

# THE ENTERPRISE

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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE SINCE 1876 | Dedicated to serving the communities of Patrick County



The Patrick County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission held a joint meeting on June 18.

## Solar facilities and tall structures top ordinance priority list

By Taylor Boyd

Solar power, including batteries, and tall structures, like windmills and communication towers, were at the top of the priority list of ordinances to be reviewed and created during a joint meeting between the Patrick County Board

of Supervisors and Planning Commission on June 18.

Festival special events, short-term rentals, manufactured homes, derelict homes, and a subdivision ordinance also were among the priorities discussed.

(See Solar Facilities p. 3)

## Cao secures GOP nomination

By Staff Reports

After handily winning the June 18 Republican Primary in Patrick County and other areas of Virginia, Hung Cao will face off against incumbent U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Richmond, in November.

In Patrick County, Cao received 62.44 percent of the vote with 369 ballots, according to the Virginia Department of Elections.

Edward C. "Eddie" Garcia Jr. garnered 77 votes, or 13.03 percent. C.L. "Chuck" Smith Jr. received 11.68 percent of the votes, with 69 ballots; Scott Thomas Parkinson received 7.28 percent and 43 votes and Jonathan W. Emord earned 5.58 percent, or 33 votes.

In Virginia, Cao received 61.79 percent, or 168,748 ballots. The second top vote-getter was Parkinson with 10.95 percent and 29,918 ballots, followed by Garcia, with 9.79 percent



Hung Cao will face incumbent U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Richmond, in the November election.

and 26,747 votes; Smith with 8.82 percent and 24,087 ballots and Emord with 8.64 percent and 23,601 votes, according to the state website.

## New YouTube series highlights county

By Taylor Boyd

A fairly new YouTube series was started to help promote the county and its tourism efforts, with Patrick County Tourism's start of "The People, Places, and Performers of Patrick County."

James Houchins, director of Tourism, said the idea to create the series came about when he and Assistant Tourism Director Grace Cooper were brainstorming ways to do more with online mediums like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, to help market the county.

"The reason that we started it was Patrick County has such a unique background, history, and diversity. So, we were talking about ways that we promote the county to get people out and bring people in, either here to the Visitor's Center, or going to particular places," he said.

Houchins said the main premise of the series was to either have either showcase the people, places, or performers to show how unique the county and its residents are.

"Definitely, our performance background, with a lot of the musicians that we have in the county, and then just the wonderful places that we have here in the county too," he said.



James Houchins (right), director of Tourism, interviews Danny Martin (left) in one of the episodes of "The People, Places, and Performers of Patrick County." Houchins also has interviewed Tom Perry, Wolf Creek Farm, and more. To watch the series, go to [www.YouTube.com/PatrickCountyTourism](http://www.YouTube.com/PatrickCountyTourism).

The series currently has about half a dozen videos, each of which averages about 25 minutes in length.

To decide who to interview, Houchins said tourism officials look at what's popular or going on in the county.

"I'll kick a name around here in the office, and then the team here, we just come up with people that we know have

been somewhat in the spotlight, especially in different circles," he said. "We just bring those unique people in, and we'll interview them in and let them tell their stories."

So far, Houchins believes the chosen interviewees have been good and diverse.

"There are so many more people in

the county, and places that we'll eventually get to too, but really we just go with what we hear in the streets and see what's happening and popular in the county too, and we pick from that," he said.

Houchins said the interviews are informal. He has 10 questions he asks guests, including a little history about themselves, what they do, what inspired them, and other personal questions.

For example, he said the first interview and episode was with Olivia Jo Hutchens, a singer-songwriter from Stuart.

"She had just produced a song and she's been doing a lot with the bluegrass industry. She's up and coming, she's been making a lot of waves in the bluegrass industry, so I got a chance to hear about her in conversations and thought it would be a good one to start off with," he said.

His office was also working on the Moonshine Heritage Trail, and Houchins said he knew Danny Martin, an author and former Fairy Stone State Park ranger, was doing several things related, including moonshine trail hikes and writing a book called "Corn Squeezins."

(See YouTube Series p.3)

## 2nd annual 'Summer Showdown' set for Saturday

By Taylor Boyd

National Independent Championship Wrestling (NICW) will hold its second annual Summer Showdown on Saturday, June 29 and Sunday, June 30.

The two-day event will be held at the Stuart Rotary Memorial Building with doors opening at 6 p.m. and the first bell ringing at 7 p.m. on Saturday, and doors opening at 3 p.m. and the bell ringing for the first match at 4 p.m.

Scott Rutter, of Rutter's Martial Arts, said the NICW decided to make it a two-day event because of "the great responses from the fans that are coming out and supporting us at these wrestling shows."

At the Saturday show, Rutter said the main event will be the APW Heavyweight Championship between Crash Cassidy and the Cuban Assassin.

A NICW Tag Team Championship match will feature The Southern Wrecking Crew with Douglas J. Wentworth III against Scott Lee and Tony Ray. Rutter noted Lee and Ray are both from the Patrick and Henry county areas.

The NICW MidAtlantic Heritage Championship match will be Hangman Larry Cooter versus Bobby Yela, and Chase Bennett will face Lance Erikson.

Rutter said World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Hall of Famer The Boogie Woogie Man "Handsome" Jimmy Valiant is also scheduled to attend Saturday's show.

"He's coming again this year; he was there last year. He's also going to be appearing and doing a free meet and greet over at Stagecoach on Main Street from 12-4 p.m. on Saturday," he said.

Valient's been involved in wrestling for more than 50 years and is notable for his kayfabe feud with Jerry "The King" Lawler while in the Memphis wrestling scene.

Rutter said Sunday's main event will be a championship match. Whoever wins the match on Saturday between Crash Cassidy and the Cuban Assassin will defend the championship against Jeff Paul.

Adam Hex will face Kidd Lightning in a grudge match and The Dragon Scott Lee will face Shanghai Pierce Jr.

There will be a gauntlet match involving John Heartbreak, Tony Ray, Bronx Bomber, K. Killah, and The Scorpion.

Rutter said Nicole Starr vs. Cassandra Chaos

**NICW presents Summer Showdown 24**  
 STUART ROTARY MEMORIAL BUILDING  
 264 WOODLAND DRIVE, STUART, VIRGINIA  
**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY**  
 SATURDAY JUNE 29TH: 6PM DOORS OPEN 7PM BELL TIME  
 SUNDAY JUNE 30TH: 3PM DOORS OPEN 4PM BELL TIME  
 SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY THE BOOGIE WOOGIE MAN HANDSOME JIMMY VALIANT  
 APW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH! CRASH CASSIDY V. CUBAN ASSASSIN  
 CHASE BENNETT V. LANCE ERIKSON  
 NICW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH! THE SOUTHERN WRECKING CREW WITH DOUGLAS J. WENTWORTH III V. SCOTT LEE & TONY RAY  
 GRUDGE MATCH! ADAM HEX V. KIDD LIGHTNING  
 GAUNTLET MATCH FOR THE NICW CRUZWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP! JOHN HEARTBREAK TONY RAY BRONX BOMBER V. KILLAH THE SCORPION  
 ALSO APPEARING: ANTHONY COOLEY, CRIMINAL MAZZ, DAMIEN JAMES, ACE ENGLAND, ROBBIE LYNN & MORE  
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The NICW will hold its second annual Summer Showdown on Saturday, June 29 and Sunday, June 30.

will compete in the women's match.

"In our area, a lot of times the fans don't get the chance, the opportunity, to see women in the ring wrestling. So, that's a good showcase for this show as well," he said.

Anthony Cooley, Criminal Mazz, Damien James, Ace England, Robbie Lynn, and more are also scheduled to appear.

The show is sponsored by Rutter's Martial Arts, Boyce-Holland Veterinary Services, Impressive Prints & Designs, Lawless Welding & Fabrication, Inc., and Friedrichs Family Eye Center.

Advance tickets are \$10 for children aged 6-12 and \$12 for adults 12 and up. Tickets at the door are \$12 for children and \$15 for adults.

Advance tickets can be purchased at Rutter's Martial Arts, Little Caesars, Stagecoach on Main Street, and Boyce-Holland Veterinary Services.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Patrick County High School (PCHS) Boys Varsity Basketball Team.



## Tolling of Bells on July 4th

The Patrick County VA250 Commemoration Committee, in cooperation with Patrick County Tourism, will join with communities from all over Virginia to mark America's birthday with the Tolling of Bells all over Patrick County.

This year's celebration will echo the celebratory ringing of bells that marked the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783 and a tradition that dates back to 1963.

This year's ringing of bells 13 times at 5p.m. on July 4, is in the planning stages and the committee is looking for churches, civic groups and others who would like to play their part in this year's ceremony.

If you, your church or organization have a bell and would like to take part in the July 4 event, please contact [pcca250@gmail.com](mailto:pcca250@gmail.com) for more information.

The Patrick County VA250 Commemoration Committee was formed to help plan the county's celebration of America's 250th birthday, including events leading up to and including July 4, 2026. To learn more, visit the committee's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/PatrickCountyVA250](http://www.facebook.com/PatrickCountyVA250).



## Former inmate and motivational speaker addressed inmates at VADOC facilities

National public speaker Andre Norman visited several Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) facilities in late May to share his lived experience and offer coaching and hope.

Norman was joined by fellow speakers Trell Donk Webb and Hasan "Giant" Bradley during the tour through Greensville Correctional Center, Sussex I State Prison, and Virginia Correctional Center for Women.

Stops were made to meet with inmates in classes, the law library, kitchens, work locations, and housing units. The messages Norman, Webb, and Bradley shared were powerful and inspiring. The group's messages to the inmates were focused on realizing their potential to accomplish amazing things and the importance of a positive attitude.

Norman's stops were well-received by the inmates at all sites and several of the inmates recognized Norman, Webb, and Bradley from watching videos of them on their assigned tablets.

Norman, Webb, and Bradley also

had the opportunity to share messages with VADOC corrections team members. Their message to staff was that they are appreciated for their hard work and that their role as corrections staff really does impact inmates' chances of changing and having success upon being released.

"It was great to have Andre Norman and his team come speak to large numbers of our corrections team and inmate population," said VADOC Director Chad Dotson. "I echo his important message to our corrections staff. What they do every day seriously matters for the Commonwealth. Additionally, helping to keep our inmate population motivated and focused on a successful reentry is crucial for long-term public safety across Virginia. I thank Andre, Trell, and Hasan for sharing their uplifting message with the VADOC."

See more of the group's messages to correctional team members and inmates via the VADOC YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/QtL4-7sjPeA>.

## General Fund Revenues Remain Slightly Ahead of Forecast

Gov. Glenn Youngkin said that general fund revenues for May 2024 increased 14.2 percent versus the same period last year and remain slightly ahead of the revenue forecast that was revised upward as part of the budget approved on May 13, reinforcing the Common Ground budget forecasts.

"With more Virginians working than ever before, Virginia's job market continues to fuel the economic engine of the Commonwealth," said Youngkin. "We are pleased with the underlying strength of Virginia's business climate and job growth, but with inflation at the federal level remaining persistent we will continue to exercise caution in our forecast and planning."

"May was a strong month for revenue collections, with revenues exceeding the revised forecast," said Secretary of Finance Stephen Cummings. "Throughout fiscal year 2024, revenue growth has exceeded expectations, supported by strong economic fundamentals which gives us confidence in the near term. But, with stubbornly high inflation and the outlook for higher interest rates for longer, we will be closely monitoring conditions for any signs of weakening in coming months."

With one month remaining in FY24, year-to-date collections are up 5.9 percent and remain ahead of the revised forecast, driven primarily by higher than projected net individual income tax collections.

## Lost Wallet? What's Next

We've all been there; you reach for your wallet and find nothing in your pocket or purse. The panic we feel in that moment is real because our wallet can be a treasure trove for criminals, who can go on to perpetrate credit card fraud or identity theft.

Most times that feeling is short lived but sometimes that wallet really is gone. Here's what to do if this happens to you.

First, cancel all debit or credit cards. By reporting them lost or stolen ASAP you may be able to avoid illegal charges. This is espe-

cially important for debit cards which are gateways to your bank account.

Next, file a fraud alert. With your driver's license in hand, identity thieves can do a lot of damage. You can request that the credit bureaus — Experian, TransUnion and Equifax — place a fraud alert on your credit. (Contact one and the others will add the fraud alert, too.) A fraud alert notifies creditors, lenders or anyone viewing your credit report that someone may be trying to apply for credit in your name.

Lastly, if you think your wallet has been stolen, call your local precinct to get a police report on record. Even though the police may not be able to recover your missing wallet, it's a crucial piece of documentation to have on hand.

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork).

## July Fourth celebrations coincide with troubling traffic safety statistics

The first week of July is typically one of the busiest American travel periods of the year. It's also one of the deadliest.

Seven individuals lost their lives in Virginia traffic crashes during the two-day statistical counting period over last year's July Fourth holiday, according to data from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles Highway Safety Office.

Virginia State Police urge motorists to practice safe, sober and distraction-free driving to avoid becoming a statistic in 2024.

"We are in the height of the summer travel season, so traffic safety should be of the utmost importance for all Virginians," said Col. Gary T. Settle, state police superintendent. "Excessive speeding, drivers and passengers failing to buckle up, and distracted driving continue to put all at risk traveling on our highways. We need Virginians to put forth the extra effort and comply with speed limits, buckle up and put the phone down, and avoid distractions."

During 2023's holiday period, state police investigated 377 total traffic crashes statewide. Troopers cited 2,051 speeders and 980 reckless drivers. They also issued 254 citations to individuals for failing to buckle up, and another 74 citations for improperly secured children.

Virginia troopers cited 124 drivers for being in violation of Virginia's "hands-free" law that took effect in July 2021. To limit distractions,

motorists are advised to program GPS and hands-free devices before departure.

"Pull over to a safe place when you are doing something that will take your eyes or mind off the road," said Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. senior actuarial manager David Tenenbaum. He serves as treasurer for DRIVE SMART Virginia, a nonprofit partner charged with raising awareness and changing behavior to improve roadway safety.

"When free of distractions, a driver can be prepared for the unpredictability of other motorists who may be distracted themselves," he said.

Arranging sober transportation is another preventable action motorists can take to keep themselves and others safe during the celebratory weekend.

Troopers arrested 36 drivers for operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the July Fourth holiday period last year. DRIVE SMART reported that 4,400 people were injured and 293 were killed as the result of alcohol-related traffic crashes in Virginia during all of 2023.

"With just a few drinks you could be too impaired to safely drive," Tenenbaum noted. "So, designate before you celebrate! Plan to use a rideshare app or designate a sober driver before kicking off the holiday weekend."

## Charlottesville Bodybuilding Coach Pleads Guilty to Child Exploitation

A Charlottesville-based virtual bodybuilding coach, who sexually exploited at least six minors over the course of three years, recently pleaded guilty to federal child exploitation and child pornography charges.

Elliott Atwell, 34, pled guilty to one count of sexual exploitation of a minor and one count of possession of, and access with the intent to view, child pornography. At sentencing, Atwell faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years in prison and a possible maximum penalty of 30 years.

According to court documents, between December 2013 and April 2020, Atwell allegedly manipulated at least six minors to record themselves engaging in sexually explicit conduct and then send those recordings to him.

In efforts to gain the victims' trust and willingness to participate, he allegedly sent them gifts, including a dig-

ital camera, sex toys, Viagra, lubricant and other items, and then gave detailed instructions on what sexual activities he wanted performed and captured on video.

In addition, the FBI searched Atwell's iCloud account, which contained over 300 images and video files depicting and videos engaged in sexually explicit conduct, including images

of prepubescent boys engaged in sex acts.

The FBI, which is investigating the case, remains committed to identifying and pursuing potential additional victims of Atwell's conduct. If you have information that may be helpful, please contact the FBI tipline at 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324) or reach out online at <https://tips.fbi.gov/home>.

## Pets of the Week



This goofy honey colored guy is a favorite with the staff at the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter (PCPAS). He has survived parvo while incarcerated and has lots of personality.

The sweet face of this brindle girl is filled with awesome cuteness. She was found on U.S. 58 in Meadows of Dan and would really like to go home. If you recognize her, please call the shelter.

Visit the shelter's Facebook page to view available pets or call (276) 694-6259 for more information. Adoption fees are \$10 and include spay/neuter and a rabies vaccination.

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#### Property Details:

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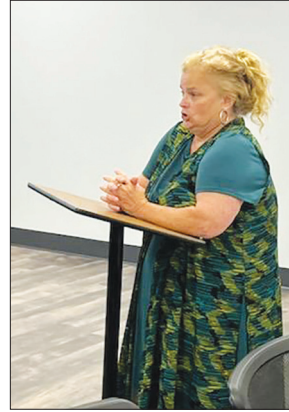


# Solar Facilities

(cont. from page 1)



Representatives of the Berkley Group fielded questions from the board and commission about the creation of ordinances, particularly for solar.



Valerie Loy addressed the Patrick County Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission at a recent joint meeting.



Trena Anderson addressed those attending the joint meeting.

The creation of the ordinances will be handled by the Berkley Group, a local government consulting firm which specializes in providing direct services like land use and planning, capital project management, community engagement, and group facilitation.

Group members Michael Zehner, director of Planning and Community Development, and Darla Orr Odom, Principal Planner with the Community Development Group, attended the meeting via Zoom.

Kurt Bozenmayer, chairman of the county's Planning Commission, said the best thing is to gather the information the county has with the existing ordinance, transmit it to the group members for review, and "have them present us with a plan of action that they would recommend. Is that what I'm hearing out of this?"

Jane Fulk, of the Dan River District, said she believed the board had previously talked about having the firm create a solar application process for the county as soon as possible.

"There's a note in our current ordinance about that, going through the building inspector first then coming to the Planning Commission. So, I think there's a current ordinance review that either we or Berkley or whomever needs to do before we make that decision about changing it," Sarah Wray, vice-chairman of the Planning Commission, said.

Zehner said it's important for the county to have a singular application form for multiple types of review, "but I think another critical piece of that is the requirement for what an application needs to provide, what an applicant needs to provide."

Orr Odom said generally the county needs to know who, why, when, where, and what the applicant is asking for, and ensure that information is concise and clear.

"If there are many different applications because there's different information that's necessary for a subdivision plat review, and that might be different than someone coming forward as we're beginning to talk about solar and wanting to do it through the (15.2-) 2232 review," she said.

Regarding the county's current existing regulation and solar facility siting policy ordinance, Zehner said Berkley's opinion is the current policy may not be as comprehensive as it needs to be to address local concerns and goals.

"I think that's one of the points tonight - to hear what concerns you all have to ensure that policy does properly and comprehensively address your concerns," he said, adding that the 15.2-2232 dictates the paramount documents for review for projects is the county's comprehensive plan.

"One of the things we want to do is clarify the application requirements. Based on the 15.2-2232 review being an application type, what are the types of application documents that we can and should require for the review of these applications," he said.

In terms of the county's existing regulations, Zehner said Berkley would look to clarify the title of the county's documents as the Comprehensive Plan serves

as the county's policy and the ordinance serves as the county's ordinance.

"But because you lack zoning, and recognizing that the 15.2-2232 review is going to focus on the comprehensive plan, we want to make sure that any regulatory revisions that we would otherwise see in localities through zoning, that those be addressed in your policy. Because essentially, you can only really regulate these facilities through zoning as enabled by the state statutes, with the exception of that 2232 review that focuses on comp plan," he said.

In terms of policy best practices, Zehner said the group encourages communities to evaluate the appropriateness of the land use and community support for these facilities.

"I encourage you to look at the design, siting, and location of the size of the scale. Desired and expected economic development outcomes, acceptable and unacceptable outcomes to recreational, natural, cultural, and historical resources," he said, adding the board should also examine the relationship between these uses and agricultural uses and areas suitable for agriculture and other community development goals.

Doug Perry, chairman, and of the Smith River District, said one of his concerns is pinpointing where the rights of property owners end and the county steps in.

"If we could define some of those then that would help us be less perception or opinionated and more, maybe we're not going to clear cut a hundred acres of forest versus if that's your property," Perry said. "What defines where the rights begin and end between that property owners and the county. I'm not a fan of government coming in and saying this is what you have to do with your property."

At the same time, Perry said if a person clear cuts a large acreage of land and pulls the stumps and roots out, and that changes the flow of water, which forces it into a stream that erodes the stream and affects properties downstream, "then is that outside of reason where the county can step in."

Zehner said he believes every locality struggles with the same issue, and that is where flexibility is allowed, within reason, for property owners to see economic benefits from use of their property.

"But also balancing that with the rights of other property owners as well to enjoy their property and not be negatively impacted by how somebody else decides to use their property. So, it certainly is a fine line," he said.

Jonathan Wood, of the Peter's Creek District, said his concern about solar projects is the decommissioning after 40 years.

"I hope to live to see one of these decommissioned. Forty years is a long time, so we can say whatever we want, but the vast majority of us sitting at this table and in this room are not going to be here in 40 years to see if they hold up their end of the deal," he said.

Wood said the information Berkley Group provided to the board and commission, about the pros and six to seven pages of cons, regarded solar energy.

"I think we really need to stop until we have time to

figure it out. We don't need to rush anything, I mean we're talking about a 40-year mission. You don't buy your house today that you're going to pay for the next 30 years without thinking about it," he said.

Wood said he favors a moratorium for a period of time until the county gets everything figured out.

"I think it will go a long way. I'm not saying that I would never, ever consider doing it, I'm just saying we need time to stop and think. We really do because there's more information in this packet than we've seen in a long time. I would really like to have some time to think about it, talk to more people in our districts," he said.

Clayton Kendrick, of the Mayo River District, said he hopes the board didn't allow too much already by approving the Fairystone Solar project.

"I asked that engineer that night when we had the public hearing on it about the battery storage on the property. He said there wouldn't be any. Well, I heard enough information to know that there's got to be battery storage on them somewhere," he said.

If the company building the solar farm isn't going to have the battery storage, Kendrick said someone else is, and the board needs to know who.

Zehner said the county can address battery storage within the policy, and whether or not the county wants to allow that use or not.

"I do believe you can subject it to the same 2232 review as a public utility. There are some processes that because you don't have zoning, that a utility can pursue in terms of seeking a certificate of public convenience and necessity to exempt themselves from local review," he said.

Zehner also spoke about concerns regarding cadmium telluride in solar panels.

"In our research, relying on research that's been done in academic institutions, we can't find any basis to restrict the uses of panels that have any different types of chemical components or elemental components in them," he said.

Zehner noted that Berkley is aware there are groups that object to the use of certain types of panels, and companies that predominantly use certain types of panels, like cadmium telluride panels.

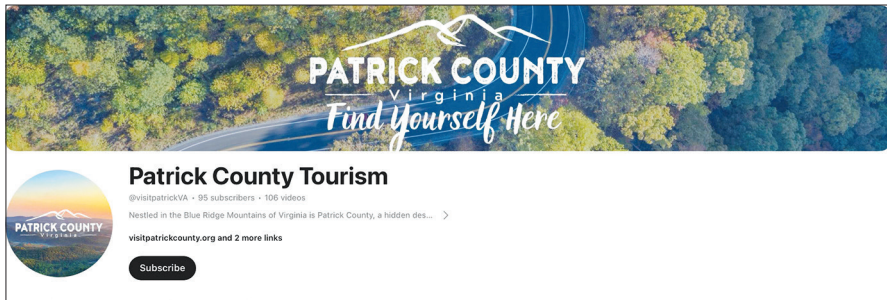
"Unfortunately, it seems like some of these objections may be more grounded in political objections to the background of certain companies and may be less about the actual composition and the risk for contamination," he said.

Zehner said he believes the important thing to recognize is the chemical components and the elemental components of the solar panels are "cased in silicone and alloys that they don't, by their nature, leach except if they're subjected to certain damages and high heat that you would not commonly expect to see."

- In other matters, the commission:
- \*Approved the May meeting minutes.
- \*Appointed Sarah Wray to serve as the new vice-chairman.
- \*Heard from Trena Anderson.
- \*Heard from Valerie Loy.

# YouTube Series

(cont. from page 1)



The Patrick County Tourism Office started a YouTube series called, "The People, Places, and Performers of Patrick County" to highlight the county.

Houchins discussed the various books Tom Perry has written when interviewing him.

"We just talk about what they do and how they have impacted Patrick County, or the ways they've been able to help highlight Patrick County with what they do," he said.

Other interviews were with Lora Mahaffey, Wolf Creek Farm, and Kevin Hubbard of Hubbard 1 Productions.

For future interviews, Houchins said he wants to go to a place like Levering Orchard or Fairy Stone State Park for a sit-down podcast to show the area's beauty.

"We just have to make sure that they have good internet connection, Wi-Fi, because we try to do it live just so that it catches people," he said.

While the goal is to have an interview once a month, Houchins said a couple of hiccups at the start of the year prevented that from happening. Still, he believes the community has received the YouTube series well.

"A lot of people have commented that they really enjoyed them. I know that Tom

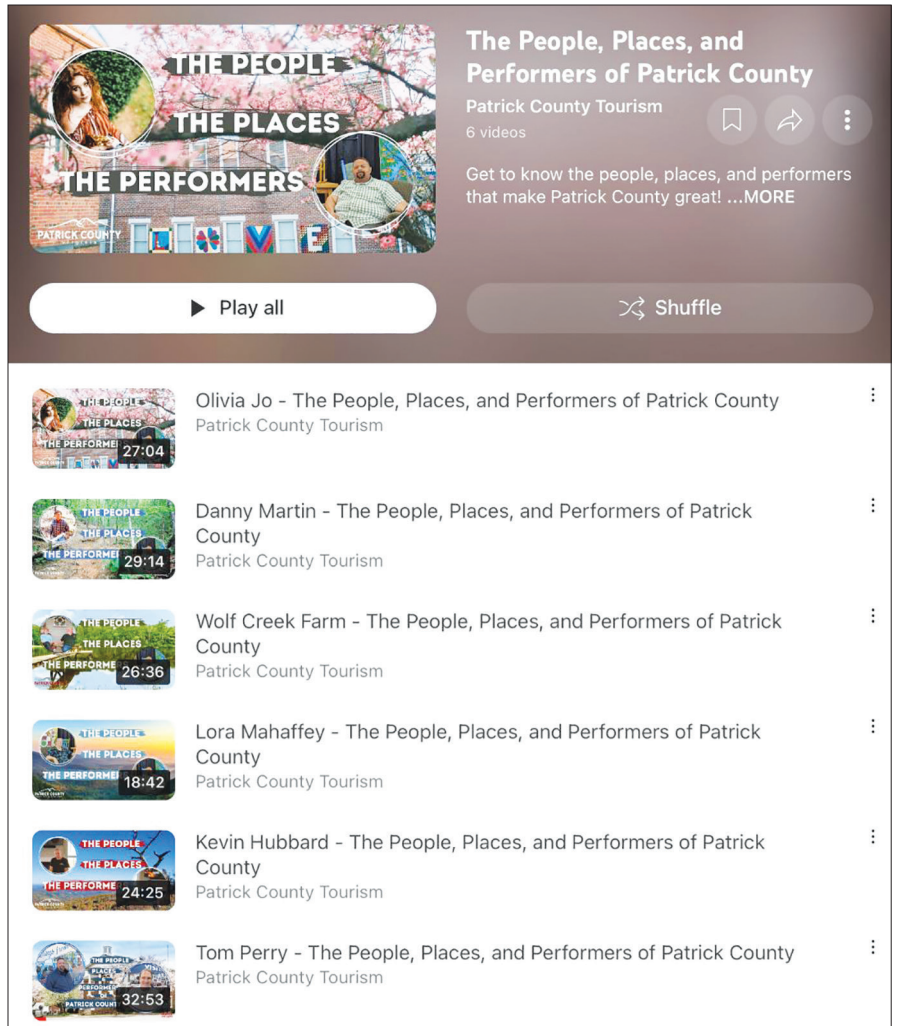
Perry's went really well. It had a lot of good reactions, and people were reposting it, and just talking about it," he said, adding people expressed that "they learned a lot too, especially with" Perry's knowledge of the Civil War and Revolutionary War eras.

Houchins said his favorite part of doing the interview series is being able to learn more about Patrick County.

"I'm a lifelong Patrick Countian, grew up here in the community, and thought I knew a lot, which I do know a lot, but it's always intriguing to hear it from other people's perspectives, and especially individuals who come from a different background that I do.

"That's the most exciting part of it. It's just the little gems that we unearth when we're talking with those individuals because everyone has their own unique perspectives, especially when they're on history in the county itself. So, it's good to see that from different perspectives, and it just makes you appreciate where you live even more," he said.

Those with suggestions on who should



A portion of the new show's playlist is displayed. To see more, visit [www.YouTube.com/PatrickCountyTourism](http://www.YouTube.com/PatrickCountyTourism).

be interviewed next should email Houchins at [jhouchins@co.patrick.va.us](mailto:jhouchins@co.patrick.va.us). To watch the series, go to [www.YouTube.com/PatrickCountyTourism](http://www.YouTube.com/PatrickCountyTourism).



# Are Biden Agencies His New Campaign Tool?

The Committee on House Administration I serve on is trying to protect our elections, investigate weaknesses, and restore election integrity and voter confidence in our elections.

Last year I introduced H.R. 4460, the NO VOTE for Non-Citizens Act, requiring only eligible American citizens to participate in federal elections. The bill withholds some federal dollars that go to localities that allow non-citizens to vote in their elections.

Washington, DC and New York City are examples where non-citizen voting in local elections is being advocated.

I was one of six Members of the House who voted to send the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act to the full House for consideration. This bill prohibits non-citizens from voting by requiring states to obtain proof of citizenship when registering individuals to vote.

Further, the Committee explored the influence of "Zuckerbucks" on elections, where private entities funded voter mobilization efforts. An investigation showed that Democrat-likely districts received 90% of "Zuckerbucks" awarded, whereas Republican-likely jurisdictions obtained 10%.

Last week, the Committee issued subpoenas to fifteen Biden Cabinet officials requesting documents related to a March 2021 Biden Administration Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting.

The subpoenas target officials from various federal agencies, including the Department of Commerce, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services, among others.

According to a Roll Call article, Executive Order 14019 instructs executive agencies to create strategic plans to partner with local officials:

"to protect and promote the exercise of the right to vote, eliminate

discrimination and other barriers to voting, and expand access to

voter registration and accurate election information."

That statement looks noble on its face. And the federal government does have a role in protecting the exercise of the right to vote, eliminating discrimination and voting barriers. But it should not have a role in pushing people to exercise their rights, or in deciding what is "accurate election information."

Again "accurate election information" sounds noble and benign on its face. But is it?

I don't know!

Why don't we know?

Because the Administration will not willingly hand over what their agencies are doing under Executive Order 14019. This information was requested in early 2022. Outside groups have tried to get information. But the Biden Administration will not tell the American people what they are doing in regard to voter registration and "accurate election infor-



**Morgan Griffith**

Representative

mation" under the Order.

One must assume they have something to hide.

While I could be wrong, I fear that Biden's phrasing of "accurate election information" really means the government is going to decide what is misinformation in the upcoming Presidential election.

We have already seen the government trying to tell us what is accurate and what is misinformation during COVID-19 and currently on the southern border. Freedom of the press means freedom, not government manipulation or control of non-classified information.

While Congress passed the "Motor Voter" National Voter Registration Act in 1993, it was limited to specific areas but NOT voter turnout and "accuracy of information."

In this case, Congress has not debated or passed any legislation delegating specific or explicit authority to these executive agencies. Particularly, authority related to pushing voter turnout in various regions and making determinations on "election information accuracy."

Any activity by these agencies to directly or secretly affect the election is wrong.

How can Americans have confidence in their elections if federal government agencies are ordered by one candidate (Biden) to seemingly use the power of the federal government to turn out the people they want to vote?

I am a believer that everyone should get out to vote. I have never failed to vote in an election where I was eligible.

It is the role of activists to encourage everyone to vote. Government agencies, however, should not be directly involved in what is essentially a campaign activity. It is unacceptable for any administration to use their government agencies to push targeted areas to go to vote.

Accordingly, I wonder how agency plans will affect rural areas. Are rural areas even considered in these federal government strategic plans? Or are federal agency campaigns focused on urban areas, where more Biden and Democrat votes tend to be concentrated?

As we saw with "Zuckerbucks", rural areas did not receive a fair shake.

Without full disclosure, this Biden Executive Order feels to me like it serves a similar purpose.

Congress is entitled to answers and the Administration must account for what it is doing with taxpayer dollars to perhaps influence this year's Presidential election.

Call my offices with questions, concerns, or comments: Abingdon, (276) 525-1405; Christiansburg, (540) 381-5671, or via email at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### No Money for Clothes

Hearing the news about Joe Biden jetting to a G-7 meeting reminded me of the childhood story of the emperor who ran around with no clothes, but didn't realize it. In the President's case, it's not only that he has no clothes, but that he doesn't have the money to buy clothes.

At the G-7 meeting, enjoying his role at the "leader" of the free world, Biden brokered an agreement to lend Ukraine money the US does not have. Having not consulted with the Congress beforehand, he even apologized to the G-7 for "the delay." Apparently, he's never heard of the Constitutional requirement that empowers only the Congress to authorize expenditures. Or, as usual, when the Constitution conflicts with

his wishes, Biden simply ignores it. Pressure will now be put on the Congress to rubber stamp the agreement.

Do we really think that the "loan" will be repaid? It is certain, however, that the loan will raise the rate of inflation. With every increase in the rate of inflation, the risk of collapsing the currency becomes more real. The BRICS countries are already rejecting the US dollar as a reserve currency. The bonds and notes that back up the money printing are also sold at a discount around the world.

Which countries will bail out America when the reality of our being broke becomes painfully evident?

Joe Cadrin,  
Stuart

### Jobs and Bidenomics

(Fox News, MRCTV, Newsmax)

The Biden administration keeps citing robust job growth as proof that the economy is in great shape. New data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia throws cold water on that claim. It shows recent job growth has been 80% less than previously estimated. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, annualized job growth in the last quarter of 2023 was a healthy 1.6%. Analysis from the Philadelphia Fed however showed an anemic 0.3% annualized rate. That difference of just 1.3 percentage points may not sound like much, but it is a significant gap. In a country of over 330 million people and over 150 million jobs on businesses' payrolls, this amounts to over half a million jobs. In other words, over 500,000 jobs that were added to the economy in the last quarter of 2023 never even existed.

Is Bidenomics a success? After 48 months, hard numbers tell a much different story.

Gas prices:

While gas prices held steady under Trump (down four cents a gallon), they have surged 54% in the first 40 months of Biden's term. From January 2021 to May of 2024, the average price of a gallon of gas (all grades) has increased \$1.31, from \$2.42 to \$3.73, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Real Wages:

After accounting for inflation, real wages earned by Americans have declined under Biden. In the first quarter of 2021, median weekly real earnings averaged \$373. But, by the first quarter of 2024,

average real earnings had fallen to \$365. Under Trump, however, real wages rose from \$352 on January 1, 2017, to \$373 on January 1, 2021.

Mortgage Rates:

Mortgage rates today are more than twice the average rate home buyers paid when Trump left office, Freddie Mac data reveals. Under Biden's predecessor, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate fell by a third, from 4.09% to 2.77%. But, by June 6, 2024, mortgage rates had more than doubled, to 7.0%.

Savings Rates:

From February 1, 2017, to February 1, 2021, the average personal savings rate increased 129%, from 5.6% to 12.8% under Trump. But, by April 1, 2024, it had declined to 3.6% under Biden, a -72% reduction.

Consumer Price Index:

Consumer prices rose 7.8% in the 48 months of the Trump Administration. In contrast, prices have already risen more than twice as much, 19.3%, in just 40 months under Biden. More than three-fourths of the way through his term, putting it on pace to increase three times as much as it did during Trump's full, four-year term. On a monthly basis, inflation averaged 1.9% under Trump, compared to 5.4% under Biden, thus far.

I would like to thank Joe Cadrin of Stuart for his article Poor Judgment or a Compromised Background? in the Enterprise on June 19, 2024. It was a great article. If you missed it, you should read it.

Pray for our country.

William Salser,  
Stuart

## Even One Alcoholic Drink Effects Brain Mitochondria

If you want to keep your brain working well as you age, a new study makes the case to eliminate alcohol consumption altogether. This recent study found that a single drink can have lasting effects on the cellular function of the brain.

A study published in PNAS suggests that a single alcoholic drink can have long-lasting effects on mitochondrial function in brain cells. These plastic changes to the brain are acute and long lasting. Mitochondria, responsible for energy production and cellular processes, appear to be significantly affected by alcohol consumption.

The study, conducted on mice and fruit flies, two species often used for modeling the human brain, revealed that alcohol disrupted the expression of genes related to mitochondrial function, leading to decreased energy production and impaired cellular metabolism. These changes persisted beyond the duration of alcohol's presence in the body. Such alcohol-induced mitochondrial dysfunction in brain cells may contribute to cognitive impairment and the development of neurodegenerative diseases and, may be a leading contributor to alcohol dependency (i.e. The reason why some people get addicted to alcohol).

Here's a summary of the function of mitochondria:

Mitochondria are like powerhouses in our cells.

They produce energy called ATP, which cells need to function.

Mitochondria break down food molecules to generate this energy.

They also help regulate metabolism and control calcium levels in cells.

Additional studies have explored the impact of alcohol on mitochondrial function in different cell types. One study demonstrated that chronic alcohol exposure reduced mitochondrial function in liver cells, potentially contributing to liver damage and disease.

Another study suggested that alcohol disrupted mitochondrial dynamics in heart muscle cells, which could contribute to cardiovascular dysfunction associated with excessive drinking.

Together, these studies emphasize the potential harm of alcohol on mitochondrial function in various tissues, including the brain, liver, and heart. The findings underscore the importance of considering the long-term effects of alcohol consumption, even in moderation.

(Submitted by Betty Dean. Written by Danny Kwon JD. Used by permission from [www.lifeandhealth.org](http://www.lifeandhealth.org) Courtesy of LifeSpring - Resources for Hope and Healing Stuart, VA)

## Letters to the Editor/Viewpoints Policy

The Enterprise welcomes letters to the editor and/or reader viewpoints of 500 words or less. Submissions may be edited for clarity, length, legal ramifications or general taste at the editor's discretion. We reserve the right to refuse to publish submitted letters for the same reasons. All letters must be signed by an individual and include community. Verifiable sources for information cited must be forwarded to the editor. Letters that do not meet these guidelines will not be considered for publication.

Disclaimer: Viewpoints and opinions expressed in letters selected for publication are the opinions of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Enterprise.



## Patrick Pioneers

*Defenders of Bataan (Part Three)*  
By Beverly Belcher Woody

When we left off last week, it was April of 1943: Hayne, Camden, and Stanley had reunited at Camp Cabanatuan; Hayne was hospitalized with beriberi; Camden was working burial detail and cutting hair; and Stanley was also working burial detail and growing crops in the field.

Hayne picked up the story again on Christmas Day 1943, "The Filipino Red Cross was allowed to furnish us extra food on Christmas Day and Stanley, Camden, and I sat down to a meal of beans, peanuts, and candy, along with the rice the Japanese gave us. We agreed that next Christmas, we would be at home together in Martinsville. We planned the biggest party that our imaginations could picture. Shortly after Christmas of 1943, we ran into Private Ralph Turner, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Turner of Stuart. Camden had gone to school with Ralph in Patrick County during their boyhood days and they knew a lot of the same people."

Hayne recalled the going away party the group had for Ralph Turner, "It was March 1944 and Ralph was notified that he had been accepted for a work detail in Japan. We got together and baked a meatloaf made from carefully saved Red Cross supplies of two cans of corned beef and our rice allowance. Ralph left Camp Cabanatuan the next day for the main Japanese island of Honshu."

Ralph Jefferson Turner, Sr. (1922-1990) was born at Buffalo Ridge, Virginia to Abram Columbus Turner and Allie Walker Turner. Ralph was the paternal grandson of John Francis Turner and Nancy Adeline Nolen Turner and the maternal grandson of James Lincoln Walker and Mary Bowling Walker of the Elamsville district of Patrick County.

Hayne remembered, "Camden and I made five cents per day on our work detail, which totaled \$1.50 per month. On the other hand, 2nd Lt. Stanley Aaron was drawing 20 pesos per month, which was about \$10.00. We pooled our pay with Stanley; he gave his \$10.00 and pooled it with our \$1.50 each, for a total of \$13.00 per month. For this amount, we were able to get a little extra rice, an occasional egg, and some rotten fish now and then. When you are eating a cupful of rice as a regular meal allotment, anything, even rotten fish tastes good... as good as any porterhouse steak. All of us were in constant hunger, a gnawing pain that eats at your very soul."

Hayne recalls their goodbyes, "In June 1944, the Japanese called for more men to be sent to Japan for a work detail and Camden and I both volunteered. Stanley tried to go too,

### TAKEN PRISONER OF WAR

**STUART** — Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Turner of Buffalo Ridge have heard from two sources that their son, Ralph, was taken prisoner by the Japanese when Corregidor fell.

Camden Bryant wrote his father that Hayne Dominick, Lt. Stanley Aaron of Martinsville. Pfc. Ralph Turner and he were together at Prison Camp No. 1 on Luzon. This letter was dated July 22.

Recently Mr. and Mrs. Turner received a card from their son which said he was now at Fukquoka, Japan, and that he was well.

Martinsville Bulletin, 1945-01-27-5

but this detail was only carrying 15 officers and those had already been selected. When the list of volunteers was sent to the Japanese officers for approval, they discovered Camden Bryant's name and would not allow him to go; they wanted him to remain at Cabanatuan to cut their hair."

Camden told Hayne, "Go Hayne. You'll get more food and probably get home quicker. They told me that they were going to move us all out anyhow if the Americans attack the Philippines. Stanley and I will come along later." So...Hayne left Camden Bryant and 2nd Lt. Stanley Aaron at Camp Cabanatuan; he never saw them again.

On June 20, 1945, Camden Bryant's family received the following telegram: "The International Red Cross has transmitted to this government an official list obtained from the Japanese government, after long delay, of American prisoners of war who were lost while being transported northward from the Philippine Islands on a Japanese ship which was sunk on the 24th of October 1944. It is with deep regret that I inform you that your son, Private Camden R. Bryant, Air Corps, was among those lost when that sinking occurred, and in the absence of any probability of survival, must be considered to have lost his life. He will be carried on the records of the War Department as killed in action 24th October 1944. The evidence of his death was received the 16th of June 1945, the date upon which his pay will terminate, and his accounts will be closed. The information available to the War Department is that the vessel sailed from Manila, Philippines on the 11th of October 1944 with 1,775 prisoners of war aboard. On the 24th of October 1944, the vessel was sunk by submarine action in the South China Sea over 200 miles from the Chinese coast, which was the nearest land. Five of the prisoners escaped in a small boat and reached the coast. Four others have been reported as picked up by the Japanese, by whom all



STANLEY AARON

Martinsville Bulletin, 1945-07-24-1

others aboard were reported lost. Absence of detailed information as to what happened to other prisoners and the known circumstances of the incident lead to the conclusion that all other prisoners listed by the Japanese as aboard the vessel perished. Signed, Major General J. A. Ulio."

Camden Ross Bryant (1916-1944) was born to Homer Orlando Bryant and Martha Magdaline Via Bryant. Camden's paternal grandfather was Reverend Alexander Bryant, founder of Fairview and Rock Castle Church and pastor of Sycamore Baptist Church for many years, and grandmother, Sarah Jane Ross Bryant. Camden's maternal grandparents were Peter Lee Via and Dicey Elizabeth King Via from the Dodson community of Patrick County.

The following month, on Tuesday, July 24th, 1945, 2nd Lt. Stanley Reid Aaron's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John R. Aaron, of Starling Avenue, Martinsville received a telegram from the War Department notifying them of their son Stanley's death, which was reported to have taken place on the 15th of December 1944. Stanley was also killed in action in the Pacific Theater while being transported aboard a Japanese vessel. He had been struck by shrapnel and was mortally wounded. He died on a stretcher while being lifted aboard a rescue vessel.

2nd Lt. Reid "Stanley" Aaron (1918-1944) was born to John Reid Aaron and Jessie Stanley Aaron of Martinsville. Stanley was the nephew of Virginia Governor Thomas Bahnson Stanley, Sr. and Stanley's brother, Jacob Crockett Aaron married Camden Bryant's sister, Era Marie Bryant in 1948.

Private Bryant, an insurance salesman in Martinsville and Lieutenant Aaron, a graduate of Martinsville High School and Virginia



CAMDEN R. BRYANT

Private Bryant, son of Homer A. Bryant, City RFD, is now listed as dead by the War department. He was reported aboard a Japanese ship sunk of China by a submarine last October.

Martinsville Bulletin, 1945-06-20-1

Military Institute, both had entered the service in June 1941. Both men were stationed in the Philippines when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941; both were captured at the fall of Bataan in April 1942; both suffered tremendously as POWs for 30 to 32 months before both perished in the South China Sea.

Ralph Jefferson Turner, Sr. (1922-1990) made it home to Patrick County although he endured a great deal from the time of his capture at the fall of Corregidor until his release from a Japanese prisoner of war camp in September 1945. Turner had suffered burns on his head, neck, torso, and upper extremities and spent six months recovering from his injuries at the Newton D. Baker Hospital in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Our storyteller, Hayne Dominick, Jr. (1920-1995) also made it home and next week, we will conclude our series with the story of Private James W. Trent, who grew up between Patrick Springs and Critz, the son of son of Walter Cole Trent and Nannie Virginia Witt Trent, the paternal grandson of Abe Trent and Nancy Spencer Trent, and the maternal grandson of Charles Richard Witt and Nancy Reynolds Witt of the Carter's Store area of Henry County.

Thank you so much to Darlene Thielman and Sandy Taylor for sharing precious memories of Camden. Woody may be reached at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or 276-692-9626.

## Social Security Matters

By Russell Gloor, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

**Ask Rusty - Why is there a Social Security Earnings Limit?**

**Dear Rusty:** I try to read your article in the Carmichael Times each week and appreciate the information you provide. I am 62 and considering my retirement options and when I should do that to get the most benefit. I understand my full retirement age is 67, but what I don't understand, and I hope you can answer, is why there is such a thing as the Social Security earnings limit? I know that if I was to retire before 67, my benefits would be reduced. But since I have been paying into SS for 45+ years, and that money is technically money I have earned, why does SS care if I make more than the earnings limit? It doesn't affect them or my benefits. Can you tell me about the reasoning behind the earnings limit? I will, for many years after "retiring," continue working in my field. Signed: Working American

Dear Working American: This is a great question and, as a point

of interest, our parent company, the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC), advocates doing away with Social Security's earnings test which affects those collecting benefits before reaching their SS full retirement age (FRA). In AMAC's view, it discourages people from working and, thus, paying Social Security taxes on their earnings. It is, after all, SS taxes from the earnings of working Americans which largely pays for the benefits provided to Social Security beneficiaries. Eliminating the restriction would tend to improve Social Security revenue and help ease Social Security's current financial stress.

The reasoning behind the earnings test? Well, when Social Security was first enacted in the 1930s, the intent was that Social Security was for retired workers, meant to keep them from poverty in old age. The logic back then was that if a person worked they didn't need Social Security to sustain them, so those who worked could not collect Social Security at all. The current rule, after many adjustments over the years, says that annual earnings for those who collect early SS benefits are limited. If each year's earnings limit (\$22,320 for

2024) is exceeded, Social Security will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit (FYI, the penalty is less severe in the year FRA is attained).

Historical accounts suggest that the reasoning behind the wording in the original Social Security Act - that "No person shall receive such old-age annuity unless . . . he is not employed by another in a gainful occupation" - was quite controversial, except for the fundamental thought that if someone worked they didn't need Social Security. Over the ensuing decades the rule has been softened to provide that only those who collect benefits before their full retirement age (FRA) would have a portion of their SS benefits offset by their earnings. In any case, the earnings test, in its mitigated form, still persists today. FYI, H.R. 5193 - The Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act was recently introduced in Congress proposing to repeal the SS earnings test but has not advanced in the legislative process since introduced in August 2023.

In any case, under current rules, if you continue working after your FRA, the earnings test will not apply to you. And, if you lose any benefits before your FRA

due to the earnings test, when you reach your FRA you'll get time credit for any months that benefits were withheld, resulting in a somewhat higher monthly payment after your full retirement age.

One final point: if you continue to work after starting your Social Security benefits and your recent earnings are higher than any of those in the inflation-adjusted 35 years used to originally calculate your benefit, your entitlement will be recalculated to give you credit for those higher recent earnings.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.*



# Celebrate Agricultural Industry during Virginia Agriculture Week

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) encourages the public to join in supporting Virginia's farmers and local economy by purchasing Virginia grown and produced agricultural goods from the state's diverse offerings, especially during Virginia Agriculture Week, which runs through June 29.

"Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry and an economic driver for the state. The industry contributes over \$82 billion to our economy, with more than \$43 billion in value-added impact, and provides over 381,000 jobs throughout the Commonwealth," said Gov. Glenn Youngkin. "Our farmers work hard to provide the food, fiber and fuel we all use every day, and I hope this week our communities remember to thank their farmers and buy local products."

According to the USDA National Statistics Service data, the Commonwealth is home to approximately 39,000 farms that cover 7.3 million acres. Virginia's diverse agricultural production includes livestock, field crops, fruits, vegetables, poultry, dairy, greenhouse and nursery, aqua-

culture, and vineyards. The Commonwealth ranks third in the nation for seafood landings and leaf tobacco, fifth for apples, sixth for turkeys, eighth for peanuts; and ninth for broilers measured in head and pounds.

"Virginia farms and agribusinesses are key influences in both the state's ecosystem and food supply chain. In addition to contributing to Virginia's economy, agriculture serves as a catalyst for growth and job creation in our rural areas," said Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr. "Our farmers provide food and fiber we use every day, as well as agritourism, flood mitigation, soil stabilization, wildlife habitat, land preservation, recreation, and green spaces. I hope all Virginians take the opportunity to show appreciation for our local agricultural community by thanking farmers and choosing Virginia Grown products."

Scientific and technological advancements have fueled greater efficiency in agricultural production. Present-day farmers produce enough to feed their family plus the equivalent of 155 people around the world, compared to

less than ten people in the 1930s.

"The Commonwealth's agricultural industry thrives on the innovative practices of Virginia farmers. As farmers improve their practices for efficiency and quality as well as stewardship of our land, water and other natural resources, we all benefit," said VDACS Commissioner Joseph Guthrie. "Virginia Agriculture Week is the perfect opportunity to celebrate and support the local family farm businesses at the heart of so many of our communities."

Consumers can identify locally grown and locally produced agricultural products by looking for Virginia Grown and Virginia's Finest logos on products in grocery stores, specialty stores, and farmers markets across the state. These products range from produce to meats, snacks, sauces, craft beverages and more. Virginia agribusinesses also produce non-food items such as firewood, plants, wool, and more. Consumers can visit their local farmers market or roadside stand for some of the freshest, best tasting food available, or find a local retailer by searching [www.VirginiaGrown.com](http://www.VirginiaGrown.com).

## Farmers brace for drought as hot, dry weather persists

While summer drought conditions are not uncommon in pockets of Virginia, farmers statewide are expressing concern about the forecast. An ongoing string of hot days with low humidity will likely affect their crops.

Those abnormally dry drought conditions are persistent throughout the commonwealth, according to a recent crop progress report from the National Agricultural Statistical Service's Virginia Field Office. Temperatures are expected to reach highs in the upper 90s in the coming weeks.

"We were getting rain, rain, rain every weekend," said Danielle Bappert, regional crop agent for Virginia Farm Bureau Crop Insurance. "Then it just cut off. The farmers I talk to are nervous, looking at their weather apps, with not a drop of rain in sight."

However, some crops thrive in this weather.

"There was a very good first cutting of hay around the state, and some farmers have already gotten a good-quality second cutting," noted Robert Harper, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation grain division manager.

Since Virginia's wheat and hayfields received significant rain in the spring, they are faring well.

"Everyone is telling me it's their best hay crop in years," explained Bappert. "And it's ideal for wheat to be dry when it's cut. Last year it rained a lot during that time frame,

which lowers quality. But for most farmers, corn and soybeans are the big money makers."

With long summer days, "photosynthesis is wide open," Harper said. "When water cuts off, it puts those crops under stress."

The lack of rain already has prevented some growers from double-cropping—growing two or more crops in the same area during a single crop year, like planting soybeans after harvesting winter wheat.

"Farmers are telling me they are not planting them," Harper said. "They are waiting for rain because they can't hammer seed into ground that's hard as a brick!"

The unusual weather may be attributed to the shift from El Niño to La Niña.

The summer will bring a climatic pattern change, said U.S. Department of Agriculture meteorologist Brad Rippey. El Niño is the climate phenomenon warming equatorial waters in the Pacific.

"The transition has already begun to the opposite conditions, known as La Niña, with colder-than-normal waters in the same region," he said. "The shift is coming."

The climate transition can result in "super-dry conditions" followed by a highly active hurricane season predicted this year, Bappert noted.

VFB has added hurricane coverage to its multiple crop insurance options. For more information, visit [vafb.com/insurance/crop](http://vafb.com/insurance/crop).

## National Farm Dog of the Year deadline quickly approaching

Australian shepherds, border collies, mixed breeds and Great Pyrenees are among the many dog breeds that help protect livestock and property and herd animals for farmers.

Dogs who perform those and other farm tasks exceptionally well can be entered into the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2025 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year Contest.

Entries must be received by midnight on July 12, and judging will take place between July 15 and Aug. 12.

Now in its seventh year, the contest is sponsored by AFBF with support from Nestlé Purina PetCare. The annual competition celebrates farm dogs and the numerous ways they support farmers and ranchers. Desired dog traits include helpfulness to a farmer and the farm family, playfulness and obedience.

A panel of judges will select the Farm Dog of the Year. The grand prize winner will receive a \$5,000 cash prize, a year's supply of Pu-

rina Pro-Plan dog food, and a \$500 travel stipend and two free adult registrations to attend the 2025 AFBF Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas. The 2025 Farm Dog of the Year also will be featured in a professionally produced video that will be shown at the convention.

Additionally, the public will be invited to vote online for their favorite dog in the People's Choice Pup contest. The people's choice winner will receive a \$2,500 cash prize, and a \$500 stipend and two free adult registrations to the 2025 AFBF convention.

The contest is open to U.S. residents who are 18 years or older and are a member of Farm Bureau in their state of residence. Visit [vafb.com/membership-at-work/membership/join-now](http://vafb.com/membership-at-work/membership/join-now) to join Virginia Farm Bureau.

View the profile of 2024 Farm Dog of the Year grand prize winner, Skippy, and access contest eligibility guidelines and submission requirements at [fb.org/initiative/farm-dog-of-the-year](http://fb.org/initiative/farm-dog-of-the-year).



Surry Community College is offering a North Carolina Real Estate Broker, Pre-Licensing course that will meet Monday, Aug. 5, at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville. For questions or to register, contact The Pilot Center at (336) 386-3618.

## SCC to offer NC Real Estate Broker, Pre-Licensing Course on Aug. 5

Surry Community College is offering a North Carolina Real Estate Broker, Pre-Licensing course that will meet at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville.

The course will start on Monday, Aug. 5, from 6 to 9 p.m. and will provide students with the knowledge to take the N.C. Provisional Broker Exam.

The class will meet in person for the first meeting on Monday, August 5; remainder of the course will meet online synchronously. Meetings will be Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m.

For more information and to register, contact The Pilot Center at (336) 386-3618. Tuition for the course is \$183, plus the cost of the book.

## USDA reminds Virginia producers to file crop acreage reports

Agricultural producers in Virginia should make an appointment with their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to complete crop acreage reports before the applicable deadline after planting is complete.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch, its intended use and location. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

### How to File a Report

Acreage reporting dates vary by crop and by county. Contact your local FSA office for a list of acreage reporting deadlines by crop.

To file a crop acreage report, producers need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety
- Intended crop use
- Number of crop acres
- Map with approximate crop boundaries
- Planting date(s)
- Planting pattern, when applicable
- Producer shares
- Irrigation practice(s)
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable
- Other required information

### Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage report-

ing date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or crop harvesting begins.

### Farmers.gov Portal

Producers can access their FSA farm records, maps, and common land units through the farmers.gov customer portal. The portal allows producers to export field boundaries as shapefiles and import and view other shapefiles, such as precision agriculture boundaries within farm records mapping. Producers can view, print and label their maps for acreage reporting purposes. Level 2 eAuthentication or login.gov access that is linked to a USDA Business Partner customer record is required to use the portal.

Producers can visit [farmers.gov/](http://farmers.gov/) account to learn more about creating an account. Producers who have authority to act on behalf of another customer as a grantee via an FSA-211 Power of Attorney form, Business Partner Signature Authority or as a member of a business can now access information for the business in the farmers.gov portal.

### More Information

For questions, producers may call their FSA county office. To find their FSA county office, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](http://farmers.gov/service-center-locator).



## FSA seeks nominations for local county committees

Nominations are now being accepted for farmers and ranchers to serve on local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees. These committees make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1.

Elections for committee members will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA). LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a geographic information system locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and determine if their LAA is up for election by contacting their local FSA office.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

Participate or cooperate in a USDA program.

Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority, women, urban and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster recovery, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as mak-

ing decisions on county office employment and other agricultural issues.

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to form urban county committees and make other advancements related to urban agriculture, including the establishment of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The FSA established county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture that work to encourage and promote urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the county committees may address food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost and food waste reduction.

Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs, serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

The 27 cities with urban county committees are listed at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) and [farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban). Of these, ten urban county committees will hold an inaugural election this cycle.

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an FSA-669A nomination form. This form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by the Aug. 1 deadline. Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in November.

## Job Openings in Va. Up Nearly 50,000 in April

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' April 2024 Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) showed that the job openings rate was up a full percentage point, according to Virginia Works (the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement).

According to the BLS JOLTS survey data and the most recent available, the number of April 2024 hires in Virginia rose by 4,000 over the month and up by six percent from five years earlier. BLS JOLTS data provides information on all the pieces that go into the net change in the number of jobs. These components include job openings, hires, layoffs, voluntary quits, and other job separations (which includes retirements and worker deaths). Putting those components together reveals the overall change in payroll employment. JOLTS data is seasonally adjusted and describes conditions on the last business day of the month. The current month's data are preliminary and the previous month's data have been revised.

On the last business day in April, there were 283,000 job openings in Virginia, seasonally adjusted, a 46,000 increase from March's revised figure. The number of U.S. job openings changed little at 8.1 million; this measure was down by 1.8 million over the year. Job openings decreased in health care and social assistance (-204,000) and in state and local government education (-59,000) but increased in private educational services (+50,000). The largest decreases in the job openings level occurred in California (-81,000), New York (-71,000), and Illinois (-65,000). The largest increases occurred in Virginia (+46,000), Arizona (+36,000), and Tennessee (+18,000).

In Virginia, the April job openings rate was 6.3 percent, up a full point from March. The U.S. rate was little changed at 4.8 percent in April. The largest decreases in job openings

rates occurred in Illinois, Kansas, and Vermont (-0.9 percentage point each). Significant increases occurred in Arizona and Virginia (+1.0 point each) and in Idaho (+0.8 point).

The number of hires in Virginia rose to 172,000 in April, an increase of 4,000 over the month and up by a similar amount from April 2023. JOLTS defines hires as all additions to the payroll during the month. The number of hires was 37 percent lower than the series high of 271,000 set in June 2020. In April, the number of U.S. hires was little changed at 5.6 million. Hires significantly increased in durable goods manufacturing (+52,000), but decreased in arts, entertainment, and recreation (-45,000) and in federal government (-8,000). The largest increases in the hires level occurred in North Carolina (+30,000), Louisiana (+15,000), and Oklahoma (+13,000). Large decreases occurred in New Jersey (-36,000) and Massachusetts (-23,000). In Virginia, the 4.1 hires rate was little changed from March's revised 4.0 percent rate. The U.S. rate, at 3.6 percent, changed little in April. The hires rate increased for establishments with 5,000 or more employees. The largest increases in the hires rate occurred in Idaho (+1.0 percentage point) and in Louisiana and Oklahoma (+0.7 point each). The decreases occurred in New Jersey (-0.8 point) and Massachusetts (-0.6 point).

The Virginia hires-per-job-openings (HPJO) ratio fell to 0.61. This was different from nationwide, where hires rose as a percentage of openings. This measure shows the rate of hiring compared to open jobs and is a proxy for time to fill positions.

In April 2024, there were 0.5 unemployed per job opening in the Commonwealth, compared to nationwide, with 0.8 unemployed per job opening nationwide. In Virginia, the unemployed per job opening ratio (sometimes called the 'job seekers ratio') peaked at 4.4 unemployed per job

## Health care among top industries reported by initial filers

The 2,325 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending June 15, 2024, which is 8.1 percent lower than last week's 2,531 claims and 6.5 percent lower than the comparable week of last year (2,486), according to Virginia Works. Nearly 82 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (59 percent) were Health Care and Social Assistance (242); Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Food Services (219); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (215); and Retail Trade (158).

Continued weeks claims (16,034) were 1.7 percent higher than last week (15,761) and were 22.3 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (13,107). Nearly 93 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of

those reported, the top five industries (59 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (2,413); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,201); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,545); Retail Trade (1,343); and Accommodation and Food Services (1,300).

A person who has already filed an initial claim and who has experienced a week of unemployment files a continued claim to claim benefits for that week of unemployment. On a weekly basis, continued claims reflect a good approximation of the current number of insured unemployed workers filing for UI benefits, and are a good indicator of labor market conditions. While continued claims are not a leading indicator, they provide confirming evidence of the direction of the economy.

## Inmate indicted in plot targeting staff members

A Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) inmate is facing charges related to soliciting the murder of two VADOC corrections team members and violations of a protective order filed for an employee's safety.

Richard Joseph Bottoms, 49, was indicted on two counts of solicit felony - murder and four counts of violation of a protective order by a Powhatan County grand jury on Wednesday, June 5.

An indictment is merely an allegation - a grand jury's determination that evidence exists to warrant a trial.

Bottoms allegedly filed a later-unfounded Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) claim against a VADOC employee at State Farm Correctional Center in June 2023, and continually harassed the employee following the claim. As a result, a court in Henrico County issued a protective order, prohibiting Bottoms from contacting the employee.

Bottoms allegedly violated the court order through third-party contact in November 2023, which prompted the VADOC Victim Services Unit to open an investigation that resulted in Bottoms and two additional inmates receiving institutional infractions.

Following the institutional charges, Bottoms allegedly solicited

another inmate to murder both the State Farm CC employee and the lead investigator from the Victim Services Unit for monetary gain. Thankfully, the two VADOC corrections team members were physically unharmed.

A trial date has not been set.

"Harassing members of our correctional team will not be tolerated and our Department will seek prosecution of employee harassment to the fullest extent of the law," said VADOC Director Chad Dotson. "Corrections employees face difficult situations every day and do so with professionalism and pride. They should not face harassment and retaliation from inmates at any point. I thank Powhatan County Commonwealth's Attorney Rob Cerullo and his office for investigating this matter and holding this inmate accountable for such dangerous actions.

"Additionally, the Virginia Department of Corrections has a zero-tolerance policy regarding violations of the Prison Rape Elimination Act," Director Dotson continued. "Making an unfounded claim for retaliation, or for any reason, wastes valuable investigation time for any claims that need to be examined."

No further information will be provided at this time.

opening in February 2010 during the Great Recession, while the number of unemployed workers per job opening stood at 3.2 in April 2020 during the height of pandemic employment impacts.

Total separations in Virginia increased by 2,000 to 156,000. Nationwide, the number of total separations changed little at 5.4 million. Over the month, the number of total separations significantly increased in durable goods manufacturing (+49,000). The largest increases in the total separations level occurred in Colorado (+48,000), Arizona (+32,000), and Louisiana (+18,000). The decreases occurred in Massachusetts (-19,000) and Idaho (-6,000). The Virginia total separations rate edged upward to 3.7 percent. The U.S. total separations rate changed little at 3.4 percent. Significant increases in total separations rates occurred in Colorado (+1.6 percentage points), Arizona (+1.0 point), and Louisiana (+0.9 point). The decreases occurred in Massachusetts (-0.6 point) and New York (-0.4 point).

An estimated 100,000 workers quit jobs from Virginia employers in April. The number of quits was unchanged from March's revised figure. That was little-changed over-the-year and little-changed from five years earlier. Quits, a component of total separations, are voluntary separations initiated by the employee. In April, the number of quits nationwide was little changed at 3.5 million. The number of quits decreased in professional and business services (-131,000), but increased in other services (+67,000), durable goods manufacturing (+39,000), and state and local government education (+32,000). The largest increases in the quits level

occurred in Colorado (+38,000), Ohio (+22,000), and Arizona (+18,000). A significant decrease occurred in Massachusetts (-14,000). The quits rate in the Commonwealth was unchanged at 2.4 percent and remained at levels seen over the last two years. The U.S. rate was 2.2 percent for the sixth month in a row in April. The largest increases in quits rates occurred in Colorado (+1.3 percentage points) and in Louisiana and South Dakota (+0.7 point each). The decrease occurred in Massachusetts (-0.4 point).

The number of layoffs and discharges in Virginia was unchanged at 44,000 in April. This was down by a quarter over the year, and down by twelve percent from five years earlier. Layoffs and discharges are countercyclical, which means that layoffs typically increase during economic contractions and decrease during economic expansions. In April, the number of U.S. layoffs and discharges changed little at 1.5 million. The number of layoffs and discharges significantly decreased in arts, entertainment, and recreation (-37,000). The largest decreases in the layoffs and discharges level occurred in Florida (-27,000) and in Michigan and New York (-24,000 each). The increases occurred in California (+39,000), Connecticut (+10,000), and Maine (+3,000).

The Virginia layoffs and discharges rate was little changed at one percent, while the U.S. rate was little changed at 1.0 percent. The largest decreases occurred in North Dakota (-0.7 percentage point) and Indiana (-0.6 point) as well as in Michigan and Oklahoma (-0.5 point each). The increases occurred in Connecticut (+0.6 point) and California (+0.2 point).



## Report indicates VA public college policies can help student parents

**Edwin J. Viera**  
*Virginia News Connection*

A new report examines how Virginia public colleges can help student parents.

The Urban Institute report reviews three policies schools can implement so student parents can thrive in college, and looks at the return on investment for each one.

The policies were a comprehensive student-parent support program, expanded grants, and on-campus childcare.

Theresa Anderson, principal research associate with the Urban Institute, said a comprehensive support program provides many benefits.

"A lot of time parents need to complete their education efficiently," said Anderson, "because there's a large opportunity cost in going to the school - because they're missing out on time with their children, they're missing out on time they could be working more."

Other benefits include helping student parents break feelings of isolation. The scholarship and grant program helps student parents make ends meet while they get their education.

On-campus childcare also helps student parents enroll, since other

studies show not having childcare is a massive barrier they face.

The comprehensive student-parent support program had the highest return on investment of all the policies studied.

Every dollar invested in it could yield almost \$6 in tax revenue and public-benefit savings. By 2035, this could benefit the public by an estimated \$1.9 billion.

Anderson said lawmakers can easily put these policies into action.

"Appropriating resources for student-parent support programs on college campuses would be very feasible," said Anderson. "Texas did part of this by requiring colleges to establish student-parent liaison positions across the state, but this would be a step further where Virginia would be a leader in actually setting up programs across every campus."

She added increasing the college scholarship program would also be easy, since it creates a new option for parents on an existing program.

For on-campus childcare, Anderson cited New York as an example - since that state uses Federal Childcare Development funds, with Gov. Kathy Hochul allocating additional money.

Support for this reporting was provided by Lumina Foundation.

## Permit Transparency website expanded, more user friendly

The Virginia Permit Transparency (VPT) website, an online resource featuring the vast majority of permit applications considered by Virginia agencies, is expanded, and now the centralized platform can be used to track the daily status and timeline of critical steps for Commonwealth of Virginia permits.

Users can search permit applications or filter results by fields such as agency, application number, locality, and more. VPT can be accessed at Permits.Virginia.Gov, according to Gov. Glenn Youngkin who announced the expansion.

VPT allows agencies to track how long each step of the process is taking. The Department of Environmental Quality, which first developed the pilot program that VPT is based on, already has reduced its average permit processing time by over 70% since 2022. VPT will enable other participating agencies to identify opportunities for improvement in permitting time as

well. VPT launched with three agencies (Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and Department of Energy) earlier this year. With this expansion, it now also includes permits from the Department of Health, Department of Transportation, and Department of Conservation and Recreation. With the new agencies added, Virginia citizens will now have access to more than 100,000 permits issued by these six agencies every year.

With this expansion, Virginia is again proving to be a trendsetter in the regulatory modernization space. No other state government or federal agency offers anything nearly as comprehensive. The DEQ pilot program that inspired VPT has won several awards, and prominent commentators have praised VPT for its accessibility and

user-friendliness.

"The expansion of the Virginia Permit Transparency website reaffirms our ongoing commitment to enhancing government transparency and ensuring it serves all Virginians effectively," said Youngkin. "The latest expansion of the VPT website innovates the permit application process by prioritizing accessibility and efficiency. It enables agencies to monitor the duration of each step and identify opportunities to expedite the permitting process for Virginians."

"VPT is a game changer for Virginia businesses and citizens as well as state agencies," said Director of the Office of Regulatory Management Reeve Bull. "It brings an unprecedented level of transparency to the permitting process and is already making life much easier for anyone tracking a Virginia permit."

### Mr. & Mrs. Dillon

Richard Leon Dillon  
May 15th, 1939 - June 17th 2024

Kathleen Turner Dillon  
April 16th, 1940 - February 21st 2024

If you ever met Miss Kitty, you were forever blessed by her presence. Her faith and love for our savior Jesus Christ was beyond evident. She enjoyed baking her cakes and her home style cooking. She always took care of her family. She enjoyed her yard sales. She never met a stranger and always left you with a smile. Her love for her family will live on for many generations.



Richard was a good man. One who was still a kid at heart, especially if there was a remote-controlled car around. He loved his wife with all his heart and thanked the good Lord for her. He was a proud father, papa and great grandpa. On weekends you could

usually find him out at yard sales wheeling and dealing with the best of them, maybe even cutting a rug at a bluegrass show! He liked his NASCAR, classic cars and sweet tea.

So, to make a long story short, these two were a blessing to us all.

This is not goodbye, it is simply "Til We Meet Again in heaven"

These two love birds were married for over 65 years and are survived by two children Rick Dillon, Wendy Prillaman, 1 granddaughter Amber Brooks and 1 great grandson Ezra Brooks.

### Bernice Stephens Hopkins

Bernice Stephens Hopkins, 91, passed away on Friday, June 21, 2024 at her home. She was born March 21, 1933 to the late Roy Stephens and Essie Ora Woodall Stephens. In addition to her parents Bernice is predeceased by her husband Howard Lee Hopkins; son, Allen Hopkins; sister, Stella Walton; brother, Billy Stephens; and half-brother, Reo Stephens.

Bernice was a member of Unity Missionary Baptist Church.

She is survived by her daughters, Marie Grogan (Norman) and Bonnie Covington (Joe); sons, Lloyd Hopkins (Linda), Mike Hopkins (Kaye), Ray-



mond Hopkins (Mary Anne), Donnie Hopkins (Susan), and Ronnie Hopkins (Barbara); eighteen grandchildren; twenty-six great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; brother-in-law, Harden Hopkins; sister-in-law, Hazel Hopkins; and daughter-in-law, Frances

Hopkins.

A funeral service will be held Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at Norris Funeral Services Stuart Chapel. The visitation will be from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. prior to the service. Pastor Ed Hartman and Pastor Curt Ashley will be officiating the service. Burial will follow the service at Patrick Memorial Gardens, Stuart, VA.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Mountain Valley Hospice attention finance, 105 North Crutchfield St., Unit 2, Dobson, NC 27017 and Unity Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, Ed Hartman, 1574 VA/NC Rd., Spencer, VA 24165.

### Winfred Curtis Stowe

Winfred Curtis Stowe, 81, of Ridgeway, VA passed away on Friday, June 21, 2024, at his home. He was born December 25, 1942, to the late William Curtis Stowe and Laura Hopkins Stowe.

Winfred retired from VDOT with forty-two years of service.

He is survived by his wife, Beverly Adkins Stowe; son, Barry Stowe (Hortencia Traynhan); grand-children, Whitney Draper and Lauren Stowe;



great-grandchildren, Mollie Draper and Savannah Draper; brother, William Junior Stowe; and sisters, Lillie Mae Lester and

Shirley Coleman. He was a devoted husband, loving father and beloved papa.

The graveside service was held Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Patrick Memorial Gardens, Stuart, VA. With Pastor Mark Elkins officiating.

Norris Funeral Services Martinsville Chapel is serving the Stowe family. Online condolences can be made at norrisfuneral.com.

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# PATRICK PULPITS

## “Lord, Open Our Eyes”

### 2 Kings 6:11-19

By Pastor Thomas Shepherd  
Stuart Church of Living Water

There is a war taking place not seen with our natural eyes, but it is just as real and dangerous. In the military one of the greatest advantages in engaging the enemy is the element of the surprise attack. This tactic has proven effective for ages. All we must do is remember December 7, 1941, or September 11, 2001. A surprise attack is a strategic advantage in any battle. That is why the military is constantly developing stealth technology where airplanes, drones, ships, and submarines are undetectable. Having the ability to secretly enter enemy territory and launch a surprise attack gives one the military advantage. I want you to know that there is a war taking place all around us that is hidden from the physical eye. It is a spiritual war, and it is real! Far too many Christians fail to believe this war even exists. There are many things that the evil ones will launch at us to discourage us in our faith journey, things like sickness, relational issues, and the like. As concerning as this is, I want to remind you of what the Apostle John told us, “Greater is he that is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Many Christians believe that by being a Christian that life will be easy. Yet the truth is, we are attacked by Satan and his demons with much greater force, because he wants us to give up on God. He wants to steal our faith and hope. Satan has one goal, “to steal, kill, and destroy” but Jesus tells us, “I have come that they may have life” (John 10:10). We have the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), we have the Word of God, and we have the strategic arsenal of Prayer and Fasting to defeat the Devil, that great deceiver!

The question is: Are we using the resources God has given us to overthrow the enemy? The spiritual arsenal of Prayer and Fasting unleashes the power of God to fight for us. And better yet, is when we enter this battle together in corporate prayer and fasting, dressed in the full armor of God, and praying in one accord for the same purpose.

In our text today from 2 Kings 6, we find that the king of Aram (Syria) was upset because the prophet Elisha always was one step ahead. Elisha would know his plans and let the King of Israel know what those plans were. The king of Syria sends an army to Dothan to capture him. In the morning, when Elisha's servant looks out, he sees the Syrian Army surrounding the town and he is frightened and fearful as he tells Elisha, “Alas, master! What shall we do?” (15). In response Elisha said, “Do not be afraid, for there are more with us than there are with them” (16). I can imagine the servants' thoughts, “You've got to be kidding me! There is an army out there and we are only a few in number. We don't stand a chance!”

Does Elisha have a panic attack? No! We are told, “Then Elisha prayed, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see” (17). God opened the servants' eyes and he saw “the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (17). I cannot help but imagine this amazing sight. That is my prayer for us, “O Lord, please open

our eyes that we may see the battle going on for our very souls. Let us know that you are on our side, ready to fight for us. “Friends, there is indeed a spiritual battle going on today. Sadly, many Christians today do not even believe in Satan, much less his demons or a spiritual war. They proclaim to be too smart to believe in mysticism, fantasy, or superstitions, but the Word of God tells us plainly that there is a spiritual war. Even though Jesus won the final victory Satan knows his doom is certain and he wants to take as many souls with him as possible.

Let's cover just a few passages that speak plainly about this spiritual war. In Daniel 10, Daniel saw evidence of a spiritual battle. He had been fasting and praying for 21 days when finally, an angel of the Lord came. Daniel saw the spiritual realm in a vision and became as a dead man. The angel tells Daniel that he was delayed 21 days by the prince of Persia, so the angel Michael came to help him. After the angel gives Daniel the message he tells him, “I must return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I am through with him, the prince of Greece will come” (20). Jesus said that there are unclean spirits “demons” in Luke 11:24-26 saying, “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ 25 When it returns, it finds it swept and put in order. 26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first.” You cannot get any plainer than that! John tells us in 1 John 4:1-6 that the spirit of the antichrist is already in the world and not to trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12 that “our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

There must be a great spiritual battle going on in Richmond and in Washington DC every day. I hope you can see with just these few verses that the Word of God confirms the reality of this spiritual war! Spiritual war is real, and you will be affected by it whether you believe it or not! We become aware of this spiritual war and see into the spiritual realm by seeking God through prayer and fasting and asking him to open our eyes. What God needs from us is for us to be prayer warriors. So, pray, fast, and pray some more! Elisha prayed for his servant's spiritual eyes to be opened and they were, and he saw.

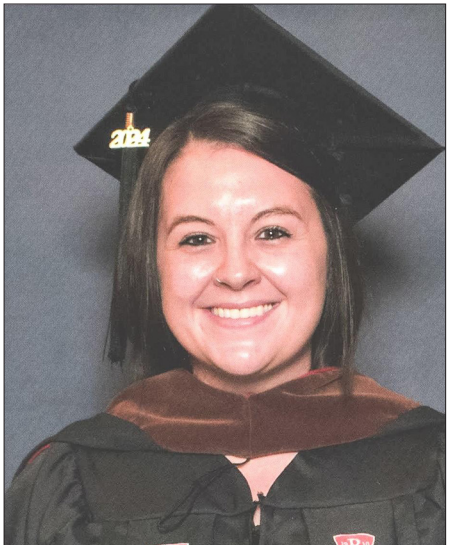
Have your spiritual eyes been open to the reality of Spiritual War? Jesus says that if you aren't with Him, you are against him and if you are not gathering you are scattering (Matt. 12:30). There is no middle ground with the Lord, You are either for him or against him. Where do you stand? The Spiritual War is real! Lord, open our eyes so that we may see the truth of this Spiritual War.

## Bembry earns degree

Brandy Lee Bembry of Stuart, Virginia, earned her master's degree in fine art from Radford University May 2024.

She was also a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Teaching Fellow at Radford University. She was inducted into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi at Radford University as well in 2024.

Before attending Radford University, she earned her Bachelor of Arts from Ferrum College in Ferrum, Virginia, majoring in Studio Art, business minor and was Summa Cum Laude.



## BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of 2 Thessalonians (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Song of Solomon 8, what is so powerful that many waters cannot quench it? Hope, Love, Salvation, Peace
3. Which book begins, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past”? Philippians, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews
4. Thorns and what else grew from the ground that God cursed after Adam and Eve's sin? Vines, Ivy, Thistles,

Weeds  
5. According to Paul, in hardships, Christians are more than \_\_\_\_\_. Friends, Conquerors, Warriors, Innkeepers  
6. From Luke 19, what town was home to Zacchaeus? Jericho, Tarsus, Thessalonica, Corinth  
ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Love, 3) Hebrews, 4) Thistles, 5) Conquerors, 6) Jericho  
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CABINET-MAKING

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>                   | 47 Higher-ranking                        | 97 “Auld Lang —”                                | 5 Nickname for Yale University             | 37 Barks shrilly           | 82 Pool cover                             |
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| 15 Molar point                  | 56 Commoners, collectively               | 107 Really cold                                 | 9 Mozart's — Fan Tuttle”                   | 41 With a variety of hues  | 86 Cube creator                           |
| 19 Ring around a lagoon         | 58 Transaction of business via e-devices | 108 Sparkly crown                               | 11 Iran — Affair                           | 46 Like sumo stars         | 87 Valley                                 |
| 20 Sag down                     | 61 Volcano in Japan                      | 109 Fitting retribution                         | 12 Race created by H.G. Wells              | 48 Ring official           | 94 Blunders                               |
| 21 Medley                       | 63 — Jose                                | 114 Composer Jean-Phillippe —                   | 13 “The Mod Squad” cop                     | 50 Israeli carrier         | 95 “Got a guess?”                         |
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| 27 U.S. Navy petty officers     | 73 To be, in, Marseilles                 | 123 Eternally                                   | 17 Put on, as a play                       | 55 Paltry                  | 100 Bellyached                            |
| 28 What a moving body has       | 74 Belly                                 | 124 Verdugo of “Panama Sal”                     | 18 Corals, e.g.                            | 57 Part of Babylonia       | 102 Choir platforms                       |
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# CLASSIFIED

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**LEGAL**

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION** Case No. CL21000281-00 COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104 PATRICK CIRCUIT COURT 101 W. BLUE RIDGE STREET/PO BOX 148, STUART, VA 24171 Commonwealth of Virginia, in re MICHAEL DEANGELO HAIRSTON The object of this suit is to: GIVE NOTICE TO DEFENDANT FOR HEARING AUGUST 26, 2024 AT 3:00 PM It is ORDERED that MICHAEL DEANGELO HAIRSTON appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before AUGUST 26, 2024. JUNE 4, 2024 *M. J. Baugh* Clerk

**LEGAL**

**TRUSTEE SALE** 1088 Peters Creek Dr, Stuart, VA 24171 Patrick County

In execution of the Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$56,193.88, dated July 9, 2002 recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the Patrick County, Virginia, in Document No. 020002198, at the request of the holder of the Note, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the entrance to the Circuit Court of Patrick County, 101 W. Blue Ridge Street, Stuart, on July 18, 2024 at 12:00 PM the property described in said deed, located at the above address and briefly described as:

**Lot 4, containing 2.0008 acres, more or less, as shown on a plat of survey titled "J. H. Horton and W. E. Edwards and A. A. Edwards", prepared by J. L. Bolt, LLS, # 1703, dated January 18, 1999, in the Current Plat Cabinet of the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Patrick County, Virginia, with any improvements thereon** Subject to any and all covenants, conditions, restrictions, easements, and all other matters of record taking priority over the Deed of Trust, if any, affecting the aforesaid property.

**TERMS OF SALE: CASH:** A deposit of \$20,000.00 or 10% of the sales price, whichever is lower, cash or certified check will be required at the time of sale, but no more than \$10,000.00 of cash will be accepted, with settlement within fifteen (15) days from the date of sale. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale which affects the validity of the sale, as well as to post-sale confirmation of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, the sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of his deposit without interest. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. Pursuant to the Federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, we advise you that this firm is a debt collector attempting to collect the indebtedness referred to herein and any information we obtain will be used for that purpose.

SAMUEL I. WHITE, P.c., Substitute Trustee

This is a communication from a debt collector. **FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:** SAMUEL I. WHITE, P.C. (88713) 448 Viking Drive Suite 350 Virginia Beach, VA 23452 757-457-1460 - Call Between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or visit our website at www.siwpc.net

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# Enhanced resources will support businesses interested in USDA procurement opportunities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced resource enhancements designed to simplify and streamline access to contracting information for businesses interested in selling their products and services to USDA. These substantial updates include the addition of new and targeted contracting information on USDA.gov, along with improved functionality that makes it easier for businesses and individuals to quickly find and access procurement opportunities, and a portal for businesses to share the scope of their capabilities with USDA more easily.

"Doing business with the U.S. Department of Agriculture should be straightforward, particularly for our nation's small businesses," said Agriculture Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres

Small. "Unfortunately, researching and identifying relevant procurement opportunities can be extremely challenging, confusing, and time-consuming. That's why the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing new tools and resources that will make it easier to contract with the USDA to serve American farmers and all of us who count on the food they grow."

Spearheaded by USDA's Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) in collaboration with the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), these improvements include:

The creation of a new "Contracting with USDA" site that offers information, resources, and links for businesses that want to contract with USDA, in a helpful Q&A format. The site addresses

commonly asked questions such as "What does USDA typically buy?", "What are the most common ways USDA buys what it needs?" and "How do I find current opportunities to contract with USDA?"

An updated Vendor Capability Submission Portal that allows suppliers and merchants to submit their business capabilities to USDA via a web form. Portal submissions are shared with contracting officers across the Department.

Updates to the previously deployed USDA Procurement Forecast, a tool that assist businesses and individuals with identifying procurement opportunities with USDA. Launched in June 2023, the Procurement Forecast now has a user-friendly way to search and filter procurement opportunities. Currently, the tool includes nearly 6,000 planned contract opportunities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

"USDA has a long history of contracting with a wide variety of businesses to help us deliver our mission to the American people. In addition, we have unwavering support for businesses, large, mid-size and small. We hope the deployed contracting resources will help even more businesses navigate the complex process of contracting with the federal government," said Malcom Shorter,

USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration.

In FY 2023, the USDA obligated more than \$11 billion in 67,000 contract activities spanning a wide variety of industries and contract types. In FY 2024, the USDA estimates a comparable obligation amount and contract awards to our industry partners.

USDA purchasing extends well beyond agricultural commodities. Last fiscal year, the Department awarded contracts to nearly 12,000 businesses from a wide range of industries for \$4.9 billion in food, \$4.2 billion in services, \$1.7 billion in Information Technology contracts, a half a billion in goods, and nearly a half billion in construction contracts.

The department strongly supports procurement initiatives that promote equity and remove barriers to procurement opportunities. To encourage growth, USDA plans to award 57.5% or more of its contract dollars to small businesses this year, including 27.85% to small, disadvantaged businesses. USDA's collective efforts to support small businesses garnered an A+ Rating on the U.S. Small Business Administration's FY2023 Small Business Procurement Scorecard.

Businesses interested in contracting with USDA can visit <https://www.usda.gov/da/ocp/contracting> for access to these and other resources.

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

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**Meetings**

**Monday, July 8**  
The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will meet at 6 p.m. in the third-floor courtroom of the Patrick County Administration Building.

**Thursday, July 11**  
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the School Board Office.

**Wednesday, July 17**  
The Stuart Town Office will meet at 7 p.m. in the town office.

**Events**

**Friday, June 28**  
Fairy Stone State Park Events - Moonshine Hollow Hike, 10 a.m. at the Visitor Center; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12:30 p.m. at Visitors Center; Native Plants and Pollinators, 4 p.m. at Shelter 4; Canoeing with Ghosts, 8 p.m. at the Beach Breezeway.

Wayside Community Church will hold a Friday Night Fellowship starting at 6 p.m. The cookout starts at 6 p.m. followed by music by Two Young Two Old. The guest speaker is Mitch Canupp. The church is located at 3520 Wayside Road, Stuart.

**Saturday, June 29**  
Poor Farmers' Farm in Vesta, near Lovers Leap, will host a celebration to celebrate 48 years in vegetable farming and retail business. Food will be served from "Joyce's Country Deli" starting at noon. Be sure to put your name in a box from 12-2:30 p.m. for a free country quilt drawing at 3 p.m. Garry Collins and Bob Ashcraft will perform on the Front Porch Music Stage from 1-3 p.m.

The Patrick County Democratic Committee will meet at 11 a.m. at the Patrick County Library. Business cards, yard signs, and more will be available.

Fairy Stone State Park Events - Old Hickory Trail, 10 a.m. at Shelter 4; Fairy Stone Hunt, noon at Visitors Center; Turtle Time, 1 p.m. at Visitors Center; Fairy Stone Workshop, 2 p.m. at Shelter 4; CSI: Creek Scene Investigation, 4:30 p.m. at Shelter 4; Corn Squeezins, 8 p.m. at Amphitheater.

**Sunday, June 30**  
Fairy Stone State Park Events - Moonshine Hollow Hike, 10 a.m. at the Visitors Center; Fairy Stone Hunt, noon at Visitors Center; Moonshine Murders, 2:30 p.m. at Shelter 4; Insect Safari, 4 p.m. at Shelter 4; Nature's Invaders, 5 p.m. at Shelter 4.

**Thursday, July 4**  
The Bluegrass and Old Time Music Competi-

tion will be held at the Vesta Community Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If it rains the competition will be held on July 5. People are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs. Banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, bands, vocals, and flat footing competitions, with three levels each - children, teen, and adult. Everyone is welcome to compete, and they must be signed in by 12 p.m. There will also be a quilt show by the Mountain Top Quilters. Hotdogs, BBQ, lemonade, soft drinks, and dessert will be for sale.

**Friday, July 5**  
The community food truck will be at the Woolwine Smith River Rescue Squad from 3-4:30 p.m.

**Monday, July 8 - Wednesday, July 26**  
Patrick & Henry Community College (P&H-CC) and Verizon will hold a Verizon Innovation Learning STEM Achievers Program from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for rising 6-8th graders. It is free to students, and lunch and transportation for the Stuart site only will be provided. Those interested should register by going to <https://verizon.nacce.com/registration>, or calling or calling (276) 656-5461.

**Wednesday, July 10**  
The Patrick County Food Bank will hold distribution at the Stuart site from 8:30-11 a.m. and from 5-6:30 p.m., at Ararat starting at 8:30 a.m., and at Meadows of Dan starting at 5:30 p.m.

**Thursday, July 11**  
The Patrick County Senior Citizens group meets at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field. Entertainment will be provided by Philip Adams. Beverages will be provided to all attendees, and attendees are requested to bring salads and/or desserts to share with the group.

**Saturday, July 13**  
The Patrick Springs Ruritan Club will hold a fish fry dinner from 4-7 p.m. at Patrick Springs Park. This fundraiser will help raise funds to help the club sponsor community service projects. The meal will include fried fish, beans, corn, slaw, hush puppies, a drink, and dessert. There will be a dessert auction of pies and cakes after the meal.

**July 15-19**  
Start the Party Vacation Bible School at Patrick Springs Pentecostal Holiness Church, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. nightly. All ages, including adults, are invited.

**Friday, July 19**  
The community food truck will be at the Fairy-stone VFD from 3-4:30 p.m.

**Saturday, July 20**  
Mayo Mountain Church will hold Vacation Bible School from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The seventh annual Rock Castle Reunion will be held at 12 p.m. at Woolwine Methodist Church. Attendees are encouraged to bring old photographs, artifacts, stories, and covered dishes. Email Beverly at [rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com](mailto:rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com) or call 276-692-9626 with questions.

**Ongoing**

Free Community Meal, every 4th Wednesday, 5 p.m., Raven Rock Wesleyan Church, 1912 Raven Rock Road, Ararat. Take out or dine in. Call Scott or Nann Phillips at (276) 773-6004 or email [pastor@ravenrockchurch.org](mailto:pastor@ravenrockchurch.org).

The Coffee Break Café hosts live music on Tuesdays from 9 to 11 a.m. Bring an instrument, or just come and listen.

The Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC meets at 7 p.m. the first Monday of every month at the Alzheimer's office at 109 Buena Vista Ave in Stuart. New members or volunteers are welcome. For more information, call (276) 693-6018.

The Patrick County Quilters' Sit-N-Sew is held on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Quilted Colors. For more information, call 276-694-3020 or email [patrickcountyquilters@gmail.com](mailto:patrickcountyquilters@gmail.com).

The Stuart Elementary School Running Club will hit the pavements along the sidewalks in town on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

The Ararat Ruritan Club holds Rook games every Monday night from 6:30-8 p.m.

The Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard meets the first Tuesday of every month at the American Legion Post 105 at 7 p.m. Interested veterans are welcome to attend.

Messianic Bible Study, Fridays from 6-7:30 p.m. at The Honey Pot, 106 N. Main St., Stuart (across from The Coffee Break). Call (276) 694-2356 for more information.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The Willis Gap Community Center Members Meeting is the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

The Willis Gap Community Center "Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam" is every Friday, with doors opening at 6:00 p.m. for food. Music and Dancing will be from 6:30-9 p.m.

The Willis Gap Community Center "Golden Oldies Open Jam" is the last Tuesday in the month, with doors opening at 6 p.m. for food; music and dancing from 6:30-9 p.m.

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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# First Lady of Bluegrass Missy Raines and her band to perform on June 29



None of the Above



Missy Raines & Allegheny

Missy Raines & Allegheny will perform as part of the Deep Roots, Many Voices: Summer Outdoor Concert Series at 7 p.m., Saturday, June 29, in the Blue Ridge Music Center's outdoor amphitheater on the Blue Ridge Parkway just south of Galax, Va. None of the Above will open the show.

Raines is a bluegrass trailblazer. Her passion for varying musical genres has taken her on a long and adventurous journey and has led to numerous lauded collaborations in the realms of Americana, country, and folk.

Raines is one of The First Ladies of Bluegrass — an elite group of women who were the first in their categories to win Instrument of the Year awards from the International Bluegrass Music Association

(IBMA). She has been awarded Bass Player of the Year by IBMA 10 times to date, making her the most awarded musician in the category.

A West Virginia native, Raines began touring professionally as a teenager and has performed and recorded with bluegrass legends such as Josh Graves, Kenny Baker, and Jesse McReynolds. She spent several years touring with the Americana/jazz-tinged ensemble, The New Hip, and was a member of the bluegrass supergroup Helen Highwater Stringband along with Mike Compton, David Grier, and Shad Cobb.

Allegheny, her touring band, is named for the region of West Virginia where Raines grew up. The members are some

of the brightest young stars in bluegrass today with Ben Garnett on guitar, Eli Gilbert on banjo, Ellie Hakanson on fiddle, and Tristan Scroggins on mandolin.

With a cultivated sound that is traditional and hard driving at its core, Missy Raines & Allegheny celebrate both the history and evolution of the "high, lonesome sound," walking the fine line between respect and rebellion.

None of the Above is a five-piece acoustic band based in central North Carolina. Working with traditional bluegrass instrumentation, band members Tim Sands (guitar, vocals), Tim Harrison (bass, vocals), Jason Bodenhamer (mandolin, vocals), Jon Cornatzer (banjo, vocals), and Lee Cecil (dobro) create a unique sound

that blends elements from a variety of styles including bluegrass, Americana, alternative country, and their own original material. None of the Above maintains its traditional roots, while drawing on each member's interpretation and contribution to arrangements, ultimately producing a sound that gives meaning to their name.

Tickets are \$25 for adults. Children 12 and younger are admitted free of charge. Advance tickets are available at BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org. Tickets can be purchased on the evening of the show at the admission gates.

Parking opens at 5:15 p.m. and is free. The gates open at 5:45 p.m. The concert begins at 7 p.m.

## Nine probationers earn certification through partnership with community college

Probation and Parole districts across Virginia continue to provide professional development opportunities, reentry resources, and many additional means of support to supervisees across the Commonwealth.

District 43, Tazewell Probation and Parole, recently highlighted this support for probationers through a collaboration with Southwest Virginia Community College in Cedar Bluff.

Nine probationers walked across the stage in June, receiving certificates for the Heavy Equipment Operator program offered through Southwest Virginia CC at their Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center.

The probationers earned their certificate for successful completion of a seven-week program from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). The program includes instruction on the operation of backhoes, bulldozers, excavators, and front-end loaders with experienced, professional instructors. Successful class completion also included certification in NCCER Core Curriculum, OSHA

10, first aid/CPR/AED training, Intermediate Work Zone Safety Flagger training, and solar panel installation.

Tuition for the program is available at no cost for the probationers or VADOC, thanks to the partnership with Southwest Virginia CC.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Construction Laborer and Helper positions are expected to grow 4 percent from 2022 to 2032, with more than 151,000 openings projected each year over the decade. The median annual wage for the po-

sitions was \$44,310 in May 2023.

"This type of partnership should be celebrated by all Virginians," said VADOC Director Chad Dotson. "Giving supervisees the tools to secure a high-quality job greatly helps the reentry process, which increases long-term public safety across the Commonwealth. I thank Southwest Virginia Community College, District 43 Chief Probation and Parole

Officer Chris Shortt and the entire District 43 office, and these probationers for their willingness to commit to learning new skills."

"I want to say a special thank you to Jamie Hackney, the dean of workforce development at Southwest Virginia Community College, and his staff for this partnership," said District 43 Chief Probation and Parole Officer Chris Shortt. "I also have to say thank you to District 43 Adult Education teacher Rick Blevins, and our probation and parole officers who worked so hard on this project and sometimes even transported probationers to class. We're here to make sure supervisees excel."

The VADOC's probation and parole officers enhance public safety by helping probationers and parolees lead more pro-social lives and assist those who have been incarcerated to transition back into society after release. More information about probation and parole in Virginia can be found on the VADOC website.



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# 4 Boating Tips for July Fourth

According to the nationwide TowBoatUS on-water towing fleet, the busiest time of the year for America's recreational boat owners is, hands down, the Fourth of July holiday period, which typically includes some days before and after the official holiday. It also may be the longest time many boaters will spend the day on the water at anchor, enjoying fireworks shows, fishing holes and raft-ups. Are they ready?

The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water has four tips to help boaters spend America's birthday safely at anchor.



Docking, anchoring, or rafting within 20 feet of boats running generators or engines increases the chances of carbon monoxide poisoning and possibly even death. (Photos by Stacey Nedrow-Wigmore/BoatUS)



Boaters will need to have patience during the Fourth of July holiday period, especially at launch ramps after fireworks shows end, says Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS).



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1. Be anchor smart. Before heading out, is your anchoring gear up to snuff? Bitter end secured? You may not have used it yet this boating season, so be sure all is good to go for whatever anchoring arrangement – a picnic hook, extra fenders for a raft-up, or shoreside tie-up requiring a second line. When arriving at your celebration spot and setting anchor, ensure you let out enough scope for the depth and predicted weather conditions. Show some courtesy if things get crowded. On the other hand, don't be that guy who runs into an anchorage throwing a wake or who is completely oblivious to those around him.

2. Avoid CO poisoning. Generators give boaters the creature comforts they want. However, don't run the generator if you've got swimmers in the water at the back of the boat – a common place for guests to congregate on floats and pool toys. This is where exhaust ports often located, spewing dangerous, odorless carbon monoxide.

3. Don't stress it. It's a long day on the water. Be careful with stressors including noise, vibration, sun, wind, waves and other motion. U.S. Coast Guard research shows that

four hours of exposure to these can produce a kind of fatigue, or "boater's hypnosis," which slows reaction time almost as much as if you were legally drunk. Adding alcohol makes it worse.

For your boat, don't stress your battery playing music all day. TowBoatUS reports calls to its 24-hour dispatch for battery jump services surge – as if on cue – just after the firework shows end when boaters want to head home.

4. Get home safely. Before departing an anchorage, wait to turn on the engine until everyone is back aboard and the ladder is up. If you're leaving a fireworks show, proceed with utmost caution. It's always better to wait a few minutes for everyone to clear out and give a chance for wakes to subside before departing. Be patient and, again, give as much courtesy as you can. Everyone aboard should be acting as a lookout. Never take a shortcut home after dark.



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