

Board delays reassessment, discusses budget proposal, sets tax rate

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to cap the estate tax rate, delay the reassessment, and continued discussions about the proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget at its March 10 meeting.

After voting to set the real estate tax rate at not more than 73 cents per \$100 of assessed value, which matches the current fiscal year's rate, the board also approved a motion to delay the county's next real estate reassessment until Jan. 1, 2027.

Commissioner of Revenue Glenda Morse explained that Virginia law requires a general reassessment of real estate every four years. However, counties with a population of 50,000 or fewer may, by majority vote, extend the reassessment cycle to five or six years.

"Tonight, I'm asking for a motion to extend the next reassessment to six years, which is normally what we do, which would make it effective Jan. 1, 2027," Morse said.

Board members also discussed several proposed capital improvements, including a generator for the county administration building,



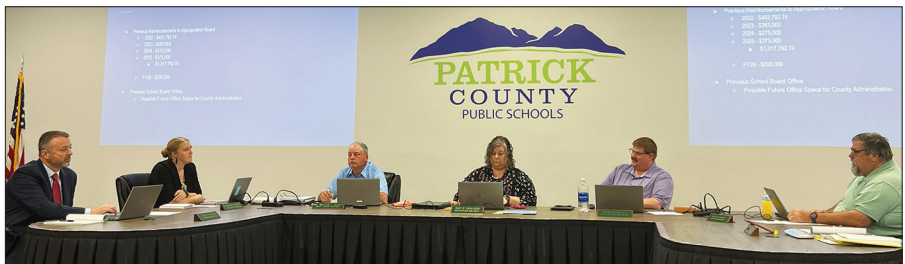
Commissioner of Revenue Glenda Morse requested the Board of Supervisors delay the real estate assessment by two years, or until January 1, 2027.

(See Board p. 2)



Berry, Wood Brothers Racing claim victory in NASCAR Cup Series Pennzoil 400

Josh Berry, driver of the #21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane Ford, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Pennzoil 400 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on March 16, 2025 in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Jonathan Bachman/Getty Images) Full Story Inside on page 12.



The Patrick County School Board approved the \$36,747,259.98 fiscal year 2025-2026 budget at its March 11 meeting.

School board approves \$36.7 million budget for next fiscal year

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County School Board approved its more than \$36 million proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said this \$36,747,259.98 is the first budget in a couple of years the division didn't have federal funds for some staffing positions.

"We had some success coaches, some other assistants that we were not able to continue with their employment. Each year over the last four years our 'Other Amendments' to our budget and also our ESSER/CARES funds have decreased, and those funds have been exhausted. Now it's just reports we get to send to the state about how we did spend it," he said.

As a result, the division is operating on a tight budget. Because of the calculation tool and the division's lowering enrollment, Wood

(See School p. 3)

Education leader Dr. Stewart Roberson to speak at P&HCC Commencement

Patrick & Henry Community College has announced that Dr. Stewart Roberson, chairman of the Patrick County Education Foundation (PCEF) Board, will deliver the commencement address for P&HCC's 2025 graduation ceremony.

Roberson is the chair of the Board of Shareholders for Moseley Architects and a professor at the University of Virginia. He previously served as superintendent of schools in both Hanover County and Falls Church, Virginia, and has worked in education since 1977. He has been recognized as a Virginia Business Virginia 500 Power List member, a Virginia Foundation for Community College Education board member emeritus, and an honorary member of The American Institute of Architects (AIA) of Virginia.

Currently, Roberson serves as chair of the Board of Directors for Moseley Architects, the Forum Club of Richmond, the UVA K-12 Advisory Council, and the VCU Autism Center for Excellence. He is also a trustee for the Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges and AdvancED. Additionally, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Prince William County Education Foundation, CodeVA, and the Cognia State Advisory Committee.



"It is a true joy to be invited to have a front-row seat on May 17 to witness the pride and accomplishments of the P&HCC Class of 2025! That day will be a terrific one of celebration as everyone applauds the graduates and the difference they will all make in our world," Roberson said.

P&HCC President Dr. Greg Hodges added, "We are so grateful to Dr. Roberson for his advocacy and support of P&HCC and for his work to make Patrick Promise a reality for Patrick County High School graduates. His passion for education and the future of students in our community is a true inspiration to us all."

The commencement ceremony will take place in the Stone Hall gymnasium on Saturday, May 17, at 10 a.m.



None of the Above will headline the Saturday, March 22 Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show.

None of the Above to headline PCMA show

By Taylor Boyd

None of the Above will headline the Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show on Saturday, March 22, at the Rotary Building in Stuart. Doors open at 5 p.m., with music starting at 6 p.m.

PCMA President Denny Alley described None of the Above as a Surry County-based group known for playing a wide variety of music.

"They're really a good band. I mean, they all have the ear monitors like the Lonesome River Band, where they can hear and play, walk around through the audience," Alley said.

The event will also feature a performance by Johnny & Wendy Dearmon.

"They've been playing and singing all their life. Johnny can sit there on a stool and play for three days and never sing the same song—any kind of music you want," Alley said, adding that the duo will play "anything under the sun" during their set.

Both Johnny and Wendy Dearmon participated in PCMA's Songwriter's Circle Series last year.

Alley said PCMA has three more monthly shows scheduled, along with a Songwriter's Circle Series event on May 17 at the Star Theatre, before taking a summer break. The monthly shows are set to resume in October.

He estimated that 200-250 people attended the February show.

Concessions will be available for purchase from the Patrick County Shooting Education Team, with proceeds supporting firearm safety education for local youngsters.

For more information or to watch past performances, visit Facebook.com/PatrickCountyMusicAssociation.

Board

(cont. from page 1)

an ambulance purchase, a scale for the Transfer Station, zero turn mower, a roof on the building that houses Adult Education, and mowing options for dams in Ararat.

Also discussed was an ‘Access Control System’ for court proceedings held on the third floor, as requested by General District Court Judge Joan Ziglar, according to discussion at the meeting.

County Administrator Beth Simms said that according to Ziglar’s request from last year, the first phase of the access control plan was for a single point of entry. “Because right now, there are quite a few exits in this building. So, the first phase will be a single point of entry with all the other” entries and exits secured.

“We can all wish and want, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that’s a requirement,” Andrew Overby, vice chairman and of the Dan River District, said, and added the county’s current security measures were sufficient.

Simms said Ziglar may disagree with that assessment, and added the security requested is outlined in the state code.

Overby said it isn’t and noted the requirements Simms referenced were for circuit courts, not for Juvenile and Domestic Relations or General District courts.

“We have this floor secured by a deputy all day long, and I believe that what we have meets the requirements and we do not need to secure the entire facility. I just spent half the day over at Carroll County looking at their facility today, they have absolutely no access control for the entire building with the exception of the court wing, and that is where the court clerk and everybody for the courts is located. Everything else in the building is completely open, they use a key for every door,” he said.

As long as the third floor is staffed with the deputy as required to do so, Overby said he doesn’t think security measures need to go any further.

“If there’s a concern with people walking into county administration – lock the door,” he said.

“So, just let her know that it is the Board of Supervisors’ opinion that we meet the requirements,” Simms asked.

Doug Perry, of the Smith River District, said he believes the board may want to discuss the issue, and the specific security elements, further.

“I think it’s jumping the gun to say that right now. I think we need to have more discussion before we go to Judge Ziglar and say, “hey, look the whole board says that the top floor is good enough.’ I think we need to hash this out,” Perry said.

“I don’t think we need to create a deterrent for people to come into this facility and conduct their



Dozens of residents attended the March 10 meeting.

business. They come here to pay their taxes, they come in here to go to the DMV, they should not be forced to go through a metal detector to get into the building,” Overby said, adding that a single point of entry could be made right now.

Clayton Kendrick, of the Mayo River District, asked if the other doors had key card locks on them.

Simms replied they did not.

“Carroll County does not have key card locks, they have keys,” Overby said.

Kendrick asked if all courts could be held in the other courthouse. Simms said she couldn’t answer that question, and added it would be a question for the judges.

“I just believe that we meet the requirements per the state right now, and if we go any further, we’re going above and beyond,” Overby said.

Kendrick believes the administration office, the Treasurer’s office, and the Commissioner of Revenue’s office could reasonably be secured with just an electronic lock and a camera to see who’s at the door.

“That will secure that down there and you got security up here,” Kendrick said.

“And we could save a whole lot more money just by locking the door and walking over to open it,” Overby said.

Simms said the request isn’t trying to be a deterrent for people to pay their taxes or obtain a building permit.

“That is not it at all. We were requested by the judge to look at key card entry for the other entrances and exits, have a single point of entry that way we can track people coming in and out better, that’s phase one,” Simms said.

“We can set up a single point of entry by simply locking the doors. I mean that’s not that hard. We don’t have to physically put card access on the doors, we can just lock the doors and say everybody has to come in the front door. It’s simple and

doesn’t cost us a dime,” Overby said.

When a judge comes to her and asks for this, Simms said it feels like it’s her job to bring it to the board.

“If you all don’t want to approve it, then like I said, I execute the board’s wishes. I’m just explaining to you her concern and her request,” Simms said.

Overby said the current measures are meeting the requirement for the third floor, and asked Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith for input.

Smith said the county is meeting the legal requirements.

“We have a deputy up here every day because the clerks of both district and juvenile domestic relations court clerks are here 40 hours a week. Just like the circuit court, we have a deputy full-time up there. You cannot get into the court complex, which is the third floor here, without going through a metal detector and a deputy,” Smith said.

State law requires that courthouses have specific security, he said. However, that doesn’t apply to other government entities. On the third floor, where court cases are heard, Smith said the county complies with the state code.

“This entire building is not the courthouse - it’s just this floor. If we’re meeting that requirement then I don’t think we need to spend funds any further,” Overby said.

The board also discussed using part of the unassigned fund balance to fund some one-time capital requests and directed Simms to bring a summary of dues and memberships to them and ask the Patrick County Education Foundation for the sum needed to launch the Patrick Promise.

The board approved removing \$15,000 earmarked to pay an outside consultant – in this case Davenport & Company, LLC, which would have provided advice on the county’s financial policies. The board also declined to provide water cooler usage for any offices that have town water.

Spring Bulbs and Summer Color

By Kristine Adel

Throughout the summer season, I often see beautiful flowering bulbs for sale. They look magnificent in full bloom and tempting in their little pots, in spite of their huge prices. I have to remind myself, I could have had many times more blooms in my garden for less cost if I had bought and planted those same bulbs earlier in the spring, if only.

Now is the time! No waiting until summer when they are already blooming: Alliums with their tiny flowers clustered into perfect spheres, Begonias in their seemingly infinite variety, and all the huge showy Gladiolus! Ranunculus (Buttercups), Calla Lilies and so many more! I want them all. Are you thinking, “Wait, isn’t it too cold here for those beautiful flowers?”

The answer is yes, and no. Our summers here in Patrick County are perfect for these beautiful flowers so long as we plant them after the last frost in spring and lift them for storage before the first frost in fall. Most almanacs agree that the last frost will come to our area sometime in the latter part of April, and the first frost next fall will arrive sometime in the latter half of October, leaving us with almost 6 months of beautiful flower growing weather.

But now you might be thinking, “I love summer flowers as much as the next person, but lifting? Storage? That sounds kind of complicated.”

Except it’s not, as long as you have a cool, dry, low light place to store your bulbs. This could be a basement, a cellar, or even a crawlspace as long as you can be certain your bulbs won’t freeze over the winter. And now is the time to start thinking about what flowers you want to plant, whether you want to grow them in a garden, plant them as a border, or decorate with containers.

Once the chance of frost has passed and the ground has warmed to 55° F, maybe 60°F, you are ready to plant. Most bulbs will come with instructions, but a general rule of thumb when planting bulbs in good workable soil is to dig the hole three times as deep as the height of your bulb.

But wait, isn’t a bulb supposed to look like an onion? What do you do if the root

structure looks more like a potato or some strange creature from a Sci-fi movie?

‘True’ bulbs do look like onions. Easy peasy, always plant them pointy side up. Some root structures look a little different though, here are the kinds you are likely to see:

One type of not ‘true’ bulb is still kind of round, but shorter and wider. This is a corm. Gladiolus are an example. They usually have one side a bit flat, called the basal plate and possibly a point on the other side where the first shots will grow. Again, pointy side up, basal plate down.

Another type of not ‘true’ bulb is a tuber. Think potato, and just like potatoes, find the side with the most “eyes” and plant them eyes up. If they are already sprouting, even better! Some plants have multiple tuberous roots, all attached to the remnants of a stem. A lot of lilies look like this. Plant these stems up in a hole wide enough to

give the roots a little room to spread out.

The last type of not ‘true’ bulb you may encounter is a rhizome. In the grocery store, this is the part of the plant you buy when you purchase raw ginger. If you plant Irises, you may already be familiar. A rhizome is a thick, horizontal, branching root structure. Large rhizomes may have multiple segments. Smaller ones may not have branched at all. The trick with a rhizome is to figure out which side had roots and which side had shoots or leaves, and then, of course, plant them horizontally, root side down, shoot side up.

Not much to do at this point but wait for summer and beautiful flowers! If you want to fertilize, you can use a good, slow release fertilizer once or twice during the season. Be sure to pinch the spent blooms to encourage more flowers and never cut or remove healthy foliage. Allow the foliage to die

back on its own at the end of the season so the plant can store as much energy as possible for the next year.

At the end of the season, before the first fall frost, lifting the bulbs can be accomplished with the aid of a garden fork. Remove any remaining foliage at this time and spread the bulbs in a cool place to dry. Corms should be dried upside down to ensure they don’t retain moisture. Once the bulbs are dry, they can be gathered into a net bag and stored in

a cool, dry, darkened place until spring. Happy Gardening!

Don’t forget to tune in to WHEO Radio, 92.7 FM or 1270 AM on March 25 for Patrick County Master Gardeners’ discussion with Pastor Keith Vernon on the Community Garden project at the Providence Methodist Church in Patrick Springs.

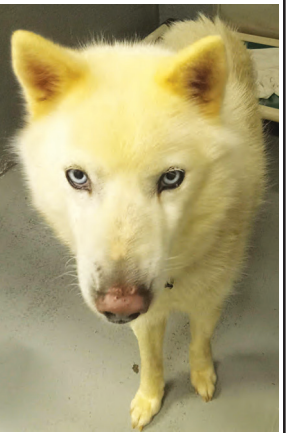
You can also contact the Patrick County Master Gardener Association at pcmgassn@gmail.com for general questions and information.

Pets of the Week



Mecum is a Great Pyrenees, approximately 2 1/2 years old. He is a big, incredibly handsome boy. Best to a home without livestock. Blaze is a white male Husky, about 2

years old. They are both so deserving of a loving home. Free spay/neuter and rabies vaccinations. Call the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter at (276) 694-6259, visit the shelter or their Facebook page, to find informa-



tion 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. It is also asking for live trap donations (have-a-heart type), even if they need some minor repairs.

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School

(cont. from page 1)



1st place Club Trading Pin: Nathan Register. Not pictured: Lileann Butler and Lily Kelly.



1st place 9th grade Agriscience Thomas Eckman



3rd Place Quiz Bowl Team: Carson Farrar. Not pictured: Draysin Maselli, DT Tanna, Xena Wilcox.



3rd place Color Photography Division 2 Kylee Blevins



3rd place Hand Drawn Anime Tara Collins



VA State Beta Club President Callie Wood



Fedir Piatovol- 6th grade Computer Science 2nd place – Meadows of Dan Elementary School Jr. BETA state winner



1st place Performing Arts Ginny Nations and Madison Scott



1st place Campaign Skit: Callie Wood, Rylee Soliday, Ginny Nations, Kylee Leonard, David Lawson, Madison Scott, and Nathan Register.

said it’s anticipated to get even tighter for upcoming budgets.

The budget follows the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) model guidance, Wood said.

“The majority of all of our line items fall within their range other than Transportation because we’re a very rural community, and our Technology because we’re a one-to-one school division, and then our size makes that also difficult,” he said.

According to the division’s budget, \$24,020,915.49, or 65 percent, is allocated for instruction. Operation and Maintenance will receive \$3,239,911.36, or nine percent of the budget, and \$2,598,135.44, or seven percent, is for pupil transportation.

Under the budget, Technology receives \$2,197,886.27, or six percent, School Food Service receives five percent, or 1,751,968.48, and the Facilities line receives two percent, or \$787,263.80.

Wood said Administration, Attendance, and Health receives \$2,151,179.14, or six percent of the budget.

“That’s superintendent, assistant superintendents, our special education department, nurses,” administrative “assistants, financial department, all that goes under Administration. I know that conversation ‘Well, look what the administrators are making.’ That’s not just administrators,” Wood said, adding that six percent is still at the bottom end of the VSBA model guidance.

The appropriation from the county has decreased by \$229,903 for next year.

“Our total loss of revenue from this current year to next year will be \$648,749. So, it will be a savings to our appropriations board, which is the board of supervisors, of \$229,903 next year, and a grand total loss of revenue for us of \$648,749,” he said.

The budget includes a proposed percentage pay increase, which comes from the state. Wood said the division will receive a portion of that for Standards of Quality (SOQ) positions.

Other budget highlights include maintaining

employee contributions to health insurance, an additional reading specialist that is required, a special education intervention specialist, and an additional elementary guidance counselor.

“A small few highlights, but when you have a decrease in your total budget, we’re doing the best we can with what we receive,” Wood said.

As the governor has until March 24 to approve a budget, Wood said he might have to present the budget without the finalized state budget.

“Both proposals would be a \$270,000 increase if that is the calc tool that gets corrected, so that \$630,000 may not hurt us as much if the governor does approve the presented Senate or House version. We’re hopeful for that,” he said.

Over the past four years, Wood noted the school division returned about \$1.3 million in School Resource Officer (SRO) reimbursements to the county “to try to be part of a solution for the economic challenges that their board and our board are facing.”

If the governor signs off on a state budget, Wood said the division is able to give back an additional \$200,000 in SRO reimbursements to the county.

“We still are thankful that we were able to give the old school board office to them for their use in the future. We’re thankful that we have a great working relationship with the board of supervisors, and we have for the last four years and we look forward to that continued good working relationship,” he said.

When he ran for the position four years ago, Rob Martin, of the Dan River District, said he was asked about his biggest concern with the budget.

“One thing I said was that the wasteful spending, because normally that’s what it is. I grew up with an elementary school principal who was a principal for 40 years and a board of supervisor member, “and I grew up in Carroll County. At the time, every locality was given the Required Local Effort (RLE), which is required by the state, Required Local Match (RLM), which is required by

the state, plus \$10 million,” he said.

Martin said it was a major shock to join the school board not knowing all the facts and be told the division only gets the RLE and RLM.

Over the past nine months, Martin said he contacted most of the state’s 133 school divisions.

“We’re the only one that I found out of over 80 school divisions that I’ve contacted that only get RLE and RLM and nothing else,” he said.

Martin said he doesn’t like not planning or being prepared for the future.

“I hope this board in the future will at least request extra funds from the locality just like the agreement that we came into two years ago, so we can start building up a spare fund just in case we have to use it to protect our employees and protect our buildings,” he said.

Amy Walker, chairman and of the Mayo River District, said she can’t help but wonder what else the school division could do if it had more funding.

“We do a very good job with what we have,” she said.

The proposal budget will be considered by the Patrick County Board of Supervisors on March 24. In other matters, the board:

- *Recognized Senior BETA Scholarship winners.
- *Recognized Junior and Senior BETA State winners.
- *Heard from Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) President Dr. Greg Hodges and Dr. Stewart Robertson, who thanked the board for its donation of leasing funds from the Patrick County High School (PCHS) cell tower to the Patrick County Education Foundation’s Patrick Promise.
- *Heard the superintendent’s report.
- *Approved the consent agenda.
- *Approved changes to the PCHS handbook.
- *Approved changes to the elementary schools’ handbook.
- *Approved policy updates.
- *Approved the personnel report as amended.

Congressional staff to hold local hours

Rep. Morgan Griffith’s Ninth District staff will be available in Henry and Patrick counties on March 26.

- In the Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin Room - Board of Supervisors Meeting Chambers, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville, from 10–11:30 a.m.
- In the Patrick County Administration Building, Conference Room, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart, from 12:30–2 p.m.

In the event of inclement weather (heavy snow, sleet, icy rain, etc.), traveling office hours may be rescheduled to avoid putting constituents at risk. If local schools are closed, then office hours will be closed as well.

Call the Christiansburg Office at (540) 381-5671 or the Abingdon Office at (276) 525-1405 with any questions or to schedule an appointment time in the event of an office hour closure.

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

PCHS Sports Schedule					
PCHS Sports Schedule					
The Patrick County High School Cougars Sports					
Schedule for the week of March 24-29:					
3/24	5pm	Baseball	at Bassett		
	5pm	Softball	at Bassett	3/28	4:30pm
	7pm	Girls Soccer	vs Bassett		4:30pm
	7pm	Boy Soccer	at Bassett		5pm
3/25	4:30pm	Girls Tennis	vs Bassett		5pm
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis	at Bassett	3/29	TBA
					Baseball vs Dan River
					Softball vs Dan River
					Girls Soccer vs Dan River
					Boys Soccer vs Dan River
					Girls Tennis at Martinsville
					Boys Tennis vs Martinsville
					Baseball vs Martinsville
					Softball at Chatham
					Track at North Stokes



Gracen Conner (left to right), Sadie Martin, Fisher Martin, Hunter Martin, Noah Hiatt, Greely Terry, Coach Kiran Penn.

Cougar Runners Receive State Honors

By Ashlee Mullis

Six Patrick County Track members received medals in the VHSL Region 2C State Track Meet. Noah Hiatt, Greely Terry, Fisher Martin, and Hunter Martin placed 2nd in the 4X800. Gracen Conner placed 3rd in the 300 meter dash. Sadie Martin placed 6th in the 1000 meter and 4th in the mile. Fisher Martin placed 5th in the 1000 meter.

Saddle Club season kicks off in April



Piper Knott, of Martinsville, rides Flicka around a barrel in competition last year at Patrick Henry Saddle Club.

By Donald Trausneck

The Junior Division rider is one of many talented Cowgirls and Cowboys who are looking forward to the new season which will begin April 5 at the arena located at 50 Clovehill Drive in Bassett. Additional fun show dates are scheduled for June 7, August 2, and September 27.

Winter Awards Banquet Recognizes Outstanding PCHS Students

By Ashlee Mullis

Patrick County High School held the Winter Sports Banquet on Monday, March 10. The following were recognized:



Girls Basketball: Head Coach Tony Mosley, Coach Essie Conner, Lady Cougar Award- Lilly Hazelwood, Best Defensive Player- Journey Moore, Most Improved Player- Kendra Worley, Most Valuable Player- Kimora Wimbush, Coach Grace Helms, Coach Lindsey Spencer.



Cheerleading: Coach Peyton Errichetti, Outstanding Leadership Award (Basketball)- Katie Vernon, Most Dedicated Cheerleader (Basketball)- Kya Pruitt, Most Dedicated Cheerleader (Football)- Breanna Hall, Outstanding Leadership Award (Football)- Kimora Wimbush, Coach Angela Rose.



Wrestling: Coach Scott Lawson, Most Improved Wrestler- Wheeler Helms, Head Coach Tim Lawson, Most Valuable- Logan Rakes, Coaches Award- Josh Jimrusti, Iron Man Award- Paul Pascale, Coaches Award- Caleb Lancaster, Coach Jaheim Johnson, Coach Roy Zeisloft.



Boys Basketball: Coach Willie Greene, Most Improved - Jayden Corns, Coaches Award - Vishal Soma, MVP- Noah Jessup, Best Defensive - Easton Harris, Head Coach Brian Chitwood.

Taskforce hosts annual summit

The SoVa Taskforce hosted its third annual Workforce Solutions Summit at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research on March 11. The event aimed to provide solutions to regional employers and address the challenges faced by local employers. With over 100 attendees representing various industries and sectors from around the region, the event served as a platform for meaningful discussions and brainstorming sessions. The Workforce Solutions Summit featured 18 exhibitors who showcased their innovative solutions and strategies for addressing workforce needs. Exhibitors included Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM), AmeriStaff, Danville Community College, Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce, Danville Public Schools, EBI, GENEDGE, Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce, Pittsylvania County Community Action Agency, Southside Virginia SHRM, Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, Southern Virgin-

ia Regional Alliance (SVRA), The Arc Southside, Tri-County Community Action Agency, Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), Virginia Career Works – South Central and Virginia Career Works – West Piedmont. The event offered two keynote speakers Elizabeth Veliz, Chief People Officer, Cayuga Health System and Christine Kennedy, Leadership & Life Purpose Coach. Veliz presented on “The Retention Revolution: The Blueprint for Keeping Top Talent.” Her session highlighted the foundations of retention, identifying leadership competencies that drive retention, and actionable strategies to strengthen retention efforts. Kennedy presented on “Assessing Today’s Leadership & Workforce: How WELL are we?” Through her presentation, she walked through key factors to assess for a thriving workplace and how to help shape organizational culture through presence. A panel discussion featuring organizational leaders further added to the valuable discussions at the summit. Angela Wimberly, Chief of Human

Resources, Danville Public Schools, Monica Karavanic, Director, The Arc Southside, Addie Lyle, Human Resources Manager, EBI, Amelia Cheek, Human Resources Generalist, IperionX, and Angel Brim, Re-Entry Case Manager, Pittsylvania County Community Action shared their experiences and best practices in addressing the workforce challenges specific to their industries. This interactive session allowed attendees to engage directly with panelists and hear related success stories in workforce development from across the region. The summit also included several updates from across the region. Dr. Julie Brown, Vice President of Advanced Learning, IALR, provided an update on the TPI Academy. Shirley Dodson, Regional Talent Solutions & Business Outreach Manager, VEDP, discussed the state incentives and opportunities that are available to employers within our region. Linda Green, executive director, SVRA, concluded the summit with an update on the regional wage and benefits survey that was launched at last year’s summit.

Crossing the Lines

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

Board to fill vacant seat after member resigns

Stephanie Brinegar, who represented the Horsepasture District on the Henry County School Board, resigned, effective immediately, citing increasing career obligations as the reason for her departure.

“Every decision I made and every vote I cast was driven by a genuine desire to do what was best for Henry County Public Schools,” Brinegar said in a release dated March 11. “Although I am stepping down from my role, I will continue to keep Henry County Public Schools and our Board of Education in my thoughts and prayers.”

Board Chairman Teddy Martin II expressed gratitude for Brinegar’s service and wished her well.

“Mrs. Brinegar has a work ethic like no other. We understand this is a difficult personal decision, and we support her in continuing to improve our community’s wellness through her career, which has also been a priority during her tenure



The March 6 Henry County School Board meeting marked the final session for Stephanie Brinegar, of the Horsepasture District. She is seated beside Ben Gravely (right), vice chairman, of the Iriswood District, and Champ Hardie (left) of the Ridgeway District.

with the board. We thank Mrs. Brinegar and wish her well,” Martin said.

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, the board will appoint an interim school board member to fill the vacancy. The interim member will serve from April to November 2025, participating in all school board functions until a special election is held for the seat.

Candidates for the Horsepasture District

interim seat will be interviewed by the school board following submission of a letter of interest and verification of registered voter status in the district.

A public hearing will be held on March 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the Henry County School Board Office, where candidates or other members of the public may present names for consideration.

City school officials discuss accreditation model, community gym



Members of the Martinsville School Board and staff recognized the accomplishments of the Swim Team, which competed at the state level. Sherman Dillard won the state title, Ben Puckett was awarded second place in the diving competition.

The Martinsville School Board reviewed a new state accreditation model at its March 10 meeting, a change that could impact how schools measure student performance and determine rankings for assistance.

Additionally, a long-discussed community gym project, first proposed more than 50 years ago, is now moving forward, with plans to seek architects and engineers for further development.

The proposed accreditation model focuses on individual student growth, tracking progress in academic courses over time. Schools would be ranked based on student growth and attendance, receiving ratings of either “excellent” (90 percent or above) or “needs attention” (70 percent or lower).

Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley Jr. expressed concerns over the program’s political nature and potential impact on local schools.

“I don’t know anything that’s not political these days. Some want to stop the implementation of this, and they thought this was an attempt to grade all schools in Martinsville as needing assistance,” Talley said.

He also questioned the necessity of a statewide overhaul, given Virginia’s high education rankings.

“Virginia is rated the highest state for business, and the second most important component of that is education. So, if Virginia needed an entirely new system, then why are we ranked so high?” he said.

Talley noted that The Virginia Association of Teachers has raised concerns, advocating for at least three years of recorded data before implementation.

“Some schools love it, some think it’s basically entrapment. It’ll be interesting to see what the results are,” he added.

Statewide law enforcement accreditation ceremony held in city



The New College Institute was the site of a recent statewide law enforcement accreditation ceremony. It marked the second time Martinsville hosted the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission.

Martinsville sheriff’s office earns reaccreditation from VLEPSC

The Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) held its monthly meeting at New College Institute on Thursday, March 5, where several sheriff’s offices awaited the verdict on their accreditation status.

Among those reviewed was the Martinsville Sheriff’s Office, which successfully earned reaccreditation. The agency has now been accredited more than half a dozen times and remains one of the oldest accredited departments in the state.

“I am very fortunate. I don’t know a member of my agency that is not sold on accreditation and will support anything they can for accreditation,” said Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper, who also serves as

vice chairman of the VLEPSC committee.

Accreditation is more than just a title—it ensures effective policing, enforces stringent policies, and helps build public confidence in law enforcement agencies. Departments that do not meet all standards are not eligible to apply for accreditation.

“This process is so important for maintaining proper community and law enforcement relations,” said Martinsville Police Chief Robert Fincher, who attended the meeting. “It allows the public to know that our officers are doing the most professional job they possibly can.”

Fincher and Draper both expressed pride in hosting the meeting in Martinsville. Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis also attended.

Proposed solar farm project faces community opposition

A community meeting was held at the Galilean House of Worship in Axton on March 11, where Ameresco representatives discussed their plan to construct a 5 MW solar facility on Jones Ridge Road.

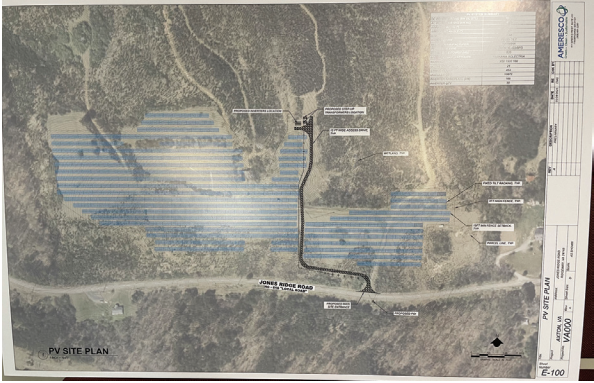
Many residents expressed concerns about the project’s impact on noise levels, aesthetics, and property values.

The proposed solar farm would be located in fields near an old airstrip, with thick foliage surrounding the site to provide screening. The solar panels would connect to a nearby power line, and the generated electricity would be sold through the Shared Solar Program.

Some of the residents that have property next to the location questioned the developers about acreage, and whether the Axton Solar Project negated plans to build due to the county’s limit for the number of acres available for solar farm development.

“It’s open, there’s not a ton of trees to clear, and it’s well-screened from the road,” said Project Manager Tom Holt, adding that Appalachian Power’s solar program was a key factor in Ameresco’s decision to pursue the project.

One resident expressed worry about possible contamination of local wells. “I wonder if things will



A map displaying the location of the proposed solar panels was presented during the meeting.

leak into our wells,” the resident said.

Senior Vice President Jonathan Mancini assured attendees that the facility would use vegetable oil, which reduces fire risks and is environmentally safer. He also stated that Ameresco would be liable for any contamination.

“We are a publicly traded company,” Mancini said.

Despite these assurances, residents remained opposed to the project.

“We are going to be against it,” one community member said.

Many expressed concerns about their health, privacy, and peace, and did not feel they would benefit from the project. The company proposed planting trees to block their potential neighbors’ view.

“It’s going to be an eyesore,” an adjacent landowner said.

The company commit-

ted to minimizing noise by placing inverters as far from residential areas as possible and hiring local electricians and vegetation experts for ongoing site maintenance.

“We try to pull from the local labor pool,” Holt said.

In an attempt to ease concerns, Ameresco proposed planting trees to block the view of the solar panels from neighboring properties.

Holt acknowledged that the project faces uncertain approval but emphasized that Ameresco is listening to public feedback.

“I have no idea what the chance of success is, but we are doing this to hear people’s feedback,” he said.

Even if opposition continues, the company plans to work with residents to address concerns through measures like landscaping plans and further community engagement.

Scammers impersonate law enforcement in jury duty hoax

A new phone scam is targeting local residents, with fraudsters impersonating law enforcement officers and claiming individuals have missed jury duty.

The scammers use caller ID spoofing, making it appear as though the call is coming from a legitimate sheriff’s office or police department. They even go so far as to use the real names of local officers found online, along with fake badge numbers, to convince

victims they are in legal trouble.

“This has actually become quite a common scam,” said Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

The calls typically begin with the scammer introducing themselves as an officer before claiming the recipient failed to appear for jury duty.

“If you have an actual summons for jury duty, you will be served by a deputy,” Davis emphasized.

Victims are then told they must re-

port to the station to avoid arrest and that there is an active warrant for them. To seem more legitimate, the scammer may provide a badge number and even encourage the victim to research their name online, which often matches real law enforcement officers.

“They were using a retired deputy’s name, saying, ‘You need to come in,’” said Martinsville Police Chief Robert Fincher. “They’ve done it with ours,

they’ve done it with the city’s sheriff’s office.”

The scammers pressure victims into resolving the matter immediately, often by asking for money over the phone.

“No one from the Henry County Sheriff’s Office will ever call your home and ask for payment of any type over the phone—whether it be from cash, credit card, or any type of payment app,” Davis said.



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



Hollywood Cinema
beside Walmart
Martinsville 276-656-3456

Lyle Raymond Hubbard

Joan was the wife of a career Air Force Veteran. She traveled the world with him and their four daughters. She always said she felt fortunate to have lived her life as the spouse of a military man and had been able to travel the world. After his retirement from the Air Force, they settled in Greensboro, NC where she worked as an Office

Mr. Knowles is sur-

clothes throughout their childhood. After moving to Critz, she became a passionate quilter and spent many pleasant years with fellow quilters at the Reynolds Homestead. She made many quilts for her daughters, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Her family was her life. She was always honest, fair, and trustworthy. She was

vived by his devoted wife of 64 years, Barbara Adkins Knowles of the home; a son, Kenneth Knowles (Darlene) of Meadows of Dan; a daughter, Judi Mayhew of Norfolk; one son-in-law, Matthew Blake of Collinsville; five grandchildren, David Knowles (Jessica), Andrew Bowman (Lindsey), Josh Bowman (Sam), Nick Bowman (fiancé, Tori)

lissa Morris, Michael Morris, and Mitchell Morris all of Roanoke; several grand puppies and grandchildren; two brothers, William Robert Morris of West Virginia and James Morris (Gay) of Roanoke; three sisters-in-law, Peggy Morris of Roanoke, Deborah Hubbard and Angie

Rites will be provided by the Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard. Moody Funeral Home in Stuart is in charge of the arrangements, and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moody-funeralservices.com.

A celebration of life service for Mr. Morris will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. at Moody Funeral Home in Stuart with Pastor Richard Dodson officiating. Burial will be private. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service on Saturday morning at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department, 6687 Fairystone Park Hwy., Stuart, VA 24171. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

She is survived by Vivian Hundley (Terry) of

She is survived by her nieces; Jean Thomas (Clyde), Debra Peters Smith (Johnny), and Rhonda Mullins (Ber-

Stuart, Va, Gracey Dise (Jack) of Virginia Beach, VA, Winfred Joyce and Brenda Monk both of Stuart, VA, thirteen grandchildren, Pamela Foley and CL Elgin of Martinsville, VA, Joshua and Brandi Dise of Virginia Beach, VA, Cynthia Dise and Jeff Barnaby of Virginia Beach, VA, Carlee Dise of Raleigh, NC, Shane and Alex Joyce of NC, Lindsay Joyce of NC, Rodney Milligan of OH, Allen Milligan of OH, Jessica Milligan of Bassett, VA, Ryan Monk of Roanoke, VA, Jennifer and Anthony Pacella of

Online condolences may be made at www.norrisfuneral.com.

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bassett.com.

She was of the Prim- bassett.com.
(Obituaries Continued on p.9)

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2025
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PATRICK PULPITS

The Theories Of Spontaneous Generation

By Van Yandell

Genesis 1: 3 “And God said, let there be light and there was light”

It appears that in our world and in this time, humans have been left with the distinct impression that they can match wits with God. To believe someone is smarter than their Creator is foolish at best and dangerous at worst.

Another of the greatest of mankind’s mistakes is the concept that theories are fact and they certainly are not; they are slightly beyond the classification of opinions, but not much. Having an opinion doesn’t make it true or correct.

An opinion is a personal feeling, attitude, value judgement or belief. It is a statement neither true or false.

Theories are defined as: “A well-substantiated explanation for an observed phenomenon. It can be based on evidence and tested through experimentation and observation.”

The emerging beliefs and theories of the beginning of the universe are at times laughable and definitely illogical and unreasonable.

Many of the “new beliefs” include the existence of something before the beginning. So, where did this “something” come from? The very idea of spontaneous generation is now considered a myth and debunked as fiction by religionists and scientists.

Those that subscribe to the “big bang theory” have yet to determine where that gigantic mass of matter came from, or what created the external pressure that caused it to “bang.” Once again the illogical existence of something from nothing (spontaneous generation) makes about as much sense as thinking that we’ve been visited by skinny little gray men from thousands of light years away.

I recently watched a video that promoted the belief (and was stated with great certainty) that in the beginning (before 13.8 billion years ago, if you can buy into that) there was a cloud of hydrogen and helium gasses that evolved into a mass that became the point of the explosion that created the universe.

In one-billionth of a second the universe became billions of light years across. Yet most scientists agree nothing can move faster than the speed of light. This is an obvious contradiction. Light speed at 186,282 miles per second cannot match that speed. If anything, creation (Genesis 1) is confirmed.

To explain the existence of anything, produced or created from nothing is incredible and without the concept of a supernatural, spiritual Creator is impossible. Yet, theories, speculation and opinions are rampant in the religious and secular world.

To be fair in our discussion of these unanswerable questions, we must address the first three words in Genesis and John (in the New Testament), “In the beginning.” An age-old question has been, “When was that?”

Since the Bible makes such a declarative and certain statement, we must entertain the thought/belief, there indeed was a beginning, but the question

remains, “The beginning of what?”

The Bible also conclusively states that God is eternal. Psalm 90:2: “Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God”

Similar verses throughout the Bible are numerous. The idea of an eternal God existed for many of the Bible writers.

Considering our eternal God, is the statement “In the beginning” a contradiction? Certainly not! But it is/was indicating the beginning of something. So what is it referring to?

I in no way, would encourage anyone NOT to have opinions. Just be sure to base them on credible information and not something that popped into your mind or the word of a non-authoritative source.

Opinions and the discussions henceforth have very positive results but they’re still with the individual mindset and are influenced by many factors.

In our human finite minds we normally think of eternity as being in the future. By the very definition of the word “eternal” it must mean past and future.

If God has always existed are we to think that He existed in this vast expanse of nothingness for all of (past tense) eternity? Then He had the thought, “Hey, I think I’ll create a universe.”

Perhaps, “In the beginning” is referring to the galaxy, the solar system, the visible night sky or more likely, the earth and the earth’s atmosphere. Nonetheless, we’ll never know for sure until we get to Heaven and ask God.

Since none of us were alive those billions of years ago and none of us have the mind of God, we’ll not know in this life. And does it really matter? We are curious beings and of course it matters because of our curiosity factor, but to our eternal soul, it will not.

We must always teach that eternal salvation is attained by a faith based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) in Christ Jesus crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (1 John 1: 9) and resurrected (Matthew 28: 6).

Eternity and the “beginning” will always create in us questions but we must accept the fact, there are some things we’ll never (in this life) know. Still, opinions do not make facts.

So, what is our best and most complete source of information? Most of the information we receive from human sources are fiction, fantasy, opinion or speculation. Extensive research and observation at times result in evidence many consider proof of fact.

Only God’s word is reliable and spontaneous generation is impossible from human science or religious points of view without a Creator.

Can we agree that Jesus is the Savior of the world and that by our faith based belief in Him, we can have eternal life? If one can’t agree with that, what if you are wrong?

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email: vmy2121@outlook.com.


BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Lot (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From what book does a woman call on the north and south wind to blow on her garden? Proverbs, Daniel, Hebrews, Song of Solomon
3. What was Herod’s last name who had John the Baptist beheaded? Pilate, Laban, Herod, Antipas
4. Who said in Deuteronomy 6, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”? Moses,

- Joshua, David, Jacob
5. From Exodus 16, what bird served as food for the Israelites in the wilderness? Dove, Quail, Duck, Robin
6. In Revelation 9, what sort of creatures had tails like snakes? Sheep, Oxen, Horses, Fish
- ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Song of Solomon, 3) Antipas, 4) Moses, 5) Quail, 6) Horses
- Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey’s subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy. (c) 2025 King Features Synd., Inc.

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Worship Services 11 am

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Super Crossword

CROSS WORDS

- ACROSS**
1 Swing by
6 Sop up
12 Fez or beret
15 General — chicken
19 Preface
20 "Hello" singer
21 Santa — winds
22 Eight, in Berlin
23 Alternative to potstickers
26 Trevis
27 Golf prop
28 Requiring lots of attention
29 L-P linkup
30 "— Up My Heart" (1997 *NSYNC song)
32 Call before the court
35 Touchy topic
37 Skit-filled NBC show, in brief
38 Texas-Louisiana border river
41 Three, in Paris
42 H.G. Wells' Doctor Moreau, e.g.
46 Penetrating
47 Get older
50 Give off
51 Shaggy's nickname for his dog
52 Pollen lover
53 Actress Perlman
54 "Life Is Good" rapper
55 Letter after pi
56 212 degrees Fahrenheit, for water
61 "Yup"
63 Big Apple sch.
66 Alpha Sig, e.g.
67 Speaks from a soapbox
68 Right after being baked
72 Fake: Prefix
75 Stalagmite site
76 Camera type, in brief
77 Acting award
81 Brand of hard cider
84 Google Play download
86 Tokyo sash
87 Prefix with byte or ton
88 Suffix with Euclid
89 An ex-Trump
92 Fix typos, say
93 Plus more: Abbr.
94 \$5 bills, in slang
96 Intense controversy
99 "That doesn't ring —"
101 Regressed
102 — -la-la
103 Group of warriors in "Kung Fu Panda"
106 Church part for the clergy
110 Chant
111 Boxing great
112 Flummoxed
115 Suffix with Motor
116 British prep school
117 Oxidizer in liquid rocket propellants
122 Swedish soprano Jenny
123 '50s prez
124 — Mae (HUD corp.)
125 Yo-yo part
126 Lucy's guy
127 Toon
128 Villains' looks
129 What nine key words in this puzzle are synonyms of
- DOWN**
1 Panorama
2 Entomb
3 Navigate
4 A Gershwin brother
5 Male tabby
6 Eve of old TV
7 — one's time
8 Missile in the Gulf War
9 "Heavens!"
10 Shred
11 — Stakes (horse race)
12 Kayak cousin
13 "Gemini Man" director Lee
14 Grazing land
15 "Proud Mary" star — P. Henson
16 Makes the Billboard Top 40, e.g.
17 Of a resistance unit
18 Artery insert
24 Like Brits
25 Pertaining to
31 Black, to Poe
33 Aide: Abbr.
34 U.S. "Ltd."
35 Female sib
36 Dutch artist Jan — -Cat
39 From — Z
40 Lettuce type
42 Option list
43 East Asian nanny
44 Platter
45 — Lodge (motel chain)
46 Actor Harvey
48 Heredity unit
49 Wolfs down
52 Malaise, with "the"
53 Horse colors
55 Little — (the Ocean State)
57 Proposal
58 Original NYC subway line
59 State exec.
60 Before surgery, in brief
62 "Star Trek" lieutenant
64 Agave plants
65 Salt Lake City native
69 Additionally
70 Fertilizable gametes
71 Chimp's kin
72 Book division
73 Vexed state
74 Dairy case containers
78 Musical finale
79 Somewhat
80 Act of liturgy
82 Film units
83 Uses a trowel
85 Noodles in peanut sauce
90 Battle (for)
91 Additionally
92 Israel's Abba
94 Vast stretch
95 Large tuna
96 Wild rants
97 Gorilla, e.g.
98 Historic time
100 Olympic swimmer
101 Actress Matt Taylor
103 Grazing land
104 De-knot
105 Renowned
106 Asteroid found in 1801
107 Chocolate drink
108 T-man Ness
109 Big dipper
112 Comic Meara
113 Rake prong
114 Mix, as paint
118 Luau guitar, for short
119 Martini liquor
120 Longtime
121 CBS series
121 30-day mo.

OBITUARIES

Erik Daniel Rakes

Mr. Erik Daniel Rakes, age 41, of Critz, Virginia passed away Monday, March 10, 2025, at his home. He was born in Patrick County on December 24, 1983, to John Moir Rakes and Teresa Lynn Rakes. He is preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Roy and Carrie Rakes; maternal grandmother, Linda Bond; and “like a grandmother”; Dot Gammons. Erik was a loving husband, father, son, brother, and friend. He was the best handyman and could fix anything; he loved life and worked hard to provide for his family, whom he loved so much. Erik loved anything outdoors from hunting, fishing, kayaking, disc golf, and four wheeling. He was the life of the party and loved his friends and family. He will be loved and missed forever by all who knew him.



Left to cherish the memory of Erik Rakes are his wife, Amber Rorrer Rakes of the home; one son, Collin Daniel Rakes of the home; his parents, John Moir Rakes and Teresa Lynn Rakes of Stuart, VA; one sister, Kayla Rakes (Payton Richardson) of Bassett, VA; mother-in-law, Teresa Martin (Danny) of Sandy Ridge, NC; father-in-law, Steve Rorrer (Kelly) of Stuart, VA; sister-in-law, Tiffany Whorley (Dustin) of Charity, VA; brother-in-law, Shawn Rorrer (Amy) of Indian Valley,

VA; four nieces, McKenzie Whorley, Rylee Whorley, Adalee Quesberry, Paislynn Richardson; five nephews, Titus Rorrer, Asher Rorrer, Jacob Quesberry, Jase Rakes, Isaiah Richardson; and his beloved dog and constant companion; Rona.

Funeral services will be held Friday, March 14, 2025, at Moody Funeral Services in Stuart at 3:00 pm with Pastor Wayne Moore officiating. The burial will immediately follow in High Point Baptist Church Cemetery. The family will receive friends two hours prior to the service at the funeral home on Friday afternoon. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Caring Hearts Free Clinic, 835 Woodland Drive, Suite 101, Stuart, Virginia 24171. Online condolences may be made at www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

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Home & office Cleaners Wanted - \$630/ Weekly Cleaning Position: Available Working Days: Mon-Fri Time Schedule: 11 AM - 2 PM Minimum Requirement Email: styleharry054@gmail.com

The County of Patrick is accepting applications from qualified applicants for a part-time Solid Waste Transfer Station Attendant.

Duties of the position will include, but are not limited to, customer

assistance, operation of scales, loading trailers, and facility maintenance. The preferred candidate must be capable of performing manual labor, possess good interpersonal skills, and be able to communicate effectively with the public. Basic math, clerical, and computer skills to prepare customer tickets and perform record keeping are required.

A high school diploma or GED is required. Applicants must be willing to submit to a background check and drug screen.

This is a part-time position with no benefits. Hourly wage is \$15. Hours will be scheduled as required between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with rotating Saturdays. Hours are limited to 29 or less per workweek.

The Patrick County employment application is available at https://www.co.patrick.va.us/Jobs.aspx. Applicants must submit a Patrick County employment application to be considered for the position. The position will remain open until filled.

The County of Patrick is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or age.

LAND FOR SALE

Small parcel of land for sale @ 586 Mount Calvary Church Rd, Stuart, VA 24171. If interested, please call (276) 694-2842 between 10AM and 4PM.

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PSS-300 Pride electric wheelchair (may need batteries). \$200 or best offer. Folding hitch cargo carrier with ramp. 500lb capacity. \$160 firm. Call 276-694-5858 for more information and leave message.

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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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RFP 2025-MNT-001

The Patrick County School Board is accepting competitive sealed proposals from licensed contractors to install Themec Decorative Flake Floor System at Blue Ridge Elementary School, 5135 Ararat Highway, Ararat, VA 24053. Proposal drawings and specifications are available as a PDF file from the Maintenance Office at 117 Via Avenue, Stuart, VA 24171 or e-mail Chad Haynes at chad.haynes@patrick.k12.va.us. There will be a pre-bid meeting at the site on Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. EST. Proposals are due by Friday, April 11, 2025: 10:00 a.m. EST at the above listed address.

LEGAL

DBE Certified Minority and Woman Owned Businesses

White's Construction Company, Inc. is soliciting bids from disadvantaged, minority and women owned business firms as a subcontractor, trucker or material supplier for the following VDOT project located in Patrick County and is to bid on March 26, 2025. VDOT Order No. M30 - Route 773 Project No.: 0773-070-198, N501 FHWA No.: STP-070-2(042) UPC#: C0000005462N01 Items available to be subcontracted on this project include but are not limited to Rumble Strip Cylindrical Asphalt, Concrete Class A3 Misc., Pilot Vehicle, Temporary Sign, Flexible Pavement Planning 0"-2", Temporary Seed, Regular Seed, Overseeding, Legume Seed, Hydraulic Erosion Control Product Type 3, Fertilizer Nitrogen-N, Fertilizer Potassium-K, Lime, Type A Pavement Line Marking 4". Interested firms should submit their bid no later than 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, or asap. Bids should be submitted to white-soffice@whites-construction.com or faxed to 434-822-8808. If you have any questions, please contact Shannon White at 434-822-7764. **White's Construction Co., Inc. maintains a Drug-Free Workplace.** WHITE'S CONSTRUCTION CO., INC. IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Meetings

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

Thursday, April 10
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the school board office.

Monday, April 14
The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will meet at 6 p.m. in the third-floor court room of the Patrick County Administration Building.

Wednesday, April 16
The Stuart Town Council will meet at 6 p.m. in the Town Office.

Events

Thursday, March 20
The Patrick County Republican Committee will meet at 6 p.m. in the P&HCC Motorsports Hall of Fame Auditorium.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club meets at 5 p.m. in the club's library in the old historic courthouse on Main Street in Hillsville.

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

Saturday, March 22
Waders & Waddlers Education Station will be at the Virginia Museum of Natural History from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Highlights include Be a Science Sleuth - activity for kids, Meet a Philpott Lake Park Ranger and learn “Why we don’t feed crackers to ‘quackers’ and more, and the first public view of waterfowl specimens from the museum vault. For more info: <https://www.vmnh.net/plan-your-visit>

The Patrick Springs Ruritan Club will hold a Poor Man’s Supper from 4-7 p.m. at the Patrick Springs Park building in Patrick Springs. The meal includes pinto beans, potatoes, corn bread, dessert, and a drink for \$9.

Fellowship and music, featuring Two Young, Two Old, New Hope Community Church, 1863 Clark House Farm Road, Stuart, 7 p.m. Refreshments to follow singing. All are invited.

Sunday, March 23
Debbie Bennett performs at Pleasant View Baptist Church, Patrick Springs, 4 p.m. A love offering will be taken. Ice cream social to follow.

Stuart Baptist Church will host a special eve-

ning of uplifting music, starting at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy a blend of bluegrass and southern gospel music performed by Whosoever, The Joyful Noise, and FourforOne. Cookies and coffee will be served during intermission.

Wednesday, April 2
The DMV Connect Mobile Unit will be at the Patrick Henry Community College Site, 212 Wood Brothers Dr., Stuart, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Closed for lunch 12:30 -1:30 p.m. This event is open to the public for Driver transactions, with no appointment needed.

The Patrick County Chamber of Commerce will hold a Lunch & Learn at 12 p.m. in Room 103 at the Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Stuart site. The workshop will focus on Succession Planning and it’s free. Registration is available at www.patrickchamber.com.

Saturday, April 5
Creasey’s Chapel will hold a BINGO! Games, Food, Prizes. Doors open at 4 p.m., bingo starts at 5 p.m. \$25 for 20 cards, 10 door prize tickets and 1 coverall.

Monday, April 7
The annual Patrick County Tourism Summit will be held at the Star Theatre. Registration is at 8: 30 a.m., and people should RSVP by March 31. Lunch will be provided.

Tuesday, May 6
The Patrick County Chamber of Commerce will hold a Lunch & Learn at 12 p.m. at the Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Stuart site. The workshop will focus on pre-venture planning for entrepreneurs and it’s free.

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.

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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.

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.

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.

Salem Church on Salem Road in Critz will hold a community meal on the first Sunday of every month at 12:10 p.m. Call (276) 222-1069 with questions.

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Josh Berry claims victory for a Wood Brothers team that is “clicking”

By Reid Spencer
NASCAR Wire Service

It's time to take the Wood Brothers seriously.

Josh Berry's victory in Sunday's Pennzoil 400 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway wasn't a bolt from the blue like Trevor Bayne's win in the 2011 Daytona 500.

It wasn't a parting shot like Harrison Burton's superspeedway victory in last summer's Daytona race.

And it wasn't the occasional bone thrown by the racing gods to NASCAR's most venerable organization during its 75th anniversary celebration.

Those who were paying attention could see Berry's victory coming. In his second start for the Wood Brothers on Feb. 23, Berry led 56 laps at Atlanta Motor Speedway—second only to Joey Logano's 83—before an overtime wreck on Lap 265 swept away his chance at a win.

Two weeks later at Phoenix Raceway, in the NASCAR Cup Series' first foray of the season onto a traditional oval, Berry finished fourth. That was no accident. NASCAR's loop data pegged him with an average running position of 9.10, sixth best among 37 starters.

In the race at Las Vegas, Berry's average running position was 7.88, behind only William Byron (7.51) and Kyle Larson (7.57). Berry achieved that number despite an unplanned trip down pit road to secure a loose wheel—a problem that was epidemic throughout the field on Sunday.

And when a spate of cautions in the final stage left Larson, Byron and Ross Chastain on the wrong side

of a pit stop cycle and took them out of the mix for the win, Berry was left to battle with Daniel Suarez and took full advantage of the opportunity.

The victory was the 101st for Wood Brothers Racing but only the fifth in the 21st century. For those who favor numerology, Las Vegas is an appropriate place for the No. 21 Ford to occupy Victory Lane. The number “21,” of course, represents a winning hand in Sin City's most prolific card game.

For those who favor nicknames, “Blackjack” Josh Berry might be worth considering, if it wouldn't infringe on the moniker of “Blackjack” Brian Brown, who drove the No. 21 winged sprint car in Saturday's High Limit Racing season opener a stone's throw away from the 1.5-mile paved speedway at LVMS.

Where the Wood Brothers are concerned, however, a far more significant number is 1981, the last year the organization won more than one race in a single season, courtesy of the late Neil Bonnett, who claimed three victories that year.

Given Berry's promising start with the team—after his struggles last year with moribund Stewart-Haas Racing—there's a sense that the pieces are in place to bring that 44-year streak to an end.

With Berry behind the wheel and Miles Stanley as his crew chief—both of whom won a Cup race for the first time on Sunday—the Wood Brothers are positioned to take full advantage of their close affiliation with Team Penske and their unbroken association with Ford Motor Company.

“We ran really well all year so far, early in the season,” said team CEO and co-owner Eddie Wood.

“Things felt right. They just feel right.

“I think Josh fits us. Miles fits us. Everything just fits. I used to make fun of people years ago when they would talk about chemistry. Football teams, baseball, all that. Then it kind of bled over into racing. This goes back a few years.

“When things click, they click. I've been doing this since I was a kid. I was there when (driver) David Pearson and Leonard Wood, my uncle, hooked up. That clicked instantly, like right off the bat.

“This feels like everything is clicking.”

Stanley couldn't agree more, and his confidence in his 34-year-old former NASCAR Weekly Series champion driver couldn't be higher.

“The potential's real high for the 21 team,” he said. “This group is really, really special. In the offseason, before we got started, there was a buzz in the shop with everyone we had put in place on this team, Josh included, and we all felt like we were going to have a really good season.

“And now I think that buzz is going to be heard outside of just our organization, and our little team. Josh is really awesome. He's only in his second year in the Cup Series, but he's a veteran racer, and he's a really big part of this team and a really big part of how we approach the race weekends and how he approaches every single run.”

With a victory in hand and Playoff berth all but certain, Berry can use the win at Las Vegas as a springboard to future successes.

If you're paying attention, you won't be surprised when he wins another race or two.

Young performers dazzle at Patrick County 4-H Share the Fun

The Patrick County 4-H Share the Fun Talent Show was held March 7 at Patrick County High School in Stuart.

Abigail Disharoon won the overall award and was the dance category winner in the junior division with her dance performance. Taylor Spangler won the vocal category award in the junior division with her vocal performance. Easton Hall won the variety category award in the junior division with his Tae Kwon Do performance. Etta Owens won the drama category award in the junior division with her drama performance.

In the junior division, Abigail Disharoon from Hardin Reynolds Memorial School received a blue ribbon for her dance performance to “Roxi” from the musical Chicago. She was chosen to move to the area competition to be held on Saturday, May 3 in Floyd. Abigail will be competing in the dance category at the Area Contest.

lor Spangler from Stuart Elementary School received a blue ribbon for her vocal performance to “Sunday Sermons” by Anne Wilson. She was chosen to move to the area competition to be held on Saturday, May 3 in Floyd. Taylor will be competing in the vocal category at the Area Contest.

In the junior division, Easton Hall from Meadows of Dan Elementary School received a blue ribbon for his Tae Kwon Do performance. He was chosen to move to the area competition to be held on Saturday, May 3 in Floyd. Easton will be competing in the variety category at the Area Contest.

In the junior division, Etta Owens from Hardin Reynolds Memorial School received a blue ribbon for her drama performance “Coat of Many Colors.” She was chosen to move to the area competition to be held on Saturday, May 3 in Floyd. Etta will be competing in the drama category at the Area Contest.

Also competing in the variety category, Banner Davis and Chet Perdue, from Meadows of Dan Elementary



School, were awarded a red ribbon for their comedy skit “Chicken- Foot.”

Competing in the dance category, Paige Ragsdale from Stuart Elementary School was awarded a blue ribbon for her dance performance to “You Say” by Lauren Daigle.

We appreciate our judges Phyllis Eastridge and Anna Lester for joining us at the talent contest. Mistress of Ceremonies included Presley Combs

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God Bless You

Laurel Hill: A Historic Site with More to Discover

By Tom Perry

The many trails in Laurel Hill are often overlooked when considering the environmental aspects of its preservation. From the early days, the site's natural beauty and the grand vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains enhanced the site's historical importance. The organization cut trails from existing logging roads down to the Ararat River and the ford over the Mitchell-Dellen-back-Hill lands, opening the property for hiking. Two Boy Scouts, Matthew and Michael Miller of King, North Carolina, cut a new trail along the eastern side of the property.

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erty down to the Ararat River and west alongside the stream until connecting with the existing trails and the river road, earning them an Eagle Scout badge. Today's visitor can see the mountain laurel from which the property gets its name, along with running cedar and varying degrees of wildlife, including deer and wild turkeys. Laurel Hill is open from dawn to dusk to hike except during the Civil War Encampment, the first weekend in October.

Laurel Hill is on the Virginia Bird and Wildlife Trail.

“Most of the sites on this loop are in and around Carroll County in the Blue Ridge Highlands. Loop sites span from the New River along the Blue Ridge Parkway to Major J.E.B. Stuart's Birthplace and end at two wildlife management areas near the City of Galax. The drive between each site is scenic and can provide extensive wildlife watching opportunities from the road (be careful, drivers!). White-tailed deer are abundant throughout this area, as are woodchuck and eastern chipmunk. Some of these sites, such as Major J.E.B. Stuart's Birthplace and the Shot Tower Historical State Park, also offer a rich historical experience. Other sites, such as Devil's Den Nature Preserve, relay their ancient histories through their fascinating geological characteristics.”

“Elevation: 1218 ft.

“I might have rambled the dear old hills of Patrick amid all the pleasures of a mountain home for a lifetime.” – J.E.B. Stuart, 1853

The rolling fields, scattered woodlots, and bubbling stream of this 75-acre property are where the Confederate Major General James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.) Stuart was born and spent his

(See Laurel p. 13)

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Kelsey Fain

REALTOR

Laurel

(cont. from page 12)

boyhood. Since 1990, the property has been controlled by the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Trust, Inc., which was formed to preserve and interpret the General's childhood home. The Trust has created a self-guided walking trail. This trail highlights the historical sites on the property, including the former house site, several cemeteries, and historical markers, and leading the visitor to a small waterfall and the Ararat River. This diversity of habitats provides

for a variety of birds. The open fields at the center of the property are home to eastern meadowlark, eastern kingbird, indigo bunting, and chipping sparrow, while the woods hold blue jay, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, and Carolina wren. Virginia Bird and Wildlife Trail <https://dwr.virginia.gov/vbwt/mountain-trail/MBR/> <https://dwr.virginia.gov/.../major-general-jeb-stuart.../> While Laurel Hill has

many hiking opportunities, the site is on several national and statewide trail systems. Laurel Hill is part of the Virginia Civil War Trails. Stuart's Birthplace is one of 1500 sites on the Civil War Trails system. <https://www.civilwar-trails.org/> Laurel Hill is on the Civil War Discovery Trail "The Civil War Trust's Civil War Discovery Trail is a heritage tourism program that links more than 600 U.S. Civil War

sites in more than 30 states. The program is one of the White House Millennium Council's sixteen flagship National Millennium Trails. Sites on the trail include battlefields, museums, historic sites, forts, and cemeteries." American Battlefield Trust Heritage Site

The Civil War Trust and the Association For the Preservation Of Civil War Sites merged to form the American Battlefield Trust. These organizations supported the efforts to preserve Laurel Hill, which is still part of the heritage sites.

The Civil War Trust's Civil War Discovery Trail is a heritage tourism program that links more than 600 U.S. Civil War sites in more than 30 states. The program is one of the White House Millennium Council's sixteen flagship National Millennium Trails. Sites on the trail include battlefields, museums, historic sites, forts, and cemeteries.

In May 2018, the Civil War Trust and the Revolutionary War Trust changed their operational structure to function as land preservation divisions of the American Battlefield Trust. The places of the formerly named trail are highlighted on the American



The many trails in Laurel Hill are often overlooked when considering the environmental aspects of its preservation.

Battlefield Trust's website as heritage sites. The following is a list of these sites as of March 2014.

<https://www.battlefields.org/.../laurel-hill-birthplace...>

Virginia Historical Highway Markers

In December 1932, a Virginia Historical Highway Marker was placed at Laurel Hill. Believed to have been written by Douglas Southall Freeman, Pulitzer Prize winning biographer of Robert E. Lee wrote the original marker that was replaced in 2000.

KG-2 Stuart's Birthplace <https://vcris.dhr.virginia.gov/Historic-Markers/>

Laurel Hill is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register

<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/070-0060/>

These trails and trail systems bring visitors to Laurel Hill every year. It is a place where you can

learn about many histories, from Native American history through Jeb Stuart and the War Between The States to the new exhibit about the Mount Airy Eastern Railroad, "The Dinky." It is an outdoor classroom where you can learn about the history of our country from before we were a nation up through the efforts to preserve this piece of Patrick County history any day from dawn to dusk.

Directions to 1091 Ararat Highway: From Stuart, Virginia, take Route 8 (Salem Hwy) south to 103 West (Dry Pond/Claudville Hwy). Turn right and proceed to 773 (Ararat Hwy), then turn right. Continue 10 miles. Laurel Hill will be on the right. Watch for signs on the right. Take Riverside Drive, Highway 104 north from Mount Airy to the Virginia/North Carolina state line. The Birthplace is about a mile into Virginia on the left.



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