HAPPY JULY 4TH

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

School board moves forward on Dogwood Road closure

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County School Board again voiced its support for the closure of a section of Dogwood Road at its June 23 meeting, amid continued questions about the legal status of a prior Board of Supervisors vote and related procedural requirements.

The board originally approved a request for the Board of Supervisors to consider initiating the process to abandon the section of Dogwood Road directly in front of Hardin Reynolds Memorial School at its June 17, 2025, meeting.

The Board of Supervisors later approved discontinuing that portion of the road by a 3-1-1 vote at its Sept. 8 meeting.

However, because the public hearing notice was not properly advertised in the Martinsville Bulletin, questions arose about the legality of the hearing and the vote.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Resident Engineer Robyn Keller, who was named to the post after Lisa Price-Hughes retired, was invited to attend the meeting, along with Patrick County Administrator Michael McGuinness.

During the meeting, Keller said an Attorney General's opinion had been received indicating the supervisors' vote was valid.

Keller said the Attorney General's Office opined that what the board did was legal and that the vote stood.

"What we had to do was our public hearing to move forward," she added.

Rob Martin, of the Dan River District, said VDOT was slowing the process on the road closure.

"No, VDOT is not. We're waiting for direction from the board. We came here and met with Mr. McGuinness and informed Mr. McGuinness that due to the fact that it's been so long since this thing had been taken care of or whatever, they had not requested that we move forward with the public hearing they needed to confirm to us that that's what they still intended," Keller said.

(See School p. 3)

Board divided on future of data centers

By Taylor Boyd

Individual members of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors have mixed views on data centers, with some opposing them under current conditions and others saying proposals should be evaluated on their merits.

As of this publication, no data centers have been proposed in the county.

Andrew Overby, of the Dan River District and chairman of the board, said he's not against any proposals, and feels the county needs to review all proposals on their own merit.

"If there was a proposal that came to the board that made sense and was environmentally sound, I would expect us to review it on its own merits. I'm never going to say that we don't want any type of business because I don't want us to categorically exclude anything," he said.

If a situation came up where it made sense to consider a data center in the county, Overby said the board would review the proposal and go from there.

"I'm neither for them or against them. There are responsible ways of running a data center and then, there are the ways that some of the data centers have been portrayed. I don't think that anybody has the full truth," he said.

Noting that he used to live in Northern Virginia around data centers, Overby said they were not intrusive or anti-environment.

"There is a world I believe where we can co-exist, but we're not going to have them on every street or every main road. Anything that we would bring would be in an industrial area, it would not be in a residential area," he said.

Overby said he does not believe the county needs to direct the Planning Commission to create a data center ordinance.

"People think that these data centers pop up like Dollar Generals, and they are not like that. They take years of planning to bring one to an area. To my knowledge, we haven't had anybody that has been seriously interested in bringing a data center to Patrick County. I don't believe that we have ever been in a position to try to bring a data center to Patrick County. I don't believe that it is that big of a concern at this time," he said.

Based on his understanding, Clayton Kendrick, of the Mayo River District and vice-chairman, said he'd be against data centers locating in Patrick County.

"I know other places like Pittsylvania County

(See Board p. 4)



Reward offered after gravesite thefts

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office is seeking information in the thefts of several bronze vases from gravesites at Patrick Memorial Gardens.

The sheriff's office, along with Patrick Memorial Gardens, is offering a substantial monetary reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible.

The thefts were recently discovered and have caused significant concern for the families and loved ones of those whose gravesites were affected.

"The removal of memorial items from burial sites is a deeply troubling offense that impacts both the families involved and our community as a whole. We are asking for the public's

(See Reward p. 4)

Patrick County Food Bank rebounds with community support



The agency received a $1,000 donation from Walmart.

By Taylor Boyd

After facing financial uncertainty last year, the Patrick County Food Bank is on firmer footing thanks to community donations and grant funding.

Rhonda Pruitt, president of the organization, said support from residents, businesses and churches has helped stabilize the food bank while volunteers continue seeking additional grants.

"We have one volunteer who is working on getting us some grants and stuff like that, which is where the AEP (Appalachian Power) grant came from. We also just got a small grant from Food Lion, so every little bit helps because we all know the rising cost of food is not helping," she said.

The food bank recently received a $2,500 donation from Walmart during the retailer's 20th anniversary celebration in Stuart and $1,000 from Woolwine Elementary School.

"Their girls did a beauty pageant, and they sold raffle tickets. Half of it went to the Food Bank and the other half went to the schools, so we received $1,000 from them," Pruitt said.

The organization also collected canned goods from local post offices participating in the National Association of Letter Carriers' annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive.

"It was a really good effort from our community in general to give," she said.

In addition, Appalachian Power awarded the food bank a $10,000 grant to purchase a freezer for food storage.

Volunteers also have been visiting local businesses to seek donations.

"That has worked to an extent, but not what we expected," Pruitt said.

She said local churches have also increased

(See Food Bank p. 12)

Residents briefed on Vesta section of U.S. 58 widening project

By Taylor Boyd

Representatives with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) provided an update on the Vesta section of the U.S. 58 widening project during a June 23 informational meeting attended by more than 100 residents at Meadows of Dan Elementary School.

According to VDOT, the $165 million project will widen a 4.3-mile section of U.S. 58 beginning about 0.10 miles west of Virginia 795 (Mabry Mill Road) and ending about 0.51 miles east of Virginia 610 (Cloudbreak Road).

Construction is expected to begin in summer or fall 2026 and conclude in summer 2031.

VDOT Salem District spokeswoman Jenna Zibton said the meeting was intended to help residents understand potential traffic impacts, noise and detours associated with the project.

"They started working already, so work will continue ramping up until it concludes in summer of 2031," Zibton said.

Zibton said VDOT is excited to work on the Vesta section because it is one of only two remaining projects needed to complete a four-lane U.S. 58 corridor from Virginia Beach to Interstate 77. The other remaining project is in the Crooked Oak area.

"It's past Meadows of Dan on U.S. 58, and that's just two lanes right now. Eventually once it gets funded…it will be two lanes in each direction," she said.

In addition to widening the roadway to four lanes, the project will include wider shoulders, improved secondary road connections and private entrances, and intersection improvements.

"The existing Dan River Bridge will be replaced with two new bridge structures. The Dan River Bridge replacement will consist of three phases. Work will begin this summer or fall 2026 and will include performing bridge repairs on the existing bridge," the video presentation stated.

(See Residents p. 13)

Patrick Branch Manager Report for May







May was an interesting month at the Patrick County Library with our new computer system. After being closed four days at the beginning of the month, I was worried about what would happen when we reopened but I have the best staff and they all have done a professional job and patrons have been so patient and understanding. I am so proud of my staff and how fast they are picking things up. They teach me something new each day and I appreciate them.

Before training however, we had an amazing event. The Bridgerton Tea Party was hosted on May 2. It was a registration only event and Regency dress was encouraged. Twenty-one guests came and snacked on mini cucumber cream cheese sandwiches, pimento cheese sandwiches and chicken salad sandwiches. There were pastries, blueberry lemon scones, hot tea and pink lemonade. The Bridgerton soundtrack played in the background. Lady Whistledown's Society Papers were read and so appreciated. Two games of bingo and name that character were played and prizes provided. There was also a Bridgerton Trivia game for them all. We had five teams and winners received wooden wick candles which smelled amazing. Guests were able to have photo opportunities with the beautiful setup Sam and our volunteer, Alicia Tiller, created. It was an exhausting day but amazing at the same time. Thank you to all who participated in all forms.

Bingocize wrapped up this month and I would be remiss to not send a special thank you to Terri Alt, who hosted this program with the Virginia Extension Office. She demonstrated patience and genuinely cares for those who participated in learning the necessary techniques to remain at home longer and live more safely as senior citizens.

Lucia hosted Book Bingo this month and did a wonderful job. Our first Library Quilt Bee started this month and five people attended. We are hoping word will spread and more quilters will come by on the second Thursday of the month from 2-4pm to see what it's all about.

My Homeschool Bookworms learned about fiction and nonfiction in May. We played a sorting "game" in the meeting room and learned what makes genres so specific. I found a catchy video on YouTube; we watched it twice and sang along. After a cutting and pasting activity, they each were allowed to keep a donation book of their choice, fiction or nonfiction, for listening and helping me sort some of the donation shelves.

Sit and Stitch was attended both times. We even had two new faces show up just for one of our original members to give them tips on crocheting. One had learned about Sit and Stitch at the Quilting Club the week prior. This made us all so happy. Joni's yoga classes are always going strong and every student that comes leaves looking relaxed and happy. She does an amazing job and I appreciate all her efforts.

On May 16th, Lisa and I sat up for the Strawberry Festival. We had so many people stop by, even our own Strawberry Shortcake, Rebecca Adcock came by. We told visitors about summer reading and some of the programs that the library offers. Everyone who stopped by, was able to spin the spinner wheel of prizes. Prizes varied from screen wipes to books to stickers and even strawberry tattoos. The weather under the tent was perfect. The visitors were happy and we had an amazing day. Lisa's family stopped by and helped us pack up the materials and tent and table and that was a huge help. Kudos to them.

Trivia Night for May was Star Wars versus Star Trek. The force was with us. We had 21 people in attendance and it lasted an hour and a half. The winning team, the Jedi Poodoo's, each won a galaxy projector and some BRRL pens and pencils. No one argued (SW vs ST) and players left laughing and the newbies met new Trekkies. Kaye did a fantastic job making trivia questions. We all left that night to live long and prosper.

The following day Kaye led the Senior Social which was a plant swap. Attendance was low but those who came seemed to enjoy themselves. The plants involved were beautiful. Next month's theme is DIY healthy snacks. Terri Alt will be leading the seniors create healthy snacks for the summertime, when heavy meals may not be their preference.

On the last Friday of the May, Sam and Jeff worked on the Summer Reading decorations. The library is looking so good. I want to mention our Splash and Read incentive program for summer reading. Students who come to four summer reading programs and finish their reading log, will receive a free day pool pass for themselves and one parent/guardian to go to the pool at DeHart Park. Special thank you to the following sponsors: The Town of Stuart, Stuart Rotary, One Family Productions, and the Stuart Ruritans. I am so thankful to have such supportive groups stand behind me and our library, to create a fun and helpful program for our community's young people. Thank you also to Patrick County Recreation for allowing us to work with you and make this an amazing summer.

A quick reminder, the bookmobile schedule is different during the summer, so make sure you are looking at Gayle's schedule. She is keeping reading rolling and we love and appreciate all that she does.

Thank you all for your continued support and please tell all you know, to come check out all the Patrick County Library has to offer. Until next month, Happy Reading.

Somer Ojodeagua,
Patrick County Library Branch Manager

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Pets of the Week





The Patrick County shelter is drowning in adorable kittens of every color. Please adopt!

This friendly, cute neutered black lab mixed dog was found on Shingle Shop Road in Stuart. Where are his people?

Please save a life! Adopt! All dogs and cats at the shelter 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. Visit the Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League Facebook page to see our videos of these amazing pets.

School

(cont. from page 1)

"We have yet to get that confirmation."

While the board's vote was legal, Keller said VDOT still must meet its obligations before the project can move forward.

Shannon Harrell, of the Blue Ridge District, asked whether those obligations included the required 30-day advertisement before a public hearing.

Keller responded that it did.

"So, what you're saying though is, after that hearing is when the CTB (Commonwealth Transportation Board) will meet to make their decision," Harrell said.

"Correct," Keller replied.

"And if their decision is there's a public outcry at that hearing, they're not going to do it possibly. So what we need to do is if people are in favor of it they need to also attend the hearing," Harrell said.

"Of course," Keller replied.

Martin asked why he was only learning about the Attorney General's opinion.

"I've been asking, and all the board members have heard me, ask for an Attorney General's opinion on this. Now I find out after wasting a lot of time that there is an Attorney General's opinion," he said.

Keller said she hoped she had not misspoken and noted she was in Price-Hughes' office when the email was written.

"I thought she was sending it to you, but I may be mistaken. That was in January," Keller said.

After reviewing her email, Chairman Amy Walker, of the Mayo River District, said she received a message from Price-Hughes in February.

"It does not reference the Attorney General. She references VDOT's Legal Operations Analyst Ellen Porter. I have not seen anything from the Attorney General's Office," she said.

Keller said Porter is with the Attorney General's Office.

"Maybe Lisa wasn't clear on who Ellen Porter was when she spoke with you. Maybe that's the situation, I don't know," Keller said.

In the Feb. 19 email to Walker, Price-Hughes said that in discussion with Porter there was nothing improper with the board of supervisors' action.

"It still stands. To move forward with a discontinuance, no additional action is required by that board. However, an action of discontinuance is required to go before the Commonwealth Transportation Board. For that to occur, VDOT's public involvement requirements would need to be met. For the previous correspondence forwarded to you regarding advertisements, they were not. The best course of action at this point is for VDOT to meet with the appropriate parties and discuss options," the email states.

Now, "what is required of us is for the board to give us direction on how they want to move forward," Keller said.

Martin said the board of supervisors did so last year.

"We have went back to them and talked to them since we didn't do the public hearing, they haven't requested that we have the public hearing," Keller said.

"So a motion made by the board of supervisors that passed with a 3-1 with a 1 abstaining vote is not good enough for VDOT," Martin asked.

"I don't know where the delay happened, I wasn't here for that. But it was approved and it didn't move forward for whatever reason that I have no idea what that was. When" my office "met with Mr. McGuinness in January, it was we need the board to confirm that's what they want to do because it's been so long since this took place and the board has changed.

"They have not requested that we move forward. So, if they request that we move forward, whatever that is, we will do that, but we need them to make that request to us," Keller said.

Before the Board of Supervisors directs VDOT to move forward with the 30-day advertisement, McGuinness said he wants direction from the school board.

"I feel the same way today as when I voted," Walter Scott, of the Smith River District, said.

"I don't want a kid to get hit. It's not worth it," Harrell said.

"If we all are still where we are, then that's where we are and pass it on and let's move forward," Scott said to McGuinness.

In other matters, the board:

- Appointed Jerry Woods as the interim Peters Creek District representative. Woods will serve until a candidate can be elected in the November election.
- Recognized its retirees.
- Heard the superintendent's report.
- Approved adult meal price increases for the 2026-27 school year.
- Approved the 2026-27 Title I-Title IV federal grant applications.
- Nominated Sara Leigh Collins for the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) Clerk of the Year award.
- Authorized the superintendent to make payments until the end of the fiscal year.
- Approved the consent agenda.
- Approved the personnel report as amended.



The Patrick County School Board recognized its retiring staff during its June 23 meeting.



The Patrick County School Board reaffirmed its desire to have VDOT close the section of Dogwood Road directly in front of Hardin Reynolds Memorial School. From left, Schools Superintendent Dr. Jason Wood and board members Shannon Harrell, Walter Scott, Amy Walker and Rob Martin.

Student Briefs

Local resident named to William & Mary Dean's List

Kali Craig from Stuart, VA was recently named to the Dean's List at the College of William & Mary for the spring 2026 semester.

To achieve Dean's List status, a full-time degree seeking undergraduate student must take at least 12 credit hours and earn a 3.6 Quality Point Average during the semester.

William & Mary is the second oldest institution of higher learning in the United States.

Spring 2026 Dean's List recognizes academic excellence at RU

Radford University has released its Dean's List for Spring 2026. Appearing on the Dean's List is the most prestigious academic recognition students can receive for their performance during a semester.

Students will be placed on the Dean's List if they meet four specific criteria. They must have 12 semester hours of coursework graded A-F; earn GPA's of at least 3.4 for courses not graded on a pass-fail basis; obtain no grade lower than "C"; and receive no incomplete grades.

Dylan Quesinberry of Stuart,
Braedon Augustine of Patrick Springs,
Cecilia Leon Cisneros of Stuart,
Kendall Williams of Stuart,
Whitley Kruse of Stuart,
Katherine Lindamood of Ararat,
Samantha Harris of Woolwine,
Emily Eastridge of Stuart,
Aaliyah Hairston of Fieldale,
Sydney Hopkins of Stuart,
Jessica Handy of Meadows Dan,
Dante Belcher of Meadows Dan,
Haley Gilley of Stuart,
Anthony Jones of Stuart,
Remi Miller of Stuart,
Nicholas Rogers of Fieldale,
Caleb Morris of Stuart,
Alyssa Callahan of Patrick Spgs,
Carrie Cassell of Spencer,
MaKayla Hall of Spencer,
Gabriela Henriquez of Stuart,
Jasmine Hiatt of Fieldale,
Sadie Martin of Stuart,
Mary Williams of Spencer,
Williams Corns of Stuart,
Katie Vernon of Patrick Springs,
Haley Cassell of Patrick Springs,
Emma Dellinger of Stuart,
Owen Nutter of Spencer,
Rebecca Craft of Stuart,
Hagen Murphy of Patrick Springs

JMU announces spring 2026 President's List

James Madison University announced that the following local students made the President's List for the spring 2026 semester:

Dhrithik Tanna of Patrick Springs, who is majoring in Computer Science - BS.

Heather Edwards of Stuart, who is majoring in Dietetics - BS.

Two local students named to President's List at SCC

Surry Community College named two Claudville students to the Spring Semester 2026 President's List:

Jayden Diane Diehl, of Claudville;
Ethan Connor Goins, of Claudville.

Students qualifying for the President's List must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours of college level coursework and maintain a 3.8 grade point average for the semester with no final grade lower than a "C." Students on the President's List receive a congratulatory letter.

Students Earn Honor Roll, Principal's Awards

Several local schools released the names of students honored with academic awards recipients for the recent grading period, recognizing students for their academic achievement and classroom performance.

Students in elementary schools include:

Blue Ridge Elementary School

3rd Grade

Academic Awards: Brantley Adkins, Montgomery Barker, Montgomery Barker, Bobby Barr, Adalyne Bowman, Hudson Bowman, Delilah Clayton, Ariel Crews, Charli Engle, Beau Frazier, Landon Frye, Ashlyn Jones, Caleb Lawson, Allie Marshall, Mollie Martin

Principal's Award: Elias Goins, Finley Wilson

4th Grade

Academic Awards: Ayla Bowman, Thomas Chaney, Edward Diego Juan, Gunnar Kerns, Jaxton King, Emerie Mayes, Elijah Paredes, Kayley Petty, Kenzie Radford

Principal's Award: Stella Turner

5th Grade

Academic Awards: Chloee Bowles, Grayson Guynn, Hope Hedgepeth, Talan Hernandez, Kara Hiatt, Elijah Ledbetter, Hines McMillian, Lakota Morris, Hunter Reynolds, Brooklyn Stanley, Elijah Voisey

Principal's Awards: Jase Bowman, Lydia Clement, Marlee Dailey, Brody Meredith, Ian Roman, Kasen Rupert, Landree Simmons

6th Grade

Academic Awards: Raven Hernandez, Early Hill, Staci Martin, Renesmee Moody, Tecora Pack, Chloe Quesinberry,

Principal's Awards: Olivia Chaney, Zoey Dailey, Karleigh Saunders, Evan Seal

7th Grade

Academic Awards: Emily Adams, Kaylee Bowles, Sadie Bowman, Montana Cain, Arieanna Crews, Halleigh Dixon, Jay Hill, Tanner Horton, Matthew Morales, Lincoln Puckett, Kaya Reeder, Tobin Simmons, Olive Waycaster

Hardin Reynolds Memorial School Academic Awards

4th Grade

Academic Awards: Noah Bowman, Layla Brown, Leland Collins, Liam Conner, Mason Fain, Ellenor Ferguson, Serenity Garrison, Jacob Hughes, Eli Hughes, Katelyn Johnson, Landon Manns, Trenton Miller, Forrest Nester, Nylah Perry, Aubrey Pendleton, Avalyn Rathbone, Iona Rathbone, Chase Ross, Clayton Walker

Principal's Award: Corey Blankenship, Liam Conner, Brennen Cox, Isabella Diaz Monay, Jessely Diaz, Josie Foster, Khalil Gray, Carlynn Hancock, Jacob Harbour, Aiden Hooker, Alayah Knox, Kylie Marshall, Paisley Martin, Wake Mills, Dylan Motley, Camden Penn, Brendan Radford-Bowles, Chase Styers, Kaylin West, Winnie Wikstrom, Tristan Young

5th Grade

Academic Awards: Landon Correll, Londyn Goff, Ryan Graham, Mia Hagwood, Abigail Hall, Caleb Hankins, Nathaniel Jones, Kayleigh King, Avery Lawrence, Natalie Lawrence, Cassandra Omarra, Etta Owens, Destiny Plaster, Cameron Redd, Arianna Slate, Harlem Smith, Kaiden Valentine, Caroline Whitlow, Taelyn Wilson

Principal's Award: Eli Adkins, Rebecca Handy, Sophia Hylton, William Keffer, Emma Nelson, Trinity Plaster, Taylor Ragsdale, Korbin Salda, Samuel Slate, Sarah Wyatt

6th Grade

Academic Awards: Colton Blackard, Chloe Bowman, Bentley Brooks, Scarlett Dobbins, Natalie Ferguson, Dani Golden, Zoey Harkey, Tim-

(See Students on p. 8)

Celebrating the Nation's 250th Birthday: Part 2



Morgan Griffith

Representative

250 years of independence not only demonstrates endurance and perseverance through hardship, but it elevates the foundations of our country.

My column last week focused on some of the figures who contributed to these foundations. These leaders, whose names are honored in our Ninth District communities, helped light the revolutionary flames for independence.

Our region served as a flashpoint for these revolutionary flames.

Take what is recognized by many historians as the first battle of the American Revolution, the battle of Point Pleasant.

At the orders of Governor of Virginia Lord Dunmore, Colonel Andrew Lewis led forces from Western Virginia on a weeks-long trek to Point Pleasant in what is present-day West Virginia.

Interestingly, Dunmore with an army from northern Virginia was supposed to meet Lewis at Point Pleasant.

Instead, Lewis and his men faced an attempted ambush from the Shawnee and Mingo warriors in the early morning hours of October 10, 1774.

Lewis' men felt they had been intentionally betrayed by Lord Dunmore in order to make the western part of Virginia insecure if additional trouble in the colonies was to occur.

Lewis and his soldiers responded courageously to the Shawnee and Mingo threat. The Americans fought off the Natives' attack and defeated Chief Cornstalk.

Action by Lewis and his forces delivered victory for American settlers. This opened up the Kentucky territory for westward expansion by those like Daniel Boone, who was in charge of supplies under Lewis.

This action was one of many to be taken to help fortify Virginia and its western flank.

Soon thereafter, Virginians from our region asserted our revolutionary intentions in the Fincastle Resolutions.

In early 1775, 15 Virginia frontiersmen signed onto these articles in a display of support for the Continental Congress, the revolutionary cause and liberty.

They were called the Fincastle Resolutions because they originated in what was then Fincastle County. Fincastle County would later be divided between Montgomery County, Washington County and Kentucky County.

Those who signed the Resolutions included William Preston.

Colonel William Preston, who owned the Smithfield Plantation located in present-day Blacksburg, was one of these revolutionaries.

During his experiences on the frontier, Preston had worked to survey and establish peace. Additionally, he at one time served under Andrew Lewis.

Preston was a prominent military figure during the French and Indian War.

Given his background in combat, Preston joined the revolutionary effort. He joined revolutionary campaigns to fight the British in the South, most notably the battle at Kings Mountain.

The Fincastle Resolutions fueled the sentiment that eventually led to the Declaration of Independence.

Just a few days after July 4, 1776, Andrew Lewis and Lord Dunmore met again.

Dunmore, unsafe on land, sailed to Gwynn's Island. There, the British camp was fortified from any land attack. On July 9, Lewis fired a heavy artillery barrage from Fort Cricket Hill down onto Dunmore's camp.

After taking damage, Dunmore sailed from Virginia never to return.

Dunmore's retreat marked the end of royal authority in Virginia!

While Lewis accomplished this feat on the Eastern Shore, others still took action to secure the frontier.

Governor Patrick Henry was concerned about the threat posed in the West. In 1777, Henry appointed Joseph Martin to handle Indian Affairs.

Martin had familiarity with the western frontier. Dr. Thomas Walker selected Martin to help lead an expedition west into the Powell's Valley.

In what is now Lee County, the establishment of Martin's Station helped serve frontiersmen looking to explore beyond.

Through his appointed role as Agent and Superintendent, Martin worked on the frontier to handle conflicts and disputes between natives and settlers. Martin's development of relations with neighboring tribes preserved peace on the frontier and protected numerous settlement communities during the American revolution.

Thanks to our region's efforts in combat and diplomacy, revolutionary success and independence were within reach.

The powerful message that the American independence movement sent around the world continues to reverberate. Not only did Americans gain victory but set the tone for the American ideals of freedom to flourish elsewhere in the world. A beacon of liberty that still resonates in the world today.

This Fourth of July, we honor revolutionary successes of 250 years ago that brought about American greatness and the unprecedented liberties that millions still enjoy.

I am proud to recognize this history on our 250th birthday.

Happy July Fourth!

Board

(cont. from page 1)

are all gung-ho, but in my opinion let them have them," Kendrick said. "I just don't like the information that I've seen on them. I'm not saying I might change my mind some other day, but not right now. I just don't think it would be a good thing."

As the updated solar ordinance, Kendrick supports having the Planning Commission create a data center ordinance.

"I think they ought to have a data center" ordinance too, he said.

While he notes that technology is necessary, Steve Marshall, of the Blue Ridge District, said he believes the county needs to be a little slower and better in its planning process.

"We have three data centers I believe coming within probably an hour-hour-and-a-half of Patrick County over the next five to seven years. That's going to affect Patrick County, there's no possibility that it won't, so we need to be planning for what those impacts are going to be," he said.

Marshall said he'd absolutely support having the Planning Commission create an ordinance focused on data centers.

"I am just at the very beginning of exploring what's going on around Patrick County as far as the data centers, because they're all just being built now. I mean there's a lot of examples I've looked at in other states that give me cause for great concern," Marshall said, adding the county's water resources are important to him.

Jonathan Wood, of the Peters Creek District, said he doesn't think the county is a viable location for data centers because it lacks the necessary infrastructure and water systems.

"While that does play into it, I think the bigger thing that plays into it is we're elected to represent the people of Patrick County, and if they're not for data centers or anything like that, then we don't need to bring those in," he said.

Wood said he believes data centers are similar to solar panels, in that while they may require 300 acres today, that number will drop to 30 acres a decade from now.

"I'm not a fan of a data center in Patrick County any time soon unless major things are changed about them that make them more environmentally friendly and more friendly to the communities," he said.

Because the world is changing, Wood believes the county will need to create more ordinances just to survive.

"I haven't had a chance to look at a lot of them myself to see exactly what's out there, but I think there needs to be an ordinance of some kind to regulate" data centers "because we don't need to be a wild west type of county where everything goes," he said.

Wood said he would support directing the Planning Commission to work on drafting a data center ordinance.

Richard Cox, of the Smith River District, said he attended a conference on data centers in May.

"If you listen to the people that wanted the data centers, they're the greatest thing since oatmeal, but if you look behind that, I can't see that Patrick County has the resources, the infrastructure to support a data center," he said.

Unless different operations are developed, Cox said he cannot see himself supporting a data center in the county.

If an ordinance to regulate data centers in the county is proposed, Cox said he would consider it.

"I think" the Planning Commission "is more technologically aware than I am, so I'd leave that decision to them and would have to see what the wording was and how it was formed and so forth," Cox said.

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FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Reward

(cont. from page 1)

assistance in identifying any individuals who may be responsible or who may have information regarding the thefts," Lt. Steve Austin said in a release.

Investigators are actively pursuing leads and gathering information related to these incidents.

Anyone who saw suspicious activity at Patrick County Memorial Gardens, or anyone who has information that may help the investigation, is encouraged to contact the Patrick County Sheriff's Office at 276-694-3161, or submit information anonymously, via messenger on the social media page.

"The families who visit these graves deserve answers," Austin said. "If you know who's responsible for this, take a long look at the attached picture and do what your conscience has already told you to do."

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office remains committed to protecting the property and memories of those laid to rest in our community and will continue to work diligently to hold those responsible accountable.

Blue Ridge Music Center to host free concert, programs on July 4

The Blue Ridge Music Center will celebrate Independence Day with a free event from noon to 4 p.m., Sat., July 4, with music, demonstrations, and more.

In celebration of the country's 250th birthday, visitors of all ages are invited to enjoy a free concert with old-time string band the Mustard Cutters and educational programs by National Park Service Interpretive Ranger Conrad Shirk and interpreter Aubrey Arrington on the Music Center plaza.

The Mustard Cutters, known for their danceable songs, features Gina Dilg on fiddle, Tyler Hughes and Ivy Sheppard on guitar and banjo, and Hasee Ciaccio on bass. Tyler Hughes will call a couple of square dances.

Shirk will share the story of the Overmountain Men, a Patriot militia that marched from the mountains to fight the British at the battle of Kings Mountain in South Carolina during the American Revolutionary War. Find out what it took to be a part of the militia and walk through a drill that was associated with muster.

Arrington will share his hands-on presentation "The Science Behind Stringed Instruments."

A part of the Backstories series, this Music Center presentation is supported by a Central Appalachia Living Traditions grant from Mid Atlantic Arts.

Patrick Pioneers



The Enterprise, Aug. 2 1956

One Building, Four Chapters

By Beverly Belcher Woody

Some buildings quietly witness the passing of generations. Businesses change, owners come and go, storefronts are remodeled, yet the building itself remains, preserving the memories of everyone who ever walked through its doors. One such building stands on Main Street in Stuart. Today it is home to Jessup & Associates, but for seventy years it has welcomed shoppers, business owners, and friends through its front doors while writing four remarkable chapters in Patrick County history.

The inspiration for this story came from Brian Jessup, owner of Jessup & Associates CPAs. Brian recently contacted me to ask if I knew the history of the building he had renovated for his Stuart office. Like many old buildings in Patrick County, I knew pieces of its story, but I soon discovered there was much more to learn.

My earliest memories of the building are from the days when it housed Reed's Five & Dime, owned by Jesse Creed Maxey and Claude Taylor Stone of Bassett. Like so many children, I looked forward to visiting the large candy counter in its beautiful glass display case. One of the friendly ladies would patiently scoop your favorite candy, weigh it on the scale, and place your treasure into a little white paper sack. It was a simple pleasure, but one that many of us who grew up in Patrick County still remember with a smile.

Years later, another generation came to know the building as Marilyn's. Marilyn Foley Lewis purchased Reed's in September 1988. Lewis was the daughter of Lester Foley and Elva Foley. She attended Woolwine Elementary School and went on to graduate from Patrick County High School in 1972. Marilyn's became known for fashionable clothing, beautiful floral arrangements, and friendly hometown service. For many local families, it was a favorite place to shop. I still remember purchasing L.A. Gear tennis shoes there.

As I began researching the building's earlier history, I was surprised to learn that before Reed's Five & Dime, the first business to occupy the building was the P & N 5 & 10¢ Department Store.

According to the August 2, 1956, edition of The Enterprise, the P & N celebrated the grand opening of its new Main Street location with great excitement. The newspaper described it as a "modern, up-to-date store" featuring wide aisles, spacious display tables, fluorescent lighting, glass storefronts, and more than 3,200 square feet of retail space. The article proudly declared that it was a store "which will do credit to a town much larger than Stuart."

Owned by Ernest Fulcher and managed by his wife, Mabel Katherine Howell Fulcher, the new store represented a significant investment in downtown Stuart. More than $10,000 worth of merchandise filled its shelves, and customers were invited to enjoy a larger selection of goods in a bright, comfortable shopping environment.

The P & N was one of five stores owned by Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Porter of Kernersville, North Carolina. Through membership in the Consolidated Merchants Syndicate of New York City, the company was able to purchase merchandise at lower prices and pass those savings along to its customers.

The article explained that the business had outgrown its previous location after years of success. Crowded aisles and increasing numbers of shoppers convinced the owners that a larger building was needed. Their solution was the modern structure that still stands on Main Street today.

The grand opening also introduced the community to the store's employees, including Mabel Katherine Howell Fulcher, Era Hatcher Baliles, Dorothy Mae Vernon Mabe, Alpha Pauline Cockram Hutchens, Mae Collins, Phyllis Jean Martin, Gladys Ruth Spencer, Donella Atkins, Julia Adkins, and Gordon Howell.

As often happens with historical research, finding one answer led to several more questions.

Where exactly had the original P & N been located?

A September 27, 1956, edition of The Enterprise helped answer part of the mystery when Dalton Jewelers announced it would be moving into the former P & N location. (This building was most recently the Commonwealth Attorney's office before it was moved to Slusher Street).

Another interesting name that appeared during my research was J. Guy Johnson, the traveling salesman of "women's factory-made clothing" whose recommendation helped convince the Porters to expand into Stuart. Johnson lived nearby on Blue Ridge Street with his wife, the former Caroline Virginia Moir, and their daughter, Jane. Jane married World War II veteran George Washington Hudson, Jr., whose family operated Hudson's Drug Store on Main Street, now operating as Honey Pot on Main.

The building entered its second chapter when Jesse Creed Maxey and Claude Taylor Stone opened Reed's Five & Dime. Maxey, a World War II Army veteran who served in the Pacific Theater as a Battalion Sergeant Major, and Stone, a decorated Army veteran who served in the European Theater, built Reed's into one of the community's favorite stores. Their friendly service and wide variety of merchandise made the store a destination for generations of Patrick County shoppers.

Years later came Marilyn's, where many local residents, myself included, found fashionable clothing and beautiful flowers before the building entered its fourth chapter as the home of Jessup & Associates.

Today, visitors entering the beautifully renovated building may see a modern accounting office, but the walls have witnessed far more than financial records. They have seen children eagerly spending their allowance on candy, families shopping for school clothes, customers admiring floral arrangements, and neighbors stopping to visit on Main Street.

Buildings cannot tell their own stories, so it becomes our responsibility to remember them.

As Jessup & Associates begins its own chapter in this historic building, another page has been added to a story that began seventy years ago. May this familiar Main Street landmark continue serving the people of Patrick County for many years to come.

For story ideas, questions, or comments, you may reach Woody at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or 276-692-9626.

Social Security Matters

By Russell Gloor, AMAC Foundation Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – When Should My Wife Claim Social Security?

Dear Rusty: We could use guidance on optimum dates for my spouse to begin taking Social Security (SS). She doesn't have enough work credits on her own, so she will be using mine for spousal benefits. I was born in 1955, and I now get $3,886 in monthly SS benefits. My wife was born in 1961. We currently receive about $50,000 per year in royalties and VA disability payments that will stop upon my death.

So, with that in mind, can you suggest optimum dates for my wife to claim, based on my projected death in early 2027 or early 2030? My wife is very healthy and will likely live beyond 2040. Of course no one can predict their own passing; these are just random dates I came up with based on probabilities with my health issues. *Signed: Planning Ahead*

Dear Planning Ahead: Life expectancy and financial need are primary factors for your wife to consider at this point, plus whether she is now working. Her full retirement age (FRA) for Social Security purposes is age 67 and, if she takes her spouse benefit before that, the monthly amount will be reduced (by about 8.3% for each year early), and she will also be subject to Social Security's Annual Earning Test which limits how much she can earn from working prior to reaching her FRA.

Statistically, your wife's life expectancy is about 87 (that's average longevity for a woman your wife's current age). Even though she isn't eligible for her own SS retirement benefits, she can still get a spousal benefit while you are both living and will get an even higher surviving spouse benefit when you die. That's because her spousal benefit (while both living) will be based on 50% of your full retirement age (FRA) entitlement, but your wife's surviving spouse benefits when you die will be based upon 100% of the benefit you were receiving at your death.

Generally, if you believe you will pass within the next few years, and your wife isn't working, her best option would be to claim her regular spouse benefit now. Although she will initially get less than 50% of your FRA entitlement, that amount will be replaced automatically by her higher survivor benefit when you pass. Depending on her age when you pass, she will get the full $3,886 monthly amount you are receiving at your death (plus any COLA yet to be awarded). If that happens before she reaches her full retirement age, her monthly survivor amount will be actuarially reduced based upon how far before her FRA it is claimed. Generally, the survivor benefit reduction will be about 4.75% for each full year claimed early (about .396% for each month early).

So, to a large degree, your wife's options for spouse and survivor benefits are based on your expected longevity. If you have reason to believe you will pass within the next few years, then your wife should probably claim her spousal benefit now (while you are both living). Because she is a bit shy of 65 years old, her initial SS spouse benefit will be reduced (she'll get about 42% of your FRA benefit amount, instead of the 50% she would get if she claimed at age 67). She can collect that amount until you die, at which time she will receive her survivor's benefit as your widow. If she has reached age 67 when that happens, your wife's benefit will become the same as yours was when you died (the $3986, plus any COLA since awarded). And she will collect that higher SS survivor benefit for the remainder of her life which, from what you've shared, would likely be about 20+ years. Assuming her life expectancy is at least average, that is how your wife would get the most cumulative Social Security benefits over her lifetime.

As you have said, no one can predict how long they will live, but from the information you've provided, I expect that the above would likely be your wife's best Social Security strategy. And, for the record, I admire you exploring your wife's options in advance. I hope this answers your question, but rest assured we are always here if you need any further information.

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

Don't Be A Victim To This Silent Killer - Part 2

Chronic stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart, disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide. Life is full of stress and it affects young and old alike, rich and poor. Stress is a silent killer.

Stressful Situations

Life doesn't always turn out the way we think. I experienced things that I thought I would never be susceptible because how watchful I am with my plant-based diet. However, as mentioned previously, stress tends to overpower that. However, note that good nutrition and exercise helps keeps things under control when stress overwhelms.

I recall stressful periods in my life in which I experienced negative health consequences. I was faced with an unusual and draining situation that caused me to be on constant eggshells. The complexity of the situation continued to worsen. Before I knew it, I became extremely dizzy. For two months, it was difficult to function without having vertigo attacks. Sleeping at night became difficult because my vertigo was accompanied by anxiety. Vertigo can be triggered by stress, and sure enough, I was diagnosed with a stress-related, anxiety-induced vertigo. As the situation passed, so did my anxiety and vertigo. I felt that I hit a low point in my life, and I knew I had to do something within my control.

(See Victim p. 8)

Race Report: Sonoma Raceway

By Wood Brothers Racing

Josh Berry and the No. 21 eero team wrapped up the road-course portion of the 2026 NASCAR Cup Series season with a 28th-place finish in Sunday's Toyota/Save Mart 350 at Sonoma Raceway.

Berry started the 110-lap race on the 1.99-mile, 12-turn road course in California's wine country from 28th and held around that position through the opening two stages.

He restarted the final segment from 29th but was caught up in an incident in Turn 2 that brought out the race's third and final caution on Lap 61. While the contact caused little apparent damage to the eero Ford Mustang, it did cost the team a set of nearly new tires.

Once back under green, Berry worked his way into the top 25 and held that position until the final cycle of green-flag pit stops began.

The eero team ran long on that series of stops, briefly cycling into the top five before making their final stop with 20 laps remaining. Berry returned to the track in 31st and gained four positions over the closing laps to take the checkered flag in 28th.



With the road-course portion of the schedule complete, Berry and the Wood Brothers team now shift their focus to next Sunday's eero 400 at Chicagoland Speedway. The 1.5-mile oval will host its first Cup Series race since 2019.



Fifty-three Surry Community College students recently graduated from the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program. Photo courtesy of Scarlett Light Photography.

53 Students Graduate from SCC's Nursing Program

Fifty-three Surry Community College students have graduated from the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program.

The pinning and graduation ceremony was held May 7 on SCC's Dobson campus. The ceremony began with a welcome from SCC President Dr. David Shockley, followed by remarks from Allison Bedsaul, MSN, RN, Interim Director of Nursing. SCC Nurse Educator Molly Pardue, BSN, RN, led the presentation of the stripes in which the rising second-year nursing students were honored for completion of the first year of nursing school, as signified by the placement of the first stripe on their nursing cap.

The guest speaker was Brittney Preslar, FNP-C, MSN, RN, Northern Regional Hospital Urgent Care Provider. Preslar encouraged students to keep evolving after graduation. "Stay open. Stay grounded. Keep learning from your patients, your colleagues, and every experience you encounter. Keep asking questions. Keep pushing yourself. Keep becoming better than you were yesterday."

SCC Nursing Instructors Sarah Broadstreet, MSN-NE, RN, and Kimberly Hall, MSN-ED, RN, CNRN, NCSN, presented awards to the following students.

The Clinical Excellence award recognizes two students who exemplify caring in nursing, practice thorough competence, compassion, commitment, confidence, and professional character; this award was presented to Kelly Flood and Joanna Brewster.

The Nightingale award recognizes a graduating nursing student who exemplifies the values of the nursing profession through compassion, professionalism, leadership, and excellence in patient care. It honors a student who not only performs well academically and clinically but also shows a genuine commitment to serving others and upholding the highest standards of nursing. This award was presented to Ellisa Dickson.

Dr. David Shockley presented diplomas to the graduates, while Allison Bedsaul, MSN, RN, presented the graduates with pins. Sarah Broadstreet, MSN-NE, RN, and Kimberly Hall, MSN-ED, RN, CNRN, NCSN, also presented graduates with lamps. Lucinda Fallin, MSN, RN, CHPN, led the recitation of the Nurse's Pledge.

Associate Degree Nursing graduates are Elizabeth Antunez of Dobson, Terri Arnder of Mount Airy, Ariadna Benavides Mendez of Boonville, Jessilyn Bowen of King, Joanna Brewster of Siloam, Ella Briggs of State Road, Jordon Byrd of Elkin, Jimena Castillo-Rodriguez of Mount Airy, Brandi Childress of Elkin, Erica Conrad of Winston-Salem, Elizabeth Creed of Elkin, Jovita Cundiff of Winston-Salem, Zeus del Rosario of Hays, Ellisa Dickson of Tobaccoville, Bluford Wayne Dumas, Jr. of Greensboro, Aliea Duncan of Mooresville, Kaylee Edwards of Mount Airy, Mindy Kay Farmer of Sparta, Kelly Flood of Walkertown, Alexandra Flores-Ruiz of Yadkinville, Katie Flowers of Mount Airy, Elizabeth Frederick of Mount Airy, Lindsey Gaalswyk of Yadkinville, Cheyenne Glass of Liberty, Pate Gordon of Pinnacle, Brittany Grimmett of Madison, Emily Haithcock of Mount Airy, Brittany Harp of Mount Airy, Grace Harrison of Elkin, Taylor Heath of Dobson, Lindsey Hutchens of East Bend, Shianna Johnson of Mount Airy, Shana Jordan of Kernersville, Madison Moore of Boonville, Jaylen Morgan of Winston-Salem, Skylar Mosley of Yadkinville, Lenitta Murray of Dobson, Madison Ramey of Westfield, Allison Riggins of Walnut Cove, Hailey Rodriguez-Jimenez of Hamptonville, Cheyenne Rogers of Mount Airy, Enrique Rosales-Estrada of Pinnacle, Haylee Santiago Orellana of Dobson, Lauren Scott of Yadkinville, Georgia Simmons of Ararat, Emma Sturdivant of Jonesville, Chloe Anne Tew of Pilot Mountain, Kasey Thompson of Rural Hall, Adrian Torres of Mount Airy, Emily Tunat of Sandy Ridge, Aubrey Weaver of Hamptonville, Kandi Webster of King, and Autumn Willey of State Road.

A special part of the ceremony included the 'passing of the lamp,' which symbolizes the nurses' dedication to providing continuous nursing care to their patients. Just as Florence Nightingale passed her lamp on to the next shift of nurses, the SCC ADN graduates symbolically pass the lamp to the freshman class. ADN graduates Enrique Rosales-Estrada and Jaylen Morgan passed the lamp to Angie Luffman and Emily Padilla, representatives of the rising second year class.

Surry Community College students can choose to complete the ADN, which is a two-year program, or currently Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) can choose to complete the LPN-ADN program, which is a three-semester program. Graduates are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Employment opportunities are vast within the global health care system and may include positions within acute, chronic, extended, industrial, or community health care facilities. The average annual salary for a registered nurse if approximately $66,220.

If you would like to learn more about SCC's Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program, contact Megan Stanley, SCC Health Science Advisor, at stanleyjm@surry.edu or (336) 386-3308.

Course registration is currently underway at SCC. The fall semester begins August 17. For assistance with college application, financial aid, or registering for classes, contact Student Services at (336) 386-3264 or studentservices@surry.edu.

OBITUARY SUBMISSION DEADLINE MONDAY AT NOON

LEGAL

TOWN OF STUART, VIRGINIA

Employment Opportunity

Community Coordinator

The Town of Stuart is accepting applications for a full-time, salaried Community Coordinator. The Community Coordinator plans and leads Town community events and special programs; serves as a liaison among Town administration, local businesses, and community organizations; and provides administrative and project support to the Town Manager and Clerk/Treasurer. This is a public-facing position with seasonal peaks in workload, including some evenings and weekends.

Reports to: Town Manager

Starting salary: $49,000 per year, negotiable based on qualifications and experience

Application deadline: 4:00 p.m., Friday, July 31, 2026 (firm)

Duties include:

- Plan and coordinate Town sponsored events, including Strawberry Festival and Apple Dumpling Festival. Must communicate logistics with various vendors, partnering organization, and volunteers.
- Maintain the Town website and social media and post public notices and announcements.
- Provide administrative and project support to the Town Manager and Clerk/Treasurer.
- Provide front-line customer service to the public.

Minimum qualifications:

- Associate's degree in business, public administration, communications, marketing, or a related field preferred; an equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered.
- Experience in event planning or coordination and in public-facing customer service.
- Strong organizational and communication skills; proficiency with standard office software; valid Virginia driver's license.

Benefits:

The Town pays 100% of the premium for employee-only health insurance, plus a retirement plan, twelve (12) paid holidays, and paid vacation and sick leave.

To apply:

Submit a completed Town of Stuart employment application, a cover letter, a current resume, and three (3) professional references to information@stuartva.org, or by mail or in person to Town of Stuart, Attn: Town Manager, 100 Patrick Avenue, PO Box 422, Stuart, VA 24171. The full position description and application are available at www.stuartva.org. Questions: (276) 694-3811. Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m., Friday, July 31, 2026.

The Town of Stuart is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. CL26000144-00

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1;8.01-316,-317,20-104

PATRICK CIRCUIT COURT

101 WEST BLUE RIDGE STREET/PO BOX 148, STUART, VA 24171

RAS TRUSTEE SERVICES LLC v. THE ESTATE OF THOMAS DEAL, ET AL

The object of this suit is to:

PROVIDE PROPER SERVICE TO HEIRS WITH UNKNOWN WHEREABOUTS

It is ORDERED that UNKNOWN HEIRS OF, ESTATE OF THOMAS DEAL AND JULIA HUTCHENS appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before JULY 10, 2026.

MAY 26, 2026

Clerk

LEGAL

NOTICE OF TAKING PROOF OF DEBTS AND DEMANDS

In re: Richard Darren Cobbler, Deceased
Patrick County Circuit Court
Case File No: 230000231

At the request of Billie S. Upchurch, Administrator d.b.n. of the Estate of Richard Darren Cobbler, deceased, and pursuant to Virginia Code Section 64.2-550 (1950), as amended, I have scheduled Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at 10:00 a.m., at my office located at 6 Moss Street, The Phoenix Building, Martinsville, Virginia 24112, as the time and place for receiving debts and demands against the said decedent or his estate.

Janine M. Jacob
Commissioner of Accounts - Patrick County
P.O. Box 884, Martinsville, VA 24114
Phone: 276-403-4252
assistant@jjacoblaw.com

Area students named to P&HCC Honors, President's lists

Patrick & Henry Community College has announced its Honors List and President's List for the spring semester. The following students earned recognition for their academic achievement.

Honors List

Students enrolled in at least 6 non-developmental credits and who earn a semester grade point average of 3.2 or higher are placed on the Honors List.

Ararat: Joseph River Beasley, Lacey Denise Easter, Reynaldo Quiroz

Claudville: Jaxon Dallas Ayers-Rosas, Jackson Douglas Sanders Barbour, Caleb Elliot Goins, Logan Dale Harrison, Jaden Liegh Napier, Taylor Annette Smith

Meadows of Dan: Clara Leandra Thorman

Patrick Springs: Dylan Reed Cruise, Rhianna Jewell Elmore, Gavin Dwayne Kendrick, Trinity Marie Lackey, Angel Faith Plaster, Mackenzie Cheyanne Underwood, Zoe Lynn Wooden, Josilene Mackenzie Williams

Spencer: Quin Niko Carter, Cameron Dwayne Cassell, Alysha Brooke Copening, Ryder Zane Deshazo, Trinity Bre'On Estes, Eli Lane Harris, Nicolette Jade Kendrick, Katherine Wright Nelson

Stuart: Jordan Leigh Biggs, Rachel Branch, Lucinda Brown, Lilieann Shauntay Butler, Cameron Lee Collins, Sara Ann Dillon, Carrington Fain, Ashley Faith Fleming, Autumn Nicole Goins, Richard Gauge Hazlewood, Mckenzie Dawn Holt, Austin Dwayne Hylton Jada Alise Knott, Aaron B. Lawson, Chelsea Elizabeth Lawson, Savannah Ruth Lawson, Kylee Jessa Leonard, Jacob Ellis Lester, Carlin Witt Manning, Draysin Maselli, Landon Ray Moles, Raeli Adrianna Moran, Sophie Leigh Scruggs, Sydney Tatum, Joseph Turner, Brayden Christopher Wolfe

President's List

Students enrolled in at least 6 non-developmental credits and who earn a semester grade point average of 3.8 or higher are placed on the President's List.

Ararat: Bronson Wolfe Edwards, Aubreigh Rose Large, Virginia Nelson Nations, Alyssa Dawn Overby, Lacey Alene Sutphin

Claudville: Addisyn Susanne Hall, David Larry Lawson III

Critz: Haley K. Gillispie, Kristen Harris, Lemia Lemons

Meadows of Dan: Jordan Ashley Haas, Willow Elizabeth Hylton, Kyra Ingalls, Elena Maria Joaquin, Trevor Brooks Joyce, Lily Jade Kelly, Greely Gates Terry, Paige L. Whitt, Benton Nash Wood, Callie Wood

Patrick Springs: Rachel Grace Bishop, William Laine Errichetti, Natalie Kate Hancock, James Riley Hodges, Steven Marion, Andrew James Miller, Rocky Marcel Nelson III, Samantha Frances Nester, Heather Marie Spencer

Spencer: Kaliyah Samone Barbour, Alexander Shelton Doyle, Kaylyn Ann Graham

Woolwine: Devon Ray Booth, Abigail Breanne Brammer, Caoimhin Cahill-Saylor, Johnathan Macoy Harbour, Danielle Jean Melillo, Elias Caleb Quisenberry.

Marriage licenses issued in May

The following marriage licenses were processed in May, according to records in the Patrick County Circuit Clerk's office:

Dustin Eckrote & Ella Ann Lawrence
Zaden Hangen & Avery Swiney
Donnie Coalson & Sandra Johnson
Christopher Meservey & Kasey Martin
Burns Beaver & Grace Weisiger
William Johnson & Glenna Rutrough
Colin Zurawski & Summer Robertson
Jerry Wilkins; Jr & Kristin Walz
Bobby Jefferson & Karen Puckett
Patrick Scales & Taylor Vali

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Cynthia M. Jones, AA, AS

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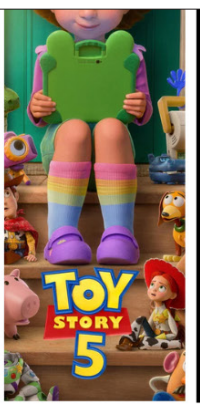
Mark Pendleton Jason Pendleton

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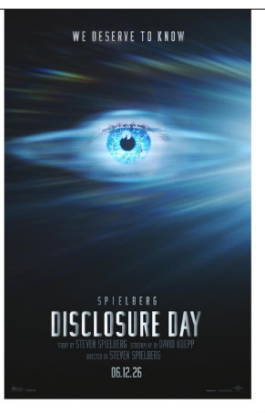
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Gov. Spanberger signs farm-focused legislation defining agrivoltaics

With pressure mounting statewide to preserve farmland while expanding clean energy infrastructure, Virginia farmers were essential in shaping the official definition of "agrivoltaics"—before others could define it for them.

A formal definition for agrivoltaics, which integrates solar energy into agricultural production, is crucial for well-developed, properly sited agrivoltaics, and preventing poorly developed projects. Codifying its definition also serves as a framework for building policy and incentive structures for agrivoltaics projects.

Flanked by agriculture leaders and environmental advocates, Gov. Abigail Spanberger signed legislation that officially defines the term agrivoltaics in the code of Virginia on June 17 at The Piedmont Environmental Council's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows. The farm is the site of Virginia's first crop-based agrivoltaics project, located in Loudoun County.

Virginia previously lacked an official definition for agrivoltaics.

"By establishing clear, enforceable definitions of agrivoltaics in the code of Virginia, we are protecting farmers," Spanberger said. "We are making clear that the use of agrivoltaics prioritizes agricultural productivity, keeps land in production for the life of the solar array, and is part of an existing farm business."

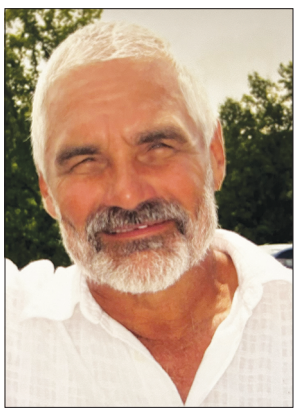
Working alongside PEC, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation helped develop the agrivoltaics definition that will ensure dual-use solar projects take best management practices into account. Inclusion of farmer input in defining agrivoltaics safeguards the state's agricultural heritage while facilitating on-farm solar projects.

"Defining agrivoltaics represents a practical path forward for farm sustainability—keeping land in production while creating new opportunities for income and energy independence," said VFBF President Scott Sink. "When we prioritize agriculture first and integrate solar thoughtfully, we can protect our farms today and strengthen them for the next generation."

The bill was a priority for the governor, a critical legislative issue for

(See Agrivoltaics p. 14)

Buddy Moricle



Buddy Moricle, age 72 of Woolwine, VA passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, June 22, 2026. He was born in Patrick County on August 15, 1953 to the late Lane Akers Moricle, Sr. and Josephine Hall Moricle. In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by a sister, Lynette M. Morrison and a brother, Butch Moricle.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years Debbie Hill Moricle; one daughter, Shasta Moricle-Harbour (Jamie), one son, Dusty Moricle (Nicole); seven grandchildren, Valley Harbour, Libby Harbour, Sam Harbour, Lettie Moricle, Oakley Moricle, Reagan Ritchie, and Eilise Ritchie; three great-grandchildren, Kaitlyn McGlamery, Asher Shell, and Kodie McGlamery; two nephews, Braeden Morrison and Jansen Morrison.

A service for Mr. Moricle will be private. The family will receive friends on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at Moody Funeral Chapel from 5:00 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. The family requests that you dress as Buddy-Fied as you would like! Pallbearers will be Robert Whitlow, Darriel Salmons, Sam Harbour, Braeden Morrison, Jansen Morrison, and Ricky Morrison. Honorary Pallbearer will be Asher Shell. The family will have a celebration of life at a later date. Online condolences may be made by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Victim

(cont. from page 5)

All this time, I had not changed anything in my diet, and according to the doctors, my health was fine, and the blood tests always came back just fine. Since then, I have learnt to manage intense and unexpected stress more effectively, as well as change my attitude towards intense situations. This is what made the difference in being able to keep my health better intact when faced with external stressors that are beyond my control.

Don't Stress About It

It isn't enough to be knowledgeable about what stress does to the body, but it's critical to take it one step further and learn how to manage and reduce stress. Sometimes we aren't entirely sure how to deal with our stress, because we can't see it. Here are proven methods that I have seen help me in my own life.

Prayer & God's Word – Starting my day this way gives me peace and a much smoother day. I give God my burdens and feel much lighter as I go throughout my day.

• Gratitude – Cultivating thankfulness helps prevent complaining and wallowing.

• Help Others – Helping others takes our minds off ourselves, and in tune with the realities and needs of others less fortunate than our own.

• Lifestyle: Exercise, Proper Nutrition, Sunshine, Air, Rest, Water, Temperance – A balanced lifestyle is the best way to handle stress in life.

• Stress and worry are linked. Worry makes the situation heavier and causes more stress. I have found that by taking my worries to God and leaving them there has helped me avoid worry! It is truly a liberating thing to experience. Moderate amounts of stress increase performance, but chronic stress poses health hazards.

This is one of my all-time favorite Bible verses that keeps things in perspective for me and reminds me that I can experience peace and not fall victim to the silent killer: stress.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

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

Students

(cont. from page 3)

othy Hough, Unique Jacobs, Kaiden Knox, Jasen Puckett, Levi Sumner

Principal's Award: Annabelle Clark, Paisley Holt, Holly Lawrence, Hannah Miller, Zoey Pickering, Jessica Schroeder

7th Grade

Academic Awards: Braiden Brooks, Wesley Burge, Dylan Clark, Colston Collins, Averi Cruz, Aiden Hagwood, Mackenzie Harman, Amilya Lawson, Andrew Nelson, Ethan Nelson, Leila Keilana Stephany, Linnea Tankersley, Alice Terry, Elena Turner, Mason Whitlow

Principal's Award: Taelyn Blakenship, Riley Epperly, Avalynn Huffman, Luca O'marra, Savannah Pendleton, James Pombo

Meadows of Dan

3rd Grade

Academic Awards: Lucinda Marshall, Sebastian Muniz-Perez, Bryson Murillo, Wyatt Lewis

Principal's Award: Arabella Cockram, Raphael Luna

4th Grade

Academic Awards: Jackson Boyd, Dorsie Harrell, Zoe Hill, Tanner Whitt

Principal's Award: Dakota Proffitt

5th Grade

Academic Award: Deklynn Goins, Jennings Hatcher, McKinley Lewis, Emersyn Wood

Principal's Award: Banner Davis, William Maner, Carter Puckett

6th Grade

Academic Award: Amelia Kernodle, Angel Ojodeagua, Gabriel Helms

Principal's Award: Lexie Profitt

7th Grade

Academic Awards: Daylin Blevins, Kenzie Lewis, Blake Wood

Principal's Award: Delilah Laird, Happy Martin

Patrick Springs Primary School

Principal's Award

Cooper Chandler, Maddie Hazelbaker, PJ Wilson

Academic Award

Addie Cole, Olivia Frazier, Luna Hatfield, Deluca Horsfield, Kandence Hughes, Mason Putnam, Milan Smith

Stuart Elementary School

3rd Grade

Honor Roll

Baddorf, Steven
Bowman, Amy
Buckmaster, Jayden
Butski, Marley
Collins, Allison
Fain, Gabriela
Gonzalez, Samantha
Hagwood, Othello
Jackson, Brody
Maroni, Tanner
McLean, Tug
Moore, Caitlyn
Nickelston, Palmer
Poplin, Maggie
Pruitt, Eliza
Ragsdale, Parker
Richardson, Coy
Roberts, Katie
Ross, Lillian
Simmons, Maylinn
Strother, Waylon
Terry-Critzer, Keith
West, Elsie
West, Odin

Principal's Award

Foley, Ethan
Gray, Emberly
Gray, Emerson
Handy, Paul
Hawks, Haley
Hostetter, Legatha
King, Owen
Kline, Bennett
Puckett, Krew

4th Grade

Honor Roll

Adkins, Kennedy
Anderson, Autumn
Bogle, Colton
Combs, Teagan
Glenn, Jakob
Glenn, Jazzmin
Gonzalez, Natalie
Hughes, Emory
Martin, Patrick
Reasor, Thomas
Roman-Miranda, Gian
Slate, Lyndon
Trent, Cooper
Williams, Carter

Principal's Award

Black, Emma
Briley, Lily
Cassell, Jourdyn
Foley, Scarlett
Hagwood, Odyssey
Hartman, Lucas
Rakes, River
Snow, Josie
Turney, Macie

5th Grade

Honor Roll

Hunter, Briley
Duffy, Caleb
Fain, Carley Rae
George, Raelynn
Hall, Hayden
Hutchens, Adelyn
Juarez-Luna, Milagros
Kendrick, Scarlett
McCraw, Maewyn
Morris, Alana
Overby, Colton
Parsons, Ethan
Post, Nora
Queen, Isabella
Sabo, Aubrey
Stevens, Jocelyn
Terry, Bella
Turner, Zion
Vestal, Cambria
Wheeler, Bradley

Principal's Award

Brown, Avery
Fain, Wyatt
Fulcher, Brooklyn
Hall, Landon
Hall, Preslie
Puckett, Korbin
Rakes, Canon
Whitener, Wesley

6th Grade

Honor Roll

Adkins, Peyton
Bembry, Nella
Conner, Easton
Houchins, Lyric
Hutchens, Emma
Jones, Hadley
Jones, Parker
King, Alexandria
Martin, Connor
Neace, Kenneth
Pack, Ainzleigh
Ragsdale, Paige

Principal's Award

Black, Lucas
Brown, Aiden
Foley, Carter
Glenn, Kay'Cee
Gray, Kaythan
Hawks, Emily
Jackson, Courage
Matias, Jose
Wheeler, Lucas

7th Grade

Honor Roll

Handy, Charlee
Hughes, Adalee
Leon Cisneros, Alex
Martin, Sophia
Post, Hannah
Scott, Millicent
Taylor, Easton
Walton, Karoline

Principal's Award

Bowman, Lydia
Cagle, Elise
Combs, Emaline
Hubbard, Avery
Turner, Juliet

Woolwine Elementary School

3rd Grade

Academic Award: Cullen Branch, Merrit Cockram, Elly Griffin, Cayleigh Harbour, Rose Marshall, Daisy McBride, Reese Morrison, Karoline Sawyer, Kimber Thomas, Adaline Wells

Principal's Award: Everlee Brockway, Joanna Shelton, Kai Stancescu

4th Grade

Academic Award: Lars Johnson, Oakley Moricle, Braxton Rakes, Silas Scott, Christopher Shuff.

Principal's Award: Aran Moran Hill, Harper Shelton

5th Grade

Academic Award: Maelynn Jones, Jeremiah Lester, Zoey Mabe, Asher Perez, Noah Sifferman.

Principal's Award: Talin Masselli

6th Grade

Academic Award: Molly Frable, Brystol Helms, Emmalyn Hubbard, Cameron Kendrick, Skylar LeBlond, Raina Newsome, Charlie Shuff

Principal's Award: Moncerat Joaquin-Ortega, Sophia Otero-Garcia

7th Grade

Academic Awards: Aubree Bowman, Blake Mills, Cassidy Urbach

Principal's Award: Christian Rakes

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Patrick Pulpits

True Freedom

By Alan Dean, retired Seventh-day Adventist pastor

Freedom evokes strong emotions in the American mind. Our country was established on freedom of the individual to choose "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as our "inalienable rights". This freedom can be defined as being free from improper authority by government over its citizens. Other than slavery, our country in its early days set a good example to the world of freedoms for its citizens.

For decades our country was relatively free from involvement in other country's problems. But being drawn into WW I and WW II combats, our goal turned to assuring freedom for Europe and many other countries. It was a good goal but expensive and difficult to achieve. Without a Christian spirit civil and religious freedom is short-lived.

Jesus knew that Satan and his fallen angels were constantly out to destroy freedom in this world. But He brought a gospel message of freedom far superior to freedoms in this world. In John 8:31,32 Jesus stated "If you abide in My word, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." And in John 8:36 He says "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Jesus is referring to freedom from within a person, a freedom that the world cannot provide. This freedom has two major aspects. The first is that the truth that Jesus offers gives us a perfect picture of our loving God. Before Jesus came, the picture and understanding of God was much maligned. He was thought of as an impersonal God who demanded works and sacrifices in order to please him and to be "saved". Satan, of course, was behind this distortion of God's character. Jesus sets us free of these false claims.

Jesus also came to set us free from misunderstandings and misinterpretations of God's Word. What Jesus taught about divine truth was like a breath of fresh air. The Apostle John's writings are proof of this.

The second aspect of freedom that Jesus taught was freedom from the slavery to sin. Jesus said in John 15:5 that if we abide in Him, we will bear much fruit (righteousness). Some of the people He healed, He would tell them to go and sin no more. God would give them the power over their sin. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote in Romans 6:14 "for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace." God's grace comes with power and victory. Being under the law refers to our feeble attempts to achieve salvation and Christian growth by our own works.

Ephesians 2:8 says "We are saved by grace through faith" but Paul adds in verse 10 that then we are under Christ's workmanship to do good (righteous) works. It is His work in us.

Freedom from oppression is important, but freedom from sin is far more important. We will have the more abundant life today, as well as the assurance of eternal life with Jesus.

'Nourishing our Neighbors' grant awarded to local food bank

The Patrick County Community Food Bank received $3,500 from the Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation to help nourish neighbors experiencing hunger. The Nourishing our Neighbors grant supports community feeding partners by helping neighbors increase their access to nutritious food, nutritional education and resources to help them get back on their feet.

The funds received will assist in purchasing food furthering the food bank's mission in combating food insecurity in our community.

The Patrick County Community Food Bank is fortunate to have the support of so many volunteers and donors who are dedicated in ensuring our neighbors have access to nutritious food county-wide, from our building in Stuart to our satellite locations in Ararat and Meadows of Dan.

The Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation is committed to supporting families facing food insecurity across Food Lion's 10-state footprint. Established in 2001, the Foundation provides financial support for programs and organizations dedicated to feeding local neighbors in the communities it serves. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than $25 million in grant funding to help nourish communities with fresh food.

"Founded in 2006, the Patrick County Community Food Bank, a 501 c (3), is the leading hunger-relief organization in the Patrick County. Our mission is to end hunger by providing nutritious food, educational resources, and advocacy for those in need. Through a dedicated network of partner service agencies, volunteers, donors and religious organizations we distribute food monthly to children, families, and seniors across the county. We believe that access to healthy food is a fundamental human right. Learn more or find out how to get involved by calling 276-694-6300 or on our Facebook page, Patrick Co Food Bank."

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BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

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

2. From Acts 17, in what city were Paul and his companions accused of turning the world upside down? *Antioch, Smyrna, Thessalonica, Galatia*

3. How many days did it take Nehemiah to get the wall around Jerusalem completed? *6, 52, 100, 1,000*

4. From Genesis 3:15, the snake is supposed to strike at what part of man? *Throat, Hand, Heel, Eyes*

5. In Christianity, what's the title given to the head of a diocese? *Arch, Cardinal, Bishop, Reverend*

6. From Revelation 12, what angel fights against Satan? *Gabriel, Angel of the Lord, Cherubim, Michael*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Thessalonica, 3) 52, 4) Heel, 5) Bishop, 6) Michael

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Worship Services 11 am

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Reconciliation
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office@stuartbaptist.org

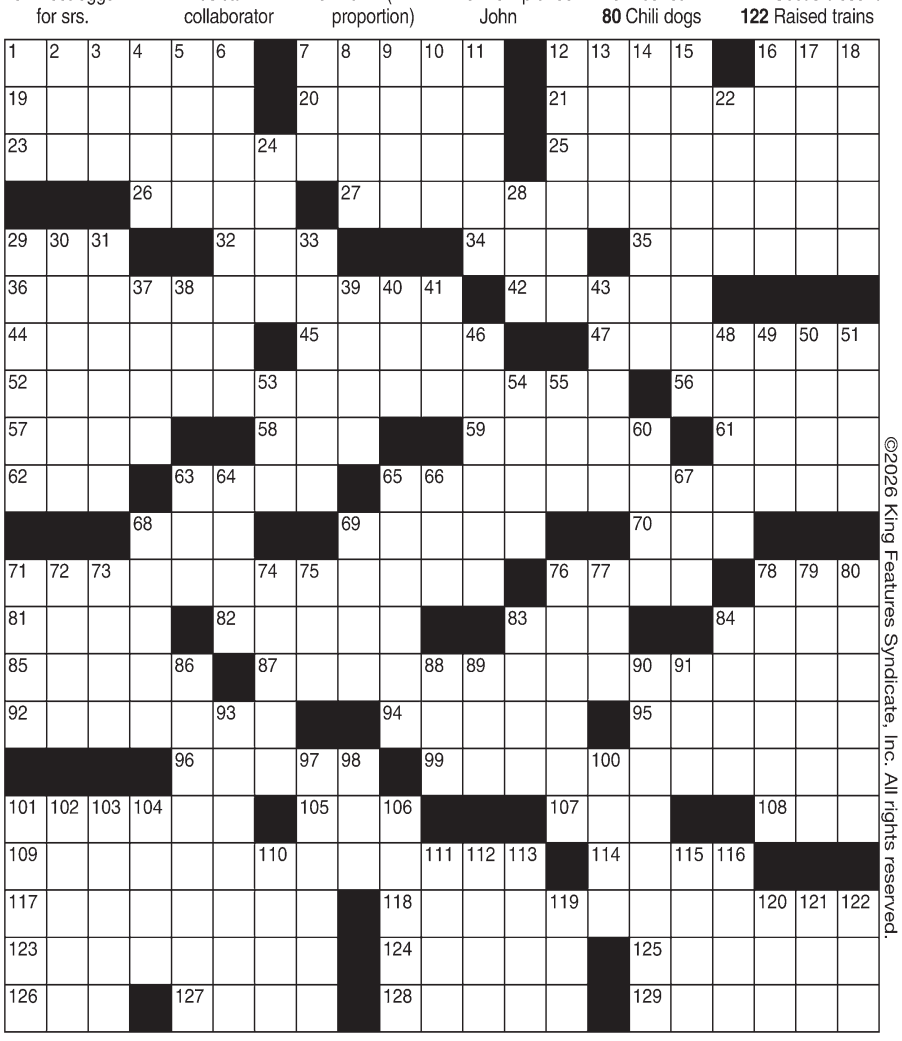
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Super Crossword — RAISING A RACKET

ACROSS
1 Streisand of "Nuts"
7 President after Bush
12 Japanese soup
16 Beaker locale
19 Fanatic
20 Boo-boo
21 State of mind
23 "Can this be?!"
25 Color close to aqua
26 Leave shore
27 "I'm to blame for everything"
29 Mil. address
32 Nada
34 "— see!" ("Evidently!")
35 Events that break ground
36 Like K-Cup coffee pods
42 Two-word conjunction
44 Sol's Greek counterpart
45 Bangor locale
47 Built
52 2011 Steve Carell film
56 Puppeteer Lewis
57 Opera song
58 Gallery work
59 Fox hangouts
61 Nest eggs for srs.
62 Flanders on "The Simpsons"
63 Quick, sharp punches
65 Cocktail of bourbon, lemon and mint
68 Purse
69 Ross who ran against Clinton
70 — in the bud
71 It might consist of a dictionary, thesaurus and atlas
76 Pouches
78 Tic- — -toe
81 "You wish!"
82 They may get slammed
83 Dad on "Rugrats"
84 For takeout
85 Fail to remain calm
87 Annual mailing to the IRS
92 Baskers' goals, often
94 Birth-related
95 Home for French presidents
96 Lerner's musical collaborator
99 Kind of salute performed at military funerals
101 Cherubs, e.g.
105 Smartphone buy
107 Emulate Picabo Street
108 Mag bigwigs
109 Heroic fighter pilot of the 1940s
114 Sinister
117 Studios with easels
118 Question you might feel like asking after seeing nine key words in this puzzle?
123 Yellow turnip
124 Roast beef fast-food chain
125 Big brand of cosmetics
126 Water quality org.
127 Pack neatly
128 L.A.'s region
129 Pitfalls

DOWN
1 German auto
2 Spa sigh
3 Material in viral genes
4 Tiny pieces
5 Pro — (in proportion)
6 Post-workout feeling
7 Multivolume Brit. lexicon
8 Matzo — (Passover breakfast option)
9 In — (stuck)
10 Soft shoes, for short
11 Locations
12 Actress Marlee
13 Agenda unit
14 Stick around to see
15 Rig accidents
16 Doozies
17 Fully grown
18 Borscht base
22 Kind of lift for downhillers
24 Yalies
28 Mauna —
29 Waste barrel
30 Capital of South Dakota
31 Mounted to a backing for decoration
33 Big-eyed primates
37 Egyptian city with pyramids
38 Myrna of old movies
39 Spellbound
40 Roman 7
41 Finale
43 Plow pioneer John
46 "Mama" Cass
48 Orang cousin
49 Figure skater Lipinski
50 Epochs
51 Plate
53 Key near Q
54 Brewery kiln
55 Actor Sahay who played Lester Patel on "Chuck"
60 Lip- — (mouth the words)
63 Pantry container
64 Got older
65 Alternative to Mazola or Crisco
66 Charlemagne ruled it: Abbr.
67 Bro's sibling
68 Suit well
69 Orch. section with timpani, cymbals, etc.
71 Performs like Drake
72 Jacob's twin
73 Twain's Huck
74 Clamor
75 Hoodwink
76 Gets trite
77 "La Cage — Folles"
78 Muss, as hair
79 "I concur"
80 Chili dogs
83 Headliner
84 "Ciao 4 now"
86 Beat others in claiming something
88 Dojo surface
89 Old verb suffix
90 Remade musicals, e.g.
91 "Showdown" rock gp.
93 "Easy-peasy"
97 Polish capital
98 Start for Pen or dermis
100 Barely earns, with "out"
101 Informed (of)
102 Still in bed
103 Garbo of old movies
104 Singer Fitzgerald
106 Gyro wraps
110 Ship of myth
111 Sleek, in brief
112 "Fast Money" network
113 "Watermark" singer
115 A party to
116 Constellation next to Hercules
119 Oahu, e.g.: Abbr.
120 Atop, in odes
121 Scot's dissent
122 Raised trains



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Puzzle answers page 11

THANK YOU FOR READING THE ENTERPRISE

Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(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

Monday, July 13
The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will meet at 6 p.m. in the third-floor court room of the Patrick County Administration Building.

Tuesday, July 14
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. at the School Board Office.

Wednesday, July 15
The Stuart Town Council will meet at 6 p.m. at the Town Office.

Events

Friday, July 3
The Kitchen Pickers will perform at Shelter 3 of Fairystone State Park from 7-9 p.m. The program is free, but the park charges a parking fee.

The Stuart Farmers' Market is open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Baked goods, fresh eggs, vegetables, and hand-crafted items and soaps. This week will be the Red, White and Blueberries event. A blade sharpener will be onsite to sharpen blades.

The First Friday Jam series returns to the Stuart Farmers Market at 6 p.m. The band will be Slick Jr & The Reactors. Food truck, beer and wine vendors.

Saturday, July 4
Bluegrass and old time music competition at the Vesta Community Center, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Competition categories include banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, bands, vocals, and flat footing with three competition levels of children, teen, and adult. People should bring their own lawn chairs. Concessions will be available for sale.

The Stuart DMV Select Office will be closed in observance of the Independence holiday.

Stuart Baptist Church will host a community meal before the fireworks start, 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Hotdogs and all the fixings.

Sunday, July 5
Open Jam, 2 to 4 p.m., Bassett Ruritan Club (upstairs), 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett. Free Admission. Bring your instruments or come to listen.

Monday, July 6
Open Mic Night sponsored by Growing Patrick County Foundation will be held at Stagecoach Coffee, 5-8 p.m. Text 276-229-0318 to register or just show up. All talents welcome.

Tuesday, July 7
Stuart Tuesday Evening Farmers' Market, 5-7 p.m., with produce, hand crafted items, and baked goods.

Thursday, July 9
The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group will meet at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. Jimmy Handy will provide the entertainment and hot dogs, buns, Cole slaw, condiments, and beverages will be provided. Attendees are asked to bring side dishes and/or desserts to share.

Saturday, July 11
The United Daughters of the Confederacy will hold a special program form the 130th anniversary celebration of Mildred Lee Chapter 74, Virginia Division at the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Museum, 1 East Main St., Martinsville, starting at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, July 12
The descendants of John Preston Williams will hold their annual reunion at the Hughes Shelter in Trot Valley, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring a covered dish for lunch, which begins at 1 p.m.

Rockingham/Stokes Genealogical Society will host a program on finding records of lost children, 2:30 p.m., in the Walnut Cove Public Library, 106 W 5th St., Walnut Cove, N.C.

Wednesday, July 15
The Patrick County Food Bank will distribute food from 8:30 - 11 a.m., and 5 - 6:30 p.m., at 108 Commerce Street, Stuart; 8 - 10 a.m. at Fellowship Church in Ararat; and 5:30 until out of boxes at the Community Building in Meadows of Dan.

Friday, July 17
The community food truck will be at Fairystone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, July 18
Patrick Springs Christian Church, 23716 Jeb Stuart Hwy, Patrick Springs, will hold a movie night and finger foods at 6 p.m.

Thursday, July 25
Fresh Harvest Christian Church, other churches and organizations, will hold a Community Back-to-School Experience at Rotary Field from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Descendants of the Rock Castle community, as well as anyone with an interest in the history of Rock Castle, are invited to attend the annual Rock Castle Reunion beginning at noon in the Meadows of Dan Community Center, 2858 J.E.B. Stuart Highway, Meadows of Dan. Attendees are encouraged to bring family photographs, stories, historical artifacts, and a covered dish to share. For additional information, contact Beverly Belcher Woody at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or 276-692-9626.

Ongoing

The Patrick County High School Hall of Fame Committee is accepting nominations for induction into the Hall of Fame Class of 2026 until July 31. Nominations can be made at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/147g76X_3A_FezM1OXKGz0BqHem1wiWnL_lV2iIxhah0/edit.

American Legion Post 105 meets every third Friday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Post building at 553 American Legion Road, Stuart. All are welcome.

VFW Post 7800 meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month. Premeeting meal starts at 6 p.m.; meeting starts at 7 p.m., 939 VFW Road, Patrick Springs. Qualified new members welcome.

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.

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.

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.

Vesta Alzheimer's Group LLC meets at the Vesta Community Center on the third Tuesday of 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.

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.

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.

Super Crossword

Answers

B	A	R	B	R	A	■	O	B	A	M	A	■	M	I	S	O	■	L	A	B
M	A	N	I	A	C	■	E	R	R	O	R	■	A	T	T	I	T	U	D	E
W	H	A	T	T	H	E	D	E	U	C	E	■	T	E	A	L	B	L	U	E
■	■	■	S	A	I	L	■	I	T	S	A	L	L	M	Y	F	A	U	L	T
A	P	O	■	■	N	I	L	■	■	■	■	S	O	I	■	F	I	R	S	T	S
S	I	N	G	L	E	S	E	R	V	E	■	A	N	D	O	R	■	■	■	■	■
H	E	L	I	O	S	■	M	A	I	N	E	■	■	E	R	E	C	T	E	D
C	R	A	Z	Y	S	T	U	P	I	D	L	O	V	E	■	S	H	A	R	I
A	R	I	A	■	■	A	R	T	■	■	L	A	I	R	S	■	I	R	A	S
N	E	D	■	J	A	B	S	■	W	H	I	S	K	E	Y	S	M	A	S	H
■	■	■	B	A	G	■	■	P	E	R	O	T	■	■	N	I	P	■	■	■
R	E	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	S	E	T	■	S	A	C	S	■	T	A	C
A	S	I	F	■	D	O	O	R	S	■	■	S	T	U	■	■	T	O	G	O
P	A	N	I	C	■	I	N	C	O	M	E	T	A	X	R	E	T	U	R	N
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■	■	■	L	O	E	W	E	■	T	H	R	E	E	V	O	L	L	E	Y	■
A	N	G	E	L	S	■	A	P	P	■	■	■	S	K	I	■	■	E	D	S
W	O	R	L	D	W	A	R	I	I	A	C	E	■	E	V	I	L	■	■	■
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E	P	A	■	S	T	O	W	■	S	O	C	A	L	■	S	N	A	R	E	S

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

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Food Bank

(cont. from page 1)



Volunteers are pictured with Appalachian Power staff. The company gave the food bank a $10,000 grant to help buy food for its clients.

their financial support.

"We started receiving from a few more area churches, which is always great to get the churches involved. We are really hoping to continue to receive from all the churches," she said.

Although the food bank's financial outlook has improved, Pruitt said the organization continues to monitor its budget closely.

"I said back in December we'd see how far we could go, reevaluate in June. We are in a pretty good place right now. I don't think we would have enough to go through December, but we just take it month by month and see what happens," she said.

The food bank distributes nearly 400 food boxes each month. Pruitt said demand typically eases during the summer as gardens begin producing and some families receive additional food assistance while school is out.

"That's normal except for November and December. We are always higher in November and December. You've got people that are getting their regular food stamps now, plus some boxes that come in the summer to the people with children in schools, and you've got people who can get their garden food out, cook it, so they may not need what we would provide. So yeah, things slow down a little bit in the summer," she said.

The organization spends between $7,000 and $10,000 each month on food.

"That's a lot of money," Pruitt said.

The food bank is also looking for someone to build a website that would allow supporters to donate online.

"We don't want anything great, we just want something that is there so we can accept donations online," she said.

Monetary donations may be mailed to Patrick County Food Bank, P.O. Box 1304, Stuart, VA 24171.

To donate food or volunteer, contact Pruitt at 276-694-6300 or 276-806-4152, or email PatrickCountyFoodBank@gmail.com. More information is available on the Patrick County Food Bank's Facebook page.

SPECIAL ELECTION TO FILL THE VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE PETERS CREEK DISTRICT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

A Special Election will be held on November 3, 2026 for the purpose of filling the vacancy that exists in the office of the School Board for the Peters Creek District of Patrick County, Virginia for the remainder of the unexpired term.

The filing deadline for the office of the School Board for the Peters Creek District is August 14, 2026 at 5:00pm. Candidate packets are available at the Registrar's Office or you may download forms at https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/becoming-a-candidate/

The Registrar's Office is located in the Patrick County Administration Building, 106 Rucker Street, Room 216C, Stuart, Virginia 24171 and is open 8:00am – 5:00pm, Monday – Friday. If there are any questions, please call 276-694-7206.

August 4, 2026 Democratic and Republican Party Primary Election Information and Deadlines

Early voting for the upcoming August 4, 2026 Democratic and Republican Party Primary Election has begun at the Registrar's Office and will continue through **August 1, 2026** during regular office hours. The office will also be open on the following dates and times for the purpose of early voting:

- Sunday, July 19, 2026 11:00am – 4:00pm
- Saturday, July 25, 2026 8:00am – 5:00pm
- Sunday, July 26, 2026 11:00am – 4:00pm
- Saturday, August 1, 2026 8:00am – 5:00pm

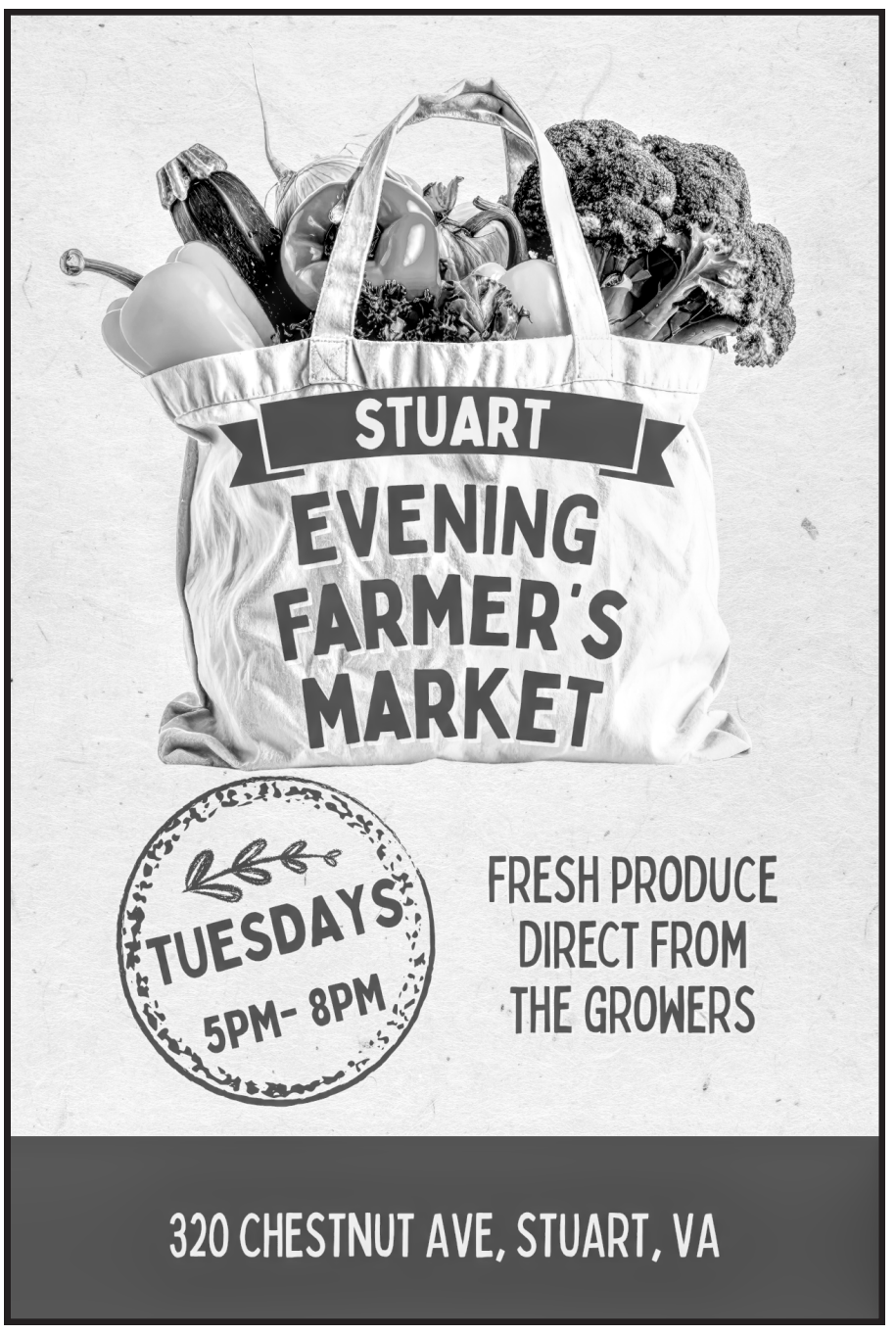
If you need to receive a ballot by mail, a Virginia Vote by Mail Application Form must be received on or before **Friday, July 24, 2026** at 5:00 pm. A request to receive a ballot by mail may be done online at https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation

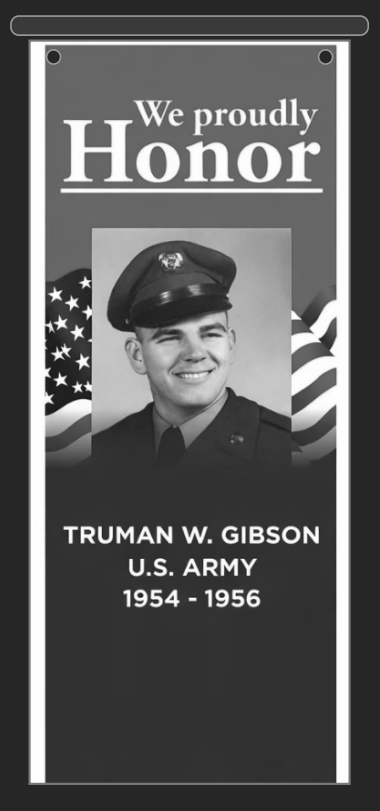
Virginia law requires all voters to present an acceptable form of identification when voting early or on Election Day. Information about acceptable forms of identification can be found at https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/in-person-voting/. Any registered voter who does not possess acceptable ID, may sign an ID Confirmation Statement.

The deadline to register to vote or to update your address on your existing voter registration for the upcoming August 4, 2026 Democratic and Republican Party Primary Election will be on Friday, July 24, 2026. Any citizen needing to register to vote or update their address may do so by: appearing in person at the Registrar's Office, mailing a completed application to Post Office Box 635, Stuart, VA, or going online at https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation. The Registrar's Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday and is located in the Patrick County Veterans' Memorial Building 106 Rucker St. Room 216C Stuart VA.

For additional information, or to request a Virginia Vote by Mail Application Form to be mailed to you, contact the Registrar's Office at (276) 694-7206 or staylor@co.patrick.va.us or visit the Patrick County Registrar's website at https://www.co.patrick.va.us/206/Registrar

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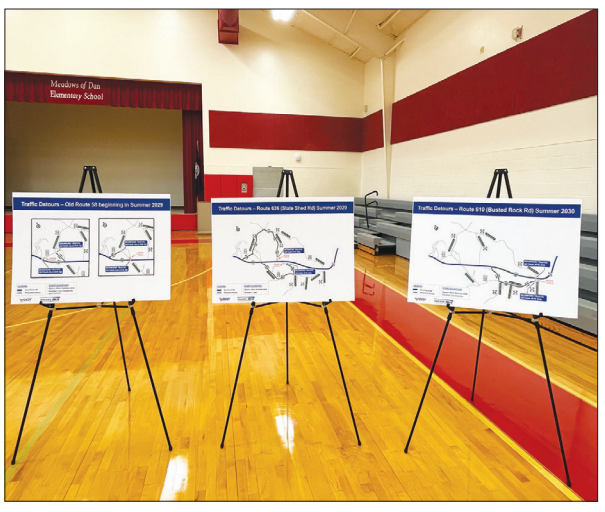
APPLY OR LEARN MORE
daniel.trail@stuartva.org
276.694.3811 · 100 Patrick Ave., Stuart

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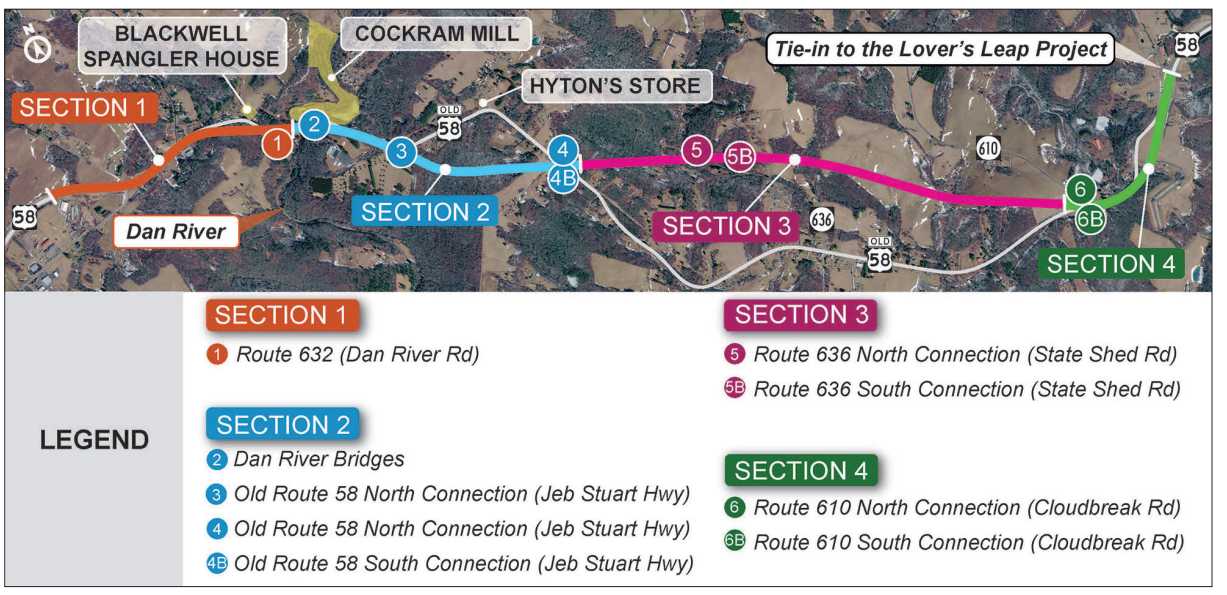
Residents

(cont. from page 1)





Residents review maps showing proposed detours during construction of the Vesta section of the U.S. 58 widening project. Detours are planned in the State Shed Road, Busted Rock Road and Mountain View Drive areas during various phases of the U.S. 58 expansion project.



This rendering shows how the project will connect to the current U.S. 58 widening project.



More than 100 residents attend a Virginia Department of Transportation informational meeting June 23 at Meadows of Dan Elementary School to learn about the Vesta section of the U.S. 58 widening project.

Traffic will be maintained on the existing bridge while construction is underway.

"A traffic shift will begin summer or fall 2028 and will involve completing the new eastbound Route 58 bridge and shifting two-way traffic from existing to the new bridge. The final configuration in fall 2030 will be to shift traffic to the completed configuration on both Route 58 bridges," the video stated.

VDOT officials said the right-of-way acquisition process will follow standard agency procedures. KDR Real Estate Services Project Manager Jeff Dykes, who is part of the design team, will send certified letters to affected property owners as the agency works to secure the remaining rights of way needed for the project.

The right-of-way process is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

Construction will be divided into four sections, with the first two receiving priority. Section 1 includes Virginia 632 (Dan River Road), while Section 2 includes the Dan River bridges and Old U.S. 58 North connections, also known as Jeb Stuart Highway.

"During construction we will maintain two-way traffic on existing Route 58 as we widen it to four-lanes. The end of section two will tie in with existing Route 58 near Vesta Church Road. Once work is complete, we will shift two-way traffic to the newly constructed eastbound Route 58 roadway," the video stated.

While traffic continues on the existing roadway in Sections 1 and 2, construction will proceed on the new roadway in Sections 3 and 4, which include the State Shed Road and Cloudbreak Road areas.

"Once work is complete on sections three and four, we will shift two-way traffic onto the newly constructed eastbound 58 roadway. The project will straighten out the roadway, increase sight distance and construct turning lanes for intersections," the video stated.

Work hours are expected to be Monday through Saturday from about 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., with occasional night work.

U.S. 58 may be reduced to one lane during construction, and flaggers or temporary signals may be used to control traffic. Drivers can expect periodic delays of up to 10 minutes, the video stated.

Temporary periods of increased noise from drilling and blasting are also expected.

According to the presentation, blasting will be limited to 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and traffic may be stopped for up to 20 minutes when blasting or drilling is necessary.

"Drivers should expect loud noises and allow extra travel time. Electronic message boards will be used to inform drivers of scheduled blasting at least 48 hours in advance," the video stated.

Access to homes, businesses and private property will be maintained throughout construction.

Several detours will be required during the project.

Two detours near old U.S. 58 and Mountain View Drive are expected to be in place for one to three months each, beginning in summer 2029.

A separate detour will affect the State Shed Road area.

"State Shed Road, Route 636, will be closed to through traffic and traffic will be required to follow…the detour to Mountain View Road, Route 767, and Cloudbreak Road, Route 610. The duration of the detour will be one year beginning in summer 2029," the video stated.

Another detour is expected to begin in summer 2030 and last approximately one to two months.

"During construction of the proposed intersection with Busted Rock Road, Route 610, traffic will be required to follow a short detour…to State Shed Road. The proposed eastbound Route 58 roadway will be completed and opened to traffic prior to implementing this detour," the video stated.

Residents with questions may contact Triton Construction Manager Michael Daetwyler at Michael.Daetwyler@tritonwv.com or 304-290-8037.

More information is available at vdot.virginia.gov/projects/salem-district/route-58-widening--vesta-in-patrick-county/.

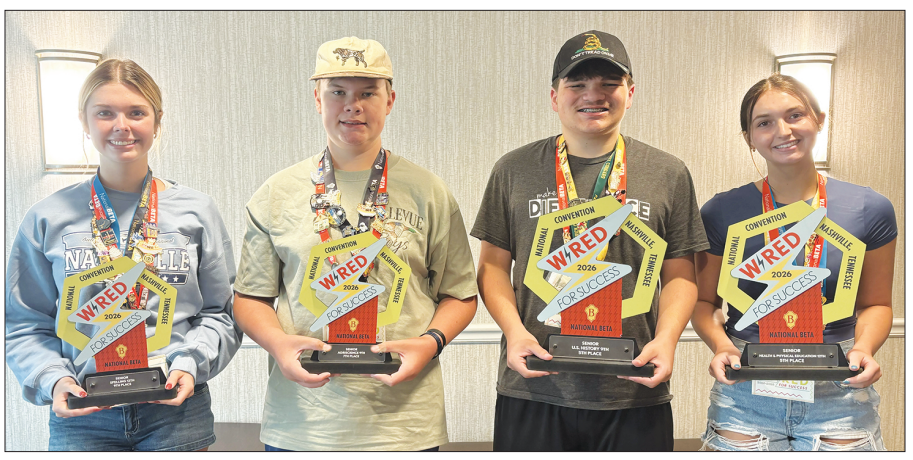
PCHS Sr. Beta Club/Beta members compete at National Beta Convention



Callie Montgomery with her art work and trophy.



Group Photo of all PCHS attendees to National Sr Beta Convention. Photo taken at Country Music Hall of Fame.



Virginia Nations - Caleb Howell, Conner King, and Madison Scott with their trophies.



All the World is a Stage group.

Thirty National Sr. Beta members from Patrick County High School recently participated in the 2026 National Beta Convention held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee. Students joined thousands of Beta members from across the United States to celebrate academic achievement, leadership, character, and service while competing in a variety of national competitions. During the convention, members from Patrick County High School earned recognition in the following events: Caleb Howell (7th Place Ninth Grade Agriculture), Callie Montgomery (10th Place Black and White Photography), Madison Scott (5th Place Twelfth Grade Health and Physical Education), Virginia Nations (9Th Place Twelfth Grade Spelling), and Conner King (5th Place Ninth Grade US History). In addition, PCHS Sr. Beta Club members placed fourth in the Eastern Division of the All the World is a Stage Competition and fourth in the National Campaign Skit for President.

National Convention provides opportunities for students in grades 4-12 to showcase their talents through individual and team competitions, leadership experiences, service initiatives, networking opportunities, and educational programming. The annual event brings together top-performing students who have advanced through state conventions and earned the opportunity to compete on the national stage.

The 2026 National Beta Convention, themed "Wired for Success," welcomed thousands of attendees for a week of competition, celebration, and student achievement.

PCHS Sr. Beta members competing at the convention also attended a concert at the Grand Ole Opry and toured the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville.

With more than 500,000 active members and 14,000 clubs nationally and internationally, National Beta has become the nation's largest independent, non-profit, educational youth organization. National Beta promotes the ideals of academic achievement, character, service and leadership among elementary and secondary school students. National Elementary Beta includes grades 4-5, National Junior Beta includes grades 6-8 and National Senior Beta includes grades 9-12. Visit betaclub.org for more information.

Agrivoltaics

(cont. from page 8)

Farm Bureau, and garnered strong bipartisan support. Code now defines agrivoltaics to mean "... the intentional co-location of agricultural production and solar energy generation on the same land" that:

• is designed to prioritize and sustain agricultural productivity while integrating renewable energy;

• allows the ongoing production and sale of agricultural products throughout the solar array's life;

• is a part of an existing farm business; and

• ensures flexibility for farmers to adapt to market conditions and support operational needs.

Agrivoltaics projects can be crop- or livestock-based. For example, beef cattle can graze beneath solar panels that are elevated 7 to 10 feet, spaced widely to provide essential shade for the herd, sustaining long-term land income while reducing the cattle's heat stress. Other livestock agrivoltaics projects use sheep to manage vegetation.

PEC's Community Farm crop-based agrivoltaics project serves as a demonstration site for farmers, installers, developers and policymakers. Beets, broccoli, garlic, kale and lettuce are growing under 42 solar panels mounted 6 to 8 feet high on a quarter acre. The panels power the farm, eliminating the electricity bill, with battery backups generating income by selling excess power back to the grid.

J. E. B. Stuart in 1860

By Tom Perry

Continuing the series of stories about the antebellum army of the United States, J. E. B. Stuart, in January 1860, was commanding Company G of the 1st U. S. Cavalry, under Major John Sedgewick. In March 1860, Stuart relinquished command of Company G to Captain William L. Walker, who had returned to Fort Riley on March 22, 1859.

Back home in Virginia on March 10, 1860, 42 members of the Virginia Legislature signed a petition for Stuart's promotion to captain. On June 26, 1860, Flora gave birth to their only son, Phillip St George Cooke Stuart. When his namesake grandfather, a Virginian, did not join the Confederate States of America, the Stuarts changed his name to J. E. B. Stuart, Jr. Today, we are up to J. E. B. Stuart VII.

In May 1860, Companies F, G, and H under Sedgewick left Fort Riley on May 15, 1860, on the Kiowa Expedition. They left on 18-May-1860, and by 24-May, they were camped near Fort Learned, having traveled 144 miles. By June, the command was at Aubry's Crossing of the Arkansas River, having traveled 475 miles from Fort Riley.

On July 11, the command was 7 miles above Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River in present day Colorado. The cavalry was chasing the Kiowa. Stuart would fight at Blackwater Springs with 20 soldiers. He wrote to Fitz Lee five days later about his opportunity for glory.

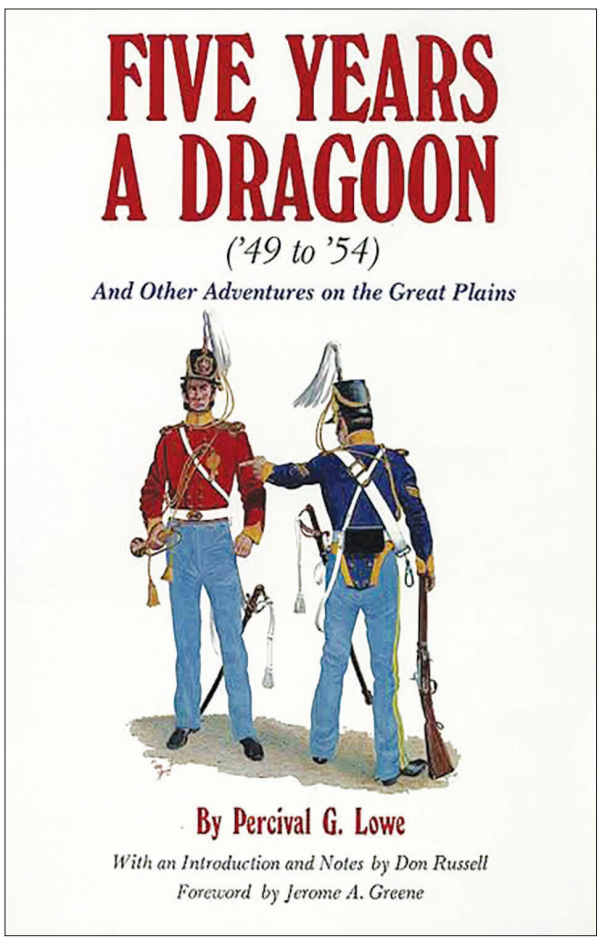
Stuart developed a relationship with Percival G. Lowe, the author of "Five Years a Dragoon." Lowe had been in the 1st Dragoons but, in 1854, became a civilian employee of the Quarter Master Department.

By August 1860, he was back at Fort Riley. Stuart was concerned about his future: "I hope that during my exile in this wilderness, my civilized friends will not entirely forget me." He left on 1-Aug-1860 for Bent's Fort, arriving on 29-Aug, traveling 355 miles. The next month, he rejoined his regiment, commanding Company H at nearby Fort Wise in present day Colorado, along the banks of the Arkansas, cradled in the snow of the nearby Rocky Mountains.

In December 1860, Stuart began corresponding with prominent Southerners about his feelings on secession. "I believe that the North will yield what the South demands, thereby avert disunion." He wrote his cousin, Virginia Governor John Letcher, offering his services to his native state if war came.

The temperance movement originated in Kansas, leading to prohibition in the twentieth century. Stuart gave a temperance speech at Christmas to men at Fort Wise, as alcohol abuse was prevalent in the U. S. Army.





Percival G. Lowe and his book, "Five Years A Dragoon"

"I am proud to meet you beneath the auspicious sky of this glorious jubilee of Christendom…I will not trouble you with a recital of the melancholy details of the woes incident to drunkenness," then proceeds to do so, police reports, guard books, hospital statements…They present poor human nature in its most revolting aspect, brothers estranged, wedded divorce, pocket and character bankruptcy."

At the age of 12, he reportedly promised his mother, Elizabeth Letcher Pannil Stuart, not to drink alcohol. He took that pledge seriously, and until the wound that took his life, there is no data to suggest he violated his pledge to his mother until he was mortally wounded at Yellow Tavern on May 11, 1864.

Public invited to review flood maps in county

FEMA is proposing updates to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Patrick County. Community partners are invited to participate in a 90-day appeal and comment period.

The updated maps were produced in coordination with local, state and FEMA officials. Significant community review of the maps has already taken place, but before the maps become final, community partners can identify any corrections or questions about the information provided and submit appeals or comments.

The 90-day appeal period will begin on June 24, 2026. Residents, business owners and other community partners are encouraged to review the updated maps to learn about local flood risks and potential future flood insurance requirements. They may submit an appeal if they perceive that modeling or data used to create the map is technically or scientifically incorrect.

An appeal must include technical information, such as hydraulic or hydrologic data, to support the claim.

Appeals cannot be based on the effects of proposed projects or projects started after the study is in progress.

If property owners see incorrect information that does not change the flood hazard information—such as a missing or misspelled road name in the Special Flood Hazard Area or an incorrect corporate boundary— they can submit a written comment.

The next step in the mapping process is the resolution of all comments and appeals. Once they are resolved, FEMA will notify communities of the effective date of the final maps.

Submit appeals and comments by contacting the County's Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management department. The preliminary maps may be viewed online at the FEMA Flood Map Changes Viewer.

For more information about the flood maps, contact a FEMA Map Specialist by telephone; toll free, at 1-877-FEMA-MAP (1-877-336-2627) or by email at FEMA-FMIX@fema.dhs.gov

Most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flooding. There are cost-saving options available for those newly mapped into a high-risk flood zone. Learn more about your flood insurance options by talking with your insurance agent and visiting https://www.floodsmart.gov.

Patrick County Flood Mapping Milestones

• July 17, 2024 — Flood Risk Review Meeting to review draft flood hazard data.

• July 2, 2025 — Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map released.

• July 29, 2025 — Community Coordination and Outreach Meeting to review Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map and discuss updates to local floodplain management ordinance and flood insurance.

• June 24, 2026 – Appeal Period starts.

• Spring 2028* — New Flood Insurance Rate Map becomes effective and flood insurance requirements take effect. (*Timeline subject to change pending completion of the appeal review process.)

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Region 3 Office of External Affairs at (215) 931-5597 or at femar3newsdesk@fema.dhs.gov.

Input sought on Virginia's 2026 Energy Plan

Gov. Abigail Spanberger announced a statewide public input process was launched to inform the 2026 Virginia Energy Plan (VEP), a ten-year roadmap for how the Commonwealth will focus on contending with high energy costs while growing energy demand, strengthening reliability and resilience for households and businesses, and continuing to move toward a net-zero economy. Led by the Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy), the plan will draw on a coordinated, holistic effort spanning multiple secretariats and state agencies to reflect the full scope of challenges and opportunities facing Virginia's energy future.

"Energy costs are too high for too many Virginia families, and with demand on our grid rising faster than it has in generations, we must make energy more affordable and more secure," said Spanberger. "But our energy future should not — must not — just be written in Richmond. I want to hear from Virginians across every corner of the Commonwealth, and I encourage everyone who pays an energy bill in Virginia to make their voice heard."

Virginians can share their perspectives through a public input survey, now open. The survey will remain open through July 31.

Alongside the public survey, Virginia Energy is hosting regional meetings across the Commonwealth and conducting targeted engagement with state agencies, utilities, industry representatives, advocacy organizations, local governments, and community organizations through virtual stakeholder sessions through late June.

Because energy touches every part of state government, the 2026 VEP is being developed in coordination with secretariats across the administration:

• Agriculture and Forestry will elevate the voices of farmers, forest landowners, and rural communities, ensuring the plan reflects rural energy needs and the opportunities of land use and bioenergy.

• The Department of Health and Human Resources will bring a focus on affordability and public health, ensuring the plan supports home energy security for low-income and vulnerable Virginians.

• The Department of Environmental Quality will bring expertise on air and water quality and environmental justice, ensuring the plan accounts for the health and pollution burdens that energy infrastructure can place on overburdened communities.

• The Department of Natural and Historic Resources will bring expertise on environmental quality, conservation, and resilience, ensuring the plan weighs the protection of land, water, and cultural and historic resources as new energy infrastructure is sited and built.

• The Department of Transportation will bring perspective on how Virginians and goods move, ensuring the plan accounts for transportation energy, electrification, and the fueling and charging infrastructure the Commonwealth's economy depends on.

To learn more, sign up for updates, and participate in the process, visit energy.virginia.gov/va-energy-plan.

