



News Messenger

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Christiansburg

Saturday, August 31, 2024

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New River Valley passenger rail plan moves forward

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The return of passenger rail service to the New River Valley took another step forward this week with a major announcement by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), who announced an agreement with Norfolk Southern Corporation to purchase the Manassas line.

The path would bring Amtrak service to a former passenger station in the Cambria section of Christiansburg, and the possibility of a layover stop in Radford, further down the line.

According to a press release, through this new agreement, the VPRA will have the ability to extend its state-supported Amtrak Virginia service to the New River

Valley (NRV) sooner and at a lower cost than originally planned. In addition, the purchase of the Manassas Line will enable VPRA to increase the Virginia Railway Express' (VRE) Manassas Line service in the future with additional frequencies including both evening and weekend options.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin said a vote by the VRE will advance a better, faster, and cheaper solution to bring passenger rail back to a historic location in the New River Valley while also providing opportunities to bolster service in Northern Virginia,

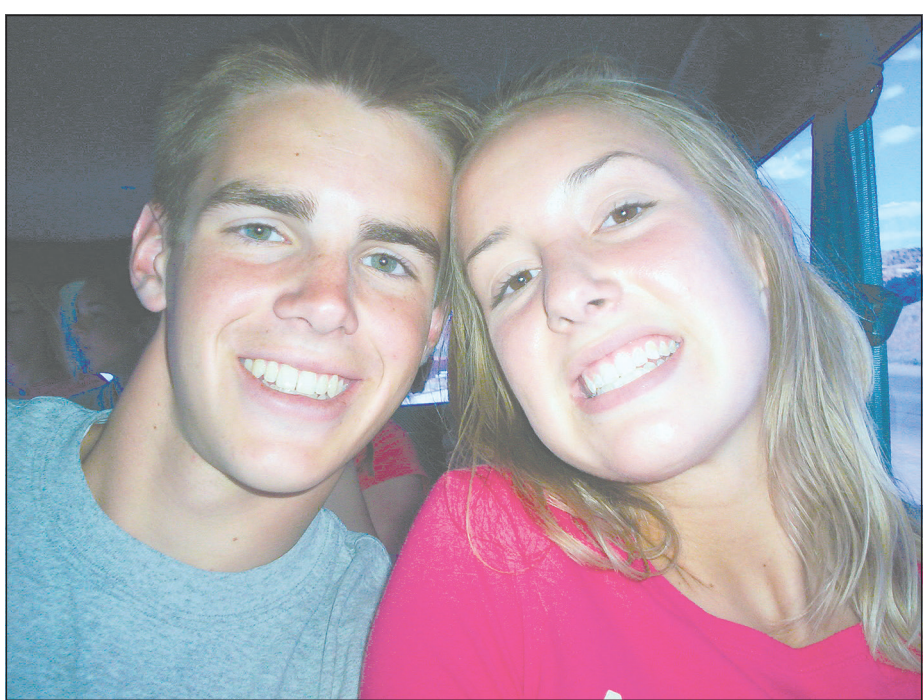
"We are excited to deliver these benefits as we continue to accelerate results not only in these two regions,

See RAIL PLAN, Page 6



RENDERING COURTESY OF VPRA

An artist rendering shows what a passenger station and its stop in Christiansburg could look like when passenger rail comes back to the area.



FILE PHOTO

David Metzler and Heidi Childs were found shot to death in the Jefferson National Forest Aug. 26, 2009.

Remembering Tech students' tragic murder at Caldwell Fields

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Heidi Childs and David Metzler were murdered in the Caldwell Fields parking lot of the Jefferson National Forest in Montgomery County, just two weeks into their sophomore year at Virginia Tech.

The year was 2009 and the date was Aug. 26, a Wednesday. The couple had driven from the campus in nearby Blacksburg just to talk and enjoy each other's company.

What happened next is a mystery. They parked their car and would be found shot to death the next morning by a man walking his dog.

This week marked the 15th anniversary of the event with no real movement in the investigation. Authorities have been scratching their heads for years, hoping someone with some information would come forward.

The fields are nestled on a section of Craig Creek Rd., approximately eight miles from Rt. 460, on Jefferson National Forest property, about 15 miles from the campus of Virginia Tech. Students from the school were known to and still do frequent the quiet, isolated area.

The description of the spot where investigators found their bodies was a small parking area, which marks Caldwell Fields. Several thousand have stopped and probably walked the same feet of ground, especially since the tragic accident.

Investigators have dug through hundreds of leads with no real suspect, thus leaving it sitting on the Virginia State Police's cold case website.

In an early 2012 press conference, local police said they were looking for the owners of several cars that had been spotted in the area. The group or owners in no way had been fingered as persons of interest, instead being someone that might have seen something that evening.

The vehicles were:
A green sedan, possibly a Ford Taurus or Dodge Intrepid, was seen stopping in front of residences on Craig Creek Road around 6 p.m.

A dark-blue Dodge Caravan was seen parked near the border of Montgomery and Craig counties, near a logging site, around 8:30 p.m.



PHOTO BY MARTY GORDON

Flowers lay at the site of the tragic murder of two college students at Caldwell Fields near Blacksburg.

A dark-colored van or minivan was parked at Caldwell Fields after dark.

A dark-colored Ford Crown Victoria of Chevrolet Caprice was seen driving on Craig Creek Road around 10 p.m.

A red or red and white Dodge extended-cab pickup with dual exhaust, oversized tires and tinted windows was seen driving up Lee Road at about 11 p.m., directly across from Caldwell Fields.

A gray or cream-colored early 2000s model Pontiac Bonneville, parked near Caldwell Fields around midnight

Local criminologist, retired Radford University professor and former police officer Tod Burke has become an expert in many cases like this one. He said from a law enforcement perspective, it's critical to bring the story back to the forefront. "Whenever there is a cold case, it is important to keep the case active in the public's mind," Burke said. "This is often done during anniversary dates but can and should be done as frequently as practical. Much depends on police resources."

See MURDER, Page 8

Residents address Blacksburg Town Council regarding homelessness, panhandling

Angelica Ramos
Contributing Writer

BLACKSBURG- During the citizens comments portion of the Aug. 27, 2024 Blacksburg Town Council meeting, two residents came forward with suggested ordinances for town council and suggested changes to ordinances.

Eric Bissey, owner of Nice Dreams in Blacksburg, proposed two ordinances to the town council. One regarded people sleeping or camping on town property.

"We have a homeless problem," Bissey

said, "especially downtown and it's not good for our businesses, it's not good for our community and it's not good for sanitation because these people have been pooping and peeing in our doorways and that's not cool."

Bissey also proposed an ordinance prohibiting panhandling in Blacksburg. Town Attorney Lawrence Spencer informed the council they cannot prohibit panhandling as panhandling is protected in the First Amendment. Due to this,

See HOMELESSNESS, Page 4

Christiansburg Town Council votes not to separate from regional tourism

Angelica Ramos
Contributing Writer

CHRISTIANSBURG- The Christiansburg Town Council discussed and voted on not separating from the Montgomery-Blacksburg-Christiansburg Regional Tourism Office just yet.

Tourism has been a topic in which the Christiansburg Town Council is very passionate about. Some members of the town council see being part of the regional tourism office as wasted money going towards changes that they

don't see. Others see these grievances as a chance to communicate more clearly what they expect and want to see in terms of tourism in Christiansburg.

The August 27, 2024 meeting agenda explained the Montgomery-Blacksburg-Christiansburg Regional Tourism Office was formed in 2011 and is funded by one percent of each town's lodging tax. The Regional Tourism Office became a stand-alone office in 2014 and allows the towns to keep 15% of the one percent

See TOURISM, Page 4

Auburn Middle School FBLA members excel at National Leadership Conference

Auburn Middle School's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) members achieved outstanding success at the FBLA National Leadership Conference, held over the summer in Orlando.

The AMS Video Game Design Challenge team, consisting of Caiden Richards, Eli Smith, and Noah Harris, secured an impressive fourth-place finish on the national stage.

The FBLA NLC is an esteemed annual event that brings together over 17,000 middle school, high school, and college students, along with their advisers, volunteers, and exhibitors, from across the nation. Participants have the opportunity to compete in various business-related events, attend

leadership workshops, and engage with representatives from colleges, universities and potential employers.

In addition to the Video Game Design Challenge team's success, AMS was also represented by the Marketing Mix Challenge team of Christian Hash and Alexander Rios, as well as the Critical Thinking Challenge team of Eva Gates and Lilliana Richmeier.

"Seeing this level of dedication, hard work, and grit from students of any age is so impressive," AMS FBLA Advisor Ms. Belcher said. "These were sixth graders and their first experience with FBLA competitions, and I can't wait to see what they are going to accomplish next."

Montgomery County Public Schools



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCPS

The AMS Video Game Design Challenge team, consisting of Caiden Richards, Eli Smith, and Noah Harris, secured an impressive fourth-place finish on the national stage.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday, Aug. 31 –
Sunday, Sept. 8:**

Blacksburg Aquatic Center closed

The Blacksburg Aquatic Center will be closed for annual maintenance. This closure will extend through Sunday, Sept. 8, and will reopen on Monday, Sept. 9.

Saturday, Aug. 31:

Blacksburg Farmers Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

Radford Farmer's Market

Every Saturday through October; 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion, 600 Unruh Dr. Visit weekly for an ever-changing supply of homemade goodies, crafts, plants, meats, produce, and more.

Sunday, Sept. 1:

Vintage Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The market is made up of a carefully chosen group of vendors selling a wide selection of quality vintage items, upcycled crafts, and occasional antiques. For more information, visit blacksburgfarmersmarket.com/vintage-market/.

Wednesday, Sept. 4:

Blacksburg Farmers Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 2 - 6 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

Market Square Jam

Blacksburg's Market Square Jam is an official Crooked Road affiliated venue that provides fun and entertainment on Wednesday evenings, June through September. The Jam takes place at Market Square Park from 7-9 p.m. For more information and a list of hosts, please visit blacksburg.gov/marketsquarejam.

Thursday, Sept. 5:

Route 460 Business Corridor Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Study public meeting

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (NRV MPO) will hold a second public input meeting for the Route 460 Business Corridor Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Study, 4 - 6 p.m. in the Joseph W. Meredith Training & Event Center at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Find out about the study's progress and the potential safety improvements along Route 460 Business in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County. Questions or not able to attend? Public meeting materials will be posted by Sept. 3 on the NRV MPO website and will be available for comment until Sept. 21 at 5 p.m. Citizens may submit written comments online, at the meeting, or via email to 460study@RKK.com.

Brush Mountain Park community feedback meeting

The Town of Blacksburg and the Brush Mountain Park and Trail project staff will host a community feedback meeting, 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the Town Annex, (the old Blacksburg Police Station, adjacent to the Blacksburg Library). The purpose of the meeting is to collect community feedback on the Brush Mountain Trail Park and Trail system, including the types of users, frequency of trail use, and user priorities, concerns, and questions. The feedback collected will help guide decision-making for the continued development of the trail network and ongoing management of the park. For more information on the Brush Mountain Trail System, please visit letstalkblacksburg.org.

Disinformation in the Digital Age

"Disinformation in the Digital Age," a free non-partisan public information program, will be held 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre, 135 College Ave. in Blacksburg. The program's focus will include social media, generative AI, fact-checking, finding reliable sources and how all of this may impact elections. The program will conclude with a Q&A, and with tips for responding to disinformation.

Maintaining brain health throughout aging - Everyday lifestyle choices that make a difference

At Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Hall, 2387 Warm Hearth Dr., Blacksburg, 2 p.m. Speaker: Ben Katz, an Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Science at Virginia Tech and a Faculty Affiliate of the Center for Gerontology. His research focuses on the neural underpinnings of executive function development throughout the lifespan, and how it might be modulated through experience and intervention, including lifestyle behaviors. Prior to his career in academia, he worked as a game designer in Austin and San Francisco.

American Legion meeting

The American Legion, Harvey Howe Carper Post 30 will meet at 6 p.m. at the VFW Post Home, 102 Watts St., Radford. For further information, please call 540-250-2283 or 540-239-9864.

Friday, Sept. 6:

The Glencoe Sessions

A FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge and Glencoe Mansion partnership with rising bluegrass star Addie Levy, held the first Friday of each month Sept. to Dec. in Glencoe Mansion, 6 - 7:30 p.m. Sept. 6: Jim Lloyd—Musical eclectic, singer, old-time banjo great, public radio host, music teacher, bluegrass rhythm guitarist, storyteller, banjo museum curator, barber of Rural Retreat and a towering figure in Appalachian music. Tickets \$15 per person per session, or \$50 for all four sessions. To purchase tickets please visit blueridgejamboree.com or blueridgefriends.org. There will be beverages available for purchase.

Monday, Sept. 9:

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 normally held 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, Sept. 10:

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.

Saturday, Sept. 14:

Fish Fry

Mount Tabor Ruritan Club will hold its September Fish Fry 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. Adults-\$12, children under 12-\$6, (under three free), carry-outs-\$12. This month, we welcome the Blue Ridge Vocal Connection to our music tent. Held rain or shine. This is the last fry in 2024. Call or text 540-449-6178 for further information. On Facebook at MtTaborRuritan.

Shred-A-Thon

The Town of Blacksburg will host a Shred-A-Thon 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center. This free event is a great opportunity to recycle unneeded household documents, records, etc. Please plan to bring documents in a box, tote, or paper bag and observe the limit of five containers per vehicle. Items that cannot be shredded include metal, three-ring binders, composition notebooks, hardback books, and non-paper materials. This is a drive-thru event only. Please remain in your vehicle during drop-off. For more information, contact the Town of Blacksburg Recycling office at 540.443.1212.

Thursday, Sept. 19:

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 (UDC) are also invited to attend. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

Ongoing:

Menagerie, exhibit at Fine Arts Center for the NRV
Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley presents Menagerie, celebrating the diverse talents of artists residing in the NRV. At the Fine Arts Center in Pulaski at 21 West Main St., Pulaski, through Oct. 5, 2024. Some artwork contains mature content and may not be suitable for children.

Bet on a fun and safe Labor Day holiday by hedging distractions and risks on the road

RICHMOND—The odds of having a fantastic Labor Day weekend are in your favor, though the chances of becoming a traffic safety statistic are something to keep in mind.

Virginia State Police stopped 4,475 speeders and 1,945 reckless drivers during 2023's four-day Labor Day weekend. State troopers also cited 491 seat belt violations and 150 child restraint violations during that time period.

According to Virginia Traffic Crash Facts, 673 injuries resulted from 1,216 crashes throughout 2023's holiday weekend.

Fourteen individuals died in 10 of those Virginia traffic crashes. Half of them involved motorcycles; seven motorcycle operators and passengers lost their lives.

The fatal crashes occurred in Virginia Beach, and Campbell, Hanover, James City, Montgomery, Nelson, Pittsylvania, Rockbridge, Scott and Wythe counties. Last year's 14 fatalities were up from 12 in 2022, and 10 in 2021.

Transportation officials, law enforcement and outreach organizations like Drive Smart Virginia work to push the

number of crashes and fatalities toward zero. But it can't be done without motorists who are free of distraction or impairment, said David Tenenbaum, senior actuarial manager at Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co., who also serves as DSV treasurer.

"No matter where you are in Virginia, or how you plan to celebrate this long holiday weekend, we all share the responsibility of roadway safety," he said. "Part of that responsibility is knowing traffic safety laws recently adopted in Virginia."

In 2021, it became illegal in Virginia to hold a mobile device while driving. A "Do Not Disturb" app can block incoming correspondence while the vehicle is in motion. Otherwise, use your device's hands-free options carefully.

Virginia's Move Over law for emergency vehicles was amended in 2023. Drivers must now change lanes when possible or slow down for any vehicle on the roadside flashing amber or hazard lights, triangles or flares. This includes utility, tow and roadside assistance trucks.

The American Red Cross

offers tips for safe Labor Day travel:

Be well rested and alert, use your seatbelts, and observe speed limits. Clean your headlights, and turn them on as

dusk approaches or in inclement weather.

Don't drink and drive. Have a designated driver available.

Give your full attention to the road.

Use caution in work zones (Virginia's Move Over law does not apply in highway work zones).

Don't follow other vehicles too closely.

Farm Bureau Virginia

Gas prices cool off ahead of Labor Day

GasBuddy, the leading fuel savings platform providing North American drivers with the most ways to save money on gas, today released its annual Labor Day travel forecast, predicting the average price of gas will continue its recent downward trend, falling to \$3.27 per gallon on Labor Day, the lowest Labor Day price since 2021. At \$3.27 per gallon, this Labor Day's national average would be 50 cents per gallon, or 13% below last year's \$3.77 tally, saving Americans a combined \$750 million over the Friday-through-Monday travel period.

Since peaking at \$3.69 per gallon in mid-April, prices at the pump have eased, with lower demand helping to bring the price of gas down. Some states are seeing significantly lower Labor Day prices this year compared to last year. For instance, average gas prices on the West Coast stand over 65 cents lower than a year ago, with Oregon's average down 90 cents per gallon, while Washington is down 87 cents and Alaska 84 cents. And, outside of the West Coast, all 50 states will see lower gas prices this Labor Day weekend than a year ago. According to GasBuddy's summer travel survey in May, Labor Day was the least popular summer holiday to hit the road, with just

over a third of respondents planning to road trip to bid farewell to summer.

"It's been a great summer for motorists to hit the road with gas prices generally lower than last year," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "But heading into Labor Day, the year-on-year gap has grown substantially thanks to few refinery outages or heatwaves impacting refineries this month. Hurricane season has also been quiet so far. With no threats to major gasoline and diesel producing refineries, it's looking more and more likely that we may avoid a late summer price spike. While many Americans may wish summer could last forever, the good news is we're seeing perhaps the best opportunity in years for the national average to fall below \$3 per gallon. As we get closer to Thanksgiving, we should see tens of thousands of stations ultimately fall back below that level, all thanks to falling seasonal demand and cheaper winter gasoline, which is right around the corner."

Gas stations in most states will start transitioning to winter blend gas Sept. 16, which will likely help accelerate the decline in gas prices.

Gas Buddy

MCPS creates new leadership position

Willie Howard III will join Montgomery County Public Schools as the Director of Student Support and Intervention.

Howard brings more than 20 years of experience in education to MCPS. He currently serves as the Director of Equity and Alternative Programs for Nash County Public School in North Carolina.

Howard III has previous experience as a principal, assistant principal and a teacher. Alongside his current role in Nash County, he is a Leadership Coach for the Principal Preparation for Excellence and Equity in Rural Schools (PPEERS) through the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"I'm very excited to join MCPS as the Director of Student Support and Intervention," Howard III said. "I'm looking forward to partnering with staff and the community to build a supportive environment where

every student feels seen, heard, and empowered to succeed."

"We want to surround our students and staff with high-quality leaders and we believe someone with Mr. Howard's skill set will be a great asset to MCPS," Superintendent Dr. Bernard F. Bragen, Jr. said. "We look forward to seeing the impact Mr. Howard will have on our students."

Howard III has a bachelor's degree in Exceptional Student Education and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He has also completed doctorate level coursework in Organizational Educational Leadership. Howard III is expected to begin his new position with MCPS Sept. 13.

Montgomery County Public Schools



Willie Howard III

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCPS

Board of Supervisors discusses tax relief for the elderly, disabled

Angelica Ramos

Contributing Writer

MONTGOMERY COUNTY- Mark McGruder, Montgomery County's budget director, addressed the Board of Supervisors regarding the tax relief program for Montgomery County's elderly and disabled population at the BOS Monday, Aug. 26 meeting.

Currently, as McGruder's presentation stated, the tax relief program for the elderly and disabled for Montgomery County begins at age 65 or older or if someone is permanently or totally disabled. Veterans who are permanently disabled 100% due to service receive 100% exemption from taxation regardless of income or net worth limitations.

Currently, the tax relief program takes into account social security increases,

annual income and net worth limitations to decide at which rate one is eligible for tax relief. Montgomery County looks at the surrounding counties in terms of their tax relief and compares to see if there are things Montgomery County can adjust that work for other municipalities.

The purpose of McGruder's

presentation, he explained, was to show and explain the numbers and what they look for in terms of budgeting and calculating tax relief, then the Board of Supervisors are open to discuss any changes they may want to make. After consensus from the Board of Supervisors is gained, the changes will be sent to the

towns and the towns would then consider those changes. After that, an ordinance would be drafted, then offered for review in public hearing, then it would be voted on. McGruder's proposed timeline for this is for the vote to occur during the Board of Supervisors meeting Oct. 15, 2024.

Va. residents can apply for free beekeeping equipment

RICHMOND—What's all the buzz? The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is accepting applications for the 2024 Beehive Distribution Program.

The program provides free equipment for assembling new beehives to Virginia residents ages 18 and up. Recipients will be selected at random from qualifying applications submitted by Sept. 6.

Businesses, nonprofit organizations and government agencies are not eligible to receive beehive units. Multiple individuals in

a household with the same mailing address may apply to the program.

Recipients of beehive units must assemble the equipment and occupy it with a colony of honeybees within one year of receiving the equipment.

To learn more and apply, visit vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-beehive-distribution-program.shtml.

Virginia Farm Bureau

Legals - Montgomery County

ABC NOTICE
SHREE MAHAVEER, LLC trading as D&D SPEEDY MART, 1225 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Wine and Beer, OFF Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

CHIRAG PATEL, OWNER.

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 15.2-2204 & 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended, the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors hereby gives notice of a public hearing to be held on September 9, 2024 at 7:15 p.m. in the County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Christiansburg, Virginia, in order to hear citizen comments regarding the Board of Supervisor's intention to act on the following Special Use Permit request:

A request by Foster Ridpath for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a restaurant (gross floor area of 2,000 sq ft or less). The property is owned by Kimberly D. Ridpath and is located at 3035 Riner Road. The property is further identified as Tax Map 106-11-3 (Parcel ID: 031860), 1.904 acres, zoned Agricultural (A-1) in the Riner Magisterial District. The property currently lies in an area designated as Rural in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Copies of the proposed plans, applications, ordinances or amendments

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may be examined at the Department of Planning and GIS Services, County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Suite 2A, Christiansburg, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or at <http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/pendingapplications>.

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

The Town of Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, September 16, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

A. Rezoning request by Robert P. Fralin, Registered Agent for F & B Land, L.P., Applicant and Property Owner, to rezone property located on the west side of Moose Dr. NW at the College St. NW, intersection, identified as Tax Parcel 556-((A))-9; (Parcel ID 008095), and consisting of approximately 16.330 acres, from Agricultural District (A) and General Business District (B-3) to Multi-Family Residential District (R-3). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

B. Conditional Use Permit request by Robert P. Fralin, Registered Agent for F & B Land, L.P., Applicant and Property Owner, to allow a planned housing development for a multi-family project of a maximum of 162 apartments in the proposed Multi-Family Residential District (R-3) zoning district on property located on the west side of Moose Dr. NW at the College St. NW, intersection, identified as Tax Parcel 556-((A))-9; (Parcel ID 008095), and

Legals - Montgomery County

consisting of approximately 16.330 acres. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

C. Rezoning request by Roger Woody, Registered Agent for RWW 34 LLC, Applicant and Property Owner, to rezone property located on the southeast corner of Sherwood Dr. NE and Maid Marian Ln., and adjacent to the US Rt. 460 Bypass, identified as approximately 2.31 acres of a 10.227 acre parcel; identified as Tax Parcel 499-((A))-12; (Parcel ID 018085), from Single-Family Residential District (R-1) to General Business District (B-3). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

D. Conditional Use Permit request by Roger Woody, Registered Agent for RWW 34 LLC, Applicant and Property Owner, to allow a 90-unit Townhome Residential Development in the General Business District (B-3) zoning district on property located on the southeast corner of Sherwood Dr. NE and Maid Marian Ln., and adjacent to the US Rt. 460 Bypass, identified as Tax Parcel 499-((A))-12; (Parcel ID 018085), and consisting of approximately 10.227 acres. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

A copy of the applications, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073, during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Retta Jackson, Planning Director, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1120 or by email at rjackson@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.



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LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

The Town of Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

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24073, during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Retta Jackson, Planning Director, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1120 or by email at rjackson@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia

that the Board of Supervisors hereby advertises a proposed Ordinance Amending Chapter 3, Animals of the Code of the County of Montgomery, Virginia by amending Section 3-34 by adding any dog that served as a police or law enforcement dog or as a military working dog to dogs no license tax shall be levied on to be considered by the Board of Supervisors at their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, September 9, 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.

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.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS _ Angela M. Hill County Administrator

Legals - Montgomery County

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia

that the Board hereby schedules a public hearing on Monday, September 9, 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, to hear citizen comments on the proposed Ordinance Amending the Assessment Fee for the Law Library as part of costs in Civil Actions from Two Dollars (\$2.00) to Four Dollars (\$4.00) pursuant to Section 42.1-70 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended.

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.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Angela M. Hill County Administrator

Public Notice The Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 10, 2024

at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Room, Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street to receive comments on a resolution for the disposition of a Town-owned property located on the western side of Silverlake Road, N.W. (0.05-acre Tax Parcel 525 – ((2)) – 63; Parcel ID 080323). The property is described as follows in the deed:

"Beginning at a stake in the west line of Silver Lake Road, N 18° W 50.0 feet to a stake; thence two new lines with the land of Floyd S. Childress, Jr., S 71° W 50.0 feet to a stake, and S 18° E 50.0 feet to a stake in a line of S.E. Hancock's

Legals - Montgomery County

land; thence with the line of Hancock's land, N 71° E. 50.0 feet to the BEGINNING, containing an area of 0.05 acre, according to a plat dated April 11, 1968, made by S.D. Richardson, a copy of which plat is filed herewith and made a part of this deed."

The Town is hereby making the property available for purchase through sealed bids. Sealed bids should be submitted to the Town at the address below by September 30, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., at which time they will be opened in the Town Manager's office. The Town will accept the highest bid for the property and reserves the right to restrict construction of a single-family residence on the property unless it is combined with another property and made compliant with applicable zoning and subdivision regulations by deed restrictions. The Town also reserves the right to retain a portion on the eastern side of the property for street widening and the right to retain public utility and drainage easements on the remaining property through the transfer deed, which will be prepared by the Town Attorney. Town Council reserves the right to reject any and all bids and cancel the sale at any time.

A copy of the proposed resolution and information on the preceding item 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. For more information, contact Randy Wingfield by phone at (540) 382-6120 ext. 1119 or by email at wingfield@christiansburg.org.

Randy Wingfield Town Manager

New River Valley Recovery Ecosystem earns Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions award

The Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) has announced the winner of the Robert M. deVoursney Best Practices Award for 2024 as the New River Valley Recovery Ecosystem.

The award was presented at a recent meeting of the New River Valley Regional Commission. The Best Practices Award recognizes organizations that have initiated innovative regional activities which have contributed significantly to the effectiveness of a region.

The New River Valley Recovery Ecosystem (NRVRE) is a five-year collaborative, regional opioid abatement program bringing together five jurisdictions for project delivery. It has received just under \$4.4 million in funding through two years from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA), along with more than \$1.5 million in local matching funds to date. In addition to the local governments that are involved, other regional organizations and school divisions are partners in



The Recovery Ecosystem team (left to right): Walter Midkiff, Kinsey Weaver, Anna Champion, Julie Fox and Holly Lesko.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VAPDC

the project.

A unique aspect of the NRVRE is the oversight and integration across prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services. The Awards

Committee was impressed that the recovery ecosystem intentionally coordinates these elements to develop structural changes that support wellness across the region. The project

was successful this past year in launching both a region-wide, anti-stigma campaign reaching over 33,000 individuals and families through various forms of outreach, as well as

a collaborative mobile harm reduction outreach program through the New River Health District.

Planning District Commissions were enabled by state legislation in 1968, and most were established the following year. There are 21 PDCs and Regional Commissions in Virginia made up of elected officials and citizens appointed by local governments. The purpose of Planning District Commissions is to encourage and facilitate regional solutions to problems of area-wide significance. This is done by promoting the efficient development of the physical, social, and economic policies of all districts by assisting local governments to plan for the future. The PDCs of Virginia joined together to create the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions in 1987 to share best practices and further regionalism across the Commonwealth.

Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions

Homelessness

from page 1

the council cannot have ordinances against panhandling as it infringes on the panhandler's constitutional rights. However, Spencer said Roanoke has an ordinance against sleeping in or on public property and Blacksburg may be able to implement something like that, but they would have to look into it. Mayor Leslie Hager-Smith said that the council will take this issue seriously and thanked Bissey for stating his concerns.

The second gentleman that addressed the council was Zachary Weiss, who proposed that the town double the time

it takes them to mow their grass as it will produce fewer emissions, allow native species and pollinators to thrive and provide more time for litter pickup. Weiss also explained that adjusting ordinances to say that weeds can be replaced with "native ground cover", meaning native species like clover, can not only help lower mowing frequency, support local wildlife species but also reintroduce many native species plants back into the ecosystem. Weiss said his proposed changes align with the town's sustainability goals.

Don't fall for jury scams, circuit court clerk warns

Scammers are calling members of the community pretending to be court officials or the sheriff's office, says Montgomery County Clerk of Circuit Court Tiffany Couch.

"If you receive a call saying you missed jury duty and owe a fine, please contact the sheriff's office immediately," said Couch in a written statement. "Additionally, the circuit court clerk's office oversees collecting fines/costs for the court and will not call you asking for payment. When this happens keep yourself and your loved ones safe and do not pay these scammers anything."

Couch recommends taking the

following actions:

1. Contact the sheriff's office directly at 540-382-6915 or go in person.
2. Contact the circuit court clerk's office directly at 540-382-5760 ext. 7 option 6 or go in person.
3. Always go inside the sheriff's office or the courthouse and directly speak to someone. Scammers will meet you outside of the building pretending to be an employee.

"Together we can help our community from falling for these frequent scams," said Couch. "Please share this information with your loved ones."

Staff report

News Messenger

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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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Tourism

from page 1

lodging tax revenue. Christiansburg has many hotels, restaurants and much of the chain-store shopping in Montgomery County, so tourists tend to lodge and shop in Christiansburg. However, some Christiansburg residents and government officials have said they don't see the effects of tourism they'd like to see.

During the Aug. 27, 2024 meeting, Council Member Johanna Hicks made a motion to withdraw from the regional tourism office and potentially reallocate those funds elsewhere for Christiansburg. The motion was seconded and town council began discussing what the impact of withdrawing would change in the long run.

"I started two and a half years ago," Council Member Tim Wilson said, "talking about how I didn't think we were

getting what we deserved out of tourism and was a catalyst for pushing this ball forward. I think we owe tourism, at this point as a council, is what we do want from tourism regardless of who we're giving the money to."

Council Member Tim Wilson and Council Member Tanya Hockett, during discussion, both said that they think as a town council, may be better to sit down and discuss what they want, strategically present that to tourism and try to better manage tourism for Christiansburg.

Council voted against the motion to withdraw with the intention to continue to discuss the issue in the next work session and spell out what successful tourism would look like for Christiansburg.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Sustained dull pain
5. Hoover Dam Lake
9. An earnest appeal
10. Tree trunk used in sport
11. Close by
12. Indicated horsepower (abbr.)
13. Delaware
14. Makes in salary
16. Fringe-toed lizard
17. Two-year-old sheep
18. = to 198 liters in Egypt
19. Barnum & Bailey
21. Destruction
25. Shock treatment
26. A priest's linen vestment
27. Consumed
28. Etymology (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

1. Temporary cessation of breathing
2. Not cloudy
3. Listened
4. Acquired by effort
5. Chart of the Earth's surface
6. Eastbound
7. Yellow-fever mosquitos
8. Small amount of residue
10. With great caution, warily
12. One who copies behavior
15. One point E of due S
16. Fiddler crabs
17. A large cask
20. Adult male swan
22. Of the whale & dolphin

CLUES ACROSS

29. Doctors' group
30. Tsetung or Zedong
31. Subroutines
35. Maintenance
36. Sacred shrine in Mecca
40. Mutual savings bank
41. The cry made by sheep
42. Fell back from flooding
43. Farm state
44. British Isle in the Irish Sea
45. Georgian monetary unit
46. Turkish rulers
48. Utter sounds
49. Mains
50. Fashionable water

CLUES DOWN

23. Frozen water
24. Metric ton
27. Marine or parasitic protozoas
28. Cologne
29. Built by Noah
30. Indicates physician
31. Parts per billion (abbr.)
32. Environmental Protection Agency
33. Supplement with difficulty
34. Dark fur coat animals
35. Utilization
37. Unit = to 10 amperes
38. Stalin's police chief
39. Almost horizontal mine entrances
40. Missing soldiers
44. More (Spanish)
47. Express surprise

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OBITUARIES

Trenor, Diane Bishop

Diane Bishop Trenor, 76, of Newport, Va., went to be with her Lord and Savior Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2024.

Diane leaves behind her loving husband of 55 years, Ty Trenor; two daughters, Michelle Long and Tina Trenor; three grandchildren, Colton Long, Billy Long, and Josie Long; her sister Maybelle McNeil (Winston); and countless other close family and friends.

Diane was born Jan. 15, 1948. She loved Jesus, her family, and so many others like they were family. She was like a second mom to some and known as Maw Maw to so many others over the



years that she dearly loved as if they were her own.

She was preceded in death by her son-in-law, Brian Long (Michelle), and her parents Edsel and Frances Bishop.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2024, at 2 p.m., with visitation 1-2 p.m. at McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg and officiated by Pastor Craig Reed. Burial will follow at Sunset Cemetery in Christiansburg.

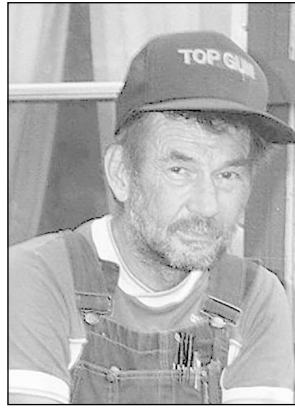
Special thanks to Amedisys Hospice for their compassionate care and assistance during the past couple of weeks.

Phillips, Sr., Jay Thomas

Jay Thomas Phillips, Sr., 93, of Dublin, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2024, at the VA Hospital in Salem.

He was a U.S. Army veteran and spent his lifetime farming. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Mary Hall Phillips; parents, Jehu Thomas and Maude Long Phillips; four brothers, Burman, Woodrow, Mark and Dewey Phillips; and three sisters, Beulah Bird, Ella Mae Long and Alice Graves.

Survivors include his children, Eva P. Collins (Michael), Harold Dean Phillips (Rita), Jay Thomas Phillips, Jr., Charlotte P. Newby (Clifford), Chris



Phillips (Melissa), Randall Keith Phillips (Karen), and Teresa P. Brown (Kenneth); 16 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, one great great granddaughter; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends Thursday, Aug. 29, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services and interment with full military honors followed in the Phillips Family Cemetery in Snowville.

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

News Messenger
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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: fbradford.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.

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

God Repays

Read Ezekiel 24:1 through 27:36

Why do people sometimes seem to get away with sinning? Does God look away when these evils come against His children?

“Your wealth, merchandise and wares, your mariners, sailors and shipwrights, your merchants and all your soldiers, and everyone else on board will sink into the heart of the sea on the day of your shipwreck” (Ezekiel 27:27).

When Israel turned away from the Lord, the people became prey for the enemies of God. The nations that attacked Israel assumed God would not judge their sin, but they were mistaken. God watched and recorded every evil deed. A day of accounting was decreed.

In time, Israel's enemies lost wealth, status, and strength. Some even disappeared from the world altogether.

When trials come, Christians should not presume that God is unconcerned with their struggles. He sometimes uses difficulties to discipline and train them for righteousness. As His people wait upon Him, their faith grows.

One day you will be lifted above your trials, and retribution will be given to those who would plunder you.

Prayer Suggestion: Lord, I trust You even now.

Quicklook: Ezekiel 27:26-31

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

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, and 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!"

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 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), 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@stmhc.us; Website www.stmichael-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 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
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. Sunday Worship at 11 AM with Nursery available. Sunday School at 10 AM with Adult and Children classes. Adult Midweek Refuel and Youth Group on Wednesdays from 6-7:30 PM. Mission: Seeking to exalt Christ by sacrificially caring for one another and our community. Pastor: Colby Callaway. Office Phone: 540-250-3864. Website: cwc4u.org. We Also Livestream on Youtube Every Sunday at 11AM!"

OBITUARIES

Frith, Dennis Lee

Dennis Lee Frith, 71, of Radford, died Sunday, Aug. 25, 2024.

He was born in Montgomery County Jan. 30, 1953, to the late James Robert and Ernestine Burton Frith. He is also preceded in death by his brother, Avis Frith.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Jamie and Kelly Reynolds, and brother and sister-in-law, Mark and Pam Frith.

There will be no funeral services conducted at this time.

Baker, Sharon Duncan

Sharon Duncan Baker, 62, of Christiansburg, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Aug. 25, 2024.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Julia Duncan, of Radford. Left behind to cherish her memory are her loving sister Vicki Duncan Pinard; her loving brother Todd

(Terri) Duncan; nieces Angie (Thomas) Graybeal, Natalie (John) Collins and Chelsea Duncan; four great-nephews and three great-nieces. A special thanks to best friend Linda Alumbaugh for her wonderful and steadfast friendship as she was a daily blessing to Sharon. Also, Vickie Hanks who has always supported and



loved Sharon as much as we did. She will be missed by so many.

Even though Sharon had to fight harder than anyone should, her faith never wavered, and her spirit remained grateful and appreciative. She will be immensely missed by her family and friends; however, we will rejoice that she is now whole again. She suffers no more,

as now she walks with her Savior. The family would like to thank everyone for all their prayers and support.

Funeral services will be conducted Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2024, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Neal Turner officiating. The family will receive visitors 5 – 6 p.m., and service will follow at 6 p.m.

ASA funds Virginia Tech research to investigate space weather

Rain delays at a sporting event. Tornado damage to a rural town in the Great Plains. Icy roads during a morning work commute in the winter months. We've all experienced the impacts of inclement weather, but did you know weather conditions high in our atmosphere also can affect our everyday lives?

"While space weather can spark the beautiful auroras across our skies, it also has the potential to cause disruptions for us here on Earth and can be dangerous for our spacecraft and astronauts in space," said Nicola Fox, associate administrator of the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Space weather can interfere with satellite communications, GPS signals, and even our electrical grid, but there has been limited research about these complex factors in the upper atmosphere and how these factors are impacted by effects from the Earth's surface.

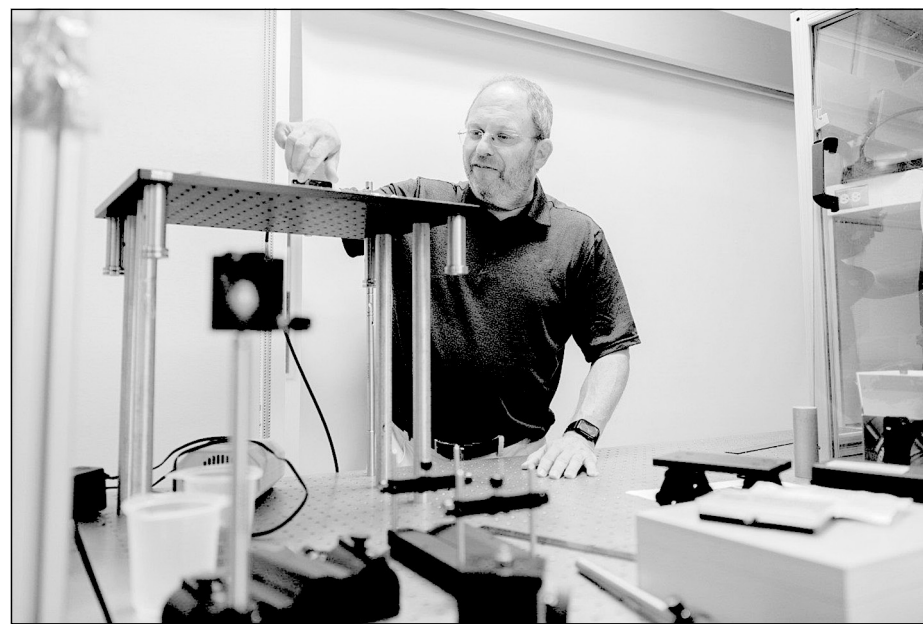
Virginia Tech researchers in the College of Engineering, along with several partners and collaborators, are seeking the answers to these relatively unexplored impacts that loom just beyond the clouds. With the help of a \$2 million grant from NASA, they hope to use next generation instrumentation to shed light on the upper atmosphere and how its motions are driven by both the sun and weather at the Earth's surface.

"I could not be more proud of the team and the robust, comprehensive plan we put together to answer NASA's DYNAMIC objectives," said principal investigator Scott Bailey, director of Space@VT and professor in the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. "I'm grateful for all of our partners, everyone who participated in the proposals, and Virginia Tech for supporting the effort at all levels of the administration."

Step one: Three proposals. Nine months. \$2 million.

This is the first of a two-step selection process to investigate the complex region of space that surrounds our planet and how it's influenced by Earth's dynamic atmosphere. Virginia Tech is one of just three academic institutions selected, and future funding of \$250 million — in 2023 dollars — will be up for grabs after the nine-month concept study is completed.

"This project will address very important gaps in our knowledge with a data set that will revolutionize our understanding of the upper atmosphere and how different regions of the atmosphere affect each other," Bailey



Scott Bailey with optics equipment.

PHOTO BY BEN MURPHY FOR VIRGINIA TECH

said.

Similar to the ocean, the upper atmosphere has tides that vary from day to day, Bailey said, but we've not been able to observe those variations because of limits in satellite technology.

"Our novel design and use of multiple satellites will allow us to gather more data and see the changes in tides and other weather phenomena every three hours or so in comparison with previous instruments that could collect data only once every 24 hours," Bailey said.

To make this project a success requires expertise in many areas: engineering and building the instruments, operating the instruments and the spacecraft, analyzing the data, knowledge of the dynamics and chemistry of the upper atmosphere, and expertise in running numerical simulations of the near-Earth space environment.

"A mission of this scope requires expertise and resources from different institutions," said Scott England, associate professor in the Kevin T. Crofton Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering and principal investigator on one of the three instruments. "The best people to put together the key elements of the spacecraft may be found at a university, a national lab, or a private company. We've done our best to find the individuals at the forefront of each of those disciplines and bring them together. For a project of this magnitude it takes many people working all across the U.S. to provide the breadth of expertise necessary to succeed."

Researchers seek to answer these questions:

How do upper atmospheric tides vary

from day to day?

How are the lower and upper atmosphere coupled as part of an interconnected system?

How do influences from the sun compete with influences from meteorology near the Earth's surface?

Which impacts on GPS, satellites in low Earth orbit, and global communications can occur from various space weather phenomena?

Step two: A DYNAMIC mission

The DYNAMIC mission is designed to make measurements within Earth's upper atmosphere between about 50 to 125 miles, or 80 to 200 kilometers, in altitude. After a nine-month initial phase, NASA will select one proposed satellite technology for mission implementation. If chosen for flight, Virginia Tech's proposed plan includes two satellites with state-of-the-art instrumentation, priced at \$250 million in 2023 dollars for a duration of 10 years.

"We designed a mission that uses two satellites instead of one, and a new technique that can collect data during day and night conditions," Bailey said. "Because the instrument looks out both sides of the two satellites, it can collect two to four times as much information as our competitors."

With multiple spacecraft, DYNAMIC's simultaneous observations from different locations will give scientists a more complete picture of how waves propagate upward through this part of the atmosphere, expanding our understanding of how space weather influences our home planet.

"The DYNAMIC mission represents a groundbreaking effort to understand the

intricate interplay between Earth's lower atmosphere and space weather. Our concept will deliver transformational observations, throughout the mesosphere and lower thermosphere, that will forever change the way we think about weather in the upper atmosphere," said Lynn Harvey, mission deputy principal investigator and research scientist at the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Grant at a glance

Agency: NASA
Funding: \$2 million
Duration: Nine months
Principal investigator: Scott Bailey
Virginia Tech co-investigators: Scott England with Brentha Thurairajah and Justin Carstens, both of Space@VT and the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Key partners

Virginia Tech's College of Engineering
University of Colorado, Boulder
Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas

Space Dynamics Laboratory in Logan, Utah

Global Atmospheric Technologies and Sciences in Newport News, Virginia
Computational Physics, Inc. in Boulder, Colorado

Other universities and government labs

The goals

Beyond understanding the intricacies of Earth's upper atmosphere better, this technology could also help with increasing air traffic concerns from the number of satellites being launched. People have sent about 16,000 objects into space in the last 65 years. Since 2020, we have added almost 7,000 satellites with 2,600 of those launched in 2023 alone. Policies have not been created quickly enough to safely accommodate the exponential growth.

"When Elon Musk recently launched hundreds of satellites in a short time, there was a one percent chance that it would hit another satellite already in orbit, one in which Virginia Tech has a leadership role. That sounds small, but when you consider the cost of losing a satellite, this is a significant risk," Bailey said. "As times go forward, this risk will only increase. Space regulation hasn't been able to move fast enough to keep up with the influx of technology. Our mission could help address this situation and allow for better prediction of satellite orbits and better quantification of the risks."

Chelsea Seeber for Virginia Tech

Rail Plan

from page 1

but across the entire Commonwealth," he said.

Just last month, state officials said an original plan to take passenger rail down a secondary track near Christiansburg would push cost to nearly \$1 billion, mainly thanks to the need to renovate a train tunnel at the Merrimac section of the county.

The state group and local officials then moved quickly to shift the project back to the M-Line, which comes through the center of the town and would use a former train station that is currently being used as a NS maintenance facility.

The cost to renovate the former structure is not known, but under the agreement announced this week, NS would absorb much of the budget. The state would have to move quickly to reach a 2026 completion date with rail work from Roanoke to Christiansburg.

"We look forward to finalizing this agreement, which will make passenger rail a viable option for even more Virginians," said DJ Stadtler, Executive Director of VPRA. "We appreciate Norfolk Southern's partnership and look forward to working with them to expand passenger rail in the Commonwealth."

"At Norfolk Southern, we know the power rail has to connect communities and grow economies, and we're proud to play a role in helping VPRA in its mission to support and expand the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth," said Norfolk Southern Chief Strategy Officer Mike McClellan. "We want to

thank VPRA for its partnership and dedication in reaching an agreement that has the potential to benefit generations of Virginians with reliable, convenient rail travel, while also balancing the needs of the freight rail network the economy relies on."

VPRA first announced it was in discussions with Norfolk Southern back in June. Responding to public input which supported service to Christiansburg along the N-Line and seeking a more cost-effective and timelier alternative for that service, VPRA reached out to Norfolk Southern who agreed to re-open negotiations. Over the past three months, the two have worked together to develop plans which will allow passenger rail service to return to Christiansburg via Norfolk Southern's Cambria Yard, which previously served the community from 1904 to 1979.

The release said the inclusion of the Manassas Line in the deal will give VPRA the flexibility to work with VRE to expand service along their Manassas Line. The ability to add evening and weekend service is something the commuter agency has recently sought as commuting trends have changed, and the need for service beyond traditional commuting times has increased. The combination of the 2024 VPRA-Norfolk Southern agreement with the 2021 VPRA-CSX agreement means that when the six Phase 1 Transforming Rail in Virginia Construction Projects are complete additional VRE roundtrips could start not only on the Fredericksburg Line but on the Manassas Line as well.

The question has always been whether NS could co-exist with a passenger trip to Christiansburg. In other parts of the state, they showed that could happen.

Currently, VRE offers eight roundtrips on the Manassas Line with stops at Broad Run, Manassas, Manassas Park, Burke Centre, Rolling Road, Backlick Road, Alexandria, Crystal City, L'Enfant, and Washington Union Station.

Following the Board of Directors vote, VPRA leadership will move forward to finalize the agreement with Norfolk Southern and close the deal in early September.

This move also came as the state said its passenger rail service, Amtrak Virginia, saw another month of record ridership in April. With a total of 118,474 passengers traveling, April 2024 beat April 2023 by 9.8%. All four Amtrak Virginia corridors saw ridership increases resulting in the highest ridership for the month of April since the Commonwealth started state-supported service in 2009. The Norfolk corridor again carried the most passengers with 44,616 traveling.

This includes a 4.4 percent increase for the Roanoke destination by Amtrak.

The additional path to Christiansburg could also allow, according to the VRE, extra stops in the Roanoke Valley.

The overall plan could have the first passenger stop coming to the NRV by 2027. In addition to the passenger station, the rail authority and local officials would have to construct a parking area and the overall passenger platforms.

"I am pleased that the VPRA Board

of Directors voted to advance an agreement with Norfolk Southern that will ensure passenger rail service arrives in Christiansburg as soon as 2027," Delegate Chris Obenshain said in a written statement. "When we recognized that the timeframe and cost of the previous plan was not feasible, legislators from across Southwest Virginia reached out to the administration to try and work together to find a better solution. I thank the Governor, the Secretary of Transportation, and the VPRA who took the time to listen to input from those in the New River Valley and beyond regarding the importance and urgency of bringing passenger rail service to our communities."

"I also appreciate the work of the New River Valley Passenger Rail Initiative for their insight and advocacy," he continued. "I eagerly look forward to future train trips with my own family originating right here in Montgomery County. I am grateful for all the hard work of my colleagues in the legislature and community leaders to ensure the future viability of rail service to the NRV and further into Southwest Virginia."

Senator Tim Kaine also expressed his support of the project.

"Great news," Kaine posted on X. "Starting in 2027, residents of the New River Valley will have access to several Amtrak passenger rail service trains every day. I've long supported expanding passenger rail and secured funding to make projects like this possible, bolstering Virginia's economy."

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Sideline VIP availability coming to Blacksburg

By Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Virginia Tech is taking the idea of standing on the sidelines to a whole new level with the announcement for two premium areas at Lane Stadium.

The Sandman Suite and the exclusive Lane Lounge. These premium areas are designed to offer Hokie fans an unparalleled game-day experience, combining comfort, exclusivity, and top-tier amenities.

The university says the new Sandman Suite within Lane Stadium will provide a one-of-a-kind viewing experience not only for the game but for the best entrance in sports. Located at field level, the suite will offer a unique perspective of the game and provide complimentary food and beverage.

Seating 16 fans in the northeast corner of Worsham Field, the Sandman Suite will be initially available to the top three Hokie Scholarship Fund (HSF) membership levels and the top 100 HSF donors. The



Lane stadium photo

FILE PHOTO

suite will be sold in its entirety on a per game basis, and pricing will vary based on the game and demand, offering flexibility to suit different needs and preferences. Game tickets are included in each suite purchase. The Lane Lounge will an

exclusive and intimate setting for our valued supporters. Located between sections 110 and 112 on the concourse level of Lane, this area features complimentary food options, protection from the elements, and a place to relax on gameday.

Available initially to the top three HSF membership levels and the top 500 HSF donors, Lane Lounge access is priced at \$1,000 per season. Passes will be limited to 4 per account and a separate game ticket will be required.

“We are thrilled to introduce these premium areas at Lane Stadium, providing our loyal supporters with an enhanced game-day experience,” said Brad Wurthman, Executive Associate Athletic Director for External Affairs and Advancement. “These additions reflect our commitment to offering the best for Hokie Nation and ensuring that every game is a special event, while also creating new revenue streams in an effort to provide our student-athletes with an unparalleled collegiate experience.”

Spaces in these premium areas are limited and will be filled based on Hokie Scholarship Fund priority rank as of March 1, 2024. Donors in the above-mentioned groups will receive direct communication regarding their interest in these areas. Should any spots remain following the initial on sale, access to these areas will be made available to remaining Hokie Scholarship Fund donors based on priority rank.

Former Hokie joins RU softball staff

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Radford University softball program continues to add to its new coaching staff with the hiring of a former Virginia Tech player.

Cameron Fagan has joined the program as an assistant for the upcoming season. After an incredible four-year career as a student-athlete with Virginia Tech, Fagan enters the collegiate coaching scene with the Highlanders. During her tenure with the Hokies, Fagan earned awards such as NFCA Mid-Atlantic Regional Teams (2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024), All-ACC Teams (2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024), All-ACC Academic (2023), and DI Softball National Player of the Week (2024). Fagan knows a thing or two about rewriting record books as she also solidified program top

10 totals for batting average, hits, home runs, RBI, slugging percentage, total bases, walks, runs and on base percentage while with Virginia Tech. Over those four seasons, accumulating over 200 games played as an infielder, Fagan collected 236 hits, 33 home runs, 140 RBI with a slash line of .363/.435/.559. The Hokies made four trips to the NCAA Regionals and two trips to the NCAA Super Regionals during her career and were ranked in multiple national polls all four years.

New head coach Kevin Fagan also announced hiring of a former Liberty player to his staff.

Kara Canetto has joined the program as an assistant coach for the upcoming season. After an impressive four-year career as a student-athlete with Liberty, earned time as a student coach and moved onto the



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Cameron Fagan played four seasons at Virginia Tech and is now becoming an assistant softball coach at neighboring Radford University.

professional scene, Canetto joins the Highlanders as an assistant coach. As an outfielder with the Flames, Canetto earned awards such as VaSID All-State, ASUN All-Freshman, ASUN All-Tournament MVP and ASUN All-Conference first-team. Professionally, Canetto spent the last season with the Florida Vibe.

Over her career including 177 games she posted impressive stats including 198 hits, 112 runs, 32 doubles, 72 RBI, 40 stolen bases, and a slash line of .357/.390/.458. During her tenure she set single season top ten totals for the Flames in hits and hitting streak as well as career top ten totals

for batting average and runs. Navigating through injuries and a shortened season, Canetto and the Flames earned two ASUN Tournament Championships, two NCAA Regional appearances and an appearance at the National Invitational Softball Championship.

Lady Hokies face competitive non-conference schedule

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Virginia Tech women's basketball team will see at least two major out-of-conference games this coming year with Georgia and former Final

Four's Iowa.

The 11-game docket includes seven home games on Carilion Clinic Court at Cassell Coliseum, in addition to three exciting neutral site matchups and a contest at Power Four foe Georgia in

the second edition of the SEC/ACC Challenge.

The Hokies will open the season Nov. 4 against UNC Wilmington, a program they have never faced. In its second contest Nov. 10, the Hokies will take on Big Ten champ

Iowa in the Ally Tipoff held at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, a rematch of last season's Tipoff game that saw the Hawkeyes earn a narrow four-point victory in front of over 15,000 fans.

From there, Tech will

remain at home for a four-game stretch that will see the Hokies entertain UNC Asheville (Nov. 13), Coppin State (Nov. 16), Rutgers (Nov. 19) and Elon (Nov. 23).

Thanksgiving week, Tech will head south to

take part in the Elevance Health Fort Myers Tip-Off's Shell Division which features Davidson, Michigan and Belmont. Friday, Nov. 29 Tech will face Davidson and then Saturday will take on either the Wolverines or Bruins.

In December, Tech will travel to play Georgia in the second annual SEC/ACC Challenge on Wednesday Dec. 4 for a clash with the Bulldogs. Tech, who fell in the inaugural Challenge a season ago, is 0-4 all-time against UGA.

To conclude the non-conference slate at the end of the fall semester, the Hokies will play host to New River Valley foe Radford Dec. 15 and then face another Big South opponent at Cassell in Campbell on Dec. 21.

The Hokies' 18-game conference schedule, along with television networks and game times will be announced at a later date.

Sports notes: RU golf adds four

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Radford Men's Golf head coach Mike Grant announced Tuesday afternoon four new additions to the Highlanders lineup for the upcoming 2024-25 season. Three of the four additions to the Men's Golf program are Louie Stott, Kieran McCarthy and Seth Robinette who all join the Highlanders from Roane State where they had great success at the JUCO national championship this past year. Stott finished 11th individually at the JUCO national championship and secured a tournament victory in his two years at Roane. During McCarthy's time as a Raider he was tabbed NJCAA Honorable Mention All-American and a member of the PING All-East Region team. Robinette was a two-time All-Conference member, scholar All-American and secured a tournament victory during his time as a Raider. The final addition to the Men's Golf program is Tate Corbett, the younger brother of former Radford men's golf great Bryce Corbett. Tate joins the program as a transfer from Lynchburg University, ranked 4th nationally last year in Division III. At Lynchburg, Corbett logged two top 20 finishes and one top 10 finish.

Clemson tops preseason poll

Clemson has been chosen as the favorite to win the 2024 Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Soccer Championship following a vote of the league's 15 head coaches. The reigning ACC and national champions were

picked as the ACC favorite by 12 coaches and earned the top spot in the preseason poll for the second straight season. The league also unveiled its 2024 Preseason Watch List, consisting of one student-athlete from each program, selected by the respective schools. The new-look ACC features 15 men's soccer programs this season with the addition of California, SMU and three-time national champion Stanford. Eleven of the ACC's 15 programs competed in the NCAA Tournament last year. Clemson returns All-ACC honorees Joran Gerbet and Nathan Richmond from its 2023 championship team and tops the preseason coaches poll with 193 total points. Notre Dame, the reigning national runner-up, was second with 167 points. North Carolina received a pair of first-place votes and totaled 156 points, while Wake Forest earned the final first-place vote and was fourth with 149 points. Stanford took fifth in the poll with 147 points, while Virginia (124) was sixth and Duke claimed seventh (122). SMU (99) earned eighth place, while Pitt (95) was ninth and Syracuse (90) notched 10th. NC State (73), Louisville (69), California (38), Virginia Tech (32) and Boston College (21) rounded out the poll.

FSU women's favorite, Tech 10th

Coming off its fourth national championship a season ago, Florida State has been selected as the favorite in the annual Preseason Atlantic Coast Conference

Women's Soccer Coaches Poll, announced by the conference office on Thursday. In addition, the 2024 Preseason Women's Soccer All-ACC Team was also announced. The Seminoles, who are coming off their fourth national championship in 10 seasons, claimed their fourth straight ACC title in 2023 and have not lost a regular-season league match since October 20, 2022. Following Florida State, ACC newcomer Stanford received the final two first-place votes and finished second in the annual poll with 235 points. In third was Notre Dame (211 points), North Carolina (187) and Clemson (186) round out the top five in the preseason poll. All three teams won at least one match in last season's NCAA Tournament, headlined by Clemson's first-ever trip to the College Cup. Notre Dame midfielder Leah Klenke earned a spot on the preseason team after posting 10 assists a season ago. Virginia finished sixth with 177 points, as the Cavalier duo of senior Lia Godfrey and junior Maggie Cagle were voted to the Preseason All-ACC Team. With 175 points, Duke earned the seventh spot as junior striker Kat Rader was the lone Blue Devil on the preseason team. Pitt landed eighth with 168 points and placed two players on the Preseason All-ACC Team with forward Sarah Schupansky and midfielder Deborah Abiodun. Rounding out the top 10 was Wake Forest (160 points) in ninth and Virginia Tech (116) in 10th.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

A	C	H	E		M	E	A	D
P	L	E	A		G	A	B	E
N	E	A	R		I	H	P	D
E	A	R	N	S	U	M	A	T
A	R	D	E	B	C	I	R	C
D	E	C	I	M	A	T	I	O
E	C	T		A	L	B		
A	M	A		M	A	O		
P	R	O	C	E	D	U	R	E
U	P	K	E	E	P		K	A
M	S	B	B	A		E	B	B
I	A		M	A	N		L	A
A	G	H	A	S			E	M
S	E	A	S				S	P

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Offensive Spotlight: Kyron Drones

Entering his second season with the Hokies this fall, quarterback Kyron Drones has helped revitalize Tech football.

After taking over the starting role last fall, the offensive captain is looking to grow from his offensive output in 2023, where he recorded 22 total touchdowns (17 passing, 5 rushing) and over 2,900 all-purpose yards.

With preseason watch list nods from the Manning Award, Davey O'Brien Award, Maxwell Award, Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award and Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award, expectations for the dual-threat quarterback are as high as ever.

Partnered with an exciting running game and explosive wide receiver room, Drones is poised to produce under offensive coordinator Tyler Bowen in their first test at Vanderbilt on Saturday, Aug. 31 at noon ET. The game can be caught live on ESPN.

After assuming the reins in the third week of the 2023 season, Drones quickly found success through his passing game. Over 13 games and 11 as a starter,

the redshirt junior posted 2,084 passing yards with a touchdown-interception ratio of 17-3. The ACC signal caller threw for a season-best 321 yards against conference rival Wake Forest, where 20 of his 29 attempts led to a 30-13 victory.

Against in-state rival Virginia, the Houston, Texas native found the endzone three times alongside 244 passing yards. When facing Vanderbilt, look for Drones to favor the long ball against a defense that allowed 36.2 points per game (129th out of 133 teams) and an average of 6.5 yards per play.

Drones' accuracy will also be on display against the Commodores. The Tech quarterback achieved an adjusted completion percentage of 72.7% last season, ranking higher than many of his ACC quarterback counterparts. Additionally, Drones has little reserve throwing downfield, as seen in gains of 84 and 75 yards last fall. With a wide receiver room made up of predominantly returning talent, look for Drones to attack opposing defenses across all levels of the field.

As the season developed, Drones



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech signal caller Kyron Drones looks to start season on a high note.

utilized his legs in more of a dual-threat role. As one of the ACC's most mobile quarterbacks, the redshirt junior rushed for 818 yards with an average of 4.9 yards per rush, his total being the second highest on the team. Standing at 6-foot-2 and 234 pounds, Drones' stature makes him a force to be reckoned

with in the run game, as seen in his 176-yard rushing game in the Military Bowl. Leveraging his athleticism within the offensive scheme will make RPO a strong option to exploit Vanderbilt's defense.

By utilizing both his arm and his legs, Drones is primed for an explosive season. *Virginia Tech Athletics*

Hokies travel to SEC's Vandy

Virginia Tech football officially kicks off the 2024 season against an SEC opponent as it battles Vanderbilt today, Saturday, Aug. 31 at noon ET.

The Hokies are set to open the year on the road at FirstBank Stadium in Nashville, Tenn.

Starting his third year at the helm, head coach Brent Pry is aiming to begin the season on a high note. Entering the year with high expectations, Hokie Nation has been eagerly awaiting kickoff. Supporting the excitement, multiple home games at Lane Stadium have sold out, and fans are encouraged to get seats to the remaining home matchups while tickets are still available.

Important information for the season-opening matchup includes:

How to follow

TV: The game will be televised on ESPN with Roy Philpott (play-by-play), Sam Acho (analyst) and Taylor Davis (sideline) on the call.

Radio: The Virginia Tech Sports Network will carry the contest over the airwaves in Blacksburg on 93.1 FM and 105.9 FM. Bill Roth will handle play-by-play duties while Mike Burnop provides color commentary and Zach Mackey reports from the sideline.

Streaming: Catch the game online at ESPN.com and in the ESPN mobile app.

Live Audio: Listen to live audio coverage of the matchup at HokieSports.com/Watch or in the HokieSports mobile app.

Live Stats: Monitor the game through live stats on HokieSports.com, including play-by-play updates and full team and individual statistics.

Players to watch

Quarterback Kyron Drones: Heading into his first season as the bona fide starter with Tech, the redshirt junior is set up for potentially a big year. After spending all of Fall Camp working with the ones, the scheme

under offensive coordinator Tyler Bowen should benefit from the continuity of returning starters. Drones offers plenty of athleticism to extend plays with his legs and tons of arm talent to challenge the third level. Last season, he set a program record for passing attempts without an interception and showcased a consistent ability to take care of the football. If Drones can continue to produce big plays through the air and with his mobility, there should be plenty of reasons to support his case for the Davey O'Brien award.

Wide Receiver Ali Jennings: A familiar name mentioned this time last year, the talented wideout is aiming to pick up where he left off in the 2023 season opener. In his first game donning maroon and orange, Jennings corralled five receptions for 72 yards and two touchdowns. After a dynamic inaugural showcase, the sixth-year Richmond, Virginia, native will look to get back on track after a season-ending injury in week two. Following participation in Fall Camp, Jennings will provide another veteran receiving option alongside Da'Quan Felton and Jaylin Lane, among others.

Linebacker Sam Brumfield: Switching gears to the defensive side of the ball, there are plenty of talented players at defensive coordinator Chris Marve's disposal. One specific addition via the transfer portal that should be one to watch is Sam Brumfield from Middle Tennessee State. Recently named one of seven team captains, the Pearl, Mississippi native is expected to hold down the middle linebacker role for the Hokies. Brumfield comes in with plenty of experience after leading the Blue Raiders in tackles (81) and being named to the All-Conference USA Second Team. The redshirt senior is a solid presence on the second level and is looking to provide some stability across the front seven.

Virginia Tech Athletics



PHOTO BY MARTY GORDON

Caldwell Fields is approximately eight miles from Rt. 460, on Jefferson National Forest property, about 15 miles from the campus of Virginia Tech.

Murder

from page 1

"Law enforcement understands that when they bring a case to the forefront, quite often there will be additional tips from the public. Follow-up on those tips is critical, but it does take resources to do so. The public's involvement in cold cases could prove paramount in closure," he pointed out earlier this week.

Burke said the longer the case remains cold, the more difficult the investigation becomes.

"Witness memory can fade; witnesses may move out of the area; witnesses can die. Similar issues happen with law enforcement. Investigating officers may relocate, retire, or die. The public needs to also understand that a suspect(s) may also move out of the area, be in prison in another state for an unrelated crime, or may be deceased," he said.

While some evidence can be maintained for long periods of time (e.g., DNA), according to Burke, some evidence may deteriorate over time. Then again, advancements in forensic science may actually prove beneficial with cold cases, offering officers with additional tools not available during the initial investigation. "I am also a strong believer in having new eyes on cold cases, when practical to do so. While not dismissing the initial investigation or investigators, fresh eyes may lead to new theories and evidence, minimizing tunnel vision - negating new information because investigators already formed an opinion," he said. Bottomline, the longer a case is unsolved, the more difficult it is to close a cold case.

"That being said, I am hopeful for a resolution to this tragic incident," Burke concluded.

There is a \$100,000 reward for any tips that lead to an arrest. If you have any information please call the Virginia State Police at 540-375-9589.

Newly renovated War Memorial Hall officially opens

War Memorial Hall is a fixture in the college memories of Hokies spanning nearly 100 years. With renovations now complete, the iconic building offers future generations and alumni an updated, accessible, and enhanced facility centered around wellness.

"I used to go there to play racquetball a lot and I played intramural basketball there, but the building was always hot and felt like you were walking back into the 1970s," said Travis Jessee '05, interim assistant vice president for design and construction at Virginia Tech. "But we went because it was the largest rec facility on campus."

War Memorial Hall — built in 1924 as a tribute to soldiers who died in World War I — hadn't undergone such an extensive renovation process on a capital scale since 1975. Jessee has had several roles in the renovation of War Memorial Hall, and he was part of the conversations around the future of the building. He said faculty who have been at Virginia Tech for many years will appreciate the transformation, and students who are new to campus will be excited about all the building has to offer.

"War Memorial Hall has all new, historically accurate windows for the head house [the front of building], we've removed partitions to make the gymnasium space more open, and the lower level was completely demolished and rebuilt to provide modern cardio workout space," said Jessee. "It's a very handsome building, and I'm proud of the improvements."

Student health and wellness

Student health and wellness was a core goal of the renovation plans for War Memorial Hall. The facility will house research space for the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise (HNFE), in addition to classroom space. This newly renovated research space will allow for clinical researchers in HNFE to have a state-of-the-art facility to conduct their innovative research.

War Memorial Hall is also the home of Recreational Sports. Hokies will have access to exercise classes, as well as ten specialized spaces, including a boxing room, two rooms for dance organizations, a mind/body studio, yoga studio, spin studio, one squash court, and five racquetball courts.

Other features include:

Wet classroom for aquatic and safety instruction
7,000 square-foot table tennis space
Basketball courts with new hardwood floors
Modern locker rooms and bathrooms that include



PHOTO BY NOAH ALDERMAN FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Among the many renovations to War Memorial Hall are new, historically accurate windows and main doors.

family changing rooms and an all-gender restroom featuring private stalls with a shared space for handwashing

Centralized air conditioning
New plumbing and electrical systems
Energy-efficient LED lighting

Membership and events

There are several events scheduled around the reopening of War Memorial Hall, including self-guided tours, exercise classes, and a grand reopening celebration on Sept. 6 at 3:30 p.m. For up-to-date information, visit recsports.vt.edu/events.

Recreational Sports offers a variety of membership options to various campus community groups to help meet fitness needs. Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled full and part time who pay the recreational fee have access to War Memorial Hall, as well as McComas Hall and the Rec Sports Field House, during normal operational hours. Faculty and staff can try out a membership for one free, 30-day all-access membership to the facility, free group exercise classes, and free towel service.

For a comprehensive list of membership rates for students, employees, alumni, and guests, visit recsports.vt.edu/membership.

Virginia Tech

THE NRV MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR THE ROUTE 460 BUSINESS CORRIDOR BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND TRANSIT STUDY

Find out about the study progress and potential safety improvements along Route 460 Business in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County. The meeting will be held at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, Joseph W. Meredith Training & Event Center, located at 1691 Innovation Drive, Suite 1025, Blacksburg, VA 24060 on Thursday, September 5th, 2024, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. In addition to the in-person meeting, public meeting materials will be posted by September 3rd on the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) website at www.newrivervalleympo.org. Please give your written comments online, at the meeting, or submit them via USPS to the NRV MPO's office, located at 755 Roanoke St. Ste. 21, Christiansburg, VA 24073. You may also e-mail your comments to 460study@rkk.com. Comments for this study will be received until 5:00 PM, September 21st, 2024.

This public notice and opportunity to comment on the Route 460 Study meets the program of projects requirements as established by the FTA pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(c).

The NRV MPO ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Dan Brugh at brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov or 540-394-2145, TTY/TTD 711.