

Partnerships announced on skilled trades project

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC), in partnership with Danville Community College (DCC) and Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC), is embarking on a coordinated, region-wide initiative to expand industrial skilled trades programs that directly align with GO Virginia Region 3's traded sector industries. This project will substantially increase the region's capacity to produce skilled workers while ensuring consistent, high-quality credential delivery across Region 3's three community colleges.

The Industrial Skilled Trades Regional Expansion project is funded in part by a \$1,346,786.00 grant from GO Virginia, a state-funded initiative administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) that strengthens and diversifies Virginia's economy and fosters the creation of higher wage jobs in strategic industries.

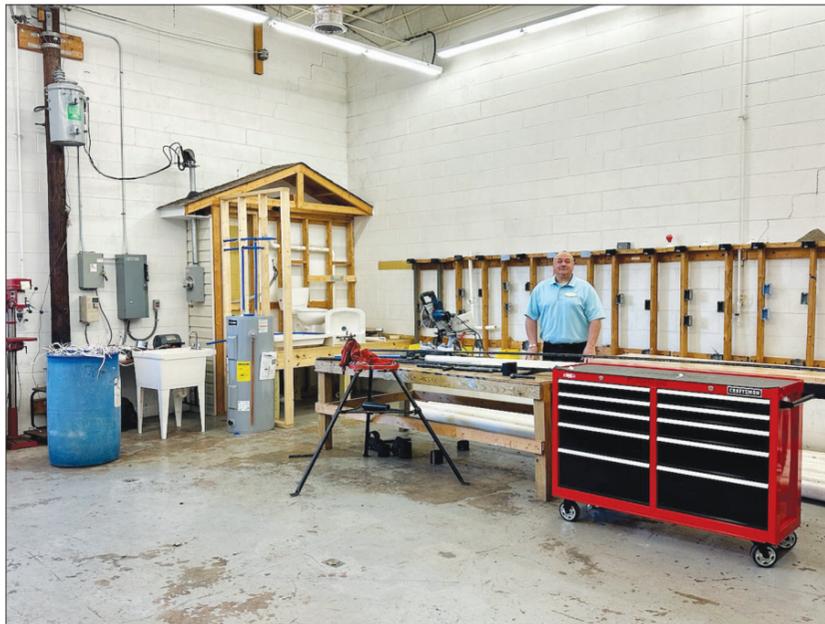
The project focuses on the Advanced Manufacturing cluster from the 2025 GO Virginia Region 3 Growth and Diversification Plan. Region 3 continues to face a shortage of industrial trades workers, limiting growth for both traded sector employers and specialty contractors. Through shared investments in equipment, faculty, and mobile-training capacity, the project will increase regional training output and ensure students earn portable, industry-recognized certifications through

NCCER, NC3, and Festo standards.

The project will support historic investments in the region, including the \$1.35 billion investment by Microporous LLC, which is adding 2,000 jobs at the Berry Hill Megasite jointly developed by Danville City and Pittsylvania County. These jobs will require a highly skilled workforce and the initiative will ensure a supply of skilled industrial maintenance workers to support this significant regional investment.

Carpenters are in particularly high demand among Southern Virginia's modular and manufactured-home builders, including Cavco Industries (Martinsville and Rocky Mount) and Cardinal Homes (Wylliesburg), which export modular products across the eastern United States. The proposed carpentry expansion at P&HCC will supply these firms with skilled labor for modular manufacturing, assembly, and finishing operations.

"Across the Commonwealth, there is a surge in demand for industrial skilled trades workers, driven by the state's growth in infrastructure, energy, shipbuilding, healthcare, and more. The project's design—three community colleges sharing resources, faculty expertise, and mobile training assets—demonstrates how regional collaboration can efficiently expand training capacity without duplication. We are so grateful to the GO Virginia Region 3 Council for



Dr. Colin Ferguson stands in P&HCC's building trades lab that will undergo renovation to house the project.

their support of the project," said Dr. Colin Ferguson, P&HCC assistant vice president of workforce & technical programs.

P&HCC will administer the grant and coordinate overall project implementation. Further, P&HCC will scale existing training to expand beyond level one NCCER training, add Levels 2-4 in HVAC, carpentry, electrical, and plumbing, and continue expanding the use of its electrical mobile training lab. DCC will lead the expansion of Industry 4.0 and indus-

trial maintenance programs aligned with Festo NC3 national standards. SVCC will launch a new plumbing program and deploy a mobile training lab that will serve counties in its area. Additionally, Virginia Career Works West Piedmont Region will help coordinate paid work experiences for students in the expanded training opportunities. The project will accelerate job creation, raise household income, and strengthen supply chains supporting advanced manufacturing across Southern Virginia.

Clark Gas & Oil donates \$39,000 to local nonprofits, schools

By Taylor Boyd

Clark Gas & Oil donated \$39,000 to more than a dozen nonprofit agencies and schools in Patrick County during its annual giving back to the community event held Feb. 12.

Blair Clark, president of the company, said the business started the annual event because of his parents, B. and Coates Clark.

"They told us if you're going to be part of the community, then be part of the community. Give back" to it, he said.

Clark said he and his sister, Anna Lester, love all the agencies they contribute to during the event and noted they try to think of ministries that help take care of people in need in the community.

"Many communities have cornerstones that are either churches or fire departments and rescue squads as well so that's why we try to give to all parts of the community," he said.

While all of the organizations are thankful for the donations, Clark said some, like the schools, earmark the funds for certain tasks that regular funding may fall short of.

"All of them obviously are very much in need of outside monies. They all do their own fundraising," he said.

Clark said he enjoys having the different groups together in one room during the give back and having them discuss who they are, what they do, what



Clark Gas & Oil donated \$39,000 to local nonprofit agencies and schools during its annual giving back event. (Photo by Anna Lester)

they hope to accomplish and what they need.

"Sometimes we have some networking opportunities" during the event. "Like I'm getting back to Caring Hearts Free Clinic on some hospital" related information. "It's awesome to network when we hear about some of the hurdles or some of the celebrations the agencies talk about," he said.

Clark added the business also donates labor to the community to help with projects, with a recent one involving equipment to help install disc golf pads at DeHart Park.

The business worked with the Rotary Club of Stuart and Patrick County Parks & Recreation on the project.

"Rotary got a grant and we provided some equipment like mini skid steers and a full-sized skid steer and we dug out areas to make a pad for the launch-

ing of the disk golf. We actually helped pour some stable footing for the disk golf that the Rotary got," he said.

Clark said the giving back event is one of his favorite days on the job.

"We enjoy it very much," he said.

Recipients include Safety Rope; the Reynolds Homestead; Caring Hearts Free Clinic of Patrick County; Envision Critz; Patrick County Food Bank; Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC; Patrick County Developmental Center; PARC Workshop; Dan River Basin Association; Rotary Club of Stuart; Floyd Co Cares; SustainFloyd; Floyd Baptist Church; The Floyd Center for the Arts; Plenty!; Floyd County Library Fund; Chance Harmon Memorial Fund; First United Methodist Church of Hillsville; Hillsville Fire Department; Carroll County Social Ser-

vices; Joy Ranch; Pipers Gap Rescue Squad Inc.; Cana Volunteer Fire Department; Rotary Club of Hillsville; Carroll Wellness Center; Hillsville Pentecostal Holiness; Ararat Volunteer Fire Department; Meadows of Dan

Volunteer Fire Department; Moorefield Store Volunteer Fire Department; Patrick Springs Volunteer Fire Department; Stuart Volunteer Fire Department; Patrick Henry Volunteer Fire Department; Smith River Volunteer

Rescue Squad; CCDF Volunteer Fire & Rescue; Vesta Volunteer Rescue Squad; Woolwine Volunteer Fire Department; and Jeb Stuart Volunteer Rescue Squad.

The schools include Meadows of Dan Elementary School; Stuart Elementary School; Hardin Reynolds Memorial School; Patrick Springs Primary School; Blue Ridge Elementary School; Woolwine Elementary School; Blue Mountain School; Springhouse Community School; and Floyd County High School.

In total, Clark said \$144,500 was donated this year to more than 25 nonprofit agencies and schools across Clark Gas & Oil's service area, which, in addition to Patrick County, includes Carroll and Floyd counties.

Pets of the Week



Rocky (the Rotti boy) and Snoopy (brown female) were surrendered to the shelter when their owner passed away. They are sad and confused. Please consider adding one or both of these grieving pets to your family. Where will your beloved pets end up when you're gone? Have you thought about putting them in your will? Pets are family members and we see this same sad story way too often.

PLEASE SAVE A LIFE! ADOPT! These are wonderful pets! All dogs and cats deserve a

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

The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League provides pet food and spay/neuter assistance. Contact blueridgeawl@gmail.com for details. Visit the Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League website at www.blueridgeawl.org.

Patrick County Master Gardeners Spring Symposium set

By Kristine Adel

The Patrick County Master Gardeners will welcome three outstanding speakers on March 7 to discuss Virginia's native habitats, with emphasis on native plants; pollinators; and one of our most beloved native birds, the American Kestrel, during its Spring Symposium, titled "Supporting Our Native Birds and Bees."

Alex Tuchman will start the day with a talk on pollinator habitats, *Creating a Pollinator Sanctuary*.

In addition to his role as director of Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, Alex is an educator, an author, and a father. He is a consistent contributor to the biodynamic agriculture and natural beekeeping movements; and he regularly teaches at conferences in the U.S., around the world, and online. Enthusiasts may want to check out his book, "A Lively Hive," published in 2021, outlining the basic body- (See Gardeners p. 8)

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P&HCC expands NC3 Festo Industry Certification program offerings

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) offers expanded NC3 Festo Industry 4.0 Certification offerings for students.

Festo Industry Certification Program (FICP) is a comprehensive certification program developed by educators and industry experts that ensures students have qualifying skills upon graduation, including soft skills such as effective communication, managing others and critical thinking. At P&HCC, FICP is integrated with existing certificate and associate's degree programming.

FICP is based on industry and education partnerships to ensure students have the right set of skills to be industry ready. At FICP level 3, certified students practice designing and engineering complex I4.0 Systems. Their responsibilities include applying systems engineering practices, such as engineering, process management, and quality assurance management, with the goal of implementing, maintaining, or improving I4.0 systems. (Festo USA)



P&HCC's FICP Level 3 students prepare the certification module wall hangings for the lab.

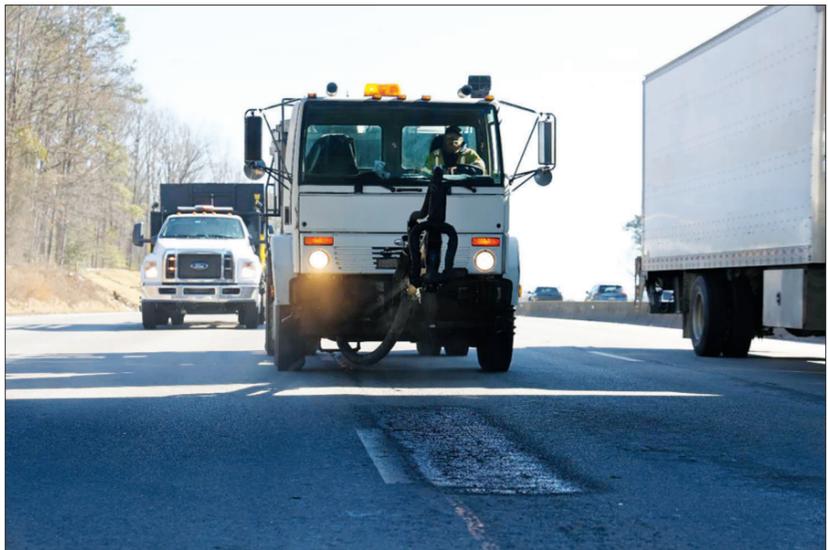
FICP programming includes Career Exploration Certifications, Fundamentals: Level 1 Certifications, Applied: Level 2 Certifications, and Advanced: Level 3 Certifications. This level includes

Advanced Industry 4.0, Advanced Robotics, Advanced PLCs, Advanced Industrial Communications, Advanced Smart Maintenance, and Advanced Product ID modules. "The addition of the

advanced level is important for the students because it's the next step in the certification process. It's taking them to an advanced level that's going to allow them to

shoot and design true Industry 4.0 systems," said Lionel Nolen, P&HCC's FICP certified industrial electronics instructor. P&HCC is one of only seven cohorts

offer Level 3 certification and is the only institution to issue a level 3 certification to date. Learn more about Festo training at <https://www.nc3.net/partner-festo/>.



VDOT repairs potholes on state-maintained roads only, which include interstate highways and most primary and secondary roads.

VDOT digs into potholes — on Virginia roads —

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) crews are already actively working to locate and repair potholes as we enter the time of year known for seeing more cracks and crumbles on the roads. Motorists can do their part in keeping the roads safe by reporting potholes and workers safe by moving over to give them room to work. "We know you see them and don't like them, and we don't like them either," said VDOT's Chief of Maintenance and Operations Kevin Gregg. "Motorists can help ensure that potholes are identified and repaired as quickly as possible by reporting them through our Customer Service Center. We ask travelers to please keep a lookout for our crews as they work to repair the roadway." Potholes can form year-round, but after freezing temperatures, heavy snow and rain — like what Virginia has seen so far this winter season — more can be expected. Potholes form when moisture seeps into pavement, freezes, expands

and thaws. This cycle weakens the pavement. Additionally, the weight of traffic loosens the pavement and over time it can begin to crumble. When a pothole is reported to VDOT, it is communicated to local crews. Repairs are scheduled in accordance with the location, traffic volume, impact on traffic and severity of the pothole. Crews inspect the issue, determine the appropriate action and timeline for resolution, then schedule repairs based on available resources. VDOT can temporarily fix potholes in winter with cold patches, but they cannot do a permanent repair until temperatures warm up. The patience and cooperation of travelers is appreciated as we work to maintain roads across the commonwealth. Motorists can use VDOT's web-based form to report potholes and other road problems, at my.vdot.virginia.gov or call 800-367-7623 (800-FOR-ROAD) 24 hours a day to reach VDOT's Customer Service Center to report road hazards or ask questions.

Substantial increase reported in initial unemployment filings

Virginia Works' Economic Information and Analytics Division, which serves as the Commonwealth's official source for labor market and workforce data, reported that 4,592 initial unemployment insurance claims were filed in Virginia during the week ending February 07, 2026. This represents a 71.2 percent increase from the prior week's 2,683 claims and is 43.4 percent higher than the comparable week last year (3,202). Nearly 80 per-

cent of claimants self-reported an employer which correlates to an associated industry. The claims were filed with the Virginia Employment Commission, which administers the Commonwealth's Unemployment Insurance program. The top five industries (68 percent) were Manufacturing (1,184); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (431); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (322); Construction

Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office reported the following:
 *Christopher Bryan Vernon, 54, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 12 with drive under the influence. Trooper Medina was the arresting officer.
 *Stephen George Patten Jr., 50, of Hardy, was charged Feb. 13 with fail to appear. Sgt. L.K. Carroll Jr., made the arrest for Martinsville PD.
 *Karson William Foley, 30, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 17 with probation violation. Sgt. C.L. Elgin made the arrest for Henry County.
 *David Keith Willard, 25, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 17 with five counts grand larceny of a firearm, not from a person, and one count each enter dwelling at night, conspire to enter dwelling at night, monument: intentional damage, and obtain money by false pretense. Senior Deputy H.R. Hylton was the arresting officer and made the arrest for Henry County.
 *David Scott Bonhams, 45, of Ridgeway, was charged Feb. 17 with six counts grand larceny of a firearm, and one count each enter dwelling at night and conspire to enter dwelling at night. Henry County made the arrest for Patrick County.
 *Kevin Allen Robinson, 35, of Woolwine, was charged Feb. 19 with first offender violation. Senior Deputy J.S. Kendrick made the arrest for Franklin County.
 *Tiffany Romont Alfred, 36, of Pinnacle, NC, was charged Feb. 19 with four counts probation violation. Sgt. I.R. Wood was the arresting officer.
 *Edward Earnest Barnes, 69, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 19 with two counts probation violation. Sgt. E.J. Litz was the arresting officer.
 *Kevin Wade Anthony, 49, of Patrick Springs, was charged Feb. 19 with probation violation. Deputy C. Gilbert made the arrest for Martinsville PD.
 *Kevin Wayne Woods, 52, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 5 with drive motor vehicle while license revoked or suspended. Senior Deputy N.A. Wolfe was the arresting officer.
 *Matthew Lewis Roberts, 30, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 6 with trespass. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodg-

es was the arresting officer.
 *Taylor Renee Haynes, 25, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 7 with four counts probation violation. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges was the arresting officer.
 *Chad McCray Williams, 52, of Lawsonville, N.C., was charged Feb. 7 with possess firearm by non-violent felon. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges was the arresting officer.
 *Tiffany Marie Spencer, 31, of Patrick County Jail, was charged Feb. 8 with one count each probation violation and fail to appear. Sgt. W.L. Higgs was the arresting officer and made the arrest for Pulaski County.
 *Brenda Floyd, 58, of Claudville, was charged Feb. 10 with one count each break and enter, intentional damage to monument, and assault. Senior Deputy J.S. Kendrick was the arresting officer.
 *Kevin Billy Lacky, 34, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 10 with two counts possess child pornography and one count possess/reproduce child porn with intent to distribute. Sgt. J.G. Pickerel was the arresting officer.
 *Matthew Allen Rea, 28, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 11 with three counts assault. Sgt. J.C. Fortner was the arresting officer.
 *David Keith Willard, 25, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 11 with grand larceny of firearm. Deputy J.L. Fain was the arresting officer.
 *Edward Earnest Barnes, 69, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 12 with probation violation. Martinsville City made the arrest for Patrick County.
 *Brandon Clapp, 48, of Stuart, was charged Feb. 12 with six counts threaten illegal/immoral act over telephone. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges was the arresting officer.
 *Mary Ann Turner, 58, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 12 with one count each probation violation and contempt of court. Senior Deputy A. Kinney was the arresting officer.
 *David Keith Willard, 25, of Bassett, was charged Feb. 12 with one count each abuse/neglect child and possess Sch. I or II drugs. Sgt. T. Dalton made the arrest for Henry County.

(259); and Retail Trade (220). Continued weeks' claims (21,291) were 0.5 percent lower than last week (21,403) and were 23.2 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (17,288). Nearly 92 percent of claimants self-reported an employer which correlates to an associated indus-

try. Based on this report, the top five industries (61 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (3,999); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,493); Manufacturing (2,058); Construction (1,688); and Health Care and Social Assistance (1,634).

Colonel John Walter Ripley



Morgan Griffith
Representative

With the United States preparing to celebrate its 250th anniversary, American communities are bound to reflect on the inspiring legacy of our country's founding.

While the clamor of independence resonated among the colonists, achieving independence necessitated bold military action.

Thanks to General George Washington and the willingness of thousands to serve, the fight for independence ultimately succeeded.

The belief in America's promise inspired the generations that followed to support and defend the U.S. Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Throughout our 250 years of existence, our armed services have battled to protect our nation, albeit under treacherous conditions that accompany the affairs of war.

For our survival and success, American servicemembers sacrificed blood, sweat and tears.

We continue to honor such amazing sacrifices in numerous ways.

The Purple Heart, the oldest military award, is presented to those who have been killed or wounded in action.

Those recognized for heroic acts or meritorious achievements in combat receive the Bronze Star Medal.

There is no higher U.S. military decoration than the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In my 2025 Veterans Day column, I highlighted five figures with ties to the Ninth District that have received the Medal of Honor.

I am proud to say that the Ninth District will soon be home to a sixth!

The House recently passed my bill to award the Medal of Honor to Radford's Colonel John Ripley.

Following graduation from Radford High School in 1957, Colonel Ripley committed to the Marine Corps.

However, he soon enrolled at the Naval Academy, graduated and returned to the Marine Corps to begin a storied ascent within the military.

By 1966, he was a Captain. The Marine Corps deployed him to help lead 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, "Lima" company in Vietnam. While he was wounded in action against the communist North Vietnamese forces, Ripley completed his tour.

However, Ripley would be called back into action in 1971.

Helping advise the 3rd Vietnamese Marine Battalion, he was stationed at Dong Ha Combat Base, which was in close proximity to the Demilitarized Zone.

As a result, the base was constantly under threat by North Vietnam.

This threat compounded when American forces began to evacuate from the region. The communists acted accordingly, launching the Easter Offensive. The 1972 spring attack represented their first large-scale attack into South Vietnam since the 1968 Tet Offensive.

As part of the communist offensive, they headed for the Dong Ha Bridge, a vital gateway into Dong Ha.

With allied forces in Dong Ha and South Vietnam in trouble, Ripley took decisive action.

Ripley climbed beneath the Dong Ha Bridge

with a small stockpile of TNT.

For three hours under enemy fire, Ripley carefully worked to plant five boxes of TNT and plastic explosives along the bridge's five different channels.

Despite exposing himself to the enemy, Ripley finished his daring work and returned to shore.

The fuses detonated, and the bridge blew up!

Ripley's decisive action at Dong Ha helped stall the North Vietnamese advance and bought time for allied forces in South Vietnam to regroup ahead of the surprise invasion.

The eventual fall of South Vietnam deflated U.S. military morale, but it did not deter Ripley from serving his country.

He served in various capacities as a Marine Corps officer, most notably leading trainings in the Arctic.

Ripley never forgot his ties to rural Virginia.

At one time, Ripley commanded the Navy-Marine Corps ROTC at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia.

After his retirement in 1992, Ripley served as president of Southern Virginia College in Buena Vista, Virginia, and later as president of Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia.

In 2008, Ripley passed away.

I am honored to share Colonel Ripley's remarkable service in the Halls of Congress. His courageous actions at Dong Ha will stand the test of time and deserve to be a fixture for future generations aspiring to serve.

While his inspiring journey of service has drawn countless accolades, I am no less excited to move forward a bill that will award a legendary Ninth District servicemember the most prestigious of honors.

Child

(cont. from page 1)



To donate to the Henry family, go to www.gofundme.com and search for "Support for Family After Devastating House Fire."

larizing, traumatic situation that was unfolding within our firehouse. It definitely stunned our newer guys that were in the firehouse trying to respond to the fire," he said.

Weidhaas said firefighters were able to get the truck en route to the fire while he and Adams stayed behind to render care to the child and mother.

"Burn injuries are very severe. The only time you can really do anything for a burn patient is when you get them to a hospital, and they start the burn care," he said.

Once on scene, Patrick Springs notified dispatch of a second burn victim, the father, and requested emergency medical services and a helicopter.

"The hospital EMS arrived at the fire station within a couple of minutes after the engine's departure from the station. Ross and I assisted the patient with getting into the hospital unit, and they immediately transported her to the hospital to try to stabilize her," he said.

Weidhaas and Adams then responded with a tanker to the scene.

Once there, Weidhaas said he was informed of some confusion as to where the other children were.

Noting that most people would consider it a defensive fire, where firefighters stay outside to extinguish the blaze, Weidhaas said the department entered the mobile home because they feared other victims were still inside.

"There were seven interior firemen fighting the fire and doing a search. The trailer was fully in-

involved. When the engine arrived, we found a fully involved mobile home," he said.

However, Weidhaas said the three older children had gotten out safely, and the youngest, a 2-month-old baby, was at her grandmother's home.

The fire was under control within 25 minutes. Fifteen firefighters were on scene.

Moorefield Store Volunteer Fire Department responded with two personnel and two tankers; Patrick Henry Volunteer Fire Department responded with one tanker and two personnel; Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department had one tanker and three personnel on scene; Stuart Volunteer Fire Department had one engine and two personnel; and Patrick Springs had six personnel, an engine, and a tanker.

Weidhaas said the incident was a very traumatic situation for all first responders.

"Everybody did an outstanding job as far as trying to handle the situation for the circumstances. It was very taxing and stressful on the first responders, and we need to keep everybody in prayer as well as the family for their loss," he said.

Weidhaas said the child was flown to the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Burn Center from Stuart Community Hospital.

"I think it was determined there that the baby was not going to be able to make it, and they decided at some point and time in the late afternoon and into the evening that they were going to have to end life support measures and let her go because of the severity of her injuries," he said.

In his 27 years of firefighting and 10 years with the Virginia State Police, Weidhaas said he has never seen anything that serious.

"I mean we go to traumatic situations all the time, but this was worse because there was a kid involved. A lot of us here have kids, and your heart just breaks, you know," Weidhaas said, tearing up.

The Henry family is currently staying at The Penny House in Patrick Springs.

A GoFundMe titled "Support for Family After Devastating House Fire" has raised \$24,015 from 226 donations as of the morning of Feb. 23.

Donations can also be dropped off at The House at D&W Lane in Patrick Springs after 2 p.m. or at 83 VFW Road in Patrick Springs.

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Retired teachers meet at library

Patrick County Retired Teachers' Book Club met Wednesday, February 18, at the Patrick County Library to discuss the book, "The Women," by Kristin Hannah. Deborah Foster led the discussion.

"The Women" is a historical fiction that reveals the powerful contributions and sacrifices made by the American military nurses who served in Vietnam. Those who returned came home unrecognized, friendless, and unappreciated for their service by angry protesters and to a country that wanted to forget Vietnam.

Angela Mullis, a book club member and former military nurse who served in Thailand and Vietnam in the early seventies after join-

ing at the age of twenty, gave a personal and visual account of her experiences in Vietnam. She spoke of the strong support among the women; the suffering; numbness; strategies of survival; and the hot, wet, humid and harsh environment. She spoke of their appreciation of small things like a picture. She summed up her thoughts by commenting on how crippling war is both on the field and on the return home just as Frankie in The Women experiences.

All who enjoy reading are welcome to attend the Patrick County Retired Teachers' Book Club that meets the third Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. at the Patrick County Library where you can enjoy reading and discussing books.

Patrick Pioneers

Luraniah "Raney" Cockram Bowman and Raney's Gap

By **Beverly Belcher Woody**

If you want to travel from below the mountain to Meadows of Dan today, your primary routes are Highway 58, Route 8, or a few secondary roads that are not for the faint-hearted — Belcher Mountain and Squirrel Spur, among them. Over the years, several lower places in the Blue Ridge have served as natural passageways: Wood's Gap, Tuggle's Gap, Orchard Gap, Willis Gap, Ward's Gap, and the lesser-known Raney's Gap. Located within what is now Primland, Raney's Gap was once the main road leading from Claudville up the mountain near Vesta.

Raney's Gap was named for Luraniah "Raney" Cockram Bowman, the daughter of William Nathaniel Cockram (also found as Cochran or Cockerham) and Ruth Brammer. Like many Patrick County families, the Cockrams appear in records under several spellings, making their story challenging to trace.

In the 1860 census, nine-year-old Raney was living at home with her siblings: Adaline, 17; Spencer, 15; Jane, 14; Milly, 7; Louisa; and baby James J., age one.

By the 1870 census, Raney was a 19-year-old young mother, married to 32-year-old Levi "Jefferson"



Simon Jackson Bowman, son of Raney. Photo from Katherine Bowman

Bowman of the Kibler area. Their household included their two-year-old son, William.

Ten years later, the family had grown. The 1880 census lists their children as:

William, 12
Hanah, 10
Drucilla, 8
Franklin, 4
Lucinda, 2
Delia, one month old
By 1900, their son Frank J. Bowman, age 24, was still living at home, along with these additional children born between the 1880 and 1900 census:

Lila, 19
Ruth F., 17
Jethina, 12
Simon Jackson, 9
Minnie, 6
Lillie Maud, 3
Life changed for Raney when her husband, Levi Jefferson Bowman, died in Octo-

ber 1901 from ulcers of the stomach. In January 1908, she applied for a Confederate widow's pension, leaving us a detailed and poignant snapshot of her life at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In her application, Raney stated that she was a lifelong resident of Patrick County, living at Claudville, and the widow of Jefferson Bowman, who had served faithfully in the War Between the States as a member of Company B, 50th Virginia Infantry under Captain J. T. Lawson in Wharton's Brigade. She affirmed that her husband had been loyal to his duty and had never deserted his command, and that she had remained his "true, faithful, and lawful wife" until his



Some of Raney and Jefferson Bownmans children. Photo from Katherine Bowman

DAN RIVER ELECTION DISTRICT
BEGINNING at Little Dan River where the Virginia and North Carolina Line crosses said river; thence up the river as it meanders to the Three Forks at the Mitchell Mill; thence leaving the river and running with the old Three Forks road as it meanders to the Double Springs at the Benjamin Hensley place at the Bursted Rock Road on top of the Blue Ridge; thence running with the Bursted Rock Road about 1 1/2 miles to **Raney's Gap** with the line of the Blue Ridge Magisterial District; thence

Ranays Gap mentioned in 1971 Enterprise

death.

At the time of the application, Raney was 67 years old, born and raised in Patrick County, and had lived there all her life. She and Jefferson got married on December 31, 1867. Jefferson died in 1901 in Kibler Valley, Virginia.

Her answers reveal the quiet hardships of widowhood. She had not remarried and was living with her children. Her property consisted of "one cow and one mule." When asked about income, she answered simply: "No income, children assist me." For this, she was granted a pension of twenty-five dol-

lars annually.

Raney also provided the names of her husband's comrades, J. H. Rangeley and S. H. Dunkley of Stuart, and two men familiar with the circumstances of his death, J. W. Barnard and N. B. Epper-son of Kibler.

She signed the application with her mark on April 18, 1908. Witnesses were R. E. Woolwine and R. L. Branch, and the application was approved by J. S. Taylor, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Patrick County.

Today, the name Raney's Gap stands as a quiet memorial to a woman who spent her entire life in Patrick

County — raising a large family, weathering loss, and relying on the strength of her children and community. Through census records and a simple pension application, we glimpse the resilience and endurance of a Patrick County mother whose name still marks a pathway across the mountain.

Thank you to Katherine Bowman for sharing information and photographs of her great-grandmother Raney's family. If you have questions, comments, or ideas for future stories, contact Woody at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or 276-692-9626.

Social Security Matters

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

Ask Rusty – My Friend is 65; shouldn't she be exempt from Medicare payroll taxes?

Dear Rusty: My girlfriend is 65 and she just enrolled in Medicare. She is still working full time as a nurse, but they are still deducting Medicare taxes from her paycheck. I thought as soon as you started Medicare, that they would no longer take any Medicare taxes from her paychecks. Is that not correct? *Signed: Concerned Friend*

Dear Concerned Friend: Your understanding about Medicare payroll tax is, indeed, not correct. Medicare taxes are levied on everyone who works and earns, regardless of whether or not they are currently enrolled in the Medicare program. That is how Medicare has worked since it was first enacted in the mid-1960s and how it still works today.

FYI, everyone who works for an employer must pay "FICA" (Federal Insurance Contribu-

tions Act) payroll tax of 7.65%. Most (6.2%) of that payroll tax goes to support Social Security, but 1.45% goes to support Medicare Part A. Self-employed individuals must also pay this tax under the Self-Employed Contributions Act (SECA) which is equivalent to FICA, except the self-employed individual must also pay the employer portion of the payroll tax. The Social Security portion of the FICA/SECA tax has an earnings cap (\$184,500 in 2026), but there is no cap on earnings for the Medicare portion of the FICA/SECA payroll tax. FYI, employers pay an equivalent amount of Social Security and Medicare taxes, and the Medicare portion of the payroll tax is paid on all earnings (there is no cap on earnings from which the Medicare payroll tax is withheld).

To ensure understanding, Medicare Part A provides healthcare coverage for inpatient hospitalization services, and Medicare Part B provides coverage for outpatient medical services (doctors, medical tests, etc.). That 1.45% of the FICA (and SECA tax for the self-employed) is paid by those who work to help fund the Medi-

care Part A program, which is premium-free for most Americans after age 65. For Medicare Part B, there is a separate premium which helps pay for Medicare outpatient healthcare services. The standard Medicare Part B premium for 2026 is \$202.90 per month, compared to Medicare Part A which is free to all who are eligible for Social Security benefits. But the 1.45% payroll tax which is being withheld from your girlfriend's paycheck is paid by everyone who has work earnings, even if they are enrolled in Medicare.

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

Sorry, Not Sorry

Part 2

But consider another angle.

What if confronting your abuser — frightening as it may sound — is actually important for them to have a chance at healthy change, or even at eternal salvation?

What if refusing to accept the smallest referred or projected responsibility for the abuser's actions, is the only way they will begin to understand what their choices do to other people, and how serious their behavior patterns are?

What if the victim's silence is what allows abusers to keep on hurting other people unchecked; short-circuiting their opportunities for spiritual, social, and emotional growth?

What if an abuser needs to actually experience the pain of staring at their toxicity in the mirror, in order to decide whether or not they want to be healthy enough to submit to the process of transformation and developing healthy habits of thought and behavior?

Ultimately, to love well means rejecting misplaced blame for the actions of others and accepting responsibility for our own decisions while having the courage to help our loved ones

face their flaws, embrace the chance to change, and grow through the experience.

LETTING SOMEONE STAY TOXIC IS NOT LOVING THEM WELL.

In addition, returning responsibility for toxic behavior back on the abuser allows you to observe firsthand whether they actually have any intentions toward lasting change, rather than grasping at empty promises.

In healthy relationships between people who make human mistakes, there are going to be times when both parties screw it all up. Times when you both need to face yourself in all your ugliness and accept that you've hurt someone you love. We're all selfish on some level, and sinful, and quick to judge.

The determining factor is what we do with that information.

Do you recoil in shock and horror at how you've caused pain, say sorry, and then pour immense effort into correcting the situation and making it right?

Does the other person, the one who acted in toxic ways toward you, accept their responsibility in the situation and genuinely work toward

a healthy change?

Does it last?

Often, people will say sorry over and over again, but as soon as the heat of the moment has passed, it's back to the usual. There's never a lasting change. Never a sense of heart transformation. Never a significant effort at not making the same mistake or causing the same pain next time.

How Do You Know They're Really Sorry?

If, when confronted with how their behavior is hurting others and given non-negotiable options for repentance and restitution, the abuser rejects the process, makes excuses, or insists it is everyone else's fault — then you have your answer.

However, if they are willing to accept accountability, embrace humility, take responsibility, and communicate transparently throughout the process — then it is entirely possible for the relationship to journey toward healing.

(Submitted by Betty Dean. Written by Sarah McDugal. Used by permission from www.LifeandHealth.org. Courtesy of LifeSpring - Resources for Hope and Healing Stuart, VA.)

Wood Brothers Racing Race Report: Autotrader 400

Josh Berry and the No. 21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane team showed early speed in Sunday's Autotrader 400 at EchoPark Speedway near Atlanta before being swept up in a multi-car crash shortly after the start of Stage 2. The damage sustained in the Lap 82 incident was too severe for the Motorcraft/Quick Lane Ford Mustang Dark Horse to continue, resulting in a 38th-place finish.

Berry started 10th and quickly established himself as a contender, running inside the top five and climbing as high as second during Stage 1. The promising start, however, unraveled early in the second segment and dropped him from 13th to 25th in the NASCAR Cup Series points standings.

"It looked like I faded up a little bit to give the 20 room, and Ty [Gibbs] went to make a move it looked like and we got together," Berry said. "It's just a racing deal at Atlanta."

Berry said it's unfortunate to drop out of a race so early.

"In this style of racing I think all of us just want to make it out with a decent finish," he said. "We were able to do that last week [in the Daytona 500], and we were able to do that in the Duel, but not so lucky this time."

Despite the result, Berry was encouraged by the overall pace of his Mustang.

"I felt like I was really strong at the beginning," he said. "We got pretty tight at the end of the first run and tried to make it better. We probably made it worse at the start of [the sec-



ond Stage]...You lose a little bit of track position, and your car handles so much worse that it's hard to tell. That's why we all race so hard to stay up front...because the cars drive so bad in mid-pack, but yet you have no choice.

"Overall, the guys did a good job. We had a really good car here last year. I think we have a

little bit of work to do coming back here in the summer, but overall, the guys do a really good job here."

Berry and the Wood Brothers team now shift their focus to next Sunday's DuraMAX Texas Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas near Austin, Texas.



Cattle on a Virginia farm wait for a portable fence to be removed to allow them to graze fresh pasture. Small-scale animal feeding operations are one of the focal points in this year's menu of projects covered by NRCS' Regional Conservation Partnership Program. (Photo by John Markon, NRCS Virginia)

NRCS sets RCPP application deadlines

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Virginia announced open application periods for available Regional Conservation Partnership Programs across the state to be considered for funding during Fiscal Year 2026.

The deadline to submit financial assistance applications to NRCS for the specific RCPP projects listed below is April 15, 2026. Applications should be made at the applicant's local USDA/NRCS service center or field office. Available programs include:

- Engaging Small AFOs in the Nutrient Management Planning Process
- Increasing Landscape Resiliency in Virginia's Top Producing Agricultural Region
- Switchgrass Cropping System Transition

The project "Engaging Small AFOs in the Nutrient Management Planning Process" will work to reduce nutrient and sediment transport from small animal feeding operations (AFOs) primarily located in the Potomac River Basin, a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. Sustainable Chesapeake and its partners will engage operators of small dairy and beef cattle AFOs in the development of comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs). Covered counties in Virginia are Page and Rockingham, which are served by the USDA's Harrisonburg field office, and Augusta, which is served by the Verona field office.

The Alliance for the Shenando-

ah Valley and supporting partners within the Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative (SVCC) are leading the project "Increasing Landscape Resiliency in Virginia's Top Producing Agricultural Region." The project involves these partners assisting with preserving working family farms and increasing climate resiliency in the Shenandoah Valley through permanent conservation easements. This project is available to landowners in Augusta, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Frederick, Page and Warren counties.

The "Switchgrass Cropping System Transition" project will improve carbon sequestration, soil health and farm income while reducing nutrient runoff in southern Virginia by transitioning 5,000 acres of marginal row crop agriculture (all covered by expiring Conservation Reserve Program agreements) and degraded cool-season grass pastureland to a Switchgrass Cropping System. The project will engage historically underserved (HU) producers through a network of partner organizations with a target of at least 51 percent HU producer enrollment totaling more than 2,500 acres. This project is available to landowners in the following counties: Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Brunswick, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Franklin, Greensville, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Southampton and Sussex.

Varsity Girls Get Win at James River

By Ashlee Mullis

The Varsity Girls Basketball Team traveled to James River, Friday, February 13, where they defeated the Lady Knights 34-30. The Lady Cougars outscored James River in 3 of the 4 quarters, holding on to the lead for the close win. Kendra Worley had 17 points in the game as well as 7 rebounds, 1 assist, 7 de-

flections, and 2 steals. Chloe Hubbard had 10 points, 6 rebounds, 2 deflections, and 2 steals. Sheyan Lester had 4 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist, 4 deflections, and 1 steal. Journey Moore had 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 3 deflections, and 4 steals in the win. Martina Hubbard added 2 points, 2 rebounds, 3 deflections, and 1 steal.



Leo Rucker



Julie Morgan

New exhibit to open in Danbury

The Stokes County Arts Council is pleased to announce the opening of "Faces of Stokes Arts," an exhibit of original paintings by Sharon Grubbs in the Apple Gallery. A reception is scheduled for Sunday, March 8 from 3-5 p.m. at the Stokes County Arts Council 500 Main Street Danbury, N.C.

The individuals featured in this portrait project were chosen by the Stokes County Arts Council for the lasting contributions they have made to the cultural life of the county as Stokes Arts recently celebrated their 50th Anniversary. Each subject represents a different way the arts have been nurtured here—through education, performance, leadership, volunteerism, and steadfast advocacy. Together, they reflect a shared commitment to creativity, community, and opportunity.

Grubbs shared: "Meeting each of them, listening to their stories, and spending time in conversation was a genuine joy. As they spoke about the Arts Council, there was an unmistakable emotion—passion, gratitude, pride, and love—that surfaced again and again. It was my hope, as I painted them, to capture not only a likeness, but that spirit: the warmth, the dedication, and the deep appreciation they carried for what the Arts Council has meant in their lives and in the lives of others."

Seen together, these portraits are more than individual representations. They are a collective expression of belief—proof that when people care deeply about the arts, their influence can ripple outward for generations.

As subjects reflected on the history of theater, music, and arts education

in Stokes County, they consistently pointed to different people and programs that shaped distinct eras of growth—each building on what came before.

Sharon Grubbs said her passion for painting began early, but it was during her first year at commercial art school that she realized her true path lay beyond structured guidelines. After discovering her love for portraiture, she apprenticed with a portrait artist, where she not only honed her skills but also learned the intricacies of running a studio and the business side of it. Learning under a master portrait artist, followed by years of workshops and intensive study with various individual artists, has allowed her to develop a unique style that reflects both her technical foundation and personal creative vision. As an award-winning artist, she has had the privilege of participating in numerous invitational, juried, and group exhibitions on both national and local levels, along with several solo shows that showcase her evolving body of work. When she is not painting, she finds joy in cooking, hiking, spending time with her grandchildren, and exploring new places with her husband, all of which inspire and enrich her artistic practice.

This exhibit will be on display February 19-March 31, in the Apple Gallery. The Stokes County Arts Council is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 12-5 p.m. For additional information about the exhibit, call the Stokes County Arts Council at (336) 593-8159 or visit www.stokesarts.org.

email us
DHALL@THEENTERPRISE.NET

Supervisors

(cont. from page 1)



The Patrick County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution declining to begin early voting before the constitutional waiting period expires.

House Joint Resolution 4, which approved the proposed constitutional amendment for voting, occurred on Jan. 16. Ninety days from that date will expire on April 16.

Early voting is scheduled to begin on March 6, more than a month before the expiration of the 90-day constitutional period.

"The Board of Supervisors is constitutionally bound by oath to uphold the Constitution of Virginia. The Board of Supervisors determines that authorizing early voting before April 16, 2026, presents a substantial constitutional question under Article XII, Section I," the resolution states.

The resolution also states that the board "directs the General Registrar and Electoral Board not to commence early voting and that no

County-owned facilities or County resources shall be made available to conduct early voting on the proposed constitutional amendment before April 16, 2026, unless and until a court of competent jurisdiction determines that such early voting is constitutionally permissible."

The resolution was sent to the Virginia State Board of Elections and the Office of the Attorney General of Virginia after its passage.

Former delegate and attorney Tim Anderson was authorized to represent the Patrick County Board of Supervisors before any court of competent jurisdiction in Virginia concerning the resolution.

More than a dozen attendees at the meeting erupted into applause following the resolution's

adoption.

Following the vote, Jonathan Wood, of the Peters Creek District, said he believes having such a monumental event as changing Virginia's district lines through a state election should not be rushed.

"It needs to carry out the way that our Virginia Constitution says that it should be carried out, and therefore I have full support for this resolution," Wood said.

Board Chairman Andrew Overby, of the Dan River District, said the resolution is much more than just trying to delay the start of early voting, but a symbol of the board's duty to uphold the Constitution of Virginia.

"In my eyes, Constitutional amendments are not something to be taken lightly. I consider

these to be supreme laws of the Commonwealth as well as the nation when dealing with the United States Constitution. As elected representatives, we have a duty to uphold the Constitution, and when we do not, our constituents have every right and duty to hold us accountable and challenge our decisions," he said.

In this case, Overby said the General Assembly has rushed through a constitutional amendment change that he believes is unlawful solely to try to gain additional power in Washington, D.C., and intentionally disenfranchise millions of Virginians.

"The General Assembly

has violated their own rules on multiple occasions to try to get this illegal referendum put up for a vote," he said.

Overby noted Virginians already spoke about the issue in 2020 when the original constitutional amendment to prevent one-party control over redistricting was passed with overwhelmingly bipartisan support.

"Any majority in the General Assembly doesn't get to just decide that the Constitution no longer applies to them and then propose another supposedly temporary process that would unfairly give them total control. The Constitution is not a temporary document that

should just be changed on a whim because of a shift in majority control," Overby said.

Changes to the Constitution should only happen when they are substantiated and approved in a bipartisan manner, Overby added.

"Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of Virginia has also failed to review and decide on this matter in a timely manner. Hopefully, if enough cities and counties in the Commonwealth stand up and pass resolutions like this one, it will push the Supreme Court or the General Assembly to do the right thing and withdraw this redistricting referendum," he said.

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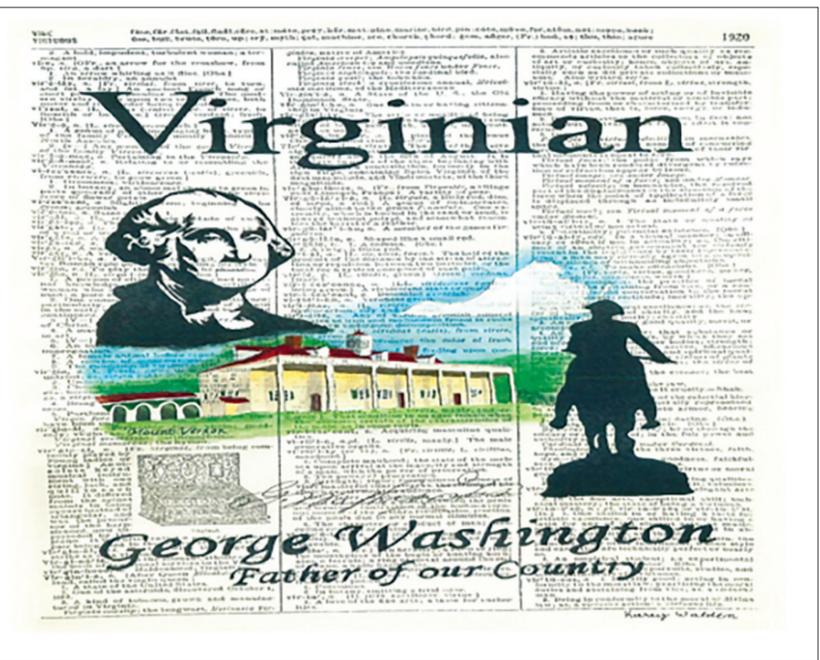


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Kasey Walden of Bristol's Virginia High School won the 2025 Congressional Art Competition in Virginia's Ninth Congressional District. Her artwork is entitled 'George Washington, Virginian.'

Congressional Art Competition kicks off

Each year, the U.S. House of Representatives sponsors the Congressional Art Competition for high school students. This competition is an exciting way for a student from our region to represent the Ninth Congressional District in Washington, D.C. The Artistic Discovery Contest is open to all high school students in the Ninth District.

The chosen theme for 2026 is "Celebrating 250 Years of America." Interested students must submit a photograph of their original artwork to either my Christiansburg or Abingdon office by 5:00 pm on Friday, April 17 for consider-

ation. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed student information release form to qualify.

The overall winner of our district's competition will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol and will be invited to Washington for a reception. The second and third place selections will be displayed in my Christiansburg and Abingdon offices.

Art works entered in the contest may be up to 26 inches by 26 inches (including the frame) and may be up to 4 inches in depth. Artwork must be two-dimensional and cannot weigh more than 15 pounds. The work may be:

Michael Henry Gilley

Michael Henry Gilley of 52 years, Iva Sue Gilley; his daughter, Angela Gilley; and his son, Antonio Christopher Gilley. He also leaves to cherish his memory his granddaughters, Aryanna Lopp, Jazmine Gilley, Brooklyn Gilley, Alexis Azzara, and Tesia Spencer; and his grandsons, Brayden Gilley and Christopher Gilley. Michael is survived by his sisters, Margaret Leonard and Barbara Sue McArthur; his special brother-in-law, Bobby McArthur; and Brenda Hylton. He is also remembered by his nieces and nephews: Bryn-an Hylton (Amanda), Donna Fisher (Mark), Teresa Spencer (Tommy), Mike Plasters (Sandi), Glenn Leonard, Jimmy Clifton (Pat), Steven Clifton (Donna), and Christopher (Brittany), along with extended family members and friends who were touched by his life. A funeral service will be held on Sunday, February 22, 2026, at 3:00pm at Salem Church with Pastor John Franklin officiating. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service. A fellowship meal will be served after the service. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Salem Church, 159 Salem Church Rd, Patrick Springs, Virginia or a charity of your choice. Online condolences may be expressed at www.bassettfuneralservice.com.

Bassett Funeral Service is honored to serve the Gilley family.

- *Paintings: oil, acrylics, watercolor, etc.
 - *Drawings: colored pencil, pencil, ink, marker, pastels, charcoal (It is recommended that charcoal and pastel drawings be fixed)
 - *Collages: must be two dimensional
 - *Prints: lithographs, silkscreen, block prints
 - *Mixed Media: use of more than two mediums such as pencil, ink, watercolor, etc.
 - *Computer-generated art
 - *Photographs
- All entries must be original in concept, design and execution.
- The Congressional Art Competition began in 1982 to provide an opportunity for members of Congress to encourage and recognize the artistic talents of their young constituents. Since then, over 650,000 high school students have been involved with the nationwide competition.
- For more information on the annual Congressional Art Competition, contact the Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405 or visit the Congressional Art Competition website.

Gardeners

(cont. from page 2)

dynamic beekeeping methods that are practiced and taught at Spikenard Farm.

Don't Forget the Woody Natives — James Foley, the second speaker at the symposium, will discuss the role of woody natives in our natural landscape. He has been in business at Snow Creek Nursery for 31 years.

Well versed on his topic, James taught Horticulture at Virginia Western Community College for 11 years. He is a graduate of Auburn University with a Master's in Horticulture in addition to a B.S. in Horticulture from Virginia Tech.

James intends to focus his presentation on woody natives as they are of significant importance, yet are often overlooked in favor of herbaceous plants and wildflowers when discussing the interdependence of native plants and native

pollinators.

VSO's American Kestrel Project and the Plight of Virginia's Grassland Birds will be discussed by the final speaker, Dan Bieker, a wildlife biologist/nature enthusiast and long-time natural sciences instructor at Piedmont VA Community College, where he taught Field Ornithology and Appalachian Ecology.

Dan will be speaking about the relationship between birds like swallows, blackbirds, sparrows, and American Kestrels with Virginia's declining grassland habitats as well as important efforts in preservation.

In 2015, the Virginia Society of Ornithology undertook a project to address the loss of tree nesting cavities for the American Kestrel, an imperiled grassland species. Over several years the

VSO facilitated the construction and installation of over 500 nesting boxes, mostly in the Piedmont and Mountain/Valley areas of the state.

Dan aims for this program to highlight various aspects of the project, along with the VSO's efforts to encourage landowners to employ conservation practices for the benefit of grassland birds.

The symposium will be held on Saturday March 7, at Patrick & Henry Community College in Stuart. Doors Open at 8:30 a.m. Walk-ins are welcome, or purchase tickets and pre-register with an optional lunch online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/patrick-county-master-gardener-spring-symposium-tickets-1979418799915>.

Email Patrick County Master Gardeners Association at patrickmastergardeners.org with questions or for more information.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF AN APPLICATION BY APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE RATES, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS OF A UNIVERSAL SERVICE FEE TO BE PAID BY RETAIL CUSTOMERS TO FUND THE PIPP CASE NO. PUR-2025-00222

On December 18, 2025, Appalachian Power Company ("APCo" or "Company") filed an application ("Application") with the State Corporation Commission ("Commission") requesting approval of a proposed update to the rates, terms, and conditions of a universal service fee ("USF") to be paid by retail customers to fund the Percentage of Income Payment Program ("PIPP"). Specifically, APCo proposes to decrease the USF to fund the PIPP from \$0.00132 per kilowatt hour ("kWh") to \$0.00101 per kWh effective July 1, 2026. APCo also asks the Commission to approve the Company's proposed true-up mechanism for the PIPP and accept APCo's legal interpretation of the \$25 million statutory cap on the PIPP. On January 6, 2026, APCo made a supplemental filing, providing the proposed tariff sheets demonstrating the changes that the Company proposes as supplemental attachments to the Application.

Established as part of the 2020 Virginia Clean Economy Act, the PIPP was designed to limit the electric utility payments of persons or households participating in certain, specified public assistance programs, based upon a percentage of their income, for customers of Virginia Electric and Power Company and APCo. The General Assembly further addressed the PIPP, its funding, and implementation, as part of the 2021 legislative session with the passage of Chapter 308 of the 2021 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session I.

The Commission issued an Order on July 29, 2021, directing, among other things, that APCo: (a) begin collecting the USF from statutorily designated customers to fund the estimated start-up costs that the Department of Social Services ("DSS") needed to establish the PIPP; (b) calculate a USF on a per kWh basis to recover \$0.6 million on an annual basis; (c) file tariffs reflecting such fee with the Commission; (d) begin making payments to the state treasury to enable DSS to undertake the actions necessary to establish the PIPP; and (e) defer its PIPP administrative costs and seek their recovery at a later date.

APCo states that, in its most recently adjudicated PIPP update filing, the Commission granted a USF with an annual jurisdictional revenue requirement of \$19,234,907. Among other things, the Commission ordered the Company to address the legality and the specific details of its proposal to collect any costs incurred above the \$25 million cap in the subsequent program year.

In its current Application, the Company proposes a USF designed to recover a revenue requirement of \$13.3 million from its Virginia jurisdictional customers. The Company also proposes a true-up mechanism for the USF. As for the PIPP's \$25 million statutory annual cost cap, APCo asserts that DSS holds the responsibility to limit program costs to \$25 million per year, and to inform APCo and participating PIPP customers when the limit is reached and the benefits are exhausted.

Further details are set forth in the Company's Application and supporting exhibits, and interested persons are encouraged to review these documents.

The Commission entered an Order for Notice and Comment that, among other things, directed the Company to provide notice to the public and provided interested persons an opportunity to comment on the Company's Application, to file a notice of participation and to request a hearing in this matter.

Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-140, *Filing and service*, of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure ("Rules of Practice"), 5 VAC 5-20-10 *et seq.*, the Commission has directed that service on parties and the Staff of the Commission ("Staff") in this matter

shall be accomplished by electronic means. Please refer to the Commission's Order for Notice and Comment for further instructions concerning Confidential or Extraordinarily Sensitive Information.

An electronic copy of the Company's Application may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company: Elisabeth M. Bruce, Esquire, American Electric Power Service Corporation, 1051 East Cary Street, Suite 1100, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or ebBruce@aep.com. Interested persons also may download unofficial copies of the Application and other documents filed in this case from the Commission's website: scc.virginia.gov/case-information.

On or before April 9, 2026, any interested person may file comments on the Application by following the instructions on the Commission's website: scc.virginia.gov/case-information/submit-public-comments. Those unable, as a practical matter, to submit comments electronically may file such comments with the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. All comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2025-00222.

On or before April 9, 2026, any person or entity wishing to participate as a respondent in this proceeding may do so by filing a notice of participation with the Clerk of the Commission at scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling. Those unable, as a practical matter, to file a notice of participation electronically may file such notice by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Such notice of participation shall include the email addresses of such parties or their counsel. The respondent shall serve a copy of the notice of participation electronically on counsel to the Company, Staff, and all other respondents. Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Rules of Practice, any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. Any organization, corporation, or government body participating as a respondent must be represented by counsel as required by 5 VAC 5-20-30, *Counsel*, of the Rules of Practice. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2025-00222.

On or before April 9, 2026, any interested person may file a written request for a hearing with the Clerk of the Commission at scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling. Those unable, as a practical matter, to file a request for hearing electronically may file such request by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. The interested person shall serve a copy of the hearing request electronically on counsel to the Company, Staff, and all respondents. A request for a hearing shall include: (i) a precise statement of the filing party's interest in the proceeding; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; (iii) a statement of the legal basis for such action; and (iv) a precise statement why a hearing should be conducted in this matter. All requests for a hearing shall refer to Case No. PUR-2025-00222.

Any documents filed in paper form with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission in this docket may use both sides of the paper. In all other respects, except as modified by the Commission's Order for Notice and Comment, all filings shall comply fully with the requirements of 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Rules of Practice.

The Company's Application, the public versions of other documents filed in this case, the Commission's Rules of Practice, and the Commission's Order for Notice and Comment may be viewed at: scc.virginia.gov/case-information.

PATRICK PULPITS

Skills build on skills

By Van Yandell

John 21: 17 "He said unto him, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep."

After teaching industrial arts and working as a carpenter for many years, I suppose I had sawdust flowing through my veins. The wood shop must have been my favorite area and that love carried over into my retirement years.

A wood shop in a garage became my work area in which I continued to build furniture, cabinets and other items of walnut, cherry and maple. A woodland on the property provided trees to cut and haul to an Amish sawmill.

Roy, the sawmill operator was an unusual sort. He worked barefoot and used a band saw. His work was absolute precision. I could not find as much as a thirty-second of an inch variance in thickness and widths.

Normally there was one-thousand or more board feet of lumber in my drying building for my habit and the projects seemed to never find an end, which of course, I would not have wanted to happen.

A high school boy from down the road would come by occasionally (most every day) and keep me company. I still see him from time to time and we reminisce about those days in the wood shop.

One day I was turning bed posts on a wood lathe. The project was a walnut, king-size poster bed. It sits in my bed room even now.

My young friend asked me that day if I could show him how to do the work. My immediate response was "These skills are an accumulation of years of work, study and a lot of trial and error. So it probably wouldn't be of any great benefit to you."

He was depressed over my response and went away head down and dragging his feet. Over the time, I had

second thoughts. We all had to start somewhere; why not?

A couple of days later he returned. Asking him what he had in mind to build, his response was "I dunno." Finally the truth came out; he wanted to make a wooden heart for one of his girlfriends. I'm not sure how many he had and I dared not ask!

Thinking he could not get into much trouble with a portable jig-saw, I gave him his first lesson. It was to draw a symmetrical design for the heart. Avoid making the radius of the curve the blade would not turn that sharp a curve.

Clamping the nine inch square piece of cherry to a work bench, he began. After an extended period of time, he brought it to me for inspection.

With a little touch up, he had a presentable heart. I'm sure it totally impressed his current girlfriend. As the days and weeks passed, he used belt sanders (portable and bench), a band saw, a router and drills. He made his mother a cutting board and a wall shelf.

Skills build on skills. If a woodworker learns simple cabinet construction, he/she can build a night stand. If one can build a night stand, he/she can build a dresser and a chest-of-drawers. If one can turn a rolling pin on a wood lathe, a poster bed is definitely in the future.

New Christians are usually (or should be) introduced to Jesus' last commandment before He ascended.

Acts 1: 8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The power He was referring to was from the Holy Spirit (Spirit of God). Acts 2: 1-4 tells us of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Any true be-

liever-follower of the Lord Jesus has this power.

A Christian should never feel that he/she is going into the world alone to teach others about Jesus and eternal life. God is with us and will give us words and motivation to inform others about His saving power (Matthew 28: 20). Just as skills build on skills in the wood shop, skills build on skills in our Christian life. Also our enthusiasm grows as well as incentive to share our faith.

In the leading scripture (John 21: 17) Jesus asked Peter "Do you love me?" We love Jesus because He first loved us. With this truth, should we not follow His commandment to "feed my sheep?"

Skills building on skills include feeding lost and hungry sheep. Sheep are not particularly intelligent animals; they become lost rather easily. There are over five-billion people in this world that have not realized eternal salvation is by a faith based belief in Jesus, crucified and resurrected.

This is not to mean those billions have limited intellect, but is to say they have never been told. Telling others is establishing a skill, a motivation and a burden for those without Christ. One does not have to be a carpenter to build; neither does one have to be a preacher or missionary to share their faith.

We may not win our first encounter to Jesus but the courage to win the next will develop and our enthusiasm will grow. A personal testimony, a gift of a Bible, or a simple invitation to a church or a back yard Bible study is a good place to begin. I challenge you! Let your skills build on skills.

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com.

BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Isaiah (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Whose first chapter begins, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus"? Matthew, Luke, John, Acts
3. From Acts 9, where did Peter cure Aeneas? Tyre, Neapolis, Lydda, Gibeon

4. As found in Numbers 20, where did Aaron die? Mount of Olives, Pisgah, Mount Hor, Gilboa
5. From Acts 24, what was Felix's wife, Drusilla? Pharisee, Gentile, Greek, Jewess
6. In II Kings 1, what Philistine city worshipped Baalzebub? Ekron, Succoth, Gomorrah, Antipatris

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Acts, 3) Lydda, 4) Mount Hor, 5) Jewess, 6) Ekron



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

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Stuart
(actually in Patrick Springs)
276.236.7814
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Mass Schedule
Sundays at 8:30 a.m.
Reconciliation
Sundays 7:45 - 8:15 a.m.

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260 Spring Rd., Patrick Springs, VA - 276-694-6357

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Sunday School for all ages 9:45 am
Wednesdays
Community Meal & Service 6:00 pm
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Monday, Wednesday and Friday

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276-694-3440 11:00 Worship Service
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Super Crossword

PEOPLE WITH CONNECTIONS

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| ACROSS | 1 Stew morsels | 5 G-man, e.g. | 8 Bun-topping seeds | 15 Razor brand | 19 "That's —!" ("Untrue!") | 20 God, in Turin | 21 Perk up | 22 Picnic pests | 23 "Secret Love" singer having two opposing personalities? | 26 Performs like LL Cool J | 27 2007 documentary about the U.S. health care system | 28 Pick-up-sticks math game | 29 Suffix with 110-Across | 30 "Aquaman" star Jason | 31 "Seven Year Ache" singer buying goods at wholesale? | 37 — kwon do | 39 Change habitats | 40 Brigitte of "Contempt" | 41 Not smart | 44 Height: Abbr. | 45 Ghana's capital | 47 Biol. or geol. | 49 Star of many silent Westerns creating an ensemble? | 53 Butterfly food | 55 Cineplex — ("Untrue!") | 56 Alternatives to coffees | 57 Distinctive times | 59 Wife of Zeus | 60 Stimp's pal | 61 Go — ride | 63 Luau gift | 64 "ER" co-star Anthony "Sleuth" co-star portraying a policeman? | 71 Boot parts | 74 Silent "yes" | 75 Network on the telly, with "the" | 76 Wall Street deg., often | 79 Head, in Pau | 80 Pare down | 82 Speller's clarification | 84 Cute, cutesily | 86 Scottish language | 89 Frequent USO show performer wishing earnestly? | 92 Raw rock | 93 Interrupt dancers, say | 95 Coach Parseghian | 96 The way things are now | 97 Swings about, as one's arms | 99 Exercise goal | 102 Has too much, briefly | 103 "Mame" star weighing people down? | 108 Turin locale | 109 Kin of "equi-" | 110 Inflated head | 111 Beginning | 114 Telly | 115 "Oliver!" Oscar nominee being zany? | 120 Writer — Stanley Gardner | 121 Iron or tin | 122 Classic auto | 123 Robert of "The Sopranos" | 124 In view | 125 Got narrower | 126 It's opposite NNW | 127 Other, in Spain | 36 "Nuts!" | 37 One-on-one instructor | 38 Positive pole | 42 "I believe," to texters | 43 Iniquitous | 45 Pungent | 46 "— -ching!" | 48 Tax-deferred svgs. plans | 50 Motionless | 51 "Hud" actress Patricia | 52 Huck Finn, for one | 54 Burn a bit | 58 Williams of tennis | 62 Lyric poem | 63 Huck Finn, for one | 65 Prez called "Ike" | 66 Net pop-ups, e.g. | 67 "Uptown Girl" singer Billy | 68 Oxide, e.g. | 69 Fetus' home | 70 Play award | 71 "Let —" ("Frozen" song) | 72 Time soon to come | 73 Suspension bridge part | 76 Popular food seasoning brand | 77 Comrow, e.g. | 78 Vast chasm | 81 Slugging stat | 82 Crucial artery | 83 Went across | 85 Print quality stat | 87 In a very cold manner | 88 Fungus | 90 Welcome | 91 Poet Ogden | 94 China's Mao — -tung | 98 Actress Quinn | 99 Blossom | 100 Mystery awards | 101 English biscuits | 103 Some Miller beers | 104 Arm muscle, informally | 105 Words on a help desk | 106 NYC rep starting in '19 | 107 Rock — (Brazilian music festival) | 112 Weizman of Israel | 113 Novice | 115 Fast plane | 116 In the style of | 117 Suffix with alp | 118 "Inc." relative | 119 Female deer |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|

Weekly SUDOKU

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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!

OBITUARY SUBMISSION DEADLINE MONDAY AT NOON

CLASSIFIED

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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- Provides information to clients seeking services and directly makes referrals for services;
- Researches a variety

of databases to obtain and/or verify information needed to process applications;

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(Meeting/event information must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Friday before the desired publication date. Email to dhall@theenterprise.net.)

Meetings

Friday, Feb. 27

The Tourism Advisory Council will host a board retreat from 12-3 p.m. in the Patrick & Henry Community College community room.

Thursday, March 5

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

Monday, March 9

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, March 18

The Stuart Town Council will meet at 6 p.m. in the Town Office.

Events

Friday, March 6

The community food truck will be at the SRRS from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, March 7

The Meadows of Dan Women's Club will hold a BINGO night at the Meadows of Dan Community Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. and games start at 6 p.m. Food is available to eat in or take out.

Wednesday, March 11

The Patrick County Food Bank will hold its monthly distribution at its Stuart location from 8:30-11 a.m. and from 5-6:30 p.m., at Fellow-

ship Church in Ararat from 8-10 a.m., and at the Community Building in Meadows of Dan starting at 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 12

The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group will meet at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. Entertainment will be provided by Shelley Roberts. The Landmark Center will be providing the lunch meal. Attendees are requested to bring their favorite desserts to share.

The DMV Connect will be inside the Stuart site of Patrick & Henry Community College from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Closed for lunch from 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Friday, March 20

The community food truck will be at the Fairystone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Ongoing

The Patrick Springs Ruritan Club meets at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the community room at Patrick Springs Park, 2 Ballpark Road, Patrick Springs.

Inside yard sale to benefit Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC. 109 Buena Vista, Stuart, Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Members meet on the first Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Alzheimer's office. New members are welcome. For more information, call (276) 693-6018.

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

Community meal at Salem Church on Salem

Church Road in Critz, the first Sunday of every month at 12:10 p.m. Call (276) 222-1069 with questions.

Vesta Alzheimer's Group LLC meets at the Vesta Community Center on the third Tuesday each month at noon. Both groups welcome new members and invite caregivers to attend. Literature is also available.

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

Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard meets on 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, on the 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 Patrick County Senior Citizens Group is sponsoring a June 2 - 5, 2026 trip to the eastern shore of Virginia. Trip flyers are available at the Patrick County Recreation Office (276) 694-3917 or by contacting Judy Lacks, trip coordinator, at (276) 694-4767.

Willis Gap Community Center: Members Meeting, the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.; Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam, every Friday. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food, with music and dancing, 6:30-9 p.m.; Golden Oldies Open Jam is on the last Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food, music, and dancing from 6:30-9 p.m.

Agriculture safety week encourages farmers to 'Live Well, Farm Well'

During this year's Ag Safety Awareness Program Week, March 2-6, American Farm Bureau Federation and safety and health professionals are encouraging farmers to prioritize their health and wellness.

Observed ahead of the busy spring season, ASAP Week raises awareness about health and safety hazards facing agriculture while reminding farmers, ranchers and farmworkers to keep safe practices top of mind.

This year's theme, "Live Well, Farm Well," emphasizes that personal health, wellness and safety together can reduce work-related injuries and deaths. Throughout the week, AFBF, AgriSafe Network and the U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers will spotlight a different topic each day:

- Monday: Beat the Heat
- Tuesday: Rest and Refuel
- Wednesday: Know Your Numbers
- Thursday: Safe Lifting
- Friday: Move with Purpose

"Living well and farming well go hand in hand," said Matt Nuckols, chair of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Farm Safe-

ty Advisory Committee. "ASAP Week encourages farmers to slow down just enough to take care of their bodies, because staying healthy, focused and intentional on the job helps keep everyone safe."

Farming is both physically and mentally demanding, and producers are known for pushing through long days to get the job done. But extended hours, physical strain and stress can cause fatigue, which leads to dangerous mistakes when working with heavy machinery and livestock. Health and safety experts encourage farmers to make time to rest, refuel with healthy meals, and stay hydrated to maintain energy and focus.

"Listening to your body and taking breaks isn't giving in or slacking off," Nuckols noted. "It's a vital part of staying safe and productive. A well-rested farmer is a safer farmer."

Beyond the hazards of working with farm equipment and livestock, many producers and farmworkers spend long hours outdoors in hot temperatures during peak seasons, increasing risk of heat-related illness. Steps



like planning work during cooler hours, taking regular breaks, staying hydrated, seeking shade and looking out for one another can help prevent heat-related emergencies.

While ASAP Week highlights safety and wellness, organizers stress that conversations should continue year-round. Regular check-ins, consistent planning and sharing resources can help promote healthy, safe agricultural and rural communities.

For more farm safety resources,

visit vafb.com/Safety. For more information on ASAP Week, visit the ASAP Facebook page, or the center's YouTube channel.

Additionally, AFBF's Think F.A.S.T. farm and agriculture safety training program proactively addresses farm safety concerns for youth ages 14 to 17. Program materials are free to members and non-members, and focus on general safety, leadership, and critical thinking skills applied to technical and agriculture-specific contexts.

Super Crossword

Answers

P	E	A	S	A	G	T	S	E	S	A	M	E	S	A	T	R	A		
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9	6	7	8	3	2	5	4	1
3	9	1	7	2	8	4	6	5
5	4	2	6	1	9	7	3	8
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Visit Patrick marketing grants available

The Patrick County Office of Economic Development & Tourism will open the spring cycle of the Visit Patrick County Marketing Grant on March 2.

This grant program is a reimbursable funding opportunity tailored for stakeholders seeking to create projects, programs, and events that will attract visitors to Patrick County.

Strong applications will demonstrate how their marketing initiatives increased visitations to and/or exposure of the county through promotional efforts.

Grant workshops are scheduled for Friday, March 13, and Friday, March 20. The workshops will be held in Patrick & Henry Community College's community room at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to tourism staff for any questions regarding the application.

"We're excited to continue with this new program," said Grace Cooper, marketing manager. "We look forward to supporting the events and programs that attract visitors

and help support the tourism economy in Patrick County. Thank you to everyone who participated in the first grant round. Your participation helped us refine the application for future cycles."

The Spring 2026 Marketing Grant will be available for events and programs held between July 1 and December 31. The application opens on March 2 and will close on April 3. Awards will be announced in May.

A total of eleven applications were submitted during the Fall 2025 funding round, with a total of \$20,000.00 available for funding. The Tourism Advisory Council awarded funding to five events: First Fridays Summer Jam \$3,400, Star Theatre Spring 2026 Series \$5,000, Songwriter Circle Series: Part 5 \$1,000, Memorial Day Gospel Music \$5,000, Stuart Beach Music Festival \$5,430.

The application and additional details can be found on the Patrick County Tourism Advisory Council webpage: <https://www.co.patrick.va.us/198/Tourism-Advisory-Council>.



Surry Community College is offering notary public courses in March at The Yadkin Center. For more information, contact Dr. Douglas Underwood at (336) 386-3584 or underwood@surry.edu or workforce.surry.edu.

Surry offers Notary Public classes in March

Surry Community College is offering Notary Public classes in March. Classes will be held at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville.

Notary Public classes are designed to prepare students to become a Notary Public in North Carolina. Topics include legal, ethical, and procedural requirements of the Notary Act. Upon completion of this course with a passing grade of 80 percent, a person is eligible to make application with the N.C. Secretary of State office. Tuition is \$71 plus the cost

of the book.

The Notary Public classes will be held on the following dates and times. One session will be held Wednesday, March 4 and Thursday, March 5, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., and a second session will be held Wednesday, March 18, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information about the course or to register, please contact Dr. Douglas Underwood, Director of Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwood@surry.edu. You can also register online at workforce.surry.edu.

WWW.THEENTERPRISE.NET

LEGAL

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY,)
a public service corporation)
organized and existing under)
Title 56 of the Code of Virginia,)
Petitioner,) Law No. CL26000109-00

v.)
JAMES ROBERT LIGON)
176 Deer Chase Drive)
Cahse City, VA 23924,)

ELAINE LIGON MARTIN)
1159 White Oak Drive)
South Boston, VA 24592)

ERIN LIGON)
6690 Eastbrook Avenue SW,)
Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469)

UNKNOWN OWNERS, the heirs of)
HARLEY D. LIGON)

UNKNOWN OWNERS, the heirs of)
ALLEN RING,)

and)

a transmission line right-of-way easement,)
comprising 0.013 acres, more or less,)
across a parcel of land located in Patrick)
County, Virginia and identified as)
Tax Map No. 4010-19-8,)
Defendants.)

NOTICE OF FILING OF PETITION FOR CONDEMNATION BY PUBLICATION

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to an order entered on the 11th day of February, 2026, this notice is hereby given:

In this proceeding, the petitioner seeks to acquire by condemnation an access easement across a certain parcel of land situated in Patrick County, Virginia, for the purpose of constructing, maintaining, and operating an electric transmission line on a nearby parcel, which subject parcel is described more particularly in the Petition for Condemnation and exhibits attached thereto on file in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Patrick County, to which reference is hereby made for a full and accurate description thereof; for the right of immediate entry in accordance with Virginia Code §§ 25.1-223 and -224; and for the appointment of commissioners or the empanelment of a jury to ascertain just compensation to the owners of any estate or interest in the property to be taken or affected as a result of the taking and use thereof by the petitioner.

A hearing on the petitioner's request for immediate entry onto the property for the purpose of constructing the access road will be held on April 15, 2026, at 1:00 p.m., in the Circuit Court of Patrick County. Any person with an interest in the property is invited to attend and participate.

At a later date, the petitioner will move the Circuit Court of Patrick County to set a date for the trial of this proceeding. The purpose of the trial will be to determine just compensation for the easement to be condemned and to ascertain the damages, if any, resulting to the adjacent property as a result of the taking.

And it appearing by affidavit filed according to law that after diligent inquiry, the following owners of the property are not residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or their names and addresses are unknown and that diligence has been used by and on behalf of the Petitioner to ascertain such names and addresses without effect:

- a. Erin Ligon, 6690 Eastbrook Avenue SW, Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469;
- b. Unknown Owners, the heirs of Jeffery Allen Ring; and
- c. Unknown Owners, the heirs of Harley D. Ligon.

It is ordered that the aforesaid owners appear within 10 days after due publication of this order in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Patrick County and do what is necessary to protect his or her interests; and it is further ordered that if any of the above-named owners desire to assert any objection or defense to the taking or damaging of the property or to the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of Patrick County to hear the case and to proceed with the appointment of commissioners or the empanelment of a jury shall file his or her answer and grounds of defense, designating the property in which he/she claims to be interested, the grounds of any objection or defense to the taking or damaging of his or her property or to the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of Patrick County to hear the case and to proceed with the appointment of commissioners or the empanelment of a jury for the determination of just compensation. Should any such owner fail to file an answer and grounds of defense as hereinabove provided, such failure shall not preclude the owner from appearing on the date set for the appointment of commissioners or the empanelment of a jury nor from presenting evidence as to valuation and damage nor from sharing in the award of just compensation according to his or her interest therein or otherwise protecting his or her rights, but such failure shall preclude such owner from any other defense by way of pleas in bar, abatement, or otherwise.

An extract, Teste:

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Patrick County

Matthew P. Pritts (VSB No. 34628)
E-mail: Matthew.Pritts@woodsrogers.com
Gavin A. Roe (VSB No. 98380)
E-mail: Gavin.Roe@woodsrogers.com
WOODS ROGERS VANDEVER BLACK PLC
10 South Jefferson Street, Suite 1800
P.O. Box 14125
Roanoke, VA 24038-4125
Phone: (540) 983-7600
Fax: (540) 983-7711
Counsel for Petitioner Appalachian Power Company



LEGAL

PUBLIC HEARING

The Patrick County School Board will hold a public hearing on the 2026-2027 School Budget on Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. at the Patrick County School Board Office, 132 North Main Street, Stuart, VA 24171.

LEGAL

RFP 2026-MNT-002

The Patrick County School Board is accepting competitive sealed proposals from licensed contractors for a Multipurpose Building/Wrestling Building (Engineered Metal) at Patrick County High School, 215 Cougar Lane, Stuart, VA 24171. RFP electronic file plans are available from the Architect's office (88knight@comcast.net) or School Maintenance Office, Chad Haynes (chad.haynes@patrick.k12.va.us). Proposals will be received on Thursday, March 12, 2026, on or before 2:00 p.m. at the Patrick County School Board Office, 132 North Main Street, Stuart, VA 24171, and results will be read aloud. A pre-bid conference will be Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at Patrick County High School. All interested contractors attending the pre-bid conference must check in at the high school main office.

LEGAL

PUBLIC HEARING: The Patrick County Board of Supervisors and the Patrick County Planning Commission will hold a joint Public Hearing, Monday, March 9, 2026 on the proposed solar energy facilities ordinance.

The hearing will be held in the 3rd floor Courtroom on the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart, Virginia. Anyone wishing to view the proposed ordinance may do so at the County Administration office, Suite 218 located in the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building.

If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please contact the County Administration Office at 276-694-6094.

LEGAL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING: The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will hold a Public Hearing, Monday, March 9, 2026 on the proposed hay cutting lease.

The hearing will be held in the 3rd floor Courtroom on the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart, Virginia. Anyone wishing to view the proposed hay cutting lease may do so at the County Administration office, Suite 218 located in the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building.

If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please contact the County Administration Office at 276-694-6094.

LEGAL

Notice of Filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Northbrook Virginia Hydro, LLC and the City of Danville, Virginia Pinnacles Hydroelectric Project FERC No. 10896

Northbrook Virginia Hydro, LLC (Northbrook) and the City of Danville, Virginia (City) (together, "Licensee"), hereby gives notice of its intent to relicense the Pinnacles Hydroelectric Project FERC No. 10896 (Project) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The Project is a hydroelectric generating facility, located on the Dan River in Patrick County, Virginia, with an associated primary transmission line that crosses through Henry and Pittsylvania Counties, Virginia. The address for Northbrook is 33 South 6th Street, Suite 4646, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402, and the phone number is 480-551-1228. The address for the City of Danville is P.O. Box 3300, Danville, Virginia 24543, and the phone number is 434-799-5100. On or about February 27, 2026, the Licensee will file with the FERC its Notification of Intent (NOI) to re-license the Project, a Pre-Application Document (PAD), and a request for Authorization to Use the Traditional Licensing Process (TLP). The NOI provides notice of the Licensee's intent to file a license application for the Project. The PAD summarizes relevant and available information regarding the Project's description and operation along with information pertaining to Project resources. The request to use the TLP provides justification for use of the TLP as the most efficient and effective process for this Project. The PAD, NOI and TLP Request will be available for inspection online at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filings/elibrary.asp> under docket number P-10896. They will also be available for inspection during regular business hours at the City of Danville office at 1040 Monument Street, Danville, Virginia 24541. In accordance with 18 CFR §5.3(d)(2), comments on the Licensee's request to use the TLP must be submitted to FERC within 30 days of the filing date using the filing procedures posted on www.ferc.gov. Comments should clearly refer to the Pinnacles Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 10896). In accordance with Commission regulations (18 CFR 5.3), comments should address the (A) likelihood of timely license issuance; (B) complexity of the resource issues; (C) level of anticipated controversy; (D) relative cost of the traditional process compared to the integrated process; (E) the amount of available information and potential for significant disputes over studies; and (F) other factors the commenter believes pertinent.

Initial unemployment claims decrease

Virginia Works' Economic Information and Analytics Division, which serves as the Commonwealth's official source for labor market and workforce data, reported that 2,653 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending February 14, 2026.

The claims were filed with the Virginia Employment Commission, which administers the Commonwealth's Unemployment Insurance program. This is 42.2 percent lower than last week's 4,592 claims and 8.5 percent lower than the comparable week of last year (2,899).

Nearly 83 percent of claimants self-reported an employer which correlates to an associated industry. Based on this reporting, the top five industries (61 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (4,082); Administrative and Technical Services (361); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,520); Manufacturing (2,297); Construction (1,734); and Health Care and Social Assistance (261); Retail Trade

(214); and Manufacturing (209).

Continued weeks claims (21,841) were 2.6 percent higher than last week (21,291) and were 24.2 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (17,579). Nearly 92 percent of claimants self-reported an employer which correlates to an associated industry. Based on this reporting, the top five industries (61 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (4,082); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,520); Manufacturing (2,297); Construction (1,734); and Health Care and Social Assistance (1,642).

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Bat House building event at Fairy Stone State Park



A large group of bat lovers attended a program by Southwest Piedmont Master Naturalists and Friends of Fairystone State. Bat House 101 was held at Fayerdale Hall on Feb. 15. A presentation about the benefits of bats and bat behavior was presented, and bat houses were assembled from kits made at the park. The houses will be installed in the park to encourage a healthy bat population.

Bats are an important part of the ecosystem and are the only flying mammal they can live up to 30 years. Bats can eat thousands of insects a night and they are wonderful for natural insect control. The types of bats most likely to be seen in the park are Little Brown Bat, Big Brown Bat and Little

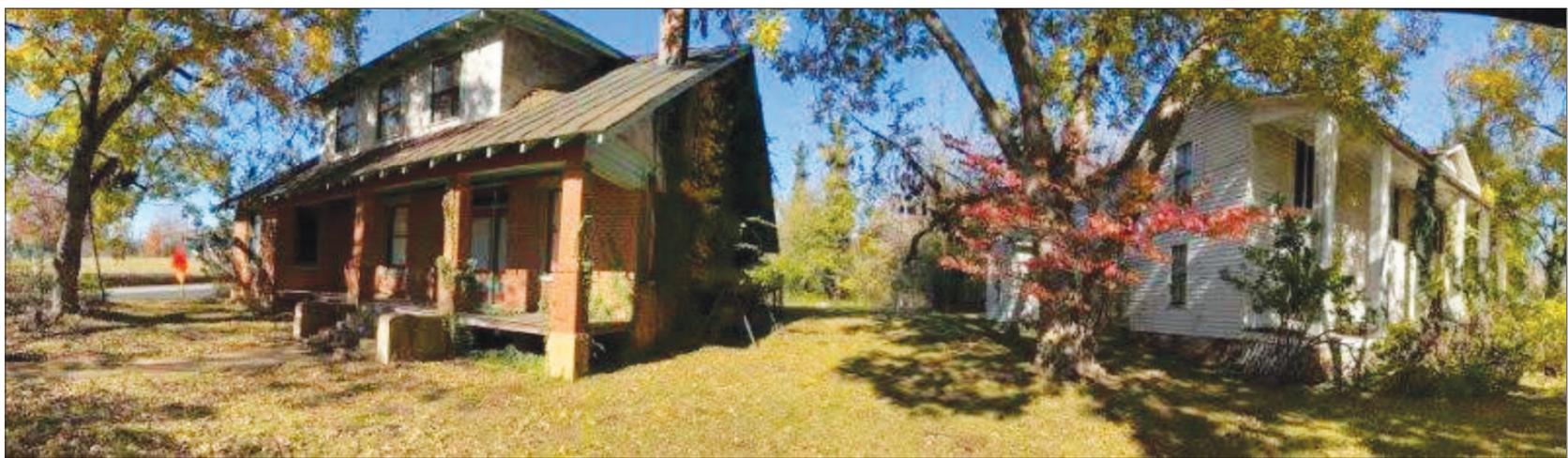
Red Bat.

Another bat program and the unveiling of the installed bat houses is scheduled for April 17 at the

park. Check the Friends of Fairystone and Fairystone State Park Facebook pages for additional upcoming programs.

Envision

(cont. from page 1)



The community center will include nature trails, walking trails, outdoor environmental classrooms, picnic shelters, a playground area, and more.

some of it is earmarked for specific purposes like purchasing playground equipment.

"Basically, if we get around \$70,000, then we would have enough with what we have and leave us a nice buffer to pay for incidentals and some of the things we needed," he said.

Over the last few years, Steele said the group has raised between \$6,500-\$7,000 from various fundraisers.

Reynolds Homestead Director Julie Walters Steele added that individual donations have also been used to pay the monthly payment on the payment note.

"We've been getting money. It's just really kind of sneaking up on us that it's time to pay and get that note taken care of," Steele said.

While she knows \$70,000 is a lot of money, Walters Steele said the funds can be used to bring so much to the Critz community, including walking trails, nature trails, outdoor environmental classrooms, picnic shelters, a gathering place, and more.

"We can't apply for the grants until we have the title on the house. Once we get the house restored, there's a real desire among the Envision Critz membership to not only inside the house but on the trails to tell the history of Critz and its people," she said.

Inside the house will be exhibits, displays, photographs, and other materials, while interpretative signage focusing on different aspects of the community, like its stores and businesses, the Dick & Willie Railroad, and notable res-

idents, will be along the trails.

"Critz is such a great community, but it has not really received much love from the county. The county hasn't supported building a park in this area, and so that's one of the reasons why we're so interested in getting a playground, picnic shelters, and gathering spaces like the other communities have, so the Critz community can enjoy that same privilege," Walters Steele said.

In the future, Steele said the group also wants to recreate a doctor's office in the brick house on the corner of the property to tell the story of Critz's first doctor's office and surgery.

"And have other exhibits there to tell the story of the history of Critz," he said.

Steele said the group plans to soon discuss potentially offering naming opportunities for parts of the property, like the picnic shelter or the playground area as a fundraiser.

"If folks would be willing to help us out with that in exchange for the opportunity to have the name of a loved one or someone who's important to the county or community there," he said.

As paved trails are installed, Walter Steele noted there's also the possibility of offering inscribed bricks in memory or in honor of someone in exchange for donations.

"We've got a lot of ideas, it's just time factors and getting things moving on our end," Steele said.

Noting the organization has some contingen-

cy plans in place if it doesn't raise the \$70,000, Steele said it would be nice if it could get support to fully pay off the purchase note.

"Then we could start applying for grants. One of the big holdups we've had with getting grant opportunities to do improvements on the property is the fact that we don't own the land and the buildings. We're very hopeful that once we get this taken care of one way or the other, we can finally start applying for grants and finally get this thing moving forward," he said.

Steele said Envision Critz hasn't talked to the property owner about potentially extending the deadline on the purchase note.

"I'm sure she probably wants to get this taken care of. What we may end up doing is getting a bank note and paying her off, maybe, and she may be open to doing some more time," he said.

If push came to shove, Steele believes the organization would be fine because it has enough money in the bank, so it wouldn't be leveraging itself if a loan were needed.

"Plus, the value of the property is much more than what we'd be asking for on a loan. We're really not panicked. It would just really, really be nice if we could get this taken care of so we could start moving forward to having a community center," he said.

Donations can be mailed to Envision Critz, P.O. Box 156, Critz, VA 24082.

For more information, visit Facebook.com/EnvisionCritz or email Tom Steele at envisioncritz@gmail.com.

The men who served as POTUS

By Tom Perry

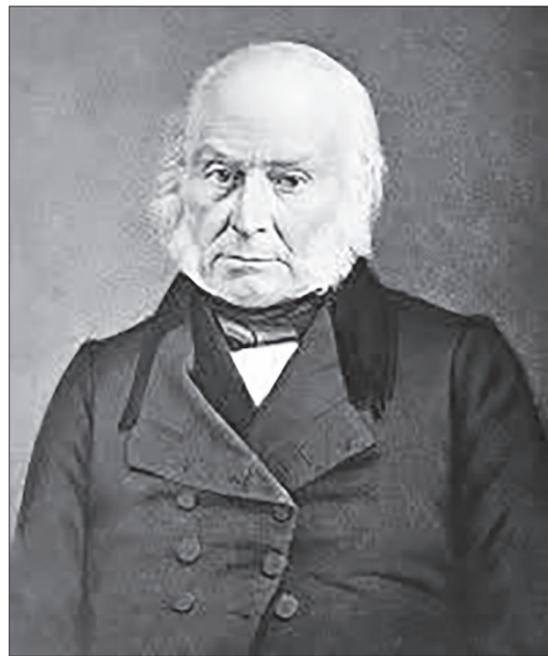
Continuing my posts about the men who served as POTUS President of the United States, we come to number six, John Quincy Adams, the son of the second President, John Adams. George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush were the second father/son combination to serve as POTUS. I have come across several connections between the Stuart and Adams families in my years of researching the Stuarts.

Judge Alexander Stuart, the grandfather of J. E. B. Stuart, is in many Missouri records. On December 12, 1817, Judge Stuart served as Judge of the General Court in St. Clair County, Illinois. On February 2, 1818, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams recommended the renewal of the commission of Stuart as United States Judge. The following month, Stuart received his commission, signed by President James Monroe, at an annual salary of \$1,500. A few weeks later, on February 24, 1818, the inhabitants, including Alexander Stuart of St. Ferdinand in St. Louis County, Missouri, requested a post office.

The Letcher family connected the Stuarts to many important personages. Giles Letcher's first son, Stephen, was the father of Governor Robert Letcher of Kentucky. Robert Letcher served in the U. S. Congress as Minister to Mexico. Letcher served as a go-between with Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams in the "corrupt bargain" that led to Adams' defeat in the 1824 presidential election. Clay came in third in the election and threw his support to Adams, even though Andrew Jackson received the most popular votes. Adams appointed Clay as Secretary of State.

J. E. B. Stuart's father, Archibald Stuart, served one term in the United States House of Representatives. During his one term, he experienced some excitement when he found himself facing the son of a "Founding Father," John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts. Adams, the son of President John Adams, was the only former chief executive of the United States to return to the House of Representatives, serving the people of the "Bay State's" 12th Congressional District for seventeen years. Not surprisingly, the icon from New England and the lawyer from Ararat voted against each other twenty-nine times and with each other nineteen times in the second session of the 25th Congress, 1837-38, with one or the other being "Not Present" another twenty-one times.

Adams repeatedly attempted to get the House to talk about slavery during Stuart's



John Quincy Adams and Archibald Stuart

one term. This "Gag Rule" kept any discussion of slavery out of Congress. Adams presented multiple petitions from citizens calling for the abolition of slavery or curtailing the slave trade in the District of Columbia, including Washington City.

Stuart and Adams locked horns over this issue on February 26, 1838, as a petition from Rocky Mount, Franklin County, Virginia, within Stuart's district, arrived on the House floor. The petition, presented by J. Q. Adams, called for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The petition stated, "in our opinions morally and politically wrong and calculated certainly to stir up the deadliest strife between North and South and finally to involve our beloved country in the horrors of a civil war and to lead to the dissolution of the Union." Stuart "said that the memorial appeared to have come from his district, but he had never heard anything of it." Stuart per the Congressional Digest asked the clerk to read the names on the petition aloud. After they were read, Stuart "said that he was satisfied the names were all fictitious and moved the resolution be laid on the table." The petition was laid on the table where it died a quiet death, and the "Gag Rule" not to talk about slavery was maintained, and the United States drifted ever closer to Civil War.

Another memory of J. Q. Adams comes from the Steven Spielberg movie Amistad, in which Sir Anthony Hopkins, in a riveting scene, plays

Adams, representing the Africans in the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to regain their freedom. Hopkins comes face to face with a bust of his father, John Adams, during his remarks in the film.

J. Q. Adams served his country from youth, acting as his father's Secretary on trips to Europe, including jobs in Russia, and as Ambassador to Great Britain, alongside his father and son, Charles Francis Adams. He served as James Monroe's Secretary of State, the stepping stone to the presidency. Adams wrote much of the Monroe Doctrine, warning European powers to stay out of America during his time as Secretary of State. He was the first President to be photographed and was in office when his father and Thomas Jefferson died on July 4, 1826. After losing reelection to Andrew Jackson, Adams returned to the House of Representatives for nearly two decades. He collapsed in the House of Representatives and died in the Speaker's Office. He is buried with his wife, mother, and father in Quincy, Massachusetts.

- Anthony Hopkins as John Quincy Adams in the movie Amistad, calling on his ancestors with his father's portrait and bust of his father, John Adams. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7B-jqVD3I6Q>
- Hopkins as J. Q. Adams in Amistad <https://youtu.be/86yzWmrR3Hk?si=5p-NiFB4a0fnNuYYE>

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Our ballot is super simple! Don't know much about the accounting firm in your region? Feel free to skip it and move on. Fill out the entire ballot if you're feeling ambitious, or pick and choose among our categories. Select from our drop down list, or if your favorite coffee shop or spa isn't listed, write in your own winner. And, take your time. Our voting platform saves your votes, so you don't have to feel rushed. That means you can return to the ballot to continue choosing your favorites without worrying about any of your votes being lost.

Winner's will be published in
The Enterprise on April 29, 2026
Henry County Enterprise on April 30, 2026

Thank you for reading The Enterprise

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