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Saturday, May 4, 2024

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ESS Technologies to increase capacity, create new jobs in Montgomery County

ESS Technologies, Inc. to invest \$1.6 million to increase capacity in Montgomery County, creating 27 new jobs

Governor Glenn Youngkin announced Wednesday that ESS Technologies, Inc., a subsidiary of the Pacteon Group that specializes in complete packaging line design and equipment manufacturing, will invest \$1.6 million to increase capacity and expand in Montgomery County.

In January 2023, the company expanded in Giles County, adding an additional location to increase research and development, manufacturing, and office space. As part of this new expansion, ESS will consolidate its current facilities in Giles and Montgomery into one

larger operation in Montgomery County, increasing the square footage to 40,000 square feet at the new location to increase production capacity. The project will create 27 new jobs.

"Companies like ESS Technologies, Inc. are a crucial component of the thriving supply chain and logistics ecosystem in Virginia," said Youngkin. "Virginia provided the location, the robust workforce, and the business climate for ESS Technologies to expand and increase capacity at its Montgomery County location. I look forward to their continued success in Virginia."

"Partners that reinvest in Virginia give a clear example that the Commonwealth is a great place to do business," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ONWARD NRV

"I am proud that ESS Technologies, Inc. chose the Commonwealth as the location to base the future of their business. Virginia offers top-level infrastructure to help companies like ESS Technologies expand their business and create jobs for local citizens."

"Pacteon is proud of the growth trajectory of ESS Technologies," said Mike Odom, CEO of Pacteon Group.

"We are excited to partner with Governor Youngkin and Montgomery County, Virginia, to secure the space and people needed to continue that path."

"Montgomery County prides itself on being a great place to live, to work, and to play," said Montgomery County Board of Supervisors Chair Mary Biggs. "One

See ESS, page 6

MCPS issues statement regarding the review into the deaths of two Blacksburg High students

Heather Bell
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The Montgomery County School Board is in the process of evaluating a report by the law firm of Gentry Locke to determine what next steps may be necessary regarding training of staff and mitigation of threats.

The school board issued a public statement Wednesday, May 1 regarding the Gentry Locke report, which found additional training should be considered at the schools.

"Following an extensive review and legal analysis of the records received and the information obtained from witnesses, Gentry Locke presented its report to the School Board on April 23, 2024," the statement reads.

"The report's factual findings detailed a time of significant change occurring within the school division around the time of the students' deaths. The report also outlined systemic failures within the school division related to Title IX compliance, the initiation of threat assessments, and compliance with law enforcement Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). As a result, the report made recommendations related to additional training needs designed to address these concerns. The School Board is in the process of evaluating the report and determining what additional actions may be necessary." The Montgomery

County School Board passed a resolution Jan. 30, 2024 requesting the review into the circumstances related to the off-campus deaths of two Blacksburg High School students on Nov. 7, 2023 and chose Gentry Locke to conduct the review in February.

"The school board requested Gentry Locke conduct a legal analysis of this matter and provide the school board with legal advice and recommendations to support its consideration of whether or not school officials acted in compliance with relevant policies, procedures, regulations, and laws," the May 1 MCPS statement reads.

"During the course of the review, the Gentry

See MCPS, page 6

Winning design chosen for the Steppin' Out 2024 t-shirt

BLACKSBURG - The Steppin' Out® t-shirt has become an annual collector's item and the design contest is part of the great Steppin' Out® tradition.

The festival committee received over 30 submissions for 2024 and ultimately chose a design that has nods to Appalachia while also representing Blacksburg's favorite summer festival.

The winning artist Claire Lambert was born in Salem and currently lives in Bassett, Va. She has a bachelor's degree in art, a masters in elementary education from the University of Virginia and specializes in painting pet portraits. The Steppin' Out® t-shirt will be available for purchase in late-May in downtown stores Fringe Benefit, New River Art & Fiber, Atlantic Union Bank North Main Location, and Blacksburg Hardware, and at the festival information booth in August.

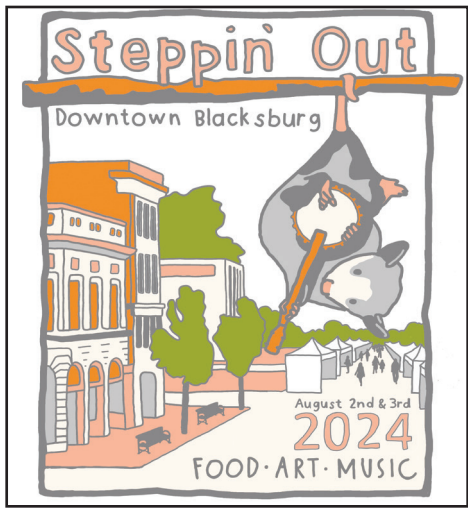
Lambert said she tried to incorporate things that are important to the region in making her design.

"I reviewed the previous design winners and saw that many had animals and instruments," she said. "When creating my design, I wanted to incorporate things that were important to this region. Along with a downtown Blacksburg scene, I picked the possum and a banjo. The possum is one of my favorite native animals and bluegrass is important to the heritage of Southwest Virginia."

Steppin' Out® will be held Friday and Saturday, August 2 and 3 in Downtown Blacksburg. The two-day festival features over 250 artists and



Claire Lambert



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOWNTOWN BLACKSBURG, INC. Lambert's winning design was chosen from among 30 submissions.

crafts people from throughout the US selling unique handcrafted items; sidewalk sales and festival foods provided by downtown merchants; and three stages of live entertainment! For more information or to be a sponsor or volunteer please visit the Downtown Blacksburg, Inc. website at: www.blacksburgsteppinout.com.

Downtown Blacksburg, Inc.



Asteigh Hill, owner The Chandlerie in downtown Christiansburg, is celebrating one year of being brick-and-mortar.

The Chandlerie in downtown Christiansburg celebrates its first year

Angelica Ramos
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG- The Chandlerie in downtown Christiansburg is celebrating one year of being brick-and-mortar.

Friday, May 2 and Saturday, May 3, The Chandlerie, located at 127 North Franklin St. in Christiansburg will celebrate their first full year since their doors opened. The Chandlerie is a newer addition to the developing downtown area. Owner and Chandler Asteigh Hill started making candles in the summer of 2016 from her home and over time grew her small business to the store front she has now. The Chandlerie offers hand-poured wood wick candles, home decor, puzzles and candle pouring workshops for the community.

Hill's mission is to provide a connection between the sense of smell and memories. Her goal is to provide a product that connects with consumers and the community by using scent as a segue into memory making.

"A scent can trigger a reaction or a particular memory," Hill said, "with memory recall and nostalgia."

Small businesses have been working together to revitalize Downtown Christiansburg with the goal of making it the place to be in Christiansburg. Businesses like The Chandlerie want to restore the vibrancy of downtown to a hub for residents and passers-by. Small businesses popping up in Christiansburg, like Hill's, are focusing on building community engagement and connecting one on one with residents.

"Christiansburg is very family oriented and having a space that is a family space,"

Hill said, "There are so many things you might not think to do as a family that I am excited to introduce to the community. Engaging your community and getting to know each other branches out in terms of connections."

The Chandlerie offers a Sip and Shop event every first Friday of the month from April to September, which not only allows the community to physically be in the space, but also sign up and participate in candle workshops. The candle workshops are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays through Saturdays at the storefront in Downtown Christiansburg. This is a new event for the business, as the flagship Sip and Shop was Friday, April 5, 2024. May 3, 2024 will be the second one, coinciding with their first anniversary and allowing for more opportunity to engage with the community.

"It feels like such an honor to have a place where people are excited to be," Hill said, "It's cool to feel rallied behind."

Hill looks forward to continuing to watch her business and family grow together after this first successful year. As Downtown revitalizes and grows, she would like to begin offering artisan workshops with other small businesses that might not have a brick-and-mortar location yet, have holiday themed shopping events, and maybe move onto Main Street with more space to grow.

"I would love to be part of the bigger flourishing picture of downtown," Hill says, "A business that has maybe helped inspire other businesses. A place where people are inspired to come in. I would love for my business to be a light in the community (pun-intended)."



The Chandlerie has a variety of items for sale.

PHOTOS BY ANGELICA RAMOS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 4:

Book Sale

There will be a book sale at the Radford Public Library, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Many children's books, many 33 1/3 records and many fantasy and science fiction will be available. The usual fiction and mystery, as well as other genres will be there too. Good prices! Come and support the Radford Public Library.

Sunday, May 5:

Blacksburg Community Strings concert

Blacksburg Community Strings presents their Spring 2024 Concert, 2 p.m. at the Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg. The program includes Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 "From the New World" as well as Appalachian Morning by Robert Sheldon and Prairiesong by Carl Strommen. Come and hear music that reflects the land and cultures of America. Admission is free, donations are accepted and appreciated.

Monday, May 6:

Special Education Advisory Committee meeting

A Radford City Public Schools Special Education Advisory Committee meeting will be held at 4:30 p.m. at the School Board Office, 1612 Wadsworth St., Radford. The public is invited to attend. The meeting will also be available virtually using Google Meet. To be invited using Google Meet, contact Anne Goodman, Chair, at 540-267-7144, or Kate Leeper, Vice Chair, at 540-267-7223, to obtain a virtual meeting link. We hope to see you there.

Saturday, May 11:

Fish Fry

Mount Tabor Ruritan Club will hold its May Fish Fry from 5 to 7 p.m. at Slusser's Chapel Picnic Shelter, 1543 Mount Tabor Rd, Blacksburg. Serving fish, fries and slaw; homemade desserts; and beverages. DJ Earl Brown will be spinning some hits to get our 2024 fry

season off to a swinging start! Adults-\$12, children under 12-\$6, (under 3)-free, carry-outs-\$12. Held rain or shine. Call or text 540-449-6178 for further information. On Facebook at MtTaborRuritan.

Monday, May 13:

Radford City Council meeting

The Radford City Council will hold its regularly scheduled meeting at 7 p.m. in council chambers at the Radford Municipal Building, 10 Robertson St., Radford. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. See the agenda at www.radfordva.gov.

Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting

Public meetings are the second and fourth Monday of each month at the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St. in Christiansburg. Closed sessions begin at 6 p.m. if needed. Open sessions begin at 7:15 p.m. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. All regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors are rebroadcast on Montgomery County Comcast and Shentel Channels 190 daily.

Tuesday, May 14:

Blacksburg Town Council meeting

The council meets in regular session the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers of the Blacksburg Municipal Building, 300 S. Main St. These meetings are open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2.

Christiansburg Town Council meeting

Regular Town Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall (100 E. Main St.). The public is welcome and encouraged to attend, with a citizen hearing time reserved at each meeting for residents to bring any matter they desire before the entire council.

Thursday, May 16:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant, 3204 Riner Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy are also invited to attend. Tiffany Lloyd will do a presentation on the Sam Davis Youth Camp. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

On-going:

The Art of Happiness at The Montgomery Museum of Art & History

Join the Montgomery Museum of Art & History for their various Art of Happiness sessions during Mental Health Awareness Month. These sessions will be May 4, 11 and 18 at 2 p.m., as well as May 30 at 6 p.m., and will cover different art form variations such as Kinesthetics Painting, Clay, Bubble Prints, and Worry Stones. For more information, <https://montgomerymuseum.org/events/arthrapy/>.

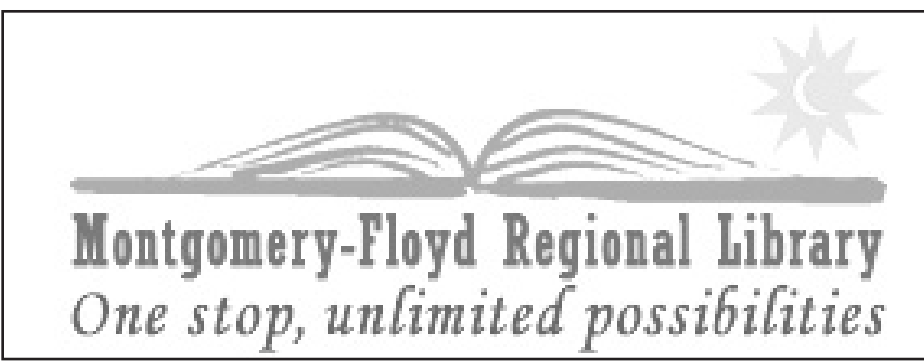
Route 460 Business Corridor Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Study

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization is seeking input for the Route 460 Business Corridor Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Study. The study will look at the segment of the corridor, from Industrial Park Road in Blacksburg to the Uptown Christiansburg Mall, for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Materials are posted online at www.newrivervalleympo.org and will be available for comment until May 9 at 5 p.m.

Radford Noon Rotary Club's Field of Honor

Field of Honor will be installed on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion prior to Memorial Day until the Fourth of July. Radford Noon Rotary Club is looking for people to sponsor flags. Individual flags are \$50. Corporate Sponsorship: Bronze - \$250; Silver - \$500; Gold - \$1000; and Platinum - \$2500. To register, contact rotary.club.of.radford.noon@gmail.com.

Meadowbrook Public Library offers free fridge to address food insecurity



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MFRL

SHAWSVILLE - As the cost for food continues to affect communities across Virginia, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library is proud to announce the launch of the Meadowbrook Free Fridge at the Meadowbrook Public Library in Shawsville.

This initiative aims to provide accessible and nutritious food to individuals and families in need within the local community.

The Free Fridge, situated conveniently inside the library's entrance, is made possible with the generous partnership of Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Eastmont Community Foundation, Shawsville Ruritan Club, and Red Sun Farms. Stocked with a variety of fresh food, often locally-sourced, the fridge is open for individuals to take what they need, free of charge.

Cindy Minnick, the manager of Meadowbrook Public Library, expressed her enthusiasm for the program.

"People are welcome to come in and take what they need," she said. "We're proud to offer this service to our community."

According to data from the state Department of Health and Feeding America, many rural communities in

Virginia, particularly in southwestern regions, experience higher rates of food insecurity. Meadowbrook Public Library recognizes the importance of addressing this issue and strives to make a meaningful impact through innovative solutions like the Free Fridge program.

"While a library may not be the first place one thinks of for food assistance, in rural communities like eastern Montgomery County, it is often one of the most accessible and visible locations," said Minnick.

The introduction of the Free Fridge program builds upon the success of similar initiatives in other libraries across the state, such as the Floyd Free Fridge, as well as similar programs in Pearisburg and Chesapeake. Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library is committed to fostering a healthier and more resilient community by providing essential resources and support to those in need.

For more information, please contact Cindy Minnick, Branch Manager, Meadowbrook Public Library, 267 Alleghany Spring Road, Shawsville, VA, 24162 (540) 268-1964, cminnick@mfrl.org.

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NRCC

NRCC announces 2024 graduation ceremony dates

DUBLIN - New River Community College will celebrate its 54th annual commencement Friday, May 10 and Monday, May 13 on the college's campus in Dublin in 117 Edward Hall.

Students who graduate this year will have completed more than 1,000 degrees, certificates and diplomas in 82 different programs, with many graduates receiving multiple awards.

Students in the Division of Business and Technologies for the

2023-2024 academic year will be honored on Friday, May 10 at 4 p.m. Doors open at 3 p.m.

Students in the Division of Arts and Sciences for the 2023-2024 academic year will be honored later that evening at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Division of Health Professions students will graduate on Monday, May 13 at 6 p.m. in 117 Edwards Hall. Doors open at 5 p.m. A pinning ceremony for associate degree nursing graduates

will be held at 7:30 p.m. following graduation.

More than 300 students plan to participate in person in the three graduation events.

Graduation ceremonies will be livestreamed for family, friends, and others to view off-campus. To view the ceremonies online, visit NRCC's graduation webpage at www.nr.edu/graduation.

NRCC

New center showcases Virginia Tech's strengths in global sustainability

Cayelan Carey and Quinn Thomas had been leading and conducting separate efforts to counter the effects of climate change, land use, and other pollution for years.

But when they combined their individual expertise in 2018, they flipped the script and began thinking about how to get in front of global warming, rather than chasing the

destruction left in its wake.

Now, as co-directors of the newly established Virginia Tech Center for Ecosystem Forecasting, the duo is not only striving to get ahead of ecological hazards but is also broadly extending efforts to encompass partners both home and abroad.

"Moving forward, we need to address

See Center, page 6



PHOTO BY FELICIA SPENCER FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Quinn Thomas (standing at second from left) and Cayelan Carey (standing at fourth from right), co-directors of the Virginia Tech Center for Ecosystem Forecasting, celebrated the official launch of their center on March 27 with center-affiliated faculty, workers, students, and their Australian partners.

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Community college philanthropists honored with 2024 Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy

Gary Hancock, of Pulaski, recently received the 18th Annual Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy. He was nominated for the award by New River Community College.

Hosted by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education (VFCEE), more than two dozen individuals, families, and organizations have earned the 2024 Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy. The awards were presented at a luncheon ceremony in Richmond on Tuesday, April 16, 2024. VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré served as emcee, and The Honorable Maurice Jones was featured as the keynote speaker.

"Virginia's growth, prosperity, and well-being depend on the success of our community college system and the success of our students," said Jones. "From childcare and housing assistance to reducing food insecurity, we must care and invest in the whole student for students and the Commonwealth to be successful."

Hancock has been a strong supporter of New River Community College and the NRCC Educational Foundation for decades. His comprehensive and consistent support has come not only in terms of generous giving, but also in important leadership roles.

He is past president and current co-chair of the NRCC Foundation Board of Directors and has served on that board for a number of terms. He also served on, and chaired, the State Board for Community Colleges. In addition to serving the local community in ways too numerous to enumerate, both he and the law firm for which he is senior partner, Gilmer, Sadler, Ingram, Sutherland & Hutton, have been generous donors to the Foundation's scholarship program.



(L to R): NRCC Educational Foundation Executive Director Angie Covey, VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré, Gary Hancock, Matthew Hancock, NRCC President Dr. Pat Huber, Peter Huber

PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC

"Over the course of its more than 50-year history, New River Community College has never had a more faithful friend and supporter than Gary Hancock. His commitment to making college accessible to New River Valley residents has been evidenced time and time again through both philanthropy and leadership. New River Community College has been extremely fortunate to call Gary Hancock 'one of

our own'," said Angie Covey, Executive Director of the NRCC Educational Foundation.

This year's class of distinguished philanthropy leaders has collectively contributed \$17 million dollars to Virginia's Community Colleges.

NRCC



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOOD CITY

From left, ACP President Mickey McGlothlin; ACP Provost and Dean, Dr. Susan Mayhew; Food City CEO/President Steve Smith; K-VA-T Food Stores Executive Vice President of Pharmacy and Fuel Operations Mickey Blazer; ACP Associate Professor, Dr. Shamy Abdelfattah; SWVHEC Agency Head David Matlock; and ACP Board of Trustees Chairman Arthur Mullins.

ACP, Food City collaborate to offer new Pharmacy Technician program

Recognizing the current shortage of certified pharmacy technicians in the Appalachian region, as well as Virginia Board of Pharmacy requirements for new pharmacy technicians to be trained in accredited training programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Appalachian College of Pharmacy (ACP) has teamed up with Food City to establish an online Certified Pharmacy Technician program.

The number of pharmacy tech programs in the state went down from 160 to only six accredited programs when new Virginia Board of Pharmacy requirements took effect. In an effort to ease this shortage and train the workforce

needed by its pharmacy partners, ACP and Food City began to collaborate to establish the new local certification program.

"Studies show that healthcare occupations are projected to grow more jobs than any other occupational groups through 2028 and as pharmacies expand patient care services, the role of and need for pharmacy technicians is also projected to grow," said ACP Provost and Dean Susan Mayhew.

"We are pleased to be working with Food City to establish this new pharmacy technician program to address those

See Food City, page 6

Marketplace

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Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County
<p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia</p> <p>that the Board hereby schedules a public hearing on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 7:15 p.m., or as soon thereafter, at the Montgomery County Government Center, 2nd Floor, Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia in order to receive comments on the following:</p> <p>AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE D-2 AND D-4 PRECINCT BOUNDARIES BY MOVING BLOCK OF LAUREL RIDGE MILL ROAD IN THE RINER AREA OF THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, VIRGINIA FROM THE D-2 PRECINCT TO THE D-4 PRECINCT IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THE SENATE DISTRICT SPLIT IN THE D-2 PRECINCT</p> <p>A copy of the full text of the Ordinance is on file in the Office of the County Administrator and is available 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for public inspection or copying.</p> <p>BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Angela M. Hill County Administrator</p>	<p>Public Notice</p> <p>The Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Room, Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street to receive comments</p> <p>on Council's intention to enter into a ground lease agreement with NRVA, Inc., with a term of 30 years, and one extension of 10 years, for placement of an approximately 1500 square foot building on Town-owned property located on the southern side of Mill Lane at 595 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcel 497 - ((A)) - 279; Parcel ID 010896) as well as any necessary accommodations for utilities and access as may be required for the construction and use of a structure by the H 2 Okies.</p> <p>Information on the preceding may be viewed in the Office of the Town Manager, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073-3029 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Written comments may be sent to the above address; please allow adequate mailing time.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">s: Randy Wingfield Randy Wingfield Town Manager</p>	<p>New River Valley HOME Consortium and Town of Blacksburg HOME and Community Development Block Grant Programs Proposed Amendment to the 2022-2026 Consolidated Plan and 2022 Action Plan Notice of Public Comment Period</p> <p>Following guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the New River Valley HOME Consortium and the Town of Blacksburg (TOB) seek public comment on proposed amendments to the 2022-2026 Con Plan and 2022 Annual Action Plan for the NRV's HOME program and the TOB's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.</p> <p>HOME and CDBG activities benefit low and moderate-income persons by developing affordable housing and supporting public services throughout the NRV.</p> <p>With community input, the five year Consolidated Plan identifies community needs and proposed solutions in the areas of Housing, Special Needs, Economic Development and Non-Housing Community Development. The Annual</p>	<p>Action Plan provides a yearly accounting of HOME, CDBG, and other funds allocated for objectives outlined in the Consolidated Plan.</p> <p>The proposed amendments to the 2022-2026 Con Plan and 2022 Annual Action Plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Adding a HOME-Affordable Housing Initiatives Project to allow for additional affordable housing development activities. •Clarifying the estimated number of families that will benefit from the proposed affordable housing 	<p>activities. The change is from 144 units to 75 units supported/developed with HOME and CDBG funds and 95 units supported/developed by leveraging HOME and CDBG funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Assigning anticipated funding to the following projects: Historic Leggett Building Revitalization \$432,250, Claremont School Redevelopment \$287,038.30, and Floyd Townhomes \$481,983.50, and \$924,380.50 for the 2022 Annual Action Plan year. <p>A draft of the amended Plan can be reviewed at</p>	<p>Blacksburg.gov/HUDplan.</p> <p>Hard copies are available in the lobby of the Blacksburg Library, 200 Miller St., or upon request.</p> <p>The public is invited to share comments about the Plan May 23 from 1pm-2pm at the Housing and Community Connections office, 303 Wilson Ave, by e-mail at housing@blacksburg.gov, phone (540) 443-1615, or mail: Housing and Community Connections, P.O. Box 90003, Blacksburg, VA 24062.</p> <p>Comment deadline is 5:00 p.m. June 2, 2024.</p>	<p>Accommodations for persons with disabilities and non-English speaking residents will be provided upon request. Please call (540) 443-1615.</p>

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Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library presents: What's It Worth?

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library has announced an event for antique enthusiasts and collectors alike: "What's it Worth: Ask Mike the Appraiser," featuring renowned author, auctioneer, appraiser, and radio show host Mike Ivankovich will be Wednesday, May 15, at 11 a.m. Attendees can participate at the Blacksburg Library or online.

This unique program will delve into the fascinating world of antiques and collectibles, offering attendees the opportunity to gain insights into the value of their cherished items. Have you ever wondered

if that vase from the thrift store was worth anything? What about that painting you inherited? Mike Ivankovich will guide participants through "What Determines Value," providing valuable knowledge on how to assess the worth of antiques, collectibles, and personal treasures in today's market.

Attendees are invited to bring in 1-2 items for Mike to appraise during the event. Due to the interactive nature of the program, appraisals will be conducted over Zoom, ensuring accessibility to all interested individuals. However,

it's important to note that appraisals are limited to the first 25 registrants, so early registration at <https://go.mfml.org/worth> is encouraged.

The program aims to ensure that everyone's treasures receive a thorough appraisal. Participants are encouraged to have a backup item available for appraisal in case the primary item cannot be virtually assessed.

Backgrounds will be turned off during the item presentations to prevent distortion, ensuring accurate evaluations. Participants are welcome to join from their own device or with the group at the Blacksburg

Library.

Ivankovich has been involved in some phase of the antiques and collectibles business for more than 40 years. He has authored more than 20 books and eBooks in his areas of specialty. He is the host of the "What's It Worth? Ask Mike the Appraiser" Radio Show that airs every Friday morning from on WBCB 1490 AM in Philadelphia PA. As a home downsizing expert, he guides clients through the entire home downsizing process, helping them deal with their antiques, collectibles, and general household contents. As

a Pennsylvania Auctioneer, he has been named Pennsylvania's "Auctioneer of the Year" by fellow Auctioneers.

Don't miss this opportunity to discover the true value of your antiques, collectibles, and personal treasures with Mike Ivankovich at this presentation. To have items appraised, please register at: <https://go.mfml.org/worth> to secure your spot. For more information, please visit <https://go.mfml.org/worth> or contact Kerri Copus at kcopus@mfml.org or (540) 382-6969 ext. 215.

MFRL

Radford's Hodge Field rededicated following needed improvements

Heather Bell
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RADFORD - A rededication ceremony for Joe Hodge Field at Sisson

Park was held Monday, bringing together city officials, family members and community members.

For decades, Radford's Little League and other recreation league baseball

and softball players have played on Joe Hodge Field. In recent years, the field began showing its age. Now, improvements including new dugouts, seating area, fencing and field work are giving the beloved field a much-needed facelift and improved functionality.

Joe Hodge was a longtime employee of the Radford Parks and Recreation department, where he served as the department's athletic director and Parks and Fields supervisor. He helped with the construction of the field in the 1970s.

"Joe, along with summer park aides, the Public Works department, and many friends and volunteers helped build the field," reads the announcement of the rededication ceremony. "Teams from all over the New River Valley enjoyed coming and playing games on Hodge Field. Many would give up their home games to play at the field.

"When Joe wasn't working on fields, he found time to also coach many teams," it continues. "Joe was loved and respected by all who knew him."

Joe Hodge Field at Sisson Park is located at 1014 Pendleton St., Radford.



The field view from behind home plate. The improvements include new dugouts, seating area, fencing and field work.



PHOTOS BY BRYANT ALTIZER

Radford Parks and Recreation Director Greg Holbrook (left) addresses the crowd as family members of the late Joe Hodge gather near home plate at Monday night's rededication ceremony. The rec department unveiled improvements to the aging kid's baseball field that is named after Hodge, a recreation employee who helped build the facility. Several members of the Joe Hodge family were present to remember him. Pictured is (from left) daughter Diane Hodge Harris and her husband, John Harris; granddaughter Katrina Williams; Daniel Hall; and great granddaughter Maecyn Williams.

News Messenger

Established 1869

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The News Messenger is a newspaper of, by and for the people of Montgomery County. We encourage letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached for verification. All letters will be verified before publication. We reserve the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

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 - River in SE S. Am.
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OBITUARIES

Dalton, Wanda Darlene Turpin

Wanda Darlene Turpin Dalton, 81, of Dublin, passed away Monday, April 29, 2024.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Argell Earnest and Daisy Southern Turpin; and her husband, Walter Staples Dalton.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Keith Dalton (Wendy); daughter and son-in-law, Shelia Bailey (Scott); grandchildren,

Candis, Brittney and Zachary; great-grandchildren, Brody, Myles and Millee; sisters, Hilda, Louise and Ruby; brothers, Hensel, Gene and Carl; and many other family members and special friends.

Memorial services will be private for the family.

The Dalton family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

her heavenly family, but her earthly family will never forget such a kind, loving, and funny soul. She was truly a hero and inspiration to her daughters, and a best friend to all who really knew her. Her family will always miss Linda, but they find peace knowing they will see her again in a place that knows no death, only joy.

Survivors include her daughters, Lisa Palm (Mark) and Brandee Nelson; stepson, Lee Hawley and stepdaughter, Michelle Hawley; grandchildren, Miranda and Jacob Franklin; siblings, Terry Nelson

(Sabrina) and David Nelson (Carol Overstreet); and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends Saturday, May 4, 2024, from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Memorial services will begin at 12 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to St. Jude Children's Hospital or to the American Cancer Society.

The Nelson family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Nelson, Linda Diann

Linda Diann Nelson, 69, passed away Friday, April 26, 2024, at her home in Hiwassee surrounded by her family. She was preceded in death by her parents, Wendell D. and Helen Hall Nelson; and sister, Carol Smith.

Linda was an alumna of Auburn High School in Riner, where she had many friends in her youth. She was a remarkable woman who



loved her family, her pets, and doing things like riding horses and fishing. She was a fan of old sports cars, good music, and having fun with her beloved family. Her battle with cancer was unexpected, but she faced it with courage and quiet dignity as she did every other battle she ever faced. God chose to go ahead and take her home to be with

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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 nurture meaningful connections to God and others through worship, spiritual growth, and 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: fbcradford.org 540-639-4419. Worship is in-person and live-streamed on Facebook and on our YouTube channel: First Baptist Church Radford.

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, 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: Hal Sonafrank, 1-336-583-4822. Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Wednesdays. 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!

(DOC - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Snowville Christian Church, 5436 Lead Mine Rd., Hiwassee, VA 24347, Pastor: Jerry King, Website: www.SnowvilleChristianChurch.com (and Facebook), Office: 540-633-3761, Email: office@SnowvilleChristianChurch.com, Sunday Worship Service: 11:00 a.m., Sunday School: 10:00 a.m., Thursday Bible Study: 6:00 p.m., We are: "Inspiring hope, helping people grow their faith, and sharing God's love with others!"

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is a simple teaching that focuses on the Light and Sound of God to help people find more love in their life. The Roanoke Eckankar Center is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. A spiritual event is held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. Since contracting COVID-19 may still be possible, please take the health steps that are best for you. It is appreciated that by attending you are taking responsibility for your own health. Visit www.eck-va.org, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences * Group* or call 540-353-5365 for other Eckankar programs and for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar can lead you to spiritual freedom.

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 Fourth Street Radford. Welcoming and accepting, we have been a part of the Radford community for more than 130 years. ALL ARE WELCOME. Grace offers an 8:00am Contemplative

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

OUR PATIENT GOD

Read 2 Kings 14:1 through 16:20

And since the Lord had not said he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash (2 Kings 14:27).

Reading through the Old Testament can seem like an exercise in frustration. We read about privileged people who regularly rebel against God and get themselves into trouble. God becomes angry at their constant attraction to sin, and threatens to punish them. From truly remorseful hearts, they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and God stays His hand. He keeps His word by punishing the ringleaders or by allowing them all to go into slavery. However, He always comforts and rescues them. Why, we wonder, do they never learn their lesson?

Interestingly, if we are honest with ourselves, we might just see our own failings mirrored in the lives of these Israelites. Like them, we, too, experience the loyal heart of a God who is unwilling to leave us in our sin and never ever willing to abandon us.

Challenge for Today: Read through the entire Old Testament this summer. Rejoice in God's long-suffering heart of love for you.

Quicklook: 2 Kings 14:23-27

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Wendi Craig at 276-340-2445 or email at advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Eucharist and a 10:30am Eucharist with organ music and a choir, with refreshments served afterwards. The 10:30am service is also available on YouTube for those unable to leave their house. Find us on Facebook and www.graceradford.org.

St Thomas Episcopal Church, 103 East Main Street, Christiansburg VA, 24073. Worship and communion at 10:00 a.m., each Sunday, followed by hospitality coffee and Adult Sunday Adult Seminar. Our service is also streamed. Contact for more info: mysthomasoffice@yahoo.com. <http://www.stthomaschristiansburg.dioswva.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 luthermemorialblacksburg@gmail.com, or contact the church office, (540) 951-1000. Rev. Monica Weber, pastor.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church ELCA, 1845 Cambria St NE, Christiansburg. Celebrate Word and Sacrament as we worship with varied liturgy, hymns and music. Join our inclusive community in person or online Sundays at 10:00 am ([youtube.com/@OSLCCburg](https://www.youtube.com/@OSLCCburg)), followed by refreshments and fellowship. Ministries include Bible study, choir, food ministry, and crafters. Little Free Pantry and Library available 24-7 by the parking lot. Parent's Morning Out offers faith-based activities and play for children 16 month - 5 years select weekdays. Wheelchair accessible. Learn how you may contribute to our ministries at www.oslc-cburg.org. 540-382-2223.

St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God's people where

we gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: "Wonderful, welcoming congregation." A place where all are truly welcome." You'll love our minister, The Rev. Dr. Wes Jamison, who engages us in God's word. St. Michael started and administers Micah's Caring Initiative which includes Micah's Backpack, Soup for Seniors, Garden, Closet, and Mini Pantry, with tremendous community impact. Partnering with Rainbow Riders and Total Action for Progress, we opened the first Early Childhood Head Start in our community (6 weeks to age 3). We sponsor an awesome Scouting program of Scouts Boy & Girl Troop, Venture Scouts for older youth, and a Cub Pack for girls & boys kindergarten - 5th grade, amongst many other programs. Directions: From Price's Fork Road, turn onto Merrimac Road. St. Michael is ~quarter mile on the left. For more information: Phone 540.951.8951; Email hope@stmcl.us; Website www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Central Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am; 9:45am Sunday School; and 11:00a.m. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodistchurch.com.

Christian Metho 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

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

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.

Piedmont Pentecostal Holiness Church, 5007 Jewell Dr., Shawsville Va. Sunday morning service 11am. Pastor Tim Clyburn. 8 miles from Shawsville Rt 460, on Alleghany Spring Rd.

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. G. Lance Presley. Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 West Main Street, Christiansburg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship at 10a.m. with Children's Church at the same time, Sunday School at 9 a.m. Worship is in-person and Live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: StPaulUMCChristiansburgVA. All are welcome. Website: www.stpaulvaumc.org

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 540-510-0952. The building is totally handicapped accessible. Website: christwesleyanchurch.org

Food City from page 3

needs and to add to the educational opportunities we provide here at the Appalachian College of Pharmacy for students looking to begin a career in pharmacy,” said ACP President Mickey McGlothlin.

Accreditation for the new program of study will be sought through the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists (ASHP).

Under the terms of the collaboration with Food City, ACP will dedicate staff to the program and seek accreditation for it through the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists (ASHP). Food City is investing in the initial costs and start-up of the program and will provide the clinical experience rotations to support and assist ACP in delivering that portion of the program to students at its locations in five states – Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.

“Food City is proud to continue our long-time partnership with Appalachian College of Pharmacy through our support of this much-needed online Certified Pharmacy Technician program,” said Steven C. Smith, Food City president and chief executive officer. “We know firsthand the important role that certified pharmacy technicians play in meeting the

health care needs of the communities we serve and we’re proud to be able to take an active role in supporting the training and education of this vital component of our health care workforce.”

Additionally, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center will develop a simulation lab at its location which students in the program will be able to utilize.

“This exciting step symbolizes Appalachian College of Pharmacy’s continued commitment to workforce needs,” said David Matlock, Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Agency Head. “Our partnership with ACP and this new program enhances our mission and ability to meet the needs of the region.”

Pharmacy technicians work closely with pharmacists and other healthcare professionals in diverse settings such as hospitals, clinics and community pharmacies. Technicians support patient care efforts of the pharmacy team with roles and responsibilities that continue to expand and evolve.

Students completing the ACP program will be eligible to sit for the Pharmacy Technician Board Certification (PTCB) exam to become certified as

pharmacy technicians.

Five modules are featured in the curriculum, which follows the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists (ASHP) textbook. Healthcare communications and professionalism; mathematics for pharmacy; pharmacy law and ethics; basic pharmacology and current pharmacy practice standards; and sterile and non-sterile drug compounding are the key components.

“This curriculum will be delivered through online access to lectures, learning activities and simulations under the supervision and evaluation of qualified faculty and practicing pharmacists and pharmacy technicians from Food City and other partners,” said Dr. Shamy Abdelfattah, director of health care innovations; clinical coordinator at KVAT; and ACP associate professor of pharmacy practice.

The program will be offered twice each year – in the fall term and in the spring term. Students will be able to finish the program within 26 weeks, which will include six weeks of experiential rotations.

Food City

Center from page 2

these critical challenges facing humanity by reaching out to partners across the globe, yet at the same time engaging the decision-makers and stakeholders as this new center is already doing,” Dan Sui, senior vice president and chief research and innovation officer, said at the center’s launch last month.

Uniquely positioned for its depth of research, innovative software, global partnerships and engagement, as well as its extensive education and training opportunities, the center combines Carey’s extensive research with lakes and reservoirs throughout the globe and Thomas’s technical innovation and data science research with Virginia Tech’s land-grant mission to serve. It already has affiliated faculty from multiple departments and colleges across the university and international prominence, demonstrated by the recent award of a National Science Foundation Global Center planning grant.

“This is exactly the kind of thing that completely aligns with our campus priorities – tapping into the excellence and expertise of our faculty to make our communities more sustainable and providing our students opportunities to get involved in hands-on research,” said Kevin Pitts, dean of the College of Science, which is the center’s administrative home.

Fresh beginnings

Similar to how meteorologists forecast weather, ecological forecasters collect and analyze environmental data, build and share ecological models and software, create and assess a diversity of forecasting methods, and then translate and communicate forecasts for end-user decision support.

Carey, professor in biological sciences, and Thomas, associate professor of forest resources and environmental conservation, began forecasting freshwater ecosystems in a partnership with the Western Virginia Water Authority in 2018. By co-developing forecast tools and visualizations with the water managers, the center has been able to supplement the existing operational guidelines used by the Western Virginia Water Authority with research-based insights to help provide the public with safe drinking water.

With warming air temperatures and other pollution, many freshwater ecosystems globally have increasingly exhibited greater variability and

degradation, which is exemplified by toxic phytoplankton blooms, unsafe concentrations of nutrients and contaminants, fish kills, and anoxia, or low oxygen levels. These effects make lake and reservoir water harmful for swimming and fisheries.

To preempt this degradation before it starts in Southwest Virginia reservoirs, Thomas and Carey developed a state-of-the-art forecasting system to deliver daily forecasts and inform the water managers of future water quality conditions. This enables them to anticipate and mitigate the effects and provide optimal water quality by various means, including diverting water from other reservoirs, adding chemicals to curb toxic blooms, issuing swimming and fishery advisories, and increasing water flows to prevent anoxia.

The center’s team members are firmly established as freshwater ecosystem forecasting experts. In addition to developing daily forecasts for managers in Virginia, they are generating daily forecasts for lakes across the U.S. from Alaska to Florida and have partnered with a lake association in New Hampshire that has sponsored student exchanges for the past three years. To date, they have received 10 federal grants totaling over \$6 million to develop freshwater ecosystem forecasts for lakes and reservoirs around the world.

The center’s forecasting approaches transcend freshwater lakes and reservoirs and are widely applicable to all ecosystems experiencing rapid changes in response to altered climate and land use. Thomas leads the National Ecological Observatory Network Ecological Forecasting Challenge, which is a continental-scale forecasting challenge spanning 81 sites across the United States. For this project, the center team collaborates with other researchers at Virginia Tech and other universities to actively develop forecasts to estimate future carbon sequestration, vector-borne diseases, tick populations, and beetle diversity using similar methods as those used for freshwaters.

Global engagement

The center is connected with researchers across the globe.

In 2022, Carey traveled to Australia as a Fulbright Future Scholar to work with researchers from the University of Western Australia who had developed an open-source lake and reservoir model for long-term simulations of historical

conditions. Since then, Carey, Thomas, and several researchers in Australia have collaborated to create an upgraded software system that not only allows for daily forecasting, but also models the effects of human activities on drinking water quality.

“This center is timely, as we are facing an ever-increasing challenge to supply potable water to protect aquatic ecosystems and to support irrigated agriculture and other water-based economies,” Justin Brookes, head of school at the University of Adelaide, Australia, said at the official launch of the center. “Now we finally have the confluence of computing power, machine learning, process-based models, and the relationships that are necessary to significantly advance water management both here in America, in Australia, and globally.”

The center’s software is open-sourced, which not only promotes transparency but aids accessibility and encourages collaboration with scientists and managers across the world. End users, including water managers, students, and researchers, can access the constantly updating iterative data and models.

“We are an action-oriented research center that develops and applies forecasts of ecosystem dynamics in partnership with managers, decision makers, and the public,” said Carey, a Roger Moore and Mojdeh Khatam-Moore Faculty Fellow in the Department of Biological Sciences and faculty affiliate with the Global Change Center and the Fralin Life Sciences Institute.

As founding members of the Ecological Forecasting Initiative and Global Lake Ecological Observatory Network, two international grassroots networks of interdisciplinary researchers who collaborate on shared open-source data, models, and software, the center’s team have developed relationships that enhance both the researchers’ work and that of their international colleagues.

Education and training

The center team has made the education and training of undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, and managers a priority for years. Alongside postdoctoral associate Mary Lofton, Carey and Thomas developed a series of hands-on teaching modules called Macrosystems EDDIE, which stands for Environmental Data-Driven Inquiry and Exploration. Since its creation in 2017,

these modules have been implemented at over 40 universities across the world.

“We’re excited to be a hub of activity focusing on a wide range of ecosystems at the intersection of data science and modeling, environmental sciences, decision sciences, and engineering,” said Thomas, a data science faculty fellow in the College of Science. “Please stay tuned for events that include training opportunities and distinguished campus visitors.”

Thomas, an affiliate faculty of the Global Change Center and the Fralin Life Sciences Institute, also teaches a new course called Ecological Modeling and Forecasting for Virginia Tech graduate students, and the center team additionally sponsors capstone projects for the computational modeling and data analytics majors at Virginia Tech.

Center’s vision

The Virginia Tech Center for Ecosystem Forecasting aims to help fill the need for predictive insights to climate and other environmental change, which is a component of all major environmental centers and initiatives at the university. Fundamental in enabling knowledge transfer, the center will continue to provide an integral link among the environmental sciences, data sciences, statistics, decision sciences, computer science, and other disciplines.

As a team of faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, a data scientist, a sensor technician, and a program manager, the center is prepared to tackle cutting-edge environmental problems that can be uniquely addressed at a university that values innovation and problem solving.

“By being at the vanguard of technology and method development, our goal is to use our position at a university to explore the limits of what ecosystem variables we can forecast reliably and deliver new ecosystem models, software, and decision support tools for a suite of partners,” Thomas said.

Supported by the College of Science, the College of Natural Resources and Environment, the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, and the Fralin Life Sciences Institute and philanthropic support, the new Virginia Tech Center for Ecosystem Forecasting will continue to make an impact locally and globally.

Lindsey Haugh for Virginia Tech

MCPS from page 1

Locke team conducted more than 23 interviews with Montgomery County Public School employees and members of the Blacksburg High School community,” the statement continues. “The legal review also evaluated records obtained from the Blacksburg Police Department, reviewed emails

between faculty members and Central Office staff, and collected and reviewed emails between various faculty members and students. The review considered relevant student videos, school policies, student files, and publicly accessible social media accounts. The information

gathered was then evaluated to determine compliance with relevant federal and state laws and regulations, and relevant policies and procedures. Those interviewed were questioned as to their knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the students and the extent of any relationship they

had with the students. School employees were asked about their awareness of school policies regarding harassment, bullying, and Title IX, and what training, if any, was provided in these areas to faculty, staff and students. The interviews also explored employees’ understanding

of the mandatory reporting requirements under state and federal law and school policies. Employees were also asked about the application of threat assessment policy and procedures, and the impact on school services of personnel moves and funding cuts that occurred prior to the deaths.”

ESS from page 1

way we accomplish the quality of life we value in our community is by supporting both new and existing businesses. We are thrilled ESS Technologies recognized our commitment to and support of local industries by choosing Montgomery County as home for expanding their innovative business.”

“Congratulations to ESS Technologies on this exciting expansion announcement. As a business with a long history in Virginia’s New River Valley, we are pleased they have chosen to retain and increase jobs in the region,” said Katie Boswell, Executive Director of Onward New River Valley. “We look forward to supporting their continued growth and success in the NRV.”

“We are thrilled by their increased

investment in the New River Valley,” said Senator David Suetterlein. “We are thrilled even more so by the 27 quality new jobs it will generate.”

“This is an exciting announcement for the New River Valley,” said Delegate Jason Ballard. “This \$1.6 million investment will bring 27 good-paying jobs to my district in Montgomery County and will encourage future economic growth and investment in our communities. I look forward to continuing my work with Governor Youngkin and other stakeholders to bring more of this type of economic opportunity to our localities throughout the New River Valley.”

Founded in 1993, ESS Technologies specializes in complete packaging line design, equipment manufacturing, and

integration for the pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, cosmetic, and consumer packaging goods industries. The company has extensive experience in designing, building, and integrating automatic cartoners, case packers, robotic palletizers, and robotic systems. ESS Technologies has operated in the Town of Blacksburg in Montgomery County since 1993.

ESS has been engaged with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) International Trade team since 2008 and is a 2023 graduate of the Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) program. VALET assists Virginia exporters that have firmly established domestic operations and are committed to international exporting as

a growth strategy.

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with Montgomery County Economic Development and Onward New River Valley to secure the project for Virginia and will support ESS Technologies’ job creation through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP), which provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs in order to support employee recruitment and training activities. As a business incentive supporting economic development, VJIP reduces the human resource costs of new and expanding companies. VJIP is state-funded, demonstrating Virginia’s commitment to enhancing job opportunities for citizens.

Onward NRV

MONTGOMERY SPORTS



PHOTO BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

Pictured are the student-athletes from Christiansburg High School, who signed letters of intent on Monday afternoon, to continue their playing careers at the next level. Pictured are: (from left) Ruby Bolling, Kady Camper, Summer Hamlin, Addison Linkous, Braelynn Williams, Zack Cummings, Daniel Duarte, Tanner Evans, Noah Jones and Jeremiah Thompson. The event took place in the school's gymnasium.

CHS athletes to play at next level

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Christiansburg High School announced 10 student-athletes will be playing at the next level of college during a spring signing ceremony on Monday, April 29.

Those putting pen to paper included:

Ruby Bolling - Cheerleading - Radford University; Kady Camper - Softball - Purdue University; Zack Cummings - Wrestling - Liberty University; Daniel Duarte - XC/Track - Longwood University; Tanner Evans - Baseball - University of Charleston; Noah Jones - XC/Track - UNC-Asheville; Summer Hamlin - XC/Track - Radford University; Addison Linkous - Softball - West Virginia Wesleyan; Jeremiah Thompson - Baseball/Football - Concord University; and Braelynn Williams - Volleyball - UVA-Wise.

Bolling will be committing to the competition cheer team at Roanoke College. She has competed in competition cheer for three years at CHS. She was a JV Cheer Captain, an All-Star Cheerleader for 12 years and is currently coaching an All-Star

cheer team. At Roanoke, she plans to major in Health and Exercise Science.

Kady Camper will be committing to play softball at Purdue University. She has played softball all four years at CHS. As a sophomore, she was First Team All River Ridge District Pitcher and Player of the Year, First Team All-Region 3D and Player of the Year and First Team All-State Flex/DP. As a Junior, she was First Team All-River Ridge District and First Team All-Region 3D Pitcher. At Purdue, Camper plans to major in Psychology/Sociology.

Summer Hamlin will be committing to run Cross Country and Track at Radford University. She has competed in Cross Country and Track for five years at CHS, is a member of the National Honor Society, Chamber Choir and 2022 All District Choir.

In cross country, Hamlin placed first in the JV Race at the Milestat Invitational as an Eighth grader and earned All Region 3D honors twice.

In Indoor Track, she was all region in the 1000m and 500m,

she was three time all state in the 1000m and is the school record holder in the 500m and 1000m. In Outdoor track, Hamlin earned all-region honors in the 400m and 800m and was all state in the 800m in 2022. At Radford, Hamlin plans to major in Exercise Sports Science and Physical Therapy.

Addison Linkous will be committing to play softball at West Virginia-Wesleyan. She has played softball all four years at CHS and was also a member of the golf program. At Wesleyan, Linkous plans to major in Nursing.

Braelynn Williams will be committing to play volleyball at UVA-Wise. She has competed in volleyball for five years at CHS, making the JV team as an eighth grader. Williams has been a varsity captain since her sophomore year and was a first team all-River Ridge District and first team All-Region 3D performer her junior year. At UVA-Wise, Williams plans to major in Elementary Education.

Zackary Cummings will wrestle at Liberty University. He has competed in wrestling all four years at CHS, finishing fifth in Region 3D as a sophomore, fourth in Region 3D as a junior

and was the Region 3D runner-up as a senior. At Liberty, Cummings plans to major in Aeronautics.

Daniel Duarte will cross country and track at Longwood. He has competed in cross country and track all four years at CHS. He is on the All-A honor roll, a member of the National Honor Society and has earned three letters in Cross Country and Track and Field. At Longwood, he plans to major in Biology.

Tanner Evans is committing to play baseball at the University of Charleston where he will be two-way middle infielder and pitcher. He has played baseball all four years at CHS. As a sophomore, Tanner was second team all River Ridge District Second baseman, Honorable Mention All River Ridge District pitcher while being named First team All-Region 3D Second baseman and Second Team All-State second baseman. As a junior, he was named second team All-District shortstop, second team All-District pitcher while being named First Team All-Region player at large and First team All-State player at large. At the University of

Charleston, he plans to study sports analytics.

Noah Jones will run Cross Country and Track at UNC-Asheville. He has competed in cross country and track all four years at CHS. He is a member of the National Honor Society, BETA Club and HOSA. Jones was a three-time all-Region 3D runner and Class 3 state qualifier in Cross Country, Indoor Track and Outdoor Track and was named a Team Captain for the Cross Country Team. At UNC-Asheville, Jones plans to major in Exercise Science.

Jeremiah Thompson will be committing to play football and baseball at Concord University. He has competed in football and baseball all four years at CHS and was 2022 Second Team All District Linebacker, 2023 First Team All-River Ridge District Linebacker and Second Team All-River Ridge District Receiver, 2022 First Team All-Region 3D Defensive All-Purpose and 2023 First Team All-Region 3D Linebacker, 2022 First Team All-State Defensive All-Purpose and 2023 Honorable Mention All-State Linebacker. At Concord, he plans to major in Business.

Bobcats fall to Alleghany in baseball



Radford pitcher Mason Murphy delivers the ball in Monday's 11-0 loss to Alleghany High School.



Radford right fielder Micah Ray hauls in a fly ball to secure an out.



Jackson Johnson pitches in relief during the Bobcats game.

PHOTOS BY BRYANT ALTIZER

RU adds three more to men's basketball roster

Marty Gordon

Contributing writer

The Radford University men's basketball roster is starting to fall in place as Coach Darris Nichols added two more transfers and a high school standout.

Earlier this week the school announced Tony Felder, David Early and Zion Walker, all guards.

Felder joins the Highlanders after attending Stonehill College.

"Tony is a high character individual that has a tremendous story of perseverance and hard work," said Nichols. "He has great discipline and leadership qualities that are vital to a program. He brings two years of experience as well as the ability to make plays for himself and the others around him using his quickness and basketball IQ."

Prior to Stonehill, the Brockton, Mass. native attended Virginia Military Institute. Between the two institutions, Felder started in 57 of the 62 games he participated in. On his career he averages 11.2 ppg, 3.0 apg, 2.5 rpg and 1.0 spg. During the 2023-24 season, Felder earned a career high 30 points versus Saint Francis (Pa.).

During his freshman season at VMI, the 5'10" 160 lb. guard was ranked eighth

in assists in the Southern Conference.

Early joins Highlanders for the 2024-25 season following one season at Tennessee Tech.

"David is an excellent person on and off the court, making him a great fit for our community and program," said Nichols. "He plays extremely hard on both ends of the floor and brings a different offensive game to our team. We're excited to welcome him to the Radford family and are looking forward to getting him here with the rest of our players this summer."

The Holden, W.Va. native stands at 6-4, 235 pounds averaging 14.3 ppg while shooting 37% from three starting in every game he appeared in.

Prior to Tennessee Tech, Early played at Marshall in which he played in 67 games over the course of three seasons.

Prior to Division I, Early attended Logan High School (WV) where he finished his career as Logan's all-time leading scorer and was an All-State First Team selection.

They will be joined by freshman Zion Walker, who graduated from the Burlington School.

"Our program is thrilled to be able to

See RU Basketball, page 8

Weekly reports: Blacksburg boys now 12-0

The Blacksburg boys' soccer team remained unbeaten with a 1-0 overtime win over William Fleming on Monday.

The team had a goal by Esteban Carvajal on an assist from Paul Distler. William Fleming Goalkeeper Jonny Orozco had three saves, and Blacksburg goalkeeper Simon Pratt had five saves.

Auburn rolls over Bland

Jared Lavergne went 4-4 with three doubles and picked up the victory on the mound as the Eagles moved to 15-1, 10-0.

Auburn shut out Bland 23-0. Brody Hensel and Graham Alley had four RBIs each, Mitchell Hale had three hits and three RBIs. Also, Zac McGlothlin

and Josh Givens had two RBI apiece to power Auburn's offensive attack.

Then on Wednesday, the Eagles clinched the Mt. Empire District regular season baseball title with a 21-0 win over George Wythe.

Eleven different players collected a hit and an RBI in the win. Jared Lavergne went 4-4 and Matthew Altizer 3-3 to lead the Auburn attack. Josh Givens and Zac McGlothlin collected three RBIs each for Auburn. Brody Hensel picked up his eighth win of the season throwing three hitless innings with no walks and seven strikeouts.

Eastern Montgomery shuts out Craig County

On Tuesday, the Eastern Montgomery softball team defeated Craig County 20-3 in five innings. Mary Miller earned the win for the Mustangs.

Blacksburg beats Lord Botetourt

The Lady Bruins softball team used solid pitching and timely hitting on Tuesday night

to down Lord Botetourt on a 6-2 night. Senior Evelyn Rhoads had two doubles and three RBIs. Also, Maddie Williams and Natalie Green had multiple hits on the night. Senior Lorelei Spradlin pitched six innings striking out 13. One of those being her 300th strikeout of her career. Evelyn closed the door striking out two Botetourt batters.

Radford falls short to Alleghany

The Radford Bobcats fell to the Alleghany Cougars on Tuesday night 8-7. Radford collected

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

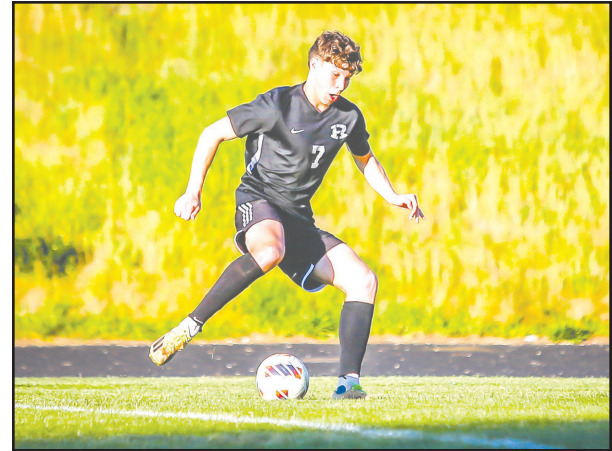
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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Bobcats take soccer win over Alleghany



Drew Edwards fires a pass down field against Alleghany on Monday. The Bobcats won the game 4-0.



Robert Fuksz dribbles to set up the attack against the visiting Cougars after scoring an early goal to help Radford improve to 10-1 on the season.



Andrew Hope races past a defender in Monday's win and would score a late goal in the second half.

PHOTOS BY BRYANT ALTIZER

Hole-in-one at Auburn Hills

Reed Underwood celebrates his hole-in-one this past week on Hole #3 during the Spring Showdown Tournament at the Auburn Hills Golf Course.



PHOTOCOURTESY OF AUBURN HILLS GOLF

RU Basketball

from page 1

add Zion Walker to our Radford family," said Nichols. "He is a guard who has consistently proven that he is a winner throughout his high school career, and we know he will bring a high level of competitiveness on a daily basis. We look forward to working with him when he arrives on

campus this upcoming summer." The Burlington, N.C. native averaged 19.6 ppg during his senior year with an additional 4.2 rebounds per game. As a junior, Walker was a member of the NCISAA state championship team and was a two-time All-State selection during his high school career.

Rated a 3-star prospect by multiple scouting services, the 6-2 guard is the leading scorer in the Burlington School history with over 2,000 career points. Additionally, this will mark 13 consecutive years of having a member of the Radford's men's basketball team from Burlington, N.C.

Notes

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10 hits in the game to include Olivia Radford's perfect night at the plate going

four for four with four RBIs. Kat Price went three for four, and Addie Saunders

plated two runs for the Bobcats.

Quinn Burton took the loss on the

mountain going all six innings and striking out four Alleghany batters.



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