



The Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved the fiscal year 2025-26 budget in a 3-2 vote.

Board adopts spending plan; increases Transient Occupancy Tax by 1%

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors adopted its Fiscal Year 2025–26 budget and approved a 1% increase to the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) at its Tuesday, May 27, meeting.

The board approved the \$76,020,616 budget in a 3–2 vote. Chairman Jonathan Wood, of the Peters Creek District; Steve Marshall, of the Blue Ridge District; and Doug Perry, of the Smith River District, voted in favor. Vice Chairman Andrew Overby, of the Dan River District, and Clayton Kendrick, of the Mayo River District, voted against.

The approximately \$126,676 budget deficit will be covered using the county’s reserve funds.

Before approving the budget, the board voted unanimously to reduce its contribution to the Patrick County Education Foundation (PCEF) for the Patrick Promise by \$15,000.

The board also approved increasing the TOT from 5% to 6% in a 3–2 vote. Perry, Overby, and Wood supported the motion, while Marshall and Kendrick opposed it.

When people visit the county, Perry said he knows they expect a certain level of Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

(See Spending Plan p. 14)

Construction advances on U.S. 58; new widening project slated

By Taylor Boyd

As the U.S. 58 Lover’s Leap expansion project nears completion, a new project to widen 4.5 miles of Route 58 in the Vesta area is preparing to begin.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Communications Manager Jason Bond said the U.S. 58 expansion project is 70 percent complete.

“At this point, all of what we would call the deep drainage has been completed. Those are the pipes that are beneath the road—sometimes deep, deep beneath the road—so all of the drainage pipes beneath the road have been put in,” he said.

Approximately 7 million cubic yards of the estimated 9 million cubic yards of excavation has been completed.

Paving is underway on the U.S. 58 expansion project. (Photos courtesy of Hubbard 1 Productions)

“The blasting that has been impacting traffic is expected to wrap up late summer. Drivers can expect throughout the remainder of the project from late summer on, there will be traffic switches, traffic shifts, as traffic will be put on new sections of the roadway as they continue to work,” he said.

Bond said the contractor’s current schedule shows the project won’t be completed until fall 2026.

“They’ve got time, and they’re trying to make up some time between now and then to get the project back (on track) this summer, so they’ve got another year plus. They’re still working toward trying to make up some time to keep it on track for summer, but right now they’re showing fall,”

(See U.S. 58 p. 2)



Garry Clifton celebrated 34 years of service in the Blue Ridge Regional Library system with a retirement party on Thursday, May 29.

Clifton retires after 34 years with Blue Ridge Library System

By Taylor Boyd

After 34 years of service in the Blue Ridge Regional Library system and 32 years at the Patrick County Library, Garry Clifton retired at the end of May.

Clifton served as the bookmobile driver and librarian for 20 years and as the Patrick County branch manager for 12 years.

Throughout his tenure, Clifton feels he achieved all his major goals, including the creation of the Storytime Castle for youngsters and the purchase of a new bookmobile.

“It’s the right time. It’s great to think about being able to do things while you can do it—get up and get down,” he said.

Noting that he and his wife both retired last month, Clifton said they are currently serving as caregivers to their elderly dog.

“When he passes, we have a little chihuahua that’s going like, ‘Okay, what’s going on? I need somebody.’ So, it’s going to be a transitional period, but once everything smooths over, I imagine we will do a few

(See Clifton p. 2)

Stuart Beach Music Festival returns June 12–14

By Taylor Boyd

The 43rd annual Stuart Beach Music Festival is set to be held Thursday, June 12, through Saturday, June 14, at Wayside Park in Stuart.

Stuart Rotary Club member Wayne Kirkpatrick said beach music bands are invited to perform during the three-day event.

On Thursday, The Castaways will take the stage. The Part Time Party Band and Special Occasion Band will perform on Friday.

The Holiday Band, The North Tower, Gary Lowder and Smokin’ Hot!, and Jim Quick and Coastline are scheduled to perform all day Saturday. DJ What!, a local personality, will entertain the crowd between sets.

“On Thursday, the music runs from 6 p.m. to about 9 or 10 (p.m.), depending on how long the band wants to play. Again, on Friday, it runs on the same hours. Then on Saturday, we have more bands there, and that runs from noon to 11 p.m. or so,” Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick said many attendees camp at Wayside Park.

(See Music p. 3)

Scott unopposed in school board bid

By Taylor Boyd

Walter Scott, incumbent, is seeking a third term as the Smith River District representative on the Patrick County School Board in the Nov. 4 election.

He is currently running unopposed.

Scott, 59, said he decided to seek reelection because he wants to do his part to ensure all of the division’s schools stay open.

“With the declining enrollment, the monies go down, and I want to do my part to ensure that we don’t wind up closing a school. That’s always been a concern in any rural area is closing a school,” he said.

To help with this effort, Scott said he wants to ensure the division’s money is spent conservatively.

So, “we don’t wind up closing a school due to reckless spending,” he added.

In his third term, Scott said he wants to address the issue at Har-

(See Scott p. 4)



Walter Scott is unopposed in his bid for the Patrick County School Board.

U.S. 58

(cont. from page 1)



he said.

According to a February release, the Commonwealth Transportation Board awarded a design-build contract to Triton Construction Inc. worth approximately \$165 million for the 4.5-mile widening project.

The project will begin near the U.S. 58 Business eastern intersection in Meadows of Dan and end about 0.5 miles east of Virginia 610, or Cloudbreak Road.

“In addition to widening Route 58 from two lanes to four lanes, the project includes replacing the existing bridge over the Dan River with two new bridges. The Vesta project adjoins the Lover’s Leap widening project that is currently under construction,” the release stated.

Bond said Triton Construction has started

taking soil samples and gathering additional data to work on the road design.

“They have not finished the design, and they won’t have a public meeting probably until sometime early next year to talk about their plan to execute the work and the people that would be impacted by it,” he said.

Residents may notice temporary access roads and brush cutting.

Clifton

(cont. from page 1)



Blue Ridge Regional Library Director Rick Ward (left) celebrated with Garry Clifton (right) on his retirement.

things,” he said.

Clifton also plans to resume doing artwork and enjoy literature from the other side—by writing it.

“I don’t think I’ll be Martin Clark level, but I do enjoy that,” he said.

During his retirement, Clifton said he will miss the sense of community the library provides the most.

“It’s seeing everybody on a regular schedule and catching up with people. That’s kind of how it was on the bookmobile. The bookmobile was like a little community center, and the library’s kind of like that too. Of course, I’ll still be coming in for the books, and I’ll probably have to restrain myself from answering questions when I come walking through,” he said.

Clifton said he is pleased to leave the library in the hands of the current staff, as he believes staff members are what make a library special.

“I mean, you can have a small library and excellent staff, and it’s better than a giant library with bad staff, right? So, we’ve got great staff to carry on, and they have the right attitude—not just public service but community. Any one of



A cake and well wishes from friends and acquaintances marked Clifton’s last day as director of the Patrick County Branch Library.

these people would do anything for a patron, and I couldn’t be happier with that,” he said.

He added the library is a little jewel of Patrick County.

“We see people when they first come into the county. They buy their house, they find out where this is, where that is, and then they find out where the library is. So, they come in and they go, ‘Wow, what a library for a little town,’ and they are impressed,” he said.

In a May Facebook post, Clifton said he has always considered himself the custodian of the library, ensuring it continues to be what the community needs.

“The library is a living, breathing thing. It’s really quite magical. The library grows and transforms into what the community needs. To be in charge of something that provides services to everyone from the newborn to the senior citizen is almost overwhelming at times. If we’re doing it correctly, the library has something to offer everyone,” he said in the post.

Since Clifton is set to retire at the end of



Rebecca Adcock, chairman of the Patrick County Library Board, presented Garry Clifton with a plaque recognizing his 32 years as branch manager of the Patrick County library.

June, Blue Ridge Regional Library Director Rick Ward said he guesses Clifton’s retirement “is okay.”

“We’re the same age, and we’ve both been here a long time. He’s been great. I mean, he blew my doors off when he took over because he took over from me. But he came in and did a lot of things that I hadn’t really thought of doing, so I give him all the credit. I just have to pat myself on the back for making a good choice,” he said.

While he believes the library system is losing a good librarian with Clifton’s retirement, Ward said he believes Somer Luna-Ojodeagua will do well in her new role as branch manager.

DMV warns customers of text scam

Did you get a text about an overdue traffic ticket charge? It’s likely a scam. The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles is alerting customers about a new text scam where fraudsters pose as Virginia DMV and falsely claim you owe money for unpaid fines.

In the text message, the scammers urgently tell you to pay a fine to avoid having your license and registration suspended and include a link in the message. Clicking that link could result in your personal information being stolen, making you a victim of this scam.

“The DMV will never send you text messages demanding payment for fines or fees,” said DMV Commissioner Gerald Lackey. “We urge our customers to be vigilant and avoid sending your

personal information via text.”

Here are some tips from the Federal Trade Commission on how to avoid falling for a text scam like this:

Don’t click on any links in, or respond to, unexpected texts. Scammers want you to react quickly, but it’s best to stop and check it out.

Check to see if the text is legit. Reach out to the agency using a phone number or website you know is real — not the info from the text.

Report and delete unwanted text messages. Use your phone’s “report junk” option to report unwanted texts to your messaging app or forward them to 7726 (SPAM). Once you’ve checked it out and reported it, delete the text.

You can also report

Pets of the Week



There are so many adorable kittens and dogs at the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter urgently in need of homes.

These two sweet doggy sisters would love to stay together, but can also go separately. Such cute siblings.

Lots and lots of kittens are pouring into the shelter. Kitties are best in pairs. They all deserve a permanent loving home.

Call the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter at (276) 694-6259, visit the shelter’s Facebook page, to find information about these and other available pets in need of a forever home. Adoption fees are \$10 and include free spay/neuter and rabies vaccinations.

The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League provides pet food assistance and information about low-cost spay/neuter services; we are always in need of pet food donations. Contact blueridgeawl@gmail.com for details.

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MARTIN L. FEB. 13, 1927 JAN. 4, 2006

APR. 14, 1949

RUTH D. JAN. 8, 1929 AUG. 22, 2010

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Music

(cont. from page 1)

“We have a lot of people come in and stay for multiple days to enjoy the festival. There are groups of campers that meet there every year like a family reunion, and they just have a really good time for the three days of the festival,” he said.

Kirkpatrick said the event typically draws 2,700 to 2,900 people annually.

“We’re trying to get past 3,000 people” this year, he said.

Advance tickets are available through June 6. They can be purchased at Patrick County Tourism and select retail locations, including the Circle K stores in Patrick County, Martinsville, Ridgeway, Floyd, and Hillsville, as

Circle K #101 (Floyd)
407 East Main Street

Circle K #105 (Stuart)
104 East Blue Ridge Street

Circle K #107 (Ridgeway)
6690 Greensboro Rd

Circle K #108 (Hillsville)
26 Airport Rd.

Circle K #206 (Critz)
25652 Jeb Stuart Hwy

Circle K #213 (Martinsville)
937 E. Church St.

E-Z Stop #204 (Hillsville)
105 W. Stuart Dr.

E-Z Stop #109 (Wytheville)
1286 East Lee Hwy.

Olde Mill Music
236 N. Main St.

Patrick County Tourism
126 N Main St

Preppy Pirate Outfitters
647 Washington St
Eden, NC

Village Spa (Collinsville)
60 Belmont St.

Advance tickets to the Stuart Beach Music Festival can be purchased at various retail locations until June 6.

Broadband updates presented at board meeting



Director of State Government Affairs Joe Prater said the majority of Charter’s projects are nearly complete.

By Taylor Boyd

Representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Office of Broadband, Appalachian Power (AEP), RiverStreet Networks, and Charter Communications provided a broadband update at an April 14 Patrick County Board of Supervisors meeting.

In 2019, DHCD Office of Broadband Director Dr. Tamarah Holmes said the department funded a broadband engineering study and design for the county.

“We really see this as a precursor to the county really getting into applying for broadband funding from the DHCD,” she said.

In 2020, the county applied for and received a grant of almost \$800,000 to expand fixed wireless through the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) program. Although the grant agreement was supposed to last one year, the project was canceled.

“The project was canceled because the year in which you were all going to get started in actually have fixed wireless within the county, we got a huge plus up in funding for the program,” she said.

Instead, RiverStreet Networks, the wireless partner, and the county leadership at the time decided to pursue the more reliable wireline connection.

“At that point it was agreed upon by the county and the county administrator at the time as well as RiverStreet to look at doing a fiber build. So, that’s when you all transition from what would have been a full county-wide wireless project to looking at a county fiber project,” Holmes said.

In 2022, Patrick County received a \$2.9 million VATI grant with matching funds for a Charter Communications project. It also received funding for a \$100 million regional project that includes several neighboring counties.

“That project was awarded with RiverStreet. That project started in September 2022 getting under contract with us, and the project is slated to be done in 2026,” she said.

Holmes said the county also applied for another grant with the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) to focus on regional broadband coverage. RiverStreet is undertaking that project.

“In 2023 that project actually allows you all to get as close as possible to universal coverage in the county. That grant just got underway in February of last year and is slated to end around the same time as your 2022 grant,” she said.

The final grant mentioned is the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant, a \$700,000 award from ARC.

“It’s a total grant of \$1.5 million including match,” Holmes said.

Holmes then provided summaries of the individual broadband projects:

Appalachian Power

With the VA3 project, which encompasses Patrick, Henry, and



RiverStreet Chief Operating Officer (COO) Michael Brown said most of its construction will begin in 2026.

Franklin counties, AEP External Affairs Manager Rob Mann said there are still about 2.17 miles remaining, with 118.59 fiber miles completed.

In Patrick County, the Stella project is nearly complete, with 26.99 miles finished out of 30.10 total miles.

The 24-mile Stuart-Floyd project “is just kicking off this week, so you’ll see some activity in the area. Stuart-Willis Gap Patrick have construction prints with the contractor, and there are some challenges getting the permit applications approved, so that one in particular has been resubmitted,” he said.

Construction prints for the 13.90-mile Dobyns-Patrick project are in progress, and AEP will need to apply for permits.

“On our distribution make-ready work, if you pay attention to the Stuart Floyd the permit has been received on that one for make-ready work,” Mann said.

The Point of Presence (POP) site will be located on AEP-owned property in Woolwine.

“Foundation has been poured, and we’re expecting delivery of that shelter at the end of this month,” he said.

In Patrick County, Mann said 386 poles will be replaced and 338 will be reconfigured.

“It’s quite a bit of work once the review process goes in and the engineering design to make sure the infrastructure’s able to handle the new fiber, there’s a lot of work that goes into that,” he said.

Mann said the Stella area is about 90 percent complete, while the other areas are at zero percent completion.

“We got work to do in Patrick County, so no other miles completed. As far as the total miles in Patrick County that needs to be completed to be built out, it’s 143.2, and out of that currency 30 miles have been completed, so there’s still 113 miles that needs to be constructed for fiber,” he said.

Fiber construction in the Stuart-Willis Gap area is slated to start in the spring, while construction for the Dobyns, Pole Bridge, and Elamsville areas is expected to begin in the summer.

The permitting process with the Blue Ridge Parkway remains a significant challenge.

“We do have a Parkway permit that’s been submitted, but still has a review-type status for that,” Mann said.

AEP is working with RiverStreet on a weekly basis to coordinate splicing designs to ensure both companies can connect their networks effectively.

“It’s a lot of work to come, but we’ve got a lot of folks working on this project currently and it’s got a lot of attention within APCo’s leadership,” he said.

RiverStreet Networks

RiverStreet Chief Operating Officer (COO) Michael Brown said work-



Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Office of Broadband Director Dr. Tamarah Holmes gave an overall broadband update at the Monday, April 14 Patrick County Board of Supervisors meeting.

ing alongside AEP to connect fiber lines has required some engineering changes, such as adjustments to the type or size of fiber used.

“The result of that is we kind of had to redesign the network a little bit and put in a lot more electronic stations throughout the network than we normally do. In Patrick County, we’d normally have four or five remote stations. In this particular case we’re up to 12 that we’re needing to be able to provide coverage throughout the county,” he said.

Brown said the Patrick County project is part of a larger effort spanning 15 counties in southern Virginia.

“What that means is we allow the capability of being able to connect to everything, businesses and residents, without always having to go out to the internet. If you keep the traffic within your network, it produces latency, and gives a lot better connection times, we even have a lot more resiliency and everything else within the network to be able to do that,” he said.

RiverStreet is under contract to serve about 8,800 locations in Patrick County. It has also submitted Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program applications that could expand its service area if approved.

Brown acknowledged the difficulty of bringing broadband into Patrick County due to geographic and logistical challenges.

“As we’ve been working with our AEP partners trying to get from Gretna all the way over to the farther edge like Woolwine and some of these locations it’s a little bit challenging because it’s quite a distance to go. Working with AEP, we’ve also looked at trying to come up from Stokes County in North Carolina, and that is a faster pathway to success so that’s what we’ve chosen to do,” he said.

The first two routes RiverStreet plans to establish are Shingle Shop and Nettle Ridge.

“Our fiber, one of the routes is already through the state line coming from North Carolina and the other is under construction at this time. We also already have the engineering and permitting underway to be able to extend those from the state line up into these two remote locations,” he said.

This work constitutes phase one of a projected four-phase project.

Phase two will use AEP’s fiber to extend service from Stuart to Woolwine and Bassett, and over to Elamsville, involving 178 miles of fiber and serving 1,245 locations in Woolwine and 964 in Elamsville.

Construction for phase two is expected to start in the first quarter of 2026.

well as Olde Mill Music, Village Spa in Collinsville, and online at Eventbrite.

Regular tickets will still be available online and at the gate after June 6.

A new feature for campers this year is a shuttle bus service on Friday that will give visitors a chance to explore the county.

The shuttle will make stops in Downtown/Uptown Stuart, Lovers Leap, and Meadows of Dan.

There will be 10 round-trip shuttle runs, with scheduled stops throughout the day. Buses will not return for latecomers.

For more information, visit Facebook.com/StuartBeachMusicFestival or www.beachfestival.com.



Appalachian Power (AEP) External Affairs Manager Rob Mann said work in the Stella area is almost complete.

Brown emphasized that the phases will not be completed strictly sequentially.

“It doesn’t mean that it’s a waterfall,” he said. “Actually a lot of these will be in parallel. As much as we possibly can we’re staging them to kind of as AEP completes their fiber we’re trying to make sure that we’re coming right behind them and being able to build our own piece of it.”

Phase three will extend fiber down Pole Bridge Road and to the Oliver Lane Road service area, serving 52 and 902 locations respectively, with construction expected to begin in the second quarter of 2026.

Phase four will extend service from Stuart to Willis Gap, Patrick Springs, Dry Pond, and New Valley. Work in this phase will be delayed slightly due to AEP’s construction schedule.

RiverStreet is delaying plans to extend from New Valley to Vesta due to permitting issues with the Blue Ridge Parkway.

“That’s one where we are trying to avoid it as much as possible, being able to go to any parallel or cross it. There will be some permits that are required there because I can’t stay off of the parkway completely to get up through there,” Brown said.

Construction in the Dry Pond area and toward Vesta is projected to begin in the third quarter of 2026.

Charter Communications

Director of State Government Affairs Joe Prater said most of Charter’s projects are located in the southwestern part of Patrick County.

“There’s about 690 locations with VATI, and we estimated about 873 with RDOF. So, between the two commitments it’s about a little over 1,500 locations,” he said.

Prater said approximately 98 percent of the VATI builds are complete.

“It’s about 13-14 homes along Gunny Sack Trail in Hillsville that unfortunately are subject to a Blue Ridge (Parkway) crossing as well. We tried to go every route possible to see if we could do it without having to cross over the Parkway...and unfortunately there’s no going around it, so we will have to wait until we get that permit back for that area,” he said.

Approximately 75 percent of the RDOF builds are complete. Like the VATI projects, Charter built everything it could except in areas requiring a Parkway permit.

“We anticipate that if we could get that back it will just be a matter of months. We first submitted that permit back in March 2023, they had us make some corrections, we resubmitted it in January 2024, and we still unfortunately have not got that one back yet,” Prater said.

Twenty-Seventh Amendment

The U.S. Constitution is a revolutionary document which has inspired other nations in drafting their own Constitutions. Unbeknownst to some, the current Constitution wasn't the first governing document of the United States after gaining independence.

The Articles of Confederation served as the country's first Constitution. Following ratification of the Articles in 1781, our young republic struggled. Under the system, there was no strong president nor three branches of government.

Congress, under the Articles, allowed each State one vote. 9 of 13 votes were needed in order to pass measures. Each State could send 2-7 delegates to serve but the various States each had only one vote.

In 1787, a convention assembled to address changes to the Articles. However, the convention created a new document, ceding power to a central government.

Subsequently, Amendments to the new Constitution were made in order to convince States to ratify it.

The First Amendment protects freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion.

The Second Amendment affirms the right to bear arms.

The remaining first ten Amendments include prohibitions on warrantless searches, restrictions on cruel and unusual punishments and limitations on the federal government.

While the first ten Amendments served as building blocks, Congress and the States continued to strengthen the Constitution with additional Amendments.

The Twelfth Amendment clarified the Electoral College process.

After the Civil War, the States adopted the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. These gave freedom to slaves and paved the way for the civil rights movement.

Other Amendments include popular election of U.S. Senators



Morgan Griffith

Representative

(Amendment 17), prohibition of alcohol (Amendment 18), the subsequent repeal of the alcohol prohibition (Amendment 21) and the institution of a two-term limit on the U.S. Presidency (Amendment 22).

In total, there are 27 Amendments in the Constitution.

Currently there is a legal case pertaining to the Twenty-Seventh Amendment.

The Amendment states: "No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened."

Simply put, pay adjustments for Members of Congress couldn't take effect until after the next election.

Interestingly, this Amendment dates back to 1789 when James Madison proposed it with the Bill of Rights Amendments.

Back then, there was strong debate over Congressional compensation.

Benjamin Franklin argued that public servants shouldn't get paid at all.

Others countered that barring salaries for Members of Congress would be disastrous for government, reserving elected office for only the wealthy.

Congress passed the Amendment in 1789, but the States failed to ratify it right away. Unlike other Amendments, the Twenty-Seventh Amendment didn't have a restriction on the time it had to be adopted by the States.

For nearly two centuries, the Amendment sat unratified. Meanwhile, Congress passed different laws adjusting the salaries of Members.

In 1982, a University

of Texas student wrote a paper on the topic, arguing that the Amendment still had potential to be ratified.

Gregory Watson was shocked to see his government professor grade his paper a C.

The grade motivated Watson to launch a nationwide lobbying campaign. He persuaded state legislatures to consider the Amendment's ratification.

At last in 1992, the threshold for ratification was met! The Twenty-Seventh Amendment is the newest Amendment.

Despite ratification, some have argued Congress has failed to adhere to the Amendment.

In the Ethics Reform Act of 1989, Congress passed legislation establishing formulas for automatic adjustments to Congressional salaries based on the cost-of-living in lieu of Members receiving payment for speeches and continuous fights over proper Congressional salaries.

However, since 2009, the Ethics Reform Act, with the adjustment formulas for Congressional pay, has routinely been suspended.

That is why there is current legal action pending by some current and former Members of Congress arguing there has been a violation of the Twenty-Seventh Amendment.

The Ethics Reform Act hasn't been repealed and suspensions have been effectuated without an intervening election.

I anticipate a court decision will be issued sometime this summer.

Interestingly, the Ethics Reform Act also affected federal judges' pay. An earlier suit by the judges arguing their pay was improperly withheld was successful.

On Congressional pay, the old debate rages on. It is the same old argument.

Should Congressmen receive a wage that encourages the best to run for office, and avoid temptations for corruption? Or should it be a job that is done with service to the country as the motivation?

This summer, due to the Twenty-Seventh Amendment of the Constitution, the Courts will weigh in on this issue. Stay tuned – it should be interesting.

Call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671 with any concerns. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at www.morgangriffith.house.gov.

P.S. Gregory Watson's grade was changed to an A.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Letters to the Editor

Hospital update appreciated

The Stuart Ruritan Club and the Patrick County Alzheimer's Group, LLC would like to express our gratitude to those in attendance at the question & answer session on the Stuart Community Hospital (SCH). A special thank you to SCH Site Manager, Larry Henson, who took the time to thoroughly explain this project. This meeting was ex-

tremely informative and while all questions couldn't be answered definitively, we hope to sponsor another community meeting when the opening date can be released.

Pamela Smith, Secretary
Stuart Ruritan Club
Sally Smith, President
Patrick County Alzheimer's Group, LLC

Blood drive set

This month's blood drive is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., at the John D. Hooker Building.

Donors are reminded that RapidPass allows you to start the blood donation process from the comfort of your home or office. The donor can answer health history questions before arriving at the blood drive location. This can save as much as 15-20 minutes in the donation process! RapidPass must be completed the day of the drive and can be found at <http://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass>. The donor can bring a hard copy or copy it to your cell phone.

The Red Cross encourages all donors to get a good night's sleep, to eat a good breakfast or lunch, drink plenty of water, and bring a picture ID with them to the drive.

Donors can make an appointment up to the time of donation through

the blood donor app, by calling 1-800-REDCROSS (733-2767) or online by going to www.redcrossblood.org and searching 24171.

Please donate to become a member of the unique "club" of only 3% of the nation's population who donate blood. Your blood is needed to save lives.

When donors come to give in June, they'll get a \$15 Amazon.com Gift Card by email PLUS automatic entry for a chance to win one of two \$7,000 gift cards.

The volunteers look forward to serving you and making your donation a pleasant experience.

It is with a heavy heart that the Red Cross Blood Drive has lost a dedicated volunteer. Patty Brunner passed away last month. She made the best various fruit breads! We will miss her dearly.

Gene Stirewalt,
Stuart

Scott

(cont. from page 1)

din Reynolds Memorial School (HRMS), where students cross Dogwood Road to access the gymnasium.

"That is a big concern of mine. I really wanted to have it done this year, but it may not happen. I really would love to see that road closed, that little road there between the gym and the school, that's always been a real safety concern to me, and I would love to see that closed," he said.

A few weeks ago in Eden, N.C., Scott noted, a truck plowed through a construction zone. He believes a similar situation could easily happen at HRMS.

"I know the speed limit's 15 miles per hour (mph) there, but if somebody comes through there hellbent, the speed limit don't mean much. If kids are crossing the road, or even adults are crossing the road, and kind of have their guard down, next thing you know they're plowed over. So, that's a real safety concern to me," he said.

Scott also wants to expand Patrick County High School's (PCHS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) department.

"That's just where I think we need to be putting our resources into. I'm really for expanding the CTE department," he said.

Any expansion, he said, would follow the recommendations of CTE teachers.

"The ones who know what the needs are more so than someone like I do. But of course, your plumbing, your electrical, and those things. Which we are working on that, but I would like to see it expanded on the CTE department to get our students work-ready when they leave the high school, or well on their way," Scott said.

Having served on the board for nearly eight years, Scott cited the establishment of the welding program and the pole yard program at PCHS through Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC)

as some of his biggest achievements.

While he sometimes disagrees with how the 1% sales and use tax is spent, Scott said he played a major role in getting it passed.

"That's been a lifeline in getting some of this stuff done that's been neglected over the years without having to go to the board of supervisors and beg for money," he said.

Scott noted that the sales and use tax can be saved and carried over from year to year, unlike the division's regular funds that must be spent by the end of the fiscal year.

"This money can roll over year after year after year, and I personally believe we should stockpile as much of that money as possible to be prepared one day because most of these schools were built in the '30s. We have an opportunity to save a few million dollars, and I know that won't build a school, but it will be a big help," he said.

Scott said the relationship between the school board and the board of supervisors has improved significantly since he first joined nearly eight years ago.

"To me it's came a long way. It could always be better, but I think we have a pretty good relationship with the board of supervisors right now," he said, adding that he believes the school board does its part to avoid constantly requesting additional funding.

Scott said his goal is for the division to continue operating on the required local effort and required local match without needing extra money.

"Doing our part to protect the taxpayers, and at the same token ensuring that all our schools are accredited," he said.

Scott worked at Wood's Cold Storage for about 30 years and in the county's maintenance department for six years. He is currently retired and working on his own projects.

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Crossing the Lines

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

Board approves volunteer departments bid to bill for services

The Henry County Board of Supervisors approved a proposal allowing volunteer fire departments to bill for services during its meeting on Tuesday, May 27.

County Administrator Dale Wagoner said the county's code authorizes the Department of Public Safety to charge for services and establish rules and regulations for administering those charges.

"The fire departments have agreed to adopt a compassionate billing policy, meaning they will invoice applicable insurance but will not pursue direct payments with individuals for any remaining balance," he said.

Wagoner said the fees are based on national averages, with adjustments for local economic conditions.

Board Chairman Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, asked how financial matters will be handled.

Public Safety Director Matt Tatum, speaking on behalf of the volunteer departments, said all fire incidents in the county are currently logged into an online database system.

"At last month's meet-



Public Safety Director Matt Tatum spoke about how volunteer fire departments billing for services would work.

ing, you all approved a third-party vendor to handle the billing process, which would give them access to that on-line database to extract data and provide billing services. All the funds collected will go directly to the individual fire department accounts, which I would hope would be audited with their normal annual audit," he said.

Tatum noted the process mirrors the one used by volunteer rescue squads for the past 15 years.

Adams asked whether the county's paid public safety staff would also

be allowed to bill for services.

Tatum responded yes and no. He said only the primary responding agency is authorized to submit a bill, and noted that more than 95 percent of fire calls are answered by volunteer fire departments.

"In the event that there was an incident the volunteers did not respond to, and public safety staff handled it without volunteer assistance, then we would have the ability to bill for that service, just like we would for EMS (Emergency Medical Services)," he said.

City leaders hear calls for collaboration at packed forum

With the regularly scheduled city council meeting canceled, Martinsville City Council Members Julian Mei and Aaron Rawls organized a public forum on May 27 in the council chambers to give residents a platform to voice their concerns. The room was filled with community members eager to speak on topics ranging from education and economic development to public safety, government transparency and moving the city forward.

"It's the people's chamber," Mei said in his opening remarks, explaining the choice of venue. Rawls noted they were unable to secure an alternate location on short notice due to the holiday weekend.

Barbara Seymour served as the facilitator and outlined the ground rules, reminding attendees that the forum was intended to be civil and inclusive. "There have been a lot of comments about expectations, right or wrong, of tonight's community forum," said Seymour, adding that thousands would watch the meeting. "Let's deliver to them a thoughtful, respectful discourse that's focused on the future of Martinsville and finding solutions to be able to move forward towards that future," she said.

Planning, Development, and Industry

Joey Martin, chairman of the Planning Commission, said that he



Joey Martin

anticipates by the end of the week, four commission members would be Certified Virginia City Planners. "In recent months, the commission has tried to weigh in on key issues like the Dumpster and Refuse Ordinance coming up for a vote in the next council meeting. Community concerns over things like traffic pattern changes in our Uptown Historic District. Unfortunately, many of those changes were made without planning commission involvement and we believe that needs to change."

Martinsville seniors celebrate resilience, remember classmates at graduation



Martinsville High School Class of 2025 graduates.

The Martinsville High School Class of 2025 graduated on Saturday, May 24. The ceremony featured remarks from Principal Ajamu Dixon and Superintendent Dr. Zeb Talley Jr., before two graduates addressed their peers.

"I'm blessed by being able to see you and talk to you. And I want to leave you with something because I'm always trying to encourage you and trying to make sure that you have what you need," Dixon said.

"Jeremiah 29:11 says, 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you. You are not to be harmed, nor will you face harm. The plans are for you to have hope and have a future.' Martinsville, I want to tell you the future is bright."

Dixon warned that students are constantly being sold something, and

that smart technology has taken over the world. He encouraged them to seek wisdom and recognize their own intelligence.

"Don't let yourself be seduced by spectacle. Yes, I want you to be open to learning new things and new ways of doing things, but never mistake flash for substance.

"Build something that lasts, not something that trends. I want you to understand that YouTube has all kinds of hacks on it, and you can find shortcuts to this and shortcuts to that. The best shortcut is showing up every day with integrity, humility, and persistence. Young people, there are no shortcuts. Success comes by working hard. Anyone who tells you otherwise, they're trying to sell you something."

Magna Vista grads celebrate milestone, look to the future



Chandler Molly (at podium) discussed number 25.

Magna Vista High School celebrated its 2025 graduates on May 24 in a morning ceremony. Several speakers reflected on the class's accomplishments, including the struggles brought on by COVID-19. Student speakers focused on the future and emphasized the importance of community.

Chandler Molly addressed her classmates as the opening speaker.

"Wow, 2025, a number that stands out. Whether it's on a speed limit

sign that we may or may not obey, the number of alarms we set only to still be late for school, or the amount of times we refreshed Canvas, hoping that our teacher finally granted that assignment—a number that we know all too well as we cannot wait to hear that bell ring for dismissal at 3:25. But for us, 25 is not just a number. It's the year of our graduation, a milestone marking it in the four years of challenges," said graduate Chandler Molly.

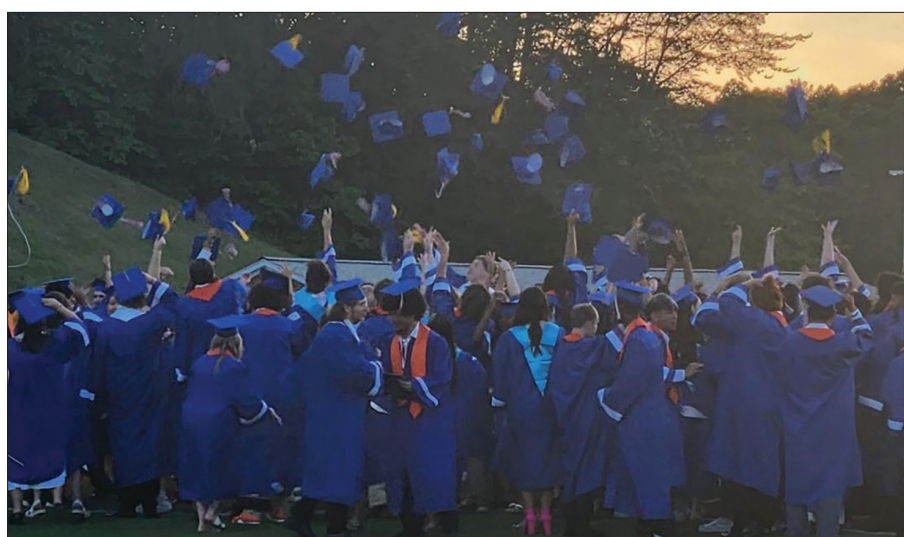
BHS Class of 2025 celebrates what lies behind, before, and within

The Bassett High School Class of 2025 celebrated their accomplishments at a graduation ceremony held on May 23. Graduates were awarded a mix of standard and advanced diplomas, and several were recognized for earning associate degrees.

Student speakers reflected on the past, looked ahead to the future, and emphasized the strength found within each graduate.

Class President Bailey Stanley opened the ceremony by encouraging his classmates to remember what lies behind them and how it shaped their journey. He reflected on the years they spent together, many since elementary school.

"We entered and exited doors together each day during these years. Going into Stanleytown, John Redd, Sanville, Campbell Court, or Carver,



Bassett High School Class of 2025 celebrated their last moments as a group.

being greeted by those smiling faces opening car doors or helping us off of steep bus steps," he said.

Stanley recalled their time at Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School, where many of them came together


for the first time, and where they experienced more doors and more possibilities.

"The world suddenly got bigger. We were teens, and we were loud, shy, silly, smelly, and lost with all those doors," he said.


Stanley told the group that one of the most influential memories of his time at the middle school was that of a poster on the back of a teacher's door that read, "Do not tell me that the sky is the limit when there are footprints on the moon."

Their journey then led them to Bassett High School.


"Our final destination as a collective group was through the doors of Bassett High School. This entrance into our school is really where we became the Class of 2025, and where we became Bengals together," Stanley said.




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1-4-7

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PATRICK PULPITS

“Be Ye Therefore Perfect”

By Alan Dean, retired Seventh-day Adventist pastor

Many Christians through the years have aspired to the goal of overcoming sin in their lives and becoming perfect. This is a worthy goal for which to strive, for Jesus asks us to be “perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). In the messages to the seven churches of Revelation Jesus states special blessings to all who are overcomers (victorious over sin).

However, many people have attempted to reach this goal of perfection through their own willpower and determination. And sometimes bad habits have been overcome and their lifestyle seems almost blameless. But deep down they still feel they haven’t yet attained it. They are like the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16) and the Jewish lawyer (Luke 10:25) who still wanted to know what they could do to inherit eternal life. In both incidences Jesus answered that the thing they lacked was a compassionate heart toward the needs of their fellow man.

In trying to “perfect” our life through personal accomplishments, we are centering our attention on ourselves. In other words, we are still remaining self-centered individuals. In contrast, Jesus says we must be born again, which means a complete change of heart, selfishness to unselfishness. A perfect (godly) life can then be achieved as a natural result

of our new nature.

When Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments into two commandments (Matthew 22:37-40), He shared the secret to keeping the commandments and living a perfect life. Jesus told the lawyer that we first need to come to know and love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. In other words, we make God the Lord of our life.

Then (verse 39) we, with our new heart, are able to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. Our concern for his welfare is as great as it is for our own. Paul says in Romans 13:8 and 10 that this type of love “is the fulfilling of the law.” We don’t lie, kill, or commit adultery because our converted mind and heart don’t entertain such thoughts. We are “free” from the law because the law no longer hinders or restricts our actions.

This is when we become safe to save for heaven. We still may inadvertently and momentarily commit a sin, but we quickly realize it to be wrong, and we repent (and are forgiven) of this sin. Life becomes free of guilt, stress, and worry. We enjoy serving others and sharing the love of Jesus with them. Jesus terms this new life as “life more abundant” (John 10:10). It is also what Jesus means when He says “Be ye therefore perfect.” It’s our continuous desire to do what is good and right.

Pray that we all may experience this “perfect” life that He promises.

Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office reported the following:

*Deauna Jane Kitts, 31, of Crockett, was charged May 16 with four counts probation violation. Senior Deputy D. Dillon was the arresting officer.

*Jimmy Roosevelt Jones, 45, of Stuart, was charged May 18 with assault. Senior Deputy A. Kinney was the arresting officer.

*Kurt Arnold Robinson, 76, of Stuart, was charged May 19 with unauthorized use of vehicle. Sgt. L.K. Carroll Jr. made the arrest for Pulaski County.

*Kelsey Francis Burton, 54, of Patrick County Jail, was charged May 19 with two counts probation violation. Senior Deputy C. Gilbert made the arrest for Grayson County and Carroll County.

*Joseph Eugene Dodd, 29, of Pulaski, was charged May 19 with two counts probation violation. Roanoke PD made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Logan Matthew Waldron, 28, of Spencer, was charged May 20 with one count each possess firearm with Sch. I/II drugs, possess Sch. I or II drugs, possess firearm by convicted violent felon, monument intentional damage, and interfere with property rights. Sgt. J.G. Pickerel was the arresting officer.

*David Wayne Whittington Jr., 46, of Patrick County Jail, was charged May 21 with four counts of probation violation. Senior Deputy T. Dalton was the arresting officer.

*Joshua Christopher Herring, 40, of Lawsonville, N.C., was charged May 21 with fail to comply with terms of pretrial services. Deputy J.L. Fain

was the arresting officer.

*Skyler Wayne Douglas Rowe, 26, of Patrick Springs, was charged May 23 with DWI 1st offense. Lt. D.L. Foley was the arresting officer.

*Sidney Jason Roberts, 37, of Stuart, was charged May 24 with fail to appear. Carroll County made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Bo Dale Vipperman, 30, of Stuart, was charged May 24 with assault. Senior Deputy N.A. Wolfe was the arresting officer.

*William Terrence Smith, 64, of Claudville, was charged May 25 with assault. Lt. D.L. Foley was the arresting officer.

*Christopher John May, 38, of Roanoke, was charged May 26 with fail to appear. Henry County made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Justin Ryan Fain, 22, of Stuart, was charged May 26 with violation of home/electronic incarceration. Senior Deputy T. Dalton was the arresting officer.

*French Andrew Bailey, 35, of Martinsville, was charged May 26 with four counts probation violation. Senior Deputy Doug Perry was the arresting officer.

*Bo Dale Vipperman, 30, of Stuart, was charged May 28 with four counts child abuse/neglect and three counts maliciously shoot/throw into occupied building. Senior Deputy N.A. Wolfe was the arresting officer.

*Nathaniel James Clendinen, 20, of Summerfield, N.C., was charged May 29 with one count each emergency services: call/set alarm without cause, and impersonation firefighter/emergency personnel. Senior Deputy B. Fields was the arresting officer.

BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Hagarites (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Daniel 5, who was holding a great feast when handwriting appeared on the wall?? Job, Belshazzar, Hagar, Hanun

3. Where did Jesus cause demons to go out of two men into a herd of pigs?? Appii, Assos, Damascus, Gadarenes

4. Who used unfair labor practices at his brick-


making establishment?? Pharaoh, Silas, Joash, Jonathan

5. What did Nebuchadnezzar dream of that reached into heaven? Tree, River, Ladder, Rope

6. Who fasted 40 days and nights after being fed by an angel?? Darius, Paul, Elijah, Ahab

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Belshazzar, 3) Gadarenes, 4) Pharaoh, 5) Tree, 6) Elijah

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ACROSS

1 Woes
5 Doubtfire's title
8 Italian wine region
12 Blaster's stuff
15 Young wolf
18 Italian "Bye!"
19 "Well now!"
20 Demonstrate
21 "Yuk" relative
22 Enzyme
23 Black gem
24 Absolutely won't
26 Player of Lou Grant
28 Jill Biden, — Jacobs
29 Definition of homophone #1
31 Name on a thesaurus
33 Merkel of "Twin Beds"
34 How goods are sold in most stores
35 Wearing a disguise, in brief
37 Gallery works
38 "Ben- —"
40 Halts
41 Definition of homophone #2

48 Bloomie's or Barney's rival
49 Hi-tech address
50 Tint
51 Nobles, collectively
56 Had a bite
57 "Insecure" network
58 Personal manner
60 Ore
61 Definition of homophone #3
64 Sponge gently
67 Suffix with Ecuador
68 Give the title
69 600 minutes after noon
70 Definition of homophone #4
76 Find an owner for, as a cat
77 Veers suddenly
78 Suffix with rocket
79 GPs, e.g.
82 Car washers, at times
83 Drink daintily
84 ETA part: Abbr.
85 Hoops tourney org.

86 Definition of homophone #5
91 Aspiring atty.'s exam
95 Label
96 Garden tool
97 Writer Nin
98 Will certifier, e.g.
102 Bro or sis
103 Trail mix muncher, maybe
105 Definition of homophone #6
109 However, for short
112 Sounding off
113 Pesky annoyance
114 Little setback
115 Petting zoo female
116 "Annabel Lee" writer
117 Great joy
118 Petting zoo female
119 Homophone #1
120 Homophone #2
121 Homophone #3
122 Homophone #4
123 Homophone #5

124 Homophone #6
DOWN
1 PC symbol
2 Script part
3 Sweet treat that's tiered
4 Chicago White —
5 Telegraphic code creator
6 Scarlett's Butler
7 Large couch
8 Accedes
9 Brand of cat food
10 Lug around
11 Victorious cry
12 Robbery
13 Lowest point
14 Mere hint
15 Biblical name of Palestine
16 Log-on name
17 Green gem minerals
25 Road 180
27 Location
29 Big name in waffles
30 Noble Brit
32 "My mistake!"
35 "Insecure" co-star Rae
36 Clutter-free
37 Feel poorly
38 Elvis Presley hit
39 4x4, for short

42 — Goldberg machine
43 Horse's gait
44 "Mask" star
45 On — with
46 Novice, in slang
47 Goddess of agriculture
52 Allude
53 Oodles
54 "The World According to —"
55 Like a K-6 school: Abbr.
57 Top seller
58 Feigned kissing sound
59 Producing charged particles in
60 Film prefix with "Cop"
61 Insect feelers
62 Aug. follower
63 Hubbub
64 Sweetheart
65 "The King —"
66 Weed — (lawn product)
71 Short-billed rail
72 Corn coverer
73 Fat-removal job, for short
74 Inca's home
75 Basil, for one

79 "Band on the Run" singer
80 Surrealist Salvador
81 Speaks
83 Kin of reggae
84 Mimic
85 Three trios
87 To be, to Henriette
88 More apt to complain
89 "Check," at a poker table
90 Dam creation
91 — Tar Pits
92 Like some huts or hats
93 Penitent sort
94 Safari shelter
99 Michael of R.E.M.
100 Singer such as Pavarotti
101 "Shucks!"
102 "Yes, —!" ("Indeedy!")
103 Vietnam's capital
104 Bury
106 Latvia's capital
107 Paris hub
108 Actress — Pinkett Smith
110 Barbers cut it
111 Ugly beast
114 Sow or cow

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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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The County of Patrick is accepting applications from qualified applicants for the position of Information Technology Director. Duties include, but are not limited to, management, technical, and administrative work to plan, coordinate, implement, secure, and supervise the County's computers, information technology operations, and data resources. The successful candidate will oversee the purchase of computer hardware, software, and attached systems, manage system integration and specialized programs, and maintain and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the county's information technology services. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated expertise in network infrastructure, IT project management, and cybersecurity, along

with excellent communication and troubleshooting skills. Knowledge of Windows and Windows Server is required.

A Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, or Information Systems is preferred. Candidates with a combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in these areas will be considered. Certifications in various Microsoft software, Wide Area Networks, Local Area Networks, security, and web development are also preferred.

This is a full-time position with benefits exceeding \$25,000 annually, which include vacation and sick leave, life and health insurance, and retirement. Annual salary range is \$50,000 – \$70,000. Hours will be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Evening, weekend, holiday, and flexible/irregular work schedules may be required.

Applicants must submit a Patrick County employment application and resume to be considered for the position. A complete job description and link to the application are available on the Patrick County website at https://www.co.patrick.va.us/Jobs.aspx. Applicants must be willing to submit to a background check and drug screen. While the position is open until filled, the review of applicants will begin on June 16, 2025.

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.

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Top readers listed in Woolwine Warrior Readers program

Woolwine Elementary School announced the names of its top readers who participated in the Warrior Reading program during the fourth quarter of the 2024-25 school year. Each student who reached their grade level goal received a free snack. In addition, students who read the most books in each grade also received a free book. Congratulations everyone, and we hope that you will continue reading over the summer! The top readers are:



Pre-K– Colton Edwards



Kindergarten–Georgia Cockram



First Grade–Lexi Hubbard



Second Grade–Joanna Shelton, Cayleigh Harbour, Merritt Cockram (tied for first place)



Third Grade–Lillian King



Fourth Grade–Kinley Fisher



Fifth Grade–Sophia Otero-Garcia



Sixth Grade–Wyatt Rodgers



Seventh Grade–Lacie Bullins

SCC

(cont. from page 6)

their efforts in receiving their college credentials. He spoke of Sir Isaac Newton’s laws of motion, and how they related to the graduates. He shared, “It is the crux of law number three that I really want to send to the students. This opposite reaction and action; it is a choice for you. Life is about choices. So, I challenge you. Do not be afraid to take the path less taken. Do not let others direct and guide and make you feel different from who you

are.”

Dr. Ashley Morrison announced the graduates’ names to the audience. Dr. Shockley and Dr. Candace Holder, Senior Vice President of Academics and Student Affairs, presented degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the students who participated in the ceremony including fall, spring, and summer graduates.

During the ceremony’s conclusion, students participated in the traditional ‘turning of

the tassel’ as friends and families applauded. As they move the tassel from the right side of the cap to the left, it symbolizes the transition from student to graduate.

SCC is currently registering students for fall classes. If you have any questions about applying for college, financial aid, or career choices, contact Student Services at (336) 386-3264 or studentservices@surry.edu. Fall classes begin August 18.

Take Back Your County



The Board of Supervisors have forgotten that they are just a mouthpiece for the citizens here. They need to learn to listen again!



Malcolm Roach
Patrick County
Board of Supervisor
Smith River District

Construction Academy begins at SCC in June

Through Surry Community College's Construction Academy, students can learn job ready skills in Construction, Carpentry, Electrical, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning. Subjects covered will include construction basics, career exploration, OSHA-10 for construction, job shadowing, and interview skills. Tuition is free if you complete the course.

The 8-week long course starts June 2 and runs through July 31. No classes will be held from July 1-4. The classroom time is scheduled Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4:30 p.m. A job shadowing schedule will



Surry Community College is offering a Construction Academy from June 2 to July 31. Tuition is free if you complete the course. To register, contact The Pilot Center at (336) 386-3618 or pilotcenter@surry.edu.

be determined for each student.

The classes will be held on Surry Community College's Dobson campus in the K-Building. To register, contact The Pilot Center at (336) 386-3618

or pilotcenter@surry.edu.

The Construction Academy is sponsored by Surry Community College, Carolinas AGC Foundation, and the North Carolina Community College System.

Spending Plan

(cont. from page 1)

"And we do need to keep our parks and recreation for tourists to have something to come back to," he said before making the motion to increase the tax by 1%.

Overby asked how much revenue the 1% increase would generate. County Administrator Beth Simms said approximately \$140,000.

Overby then seconded the motion.

Later in the meeting, Commissioner of Revenue Glennda Morse noted that since the TOT is collected on a calendar-year basis, the county would not receive the full \$140,000 in the current fiscal year.

Simms estimated the TOT would generate approximately \$70,000 in FY2026 and \$140,000 in subsequent years.

Wood agreed with Perry, saying visitors use many county services.

"I know we've talked about some of those. I know the Sheriff's Department had to help lost people more than once—people getting injured out there doing different things," he said.

Wood added that TOT rates have never influenced his travel decisions.

Perry noted that local volunteer fire departments and the ropes team recently hiked about a mile into the woods and down a cliff to rescue someone.

"The ropes team's equipment is expensive. A lot of times you don't get a lot of uses out of it because as soon as it starts to wear it becomes unsafe for rescue. I know they pull from the general fund to support that," he said.

Overby said he doesn't think the 1% increase would deter visitors.

"Like you (Wood) said, I don't pay any attention when I go places. Quite frankly, ours is still very small compared to what it is in other localities, especially places that have a lot of tourism. You know, it's not uncommon to find places with 13-14 percent, so I don't think it's going to make much of a difference," he said.

Perry said the biggest trend he's seeing is increasing parking fees.

"I had a friend that got back from someplace—they were charged, I want to say, \$20 a night to park at a hotel they were already staying at," he said.

Marshall said that while he agreed with the need for additional revenue, he disagreed with increasing the TOT as the method.

"I think the effect this would have, in contrast with the effect it would have on tourism, just doesn't pan out for me," he said.

In other matters, the board:

*Approved keeping the personal property tax rate the same in a 5-0 vote. The motion was made by Overby and seconded by Marshall.

*Awarded the 2027 general real estate reassessment contract to Vision/Wampler-Eanes.

*Awarded a contract for repairing the Patrick County Jail HVAC to Handy Rentals, with the provision that if Handy is unable to match the warranty offered by Vipperman Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Inc., the contract will be awarded to Vipperman. Since Handy has since withdrawn its bid, Vipperman will be awarded the contract.

*Approved a contract with Triangle Electric for HVAC and electrical system upgrades at the Patrick County Circuit Court.

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