

Photography Show At Bice-Ferguson Museum

By Debra Herndon

The Bice-Ferguson museum is currently featuring a photography show during the month of July. The theme is historic people, places or things of North Central West Virginia. Five photographers have contributed 23 photographs. Prizes will be given based on People’s Choice. Come in and vote for your favorite.

The Museum will hold three more shows during the 2026 season. Members of the public are invited to show their work. The Art Show will be set up August 6 th , the Quilt Show September 3 rd and the Fiber Arts (knit, crochet, cross stitch, etc.) October 1 st . Each show will last for the month and all will have People’s Choice prizes. The Museum is open Thursday through Saturday each week from 9:00 to 1:00. Further information can be obtained from Museum Director Debra Herndon at 304-677-6650.



Ferguson Memorial Park Hosting Another BIG Event August 1st

By Leigh C. Merrifield

Mark your calendars in advance and plan to attend another crowd pleaser at Ferguson Memorial Park on Saturday, August 1st. Plans are set for Shinnston’s “Shindy 2026” at Ferguson Memorial Park. SHINDY, by the way, is a Gaelic term for “party”, and this will be the 4th year for this event, which has been successful in the past.

While most small towns are often branded as being rather dull and lifeless, with very few entertainment options, Shinnston does not fit that description at all! From springtime until fall arrives, there are typically free entertaining events of some kind planned each and every month to draw the community together and welcome visitors as well.

Brendan Gallagher, owner of Born & Bred Studio, located at 413 Pike Street in Shinnston, explained that the Shindy

See “Ferguson” Pg 9



Louisville: Where Tradition Meets Innovation



By JIM HUNT

Building Amazing Cities

For the Harrison County Journal

I recently traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, for the National League of Cities Summer Leadership Meeting. While I had visited Louisville before, this trip provided an opportunity to see the city through the eyes of its local leaders and to learn more about how it is preparing for the future.

My good friend, Louisville Metro Councilman Kevin Kramer is serving as the 2026 president of the National League of Cities. As our host, he offered an excellent overview of his hometown and helped showcase the facilities, programs and people that make Louisville a city on the move.

Throughout the meeting, we participated in tours and presentations highlighting Louisville’s commitment to innovation, public safety and efficient government. It quickly became evident that the city is not simply talking about new ideas—it is putting them into practice.

One of the most interesting presentations came from Pamela McKnight, Louisville Metro Government’s first chief artificial intelligence officer. In this relatively new position, she is leading the city’s effort to use artificial intelligence responsibly and safely to improve government efficiency and streamline public services.

Artificial intelligence is a subject that often produces equal measures of excitement and concern. McKnight’s presentation demonstrated why cities need thoughtful leadership as they explore this rapidly developing technology. Louisville is working to establish safeguards while also looking for practical ways AI can help employees perform their jobs and make city services more responsive.

Louisville has already begun testing AI as a way to improve parts of its permitting process. The goal is not to replace city employees, but to provide them with better tools, reduce unnecessary delays and improve the experience of residents and businesses.

Our visit also included an evening at Churchill Downs, home of the world-famous Kentucky Derby. The massive racetrack and surrounding complex are impressive even when the Derby is

See “Hunt” Pg 3

West Virginia Department of Education Tells HCS “You Better Get Your House in Order”

By Stephen Smoot

On July 6, the Harrison County Superintendent and Board of Education held their regular meeting. It was the first of the month and also the first of the new fiscal year.

No inkling of the news that would soon come was evident during the quick 10 minute proceedings that focused on typical housekeeping topics. Last week came the news that the West Virginia Department of Education would intervene in Harrison County Schools.

Among other significant concerns included reports that Harrison County remained 239 employees over the formula for school funding and used \$16 million of financial reserves rather than cut personnel.

The school aid funding formula, a topic of focus in the past two years, uses a seven step process to determine which counties receive what. It appears Byzantine on the surface because state education officials and the State Legislature have tweaked it over the years in an attempt to ensure fairness and to address challenges faced by some school systems, but not others.

Much of the school aid formula is used to pay for what the State finds is an appropriate amount of personnel for the system related to its student population.

Factors accounted for include the “1,400 floor” for the most sparsely populated counties, reflecting the unique challenges they have faced in transportation and other fields, especially after consolidation over the decades. These schools have a formula that provides extra funding to meet those specific challenges.

In 2018, the State Legislature gave added flexibility to school systems. Prior to that year, a school system had to employ the number of personnel that it paid for. After 2018, a school system could employ “under the formula” and retain the extra funds for other needs. The most successful systems, such as Pendleton County, typically employ under the formula. That county enjoyed approximately a little under \$2 million million carryover from the 2026 fiscal year to the 2027.

One of the secrets of its success lay in finding ways to use other personnel funding sources and moving employees back and forth while revising job descriptions. It all took place within the parameters of the rules and the law. While some personnel faced the threat of a “reduction in force” layoff, the central office was able to avoid that. That county also has a very frugal policy in terms of employment as well.

Its restrictions have come under scrutiny in recent years as different school systems face different stressors. Hardy County, for example, has a large legal immigrant population of workers at its poultry processing facilities. That school system has 15 different languages spoken in it, including tribal tongues from Guatemala with no written form. That same school system also has a much

See “Dept of Ed” Pg 6



Each week copies of the News & Journal are distributed in each hospital to patients compliments of these community minded sponsors listed:

TO UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER, LOUIS JOHNSON V.A. HOSPITAL, HIGHLAND CLARKSBURG HOSPITAL & WV VETERANS NURSING FACILITY



U.S. Supreme Court Case From 1853 Could Have Impact on Current Methodist Church Schism Disputes

By Stephen Smoot

After the United Methodist Church became less so following schisms over religious practice and positions on social issues, debates over property and asset ownership soon followed.

Over the past few months, both the West Virginia State Legislature and West Virginia State Supreme Court of Appeals have examined the issue and the law surrounding it. It would almost serve the cause of appropriateness for West Virginia to address this issue. Bishop Francis Asbury, who led the split from the British Methodist Church in 1784, labored for many years among many other “circuit rider” preachers in the then-western Virginia mountains to establish Methodism in remote areas.

At one point in his journal, he bemoaned the fact that his converts in eastern Virginia kept moving west into the mountains, keeping the church from growing in the eastern counties.

By the 1840s, however, a dispute emerged over a Georgia bishop owning slaves. He had inherited and received by marriage two slaves that he did not wish to own. He desired to emancipate them once they could support themselves, according to Wofford College Archivist Phillip Stone in an article, but both requested to stay with him for humanitarian reasons. State law made it difficult to emancipate a slave as well.

Over this dispute over the slave owning bishop’s worthiness to serve, which tapped into the general conflict over slavery itself, the Church separated into separate northern and southern organizations.

Nine years afterward, a dispute arose over a church operated institution in Cincinnati called “The Book Concern.” The founders of Methodism, Charles and John Wesley, promoted the ideal that Christians should be avid consumers of books. By 1787 when American Methodists had charted their own path, the first “Book Concern” was started in Philadelphia with \$600.

The publishing house would print materials for sale to Methodists in rural, remote, or frontier areas. It also published popular magazines which were among the most circulated of such works in America at the time.

Profits from those sales would go to support the needs of often impoverished circuit riding preachers who traveled from church to church in such regions to preach the Gospel. At some point well before the Church split, a “Book Concern” opened operations in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1853, a dispute emerged over which of the two organizations had rights to the proceeds of it. This case went to the United States Supreme Court as Smith v. Swormstedt (1853).

The case syllabus shared that the “property, known as the Book Concern” had come from “the result of the labors and accumulation of all the ministers.” It added that “The Methodist Church was divided. It was not a case of the secession of a part from the main body. Neither division lost its interest in the common property.”

The Book Concern was administered by Leroy Swormstedt and others who were all citizens of either the states of Ohio or New York.

See “Methodist” Pg 3

Super Crossword

CHARGING JOE

ACROSS

1 Reserves of stock

9 Person applying a mail stick-on

16 Understands

20 Actress Palicki of “Friday Night Lights”

21 Popcorn personage Redenbacher

22 Out of the wind, nautically

23 Start of a riddle

25 Watson of “Little Women”

26 Was bested

27 Rug threads

28 Emo of zany comedy

30 Crafty plans

34 Arnaz of “I Love Lucy”

35 Have in mind

36 King, in Paris

37 Riddle, part 2

41 Unhappy

44 Almonds, e.g.

45 See 63-Across

46 Jamaican music genre

47 Alpine climber’s tool

49 Extra NFL periods

51 Actress Long of “Missing”

53 Nobelist Bohr

54 Riddle, part 3

60 “The Taking of — 123” (2009 film)

61 Check casher, e.g.

62 Pre-2001 space station

63 With 45-Across, informed on the latest

67 Lacking living organisms

69 Shampoo brand

71 Vidal — (shampoo brand)

73 Some till bills

74 Helium, e.g.

76 Dot in the ocean

78 Fife sound

79 Riddle, part 4

82 Pong producer

86 Tart’s cousin

87 Capote, to his pals

88 “The First 48” network

89 Ricky Martin’s old boy band

91 “Sir,” in colonial India

95 “Hey there, tiger!”

97 Wee child

98 End of the riddle

102 Yoga chants

103 Loosen up

104 Tolkien trilogy initials

105 To some degree

109 Popular rum brand

111 Swindling guy

113 Really ruin

114 Scraped (out)

115 Riddle’s answer

120 Give for a while

121 Determines the sum of

122 Thief’s activity

123 Uno + dos

124 Some tax cheats

125 Lays out for proofing

6 “Warzone” singer Yoko

7 Wildebeest

8 Narcissist’s love

9 People crying loudly

10 Maple fluid

11 Greed for wealth

12 Russian-built fighter jets

13 Arafat’s gp., once

14 Formed a secret union?

15 Ginger’s trait

16 Scottish Celt

17 Suburb of Phoenix

18 Pertaining to time

19 Ocean coasts

24 “White Flag” singer of 2003

29 Have in mind

31 Tailless feline breed

32 Aussie bird

33 New Jersey’s — Hall University

35 Smaller than large

38 Lens aperture setting

39 Russo of “The Intern”

40 Hi-tech movie effects

41 Hold to one’s decision

42 Novelist Chinua

43 Buy and sell

48 Eldest of the Musketeers

50 Suddenly lose patience

52 Warts and all

55 Pal, in Peru

56 Song line

57 Kin of “Oy!”

58 Beautiful, in Bologna

59 Poetic Muse

63 Old Glory’s land, informally

64 Really strong

65 City in Spain or Ohio

66 A short round of tennis

68 Al who drew the Yokums

70 For fear that

72 To the extent that

75 Bern’s land, to the French

77 Australia Zoo owner Irwin

79 Not as messy

80 Harvest

81 “The Flight Attendant” star Kaley

82 Bandoleer, informally

83 Drink infusing device

84 Cutoff cry from a film director

85 Long to undo

90 Out with one’s sweetie

92 Hint-providing columnist

93 “My thoughts exactly”

94 Alternatives to GIFs or JPEGs

96 Hulk Hogan’s 1980s org.

99 Isaac of sci-fi

100 Actress Drescher

101 Sings in the Alps, perhaps

106 Perez of film

107 Quaint reply of denial

108 Canoodles, in Cambridge

110 Determines the sum of

111 Street rep

112 Hawk’s home

116 Plato’s “H”

117 Hog’s home

118 Vivacity

119 “Little” actress Issa

DOWN

1 Cries loudly

2 Like a one-off committee

3 Fail suddenly

4 Purring baby

5 Precept

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

Find the Super Crossword Answers on Page 4!

THIS WEEK IN West Virginia History

Charleston WV – The following events happened on these dates in West Virginia history. To read more, go to e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia at www.wvencyclopedia.org.

July 16, 1791: Adam Stephen, a physician and Revolutionary War general often credited as the founder of Martinsburg, died at his home in that city.

July 16, 1869: Philanthropist Michael Late Benedum was born in Bridgeport. He made a fortune in the oil and gas business but is best remembered for establishing the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

July 16, 1877: The first nationwide labor strike in U.S. history began in Martinsburg, after the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad cut worker’s wages. Federal troops soon put down the violence in Martinsburg, but the strike continued across the country for another 52 days.

July 17, 1775: Two months after the Revolutionary War started, Hugh Stephenson’s 98- man rifle company left Shepherdstown, marched 600 miles in 24 days and arrived in Cambridge to help defend Massachusetts.

July 17, 1861: The Battle of Scary Creek took place in Putnam County. It was one of the earliest battles of the war and one of the first Confederate victories.

July 17, 1914: Singer Eleanor Steber was born in Wheeling. She made her debut with the Metropolitan Opera in 1940.

July 17, 1921: Marcenia “Toni” Stone was born in Bluefield. She was the first woman to play professional baseball for a previously all-male team. In 1953, she joined the Indianapolis Clowns of the old Negro American League, replacing the team’s second baseman, Hank Aaron, who had just joined the National League’s Milwaukee Braves.

July 17, 1922: The Cliftonville Mine Battle took place east of Wellsburg, Brooke County. The gun battle between striking miners and sheriff’s forces left at least nine people dead.

July 18, 1776: Methodist bishop Francis Asbury first set foot in present West Virginia outside of Berkeley Springs. He worked extensively in what is now the Eastern Panhandle, preaching and lecturing almost every day, before continuing farther into western Virginia.

July 18, 1865: Samuel Cabell was murdered at his Institute plantation by either pro-Union or pro-

Confederate sympathizers, depending on the source. His widow and mother of his children, Mary Barnes Cabell, who he had previously enslaved, inherited all his property, including the land on which today’s West Virginia State University was founded in 1892.

July 18, 1893: Spencer State Hospital opened. With its connected brick buildings, a quarter-mile in length, the hospital was sometimes referred to as the longest continuous brick building in America. It remained in operation until June 1989.

July 19, 1850: Pope Pius IX established the Diocese of Wheeling, naming Richard V. Whelan as its first bishop.

July 19, 1863: A Confederate raid led by Gen. John Morgan came to an end on Buffington Island, near Ravenswood. The Confederates were overtaken by federal troops, local militia and three U.S. Navy gunboats.

July 19, 1946: Author Stephen Coonts was born in Morgantown. After graduating from West Virginia University and serving in the navy during the Vietnam War, Coonts became a best-selling action and adventure novelist with the 1986 publication of Flight of the Intruder.

July 19, 1952: Novelist Jayne Anne Phillips was born in Buckhannon. After graduating from West Virginia University, her short stories and novels began receiving wide recognition. In 2024, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her 2023 novel Night Watch, about a mother and daughter in West Virginia after the Civil War.

July 20, 2010: Carte Goodwin became the nation’s youngest sitting senator. Goodwin was appointed to fill Robert C. Byrd’s seat in the U.S. Senate following Byrd’s death.

July 21, 1924: Don Knotts was born in Morgantown. The comedy legend will be forever remembered for portraying Barney Fife on The Andy Griffith Show.

July 22, 1859: Athlete “Jack” Glasscock was born in Wheeling. Glasscock, who played bare-handed, was one of baseball’s premier shortstops of the 19th century.

July 22, 1930: The rollicking Dungen Hotel, located across the New River from Thurmond, was destroyed by arsonists. A hubbub of illegal activity during the Prohibition era, it supposedly hosted a poker game that lasted 14 years.

July 22, 1937: Musician Tommy Thompson was born in St. Albans, Kanawha County.

Through his group, the Red Clay Ramblers, and a career that spanned four decades, Thompson played a major role in spreading the popularity of old-time music.

“A Newspaper The Whole Family Can Read”

ShinnstonHarrison County

The News & Journal

USPS 494-420

Michael Showell

Publisher

Stephen Smoot

Editor

Debra Smith

Advertising

Bill Nestor

Sports Editor

Published weekly by

Mountain Media, LLC, P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV,

with the exception of the week of July 4th.

Single Copy \$1.00

Annual Subscription Rates

In-County: \$49 • Out-of-County: \$53 • Out-of-State: \$56

Periodicals Postage Paid at Shinnston, WV

POSTMASTER: send change of address to:

The Shinnston News & Harrison County Journal

P.O. Box 429

Lewisburg, WV 24901

How To Let Us Know

To start home delivery or to report a service problem, call our office at 304-647-5724 or fax us at 304-647-5767.

OBITUARIES

Dorsey

Funeral Home

LOUIE MALE, Owner/Licensee-In Charge

701 South Pike Street, Shinnston, WV 26431

Office: 304-592-2500 ~ Fax: 304-592-2571

www.dorseyfuneralhomewv.com



Harmer Funeral Home

Shinnston, WV · 592-2500

www.harmerfuneralhome.com

Jay D. Harmer, LLC,

Jacob A. Harmer, Licensed Funeral Director



Perine Funeral Home

Call 592-5925 • 1348 S. Pike St. Shinnston

Timothy E. Perine - L.I.C./Owner

Adam T. Perine - Funeral Director/General Manager

Patrick A. Kovalck - Licensed Director



“Methodist”

Representatives of Methodist Episcopal Church South demanded the appropriate share of proceeds to distribute amongst circuit riders adhering to the southern Church.

The nature of how the Church divided, according to the Southern plaintiffs was that its organization “was entitled to its proportion of the common property real and personal of the (original American) Methodist Episcopal Church . . . to which the members of the church south had contributed more than their share.” Representatives from Methodist Episcopal Church North did not dispute the facts presented so much as their interpretation.

Southern Methodists claim that the conference created two distinct and legitimate Methodist Churches. Northern Methodists saw the action as “an unauthorized separation” that meant “they have hereby renounced and forfeited all claim, either in law or equity, to any portion of the property in question.”

Supreme Court Justice Samuel Nelson, who also served as Chief Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, delivered the opinion of the court. He relied heavily on the veteran Justice Joseph Story who served as Chief Justice John Marshall’s right hand during much of his tenure. Justice Story is still regarded as one of the great American legal minds.

The defendants made an objection to the suit

itself, attacking the notion that a small handful of Southern Methodists could represent the diverse needs of all. Justice Story articulated three foundational points on how they could do so, which also serves as underpinning for what would become known as “class action” suits in the future. Each refers to the “common interest or a common right” connecting the plaintiffs.

Justice Nelson alleged that the defendants argued their case a little too well. He interpreted their arguments to lead to the legal conclusion that neither northern nor southern Methodists retained rights to the assets, and “are deprived of any right to a distribution.”

The Court ordered a tallying of the Book Concern’s finances with an aim towards the equitable distribution thereof between the two Methodist organizations.

In West Virginia, one of the heartlands of the original Methodist Church in America, both legislative and judicial bodies are looking at similar issues almost 170 years later. Once again, disagreements over social issues and doctrine led to the creation of competing Methodist organizations, but many others chose to abandon the concept of denominationalism altogether and create independent churches and congregations.

As West Virginia Metro News reported, the position of the United Methodist Church is that

“all local church property is held in an irrevocable trust for the benefit of the entire denomination.” Local churches, again according to Metro News, have asserted that the Methodist Conference has no rights to individual churches because they paid for, maintained, and insured those properties.

Metro News also shared that one objection from the UMC is that a secular court has no authority to judge Church issues, based upon the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and similar language in that of the State of West Virginia. Smith v Swormstedt (1853) would seem to negate that argument on its very face.

The West Virginia State Legislature also considered the matter in HB 4515, but elected to not pass legislation this year due to potential Constitutional issues.

Effective language in HB 4515, intentionally or unintentionally, generally follows the outline of the 1853 case. It establishes a process to determine rights in church property for both the former UMC and the current church and would have ordered either reimbursement to the UMC or individual church depending on which side was determined to have the greater interest.

Case law in the United States rests on the principle of stare decisis. This means that courts follow the previous precedent established unless conditions have changed significantly

cont. from p. 2

“Hunt”

not taking place. For someone like me, who has never attended the event, the visit provided a much better understanding of its size, history and importance to Louisville.

The following day, I toured the Louisville MetroSafe 911 center. The state-of-the-art facility was impressive, but even more impressive were the professionalism and dedication of the people working there.

Louisville Metro Emergency Services is led by Executive Director Jody Meiman, a former firefighter who helped direct the city’s response following the November 4, 2025, crash of UPS Airlines Flight 2976. The aircraft crashed shortly after taking off from Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport. The tragedy ultimately claimed 15 lives, including the three crew

members and 12 people on the ground.

Our group also learned about Louisville’s Drone as First Responder program. Drones positioned at stations around the city can be deployed quickly to accidents, fires, crime scenes and other emergencies. They provide dispatchers and first responders with an aerial view of a scene before emergency personnel arrive, helping them understand what they may be facing.

Louisville has also launched Text to 911, allowing people to reach emergency dispatchers when speaking on the telephone is impossible or unsafe. The service can be particularly valuable for people with hearing or speech disabilities and for victims of domestic violence who may be unable to make a voice call.

Our final evening included a visit to the

Muhammad Ali Center. The remarkable facility tells the story of the Louisville native who became heavyweight champion of the world and one of the most recognizable figures of the 20th century. More importantly, it explores Ali’s courage, confidence, convictions and commitment to serving others.

Louisville is proud of its history—from Churchill Downs to Muhammad Ali—but it is not living in the past. The city is using artificial intelligence, drones and advanced communication technology to improve public service and public safety.

That combination of tradition and innovation may be Louisville’s greatest strength. It respects the people and institutions that shaped the city while remaining willing to explore what comes next.

cont. from p. 1

Rail Trail Update Includes Discussion of Shinnston Role in Completion

By Stephen Smoot

During the opening County Commission meeting of July, Commissioners heard about progress and challenges with expansion of Rail Trails in the county.

The Thrasher representative, Chad Miller, was present for the meeting. Commissioner Hinkle requested information first on a planned bridge over the West Fork. The representative replied that he reached out to a project manager with the West Virginia Department of Highways, but had heard back nothing of substance, saying “it typically goes to the engineering division after you give it to the DoH and it goes into a black hole.”

With “no time frame” of when it will move forward, Miller suggested “political pressure” could help. Pressure at the federal level could free up funding, but “sometimes your local politicians have a great influence on the DoH.” The representative also noted that DoH is “understaffed and I know they’ve got a lot on their plates.”

He added that “I haven’t gotten any response from the environmental people.”

Commissioner David Hinkle asked about the transfer process with Shinnston and projects needed to move the trail towards completion. Miller stated that “We’ve spent a lot of time out there from Shinnston to Spelter trying to develop the appropriate route for the Rail Trail.” One challenge comes from “a lot of abandoned mine workings in that area.”

Furthermore, while some areas have seen repairs undertaken by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, some of those have already fallen into disrepair. Miller then explained that “we’ve broken up the expansion into five different sections and we feel strongly that four of these five sections could be funded through the intergovernmental transfer of funds to the City of Shinnston.”

He added that the DEP has significant concerns about one section that could cause issues “if the mined areas would blow out.”

Also since “it takes years to do this” he said “I think these are good things to start talking about.” Miller also suggested that, with Meadowbrook and Spelter areas also still in the planning stages, “you should go ahead and prioritize these things.” Additionally bids will open on August 13 for the South and West trails.

Commissioner Hinkle then brought up the issue of “a section of trail (lost) into the stream” near Mount Clare “between the Post office and the Fire Department.” Miller said “we tried to get FEMA to fix it and could never make any headway” but “it has gotten substantially worse” and now that it involves a permanent stream “we will need an Army Corps of Engineers permit.” While some work on the section of trail between the VA Hospital and Lost Creek is being put out to bid, work on bridges and the landslide into the creek

are separate matters.

Focus turned to trail matters in Clarksburg. Miller described the city as “the hub of your trail system . . . and I know they’ve gotten grants to study it.” He added that “they really need to be your partner in that because they’re really the ones that will benefit the most.”

Miller went on to add after discussion of possible moves in Clarksburg that “I’m getting a lot of interest from . . . the Elk River Trails in Charleston. They’re really wanting to connect into your system.” He added “I can see that happening at some point.”

In response to questions about the Shinnston end, Miller stated that a big slip repair project was underway. Commissioner Hinkle stated that “my big concern right now is getting Shinnston so we can run all the way to Fairmont open.”

West Virginia Hospital Association Releases 2025 Workforce Report

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Hospital Association (WVHA) has released its 2025 Workforce Report, providing a comprehensive look at workforce trends across West Virginia hospitals and highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen the state’s healthcare workforce.

A strong healthcare workforce is essential to ensuring access to high-quality care in communities across West Virginia. With more than 54,000 employees working in West Virginia hospitals, healthcare remains one of the state’s largest and most critical employment sectors.

The 2025 report marks WVHA’s third annual Workforce Report and includes data from 47 hospitals representing 69.1% of eligible hospitals statewide. The report tracks workforce trends across 13 critical hospital occupations grouped into five categories: nursing, imaging, medical laboratory, respiratory, and operating room professions.

“Across West Virginia, hospitals continue to meet workforce challenges head-on through resilience,

innovation, and an unwavering commitment to patient care,” said Jim Kaufman, President and CEO of WVHA. “This report provides valuable insight into workforce trends while helping inform workforce planning, education, and policy decisions. Just as important, it highlights the collaborative efforts underway to strengthen the healthcare workforce pipeline and support the professionals who care for our communities every day.”

Among the key findings:

- The report expanded in 2025 to include operating room professions, establishing baseline workforce data for Sterile Processing Technicians and Surgical Technologists.

- Nursing continues to experience the greatest workforce pressures, with a vacancy rate of 17.5% and turnover rate of 21.4%, reinforcing the importance of continued investment in recruitment, retention, and workforce development efforts.

See “Report” Pg 4

Should I Stay Or Should I Go?



The Bottom Line

By Bill Nestor
Sports Editor

This summer has been difficult for several area schools. It is supposed to be a time of fun and revelation that leads to the upcoming year. With that brings the seasons! No, I am not referring to winter, spring, summer, or fall. I am speaking of all of the sports that we love and look forward to that will commence in a matter of weeks.

Unfortunately, for many, it's as if the Grinch has gotten loose with a big sack and lifted some of the biggest gifts out from under the tree. Fans are waking up to the depressing news that some of their favorite players are leaving for different destinations. Players are transferring and it is leaving a big void to be filled by these departing athletes.

The old transfer rule was replaced at the end of March by the WVSSAC. There have been so many moving parts and with NIL along with other considerations that the governing body of high school athletics had to make necessary adjustments to keep a handle on the situation.

Under the new rule, ninth and 10th graders are eligible for a one-time transfer. They can go anywhere they would like with the test-the-waters philosophy, provided it is done before Sept 1.

A transfer back opportunity is provided for ninth, 10th, or 11th graders. If that move back occurs prior to Sept 1 and the athlete goes back to the school that is located in the attendance zone where the athlete's parents reside, then immediate

eligibility is restored.

If that one-time transfer should occur during a season that athlete would retain immediate eligibility in all sports except the sport in which the athlete has already participated that season. The rule changes have sent some athletes scurrying to find new homes well before the Sept 1 deadline.

Prior to the new rule, there were some student-athletes that looked like they majored in musical chairs as they toured the state in search for new places to play. When there are loose rules surrounding transfers, it disrupts everyone else involved. It is difficult for coaches to coach with discipline because they fear players would just pick up and leave. It becomes more of a babysitting service and that hurt everyone involved.

The rest of the team was also impacted. With teammates coming and going, it was hard to build chemistry. The revolving door provided emotional instability, which is the exact opposite of what team sports is supposed to bring to the table.

It feels like the WVSSAC got this right. It gives the option for a transfer when there is a proper need for one with little repercussion for a return home if it turns out to be in the best interest of a student-athlete. At the end of the day, it is supposed to be about the student-athlete and if the circumstances warrant a change, then so be it. This does keep those green-grass-chasers at bay, those parents that think it's greener on the other side of the fence so they take their kids' talents elsewhere. Remember it's all about the kids and what is best for them in the long run.

That will do it for now!!! Until next time . . . take care and God Bless!!!

Tee It Up!

By Bill Nestor

This week's edition of Tee It Up takes us to Morgantown where we find the Mountainview Course of the Lakeview. The resort itself owns two 18 hole courses on two different tracts of land.

The Mountainview course was designed by Bryan Ault and opened for play in 1985. It is a relatively newer course compared to most in North Central West Virginia. It ranges 6,447 yards from the tips and it owns four sets of trees providing a challenge for golfers of all skill levels. Narrow fairways, elevation changes, and extremely thick and punishing rough provide the teeth for this par 72-18 hole course. Throw in some well-placed bunkers and slick greens to go in conjunction with some lengthy par fives and the challenge is on in Mo-Town.

The number one handicap is the par five third that plays 514 yards from the blues. The number three handicap hole is the 505 yard par five ninth hole. The round ends with the longest of the day, the 549 yard 10th which is the sixth toughest on the course. All of the par fives also require accuracy off of the tee or you might as well hand over your lunch to this monster because it is taking it one way or another!

The par threes (numbers four, six, 14, and 17 are shorter with the exception of the last) The 17th is the signature hole in my eyes. It is 200 yards and the huge elevation drop downhill through the tee is spectacular.

Mountainview is in great shape and the price is right. It's the cheapest 10 hole public course in Mon County with a high level of quality located within minutes of Touchdown City. You will score big (one way or another) with a round at Mountainview Golf Course.

“Report”

cont. from p. 4

- Medical laboratory professions reported the lowest vacancy rate among the workforce categories surveyed at 12.6%, reflecting continued workforce stability in these essential roles.
 - Respiratory therapy continued to demonstrate relatively balanced workforce indicators, supporting access to critical patient care services throughout the state.
 - Workforce data shows that, despite ongoing challenges, vacancy and turnover rates remain improved compared to peak levels reported in 2022, reflecting progress in workforce stabilization efforts.
- The report also highlights several workforce initiatives and policy advancements designed to strengthen the healthcare workforce. During the 2026 legislative session, policymakers advanced several workforce-related measures, including the Healthcare Worker Protection Act (SB 200), the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact (HB 5015), employer-supported childcare tax credits and childcare subsidy reforms (HB 4191), and peer support programs for healthcare workers and first responders (HB 5086). Together, these efforts

support workforce safety, recruitment, retention, and employee well-being.

In addition to policy advancements, WVHA continues to support workforce development through initiatives such as Explore Health Careers WV, the LEAD Program for Managers, workplace violence prevention education, and the Rural Health Transformation Program. These initiatives are designed to strengthen career pathways, support professional development, improve workforce safety, and build a sustainable healthcare workforce for the future.

Explore Health Careers WV is a free online resource that helps students, parents, educators, individuals considering a career change, and aspiring healthcare professionals discover the many healthcare career opportunities available in West Virginia. The website provides information on career options, education and training pathways, salary and job outlook data, and resources to help individuals begin or advance a career in healthcare. To learn more, visit www.explorehealthcareerswv.com.

“Building a strong workforce goes beyond

recruitment alone,” Kaufman said. “It requires meaningful investment in professional growth, supportive work environments, strategic partnerships, and policies that promote long-term workforce stability. West Virginia hospitals remain committed to this work, and WVHA is proud to support those efforts as we work together to build a stronger, more resilient future for healthcare in our state.”

WVHA conducts workforce surveys twice each year to better understand workforce trends and support data-driven solutions. The information collected helps inform workforce advocacy efforts and provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and healthcare leaders working to strengthen the healthcare workforce across West Virginia.

About WVHA

The West Virginia Hospital Association is a not-for-profit statewide organization representing hospitals and health systems across the continuum of care. WVHA advocates for policies that support the delivery of quality healthcare in West Virginia. To learn more, visit: www.wvha.org.

WWW.SHINNSTONNEWS.COM



GENERAC

#1 standby generator worldwide.

Get whole-home power, automatically.

Call 844-901-2301 to schedule your free quote today!

*Terms & conditions apply

Super Crossword

Answers

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

West Virginia Statewide Classified Network

Featured in WVPA Newspapers Across West Virginia

HEALTH/MEDICAL

AUDIEN HEARING. The world's first hearing aid with touchscreen controls. No tiny buttons, apps or prescriptions. 45-day risk free trial. Free shipping. Lifetime support. More than 1.5 million happy customers. Call Audien 1-866-327-9323

DONT LET THE STAIRS LIMIT YOUR MOBILITY! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-844-592-5113

DENTAL INSURANCE from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400 plus procedures. Real dental insurance - NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your FREE Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-855-405-3412 [#6258](http://www.dental50plus.com/press)

INTERNET/TV

GET DISH SATELLITE TV + INTERNET! Free Install, Free HD-DVR Upgrade, 80,000 On-Demand Movies, Plus Limited Time Up To \$600 In Gift Cards. Call Today! 1-855-736-4350

CONSUMER CELLULAR - the same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest carriers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees and activation is free. All plans feature unlimited talk and text, starting at just \$20/month. For more information, call 1-855-615-6411

MISCELLANEOUS

DONATE YOUR CAR, TRUCK, BOAT, RV AND MORE TO SUPPORT OUR VETERANS! Schedule a FAST, FREE vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-888-964-4167 today

REPAIRING OR REPLACING APPLIANCES AND HOME SYSTEMS LIKE HEATING AND COOLING CAN BE COSTLY. A home warranty plan can help. Start saving and get 30% off any plan today. Workmanship Guarantee included. Terms apply. Call Cinch Home Services 1-855-968-0741

JACUZZI BATH REMODEL can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waiving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. (Offer ends 12/27/26.)

ACCULEVEL. YOUR FOUNDATION REPAIR AND BASEMENT WATER-PROOFING EXPERTS. Whether basement, crawl space or concrete slab we'll guide you on the right path to a healthy home. Act now! Up to \$600 off. Restrictions apply. Call for a free consultation. 1-833-974-2676

PREPARE FOR POWER OUTAGES TODAY with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-844-901-2301 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

UP TO \$15,000.00 OF GUARANTEED

LIFE INSURANCE! No medical exam or health questions. Cash to help pay funeral and other final expenses. Call Physicians Life Insurance Company- 888-217-5559 or visit www.Life55plus.info/wv

SAFE STEP. NORTH AMERICAS #1 WALK-IN TUB. Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our FREE shower package and \$1600 Off for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call Safe Step 1-844-803-1282

NO MORE CLEANING OUT GUTTERS. Guaranteed! LeafFilter is backed by a no-clog guarantee and lifetime transferable warranty. Call today 1-844-295-2840 to schedule a FREE inspection and no obligation estimate. Get 15% off your entire order. Plus, Military & Seniors get an additional 10% off. Limited time only. Restrictions apply, see representative for warranty and offer details.

TRAVEL

YMT VACATIONS. Over 50 guided tours available. Affordable, social and stress-free travel designed for mature travelers. Our tours include accommodations, transportation, baggage handling, sightseeing, entrance fees, a professional Tour Director and select meals. For a limited time SAVE \$250 on all tours. Call YMT today. 1-833-649-1532

Place YOUR statewide ad today
Call the WV Press at (304) 342-1011



WEST VIRGINIA
Press
ASSOCIATION • SERVICES • FOUNDATION

UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER’S HOME VISIT

HOUSE Call

HOW IMPORTANT IS SUNSCREEN?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S., largely driven by overexposure to the sun.



What should we look for in a sunscreen?

In the continental United States, UV rays tend to be strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daylight saving time and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. during standard time. Make sure to put on a broad spectrum sunscreen that filters out both UVA and UVB rays and has an SPF of 15 or higher before you go outside. Don’t forget to put a thick layer of sunscreen on all exposed skin. Get help for hard-to-reach places such as your back.

Is sunscreen safe for babies and children?

Sunscreen is not recommended for babies who are six months old or younger. The US Food and Drug Administration recommends keeping infants out of the sun during midday and using protective clothing if they have to be in the sun. Children, the elderly, and those with

special needs may need special attention or be more sensitive to sun. Parents and other caregivers should protect children from excess sun exposure.

What clothing provides the best protection from UV rays?

When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts, which can provide protection from UV rays. If wearing this type of clothing isn't practical, try to wear a T-shirt or beach cover-up. Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection. A wet T-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry T-shirt, and darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors. Some clothing is certified under international standards as offering UV protection.

HEATHER SWIGER, RT, (R)(T)
Radiation Oncology Manager
United Hospital Center
327 Medical Park Dr.,
Bridgeport, WV 26330



EXCEPTIONAL CARE GOES
BEYOND
MEDICINE.

WVU Medicine
UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER



Harmony Valley
Community for Seniors
An Independent Living Community for Seniors 55+ in a beautiful country setting located on Sun Valley Road off Rt. 50 West of Clarksburg. One & Two Bedroom Apartments Available. All Utilities Including Cable TV Provided. Major Appliances Furnished.
Call (304) 622-6711
or (304) 677-6800



MONONGAHELA VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF
HEALTH CENTERS
Shinnston Medical Center
1 Columbia Road
Shinnston, WV 26431
304-592-1040

“Dept of Ed”

cont. from p. 1

larger than typical special education population. Hardy County Schools superintendent Sheena Van Meter has suggested that an easy fix for the school aid funding formula could lie in increasing slightly the number of both faculty and service personnel paid for by the formula. The formula does not cover the salaries of most central office staff. That remains the complete responsibility of the county school system.

In December 2025, Pendleton County Schools Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer J. P. Mowery informed his board that “we employ under the formula, which is how we survive” and later added that a fiscally conservative approach is “how we balance the budget and keep all our schools open.”

He also explained at the time that school systems that employ over the formula generally enjoy added funds from a school levy or are in significant financial trouble. Mowery is a regular speaker on these issues with the West Virginia State Legislature and also often goes to Capitol Hill to educate Congress about the need to retain various federal funding streams that benefit West Virginia schools.

According to the WVDE, Harrison County Schools has both benefited from a school levy and also has fallen into significant financial trouble. The system has 1,430 total personnel, 239 over the formula and only about 150 of those funded by the excess levy.

This has taken place during a period of declining enrollment. Harrison County Schools has made unpopular decisions to consolidate schools such as Liberty High School as it faced increasing financial difficulties. It also passed a spending freeze in March of this year, but the report expressed doubts as to its effectiveness in addressing the shortfall. Problematic was the information gathered that suggested some principals worrying about delivering service adequately during the freeze while others reported no change at all.

Paul Hardesty, who recently returned to an unprecedented fourth straight term as West Virginia State Board of Education president, levied strong criticism at Harrison County Schools. He shared that one problem seemed to come from the presence of four former teachers on the five-man county Board of Education.

“Nobody wants to RIF their friends, but you know what? You have what’s called a fiduciary responsibility to manage the taxpayers’ funds in an appropriate manner to offer the best opportunities for the children of Harrison

County,” Hardesty was quoted by West Virginia Public Broadcasting as saying. “I’ve read this report three times, and I get more aggravated each time I read it. It says that basically that certain employees are off-limits because of certain board members. That don’t work, can’t work. I’m anxious to hear what the recommendation is to the department, but I think the good Lord told Hezekiah, you got to get your house in order, Harrison County, you better get your house in order.”

He noted that “almost 20 percent of the counties in this state” have found themselves in significant trouble due to a refusal to make the practical choices.

Repeated poor financial performance by a minority of school systems has fueled calls to abandon county systems altogether and create a regional system. Additionally, those systems that have made tough choices and performed within their financial parameters have to endure the added scrutiny, criticism, and regulation that often comes to address the poor performers.

Yet the report upon which the action was based includes more criticisms than the simply financial.

A five-member team from WVDE, four from its Office of Accountability, one being Jeffrey Kelley, Associate Superintendent of External Operations, reviewed HCS. Another member was Alexandria Criner, Director of the Office of Accountability. Criner told WV Public Broadcasting that “While enrollment has decreased steadily since 2019 the per pupil expenditure and personnel in excess of the funding formula have continued to increase.”

Its criticism focused on the “overreach” of the Harrison County Board of Education into HCS central office and school operations. Hardesty noted that a county Board only has oversight over a single employee, the Superintendent. The Superintendent has authority over operations.

The report cited continual “Board overreach into administration, including interference in staffing, scheduling, and discipline, advocacy for certain schools, programs or individuals, undermining of the Superintendent’s authority, and bypassing the established chain of command.”

One example described lay in “a lengthy board discussion focused on the honor society graduation regalia at one high school.” More significant problems have come from Board members basing selections of curriculum and programs based on teacher feedback when those decisions fall under the exclusive purview of the

SERVICES

ALL STATE PAVING Driveways, parking lots, basketball courts, resurfacing old asphalt, patchwork, seal coating – Machine laid and rolled – All Work guaranteed – Over 40 years experience – Licensed and insured- Competitive prices and discounts – Free Estimates – 304-472-8097. WV014137.

Superintendent.

It went on to cite a number of areas where Board members had acted beyond their legal authority in “active personnel investigations”, “grievance and discipline matters”, “and situations involving potential conflicts of interest or impropriety.”

While the State report noted that the Board supported the Superintendent, it also accused it of tying her hands in terms of her legal authority. Additionally it called for a “targeted review” of special education services.

Frank Devono Jr. , President of the Harrison County Board of Education, responded in a lengthy statement last week. He noted that HCS received “a positive independent audit from the West Virginia State Auditor’s Office” sharing that it “presented no findings” and “the Board’s financial statements were fairly presented in all material respects.”

He shared that “the Board’s overall net position increased by more than six million in this fiscal year” and that WVAO would have shared concerns if it found “immediate financial distress.”

Additionally, in recognition of the overstaffing issue, Devono stated that “the Board, the Superintendent have been reviewing options and brainstorming ideas to reduce staff responsibly.”

A loss of 400 students since 2024 and about 1,800 since 2019 have taken a toll on funding, shared Devono. He listed a number of steps taken by HCS and the Board to address budgetary concerns.

“We wholeheartedly acknowledge and respect the authority of the West Virginia State Board of Education and the Office of Accountability,” shared Devono, who added “unequivocally, we remain committed to collaborating with the Department of Education to address concerns identified in that report.”

Randolph County, which recently hired Pendleton County Middle/High School principal Dr. Derek Lambert as its new superintendent, has been released from its WVDE intervention. Roane County Schools, however, will continue under State supervision.

N&J Briefs

FROM AROUND HARRISON COUNTY

This Shinnston News provides a calendar of events free of charge to churches and nonprofit organizations. Please submit your listing two weeks prior to the event. Send via email to newsandjournal@yahoo.com.

Thursday, July 16, 2026

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 31 monthly meeting. Covered dish dinner 6 pm. Meeting 7 pm. Installation of officers. All members welcome. Bridge Street, Shinnston.

SHINNSTON

MCDONALD'S



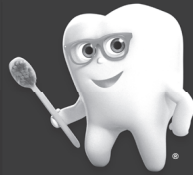
BOGO*
BIG MAC
SANDWICH

(Not to be used with a combo meal purchase)
Expires July 22, 2026

*BOGO - Buy One Get One Free
One per customer per visit, not to be used with any other offer, discount or within an EVM purchase. Valid at the Shinnston McDonald's only. Cash value 1/20 of 1 cent LwC. Must present this coupon prior to ordering.

DENTAL
Insurance

Big dental bills? Get protection.



Dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company, Inc.

Get your **FREE**
Information Kit
It's easy! Call or
scan today



1-855-405-3412

Product/features not available in all states. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. To find a network provider, go to physiciansmutual.com/find-dentist. This specific offer not available in CO, KS, NY, OR – call 1-800-969-4781 or respond for a similar offer in your state. Certificate C254/B465, (ID: C254ID; PA: C254PA); Insurance Policy P154/B469 (GA: P154GA; OK: P154OK; TN: P154TN).

6370



Don't forget to follow
us on Facebook to get
the latest in updates

**THANK YOU
FOR READING**

Donate Your Vehicle

Call (888) 964-4167 to donate
your car, truck, boat, RV,
and more today!

How it Works:



1. Contact Us
Call (888) 964-4167



2. Schedule Pickup
We'll pick up your vehicle
for FREE - at a time and
place convenient for you.



**3. Receive Top
Tax Deduction**
You may qualify for
a tax deduction.



- Support Veteran Nonprofits.
- Free Pickup & Towing.
- Top Tax Deduction.

Donate Your Vehicle Today

888-964-4167

www.veterancardonations.org/dnt36



While we appreciate every donation, in some cases, we find that we are unable to accept certain vehicles, watercraft, and/or recreational vehicles due to the prohibitive costs of acquisition. If you have any questions, please give us a call at (888) 964-4167.

WWW.SHINNSTONNEWS.COM

LEGAL

(2025-C-000302 - HARRISON COUNTY - OCCAM RESOURCES, LLC)

To: PAULA CARVELL, FREDERICK LEONARD HAND, MARK L CHOQUETTE, or heirs at law, devisees, creditors, representatives, successors, assigns, all known heirs, guardians, conservators, fiduciaries, administrators, lienholders, co-owners, other parties having an undivided interest in the delinquent property, and other parties that may have an interest in the subject property.

DISTRICT CLAY OUTSIDE DISTRICT MAP 9999 PARCEL 0671 4488 0000

You will take notice that OCCAM RESOURCES, LLC, the purchaser of the following real estate, **Cert No. 2025-C-000302**, located in CLAY OUTSIDE DISTRICT District, .0370 INT 96 AC O&G MUDLICK (CABOT/HARDESTY-API#23, which was returned delinquent or nonentered in the name of OWENS SHIRLEY HARDESTY (LE), and was sold by the deputy commissioner of delinquent and nonentered lands of HARRISON County at the sale for the delinquent taxes on May 7, 2026. OCCAM RESOURCES, LLC requests that you be notified a deed for such real estate on or after December 1, 2026, as provided by law, unless before that day you redeem such real estate. The amount needed to redeem on or before November 30, 2026, will be as follows:

Amount equal to the taxes and charges due on the date of the certification, with interest, for tax year ticket number 2023 - 16035.	\$	84.68
Back tax tickets, with interest, and charges due on the date of certification for ticket number.	\$	0.00
Subsequent of taxes paid on the property, with interest to for tax year 2025 - 16196.	\$	22.13
Additional taxes with interest.	\$	0.00
Auditor's Certification, Publication, and Redemption fee plus interest.	\$	209.40
Amount paid for Title Examination, notice to redeem, publication, personal service, Secretary of State with interest.	\$	443.42
Additional Statutory Fees with Interest.	\$	0.00
Total Amount Due and Payable to WV State Auditor - cashier check, money order, certified or personal check.	\$	759.63

You may redeem at any time before November 30, 2026 by paying the above total less any unearned interest. If the above real estate is your primary residence, you may petition the Auditor to redeem the real estate in not more than three incremental payments that equal the total mount required to redeem the real estate prior to the issuance of the deed described above.

Given under my hand June 24, 2026

Christal G. Perry
Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and Nonentered Lands of HARRISON County, State of West Virginia

Please return this letter and payment to the West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collections Division 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East Building 1, Room W-114 Charleston, West Virginia 25305. Questions, please call 1-888-509-6568

LEGAL

(2025-C-000292 - HARRISON COUNTY - OCCAM RESOURCES, LLC)

To: JACK E SOUTHERN, REBEKAH LYNN HILL, JAMES SOUTHRN, or heirs at law, devisees, creditors, representatives, successors, assigns, all known heirs, guardians, conservators, fiduciaries, administrators, lienholders, co-owners, other parties having an undivided interest in the delinquent property, and other parties that may have an interest in the subject property.

DISTRICT CLAY OUTSIDE DISTRICT MAP 9999 PARCEL 0662 9277 0000

You will take notice that OCCAM RESOURCES, LLC, the purchaser of the following real estate, **Cert No. 2025-C-000292**, located in CLAY OUTSIDE DISTRICT District, 73.47 AS O&G SHINN RUN (TRIO PETRO) 1/28 INT, which was returned delinquent or nonentered in the name of SOUTHERN ALMA G, and was sold by the deputy commissioner of delinquent and nonentered lands of HARRISON County at the sale for the delinquent taxes on May 7, 2026. OCCAM RESOURCES, LLC requests that you be notified a deed for such real estate on or after December 1, 2026, as provided by law, unless before that day you redeem such real estate. The amount needed to redeem on or before November 30, 2026, will be as follows:

Amount equal to the taxes and charges due on the date of the certification, with interest, for tax year ticket number 2023 - 16881.	\$	84.68
Back tax tickets, with interest, and charges due on the date of certification for ticket number.	\$	0.00
Subsequent of taxes paid on the property, with interest to for tax year 2025 - 17036.	\$	22.13
Additional taxes with interest.	\$	0.00
Auditor's Certification, Publication, and Redemption fee plus interest.	\$	209.40
Amount paid for Title Examination, notice to redeem, publication, personal service, Secretary of State with interest.	\$	443.42
Additional Statutory Fees with Interest.	\$	0.00
Total Amount Due and Payable to WV State Auditor - cashier check, money order, certified or personal check.	\$	759.63

You may redeem at any time before November 30, 2026 by paying the above total less any unearned interest. If the above real estate is your primary residence, you may petition the Auditor to redeem the real estate in not more than three incremental payments that equal the total mount required to redeem the real estate prior to the issuance of the deed described above.

Given under my hand June 24, 2026

Christal G. Perry
Christal G. Perry
Deputy Commissioner of Delinquent and Nonentered Lands of HARRISON County, State of West Virginia

Please return this letter and payment to the West Virginia State Auditor's Office, County Collections Division 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East Building 1, Room W-114 Charleston, West Virginia 25305. Questions, please call 1-888-509-6568

LEGAL

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Highways

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

Bids will be received electronically by the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways through the Bid Express Bidding Service (www.bidx.com) and by sealed proposals (only when prequalification is waived) being received at its office in Building 5, Room 843, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Charleston, West Virginia, until August 11, 2026 at 10:00 AM (Eastern Standard Time). The bids will be downloaded and/or opened and read publicly thereafter for the constructions of the following project(s):

Call	Contract	State Project	Federal Project	Description
002	2023170006	S317-NFB/R-0.01 00	STBG-2023(156)D	STRUCTURE RENOVATION NUTTERS FARM BRIDGE Nutter Ln, 0.03 MI E CO 25 COUNTY: HARRISON

BRIDGE:	9407.1	CONCRETE SLAB ON FABRICATED STEEL GIRDER
SPAN(S):	1	STRUCTURE STEEL:

Proposals will be received from prequalified and West Virginia licensed contractors only except that on Federal-Aid Projects a contractors' license is not required at time of bid, but will be required before work can begin. Registration is required with the Department of Administration, Division of Purchasing, in accordance with Chapter 5A, Article 3, Section 12 of the West Virginia Code. All contractors submitting bids on project(s) must include one of the following forms properly executed with each proposal: Proposal Guaranty Bond, Cashier's Check, or Certified Check for \$500.00 or 5% of the total bid, whichever is greater.

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways reserves the right to defer, delay or postpone the date for receiving and publicly opening proposals for any project designated in this advertisement, without the necessity of renewing such advertisement. The deferment, delay, postponement, and the date that proposals will be received and publicly opened will be available on www.bidx.com.

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in consideration for an award.

Treasurer Pack Announces Winning Bid from June Online Firearms Auction

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – State Treasurer Larry Pack today announced the winning bid amount from the June online firearms auction was \$60,492.00 placed from a federal firearm licensed dealer in West Virginia. This was the Office’s second online firearms auction held in 2026, and seventh overall online firearms auction since last year.

More than 15 bids were submitted from licensed dealers spanning across nine states. There were 489 firearms sold from 18 law enforcement agencies across West Virginia that were up for bid.

“Safer communities are crucial to a better West Virginia. That is why we must do everything in our power to support these departments. This online auction was a success in terms of participation both from law enforcement and firearm dealers placing bids, as well as the value we received that will go back to those agencies,” Treasurer Pack said. “My Office is thrilled to return this money to 18 law enforcement agencies across the state and announce a West Virginia federal firearms licensed dealer as the winning bid.”

The following agencies participated in the June 2026 online firearms auction:

- Hampshire County Sheriff’s Office

- Harrison County Sheriff’s Office
 - Kanawha County Sheriff’s Office
 - Morgantown Police Department
 - Mountain Region Drug & Violent Crime Task Force
 - Parkersburg Police Department
 - Preston County Sheriff’s Office
 - Raleigh County Sheriff’s Office
 - Randolph County Sheriff’s Office
 - Vienna Police Department
 - Weston Police Department
 - WV Division of Natural Resources Police – Beckley, French Creek, Romney Detachments
 - WV State Police – Clay, Parsons, Romney, Wayne Detachments
- In 2025, the Treasurer’s Office sold 2,347 firearms for a total of \$452,073 from one in-person live auction and five online auctions.
- More information about State Treasurer’s Office’s firearms auctions is available at www.wvtreasury.gov/FFL-Auction.
- To learn about the unclaimed property program or to find out if the Office is holding any money for you or your family, visit www.WVUnclaimedProperty.gov.

Stonewood CEOS Discuss Health Habits For Better Living

By Estella Farnsworth

The Stonewood CEOS club met at the Congregational Missionary Church fellowship hall. The meeting was called to order by President Ladonna Tucker and members welcomed. A candle was lit in memory of the deceased members. Devotions entitled “Mornings with Jesus” were read by Terri Jo Boyers. Members present were Ladonna Tucker, Deloris Wilson, Estella Farnsworth, Lesita Snider, Eva Summers, Terri Jo Boyers, April Stout and Willa Jean Green. Members recited the American and WV flag salutes. Treasurer’s report given by Ladonna in the absence of treasurer Pam Cowdrey; it was accepted to be filed for audit. Minutes of last meeting were read and accepted as read. Terri Jo had the lesson today entitled Happy, Healthy Hobbies. Some examples of hobbies of our members include Reading, word search, and crossword puzzles which aid in improving our cognitive health. Walking, swimming, and yoga for example can improve our stamina and physical health. Terri also brought an assortment of fresh fruits for a healthy snack and led members in leg raises to strengthen calf muscles. Committee reports: Family; April will be collecting duffle bags, small suitcases, and backpacks to be donated the the Genesis Center for children who are discharged to use for their clothes and other belongings. A member of the church that works at the center will deliver them; they will be greatly appreciated.

Continuing education chair Eva reminded members of the short story, poems, and photo entrance deadlines of August 1st. Deloris gave a book report entitled A Mother’s Gift by Charlotte Hubbard; if you’re looking for a good read, please check it out. We are putting finishing touches on our throw to be donated to the Stonewood VFD for a raffle at the annual Firefighter’s festival in August. We are very proud of how it turned out. You could be the lucky winner, you never know.

Show and share today was brought by Eva; a handmade Betsy Rabbit doll, it was very pretty and meticulously made; Deloris brought a mid-century metal meat/cheese slicer and Terri brought samples of different types of adult bibs that she made which were very pretty, we plan to make several different styles to be donated to local nursing homes. Willa Jean, health motivator reminded us to be cognizant of ticks and mosquitoes this summer; they can cause serious illnesses. Standing water in bird baths, flower pots and gutters are examples that attractive to mosquitoes. Wear long pants and long sleeves whenever possible and treat yourself with insect repellant to prevent getting ticks and mosquito bites. Always check your pets for ticks when they have been outside.

New business: A motion was made by April Stout and seconded by Terri Jo Boyers to retain the present club officers for another year. We will make plans to invite a visiting club later this year. Reminders: County picnic July 6 @6pm; bring cleaning items for donation; be sure to bring your Blue yearbook to next meeting.

We collected 21 boxes of Hamburger Helper and 24 packages of Ramen Noodles for donation to the Mustard Seed today; next month donation will be cans of Manwich. Next meeting will be on July 20th. Be careful being out in the heat, stay hydrated, don’t exert yourself, and don’t get overheated. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.

CVH 496.5
Books read 17

Capito Applauds Mine Rescue and Emergency Preparedness Grant Funding Opportunity

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Today, U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Chairman of the Labor, Health, and Human Services (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee, applauded the availability of up to \$250,000 in Brookwood-Sago Mine Safety Grants from the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The funding will support mine safety, health education, and mine emergency preparedness efforts.

The Brookwood-Sago Grant Program honors the West Virginia miners lost in the 2006 Sago Mine disaster. The program was created by the MINER Act, which Senator Capito introduced while serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. This funding will enhance mine safety by funding the development and implementation of mine safety training exercises.

“Coal mining is a proud tradition here in the Mountain State, and the men and women who work in our mines deserve every resource possible to keep them safe,” Senator Capito said. “Investments in mine safety training and equipment are critical to ensuring our mine rescue teams and fire brigades are prepared to respond when it matters most. I applaud the DOL for making this funding available and encourage eligible localities and organizations in West Virginia to take advantage of this opportunity.”



Valley Link Project to Add Urgently Needed Capacity, Heading Off Future Power Reliability Problems

By Stephen Smoot

Two weeks ago, PJM Interconnection LLC shared an alert that many on social media turned intentionally or unintentionally into unnecessary scare posts. The organization, which manages the electric grid in 13 states, operates between the Atlantic and the Mississippi, and between Virginia’s southern border and Pennsylvania’s northern. Its mission lies in ensuring grid reliability while also keeping costs down as low as possible.

The alert was intended for certain select customers who had agreed to reduce their power consumption during peak times. This list ranges from residential to large commercial customers. They receive a benefit for the voluntary move. Also, PJM’s diligence prevented the need to ask all customers to swelter in the heat without benefit of sufficient air conditioning, as New York State asked its system customers to do.

The same alert was issued in June of 2025 with the added request of electric power companies to defer scheduled maintenance of lines and other infrastructure until maximum levels of demand decreased somewhat.

While not an emergency in the short term, these alerts indicate a long-term problem. Power demand has increased dramatically in the 21st century. While data centers are the popular target of blame, long-term consumer trends have driven the problem as well.

For example, in the 1980s and 90s, most at-home recreation did not require electric power. The rise of high capacity systems for video gaming and also the increased need of more powerful computing for professional and business needs drove demand up sharply before the common use of artificial intelligence and its increased need for expanding infrastructure of data centers.

Also in the past two decades, the Mountain State has seen extraordinary success in adding large-scale manufacturing across the state, from Proctor and Gamble and Clorox in Berkeley County to the Nucor steel mill near Point Pleasant. These have driven the state economy forward and have brought thousands of jobs and significant tax revenues to state and local governments, but also add to electric power demand as well.

Within the PJM system the Valley North project, as Valley Link explains, will bring added capacity to grid infrastructure. This will mitigate the burdens brought by increasing demand and hold off the threat of mandatory power reduction for all customers or grid shutdowns.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation serves as a non profit entity that

observes and reports on the different grid systems, such as PJM Interconnection, that serve North America north of the Mexican - U.S. border. It issued a report in January on the long-term grid reliability for PJM, given current conditions.

Through the end of 2028, PJM is rated as seeing “elevated risk.” To that entity, that describes “a region where resource adequacy criteria are technically met, but planned power resources are likely to result in energy shortfalls or operating challenges during extreme peak conditions” such as PJM faced in the first week of July.

Starting in 2029 PJM, if current capacity is not expanded, is expected to enter the “high-risk” realm as power demand starts to outstrip grid capacity. This “increases the risk of load loss or rolling blackouts during extreme weather or periods of high electricity demand.”

PJM Interconnection relies heavily on power production in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. West Virginia Governor Patrick Morrissey’s 50 by 50 plan to expand electric power production would make the Mountain State part of the solution in meeting those needs and also helping to stabilize grid capacity for the long term.

West Virginia, through PJM, is in the same pool of production and consumption as the other states in the system.

Lauren Siburkis, a spokesperson for Valley Link, explained the need for the project and also the positive impacts it could bring to local communities along the planned lines. The company is holding open houses in each county that will host a section of the project.

She explained that “the Valley North Project is designed to move electricity to where it’s needed most across West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland.” Added capacity is critical, she states, because “demand continues to grow rapidly due to new industries, technology, and population needs our existing grid is being pushed closer to its limits.”

Along with NERC and PJM, Siburkis confirms that failure to add to capacity will cause a higher “risk of service interruptions, voltage issues, and even broader outages over time.” She compares the electric grid to the highways system in that a major transmission line serves the same purpose as an interstate highway or Appalachian Corridor project. It allows “traffic” to move more efficiently and also avoid local “congestion” that could cause customers problems in high peak demand periods.

Not adding more capacity to address rising power demand would have the same effect of not improving highway systems when a community adds population and business over time.

“One of the most common misconceptions,” stated Siburkis, “is that this project is simply ‘pass-through’ infrastructure that doesn’t benefit West Virginia or local communities. That is not accurate.” Primarily, it will provide a “foundation” for growth locally and more broadly while adding capacity to maintain reliable service overall.

Siburkis also shared that the project will “create both short-term and long-term economic benefits for the communities they serve.” First, “transmission infrastructure contributes to local tax bases that help essential public services.” The company operating the lines pays taxes that support schools and county needs such as fire, EMS, basic infrastructure, and other needs.

She added that “industry and federal research shows that every one dollar invested in infrastructure can generate up to \$1.50 to \$2.50 in broader economic activity, a dynamic called in economics “the multiplier effect.”

Construction will require hundreds of workers from a broad spectrum of fields whose money will go into the local economy. Over the long-term, compensation to landowners hosting parts of the infrastructure will continue to add to economic growth. Though not on the same scale, a year of major natural gas pipeline construction in Jackson County several years ago gave it the biggest economic boost of any county in the nation.

Connection to these lines “helps connect communities to commerce and opportunity.” Companies seeking to expand or invest, she explained, will prefer a local area with access to reliable power.

Valley Link’s schedule of open houses, Siburkis explained gives local residents “in all potentially affected areas (an opportunity to) participate in the public open house process where they can review preliminary routes, speak directly with project representatives, and provide feedback that will help inform future decisions.” The process will include “early” and transparent communication, one-on-one work with landowners, gathering local information to reduce or mitigate potential impacts and adjusting when needed, and providing fair compensation.

Siburkis added that the company will take into account environmental, cultural, historical, and community impact while making final determinations along its routes.

Valley Link will hold a community meeting on Tuesday July 21 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at South Harrison High School

“Our goal,” she stated, “is to be open about these real challenges and the role this project plays in addressing them so that people are informed, not alarmed.”

Shinnston Little League Approved for Support By County Commission

By Stephen Smoot

On July 1, the Harrison County Commission held its first meeting of the month of July and also for fiscal year 2027. It opened with the customary invocation by Commissioner Patsy Trecost, who prayed “Help us to be faithful in our prayer so that we may glorify You . . . in Jesus’ name we pray.”

One of the first items of business lay in approving a letter to engage the law firm Steptoe and Johnson in “relation to the modification of the project plan and extension of the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District for Development District Number Four White Oaks Industrial Park.

Tom Aman from Steptoe and Johnson noted that without approval from the development office and County Commission “that would terminate the engagement” which is established “just for the efforts to modify the district.”

Commissioners David Hinkle and Patsy Trecost noted the lack of progress thus far and suggested periods of time for the Commission to revisit the issue and receive updates. Commissioner Hinkle suggested six months and Commissioner Trecost a year.

Commissioner Trecost stated “that way it gives you a chance to do your due diligence and move forward” while Commissioner Hinkle noted “they haven’t gotten anything started or moved in six months.”

Aman shared that “I just need to get some information from the developer to complete it and then I’ll be ready to put that in front of you all . . . so I think you’ll be seeing some progress within a month.”

Commissioner Hinkle then raised questions about the potential use of artificial intelligence, saying “do we have to agree to that?” Aman replied that they use AI software that is completely

separated and closed off from other systems. When Commissioner Hinkle asked about a company policy on AI use and staff training on effective use.

After Aman replied that staff receive training on identifying inaccuracies and other issues, Commissioner Hinkle said “sounds like a good policy” then made the motion to meet in six months “with automatic renewal for another six months if progress is being made.” The motion also excluded AI from the contract, which Aman said was acceptable.

Harrison County Commission President Susan Thomas noted that “it’s ironic” that AI had come up because “we’re looking at an AI policy today.” Commissioner Hinkle added “I love that their policy is a closed system and that they’re using and giving their people training. And I don’t see that in our policy and it’s something I think we need to take under further guidance in our policy.”

The City of Salem then came forward to request \$1,500 to assist their events committee “to celebrate America’s 250th anniversary.”

Commissioners later approved a \$2,000 request from the City of Clarksburg to defer some of the cost of their fireworks display. They then voted in favor of \$1,500 requests from the Harrison County Sheriff’s Department and the cities of Clarksburg and Bridgeport for National Night Out events. This event takes place across the country and helps law enforcement officers develop engagement with the community in a fair and festival type atmosphere.

Amy Comer, the new City Manager, made the request for “funding for not only the support for the decorations, which we will be using year after year, and for investment in future events. Commissioners approved the request unanimously.

Shinnston Little League also came to request

assistance “to go to the West Virginia State Baseball Tournament in Barboursville” from July 17 through the 24th. Corey Hagan spoke on behalf of the organization on Zoom. He said “I’m not asking for a set amount, but it takes a lot for 12 kids to go down there and stay for hotels, meals.” Hagan reminded Commissioners that the team won the state championship in 2025 “and we were down there for nine days because of rainouts, so it does take a a lot.”

Commission President Thomas asked her colleagues “are we okay with three?” They then approved \$3,000 to support the squad.

Next came discussion of nuisance properties with the news that one near Shinnston had been cleaned up, but another near Mount Clare “has gotten far worse.”

Not long after came a discussion and update on Rail Trail progress.

After that discussion, covered elsewhere, Commissioners discussed the Harrison County Artificial Intelligence Policy. It was assembled in part, said County attorney Trey Simmerman, from guidance by State code and the National Association of Counties.

Commissioner Hinkle inquired about limitations or “platforms that are strictly for government.” Simmerman affirmed that “we can look at a closed system, closed AI.”

Commission President Thomas stated “we need to know what’s going on where” and after further discussion, concluded “it looks like we need to do more work.”

After Simmerman stated that he was not aware of a State policy, Commissioner Hinkle said “so well, let’s make us number one. Let’s make us the model.”

At the close of the meeting, Commissioners authorized a “substantial grant” submission to fund work on the former Sunset Ellis property.



Valuable Learning From A Carpenter’s Son

Among the many lessons we are taught when we are young are to be patient, to be tolerant, and to be forgiving; continuing to harbor bitterness doesn’t solve a problem. In life, there are times when we may “have words” with family members, friends, co-workers, but what is solved by holding on to anger and hostility? It will likely grow as will the distance between you and those involved. Living with resentment or seeking revenge is not the answer either. That only builds a taller fence that neither party can climb.

I am reminded of a story of two brothers who lived on adjoining farms. They had farmed beside one another for nearly 40 years, always sharing machinery and helping each other with labor. One day, however, they exchanged hostile words and their relationship fell apart. What began as a small misunderstanding grew into a major rift between them that went on and on for months.

One morning, the older brother answered a knock at his door and found a carpenter and his son looking for work. “Yes”, the older brother said, “in fact I do have a job for you.” He explained the angry words that had passed between him and his younger brother and that his brother had spitefully taken his bulldozer to the river levee and put a wide creek between their two properties. So he told the carpenter and his son to use a massive pile of lumber located by his barn and build an 8-foot fence so he wouldn’t even be able to see his brother’s farm any longer.

This saddened the carpenter’s son that their relationship had been severed and a fence would only make it worse, but he told the farmer he could handle the job alone and his father could possibly help the farmer with other chores; and he got to work carrying the lumber, measuring, sawing and pounding. At the end of the day when the sun began to set, the farmer was anxious to see the finished product, and he was astonished – there was NO FENCE! Instead there stood a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other – an extraordinary piece of work with handrails.

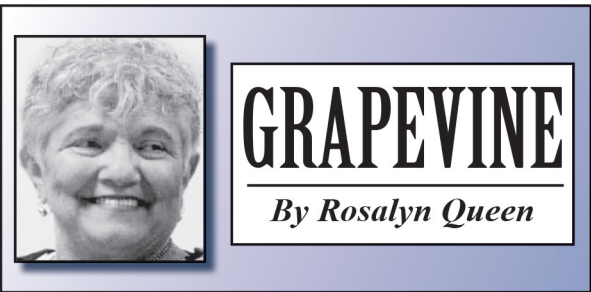
Standing at the other end of the bridge was the farmer’s younger brother. “You’re right,” he said. “We needed to build a bridge across our troubled waters. Our history is so rich with good memories, and there are more to be shared.”

As he retrieved his toolbox, the carpenter’s son simply smiled as the two brothers met in the middle and shook hands.

If you are familiar with the Bible, you know that Jesus was also a carpenter’s son and He taught His followers about being gracious and forgiving and that it cleanses the soul while it heals broken relationships.

This is just one of many lessons we can learn from carpenter’s sons about the importance of communicating and moving beyond our differences.

Quote of the Week: *“We build too many walls and not enough bridges.” ~ Isaac Newton*



What a wonderful weekend I had celebrating the U S A’s 250 th birthday. I never felt so proud as I did this weekend. It started with the Progressive Women’s Association Women Of Distinction Luncheon which opened up with the VFW playing taps for those military who gave their lives and continued with the honoring of six women who served in the military. It closed with birthday cake and singing Happy Birthday.

I left there all pumped up and went home and put out a few flags and checked a few programs on television that I knew I would enjoy watching.

While searching for my flags I ran across a photo of my father when he served with the Marines in Nicaragua. This was back in 1922 - 24. My father was an Italian immigrant. Who came to the United States in 1911. He acquired his citizenship and then dreamed of joining the military. He told us the story of his wanting to join the service that he even lied about his birthdate. He would have been 17 and put his date of birth making him 18. We verified this when we got his military records for his retirement and they wanted him to retire a year earlier.

He always told us the story about wanting to join the Marines. He read the Marine enlistment slogan, “The Few, The Proud.” And being the proud man that he was this was where he wanted to go. So he did enlist and it always seemed to make him believe that he was among the few who got to be a Marine.

“Ferguson”

events originated to replace Shinnston’s long-running annual Frontier Days celebration, which floundered during and following COVID.

“The COVID pandemic really affected our social climate and, to be honest, finding fair/ carnival companies interested in coming here became difficult; they seemed to prefer to book gated festivals where admission fees were charged,” Gallagher stated. “That is when we initiated the Shindy event, and it has flourished, with noticeable growth each year. Attendance is not limited to just folks from our community either; we’ve had visitors from throughout north central West Virginia and even some from Pennsylvania, Michigan, Indiana and Tennessee! It has done so well that it too has become an annual event.”

Gallagher is the Economic Developer and Event Planner for the City of Shinnston, and thanks to his many contacts with Mountain State artists through Born & Bred Studio’s dealings with WV artists and musicians, finding talent has not posed a problem.

Shindy 2026 will feature regional artists from WV who enjoy touring, performing, and offering a great mix of musical genres. Headlining this year’s Shindy festival will be Dalchord, a four-piece group that hails from Charleston and offers folk/rock selections. Others performing will include Grace Campbell (pop rock), Trevor Cooke (hip hop), Emmalea Deal & The Hot Mess (rock & country), Hello June (Americana/folk), Maximus (country), and Gallagher himself (acoustic pop).

Why this story? My father was so proud and he instilled this pride in us. He never told us much about Nicaragua but we were always reminded by the presence of his Marine trunk and his uniform. Every time I see a Marine there is a soft spot in my heart.

Fray Queen, my children’s father also served in the military. He joined in 1954 and served in Germany. Although our children did not join the military, they continued to serve our country as elected officials. Senator Ben Queen is the fourth generation to serve our community. I like to think that the pride my father had in this country has been passed down to all the members of our family.

A belated thank you to my dad for his service. Continuing with the birthday celebration, I am a fireworks and Ferris wheel and merry go round kid at heart. Every time I saw the Ferris wheel in D.C. I relived a lot of childhood memories. I thought about the Merry Go Round I rode at the base of the Eiffel Tower and another located at the Brooklyn Bridge. The Ferris wheel always reminded me of the carnivals at Norwood Park always on the Fourth of July. I watched the fireworks on Bridgeport Hill with my family and especially with my great grandson Arthur. He oohed and ahed with me with every display. They were beautiful. I guess at 86 I was acting like a child but that’s ok we can all do that if we want to.

My memories are many and my pride in the United States is unsurpassable. I can speak from the heart as I have traveled to Europe many times and many other places that makes me want to shout out to all those who are not proud to be living in this country. We have a lot to be thankful for.

To all my readers continue to celebrate this special birthday, stay healthy, stay cool and until next week”Now You Have Heard It Through The Grapevine.”

cont. from p. 1

“While this is kind of a celebration of the music culture of our state, it is not strictly music,” Gallagher added. “There will also be inflatables and a few rides for kids, plenty of food and drink trucks, a tap beer truck, a mini-market offering seasonal vegetables along with a mix of craft vendors. The pool will also be open with its regular hours that day, so there will be plenty of activity at our park!”

Attendees are encouraged to bring their outdoor chairs, blankets, canopies, etc. and enjoy a hopefully beautiful day at the park. Shindy 2026 begins at 1 p.m. and will shut down around 9 p.m.

Gallagher concluded, “We enjoy being able to bring people together in a festival-like atmosphere! For a small community, and despite having a limited budget, we offer a lot of activities for people to take part in, and we’re proud to offer these opportunities.”

Don’t forget that Shinnston will also host ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ (also admission-free) on July 19th, (beginning at 7 p.m.) with The Rustic Mechanicals performing A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM, its city-wide yard sale on July 25th, its final Wind Down Wednesday event on the Green on September 2nd (beginning at 6 p.m.), and Fall Fest in October!

Please watch for upcoming details in the *News & Journal* about the annual “Party on the Green” hosted by Shinnston High School alumni in the very near future – another August event open to the public!

Response to Office of Accountability Findings

Statement by Frank Devono Jr - President of Harrison County Board of Education

The West Virginia Department of Education’s Office of Accountability presented their findings based upon an on-site review earlier this year. The result of their actions are to intervene by taking partial control over the district. This measure is understandably a disappointment to our entire school system, the community, and most especially to the board members. We wholeheartedly acknowledge and respect the authority of the West Virginia State Board of Education and the Office of Accountability, and unequivocally, we remain committed to collaborating with the Department of Education to address the concerns identified in its report.

The responsibility of elected leadership is to focus on solutions facing the challenges of factors that influence system wide changes. We board members strive to provide open and honest information to the public and to all employees of the system. Board meetings are live streamed and community members, parents, and students are invited to speak as a delegation to express their concerns. Students and all board personnel accomplishments are valued and many receive recognition at board meetings.

Sadly, Harrison County Schools’ student enrollment has declined by more than 400 students

between the 2024 and 2025 school years and has declined by an alarming 1,800 students since 2019. Because state funding is distributed to the county based upon student enrollment therefore, this formula means “fewer students equal less state aid” to the county. Despite increasing operational costs, we shall continue with our diligent responses to funding for operations. These decisions are never easy. Board members understand the impact of reduced funding for personnel and programs. They affect employees, schools, and communities that we care deeply about. Nevertheless, they are necessary steps toward creating a financially sustainable school system while preserving as many classroom positions and student program and learning opportunities as possible.

From 2024 to current day, our educational leadership has recognized and acknowledged how declining enrollments impact changes in the state aid formula. Thus, requiring us to implement new planning strategies to enforce difficult financial compliance decisions. For two years, our team has addressed ways to comply with maintaining a balanced operation. Today’s report reminds everyone involved in this process that “change is a process and requires time, care, cooperation, understanding, and persistence.” Throughout the past two years, board members, along with our entire school system have carried out the following measures towards achieving necessary changes:

- Reduced costs through retirements, employee transfers, attrition, school consolidations.
- Eliminated approximately 140 positions without firing employees. (RIF)
- Maintained programs and analyzed student/teacher ratios
- Established a countywide spending freeze affecting vehicle and equipment purchases, overtime, substitutes, contracted services, supplies, travel, etc...
- Recent consolidations of high school, middle and elementary schools Community and School System Assurances:
- Be confident that every Harrison County school board member comprehends the seriousness of the Office of Accountability’s findings, regarding enrollment trends and the impact on county operations continuing to maintain longterm sustainability of the public’s funds.
- Rest assured we will continue to work diligently with all stakeholders, as we have for the past 2 years, to address all factors impacting students, teachers, and all personnel.
- The board members have previously entrusted the superintendent and the instructional leadership team to continue evaluating more, (ex: secondary instructional schedules, aligning staffing with enrollment). These efforts have been discussed in public board meetings should

American Legion Celebrates 250 Years of Freedom



Pictured is American Legion Post 31 Commander, Darren Hardman, decked out in his Fourth of July finery. Photo provided by Margaret Yost.

The American Legion Family (Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and Riders) of American Legion Post 31 in Shinnston celebrated the Fourth of July on Saturday,



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 31 members take a well-deserved break at the conclusion of the festivities. Pictured left to right: Marsha Duckworth, Roxie Nicholson, Carla Wilfong, Margaret Yost and Sharon Duckworth. Not pictured: Dortha Parsons and Betsy Turner. Photo provided by Robin Shingleton.

July 4, 2026 from 2 - 4 pm with a dinner for members, family and guests. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 31 prepared a picnic style meal of hot dogs with all

the fixings, potato casserole, a variety of salads and desserts. The event was considered a success with approximately 80 people in attendance.

“Response”

cont. from p. 9

be part of the long-term sustainability strategy and planning. Something that has already been discussed openly Additional Financial Assurances:

- Harrison County School system is not financially mis-managed and is financially solvent.
- The county continues to maintain a positive unrestricted fund balance, which is being used to provide financial stability while long-term changes are discussed and implemented in a deliberate and responsible manner rather than through sudden reductions that would unnecessarily disrupt students and employees.
- In March of 2026, The Harrison County Board of Education received a positive independent audit from the WestVirginia State Auditor’s Office. The audit presented no findings, and concluded that “the board’s financial statements were fairly presented in all material respects”. The report also stated that the board’s overall net position increased by more than \$6 million during the fiscal year. The audit also reflected a healthy unrestricted fund balance available to support operations while long-term adjustments are implemented. If there had been any known concerns about the financial stability of the county the State Auditors Office is required to disclose those items and the issues in their report. No

such disclosures were made indicating Harrison County School is in immediate financial distress

- The school building authority has approved millions of dollars designated for capital projects that required substantial local matching funds to complete. There are additional projects currently in progress that are allocated in capital improvement funds.
- The above findings demonstrate that Harrison County schools have “maintained sound financial stewardship while confronting significant demographic and funding challenges.” Important Community Support for Public Education:
- Another important part of this discussion is the support our community has consistently demonstrated for public education.
- It is crucial to understand that the Harrison County excess levy has allowed our system to provide educational opportunities and staffing levels beyond those funded by the state aid formula. According to the Office of Accountability, approximately 150 positions currently exist because of local levy support. Our citizens have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to invest in our schools, our employees, and, most importantly, our students.
- At the same time, that local levy funding alone cannot permanently offset the long-term effects

of declining enrollment. That is why the board, and the superintendent have been reviewing options and brainstorming ideas, to reduce staffing responsibly via attrition, retirements, transfers, vacancy elimination, and, if necessary, reductions in force.

Conclusion and Final Remarks:

The Office of Accountability’s action by the West Virginia State Board does not change our commitment to our students and our community.

The Office of Accountability’s report identifies governance, operational, and special education matters that deserve careful attention. We will review each recommendation thoroughly and work with the West Virginia Department of Education to strengthen our governance practices and ensure that every decision continues to place students first.

Leadership is tested during difficult moments—not by avoiding challenges, but by confronting those challenges with honesty, professionalism, and determination.

That is exactly what I plan to do.

Our employees, our students, our families, and our taxpayers deserve nothing less.

Frank Devono Jr.
President
Harrison County Board of Education
Response to Office of Accountability

PJM Implements Electric Supply Load Management Protocols As Heat Wave Drives Demand

By Stephen Smoot

Recently, West Virginia Metro News’s T. J. Meadows reported that PJM Interconnection had undertaken a preload emergency management reduction action across its system. This measure came in response to the Independence Day Week heat wave that has settled in the Eastern United States.

It also released a Maximum Generation Alert for July 3.

That said, the organization also stated that “this alert does not require any action from customers.”

PJM Interconnection, according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, “operates a competitive wholesale energy market and manages the reliability of its transmission grid.” That grid serves the Mid Atlantic and part of the Midwest into the Chicago area.

Its main pillars of energy production rest on facilities in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Its job lies in both ensuring the reliability of electric power while trying to keep consumer costs as low as possible. They do this through promoting grid capacity by encouraging adding supply to meet demand and also for added transmission lines to carry the increasing burden of national power demands.

West Virginia Governor Patrick Morrissey along with the West Virginia State Legislature have enacted policies to help PJM Interconnection meet rising demand in its area covering 13 states and the District of Columbia. This has helped PJM consumers avoid some of the problems afflicting other parts of the nation.

New York State, which uses its own system, called for voluntary load management from its system customers last week, asking them to keep thermostats in the high 70s to prevent power

disruption. The Empire State has embraced “Green” policies over the past several years that block relatively inexpensive Appalachian natural gas from power production and also closed the Indian Point nuclear power plant that once supplied 25 percent of New York City’s power.

Reducing the supply of power for that system has forced New Yorkers to deal with the consequences of those policies. Also, since it is in a different system, its dysfunction does not affect PJM Interconnection’s system. Should PJM Interconnection’s ability to supply power fail to keep up with demand due to too little electricity generated by power plants, its average consumers could face similar issues as New Yorkers have so far this month.

PJM Interconnection advocates for policies at the state and federal level that will keep consumer rates as low as possible in the long-term as well. This includes advocating for policies that data center operations not pass on the added cost of their power to residential or other business customers. The West Virginia State Legislature, for example, followed this lead and mandated that data centers pay for their own electrical upgrades while also encouraging them to develop “microgrids,” independent sources of power that do not draw from the grid. Nor could they sell power to others to compete with the grid.

A preload emergency management reduction represents an early step in response to spikes in demand. One could consider electric power almost like a financial budget in this sense. PJM Interconnection has agreements in place with certain consumers to reduce use in ways that will not affect the average consumer. The purpose lies in keeping rates flat while also ensuring a steady flow of power.

One could consider it the same as reducing the weekly eating out at a restaurant part of the budget to help pay for an unexpected car repair. The budget remains in good shape, but requires moving

resources around.

According to PJM Interconnection, it works because their “Demand Response programs pay customers in advance who sign up to allow reduction of their electricity use in emergencies.”

PJM Interconnected had to take these steps in June of 2025. In the wake of power demand hitting its highest level since 2011 last year, the organization released details. It stated that “PJM served a preliminary hourly integrated peak load of 160,526 MW between 5 and 6 p.m. Eastern on June 23. This exceeds PJM’s summer forecast load of 154,000 MW and is the highest demand recorded on the PJM system since 2011.”

One megawatt powers approximately 800 homes.

In addition to the pre load emergency reduction action, it also declared a maximum generation alert.

Last Thursday, PJM Interconnection reported that “its peak instantaneous load was approximately 162,700 MW between 5 and 6 p.m., according to preliminary figures, but that figure was suppressed by the use of demand response programs. The peak load is likely to have surpassed the all-time PJM record of 165,600 MW set in 2006.”

It explained also that “PJM coordinates with its generation and transmission owners as we respond to the needs of the grid in real-time based on actual conditions to preserve reliability for the 67 million people we serve.”

The Maximum Generation Alert, explains PJM Interconnection “is targeted at transmission/generation owners, who then determine if any maintenance or testing on equipment can be deferred or canceled. By deferring maintenance, the units stay online and continue to produce energy that is needed to serve electricity demand within the PJM region.”

Relief came last weekend as rains returned to the region, ushering in somewhat lower temperatures.