



The first Innovation Campus building is expected to welcome students, faculty, and staff in the fall of 2024. Photo by Mike Chirieleison for Virginia Tech.

'A day many years in the making': Virginia Tech celebrates Innovation Campus groundbreaking

Jenny Kincaid Boone
Contributing writer

Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus celebrated a major milestone on Tuesday: the start of construction.

During a groundbreaking ceremony for the campus's first academic building in Alexandria, a host of top government, university, and business leaders, including Virginia Tech President Tim Sands and Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, lauded the Innovation Campus for its mission to solve the nation and common-

wealth's critical needs for tech talent.

They spoke to a crowd of more than 200 supporters, all gathered under a large white tent at the campus's construction site on Potomac Avenue.

"It's a day many years in the making, made possible by a broad group of partners who were willing to support a bold vision to advance research, graduate education, and community engagement in the greater Washington, D.C., metro area," Sands said.

See **novation Campus**, page 6

MFRL to launch second edition of Edgar A. Long book

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library (MFRL) and Christiansburg Institute are partnering to launch the second edition of A Vision of Education: Selected Writings of Edgar A. Long.

Free and open to the public, the book launch will take place on three occasions:

Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library, 125 Sheltman St.

Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library, 200 Miller St.

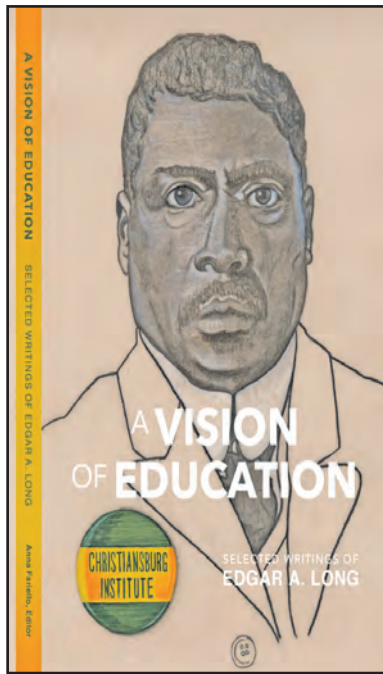
Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Meadowbrook Library, 267 Alleghany Spring Road, Shawsville.

Books will be available to purchase after the program.

The second edition is made possible by a grant from the Virginia Humanities. The first edition, also grant funded by the Virginia Humanities, was originally published in 2001 by the Christiansburg Institute and was edited by Anna Fariello.

Beginning in 2020, Christiansburg Institute staff, board members, and descendants of

Edgar and Anna Long collaborated to reprint a second edition of A Vision of Education: Selected Writings of Edgar A. Long. The second edition includes new original cover art, a new preface, a letter from Edgar and Anna Long's grandson, updated photographs, and an updated timeline.



Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets ambassador Growley II to retire

After five years of greeting people across campus, sharing the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets story, and providing tail wags and morale boosts to cadets, Growley II (call sign "Tank") will retire at the end of this semester.

The 8-year-old yellow Labrador has served honorably as the corps' faithful canine ambassador. His reward? He soon will become a happily spoiled pet.

The adoption process is already underway among corps' alumni who served as Growley's handlers or on his 12-member team. Current Growley Team cadets are also working with Ciao Bella Retrievers of Troutville, Virginia, to train Growley III.

Meanwhile, Growley II and team are looking forward to a few more months on the job.

Growley II is a happy, bouncy dog who loves to play ball. "He's fiercely loyal, eager to please, and the most expressive dog," said his handler, Cadet Dara Qualter, a senior in the corps' Citizen-Leader Track majoring in biomedical science in the College of Science.

Trained as a companion dog, he enjoys the attention of being an ambassador, and his cadet team ensures he has a healthy, fun, and stress-free life on campus, where he lives with Qualter on Upper Quad.

Growley II arrived on campus during summer 2016 as a 3-year-old Lab, the unexpected result of a miserable winter morning for then cadet Zack Sever.

"It's hard to believe it's been five years," said Sever, now a U.S. Navy lieutenant and

F-18 pilot with Strike Fighter Squadron 103 at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Virginia. He graduated in 2017 with a degree in political science from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

That morning of Sever's junior year, everyone was in a mood. Grousing turned to possible solutions. Someone mentioned the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M had a dog, Reveille. Someone else mentioned the story of Virginia Tech's corps having a dog decades ago.

Later that day, Sever was still thinking about a dog. His roommate pushed him to try to make it a reality.

The way Col. Patience Larkin, who retired from the U.S. Air Force to serve as the corps' alumni director, remembers

it, Sever showed up in her office with a document detailing why the corps needed a dog. A 1987 corps alumnus who earned a degree in political science, she had been a member of Echo Company, like

Sever.

Larkin listened and offered to bring the idea to Commandant of Cadets Maj. Gen. Randal Fullhart.

See **Growley**, page 6



PHOTO BY SHAY BARNHART FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Growley II has served as the Corps of Cadets' ambassador since fall 2016. He will retire at the end of this semester. As a cadet brigadier general, he is the highest-ranking cadet. He has been featured on several class rings and attends classes with his handler, Cadet Dara Qualter, and his "tankerchief" matches the uniform of the day for the cadets.



Visitors to the Science Museum of Western Virginia can crank up a helmet to simulate the impact studies done in the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab. Photo by Phyllis Newbill for Virginia Tech.

New museum exhibits showcase Virginia Tech research

From flying snakes to honey bee habitats, the newest exhibits at the Science Museum of Western Virginia in Roanoke give visitors the opportunity to explore the university's discoveries through a series of interactive opportunities.

The museum and Virginia Tech have collaboratively developed four new museum exhibits inspired by the work of the university's students and faculty. Through a unique partnership, Virginia Tech has the opportunity to share its discoveries with the public, while museum visitors

get hands-on experience with innovative technologies and exciting scientific discoveries. Photos and short biographies provide a glimpse at the scientists behind the work.

Phyllis Newbill, associate director of educational networks for the Center for Educational Networks and Impacts (CENI), serves as the liaison managing the relationship between Virginia Tech and the science museum connecting faculty, students, and staff from both organizations to create new collaborative opportunities and sustain the partnership.

"The relationship is rich and growing. It is really a win-win," said Newbill. "The museum gets fresh new exhibits highlighting current scientific research. Virginia Tech researchers get access to the museum's 60,000 annual visitors so their research can make a broader impact. Four new exhibits opened this year, adding to the three already on the museum floor. More are in design now."

These are the four new museum exhibits:
"Snakes can fly?!"

See **Museum**, page 2

News Brief: Radford police arrest Blacksburg man for sexual assault of minor

33-year-old Zachariah B. Wilson of Blacksburg has been charged with six felonies relating to the sexual assault of a minor or minors after his arrest by the Radford City Police Department Sunday, Sept. 12.

The charges include sexual assault on a victim through mental incapacity or helplessness, two counts of sexual assault of a victim under the

age of 13, and two counts of taking indecent liberties of a child under the age of 15.

The offenses allegedly occurred between October of last year and July of 2021. Other details remain sketchy, and whether Wilson was related to the victim(s) is not known.

Wilson is being held at the New River Valley Regional Jail.

Blacksburg, Christiansburg police departments investigate larcenies from vehicles

Blacksburg and Christiansburg police departments are conducting a joint investigation into early morning larcenies from vehicles.

The suspects targeted vehicles located at "Fitness Facilities." Multiple vehicles located in parking lots at local gyms were broken into. Various items were taken.

The suspect vehicles are a dark colored Jeep SUV and a white GMC, possibly an Acadia. Both vehicles appeared to display out-of-state license plates. The suspects were described as two black males.

Both departments are asking the community for any assistance in helping to identify the vehicles and/or the occupants. The departments

remind everyone to continue to make sure your vehicles are secure, and items of value should not be left in your vehicle. Anyone observing any suspicious activity at any time should report it to the police by dialing 911 or calling the New River Valley Communications Center at (540) 382-4343.

Anyone having information about these crimes or any other crimes should contact the Blacksburg Police Department at (540) 443-1400 or the Christiansburg Police Department at (540) 982-3131. To place an anonymous tip, call the Blacksburg Police Tip Line at (540) 961-1819 or email CIU@blacksburg.gov.

Church of the Brethren to present annual gospel sing

CHRISTIANSBURG - Three gospel performers will bring a joyous sound to the Christiansburg Church of the Brethren this evening, Saturday, Sept. 18, at 6 p.m. The occasion is the

church's annual gospel sing. The church is located at 310 S Franklin St. Dale Buckner of Pilot; Sounds of Harmony, of Floyd; and The Glorylanders of the NRV will provide the music.

"All three are very popular in the area for spreading God's word through their God-given musical talents," the church announced. "The Christiansburg Church of the Brethren invites everyone to

come and enjoy an evening of beautiful gospel music." A social hour with light refreshments will follow the concert. The singing will be inside the church, but will also be

transmitted to the parking lot. Those feeling uncomfortable coming into the church because of COVID-19 may remain in their vehicles and listen through their radio.



Pilot's Dale Buckner will present joyous gospel music this evening at the Christiansburg Church of the Brethren's annual gospel sing.



Also scheduled to present their unique gospel sound at the Church of the Brethren are The Glorylanders of the New River Valley.



Offering their harmonies in praise of the Lord at the Church of the Brethren tonight are the Sounds of Harmony from Floyd.

RSVP sponsors tribute to local first responders on 9-11 anniversary

Pat Brown
Contributing writer

To honor first responders on the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 tragedy, members of the Montgomery County RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) packed and delivered baskets of treats for 21 emergency agencies in Montgomery County and Radford. Two hundred and fifty local RSVP members, all 55 years of age or older, donated their time to bake treats and pack snacks into baskets. A group of nine volunteers delivered the gift baskets and trays on trips that included stops at Radford University and Virginia Tech, both of which maintain first-aid squads. The thank-you treats went to police stations and sheriff's headquarters, fire stations, and rescue teams.

RSVP Director Mandy Hayes called the event a "Patriot's Day of Service." Last year's event had to be virtual because of the threat of COVID. Noting that RSVP is designed to attract seniors, Hayes said, "We serve some of the most vulnerable people."

Hayes said RSVP members usually give out tote bags to residents of a lo-

cal nursing home at Christmas illustrating that the volunteers are busy all year long. The bags are filled with useful and thoughtful items, some of which might be holiday themed. This year bags will go to residents of the Kroontje facility at Warm Hearth Village.

On Veterans Day in November, nursing homes receive vases of flowers in red, white, and blue from RSVP. "In normal times our volunteers put those together," Hayes said, but health concerns prevented a group project last fall, so flowers had to be ordered.

RSVP offices are located on the first floor of the Montgomery County Health Department building. Montgomery County has had a senior volunteer program in place for the past 48 years and includes Radford City as part of the service area.

The agency is funded by the federal government through AmeriCorp, by the Montgomery Board of Supervisors, and by local fundraising efforts and donations.

Hayes singled out Supervisor Sherri Blevins and County Administrator Craig Meadows for their ongoing support of RSVP.



Volunteers from the Montgomery County Retired Senior Volunteer Program baked 22 trays of homemade treats and packed up 22 baskets of pre-wrapped goodies for first responders around Montgomery County and Radford, timing their efforts to coincide with commemorations of the 20th Anniversary of the 9-11 terrorist attack. Pictured, left to right, are Shirley Mullins, Carol Trutt, Brenda Arnold, Rosemary Jones, and Shirley Hallock.

Local students among semifinalists in 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program

Students from Blacksburg High School, Christiansburg High School, and Eastern Montgomery High School were among the 16,000 students nationwide announced Wednesday, Sept. 15, as semifinalists in the 67th annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$30 million that will be offered next spring.

High school juniors entered the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2020 Preliminary SAT/National Merit

Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a finalist, the semifinalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about the semifinalist's academic record, participation in school and community

activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received.

A semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT® or ACT® scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.

About 15,000 of the semifinalists are expected to advance to the finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation. All National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from this group of finalists. Merit Scholar designees are selected on

the basis of their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, or religious preference.

The National Merit Scholarship winners of 2022 will be announced in four nationwide news

releases beginning in April and concluding in July. These scholarship recipients will join more than 362,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title.

The semifinalists from Blacksburg High School are Chase A. Beams,

Ayca Bulbul, Katerina A. Leedy, Kylene J. Monaghan, Seonbin Song, and Kevin Xu.

The semifinalist from Christiansburg High School is Jade M. Riddle.

The semifinalist from Eastern Montgomery High School is Ava V. Lazar.

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OPINION

Appalachian Power requests fuel rate increase for Virginia customers

ROANOKE, Va. -- Appalachian Power, a utility subsidiary of American Electric Power (NYSE: AEP), this week filed its annual fuel factor update with the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) and is requesting an increase in the fuel rate for its Virginia customers.

Fuel costs are the portion of a customer's bill used to recover the cost of natural gas and coal used in the generation of

electricity as well as the cost of purchased power. The SCC reviews the company's fuel rate each year to determine whether it should be increased or lowered.

Fuel costs are approximately 20 percent of a residential customer's electric bill. The current fuel factor is 1.999 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Appalachian's proposal increases the fuel factor to 2.300 cents per kWh. For a customer us-

ing 1,000 kilowatt hours in a month, this will result in an increase of approximately \$3. The fuel factor was reduced last year due to lower costs; this year's increase brings it to the same level as it was in 2019.

If approved, the increase will go into effect in November. At that point, a Virginia residential customer using 1,000 kWh/month will pay 12.29 cents/kWh for electric-

ity, a cost that remains below the national average. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), the average residential U.S. cost for electricity was 13.41 cents per kWh. (Electric Power Monthly, August 24, 2021.)

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is part of American Electric Power. AEP's approximately

16,800 employees operate and maintain the nation's largest electricity transmission system and more than 223,000 miles of distribution lines to deliver safe, reliable power to nearly 5.5 million customers in 11 states. AEP is also one of the nation's largest electricity producers with approximately 30,000 megawatts of diverse generating capacity, including 5,500 megawatts of renewable energy.

WalletHub ranks Virginia among happiest states

As the personal finance website WalletHub points out, over the past year and a half, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life as we know it and hurt many people's mental health with four in 10 adults reporting symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder. In light of this, WalletHub searched for the states that will most promote happiness in the wake of COVID-19 and ranked them from happiest to least happy.

The website's results placed Virginia among the happiest states in

the union at the No. 17 spot.

In this study, WalletHub drew upon the findings of "happiness" research to determine which environmental factors are linked to a person's overall well-being and satisfaction with life. Previous studies have found that good economic, emotional, physical, and social health are all key to a well-balanced and fulfilled life.

To determine where Americans exhibit the best combination of these factors, WalletHub

examined the 50 states across 31 metrics divided into three key dimensions: 1) Emotional and physical well-being, 2) Work environment and 3) community and environment.

Among the metrics and their individual rankings that contributed to Virginia's relatively high place in the survey with the lower numbers indicated the most happiness were the percentage of depressed adults: 13; the suicide rate: 11; the long-term unemployment rate: 28; the volunteer rate: 21; the

separation and divorce rate: 17; safety: 15; COVID-19 positive tests in the past week per capita: 20.

Among the metrics in the emotional and physical well-being dimension WalletHub used to determine its rankings were adverse childhood experiences, the share of adult depression, social well-being, the share of adults with alcohol use disorder, adequate sleep rate, and sports participation rate.

Some of the metrics included in WalletHub's work environment di-

mension to determine the rankings were the number of work hours, commute time, the share of households earning annual incomes above \$75,000, the share of adults worried about money, the current unemployment rate, and the long-term unemployment rate.

The metrics used in the community and environment dimension were the volunteer rate, ideal weather, the average leisure time spent per day, the separation and divorce rate, and safety.

According to WalletHub's survey, the ten states in the union most promoting happiness in the wake of COVID-19 are 1. Utah 2. Minnesota 3. Hawaii 4. California 5. North Dakota 6. South Dakota 7. Idaho 8. Maryland 9. New Jersey 10. Massachusetts.

Ranking in the bottom of WalletHub's happiness scale were 41. New Mexico 42. Alaska 43. Alabama 44. Tennessee 45. Kentucky 46. Oklahoma 47. Mississippi 48. Louisiana 49. Arkansas 50. West Virginia.

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Virginia students outperform peers on SAT

RICHMOND — Virginia high school graduates outperformed their global peers on the SAT in 2021, according to data released Tuesday by the College Board, the non-profit organization that administers the college admissions test.

Forty-one percent of Virginia's 2021 graduates took the SAT, compared to 65% of the commonwealth's 2020 graduates. The College Board attributes the sharp decline in participation — and related fluctuations in stu-

dent performance on the test — to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a pause in testing during spring 2021, and the closure or reduced capacity of local testing centers in response to public health orders.

Of the 38,927 Virginia 2021 graduating seniors who took the SAT, 63% met or exceeded the College Board's college-readiness benchmarks in both the reading and writing, and the mathematics sections. Globally, 46% of SAT takers met the readi-

ness standard on both sections of the test.

"While this year's results represent a snapshot of achievement on the SAT during an extraordinary year, Virginia students overall continue to perform well above their peers nationwide," said Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane.

The commonwealth's high school graduates outscored their peers overall and on both required sections of the college-admissions test, as

follows:

Virginia's average overall score of 1151 was 91 points higher than the average for all 2021 tested graduating seniors.

Virginia's average of 584 on the reading and writing section of the SAT was 51 points higher than the average for all 2021 tested graduating seniors.

Virginia's average score of 567 in mathematics was 39 points higher than the average for all 2021 tested graduating seniors.

Financial Focus: Prepare yourself financially for illness, just in case

All of us hope to live long, healthy lives, so we do what we can to take care of ourselves through proper diet, exercise, and avoiding unhealthy activities.

However, none of us can predict our future, so it pays to be prepared for anything including a serious physical illness or the onset of some type of mental incapacity such as Alzheimer's disease.

Of course, you may never face these infirmities, but you should be aware that they could upset your long-term financial strategy and place considerable stress on your loved ones. What steps can you take to head off these threats?

First, make sure you know what your health insurance covers and how much you might have to pay out of pocket for treatment of illnesses such as cancer or kidney ailments. If you're on Medicare (supplemented with Medigap) or Medicare Advantage (Medicare Part C), you'll want to know all about deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance. However, if Alzheimer's or another type of dementia is involved, Medicare may not cover the costs that could be incurred in an assisted living facility, so you may want to consult with a financial advisor, who can suggest ways of protecting yourself from long-term

care costs, which can be quite high.

Your next move is to make sure you have adequate liquidity. It's hard to predict how many out-of-pocket costs you could incur when coping with a serious illness, but it's a good idea to have enough cash readily available, rather than dipping into your 401(k) or other retirement accounts. So, if you're retired, you might want to keep up to a year's worth of living expenses in a liquid, low-risk account.

Here's another important step: Update your estate plan. Hopefully, if you have a serious illness, you'll be able to recover. But it's still a good idea to review your estate plan to ensure everything is in order, such as your will and your living trust if you've created one. If you've kept up your life insurance, you'll also want to ensure your premiums are still being paid. And don't forget to review your beneficiary designations on your 401(k), insurance policies, and other financial documents, since these designations can supersede the instructions in your will.

As part of your estate planning, you may want

to include a durable power of attorney for finances, which allows you to name someone to manage your financial affairs if you become incapacitated, and a durable power of attorney for health care, which lets you name someone to make medical decisions for you if you're unable to do so yourself. You may also create a health care directive or living will to express your wishes if you don't have a power of attorney for health care, or the person named in a power of attorney for health care can't be reached in an emergency. And since estate planning can be complex, you'll certainly want to work with a legal professional and possibly your tax and financial advisors as well.

You might think it's somewhat grim to prepare yourself financially in case you become seriously ill or if your life is touched by Alzheimer's or another mental infirmity. But it's a positive move. You're protecting yourself and your loved ones from whatever life may throw at you.

-- Submitted by Meghan Kuczmarski, Edward Jones Financial Advisor

CROSSWORD

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Bulla

5. Former Egyptian Pres.

10. Identical

14. Military assistant

15. True heath

16. Indonesian phenomenon

17. Japanese social networking

18. Bring banquet food

19. Front of the head

20. Jean Paul __, author

22. Movie settings

24. Incline from vertical

26. Bleats

27. One who sings carols

30. Any high mountain

31. Mutual savings bank

34. Tequila plant

35. One point N of due E

37. Not large

39. Khoikhoi people

40. Soccer player Hamm

41. European owl genus

42. Pallo race city

44. Hostelry

45. Outer ear eminences

46. Explosive

47. Illuminated

49. Musical pieces in slow tempo

51. Not crazy

52. Star Trek helm officer

53. Gave the axe

56. Make a mental connection

60. City founded by Xenophanes

61. Extremely angry

65. Wild Eurasian mountain goat

66. Voyage on water

67. Comforts

68. Otherwise

69. Young herrings in Norway

70. Weapon discharges

71. Prepares a dining table

CLUES DOWN

1. Shopping pouches

2. Old Italian money

3. Central German river

4. Composer Ludwig van

5. A way to withdraw

6. Macaws

7. Radiotelegraphic signal

8. Highest card

9. Any bone of the tarsus

10. Places to store valuables

11. Actor Ladd

12. Nutmeg seed covering

13. Vision organs

21. Abnormal breathing

23. Crownworks

25. Religious recluse

26. Fruits of the genus Musa

27. Thou __ do it

28. Repeatedly

29. Plant of a clone

31. African tribe

32. No. Irish borough & bay

33. French Chateau Royal

36. Bulk storage container

38. "Good Wife" Actress Julianna

43. Assoc. of Licensed Aircraft Engineers

45. An account of events

48. West __ archipelago

50. Coercion

51. Ancient Scand. bard

53. Leaves of the hemp plant

54. Jai __ sport

55. Designer Chapman

57. Having the skill to do something

58. Exam

59. Prior wives

62. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

63. Volcanic mountain in Japan

64. Vietnamese offensive

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National observance places focus on farmer safety

To produce enough food and fiber to supply worldwide consumer markets, farmers often work through adverse and hazardous conditions.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, agricultural occupations are the most dangerous in America, with 573 fatalities registered in 2019, or 23.1 deaths per 100,000 workers.

To raise awareness of farming's occupational hazards, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) has designated Sept. 19-25 as National Farm Safety and Health Week. The annual safety promotion has been observed during the third week of September since 1944.

The theme for 2021 is "Farm Safety Yields Real Results," a reminder that it's in everyone's interest to prioritize the health and safety of those who provide

the nation's food, fiber and fuel.

Each day during National Farm Safety and Health Week, the AgriSafe Network will host two free webinars. AgriSafe is a nonprofit organization representing health professionals and educators who strive to reduce health disparities in agricultural communities. Daily webinar topics include tractor safety and rural roadway safety; overall farmer health; safety and health of youth in agriculture; agricultural fertilizer and chemical safety; and safety and health for women in agriculture.

Farm State of Mind, an American Farm Bureau Federation campaign, is among the programs also being promoted during the safety week. The goal of the campaign is to provide relevant information and critical mental health resources for farming families, as

well as reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness in rural communities.

NECAS also will promote American Farm Bureau's Think F.A.S.T. campaign, which focuses on addressing on-farm safety concerns pertaining to teens.

Farmers and other rural residents can access additional farm safety resources through the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation safety website.

Information on the site is compiled by the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Farm Safety Advisory Committee and addresses topics such as accident response, agricultural hazards, mental health, and rural road safety. Site content also includes links to safety resources offered by other farming advocacy organizations.

"Safety is such an important aspect of farming, and we want to make

sure folks have access to as many resources as they can to help make their jobs as safe as possible," said Dana Fisher, chairman of

the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation safety committee. "As farmers begin the busy fall harvest season, National Farm Safety and

Health Week is a great time to remind our farmers that their physical and mental health should always come first."



According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, agricultural occupations are the most dangerous in America. Sept. 19-25 is National Farm Safety and Health Week.

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

St. Peter the Apostle Anglican Church, 230 W. First St., Christiansburg, VA. Fr Peter Geromel OHI Th.M., Vicar, Fr. Alex Darby, "Associate", 540-382-0432/540-270-9166. Sundays: 8:00 am & 10:00 am Holy Eucharist followed by Christian Education and refreshments. Holy Communion most Thursdays at 12Noon, other Holy Days as announced. Traditional services use the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and 1940 Hymnal. Handicapped accessible. All are welcome. Come worship with us! Website: www.stpetersacc.org. Follow us on Facebook

St. Philip's Anglican Church, 306 Progress Street, NE, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060, (540) 552-1771, www.stphilipsblacksburg.org. Reverend Fr. Wade Miller, Priest. Eucharist Sundays at 11am and Wednesday's at 12pm.

St. Thomas Anglican Church - located at 4910 Hubert Rd, NW Roanoke, Va. Traditional Liturgical Lenten Services, Sunday at 10:30 am. Call (540) 589-1299 or visit www.sttofc.org for midweek masses and events. (In Roanoke, go E on Hershberger, L on Hubert to 4910).

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave. at the corner with Downey St. We are committed to personal spiritual growth and to providing leadership in community ministry. We celebrate the dignity and worth of all persons, created in the image of God. Sunday Bible Study Groups - 9:45, Sunday Worship - 11:00. Website: www.fbcradford.org, 540-639-4419. Worship is broadcast live on JOY radio, 93.1 FM and 890 AM.

Trinity Community Church, 1505 N. Franklin Street, C'burg. John Altizer, Lead Pastor, Brian Cockram, Associate Pastor, 382-8121. Worship at 10:45 a.m., Outreach Ministries - 6:00p.m. Wednesday, Growth Groups - 5:00p.m. Sunday, Youth and Children's Ministry - 5:00p.m. Sunday, www.trinitycburg.org

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Blacksburg Church of Christ, 315 Eakin St., 552-1331. Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 a.m., Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m., Wed. Bible classes, 7 p.m., Outreach Minister Curt Seright, Community Minister Tom Gilliam, Dean Meadows, Campus Minister.

Faith Christian Church of Christ, 305 3rd Street, Christiansburg, David Rhudy, Minister, 382-4628, Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am; Evening Worship 6:30 pm; Wednesday night Bible Study for Women and Men 6:30 pm. We welcome you to any and all of our services.

CHURCH OF GOD

New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C'Burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School— 10:00A.M. Morning Worship— 11:00A.M., Children's Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening – 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night – 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office – 540-639-6562 or 804- 921-0828.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Paul J. Stover Jr. 540-797-5015. Sunday School 10 a.m.; Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God's Word, and delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. However, due to COVID-19, the Light & Sound Services and other ECK programs are currently available online through Zoom. Visit www.eck-va.org for program listings, www.eck-va.org

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

Sincere Remorse

Read Hosea 8:1 through 14:9

"Though they offer sacrifices as gifts to me, and though they eat the meat, the Lord is not pleased with them. Now he will remember their wickedness and punish their sins: They will return to Egypt" (Hosea 8:13).

Hosea declared the futility of Israel offering insincere sacrifices. The Lord was not pleased with rituals performed without remorse for wrongdoing. Instead of receiving forgiveness from heartfelt confession, the nation suffered punishment for their accumulated sins.

Hebrews 9:22 teaches that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgive-

ness." The blood from animal sacrifice pointed to the time when Christ's blood would secure forgiveness for all who receive Him. His death paid the penalty for sin once and for all.

Israel had treated the Lord as one of many gods, sacrificing only to gain favor. Doing good things to gain God's favor will not cover our sin. Nothing can substitute for the blood Christ shed. God sees each heart. He knows if there is true remorse that brings about change.

Prayer Suggestion: Lord Jesus, my forgiveness is only possible through You. I owe You everything.

Quicklook: Hosea 8:11-13

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Randy Thompson at 540-389-9355 or email at advertise@ourvalley.org

meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences-Group, or call 540-353-5365 and leave a message. We will return your call. Also visit www.eckankar.org for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar lead you to spiritual freedom.

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 4th Street, Radford, 639-3494. A friendly, mission-oriented spiritual community sharing the Word of God. ALL ARE WELCOME. In person and live-streamed services 10:30AM Sundays. Holy Eucharist twice a month. Morning Prayer twice a month. Fellowship and refreshments follow services. Find us on Facebook: Grace Episcopal Church and www.graceradford.org.

LUTHERAN

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church ELCA, 600 Prices Fork Rd, Blacksburg. Weekly Online Worship at www.lmlc.org. We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation that welcomes and affirms all people just as they are. For information on Bible studies and Wednesday Vespers, email luthermemorial-blacksburg@gmail.com, or contact the church office, (540) 951-1000. Rev. Monica Weber, pastor.

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-DENOMINATIONAL Christian Growth Center, 1850

Electic Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service *Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Richard Hall (540) 552-7194. pastorhall29@gmail.com. Sunday School at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Chandler Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. Find us on facebook and Instagram

Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7 p.m.

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382-0743. Rev. Dr. Patricia Jones. Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

Central United Methodist Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am (interpreter provided); 9:45am Sunday School (interpreter provided); and 11:00a.m. Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30p.m. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodist-church.com.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc **Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church**, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, Christiansburg. Public Worship service at 11:00 AM. Sunday School for adults - 10:00 AM. Pastor: Gale Janofski 574-306-7682. Website: christwesleyanchurch.org

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Christiansburg volleyball takes down Lord Botetourt



Baylee Reasor serves in Christiansburg's big win over the defending state champion Lord Botetourt Cavaliers Tuesday. Reasor served three aces to go with 11 kills and 12 digs in Christiansburg's 20-25, 25-19, 14-25, 15-13 win.



Niqua Banks makes the pass in Christiansburg's win Tuesday over Botetourt. The Blue Demon squad improved to 6-1 on the season. Kyleigh Phillips had 28 assists and four aces in the match.



Addison Reasor sends the ball back over the net in Tuesday's defeat of the Cavaliers, a traditional state volleyball powerhouse.

Matt Hagan to return to track after battle with COVID

Reigning National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Series Funny Car champion Matt Hagan will return to competition this weekend at the NHRA Carolina Nationals in Concord, N.C., after missing two races due to COVID-19.

Hagan has completed all the NHRA protocols and has been cleared to suit up and strap back into his 11,000-horsepower Shelor Motor Mile Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye where he will continue his title defense.

Hagan enters the weekend ranked second in the point standings and less than one round behind the current point leader following his team's victory last weekend at the Mopar Express Lane NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil, the first of NHRA's seven Countdown to the Championship playoff races.

Hagan discussed his COVID-19 experience in an interview.

"COVID affects everyone differently, and it was something that hit me re-

ally hard. It started like the flu and then just never got better. I had several days of lying in bed with a fever, chills, and aches and finally ended up having to check myself into the emergency room. I spent a night there receiving fluids and steroids, and they were doing everything they could do to bring my 104-degree temperature down.

"My breathing was really concerning to them and that's why they kept me overnight. Once they got my oxygen up and finally got my fever down to about 101, they released me from the hospital, but I still wasn't out of the woods. It still took some time for my body to recover.

QUESTION: Indy would have been your 288th race. Have you ever missed a race since embarking on your professional NHRA career in 2008?

HAGAN: No, I've never missed a race. I was talking to my dad about that yesterday, actually. We were saying it's pretty crazy that I've been able to race for almost 15 years now and never had

to miss one. I've always been healthy; never had a broken bone or anything, which when you think about it, I'm on the farm when I'm not at the race track. I've never been kicked by a cow or gotten run over by a piece of equipment.

QUESTION: How did you follow along or watch the Indy and Reading races? On TV? Live timing?

HAGAN: I had about 100 people texting me all day long. And obviously, I was following the @ShoreRacing social media channels, checking all of the round-by-round results, too, so that kept me right in the loop.

But honestly, even if I never looked at social media or turned on live timing, I still would have known what was going on because my phone was going off nonstop.

QUESTION: Now that you're healthy, what have you been doing to prepare to return to the driver's seat?

HAGAN: As big of a setback as this was for me, I feel 100% confident and I'm 100% ready to



Riner's Matt Hagan is the defending 2020 World Champion and will be back in action this weekend.

go racing this weekend in Charlotte. I've been doing cardio, lifting weights. I'm a little weaker on the weights than I'm used to, but my lung capacity has bounced right back. That was the biggest concern for me – putting on 30 pounds worth of gear, and the nitro, and the g-forces, and strapping in and not being able to breathe, and thankfully, that's not even a concern of mine anymore. I truly feel like I'm ready to go.

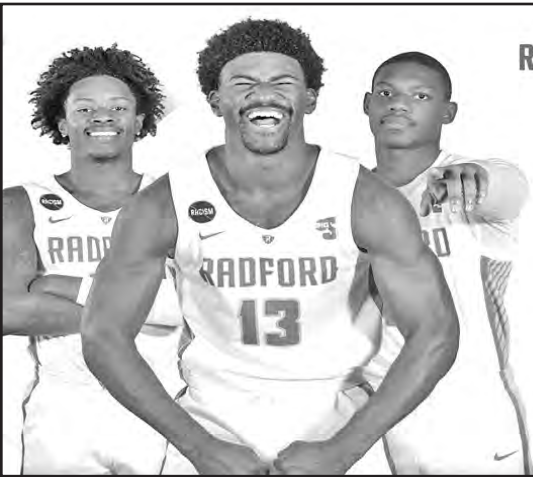
QUESTION: You've

been out of the seat since Brainerd, which was almost a month ago now. Do you feel behind at all knowing that all of the other championship-contending drivers enter Charlotte with two solid weeks of back-to-back racing?

















HAGAN: I don't feel at a disadvantage at all. We've taken months off before. Last year we had about four months off due to COVID, and we came back and won that first race back. I feel very

confident in my abilities to drive the race car and be a good leaver on the starting line. I feel excited because I know I get to crawl back into a great race car. I've been doing this for so many years, so the g-forces and acclimating to the speed isn't really that big of a deal to me. I know what I've got to do. My guys will put a great race car underneath me and I'm confident I can get back in there and not miss a beat.

Big South schedule finalized for RU men's basketball



2021-22 BIG SOUTH SCHEDULE
RADFORD MEN'S BASKETBALL

 1.5	 1.8	 1.12	 1.15
 1.19	 1.22	 1.26	 1.29
 2.2	 2.5	 2.9	 2.12
 2.16	 2.19	 2.23	 2.26

HOME AWAY

PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS

The Radford men's basketball team will play 16 Big South games as part of the 2021-22 season, the conference office announced Wednesday.

The Highlanders begin their quest for the seventh regular season championship in program history on Wednesday, Jan. 5, at USC Upstate. They then return home for back-to-back contests in the Dedmon Center against Big South newcomer North Carolina A&T (Saturday, Jan. 8) and Longwood (Wednesday, Jan. 12).

Another brief road trip comes up right after with a game at Campbell on Saturday, Jan. 15. Radford then returns to the NRV for another pair of home games against Hampton (Wednesday, Jan. 19) and UNC Asheville (Saturday, Jan. 22).

The Highlanders will swing through North Carolina to close out the month of January, playing against High Point on Wednesday, Jan. 26, and Gardner-Webb on Saturday, Jan. 29.

The squad then welcomes Charleston Southern (Wednesday, Feb. 2) and Presbyterian (Saturday, Feb. 5) to the Dedmon Center before traveling for the sole showdown with Winthrop (Wednesday, Feb. 9) and a rematch with Hampton (Saturday, Feb. 12).

In two of the biggest dates on the schedule, Radford hosts Campbell (Wednesday, Feb. 16) and High Point (Saturday, Feb. 19) for the final two home games of the year. They then close out the regular season at Longwood (Wednesday, Feb. 23) and N.C. A&T (Saturday, Feb. 26).

In a change from previous years, the Big South Tournament will be held at Bojangles Coliseum in Charlotte March 1-6.

The Highlanders will be led by Head Coach Darris Nichols in his first year at the helm. They return several key contributors from last season, including seniors Lewis Djonkam, Josiah Jeffers, Shaquan Jules, and

Chyree Walker. Tickets for both Radford men's and women's basketball will go on sale soon at radfordtickets.com.

2021-22 RADFORD MEN'S BASKETBALL BIG SOUTH SCHEDULE

1.5.22	@USC Upstate
1.8.22	N.C. A&T
1.12.22	Longwood
1.15.22	@Campbell
1.19.22	Hampton
1.22.22	UNC Asheville
1.26.22	@ High Point
1.29.22	@Gardner-Webb
2.2.22	Charleston
2.5.22	Presbyterian
2.9.22	@Winthrop
2.12.22	@Hampton
2.16.22	Campbell
2.19.22	High Point
2.23.22	@ Longwood
2.26.22	@ N.C. A&T

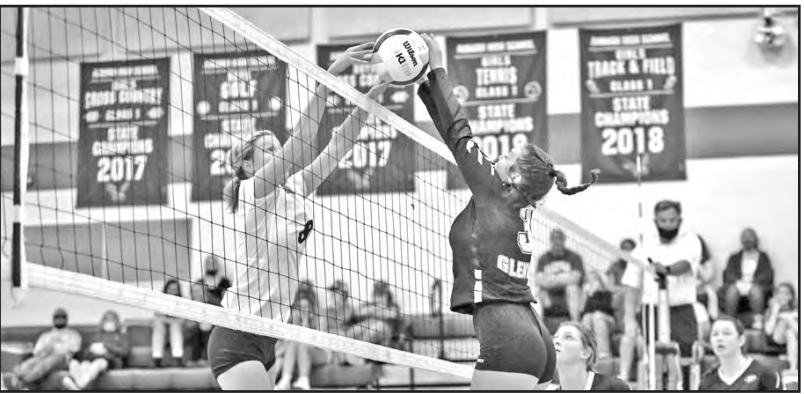
Auburn downs Glenvar



Avery Zuckerwar returns the ball during Wednesday's 23-25, 24-26, 25-18, 25-19, 15-9 win over Glenvar. The victory stretched Auburn's win streak to 67, which breaks a 48-year-old Virginia High School record. Zuckerwar finished with 10 kills, two aces and two digs.



Auburn's Anna McGuire sets the volleyball during the team's win over Glenvar. McGuire tallied 35 assists, and Stacy Lewis added 18 digs.



Allyson Martin goes up against the Glenvar blocker and is able to force the ball back over the net. Martin had 27 kills, 28 digs and three blocks in the match.

Lady Highlanders release 2021-22 basketball schedule

The Big South portion of the Radford University women's basketball 2021-22 schedule was announced by the Big South office Tuesday afternoon. The 18-game slate includes nine games in the Dedmon Center and a pair of matchups against Big South newcomer North Carolina A&T. The Highlanders will open conference play on the road against UNC Asheville on Dec. 29. The first home conference match is currently slated just after that on Jan. 1. Radford will spend a majority of the first half of its schedule on the road with six of the first nine games scheduled for opponents' courts. The second half of the schedule flips that theme as seven of the last ten games of the season will be played in

the Dedmon Center. The program's final tune-up before the Big South tournament will be at home on Feb. 26 against Presbyterian. The Big South Championship will be hosted at the Bojangles Coliseum in Charlotte this season as the conference will move away from the previous format that allowed top-seeded teams to host portions of the tournament. Head Coach Mike McGuire owns a 102-50 record against Big South teams and is currently on a streak of seven straight conference seasons without a losing record. McGuire earned his 100th Big South win last season against Charleston Southern. Overall, Radford enters the year with a 341-191 (.641) record against Big South competition which is first in the all-

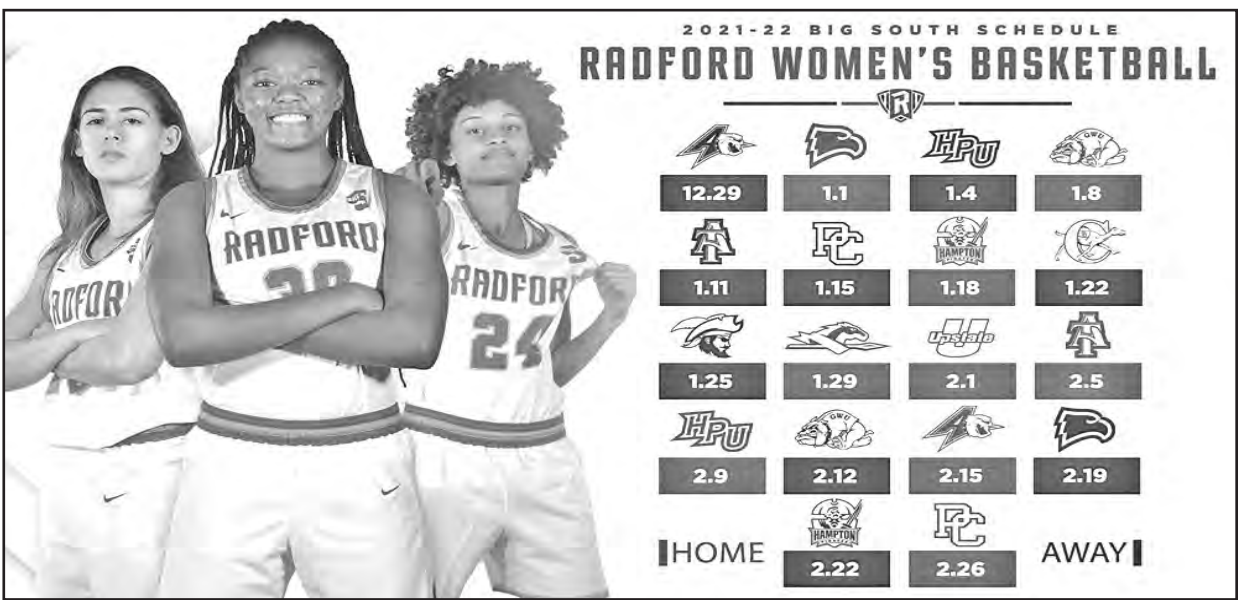


PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS

time standings.	1.8.22	1.25.22	@	2.12.22	@
2021-22	Gardner-Webb	Charleston Southern		Gardner-Webb	
BIG	1.11.22	1.29.22	Long-	2.15.22	UNC
SOUTH SCHEDULE	@North Carolina A&T	wood		Asheville	
	1.15.22	2.1.22		2.19.22	@Win-
12.29.21	@Pres-	USC Upstate		throp	
@UNC	byterian	2.5.22		2.22.22	@
Asheville	1.18.22	North Carolina A&T		Hampton	
1.1.22	Hamp-	2.9.22		2.26.22	Presby-
Winthrop	ton	High Point		terian	
1.4.22	@				
@High Point	Campbell				

RU, VT baseball set fall exhibitions

Radford University baseball head coach Karl Kuhn Monday announced a packed fall schedule that includes three exhibition games and a father-son camp day. All three games will take place at Sherman Carter Memorial Stadium in the Radford Athletics Complex. Kicking off its fall schedule, Tech will welcome the Ontario Blue Jays to Blacksburg on Friday, Sept. 24, at 2 p.m. Regarded as one of Canada's top

development clubs, the Blue Jays have produced eight major-league players across their 25-year history, including current pros like Cleveland outfielder Josh Naylor and Toronto reliever Jordan Romano. VT will also host a home exhibition game against in-state foe Liberty University at 5 p.m. on Oct. 15 at English Field at Atlantic Union Bank Park. Both exhibition games will be open to the public with free admission for all fans.

The Hokies will conclude the fall exhibition season with a game on the road against Radford University at 4 p.m. on Oct. 22. Ballpark concessions will be open and available to all fans for both Tech fall games at English Field. Per Virginia Tech athletic department policy, all guests must wear masks regardless of their vaccination status when utilizing indoor facilities. The Highlanders will kick

off their fall against those same Ontario Blue Jays at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 26. Fans are then invited to come back on Friday, Oct. 15, for the team's second exhibition game of the fall, a 6 p.m. game with Potomac State. The Highlanders' final exhibition game of the season will be the previously mentioned contest against Virginia Tech in the Radford Athletics Complex on Oct. 22. The weekend will continue

with a father-son camp day on Saturday, Oct. 23, presented by Highlander Baseball Camps. To view pricing and get registered, visit highlanderbaseballcamps.com. All three exhibitions are presented by Radford baseball. Everyone is welcome with no admission charge. Fall exhibition games may vary in length and format from traditional nine-inning contests at the discretion of both coaching staffs.

Outdoor report: Dove hunting harvest looks to be below average this year

With a gradual decline in the dove population numbers in Virginia over the past 15 years or so, the 2021 season could yield average or below average results for dove hunters. The mourning dove is one of the most abundant game birds in North America. Data from recent years indicate there are around 194 million doves in the United States and around 5 million in Virginia. Mourning dove hunting is very popular and is offered in 41 U.S. states and several Canadian provinces. In the United States, an estimated 750,000 dove hunters harvested around 11.7 million doves during the 2020 hunting season. Recent surveys in Virginia indicate there are around 16,500 dove hunters in the state and the average harvest is

around 225,000 doves annually. In 2021, late winter and early spring weather was mild but quite wet with many areas getting above average rainfall. These wet conditions sometimes lead to a reduction in dove nesting success. Doves build fairly shallow nests that can get damaged by wet and windy conditions. In addition, the nestlings are susceptible to this cool and wet weather, and their survival is often lower in these conditions. Overall, production looks like it will be around average to slightly below average this year. Dove hunter success often depends not only on the dove populations and nesting success, but also on the condition of the habitat and the amount of food available. Like always, conditions varied around the

state. In most areas, planting dates for agricultural crops (corn and sunflower) were close to normal with mild weather and warm conditions during spring planting. Good to abundant precipitation throughout the summer has led to a very good crop of both native vegetation and agricultural grains in many parts of the state, especially the eastern portions. As the corn harvest increases in early to mid-September, this will open up more feeding grounds for doves. This may also spread the birds out across the available habitat and make concentrations of birds harder to find. Some pre-season scouting may be necessary to help locate areas that doves are using. Look for fresh cut agricultural fields or areas with lots of native plant foods like millets

and pokeberry. Remember to check your birds to see if any are wearing leg bands. The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) captures and leg-bands doves in July and August, just prior to the hunting season. The information obtained from this banding program is used for evaluating dove population status and for developing hunting season regulations. Only about 5 to 8% of the doves the department bands are recovered by hunters, and most of those recoveries (90%) occur within the state of Virginia. Out-of-state recoveries of Virginia-banded doves have come predominantly from neighboring states or states in the southeastern U.S., including Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and a couple from Flor-

ida. Most band recoveries occur during the first two weeks of the season, and 90% of all recoveries occur during the month of September, an indication that most dove hunting occurs during September. Remember to report any bands you recover to the Bird Banding Laboratory website www.reportband.gov. You will receive a "Certificate of Appreciation" that includes information on where and when the dove was banded. Also, remember to register for the department's Harvest Information Program (HIP) well before going dove hunting so you aren't rushed trying to do everything at the last minute. Enjoy your hunting and be safe. Good luck. -- Gary Costanzo, DWR Migratory Game Bird Manager

Big South, Hercules extend partnership

The Big South Conference, in conjunction with its official basketball championship logo reveal, announced Sunday that Hercules Tires, a wholly-owned subsidiary of American Tire Distributors and one of the largest independent suppliers of tires in North America, has extended its title sponsorship of the conference's basketball championships for two years. The agreement continues a partnership that began in 2020. The 2022 and 2023 Hercules Tires Big South Men's and Women's Basketball Championships will be held in Charlotte, N.C.

The 2022 Hercules Tires Big South Men's and Women's Basketball Championships will be played at historic Bojangles Coliseum for the first time, and the facility marks the league's first neutral site for its marquee basketball events since 2003 and just the fifth time overall in the conference's 38-year history. The multi-year extension marks one of the largest sponsorships in Big South history. In addition to the title sponsorship, Hercules Tires will continue to have an integrated marketing presence, allowing the brand to have ongoing

connections with Big South alumni, fans, students, and employees at all conference championship events. Hercules Tires will also return as the title sponsor of the annual Big South Basketball Campus Tour. "We're excited to continue the partnership we've enjoyed with the Big South Conference which continues to prove itself as a leader in college athletics," said Josh Simpson, Senior Vice President of Hercules Tires. "Our sponsorship entitlements continue to allow us to strengthen our brand recognition with students, athletes, and the loyal fan base of

the conference in some of our key markets." "Hercules Tires has been a wonderful partner for the Big South Conference, and we are thrilled that they are back as the title sponsor of our basketball championships," said Big South Commissioner Kyle Kallander. "Tipping off for the first time in Charlotte in March, the Hercules Tires Big South Conference Basketball Championships will be an outstanding experience for our student-athletes and fans, largely due to Hercules Tires support. Welcome back, Hercules Tires." The 2022 Hercules

Tires Big South Basketball Championships are scheduled for March 1-6 and will feature four games a day leading up to Championship Sunday on March 6. The women's tournament will begin Tuesday, March 1, with first-round games while the men's event begins Wednesday, March 2 with first-round contests. The women's quarterfinals are Thursday, March 3, followed by the men's quarterfinals on Friday, March 4. Each championship semifinal round will be Saturday, March 5, with both championship contests set for Sunday, March 6. The official

2022 Hercules Tires Big South Basketball Championship brackets, as well as ticket information, will be released at a later date. Founded in 1983, the Big South Conference is currently composed of 12 member institutions: Campbell University, Charleston Southern University, Gardner-Webb University, Hampton University, High Point University, North Carolina A&T State University, Longwood University, Presbyterian College, Radford University, UNC Asheville, USC Upstate, and Winthrop University.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

Landowners encouraged to contribute acorns for 2023 hardwood seedling crop

Statewide expansion of hardwood habitat is the grand prize for a unique scavenger hunt open to all Virginia landowners.

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) is collecting a variety of acorn species and nuts that can be planted at its Augusta Forestry Center in Crimora. The seeds from these nuts will produce 2023's hardwood seedling crop and be sold to Virginia forestland owners, typically to reforest open lands.

State foresters said seedlings sprouted from Virginia-grown acorns generally produce trees that will best thrive in Virginia's climates. But some of those seeds

are hard to procure in abundance. Species needed include black oak, black walnut, Chinese chestnut, chestnut oak, live oak, northern red oak, pin oak, southern red oak, swamp chestnut oak, swamp white oak, white oak, and willow oak.

"Virginia Farm Bureau and other associations helped us get about \$300,000 from the (state's) general fund last General Assembly session to expand our Augusta nursery," said Ed Zimmer, deputy state forester. "A lifting machine, sprayers, and irrigation pipe will allow us to expand about seven acres of fields there for the 2023 planting crop, so we're tripling the

amount of acorns we're ordering from bulk producers. We hope to have about 1.3 million hardwoods and 2.3 million conifers."

The public can help with that effort by collecting and donating acorns. September and October are the best months for collecting in most areas of the state. This year's deadline for receiving acorns is October 15.

"Acorn collection can be a fun activity for both children and adults," Zimmer said. "And it provides an opportunity to learn more about Virginia tree species."

Foresters said acorn collectors should look for healthy trees by avoiding those with bulges or in-



sect infestation and those that appear diseased or deformed.

Make sure each burlap or paper collection bag of seed is labeled with the species, source location, and date. Do not mix nuts from different species in the same bag. Store collected nuts in a cool area (not a freezer) for no more than 10 days

before delivering them to a VDOF office. Bags also can be mailed directly to the Augusta Forestry Center at 90 Forestry Center Lane, Crimora, VA 24431.

More details and identification tips are available on the VDOF website and from the Augusta Forestry Center, 540-363-7000.

Purchasing the correct insurance coverage means enjoying toys worry free

Boats, motorcycles and RVs all can provide carefree summertime fun, but it's important that they're properly protected with insurance coverage.

Virginia Farm Bureau can provide coverage for a variety of recreational vehicles and offer policyholders peace of mind.

Boat insurance
With a properly endorsed boat insurance policy, also known as a navigator policy, boats are covered in and out of the water.

Boat owners can purchase coverage for personal-use watercraft such as fishing boats, motor boats, pontoon boats, and Jet Skis, as well as coverage for trailers and other equipment needed to tow them.

A standard policy will cover property damage to a boat, its motor, and other valuable on-board accessories, such as communication devices and radar instruments. The policy also provides liability coverage to help pay for injuries sustained by passengers in the event of an accident as well as damage done to other boats.

Additional coverage that can be purchased includes towing and emergency services and personal property and uninsured boater protection.

For policyholders who intend to share ownership of a boat or any vehicle with fam-

ily or friends, it's important that each person on the title be listed as an insured and each operator listed as a driver on the policy. Otherwise, losses incurred by owners not listed on the policy may not be covered.

Motorcycle insurance
Motorcycle coverage is similar to what's offered through standard auto insurance policies, and bikes can be protected under a pre-existing policy or on a separate one.

Motorcyclists can opt for the same coverages available to passenger vehicles—liability, collision and comprehensive coverage—which offers protection against damage caused by other vehicles, thieves, vandals, and weather. Additional protection against uninsured motorists, medical expenses and income loss due to an accident also may be purchased.

Lisa Whitus, personal and commercial lines underwriting manager for Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co., noted motorcyclists should be mindful of liability coverage due to the dangers associated with motorcycles.

"Motorcycles are much smaller vehicles, so they're not going to do a lot of property damage like other larger vehicles would," Whitus said. "But, because motorcycles offer their drivers and passengers little protection, accidents can

cause severe injury or death. That's why it's important to keep in mind the potential costs of bodily injury."

To compensate for above-average injury risks, Whitus recommends policyholders purchase liability limits of \$100,000 per person per incident for bodily injury and \$300,000 in coverage for an entire accident. She also recommends bikers endorse

their policies with \$50,000 for total property damage.

Motorhome and RV coverage

Camper vans, travel trailers and full-size RVs also can be covered under an auto policy.

Insurance needs often depend on the type of vehicle, but liability, collision, and comprehensive coverage are available on most recreational

vehicles. Other optional endorsements include coverage for pets and electronic equipment and transportation and towing expenses.

ATV coverage
Most homeowners can endorse an all-terrain vehicle on their home insurance policies if the vehicle will be used only on the premises of the insured property. Coverage under a homeowner policy provides

limited protection for damage, liability and theft claims.

However, if a policyholder plans to use the ATV elsewhere, it must be insured under an auto policy. Customers can then purchase coverage for bodily injury and property damage liability, collision and other than collision, medical payments, and protection against uninsured motorists.

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MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON AMENDMENT # 1 TO THE 2045 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) seeks public comment on an Amendment to its Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan. The purpose of the Amendment is to update and expand the constrained project list because of an increase in revenue estimates. Copies of the Plan are available for review at: Planning Offices in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, the Counties of Montgomery and Pulaski, and on the MPO website at: www.newrivervalleympo.org.



Deadline for Written Comments: October 19, 2021

The public can also speak at the MPO Policy Board Meeting November 4, 2021, 2 P.M., at the Montgomery County Government Center.

This plan is being developed in compliance with the FAST Act and its amendments (Public Law 114-94, December 4, 2015).

Questions? Contact MPO Director Dan Brugh

Phone: 540-394-2145

Email: brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov

The New River Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (NRVMP) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Discrimination Complaint Form, email: brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov or call (540) 394-2145.



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