

Hospital renovations advance, Braden Health prepares for regulatory review



Kyle Kopec, co-founder and COO of Braden Health (foreground), and Revenue Cycle Director Larry Henson (background), said the curb blocking EMS vehicles has been removed.

By Taylor Boyd
Braden Health continues to make progress on reopening the former Patrick County Community Hospital, after purchasing the facility at auction. The company is actively working on renovations and regulatory requirements to bring the hospital back into operation.

Kyle Kopec, co-founder and COO, said the opening date remains internal – for now. “The reason why we do that is with construction and with certifications, timelines shift forwards and backwards,” Kopec said. “We don’t

Braden Health Revenue Cycle Director Larry Henson said work on the facility’s new roof should be completed soon.

want to say, ‘Here’s a date,’ and then move the date, or open early and have EMS (Emergency Medical Services) not be ready.”
As construction nears completion, Braden Health will provide more specific updates on the timeline.
“It’s just still early on with construction and certification ... we’re not within a margin of error or comfortable enough to say this date or that date,” Kopec said. “In a few months, a few weeks, that may change, but we’re not announcing anything at this time.”
Instead of making early public commitments,

Company officials said several parking spots will be designated exclusively for EMS vehicles.

Kopec said Braden Health prefers to focus on delivering results.
“We’d just rather work and then pleasantly surprise everybody with it being ahead of schedule—or if we need a little bit more time, doing it the right way,” he said.
Braden Health’s decision to reopen Patrick County’s hospital came after the facility had been on the company’s watchlist for rural hospitals in need of assistance.
“An opportunity presented itself for us to be able to provide the services,” Kopec said. “We
(See Hospital p. 2)

Frustrations aired as company seeks support for grant

By Taylor Boyd
A local telephone and internet company addressed concerns about service issues affecting some Patrick County residents and received a letter of support to pursue Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program funding.



Brightspeed Government Affairs and Public Policy Director Chris Dillon discusses the company’s BEAD application.

Brightspeed Government Affairs and Public Policy Director Chris Dillon said the company, a two-and-a-half-year-old startup, purchased CenturyLink’s assets and now serves localities in 20 southeastern states.
Brightspeed has built fiber infrastructure to reach 1.8 million residents in 2024, making it the third-largest fiber builder in the United States, Dillon said.
“So that puts us behind giants like AT&T, Verizon, and above people like Google and other huge providers,” he said.
Dillon acknowledged that aging copper lines are a problem in Patrick

County. He said the industry is transitioning away from copper, which will no longer exist within five years.
“That is a great thing for you and your residents and businesses,” he said.
Brightspeed has also increased fiber installation efforts. Since acquiring CenturyLink’s infrastructure, the company has seen a 49 percent increase in 48-hour repairs, a 38 percent increase in 96-hour repairs, and a decrease to fewer than three trouble tickets per 100 customers within a year of ownership.
However, Hurricane Helene impacted the company’s services and fiber

projects, Dillon said.
“That has impacted service for all companies and utilities in this part of the region,” he said.
The company’s out-of-service calls were expected to be resolved within 48 hours, Dillon said at the meeting. “If you call before a certain time, I think it’s 2 p.m., we can get same-day repairs on most trouble tickets to your home. We are fully staffed.”
To transition from copper to fiber, Brightspeed has partnered with Verizon Wireless to launch a fixed wireless voice and data solution for its remaining copper customers.
(See Frustrations p. 3)



Candy Elliott, LeeAnn Seeley, Dana Jones, Debbie Sayre, Lynn Chipkin, Amber Rakes at the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter for the holiday food treat for the shelter cats and dogs.

Animal Welfare League Expands Efforts to Support Animals

By Taylor Boyd
A coalition of experienced animal welfare volunteers is working to support the animals of Patrick County through adoptions, pet food assistance, and spay/neuter programs.
The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League (BRAWL), founded last year, aims to provide resources to pet owners while helping reduce overcrowding at the Patrick County Animal Shelter. The organization assists in finding homes for animals, ensuring they are spayed/neutered and healthy, and offering other services as needed.
Dana Jones, BRAWL’s president, has decades of experience in animal welfare, including managing an SPCA in Norfolk for seven years.
“There, I opened a low-cost spay/neuter clinic and transitioned the shelter to no-kill during that time,” Jones said. “I have about 30 years of nonprofit management experience.”
Vice President Lynn Chipkin, a li-

censed veterinary technician, has volunteered in animal rescue for many years, including 25 years with the Floyd County Humane Society. She also worked at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Virginia Tech.
Jones said meeting Chipkin and working on BRAWL’s mission answered her personal call to volunteer.
“Out of the need to really establish an organization, we created this nonprofit,” she said. “There’s just so many opportunities we feel that we have to offer this community — not just the pet food pantry and the spay/neuter program, but a real partnership with Animal Control and the Patrick County Animal Shelter.”
Jones noted that the Patrick County Animal Shelter’s euthanasia rate is nearly twice the state average.
Addressing Shelter Overcrowding
Noting that the shelter has a euthanasia rate that’s nearly twice the state
(See Animal p.3)

Board donates cell tower lease funds to Promise program

By Taylor Boyd
The Patrick County School Board approved using funds it receives from the cell tower at Patrick County High School (PCHS) to help further local education.
Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said Milestone Towers, a Virginia-based telecommunication provider, recently completed all the necessary permits, and the school system deposited the \$25,000 lease agreement.
“We’re thankful for that revenue and that is for the board’s determination on how we want to utilize that fund. It is not earmarked for any project in our budget yet, it was additional revenue,” he said at the board’s meeting on February 13.
The company that’s leasing the tower will begin paying its lease on March 1, and a second cellphone carrier is also interested in conversations with Milestone about using the cell tower, Wood said.
“They’re just in negotiations right now with the second carrier to see if this is a good prime location, but

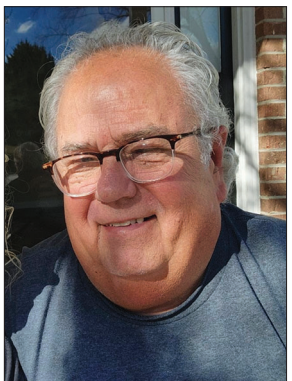


Schools Superintendent Jason Wood presented Board Clerk Sara Leigh Collins with a certificate for School Board Clerk Appreciation Month.

(See Board p. 2)

Pittis tapped to fill vacancy on council

By Taylor Boyd
The Stuart Town Council recently appointed Robert “Bob” Pittis as an interim council member, during a meeting earlier this month.
Pittis, 65, will serve in the position until the end of the year, with a special election scheduled for November to determine who will complete the remainder of the seat’s term. He has already announced his intention to run for the position in the election.
Pittis said his decision to seek the inter-



Bob Pittis will serve as an interim member of Stuart Town Council.

im role stemmed from a long-standing interest in politics and a desire to contribute to the town.
“I thought it would be nice to be on council

and just maybe be part of making the town even better,” he said. “I know we’re doing fantastic now, the council’s doing an excellent job and everybody, and I’m so proud to live here. I just want to get on there and maybe see if I can’t add a little bit more to it too.”
Pittis emphasized that while the town council governs, its focus remains on serving the residents of Stuart.
“We have so many great people within our town here, and that’s who we work for is the
(See Pittis p. 4)

Hospital

(cont. from page 1)

monitor all of the rural hospitals in the United States, and when an opportunity presents itself, we're able to act on it."

Compared to other hospital revitalization projects, this one is relatively straightforward, Kopec said.

"A lot of rural hospitals are in much worse shape than this one," he said, adding much of the credit for that is due to uninterrupted electrical service and that the building was winterized.

Kopec does not anticipate any single major challenge during the construction process but emphasized the importance of thorough inspections and allowing contractors the time needed to complete their work properly.

"As far as regulatory landscape, that's been fairly straightforward. The state has given a great amount of attention, and as far as things like movable equipment, our vendors are aware of this project and are keeping an eye on things," he said.

Braden Health Revenue Cycle Director Larry Henson will serve as the hospital's acting CEO when the facility reopens.

"It will be a temporary position, but we want to make sure that we get the first CEO for the job to permanently take over this location," Henson said.

Kopec said Braden Health has a transition team to support new hospitals until they become self-sufficient.

"We're not announcing a CEO or anything right now, but he'll sort of be the onsite person that can help Braden Health resources make sure we're providing the proper training and things," Kopec said.

As staffing needs arise, the company plans to hire local doctors, nurses, and other hospital personnel.

Kopec said physician interest has already been high, and lack is not a concern.

"It's not very unusual for us to go into a community, open a hospital, and have a lot of difficulty in bringing physicians in," he said. "It's just



The hospital's laboratory is undergoing a full overhaul, and work on other interior spaces continues, with walls being removed and equipment repositioned.

something that's not really a concern for us."

Kopec also noted that he does not anticipate staffing Registered Nurses (RN) to be a challenge either. In Tennessee, Braden Health was the only healthcare company that didn't experience a nursing shortage or require temporary travel nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, local plumbers, electricians, and workers are being used whenever possible for hospital construction and renovation projects.

Henson said the emergency room (ER) entrance is being cleaned and reorganized to enhance efficiency.

"The layout is already a good layout, so we're happy with that," he said.

Beyond the nurse's station, registration area, and trauma rooms, the medical surgery wing will house patients needing extended care.

The hospital contains 50 rooms in its medical surgery wing. Braden Health will initially license only 25 beds. There are currently no plans to obtain licensing for 50 rooms.

"The utilization of the hospital was never that high with medical surgical," Kopec said.

Henson said one room is being converted into a medicine room, where staff will store and distribute medication.

Regulatory updates are also being made to ensure compliance with nursing and pharmacy laws.

Several structural improvements are underway, including:

- Plumbing updates to replace hundreds of patch-repaired pipes.



- Asbestos mitigation to comply with safety regulations.
- Electrical rewiring to modernize outdated systems.
- IT infrastructure replacement to remove old, unused wiring.

"The vacuum lines have all been cleared and marked," Kopec said. "Information Technology (IT) is working on removing all of the wires you see in the roof. None of them are within any of the current use of any medical equipment, so they're all being pulled out, and we're going to have people put in new" equipment. The hospital's roof replacement project is well underway.

"We peeled off about seven or eight inches of tar roofing before starting the new roof," Henson said.

- The new system includes:
- Six inches of insulation to meet R-Value standards.
 - A thick plastic coating for added protection.
 - Redone drainage systems.

Company officials are working closely with local officials and EMS personnel to ensure the hospital's exterior and emergency access points meet safety standards.

EMS Coordinator Scottie Cassell reported issues with ambulance access due to a curb near the ER entrance.

"He said getting the EMS vehicle in was a challenge, so we took out this curb," Henson said. "He said the lighting was terrible, so we updated the lighting."

Additionally, some parking spaces near the ER entrance will be designated exclusively for EMS vehicles.



New lighting will be installed around the hospital's exterior to improve visibility and safety.

"We don't want anybody hurting themselves going into the actual hospital, so we'll get some new light poles in here and update this exterior area as well," Henson said.

The hospital parking lot will also receive repairs before the facility reopens.

"We won't be opening the hospital with the parking lot's current state," Kopec said.

The company is evaluating the feasibility of adding a helipad for critical patient transport.

"The Virginia Aviation Office is going to play a role in it, just like they did the last time when the hospital opened," Kopec said. "We are on one of the published approaches for the Blue Ridge Airport, so we need to see if that needs to be updated or not with the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration)."

Kopec emphasized that even after construction is completed, the state must conduct regulatory inspections before the hospital can begin operations.

"They come through and tell us everything they want us to change, then we do that, then there's another inspection," he said. "It's a very choreographed dance."

The first state inspection is scheduled for late February or mid-March.

"We're looking forward to them coming out, hopefully pointing out things preemptively if they see anything that we can already work on adjusting," Kopec said.

Board

(cont. from page 1)



Members of the school board were recognized with certificates during School Board Appreciation Month.

Milestone said it was very promising, in that the carrier reached out to them. It's not like they were doing cold calls and asking someone here's a tower with lease space, so the second carrier is interested because they must know there's a need here," Wood said.

In addition to the initial lease agreement of \$25,000, the school division will receive \$1,000 per month from each carrier. If a second carrier comes on

there will be a one-time lease agreement of \$5,000.

Discussions Wood has had with board members indicate the board wants the funds used in the best way possible to impact local students.

In a motion made by Walter Scott, of the Smith River District, the board approved contributing \$25,000 from the cell tower to the Patrick County Promise, and any funds from the month-

ly lease not used for current students dual-enrolled at Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) also be sent to the Promise in June of each fiscal year.

Started by the Patrick County Education Foundation, the Patrick County Promise is aimed at increasing the post-high school credential attainment rates and the economic attractiveness and workforce development potential of the Patrick County region and decreasing population migration from Patrick County.

As of early December, about \$160,000 had been raised for the Promise, which was about \$110,000 shy of being able to launch for its first three years.

"Right time or wrong time, I'd like

to challenge the Patrick County Board of Supervisors to do the same when they get the opportunity," Scott said.

Supervisor member Steve Marshall, who attended the meeting, said he agreed with Scott.

"I've been arguing that and put it out there I think three or four times already," Marshall, who represents the Blue Ridge District, said.

Rob Martin, of the Dan River District, said he first heard of the Promise last year.

"I think that's excellent for our kids that want to extend their education beyond our doors to Patrick & Henry Community College," he said.

In other matters, the board:

- *Approved the con-

sent agenda.

*Heard the superintendent's report.

*Heard an update on the 2024-2025 school board budget.

*Heard a presentation on student academic growth in the division.

*Presented certificates to board members for School Board

Appreciation Month.

*Presented a certificate to board clerk Sarah Leigh Collins for School Board Clerk Appreciation Month.

*Approved the personnel report as amended.

Vice-chair Shannon Harrell, of the Blue Ridge District, did not attend the meeting.

Initial unemployment claims down

Virginia Works announced that 2,899 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending February 15, 2025, which is 9.5 percent lower than last week's 3,202 claims and 27.6 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (2,272).

Nearly 74 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (64 percent) were Manufacturing (400); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (378); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (255); Health Care and Social Assistance (181); and Retail Trade (162).

Continued weeks claims (17,579) were 1.7 percent higher than last week (17,288) and were 11.1 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (15,817). Nearly 92 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (58 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (2,622); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,181); Con-

struction (1,592); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,535); and Manufacturing (1,382).

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.



Pets of the Week



These beautiful girls are friendly and only two years old. They are so deserving of a loving home. Free spays and rabies vaccinations. Call the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter at (276) 694-6259, visit the shelter or their Facebook page, to find information about these and other available pets in need of a forever home. Adoption



fees are \$10 and include spay/neuter and rabies vaccination. The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League provides pet food assistance and information about low-cost spay/neuter services; contact blueridgeawl@gmail.com.

Norris

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Frustrations

(cont. from page 1)

tomers. Dillon said only 9 percent of Brightspeed's copper infrastructure remains in use, yet maintaining it is more expensive than running its entire fiber network.

As the company stops maintaining copper, customers will have a wireless device installed on their homes to maintain service.

"This is going to take the place of their landline," Dillon said. "Your phone number doesn't change, you don't have any different functionality—you pick up the phone, and you have a dial tone. The customer does not see any difference in their service, but it is extremely more reliable."

Mayo River District Supervisor Clayton Kendrick asked the audience how many were dissatisfied with their service. About a dozen residents raised their hands.

"I'd hate to dispute what you're being told," Kendrick said. "You had a supervisor named Scott Strader... when he was up here, I went with him one day, almost a whole day, showing him problems, and he got them took care of."

However, he questioned whether Brightspeed's wireless solution would work in areas with poor cell coverage. If there isn't already cellphone signal, "it's just got terrible," Kendrick said.

Vice chairman and Dan River District Supervisor Andrew Overby agreed.

"Unless you live in the Town of Stuart, that's probably the only place you're going to get Verizon at all," he said. "I live two miles from a T-Mobile tower, and I get no signal. So, in my area, that would not do any good."

Overby also asked why residents report waiting up to a month for repairs, despite the company's stated 24- to 48-hour response time.

Dillon said Brightspeed could verify records to determine whether service requests were rescheduled, missed, or impacted by hurricane disruptions.

"I'm not saying anybody's lying, and we did have disruptions because of Helene," he said. "We can go in and pull a file... They said 28 days, we came (within) a week, and nobody was there. It shouldn't be a week; we should be roll-

ing within 48 hours."

To help expand its coverage and work to replace its copper lines with fiber, Brightspeed requested a letter of support from the board to apply for its BEAD grant application, which the board approved in a 3-2 vote.

Under BEAD, Virginia will receive \$1.48 billion to expand broadband access statewide.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the broadband office want every home to have fiber or an affordable alternative, Dillon said. "Virginia's deadline for applications is March 1. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This is FDR building out the phone system in the '30s and '40s. This is building out highspeed internet to areas like Patrick County."

Brightspeed's proposal includes 3,000 addresses in Patrick County, with 621 classified as unserved or underserved by DHCD.

"Our proposal for Patrick County will provide 3,000 addresses with highspeed, fiber internet, Dillon said, adding that fiber is not susceptible to disruptions like copper lines are. "We have to order parts from Vietnam because nobody's making these parts for copper networks anymore. Fiber is the only fix for copper, there is no other option," he said.

"We're going to pay to build past 2,230 other addresses. The grant won't come to those addresses; we'll pay out of our pocket for that," Dillon said. "We're making significant investments in western Patrick, southeastern Patrick, and the eastern area south of Fairystone State Park."

Jonathan Wood, board chairman and of the Peters Creek District, questioned the company's commitment to existing customers.

"At almost \$99 per month, 3,000 potential customers would pay Brightspeed nearly \$3.6 million annually," Wood said. "Right now, I don't believe the taste in everybody's mouth is where it should be."

Wood said his grandparents, who rely on a full-time caregiver, waited 21 days for a phone repair.



Regina Wood shares her service issues.



Jamie Clark expresses concern over phone service.



Galen Gilbert criticizes Brightspeed's infrastructure maintenance.

"Thankfully, we have good cellphone signal. Verizon might work great for a few people but it's not going to fix" a lot of people, Wood said, and estimated the company is the fifth provider to request a letter of support for the BEAD program. "It seems like what you have needs to be repaired and maintained before we add more to it. That's just the way I see it."

Smith River District Supervisor Doug Perry noted that fiber investment is necessary to replace copper.

"In order to fix the copper, you got to run the fiber-optics, and of course, that takes money," Perry said. "That's why they're here tonight to request the support of the BEAD grant."

Dillon said copper will be retired nationwide within five years.

"If we don't get BEAD or fiber, or somebody doesn't get it, there will be a hole there where people will have to get Starlink or something," he said. "What's key is this money is to fix the copper problem. It is not I don't like your company, it is there's a copper issue and we have to fix it," Dillon said.

Several residents spoke about persistent service outages.

Regina Wood said her landline and internet were out from Dec. 10 to Jan. 25. She and her husband, both disabled, could not make emergency calls.

"We had a cellphone that we thought we could get out an emergency call. Had no idea we could not," she said.

On Jan. 24, a logging crew's equipment caught fire near her home, but no one could call 911.

"They were trying to use their cellphones - would not work. We live down in the Patrick Springs area. They came to the house; we thought we could get out an emergency call. Tried, tried, and

tired. Nothing," she said.

Regina Wood's husband eventually had to get in his car and drive about a mile down the road to summon a fire department. "There's no sense in that. That's unacceptable. You're not doing your job!"

Galen Gilbert criticized the company's infrastructure maintenance.

"If you ride down Route 8 from the high school, there are probably eight or nine places where there's trees on the lines," he said. "You see the pedestals that are laid over with an orange bag on top. That must be a new way of fixing your phone lines—cover it up and forget about it."

Jamie Clark said his mother's pace-maker relies on landline monitoring, but her phone service is unreliable. "She does not have internet and does not want it, but would like to have a reliable telephone service that doesn't go out at least once a month," he said.

When an outage occurs, Clark said he calls in the work order and is told it will be a minimum of 21 days before a repair technician is available.

"Ironically, the last time that a repairman was physically at my mother's house was about a year ago. He told her then that the problem was in the main line between Roanoke and Stuart, and none of the outages were caused by problems at her house, they were all infrastructure problems with equipment," he said.

Noting he addressed his issues about two years ago, Clark said, "honestly, the service has not gotten any better. In 2025, I can't believe we're still talking about phones not working. How can we expect any company to invest here when we can't even get reliable basic services?"

Animals

(cont. from page 1)



Rachel Martin and LeeAnn Seeley are pictured at distribution day at the food bank.



For more information, go to www.blueridgeawl.org or [Facebook.com/BlueRidgeAnimalWelfareLeague](https://www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeAnimalWelfareLeague).

er months arrive," Jones said. "We're really, really trying to get our program together and secure significant funding so that we can have a real impact."

Pet Food Bank Offers Assistance

BRAWL officially launched in October 2023 after volunteers identified a growing need for pet food assistance through the Patrick County Food Bank.

"We had heard from our partners at the Patrick County Animal Shelter, Wanda and Vickie, that there were occasions where people had to surrender their pets because they couldn't afford to feed them," Jones said.

In response, volunteers began distributing donated pet food in gallon-sized bags alongside the Food Bank's monthly food distributions.

"We had such an incredible response to it. People were so thankful that we decided we really wanted to keep it going," Jones said.

BRAWL is a member of the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies, allowing it to partner with Gleaning for the World, a faith-based humanitarian aid organization, to procure large amounts of pet food at low costs.

Each month, BRAWL distributes 750 to 800 pounds of pet food. Volunteers package the food at the Food Bank's Stuart facility, working alongside other volunteers preparing human food boxes.

"The Food Bank has been so gracious to let us have the pallets dropped off at their Stuart building," Jones said.

Chipkin said 300 to 350 cars typically receive pet food at each distribution, with 400 cars served during holiday months.

"When we're doing our dividing up of the bags, we label them in the Zip-



BRAWL members prepared holiday meals for shelter pets.

lock bags with either cat or dog. We also distribute canned food, so it's always labeled," Chipkin said

In addition to Stuart, BRAWL distributes pet food at the Food Bank's satellite locations in Ararat and Meadows of Dan.

Expanding Spay/Neuter Access

Jones said the monthly pet food distributions have also highlighted the need for affordable spay/neuter services.

Patrick County currently lacks a low-cost spay/neuter clinic, requiring pet owners to travel 45 minutes to an hour for services at Mountain View Humane in Christiansburg or Angels of Assisi in Roanoke.

"We're referring people out, but we know the cost is a barrier," Jones said.

BRAWL has applied for grants to help subsidize spay/neuter costs.

"An average spay/neuter can cost \$400 to \$500," Jones said. "Most of these low-cost clinics can bring it down to \$100 to \$150, but that's still out of reach for some families."

BRAWL is also exploring transportation assistance for pet owners who cannot travel.

"With these clinics being kind of far away, it really can take a person's day to transport an animal," Jones said, and added the group is looking into partnering with other groups to share transportation costs or seeking funding to purchase a vehicle to shuttle multiple animals at once.

Addressing Free-Roaming Cat Populations

"We're hearing people say they have neighbors who are feeding animals



Lynn Chipkin and Carla Krietsch pack Ziploc bags of pet food at the Patrick County Food Bank. (Contributed photos)

but not doing more than that," Jones said. "It's good that they have it in their heart to help, but in some ways, they may be exacerbating the problem because they're just making them healthy enough to breed."

BRAWL plans to implement a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program, which involves trapping cats, spaying/neutering them, administering rabies vaccinations, and returning them to their colony.

"It's a process — making sure we have approval to even go on the property, observing what's going on, and then getting our plans together," Jones said. "Cats can be savvy when you start trapping. You get a couple, and then the others learn to avoid it. It gets progressively harder."

BRAWL will increase its presence at community events this spring, providing educational materials and outreach.

"We're going to start to get more involved with community events coming up, so we'll be able to distribute information at those events in Patrick County," Chipkin said.

The group also hopes to host a community rabies clinic later this year.

"There is definitely a need in Patrick County for that," Chipkin said.

For more information, visit www.blueridgeawl.org or [Facebook.com/BlueRidgeAnimalWelfareLeague](https://www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeAnimalWelfareLeague).

To donate online: Click the "Donate" button on the website. By mail: Send checks to P.O. Box 184, Woolwine, VA 24185. Pet food donations can be dropped off at Pet Provisions in Downtown Stuart.

(Submitted by Betty Dean. Written by Grace Jauwena. Used by permission from www.lifeandhealth.org. Courtesy of LifeSpring – Resources for Hope and Healing Stuart, VA)

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

Crossing the Lines

News snippets from outside the town/county lines...

N.C. man arrested in 2023 Martinsville homicide

Authorities have arrested a Greensboro man in connection with the July 9, 2023, death of Nyjeon Dameae Brandon, a 20-year-old from Martinsville who was fatally shot while driving on Commonwealth Boulevard.

Jahil Arman Martin, 23, of Greensboro, N.C., has been charged with first-degree murder in connection with Brandon's death. Martinsville Police Chief Robert Fincher announced the arrest during a Feb. 18 press briefing.

Martin, Fincher said, has ties to this area, and family members in the area, and "was originally from here." He added that Brandon and the alleged shooter knew each other "very well."

Brandon was taken to the local emergency room, "suffering from several gunshot wounds," Fincher said, adding the case, "greatly impacted our community."

City investigators who had met with Brandon's family, refused to stop seeking a resolution in the case, Fincher said, and described their efforts as a "long two-year investigation. The investigation has been long, and it has not ceased. The key thing that really drives our officers" were investigator's meetings with the family members.

Fincher said complimented the investigative efforts put forth by his department. "Our criminal investigative unit is headed by Lt. Richard Barrow and Sgt. Harley Durham, but also the key case agent in this has been Sgt. Jason Vaughn, who has not given up and worked continuously on this case to bring about this result," he said.



Martinsville Police Chief Robert Fincher provides an update on the homicide investigation of Nyjeon Dameae Brandon.

He also credited the collaboration of multiple law enforcement agencies, including the Greensboro Police Department's Violent Crimes Apprehension Team, the North Carolina Bureau of Investigation, and Virginia's Division of Forensic Science, for their role in the arrest. Martinsville investigators were on-site in Greensboro when Martin was taken into custody.

"Unfortunately, this hasn't been an easy case. It's been very complex. We're not finished with it and will continue up through the trial," Fincher said. "We have been in touch with family members, particularly the mother of the victim, to let them know what has developed and what has taken place."

Anyone with information about the case is encouraged to contact Barrow at (276) 403-5458 or Martinsville-Henry County Crime Stoppers at (276) 632-7463. Crime Stoppers allows anonymous tips and offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for information leading to an arrest.

Martinsville City Council approves members for Charter Review Committee

The Martinsville City Council has approved five residents to serve on a newly formed city charter review committee, a step toward evaluating and updating the city's governing document for the first time in decades.

During its Feb. 18 meeting, the council approved Barbara Seymour, Gene Teague, Andy Hall, Jennifer Bowles, and Kimble Reynolds as committee members. Each council member was responsible for nominating one individual, though it was not publicly stated who selected each nominee.

The names were read by Deputy City Clerk Peyton Nibblett. According to City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, this was solely the approval of the names provided by council members and not the official resolution to approve the committee itself.

"What we will do is bring back the resolution that will define the roles and responsibilities. It's almost done, but we will bring that back on next Tuesday with the names appointed," Ferrell-Benavides said.

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson made a motion to approve the list of names, seconded by Rayshaun Gravely, and the matter was open for discussion. Council member Aaron Rawls asked, "When we approve this, are we also approving every member?" Ferrell-Benavides said that the council could approve the candidates as a group



Deputy Chief Chad Rhoads discussed the coyote problem in the city.

or individually. Rawls said, "I'll have to go individually on that one."

Seymour, Teagues, Hall, and Reynolds all received a 5-0 approval. Bowles was approved in a 3-2 vote, with Rawls and Julian Mei dissenting.

Mayor LC Jones clarified the purpose of the committee and noted it has nothing to do with reversion as some have speculated.

"I've been hearing a lot of talk about that the creation of this committee is to spark up the reversion conversation, and just killing that conversation all together. The reason we're doing this committee is because we haven't had any major changes to our charter since probably the '50s... We're just looking at an overhaul and giving citizens the opportunity to kind of look at this thing, and I think we put together a good group," Jones said.

Renovations to improve accessibility underway in the county

The Henry County Administration Building is undergoing another round of renovations, this time focusing on upgrading public restrooms to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The improvements are part of a broader effort to modernize the aging facility, which was originally built in 1974 and has seen limited updates outside of technology upgrades.

The current project, which resulted in the February 6 School Board meeting being held at Bassett High School, is the first in a series of restroom renovations aimed at improving accessibility for individuals with mobility impairments.

Public Information Officer Brandon Martin said that the first phase of the project involves renovating restrooms near the Summerlin Room, where many county board meetings are held. These restrooms were identified as a priority due to their frequent public use.

The narrow layout of the existing bathrooms made wheelchair access difficult, requiring a complete redesign to ensure compliance with ADA regulations.

Daniel Builders of Danville is handling the renovations, which are expected to take a few months to complete at a cost of \$198,500.



The entrance hallway to the Summerlin Room is closed due to ongoing bathroom renovations.

"It is moving pretty quickly, I think that they plan to have it done here in the next couple of months," Martin said.

Once work on the first-floor restrooms is complete, the county will begin renovations on the second floor, and continue upgrading additional bathrooms throughout the building.

Proposed Refuse Ordinance discussed at joint meeting

The Martinsville City Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting to discuss proposed changes to the city's refuse ordinance, including community dumpster placement, service costs, and enforcement measures.

The ordinance, which was introduced in a public hearing after its first reading, received significant public feedback regarding its impact on businesses, accessibility for residents with disabilities, and concerns about sanitation and enforcement. Officials are now refining the proposal to address those concerns before finalizing the plan.

Director of Public Works Greg Maggard provided an overview of the ordinance, including updates to legal penalties, which have been downgraded to a Class 3 misdemeanor. He emphasized that the ordinance is about more than just uptown dumpsters. "It's more than just the uptown piece, it's more that will affect the city residents as a whole."



Planning Commission members Jonathan Martin, Riggs Roberson, Joseph Martin, and Nelson Evans attend a joint city council meeting to discuss the new refuse ordinance.

Maggard presented cost estimates for the program, noting that the current weekly expense is \$5,000, with a shortfall of approximately \$2,000. He also said that under the proposed plan, no resident or business would need to walk more than half a city block to reach their assigned dumpster.

Protesters Rally Against Trump Policies at City Municipal Building

Protesters gathered outside the city municipal building on Feb. 17 to voice opposition to policies enacted by former President Donald Trump, part of a "We The People" initiative across the U.S. Locally, the demonstration focused on concerns over education funding cuts, mass deportations, and threats to the balance of power in government.

Among the demonstrators were local educators and District 48 House of Delegates candidate Melody Cartwright, a democrat, who held signs addressing their concerns.


Greg Hackenberg, a STEM teacher at Martinsville Middle School and an organizer of the protest, criticized Trump's policies on education, the prison system, and judicial authority. He expressed concern about the erosion of separation of power




Educators and other school personnel gathered to protest changes to the federal Department of Education

ers, warning that the country appeared to be moving toward authoritarianism.


Cartwright emphasized the impact of potential funding cuts on low-income communities, noting that more than 25% of residents in the area live in poverty. She called Trump's actions unconstitutional and urged local representatives to challenge his policies in court.



1-3-5-7-9PM



1-3-5-7-9PM



1-3-5-7-9PM



1-3-7PM



1-3-7PM



1-3-5-7-9PM



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Jimmie Rodgers Mills

Mrs. Perdue is survived by a son and daughter-in-law, Gary Wayne Perdue & Dora Lee of Stuart; a daughter and son-in-law, Lisa P. Keen & Danny of Patrick Springs; 7 grandchildren, Thomas Wayne Howell, David Howell & Amanda, Michelle Cruise & Jamie, Donna Harbour & Mark, Wayne Sowers, Darrell Sowers, and Jessica Keen; 14 great-grandchildren; 5 great-great-grandchildren.

United States, and he embraced every new adventure. After retiring from the CIA in 1997, Edd became Vice President of Alcohol Testing and Certification, a start-up company in Houston, Texas. He and his business partner provided drug and alcohol testing services for Southwest Airlines, Continental Airlines, and Air Micronesia. Edd later returned to the CIA as an independent contractor, relocating to Williamsburg, VA. There he spent nearly two decades continuing to share his vast knowledge and skills through the training of new officers.

All services for Mr. Carter will be private. Moody Funeral Home in Stuart is handling the arrangements, and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Mrs. Pollard is survived by her husband of 53 years, Leon M. Pollard of the home; one brother, J.W. Via and wife, Cheryl; three nieces, Deb-

The family would like to express their appreciation to Liberty Home Healthcare for the care and kindness given to their mom.

A celebration of life will be held on March 8, 2025, at 2:00 PM at Patriots Colony in Williamsburg, Virginia

All services for Mr. Carter will be private. Moody Funeral Home in Stuart is handling the arrangements, and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Jim was an organiz-

ived by a son, Michael Christopher Martin; a daughter, Christina Martin Cahoon; two grandchildren, Addison Tuggle and Dominic Cahoon; his mother, Mary Hilda Hughes Martin; two brothers, David Franklin Martin (Deb) and Scott Andrew Martin; four aunts, Linda Hylton,

Collins Funeral Home is respectfully serving the Mills family. Online condolences may be made at www.collinsmckeestonebassett.com.

Mr. Martin is sur-

Hillsville, VA, Kevin
Dwayne Wood (Di-
ane Ball Wood) of
Oak Ridge, NC; five
grandchildren, Steven
Alexander Wood (Ja-
mie), Christian Blake
Wood (Bailey), Ben-
jamin Hunter Wood,
Ashley Lynn Wood,
Kristin Taylor Wood;
seven siblings, Richard
Wood (Jeannette) of
Wytheville, VA, Thom-
as Wood of Martinsville,
VA, Thelma Shelor of
Meadows of Dan, VA,
Mary Clifton of Patrick

The funeral for Mr. Wood will be held on Sunday, February 23, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Meadows of Dan Baptist Church with Pastor Lonnie Hylton officiating. Burial will immediately follow in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends on Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Moody Funeral Home in Stuart has been entrusted with the services and online condolences may be sent visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

A memorial service for Mrs. Pollard will be held Sunday, February 23, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Moody Funeral Home in Stuart with Pastor Ed Hartman officiating. Burial will be private. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

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Terri S. Wood, Manager

PATRICK PULPITS

Our Assignment

By Dr. Evonne Wimbush

Fresh Harvest Christin Church (D.O.C.)

Ash Wednesday is approaching. Many will prepare to commemorate the 40 days leading to the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This time for many is for reflecting on the sacrifice made for us, Jesus's assignment completed.

Jesus knew that His assignment was to show people God. He knew that his time on earth would be spent showing Believers and unbelievers the miraculous works, the power and authority of God. He knew that he would be ridiculed, mocked, rejected, accepted, and ultimately die but to rise again. Jesus accepted his assignment, prepared to be revealed as a human baby, and readied himself to endure the suffering that would be associated with it. It was clear to him that his task would not be easy.

The Prophet Isaiah foretold of the coming of the Lord (Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6-7). "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman...." (Galatians 4:4 NIV). We are encouraged by His earthly presence (John 1:14), "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." We are reminded of the ultimate purpose of his coming (John 3:16). We are additionally reminded of our assignment (Matthew 28:19), and how to prepare and continuously be trained (Genesis – Revelation).

How are you preparing and implementing the tenets of your assignment?

What areas do you need strengthening? Do you need to seek the Lord for clarity on your assignment? Have you considered the steps to completing your assignment? Where are you on the journey? I submit to you to take time to open yourself to hear from the Lord. The perfect time, I do believe, is during the time we commemorate the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The journey on this assignment will not be easy. The sacrifice comes not only personally but also from others. Friends and family may or may not like the change in you. You may be ostracized, criticized, lied about, and rejected. You may not get an invitation to social gatherings. It will all be alright. Your sacrifice and their rejection will pay off. Do not take your eyes off the promises of God. Ready yourself. If you started and then stopped, start again. Work on your assignment to completion. 2 Timothy 2:12 KJV, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us."

If you have not already done so, accept your assignment. Sacrifice, pray, and ask for guidance. As Jesus's assignment was clear to Him, so shall yours be to you.

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Cynthia M. Jones, AA, AS

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BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Acts (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. In 1 Kings 20, who besieged and made war against Samaria after gathering his forces? Ben-Hadad, Menahem, Rezin, Omri
3. What king asked for the help of a woman who was a medium? Jehu, Amaziah, Saul, Neco
4. From 1 Samuel 19, whose life was saved when his wife put an image of a

man into his bed? Samson, David, Amon, Cyrus

5. Who was the father of Elkanah? Jeremiah, Philip, Esau, Jeroham
6. From Esther 1, how many days did Ahasuerus' feast last? 2, 4, 7, 10

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Ben-Hadad, 3) Saul, 4) David, 5) Jeroham, 6) Seven

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy.

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Meadows of Dan, Virginia
Rev. Tommy Gosnell
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Worship Services 11 am



Risen Lord Catholic Church

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Reconciliation
Sundays 7:45 - 8:15 a.m.

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Sunday School for all ages 9:45 am
Wednesdays
Community Meal & Service 6:00 pm
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Super Crossword

SONG TITLES

ACROSS

- 1 Teenage witch played by Melissa Joan Hart
8 Breakwater embankment
15 Nintendo title
20 Germ-free
21 Singer with the 2018 hit "Boo'd Up"
22 Put up, as a building
23 Patti Smith
25 Flat, as cola
26 One of the two Pro Bowl gps.
27 Rankle
28 Notices
30 Hero type
31 Nina Simone
39 Napoli's nation
41 Alien-seeking proj.
42 City near Disney World
43 Manicure tool
46 Oxidizes
49 Put the kibosh on
50 Missy Elliott
53 Dir. from Miss. to Mich.
56 Pre-CIA gp.
57 Ad featuring Smokey Bear, e.g.

- 58 "Science Guy" with multiple Emmys
59 Honorable
60 Busy airport
63 George Strait
69 World capital in the Andes
74 '60s war zone
75 2010-14 Mets member
76 Britney Spears
79 Plane ticket detail
80 Large musical disk
81 Encyc. unit
82 Tosses out of the game, for short
85 "Law & Order"
88 Busy insect
89 Bessie Smith
97 Plane ticket detail, for short
98 Mafioso John
99 Narrates
100 Running rather quickly
104 "This Is Life" journalist Lisa
106 Totally in favor of
107 Chuck Berry

- 112 "Casablanca" woman
113 "Dies —" (Latin hymn)
114 — Schwarz
115 Peculiar
118 Just making, with "out"
120 Liza Minnelli
127 Roaring cat crossbreed
128 Remove loose coverings from
129 "Tartuffe" playwright
130 Thick
131 Ancient Jewish ascetics
132 Slung mud at
DOWN
1 Very long tale
2 Dating from
3 Furniture pieces for lying or sitting
4 Tach abbr.
5 Judge Lance
6 Petty peave
7 Have — on one's shoulder
8 "Black Panther" actor Andy
9 "Xanadu" gp.
10 Sitcom ET
11 "679" rapper Fetty —
12 Make laugh

- 13 Thin streets
14 "In this way"
15 Spanish for "month"
16 Skilled crafter
17 Go further in the book, say
18 Apple digital storage service
19 Verdi opera
24 Mess up
29 Hercules player Kevin
32 Afflictions
33 Natural talent
34 Greet loudly
35 Architect
Saarinen
36 Double — (Oreo option)
37 Wife on "The Addams Family," casually
38 Big to-do
39 Lowdown
40 Mai — (rum drinks)
44 Track circuit
45 Mag staffers
47 Ex-Yankee Martinez
48 James Bond genre, in brief
51 Ox of Tibet
52 "Doggone it!"
53 Punishment for a tube watcher
54 "Me neither"

- 55 Rival of Ben & Jerry's
59 Nibble (on)
60 Suspend
61 Scanned market ID
62 Busy insect
64 With one flat, musically
65 Brief snooze
66 Biotech-created food
67 Atop, in verse
68 Japanese salad green
69 Links gp. for women
70 Club for a 69-Der member
71 Small fortune
72 Letters of invitation?
73 American assn.
77 Margarine, quaintly
78 Adobe Acrobat suffix
83 Fourth of a yr.
84 That girl
85 Large yellow bloom
86 Put the kibosh on
87 KGB's land
89 Paree "to be"
90 Native New Zealander

- 91 WWII battle town in France
92 Glue — (brand of adhesive in a tube)
93 Hog sound
94 Tesla auto, e.g.
95 String necktie
96 Quiet stretch
97 Fuel gases
100 Off-track
101 New film type in the 1920s
102 What "@" is
103 Rotational force
105 Big blunders
108 Man-goat deities
109 Marsh plants
110 Capture
111 Campus buildings
116 Have the guts
117 Made blond, maybe
119 Test for college srs.
121 Prior to, in sonnets
122 Indian flatbread
123 Not closed, in verse
124 — -pah band
125 Heady brew
126 Day, to Diego

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Invitation For Bid (IFB)
IFB # 2025-31200-01-31
Patrick County Sheriff's Office
Night Vision Equipment and Accessories
Dated: January 31, 1025

The County of Patrick seeks the purchase of Night Vision Equipment and Accessories to fully outfit our SWAT for use at times of low or no light incidents. The intent and purpose of this invitation for Bid is to establish a contract with a qualified supplier to furnish and provide inside delivery of Night Vision Equipment and Accessories to Patrick County, Sheriff's Office, as needed and requested. To download the complete IFB package, please go to Virginia Marketplace (eVA.gov) or the Patrick County website at <https://co.patrick.va.us/Bids.aspx>.

LEGAL

BWW# VA-354662-1

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 1683 WILLIS ROAD, MEADOWS OF DAN, VA 24120. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated October 12, 2012, in the original principal amount of \$120,000.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Patrick County, Virginia as Instrument No. 120001901. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Patrick County, 101 West Blue Ridge Street, Stuart, Virginia, or any such temporary alternative Circuit Court location designated by the Judges of the Circuit Court, on March 31, 2025, at 3:30 PM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: ALL THOSE TWO CERTAIN TRACTS OR PARCELS OF LAND LYING AND BEING IN THE BLUE RIDGE MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO-WIT: CONTAINING 36.980 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, AND 1.00 ACRE, MORE OR LESS; AND BEING THE SAME TWO TRACTS OR PARCELS OF LAND CONVEYED TO MICHAEL RAY BRIDGES AND SUSAN CAROL RAINES BRIDGES, HUSBAND AND WIFE, BY DEED FROM MICHAEL RAY BRIDGES, DATED OCTOBER 6, 2010, AND RECORDED IN THE CLERICS OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AS INSTRUMENT NUMBER 1001737, TO WHICH DEED REFERENCE IS HERE MADE FOR A MORE PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY HEREIN CONVEYED. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit often percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. For more information contact: BWW Law Group, LLC, attorneys for Equity Trustees, LLC, 6003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-354662-1.

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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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LEGAL

2021 Virginia Building Code
The 2021 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) took effect January 18, 2024. Permit applications submitted after January 18, 2025 must comply with the 2021 Virginia USBC. To view the significant code changes, please visit the Patrick County Building Inspection website at: www.co.patrick.va.us/160/Building-Inspections or you may contact the Building Inspection office at 276-694-4143 and a copy can be emailed to you.

LEGAL



PUBLIC NOTICE
PROPOSED SIX-YEAR HIGHWAY PLAN
(2025/26 - 2029/30)
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION BUDGET
2025/26
PATRICK COUNTY

The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Board of Supervisors of Patrick County, in accordance with section 33.2-331 of the Code of Virginia, will conduct a joint public hearing on the Third Floor of the Veteran's Memorial Building located in Stuart, Virginia, at 106 Rucker Street in Stuart, VA 24171 from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 10, 2025.

The purpose of this public hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed Secondary Six-Year Highway Plan for Fiscal Year 2025/26 through 2029/30 and the Secondary System Construction Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/26. Copies of the proposed Plan and Budget may be reviewed at the Martinsville Residency Office of the Virginia Department of Transportation, located at 309 Weeping Willow Lane in Bassett, Virginia, or at the office of the Patrick County Administrator located in Stuart, Virginia.

All projects in the Secondary Six-year Plan that are eligible for federal funds will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which documents how Virginia will obligate federal transportation funds.

Persons requiring special assistance to attend and participate in this hearing should contact the Virginia Department of Transportation at (276) 629-2582.

Oral comments, written comments, or other exhibits relative to the proposed plan may be presented at this hearing.



Meetings

Thursday, March 13
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the School Board Office.

Wednesday, March 19
The Stuart Town Council will meet at 6 p.m. in the Town Office.

Events

Wednesday, Feb. 26
The Patrick County Lodging Association will meet at the Stuart site of Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) in the community room at 2 p.m. This is for any overnight lodging entities who rent on a short-term, vacation type basis. The aim is to share information and ideas to support the lodging in Patrick County.

Women Impact Virginia Virtual Event. Join the Reynolds Homestead and women across the commonwealth via Zoom at 10 a.m. to hear from Women Impact Virginia advisory board member Natalie K. Hodge. Sign up at forms.office.com/r/ghLMGbjYVD.

Friday, Feb. 28
Wayside Community Church, 3520 Wayside Road, Stuart invites everyone out for their Friday Night Fellowship at 6:30 p.m. Special musical guests are the Grace n’ Grass group with an encouraging message by special guest Pastor Ron Peal. A variety of soups and sandwiches will be served afterwards. Come as you are.

The Stuart Farmers Market will host a vendor meeting at 11a.m. in the Stuart Town Office 100 Patrick Avenue, Stuart. This meeting is for current or future vendors for the Stuart Farmers Market. For more information, call Billy, (276) 694-3811.

Friday, March 1
Community Breakfast at Jeb Stuart Rescue Squad, 7:30-10 a.m. Plates are \$8 each and dine in, take out, and curb service options are available. Orders can be placed by calling (276) 694-6171.

Poor Man’s Supper hosted by CCDF Fire & Rescue, 4-7 p.m. at the CCDF Fire & Rescue Building, 2086 Dry Pond Highway. Plates are \$6 each and include pintos, cornbread, chowchow or slaw (option to add onions) dessert and drink. Call (276) 694-6025 with questions and or to place orders.

Monday, March 3
A vendor meeting for the 2025 season of Monday Market at Fairy Stone State Park will be held at Fayerdale Hall at 1 p.m.

Tuesday, March 4
The Stuart Church of Living Water will hold an All-Day Pancake meal at Stuart Volunteer Fire Station from 7 a.m.- 6 p.m. Adults \$10, children (10 years and under) \$5. To place an order, dial (276) 694-3322.

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) will hold a grant opening and ribbon cut-

ting for its Heavy Equipment Operator Lab at 10 a.m. at the Baliles-Reynolds Learning Center.

Wednesday, March 5
Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 p.m., Stuart Church of Living Water, 101 East Blue Ridge Street, Stuart.

Friday, March 7
The Community Food Truck will be at the Woolwine SSRS from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, March 8
The Patrick County VA250 Committee will hold a free event from 2-4 p.m. at the Star Theatre where people can learn about the county’s colonial history from local historians and about the upcoming 250th celebrations.

The Patrick County Master Gardeners will hold its 15th annual Spring Symposium: Master Your Garden at Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC). Guest speakers are Jim Mitchell of Mitchell’s Nursery and Stesha Warren, an Agroforestry Technical Trainer and owner of Eliana’s Garde, LLC. The symposium will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and vendors and light refreshments will be available. Registration is \$10 per person, and pre-registration is encouraged due to limited seating. Send fee and information for each person attending (name, full address, email address, and contact number) to Ms. Glenda Cobbler, 932 Palmetto School Road, Stuart, VA 24171.

Saturday, March 15
Country breakfast at Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department, 6:30-10 a.m. Dine in plates are \$10 for adult plates and \$5 for child plates. All take out plates are \$10. Call in orders can be made by calling (276) 930-2113.

Friday, March 21
The Community Food Truck will be at the Fairystone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Ongoing

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

Patrick County Alzheimer’s Group LLC is open Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. During opening hours an inside yard sale is open to the public. Proceeds from the yard sales are used to purchase supplies. Members meet on the first Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Alzheimer’s office, located on Wood Brothers Drive, in the basement of Hills Tax Service. New members 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.

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.

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.

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, the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.; Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam, every Friday. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food. The music and dancing are 6:30-9 p.m.; Golden Oldies Open Jam is on the last Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food, music and dancing from 6:30-9 p.m.

Connect Health+ Wellness offers free confidential Medicaid/FAMIS application and renewal assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deductibles. Medicaid renewals have resumed. Medicaid members need to keep their mailing address and contact information up to date. Connect Health + Wellness’ specially trained Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Advocate can provide more information. Call or text Ann Walker, (276) 732-0509, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Parks and Recreation Department is offering free Tai Chi Flow classes for seniors. The gentle, low impact exercise can help improve balance, coordination and mobility. Classes meet on Thursdays from 3-4 p.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart, through February 27. For additional information call (276) 694-3917.

Patrick County Senior Citizens is sponsoring two upcoming trips — three-days, two-nights to Lancaster, Pa., June 18–20, and a one-day trip on August 2 is planned to NarroWay Dinner Theatre, Fort Mill, South Carolina. For more information, call (276) 694-3917.

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Ruritan clubs recognized at national convention



Zone 1 Lt. Governor Kevin Smith presenting the certificate to Woolwine President David Belcher during their February meeting. (Contributed photos)



Stuart Ruritan Bill Hines presenting Rudy Bears to Patrick County Sheriff's Deputy Cody Fortner.

By Pamela Smith
The Ruritan National Convention was held in January in Greenville, S.C., and the newest club in Patrick County was recognized as being in the top 5 percent of all small clubs in growth. The Woolwine Community Ruritan Club added 18 members in 2024, all of which are dedicated to their community.
“This club amazes me,” said Zone 1 Governor Pamela Smith. “Their willingness to step outside of the box with their projects and their success in helping the community in many ways is phenomenal.” The club has lots of activities planned throughout the year.
The second youngest club in the county, the Stuart Ruritans, had a busy fourth quarter, spilling into 2025. They distributed Christmas goodie bags to the residents at the Landmark Center, presented Rudy Bears to the Stuart Fire Department, Patrick County Emergency Services and Patrick County Sheriff's Office. Rudy Bear is the official Ruritan mascot and are teddy bears that help first responders in situations that warrant comfort to children in tragedies. Smith, who also serves as

Stuart's secretary/treasurer, said this club is committed to mental health awareness and is planning again to partner with Patrick County Alzheimer's Group for a Color Walk/Bike Run later this year.
“Partnering with other civic/community organizations is helpful for all of those involved,” said Smith.
Patrick Springs recently held a BBQ fundraiser to help “Envision Critz” with their endeavors. Vice-President Kenneth Reynolds said the recent addition of new members is helping the club develop new ideas and with manpower needed for their projects. This club is planning a Poor Man's Supper in March.
The Red Bank club is gearing up for its annual Peanut Butter Easter Egg sales, according to Vice-President Robert Cowdrey. Cowdrey reflected on the loss of one of their integral members. “Tom Bishop was a huge part of our delivery sector of these eggs. We will have to step up to make it happen this year.” The Red Bank Club is excited to continue their traditional fundraiser this year.
Meadows of Dan is hosting Braden Health representatives to give an update on the hospital's

progress during their March 6th meeting. President Aaron Shelor proudly reported that his club delivered 18 loads of firewood to the needy and is actively helping to support the food pantry in their community.
The Ararat Ruritan club hosts the Disaster Relief Food Ministry on the last Saturday of each month. “This program has grown by leaps and bounds, and has now been moved to Smith Brothers Trucking,” Smith said. “There is a tremendous need for this service, and we're glad to help provide for our community,” said club President Claude Smith. The club hosts a casual (friendly) Rook game every Monday night. This provides a time for folks to come out and fellowship.
The Ruritan slogan is “Fellowship, Goodwill, and Community Service,” and as you can see from all of the above, all of the clubs in Patrick County are ‘all in’.
For more information on Ruritans in your area, or if you're interested in starting a club in your area, please contact Zone Governor, Pamela Smith at pamela.smith.ruritan@gmail.com or at (276) 229-6931.

Valentines, community gathers at special dance

The Willis Gap Community Center held its Valentine's Dance with Rock and Roll Doug Reeves' 52 Soth Band on Saturday, February 15, with food, drinks, music and dancing.
The kitchen helpers, Waymond and Diane Dawson donated fried apple pies, a cake, and a picture frame made by Waymond.
Mary Dellenback Hill donated two boxes of Valentine's chocolates. The tickets were drawn from the usual 50/50 drawing.
A big thank you to the 52 South Band's musicians and singers, the audience, the kitchen helpers, the person who greeted us with a voluntary 50/50 ticket sale, and all our working volunteer members of the center.



Order Open of Jams, Les Edgell (left), withdrawing the ticket, Richard Solemdinger.

The Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam is every Friday Night, and the Golden Oldies Open Jam is the last Tuesday of each month. Both Jams, the doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food and drinks, music, and dancing from 6:30 until 9 p.m. The 50/50 drawing at about 8:15 p.m. All proceeds go to the Community Center.
Willis Gap Com-

munity Center is affiliated with Virginia's Tourism Corporation, The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, The Patrick County Tourism Council, and the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce. Email marhill196648@yahoo.com for more information.



Brenda and Richard Solemdinger, one of the night's most stand-out dancing couples.



Left to right: Dourg Reeves 52 South Band with Tom Reeves, steel guitar, Doug Reeves, electric guitar, Tracy Hodges, drums, and Mark O'Neal, electric guitar. (Photos by Mary Dellenback Hill)

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DRBA launches plastic recycling challenge to earn free Trex bench

The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) is inviting the community to participate in a plastic recycling challenge to earn a free Trex bench by collecting 1,000 pounds of qualifying plastics by January 6, 2026.


- How to Participate
- *Only certain plastic materials count toward the challenge, including:
 - *Plastic grocery, bread, cereal, and produce bags
 - *Mulch, soil, and salt bags (must be clean and dry)
 - *Plastic wrap from bottled water, paper towels, and toilet paper
 - *Bubble wrap
 - *Ziploc-style food storage bags

What can be recycled?


All plastic must be clean, dry and free of food residue.




Grocery bags




Bread bags




Bubble wrap




Dry cleaning bags




Newspaper sleeves




Ice bags




Plastic shipping envelopes




Ziploc & other reclosable food storage bags




Cereal bags




Case overwrap




Salt bags



Pallet wrap & stretch film



Wood pellet bags



Produce bags

(clean and dry) Participants should collect and weigh their plastics, take a photo of the weight, and drop them off at locations with plastic bag recycling bins, such as Target, Walmart, or Food Lion.

After dropping off plastics, participants must log the collection at my.trex.com using: Username: DanRiverBasin Password: Cleanrivers Submissions should include the drop-off location, city, state, and total weight, along with the photo of the weighed plastics. By recycling plastic waste, the initiative aims to protect the Dan River Basin's ecosystems while working toward earning a free Trex bench for a local park or trail in the region. Participants can submit multiple entries until the challenge deadline on January 6, 2026.

Birthday celebration held for Stuart

The annual Birthday Party for Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart was held February 1, by the JEB Stuart's Birthplace Preservation Trust, Inc. The Fisher Peak Timber Rattlers, an old-time band, provided music and dancing. Cake and lemonade, along with free hotdogs with all the fixings, coffee, sodas, and water were provided by members of the board. Speakers were Ronnie Haynes and actor Sam Winkler.



The Fisher Peak Timber Rattlers (left to right), along with all the volunteers, dancing the Virginia Reel to old-time music. On the table to the right is the birthday cake and lemonade. (Photo by Timothy Tilley)



Kitchen helpers Chip Bondurant (left to right), Amy B. Sawyers, and Brandon Parish. Not pictured, Misha Fulton Parish. (Photo by Mary Dellenback Hill)



Board members John Wilson, Amy B. Sawyers, Ronnie Haynes, along with Stu Shank, Dan Shikenjanski and Dot Shikenjanski (seated), of the Fisher Peak Timber Rattlers' band. (Photo by Mary Dellenback Hill)





Patrick County
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PRESENTS

SUCCESSION PLANNING

LAYING OUT A ROAD MAP FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION

April 2, 12PM
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director@patrickchamber.com
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- Steps to ensure smooth transition
- Embracing Community Support
- Planning for the Unexpected

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Succession Planning class set for April

Businesses or organizations looking for the next generation to step up and take over may be interested in attending Succession Planning, a Lunch and Learn workshop hosted by the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce. The workshop will be held on Wednesday April 2 at 12 p.m. at the Stuart site of Patrick & Henry Community College. Attendees will learn the steps needed to make a smooth transition from one company leader to the next during the event that will provide a unique opportunity to reflect on the importance of succession planning and its role in sustaining businesses for future generations. Insights to implement will be shared. This workshop is presented by the chamber in partnership with Patrick & Henry Community College, SOVA Rise and Community Investment Collaborative. Attendance is free. Registration is required at www.patrickchamber.com or for more information contact the chamber at 276-694-6012 or director@patrickchamber.com.

ty to reflect on the importance of succession planning and its role in sustaining businesses for future generations. Insights to implement will be shared. This workshop is presented by the chamber in partnership with Patrick & Henry Community College, SOVA Rise and Community Investment Collaborative. Attendance is free. Registration is required at www.patrickchamber.com or for more information contact the chamber at 276-694-6012 or director@patrickchamber.com.

Donations announced to the Patrick County Dolly Parton Imagination Library



The Patrick County Dolly Parton Imagination Library was awarded donations from their partners. The local chapter currently serves 403 children who receive a book mailed to them each month. Without our local partners and donations, this program would not be successful. For more information or to register a child visit www.patrickchamber.com Pictured left to right: Sarah Wray with One Family Productions, Rebecca Adcock, Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, Anna Lester with Stuart Rotary Club, Kimberly Stegall and Kathleen Kilgore with Step Inc.

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**Winner's will be published in
The Enterprise on April 30, 2025
& The Henry County Enterprise on May 3, 2025.**

Playing possum, or opossum, at the library



Two win National Beta Scholarship

By Kaydence Harman
Patrick County High School

Each year the National Beta Club awards 257 merit scholarships to 12th grade members of the Senior Beta Club. This year, more than 3,500 students from across the USA applied for National Beta Scholars. The Patrick County High School Senior Beta Club announced that two of this year's 257 National Beta Club scholarships were won by members of our club.

Bryan Clark and Zachary Letchworth



Zachary Letchworth (left), and Bryan Clark, won a National Beta Club Scholarship this year.

both won a National Beta Club Scholarship this year. The local club congratulates Bryan Clark and Zachary Letchworth for their outstanding achievement.



Another misunderstood animal, the opossum, was the subject of Storytime at the library. Opossums and possums are two different animals. Opossums live in Virginia and possums live in Australia. Opossums are the only marsupials in United States and are beneficial to the environment. They eat thousands of ticks and are very clean animals that are often seen roaming at night. They don't carry rabies due to their low body temperature. You might also see a mother opossum carrying 8 or more young on their back.

Story time led by Sam Edmundson, Norma Bozenmayer and Jess Hines started with reading the books "Night Animals," by Gianna Marino; "My First Book of Baby Animals," by Dianne Namm, and "Playing Possum," by Jennifer Black Reinhardt.

Facts about opossums were shared and participants created an opossum craft out of a recycled



toilet paper roll. For more information on opossums or library programs, visit or call your local library.

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FROM STUART, VA - Take Hwy 58E into Henry County, turn right on Rt. 687 (Soapstone Road), 1st road to right just past Old Country Store & Hillcrest Baptist Church. LOOK FOR SIGNS

TERMS - Cash or approved check with proper ID. No warranties expressed or implied. All announcements made day of sale take precedence over all previous statements, written or verbal, concerning this auction. All items sold "as is-where is". 10% Buyer's Premium applies.

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