville Mayor LC Jones said Draper was the sheriff of the people.

"He was someone who was out in the community, especially during the hardest times it was to be a sheriff. He spoke with the people, and it showed in how he did his job. He wasn't afraid to knock on a door and talk to people," Jones said.

Jones said Draper would go to local schools to eat lunch with children and remember their names.

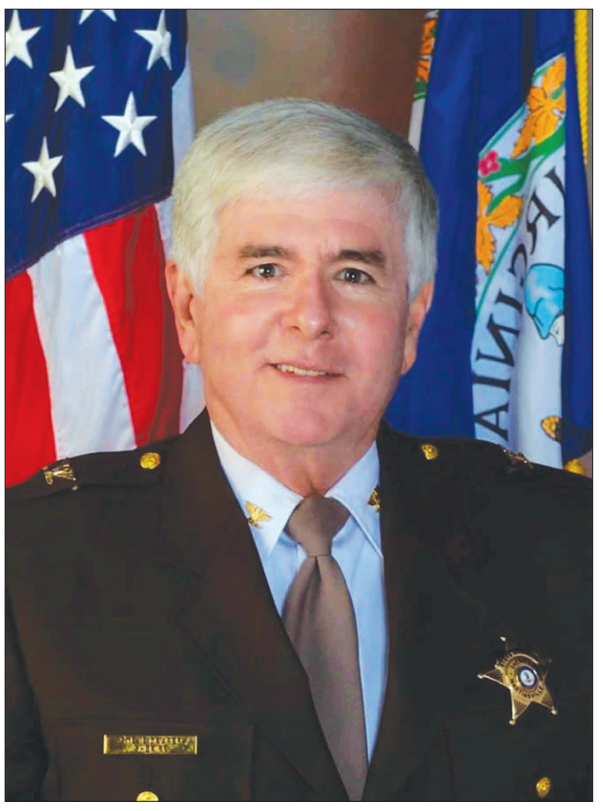
"He actually knew my son before we met, and he remembered his name. It was so amazing how deep he was in the community," Jones said.

Having known Draper since she was 13 years old, Martinsville Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson said she lost a lifelong friend.

"Not only have we lost a dedicated public servant, we've lost a good friend," she said.

Lawson said Draper transitioned the Sheriff's Office from a run-of-the-mill office that primarily oversaw the jail and served warrants into an organization focused on community enrichment.

"He implemented many different programs that were unique to the Martinsville Sheriff's Office like our firewood program that was started probably over a decade ago that provides firewood to our citizens in need. I can't think of another Sheriff's Office in the Commonwealth that does programs like that," she said.



Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper is pictured in a brown Sheriff's Office uniform.
Photo courtesy of Ray Reynolds

In a social media post Saturday, Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis wrote that "Steve was the most senior sheriff in Virginia and a true servant to the people of Martinsville. His dedication to his community and to the Office of Sheriff was unwavering.

"More than a colleague, Steve was a mentor to many of us. His wisdom, leadership, and friendship left a lasting mark on those fortunate enough to know and serve alongside him. The City of Martinsville was truly blessed by his years of faithful service," he wrote.

Davis added that Draper "was such a positive guy. I don't know that everyone knew that side of him, but he really was a good guy to be around."

Because of Draper's service as a longtime board member and past president of the Virginia Sheriff's Association, Davis said "his impact on public safety was felt way beyond Martinsville. There's not a sheriff in the state that didn't know Sheriff Draper."

Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said Draper "was a good friend. I'm going to miss him."

Smith added that Draper's office "has always been very supportive of our office."

Draper also was known for his support of community events, including the Jennifer Short Memorial Scholarship Ride.

Organizer Ray Reynolds said his support was steadfast, and went on for 20 years. "We were successful because of Steve. It would not have continued without Steve's help."

Draper "was not only a great friend of mine, but I confided in him when I needed advice or help," Reynolds said.

"I'll miss him."

Council

(cont. from page 1)

crafts; community-based art; public art; and creative industries and businesses.

The plan was developed over 11 months with input from the committee and city residents. The process included individual and small-group interviews with 35 people involved in the arts, culture, business, education and government, as well as an online sentiment survey.

Committee members said residents expressed interest in seeing the arts respond to a younger, more diverse audience reflective of the city's growing population.

The plan outlines five goals.

The first is to strengthen leadership and coordination.

The second is to increase awareness and participation in the arts by expanding ways for residents of all ages, backgrounds and neighborhoods to engage with arts and culture, with a focus on youth, families and neighborhood-based participation.

The third goal is to elevate visibility and storytelling.

The fourth is to grow the creative economy.

The fifth goal is to creatively activate spaces by using arts and culture to enhance public spaces and create more engaging environments.



Ariel Johnson receives a proclamation honoring September as National Recovery Month.

In Uptown, that could include creating more interesting and walkable streetscapes through public art or destination-worthy arts experiences.

The council also received an update on the Five Point subdivision.

Public Works Director Greg Maggard said construction work on the subdivision is complete and the city is working to close out the stormwater permit.

"The Five Points subdivision is now done. I'm working on closing out the stormwater permit for that subdivision. We've done the paving over there, the stormwater underground has been done, gutter's finished. It's all done. I think that's a good thing. We'll see. I know we have some other issues down there, but we'll take care of that. But as far as the state is concerned, the project is complete, and we can close up permitting for it," Maggard said.

Maggard also discussed a proposed position advancement plan for his department that would establish steps for employees to progress through positions.

"I do have something for my department that basically allows them to go into a position and it gives them sort plan of 'what do I do to go to a two, what do I have to do to go to a three?' And it's spelled out for them step by step by step, and then one step builds on the next step. We just need to get to a spot where we're comfortable implementing that."

Maggard said the proposed plan does not include the water or electric departments, with the latter having already received a pay increase.

He estimated the cost at approximately $50,000 to $60,000 for his department.

The council presented a proclamation honoring September as National Hispanic Heritage Month to Eli Salgado and the Southern Virginia Latino Association (SOVALA).

A proclamation honoring September as National Recovery Month was presented to Ariel Johnson of the Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition.

Two Danville leaders appointed to Tobacco Commission

Two Danville leaders have been appointed to the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission by Gov. Abigail Spanberger.

The appointments are Dr. Angela Hairston, superintendent of Danville Public Schools, and Dr. Alexis Ehrhardt, vice president for government relations at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Spanberger announced the appointments Aug. 28 as part of several appointments to boards across Virginia.

"I am proud to appoint the following Virginians to boards across our Commonwealth — Virginians who will use their expertise to help all our neighbors," Spanberger said.

THANK YOU FOR READING
HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Harm Reduction honors overdose victims







By Jessica Dillon

The Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition marked Overdose Awareness Day on Aug. 31 with a roadside memorial honoring people who have died from overdose.

The coalition also hosted an event at its new Bassett location to raise awareness and connect people with resources.

"Specifically today we take time to honor those who have lost their lives to overdose," said Ariel Johnson, director of operations.

Johnson said the memorial has prompted families who have lost loved ones to share their stories and photos.

"I think what I've seen a lot of is, I've had families send me pictures of their loved one so we could enter them on the roadside memorial," Johnson said.

She said the memorial gives families an opportunity to talk about their loved ones without shame or judgment. Johnson hopes to keep the roadside memorial in place through September.

Johnson also encouraged people in need of assistance to contact the coalition, regardless of whether they live in Henry County or a neighboring locality.

"We just try to not focus on the lost but remember the people who are still here and who are struggling," Johnson said.

The Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition is located at 2611 Riverside Drive in Bassett and can be reached at 540-541-2022.



The Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition created a roadside memorial honoring those who have died from overdose. (Contributed by rbs news now.)

Ferrum

(cont. from page 2)



Ferrum College students hold up glowing smartphones to create a sea of lights in Swartz Gym during the annual Light of Knowledge ceremony at Convocation on Monday, August 10, 2026.

for the commitment our employees bring to this work each day, and these results are a reflection of their efforts."

Founded in 1913, Ferrum College remains committed to its historic mission of providing a rigorous, hands-on education rooted in academic excellence, character development, leadership, and service. Guided by its enduring motto, Not Self, But Others, the College continues to prepare graduates who strengthen their professions, enrich their communities, and make meaningful contributions throughout the world.

With the strongest enrollment in six years, a more than 20 percent increase in returning students, and a significantly strengthened financial position, Ferrum College continues to demonstrate that mission-driven institutions can thrive through disciplined stewardship, academic excellence, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to student success.

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

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