

THE PENDLETON TIMES

Serving the Community since 1913

\$1.25
Volume 113, Number 2

Franklin, Pendleton County, West Virginia 26807

Thursday
January 15, 2026

Health Department Confirms Rabies in Circleville, Issues Information on Protecting Pets, Self

By Stephen Smoot

Last week, according to Brooke Hott from the Pendleton County Health Department, a Circleville resident noticed a raccoon behaving oddly on his porch, “staggering” strangely. Just as with a rabid dog famously depicted in the novel “To Kill a Mockingbird,” the raccoon moved with a strange and almost drunken stagger, typical of animals with that deadly and dangerous disease.

Hott stated that the resident acted properly when confronting a feral animal with obvious symptoms of rabies. “Staggering is a common symptom,” she noted. The resident dispatched the animal and notified his local veterinarian. That starts the process overseen by county health departments as they work to keep both human beings and their beloved pets or working animals free from the ravages of rabies.

A specific protocol governs instances of rabies. As Hott explained, the veterinarian will submit samples from the animal. “They send it off to Charleston where the rabies lab is to test the brain.” Also “we get the call from the veterinarian about a cat dog, raccoon or any other animal suspected of carrying the disease.”

After two or three days, Hott related, the health department receives the call from the Charleston laboratory to get the results of the test. Immediately, the person who submitted the animal will also receive word from the health department about the results, should they return as positive that the creature had the disease.

Hott related that this makes the fifth animal found in the past 12 months. Four were reported and confirmed last year, the first appearing in February. Hott remarked that “it’s an off time to have it, in the cold weather, but you always have to be aware. You never know.”

One of the more recent tasks involved in tabulating rabies lies in gathering and report-

ing to the state a precise GPS location of where the rabid animal was found. Health department officials perform this work.

Hott took the opportunity to remind animal owners of the best way to protect them from rabies in the first place, following the recommended vaccination regimen. Pets should receive their first vaccination within three months of birth, a booster after a year, then booster shots every three years.

She added that the best way that people can protect themselves lies in following a good piece of advice, “If you don’t know who the animal is, leave it alone.” Many do not understand the broad spectrum of animals who might carry rabies. She stated that last year they confirmed rabies in a beaver. “That was my first time finding a beaver with it in my 13 years here,” Hott remarked.

Bats, very common in areas of Pendleton County with cave systems, are one of the most common carriers of rabies.

“No exposure to people or animals is a perfect case,” Hott shared, talking about when a rabid animal is found, but has not come into contact with people or pets.

If a human has direct contact with a rabid animal in such a way that may transmit the disease, he or she must take a post exposure prophylactic shot. While highly unpleasant, the pain is significantly better than what happens as the virus runs its course.

“Rabies virus gets into your body when the saliva . . . of an infected animal gets into an open wound (usually from a bit states the Cleveland Clinic). The next part is what should give pause, “it moves very slowly along your central nervous system. When it reaches your brain, the damage causes neurological symptoms. From there, rabies leads to coma and death.”

The Centers for Disease Control reports that “the incubation period may last for weeks to months.” Once it sets in, people may feel



A resident in Circleville reported the fifth rabid wild animal in the county in the past 12 months. Photo courtesy of the Monongalia County Health Department.

weakness, discomfort, or headache, along with irritation at the bite location.

As the virus breaks down the brain and spinal cord, symptoms may include anxiety, confusion, agitation, delirium, hallucinations, acute fear of water, hypersalivation, seizures, and more

Pets that have had their booster shots, yet still come into contact with an infected animal, must receive a booster, then go into a 45-day quarantine period, at the end of which the Health Department will call to give the “a clear.”

Owners of animals who have gone too long since a rabies shot, or who never had one, have two options if they come into contact with a rabid creature. The first lies in euthanizing it before the virus can infect the pet or working animal.

Other owners may choose a specialized six-month quarantine. This requires a double pen system where the animal resides in, and does not leave for six months, a primary pen. A second enclosure also surrounds the area where the human may feed or water the animal.

“It’s probably like agony,” stated Hott, because the animal cannot leave the primary enclosure for any reason until the health department gives notice. It can have no direct contact with any other animal, including its owner. That quarantine protocol will take six months and, again, the health department will call when the quarantine period has passed.

Of course, by keeping up with ones’ animals’ rabies vaccination schedule and following the rules when rabies is suspected or encountered, Hott says, “This protects you from getting it too.”

North Mountain Traffic Camera Restoration To Be Covered by Board of Education

By Stephen Smoot

The Pendleton County Board of Education held its first meeting of 2026, which was a special legally required meeting to discuss the 2026 and 2027 school year calendar.

After a brief presentation came, the official second meeting of 2026 for the group. J. D. Wilkins, board president, gave the invocation, praying, “We ask for Your blessings for all.”

First, the board approved recent resignations of personnel, including two coaches, Jeremy Bodkin and Chris Wilburn, at Pendleton County Middle/High School. Additionally, it approved naming former Wildcat standout Clayton Kisamore as an unpaid coach, pending him receiving certification.

J. P. Mowery, Pendleton County Schools treasurer, provided the report on budget and finances. He opened by sharing the closing cash balance for December 2025 was \$3,164,654.73. Then he pointed out the difference between that and the ending balance from December 2024, which was \$2,747,609.00.

Mowery stated that board members should not expect necessarily that the accounts’ balance would remain that far above the previous year, but said, “It’s a good sign that we are holding our own on cash flow.”

Not every county has created for itself the same cushion. Delegate Pat McGeehan (R-Hancock) blasted his home county’s school system for financial mismanagement last week. West Virginia Metro News reports that the financial position of 13 systems in the state have reach precarious points, which has attracted the at-

tention of state officials.

Some of the expenses from December included \$852,905.86 in total payroll for the month. A major recent expense lay in a series of what Mowery called “service calls” for repairs of different devices. “We pay a fair amount of money for maintenance,” he stated, adding that as the school system necessarily relies on more electronic technology for security, communication, and other needs, it means more maintenance needs.

He also shared that PCS paid Lost River Meat Company \$8,855.23 for school lunch beef and also stated that “we have to get a better handle on energy.” Franklin Elementary School in particular has seen problems with its heating and cooling, leading to higher bills.

Mowery informed the board and Nicole Hevener, superintendent, that Congress renewed the Secure Rural Funding program and that the school system should receive their check within 45 days. Congressional battles kept the renewal on the backburner through most of 2025, preventing payout. He added that advocates are pushing Congress to make the funding, which in some form or another has been in place almost since the start of the 20th century, more permanent in terms of not needing frequent renewals at least.

Next came a discussion of the bus fleet. Mowery showed how strategically planning whether to lease or purchase outright helps to put the school system in a firmer financial position. He then shared the status of a permanent improvement fund established several years ago.

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County School Systems Share Their Needs for the 2026 State Legislature

By Stephen Smoot

With 13 school systems facing serious financial problems, a group of superintendents statewide created a proposal for the State Legislature to consider

These proposals center around the concept of the “West Virginia Portrait of a Graduate,” which reflects the vision of Charleston-based Education Alliance. This organization is composed of the business community and other stakeholders who have, since 1983, contributed to public education policy discussions and debates. Its board and executive committee includes officials from around the state, such as Mallie Combs, Hardy County Rural Development Association director, Michelle Blatt, state superintendent of schools, Gat Caperton, Morgan County business owner, and others.

“West Virginia Portrait of a Graduate” combines two main purposes. It seeks to “backfill” for many students the kinds of social and personal skillsets once learned at home or from extracurricular activities,

teenage employment, or general interactions. This also includes practical planning for a productive adult future. Such “soft skills” have grown absent in younger generations.

Additionally, the “Portrait” lays out the goal of improving education for the student to help him or her reach full potential.

The superintendents requested flexibility first in educational pathways and graduation requirements. To the portion of State Code, 18-2-6, that governs school standards, the proposal requested that language be added to that clause giving more decision-making power to county boards, saying minimum requirements for graduation “may include course credits, competency demonstrations, and/or assessments as the board determines necessary to ensure that graduates are prepared for postsecondary education or gainful employment.” The document referred to a series of classes required by the State Legislature, including a year of West Virginia History, personal finance education, civics, physical education, and other mandates.

Another requested change in state law was presented as “flexibility in accepting transferred/transcribed grades from other educational institutions.” The proposed change would give local boards decision-making power on whether to accept a transcript as valid or not.

A document presented as evidence for the change has raised controversy. The superintendents shared what they called an example of a “homeschool transcript” in



Superintendent Nicole Hevener and her colleagues statewide seek more flexibility in school governance.

comparison to a public school transcript. Advocates of alternative schooling, which includes homeschooling, such as State Senator Patricia Rucker (R-Jefferson) and Delegate Kathie Crouse (R-Putnam) have blasted the presented document as an outlier and not representative of what parents who homeschool typically produce.

Another proposed change involved expanding the idea of tailoring a West Virginia high school diploma more to the student’s experience. It advocated “creating a two diploma system allowing students to pursue opportunities in credits related to their chosen pathway,” whether that choice lay in pursuing a traditional or a career and technical education (trades) pathway.

It also argued that any conferred degree “regardless of educational choice” would “require a digital portfolio of students’ learning experiences.”

Next, the proposal requested Legislative relief from some of a long list of required trainings required by state law. These join those required by the federal government and also the West Virginia State Board of Education. These address a full range of possible issues that could be encountered in the school system and include for all employees trainings on

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Community CALENDAR

Family Support Center Sponsors Activities

The Pendleton County Strive to Thrive Family Support Center on Main Street in Franklin is hosting the following events.

•Saturday, 10 a.m. — A Hotcake Hang Out and Crafts with Tayna from WIC. This event includes pancakes with toppings, refreshments, crafts and fun.

•Jan. 22, 4 p.m. — Rooted in Love Family Paint Night. Paint a family tree with one’s little and loved ones. Light refreshments included.

For more information, call 304-538-7711.

Pendleton and Hardy County Commissioners Share What They Need in the Next Legislative Session

By Stephen Smoot

The West Virginia State Legislature convenes this week for its annual regular 90 day session. Although both chambers, the majority party, state officials, and individual legislators all have agendas to bring forward and work upon, local government officials want to make sure that their needs are recognized as well.

Pendleton and Hardy counties both rely on the same watershed, contend with the same ridges and mountains, have agricultural economies that deal with the same issues, and both have many of the same challenges of rural counties, including challenges with keeping volunteer first responder organizations operating at full potential.

Steven Schetrom, Hardy County Commission president, expressed an important concern regarding the South Branch Day Report Center and laid blame with Senate Bill 128, passed last session.

The bill itself related to ordering courts to pay for various services at the Medicaid rates, but triggered significant problems with Day Report Centers statewide receiving what they need.

Schetrom provided an analysis of the impact, which reads “SB 128 disrupted the payments and the invoicing we had in place for services and testing we provide for DoHS (West Virginia Department of Human Services, formerly part of WV DHHR)”

No Day Report Center has “received a payment for invoiced services since July.” The last payment arrived at about the point that SB 128 took effect on July 11 of last year. Problems

have come in the state not issuing payments due to Day Report Centers around the state struggling to adjust to a new system. “We have adjusted our invoicing to the standard only to have it returned to us in the mail and then have to resubmit,” Schetrom said.

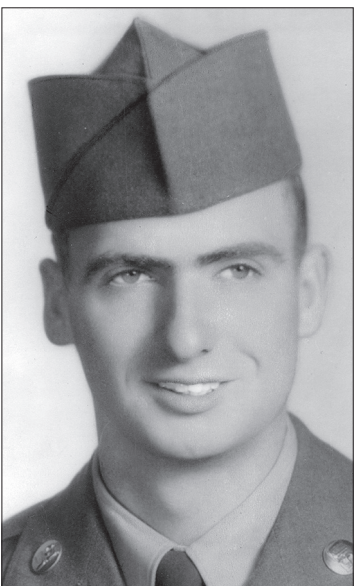
One of the key points of accountability for Day Report lies in regular testing, since the vast majority come to the program with a drug problem. Testing utilized prior was billed by Day Report at a rate of “\$220 per test with \$100 going to lab fees and we did a significant number of them monthly.” Currently “the department now only wants to pay \$12.40 for a visual confirmation Urine test. That’s it.”

Testing billing, according to the analysis provided by Schetrom, has always been more than for services, approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000 per month for the latter, \$60 to \$70,000 per month for testing.

Because of the discrepancies between what DoHS wants to fund and the operating costs surrounding drug testing “it may come to a point that testing for the department will not be feasible.” Without the accountability provided by testing, the mission of Day Report may suffer.

Carl Hevener, Pendleton County Commission president, blasted the state on rising expectations of local government. “They need to cut down on unfunded state mandates.” He and fellow commissioner and former state USDA official Roger Dahmer explained that the state, through the Legislature or other process, will place requirements of counties to perform some

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Alfred Olen Armstrong

Alfred Olen Armstrong, 92, of Doe Hill, Virginia, passed away Jan. 7, 2026, at his home, where he was born and raised. He was born Oct. 19, 1933, a son of the late William Mason and Edna Frances (Stogdale) Armstrong.

In 1954 Mr. Armstrong joined the U.S. Army where he served in Austria, Italy and Germany, and was in the reserves until 1962.

A man of many trades, he traveled all over Virginia and West Virginia shearing sheep and roofing. He even won first place in the statewide sheep shearing contest and second place in the National contest in Chicago, Illinois.

Additionally, he served on many county and civic organizations throughout the years.

In the late evenings a person would find him picking his banjo or reading a book. On weekends when he wasn't working on his farm, he would be riding his horses in the mountains. He was also proud of his "coyote tree" where he would display coyotes that would no longer harm his animals. He took great pride in hosting Grandpa Jones from HeeHaw during a turkey hunt on Jack Mountain. Above all, he enjoyed teaching his family and friends how to work with their hands.

On Aug. 24, 1957, he married Shirley Ruth (Nichols) Armstrong.

Together they had eight children, Michael "Mike" Armstrong and wife, Georgeanne, Kenneth Armstrong, Scotty Armstrong and wife, Sherry, and Penny Armstrong, all of Doe Hill, Virginia, Pam Lassle and husband, Dan of Terry, Montana, Robin Gumm and friend, Jim Hiner of Monterey, Virginia, Becky Rexrode of Verona, Virginia, and Larry Armstrong of McDowell, Virginia; a brother, Joe Armstrong of Bridgewater, Virginia; 15 grandchildren, Casey Thaler, Cody Armstrong, Kristen King, Tracy Rhodes, Timmy Armstrong, Nathan Lassle, Jordan Lassle, Brad Gumm, Lindsey Gumm, Tyler Rexrode, Lucas Rexrode, Stephanie Armstrong, Dillon Armstrong, Bryan Armstrong, and Colby Armstrong; 17 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was also preceded in death by a grandson, Michael Robert Lassle; three sons-in-law, Charles "Duke" Rexrode, Darrell "Junior" Gumm, Jr. and Steve Gallagher; and a daughter-in-law, Joan "Joanie" Heavenrich; a brother, William "Bill" Armstrong; a sister, Ethel A. Garber; and sisters-in-law, Shirley Armstrong and Betty Armstrong.

A funeral service was held Monday at Obaugh Funeral Home in McDowell, Virginia, with Rev. Andre Crummett officiating. Burial followed in Doe Hill Cemetery.

Pallbearers were his grandsons Casey Thaler, Brad Gumm, Lucas Rexrode, Bryan Armstrong, Timmy Armstrong, Tyler Rexrode, Colby Armstrong, and Cayden Warner.

Memorial contributions may be mailed to Doe Hill Cemetery, c/o Delbert Rexrode, 527 Windrush Lane, Doe Hill, VA 24433.

Condolences and memories may be shared to the family at www.obaughfuneralhome.com.



Reverend Judy Richards Vetter

The Reverend Judy Richards Vetter, 72, went to be with the Lord on Jan. 8, 2026.

Her family, friends, and church community thank God for her life and the legacy of love and faith she left behind.

She was born on June 25, 1953, in Baltimore, Maryland, to the late Reverend William E. Richards and Mary JoAnn (McNemar) Richards.

Rev. Vetter graduated from Franklin High School, earned an undergraduate in education from Ferrum College and James Madison University in Virginia, a masters in communication from West Virginia University, and a masters of divinity from Eastern Mennonite University.

She was a kindergarten teacher at Brandywine Elementary and a birth-to-three teacher for RESA VIII in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia as a first career. After her 27-year career in public education, she followed her calling to join the ministry.

She served charges in Hardy, Tyler, Hampshire, Wood, and Pendleton counties. Her final appointment, in Pendleton County, brought her back to one of her childhood homes as she followed in her father's footsteps serving as the minister of the South Fork charge for Fairview Bethel, Francis Asbury, and Riverside United Methodist churches.

She enjoyed traveling, arts and crafts, gardening, shopping, and ice cream. She had a great sense of humor and loved to make those around her laugh. She touched and influenced the lives of many, making countless friends along the way.

She shepherded numerous individuals in their personal faith and helped them develop their ministries to serve God and their communities. She had a heart for children, which was demonstrated by her passion for her education career and her focus on children's ministry within the United Methodist Church, as well as her loving care of her daughters and grandchildren.

She was married to Charles F. Burgoyne II (1970-1980) and Frank Vetter (1981-1997).

She was a loving and devoted mother to Stacey (Burgoyne) Funkhouser (husband, Andy) and Holly (Burgoyne) Branch (husband, Ron), who she described as her greatest accomplishments. She was affectionately known as "Gram-moo" to her grandchildren, Justus Branch (Holly) and Sophia, Heather, and Rachel Funkhouser (Stacey). She was the oldest sister to Jann Richards, Jill O'Regan, and Jinni Richards, aunt to Will and John Hardy and stepmother to Michael and Steven Vetter.

She was also preceded in death by her brother-in-law, Jerry Hardy; and nephew, John Hardy.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Services are to be determined in the future as a celebration of life.

Memorial donations may be made to Hospice of the Panhandle, one's local Hospice Care facility, or one may honor her by taking the time to serve those in need within one's community.

Arrangements were made by Brown Funeral Home.



Carroll Charles Mitchell

Carroll Charles Mitchell, 89, of Doe Hill, Virginia, passed away Jan. 6, 2026, peacefully going home to be with his Lord and Savior.

He was born June 19, 1936, in Mitchell, the son of the late Pierce Emmanuel and Verna Mae (Pitsenbarger) Mitchell.

A devoted steward of the land, Mr. Mitchell found deep purpose and joy in farming. He cared for sheep and cattle and took great pride in responsibly tending the land. His love for the outdoors extended beyond the farm; he especially enjoyed deer hunting and eagerly awaited mushroom season, often sharing stories and adventures from the woods with friends and family.

Family was at the heart of his life. A person could often find him at his grandchildren's ball games, livestock shows, and community events, quietly cheering them on with pride. He treasured time spent with family and enjoyed visiting with old friends, content to talk about the weather, farming, hunting trips, and the simple rhythms of life. Known for his sense of humor, he brought warmth and laughter to those around him.

He worked faithfully for the Virginia Department of Transportation for 39 years, a career marked by dedication, dependability, and pride in serving his community.

A faithful member of St. Paul Independent Lutheran Church, his faith guided his life and shaped the way he served others.

He will be remembered for his love of family, his strong work ethic, his generosity in sharing knowledge and stories, and the quiet, steady presence he offered to all who knew him.

On Aug. 12, 1959, he was united in marriage to Virginia "Dottie" Dorothea Armstrong, who survives. Together they shared 66 years of marriage rooted in faith, commitment, love, and family.

Also surviving are three daughters, Patricia Marshall and husband, Wendell of Franklin, Karen Mitchell of Broadway, Virginia, and Leslie Armstrong and husband, Cole of Head Waters, Virginia; a brother, Harald Mitchell of Harrisonburg, Virginia; sister, Thelma Fleisher of Franklin; grandchildren, Kimberly Zdan, Warren Marshall, Lisa Neil, and Sydney, Anna and Zach Armstrong; and great-grandson, Carson Neil.

A funeral was held Sunday at St. Paul Independent Lutheran Church with Rev. Jerry Smith officiating. Burial followed in St. Paul Lutheran Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Warren Marshall, Tracy Armstrong, Cole Armstrong, Zach Armstrong, Justin Neil, Chris Zdan, David Simmons and Gary Simmons.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Paul Independent Lutheran Church, c/o Delbert Rexrode, 527 Windrush Lane, Doe Hill, VA 24433 or McDowell Volunteer Fire Department, c/o Delbert Rexrode, 527 Windrush Lane, Doe Hill, VA 24433.

Condolences and memories may be shared with the family at www.obaughfuneralhome.com.



Mary Doris (Warner) Huffman

Mary Doris (Warner) Huffman, 86, of Franklin passed away on Jan. 9, 2026, at her home, surrounded by her family.

She was born on Nov. 13, 1939, in Riverton, the daughter of the late Burke M. and Ona S. (Bland) Warner.

Mrs. Huffman was a beloved wife, mother and grandmother (better known as Mommom), and sister.

She attended Dolly School House and Circleville High School. She was a member of Solomon's Chapel Church in Riverton.

She had worked as a teacher for Head Start in Circleville. She had also worked as a nurse's aide at local nursing homes. Her greatest treasure was being a homemaker, where she devoted her time to her grandchildren and instilled a legacy of love and hard work ethic.

She was famously known as the "rattlesnake woman" of North Mountain and proudly wore her black hat with a snake skin band and red lipstick. She carried many skills and took pride in applying them in skinning rattlesnakes, cooking, canning, sewing, and entertaining her family and friends. She was passionate about gardening, her flowers, going ramp digging, picking huckleberries on Spruce Knob, and going shopping in town.

After high school, on Jan. 31, 1956, she married the love of her life and her husband of 67 years, Richard D. Huffman, who preceded her in death on Jan. 12, 2023.

She leaves behind to cherish her memory three daughters, Sarah Taylor (Tommy) of Statesville, North Carolina, Sandie Smith (Danny) and Susan Hedrick (Vanessa), all of Franklin; six grandchildren, Bryan Taylor (Ashley), Megan Taylor, Breanna Hartman (Tim), Lacey Bowers (Matthew), Samuel Ruddle (Savanna) and Adam Ruddle (Glenna Burns); five great-grandchildren, Ethan Taylor, Lucas Ruddle, Mason Ruddle, Mavis Ruddle and Indie Hartman; siblings, Naomi Wheeler, Lorene A. Warner, Guy and Brenda Warner; and special caregivers, Ivory and Cheyenne Rader and Kathy Teter.

She was also preceded in death by a sister, Dallas Hundley; and two brothers-in-law, Ed Hundley and James Wheeler.

Funeral services were held Sunday in the chapel of the Basagic Funeral Home in Franklin with Willard Huffman officiating. Interment was at the Richard D. Huffman Family Cemetery in Franklin.

Memorials may be made to "the family" to assist in burial expenses, c/o Basagic Funeral Home, PO Box 215, Franklin, WV 26807.

Memories and words of comfort may be left at www.basagic.com.



Thomas E. Campbell

Thomas E. Campbell, 85, of Franklin passed away Jan. 9, 2026, at Sentara RMH in Harrisonburg, Virginia, with his loving family by his side.

Born in Owosso, Michigan, to the late Earl Andrew Campbell and Evelyn Mae Wiers Campbell on the Fourth of July 1940, he came into the world with fireworks. He joined his older sister, Barbara, who remembers him as such a sweet boy – forever recruiting her to play softball with the neighborhood kids.

Mr. Campbell worked at the local golf course in town and found his passion for golf that would last a lifetime.

After graduation and a year of college, he joined the Air Force to pursue his interest in aviation – another passion that would last a lifetime. The military shaped much of his life, and it was through it that he met his future wife, Jerri Lee. It didn't take long before their family expanded to include four children.

Moving often for his career, he made many friends along the way. He became a part of every community he lived in – whether through his children's activities, his work, or simply being a devoted husband. Somehow, he always found time for a good round of golf. And through it all, he left a mark on everyone he met.

He and his wife eventually made their way to West Virginia, a place they would call home for 30 wonderful years together. There, they found a warm and welcoming community that embraced them, and it became a favorite place for many of his grandchildren to visit. As a bonus, a beautiful golf course was built in Franklin where he made so many great friendships which were a source of comfort and companionship after losing his wife of 61

years.

In addition to his military missions as a pilot with the Air Force, he worked with the forestry service in Florida as a fire detection spotter and monitored and counted eagles and other endangered bird species. He and his wife co-owned a pet shop, The World of Pets, and he worked at Bowman's Store.

He enjoyed gardening and designed his own gas-powered bicycle. After a cooperative tutelage with Tyson Propst, he traveled to juried art shows and festivals demonstrating his passion for crafting staved wooden containers.

As the years went on, he remained a steady presence in the lives of his family and friends. He faced life's challenges with quiet strength.

His legacy is not only in the life he built with his family, but in the countless relationships he nurtured along the way. He showed that a life well-lived is measured not just by accomplishments, but by the love and care given to others. Though he will be deeply missed, his spirit lives on in the family he cherished, the friendships he cultivated, and the memories that will continue to bring smiles and comfort for generations to come.

His wife of 61 years, Jerri Lee Childers Campbell, preceded him in death.

Surviving are two daughters, Rebecca Dugan (Keith) of Hollywood, Maryland, and Regina Watson of Franklin; two sons, Thomas E. Campbell II (Gina) of Panama Beach, Florida, and John Mansfield Campbell (Kimberly) of Merritt Island, Florida, a sister, Barbara Arnold (Jonathan) of Athens, Georgia; nine grandchildren, Lauren Glass (Davis), Emily Campbell, Hannah Campbell, Brianna Nash (Zachary), Jessica Boyd (Gareth), Mary Laviolette (Caleb), Shane Dugan, John Campbell (Amanda), and Mackenzie Smith (Cody); and eight great-grandchildren, Juniper Glass, Connor and Madeleine Nash, Eden, Avner and Theodore Boyd, and Elijah and Azaria Campbell.

He was also preceded in death by a son-in-law, George Thomas Watson.

A memorial service was held Wednesday at the Kimble Funeral Home in Franklin with Pastor Michael Loudermilk officiating.

Online condolences and memories may be shared at www.kimblefuneralhome.com.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF FRANKLIN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The West Virginia Community Development Block Grant program provides funding for projects that improve communities where lower income people live. Program objectives include supporting local efforts to: 1) provide affordable water and sewer systems that affect environmental quality, public health, or economic development and 2) help lower income people to achieve an improved quality of life by increasing access to community facilities, services, and housing. The state will grant funds to local governments whose projects 1) benefit low and moderate-income people, 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or 3) meet an urgent need that poses an immediate threat to public health and welfare.

The Town of Franklin is considering applying to the West Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program. The purpose of this meeting is to obtain citizen input, comments, or opinions related to activities that the Town should include in an application seeking PY2025 State/HUD Community Development Grant funding for a planning grant for sewer plant upgrades.

A public meeting will be held on January 30, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. in the Town Office meeting room located at 305 North High Street, Franklin, WV. All residents of the community are invited to attend the meeting and to comment on community development and housing needs. The Region 8 PDC will use comments to prepare a Regional Development Plan that the community has previously used to meet federal planning requirements.

"It is a policy of all of the above agencies not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, religion, age, familial status and handicapped status in employment or the provision of services."



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Deborah Lee Pope Horst

Deborah Lee Pope Horst, 75, of Brandywine passed away peacefully on Jan. 10, 2026, surrounded by family and loved ones at Blue Ridge Nursing and Rehabilitation in Harrisonburg, Virginia. She was born on Dec. 18, 1950, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, at Rockingham Memorial Hospital, to the late Iris L. Pope (Mitchell) and Bobbie L. Pope.

From an early age, Mrs. Horst was known for her determination, kindness and integrity – qualities that remained with her throughout her life.

She graduated in 1968 from Franklin High School and later from Denard's Beauty College, beginning a life marked by creativity, dedication, and service to others. She was deeply involved in her community, serving as fiscal officer and treasurer of the Fort Seybert Heritage Education Association, an organization dedicated to preserving the heritage of Pendleton County. She was also a faithful member of Faith Lutheran Church in Franklin.

She and her beloved husband, Enos, owned and operated multiple businesses during the years, always with a strong commitment to supporting their community something that mattered deeply to them both. Together, they established and managed businesses in Brandywine and Franklin, as well as Harrisonburg, Virginia, operating D&E Home Store, which specialized in gifts and collectibles. They also owned and oversaw Lone Pine Lodging, which grew during the years as they purchased, renovated, and offered homes as rentals.

She was an experienced and versatile businesswoman who also worked as a beautician and served as a wedding planner and coordinator. In every role she held, her creativity, attention to detail, and genuine care for others shone through. Anyone who called

on her and her husband knew they could count on them for help at any time. Wherever she was, her husband was never far behind; they were truly a match made for one another and shared a deep and abiding love.

Above all else, she was devoted to her family. She especially enjoyed traveling, most notably to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and cherished time spent with her grandchildren and family.

In her later years, she faced Parkinson's disease with strength, grace and unwavering determination. She never gave up, always pushing forward and fighting until she could no longer, leaving a lasting impression on all who knew her.

Her legacy lives on through her family, her values, her dedication to her community, and the countless lives she touched. She will be remembered for her kindness, her strong work ethic and her unwavering love for all those around her.

On Aug. 6, 1975, she married Enos Heatwole Horst at Muhlenberg Lutheran Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Enos Horst (Nov. 21, 1943 - March 10, 2025), and her first husband, Luther "Randy" Randolph Thompson (Sept. 19, 1940 – April 13, 1972).

Surviving are a son, Randy Thompson Horst of Bridgewater, Virginia; former daughter-in-law, Terri M. Horst of Penn Laird, Virginia; a stepson, Randall Lynn Horst (Delia) of Grottoes, Virginia; a stepdaughter, Sandra "Sam" Baker of Bridgewater, Virginia; beloved grandchildren, Chloe Horst, who was her caregiver in recent years, Brandon Horst, Becca Horst, Cory Madison and Trip Madison; cherished great-grandchildren, Everly Madison and Margery Madison; and a number of loving nieces and nephews.

She was also preceded in death by brothers, Daniel "Dan" Pope, Richard "Rick" Pope and Randy "Bobby" Pope.

The family will receive friends from 6–9 p.m. Friday at Kimble Funeral Home in Franklin. A graveside service will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday at Pine Hill Cemetery in Brandywine with Reuben Horst officiating.

Memorials may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

Online condolences and memories may be shared at www.kimblefuneralhome.com.



Lawrence "Larry" Pope

Lawrence "Larry" Pope, 88, was born on May 12, 1937, in Washington, DC, to the late Otis A. and Ruby (Trail) Pope and passed away peacefully on December 30, 2025, in Tyler, Texas.

Mr. Pope graduated from Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia. He went to West Virginia University where he met his future wife in the choir. He graduated with a degree in agricultural science. He went on to get his master's degree in experimental statistics.

He wanted to follow in his father's, Otis A. Pope, PhD, footsteps so he also went to work with the United States Department of Agriculture. He was drafted into the U.S. Army, and after two years of active duty he returned to the USDA.

His career filled his life with wonderful friends and co-workers. After his retirement, he went to work with USAID teaching statistics in crop sampling and forecasting in Egypt and Morocco. He was an active member of the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. He loved to teach. He enjoyed "moonlighting" as an adjunct professor at several colleges, including FTU/UCF in Orlando, Florida.

He and his wife, Sandra, spent their summers in Fort Seybert.

He was a member of Living Faith Church in Franklin and was active with the Fort Seybert Heritage Education Association. He also assisted his wife with the Cemetery Identification and Preservation



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Project in Pendleton County and her books on the Pope and Cowger Genealogies.

In 2019 they moved to Texas full time. He was a member of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas. He enjoyed singing in the choir and attending their senior Sunday School classes.

His wife, Sandra Pope, preceded him in death.

Left to cherish his memory are his son, Steven Pope and wife, Leigh of Ohio; daughter, Cynthia Adams and husband, Kenneth of Frankston, Texas; a son, Christopher Pope and wife, Becky of New Zealand; a sister, Janet Emerson and husband, Derrel of Georgia; sisters-in-law, Sally Niezgoda and husband, Gary of West Virginia, and Bonnie Snyder Earp of Virginia; grandchildren, Rachael, Lianna, Emma-Leigh, Catherine, Marian, Taylor, Kennie, Zachery, Brianna, and Caleb; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was also preceded in death by a sister, Irene Pope Michael.

In keeping with his wishes, no services will be held.

Rather than customary condolences, the family requests donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Project at www.woundedwarriorproject.org. If one would like to reach out to the family, please contact the funeral home.

Arrangements were entrusted to Autry Funeral Home in Frankston, Texas.



Worth Miller

Worth Miller, 75, of Cabins passed away on Jan. 8, 2026 at his home.

He was born on Dec. 15, 1950, in Seneca Rocks and was a son of the late Denton Miller and Chloe B. (Lough) Miller.

Mr. Miller was an employee of Greer Limestone Company for 33 years and also worked for 13 years on the late Doan Harman farm. His wife of 49 years, Patty Sue (White) Miller, survives.

Also surviving are a son, Shaylon W. Miller (Robin) of Cabins; a daughter, Chlorenda M. Booth (Brian) of Petersburg; two

grandchildren, Caleb Arbaugh and Kaitlin Booth; a step-granddaughter, Michelle Wolfe; two step-great-grandchildren, Danica Wolfe and Delanie Wolfe; two sisters, Josie Champ (Dayton) of Lahmansville and Velma Bland of Seneca Rocks; a brother, Truman Miller (Connie) of Seneca Rocks; three sisters-in-law, Mary Ann Miller, Nouvelle Helmick and Wyoma Orebaugh; four brothers-in-law, Earl Sites, Golden Helmick, Carlton White and Larry White; and several nieces and nephews.

He was also preceded in death by five sisters, Infant JoAnn Miller, Mae Sites, Joy Rao, Pauline Phares and Sweetie Vance; four brothers, Gene Miller, Dewey Miller, Roosevelt Miller and Johnnie Denton Miller; two sisters-in-law; and four brothers-in-law.

A funeral service was held Tuesday at the Schaeffer Funeral Home in Petersburg with Pastor Lynn Durbin officiating. Interment was private at the Miller Family Cemetery in Seneca Rocks.

Memorial contributions may be made to the family, c/o Patty S. Miller, 175 Miller Lane, Cabins, WV 26855.

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- Cervical cancer is a disease in which cells in the cervix grow out of control.
- Each year 13,000 women in the U.S. will get cervical cancer, over 4,000 will die.
- It occurs most often in women over age 30.
- HPV causes cervical cancer.
- Any type of sexual contact transfers HPV.
- The HPV vaccination is recommended for girls and boys ages 11-26.
- All women should begin cervical cancer screening starting at age 21.
- Cervical cancer is the most preventable cancer.

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New Year Prompts One to Explore a Box of Treasures

Sugar Grove

By Paula Mitchell

The new year has begun and with it comes the eternal hope that this year will be better. The new year does seem like a time for new beginnings. It stretches ahead like a box of treasures that has not been opened. A person can open one day at a time with hope and optimism.

Here are some wishes to pass along to the reader.
May one's hair, teeth, face-lift, abs and stocks not fall; and may one's blood pressure, triglycerides, cholesterol, white blood count and mortgage interest not rise.

May what a person sees in the mirror delight one, and what others see in one delight them.

May someone who loves a person enough to forgive one's faults, be blind to one's blemishes, and tell the world about a person's virtues.

May a person remember to say "I love you" at least once a day to one's spouse, child, parent, and siblings.

May a person get a clean bill of health from one's dentist, cardiologists, urologist, plumber, I.R.S., podiatrist, and gastroenterologist.

May the New Year find a person seated around the table with one's beloved family and cherished loved ones. May a person find the food better, the environment quieter, costs much cheaper than anything else one might ordinarily do.

And may everyone live in a world at peace, and with the awareness of God's love in every sunset, every flower's unfolding petals, a baby's smile, and every wonderful beat of one's heart.

Have a Happy New Year!

Life's lessons to live by include the following:

1. Hug a friend.
2. Giggle with children.
3. Read every day.
4. Laugh a lot.
5. Cuddle a baby.

Sprinkles of rain fell Friday. Temperatures began to lower early Sunday morning, with snow showers all day. This is quite a change from last week! The length of daylight is beginning to show itself; and it is marching on to spring!

Quotes for the week are as follows:

"In the winter's silence, January speaks: try again, begin anew." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

"I never eat December snowflakes. I always WAIT UNTIL January." — Lucy, "A Charlie Brown Christmas"



Wayne (July 7, 1883 - Jan. 18, 1951) and Mary Elizabeth "Bessie" Sinnott Propst (May 11, 1890 - May 29, 1978) children were Everette (Sept. 23, 1913 - Sept. 4, 1989), Warren (April 10, 1916 - Jan. 18, 1951), and Dillon (Jan. 26, 1920 - Nov. 27, 1991). Pictured, from left, are Wayne, Everette, Dillon, Warren and "Bessie."

"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn." — Hal Borland

"Even the strongest blizzard starts with a single snowflake." — Sara Raasch

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant." — Anne Bradstreet

Sitting by the fireplace is a great place to hear about the "Talk of The Grove."

Rick Neil has retired following 46 years of 3 million miles of truck driving. Congratulations!

Tuesday, Charles and "Pidge" Anderson had a very pleasant visit from Lester and Mary Alice Hyre.

Friday morning found Phil Downs pleasantly surprised

North Mountain Traffic Camera Restoration

Continued From Page 1

Annually the school system puts in \$50,000 for a current total of \$300,000 that can be used for important projects, which was "one of Charles' (Hedrick, retired superintendent of schools) greatest insights," according to Mowery.

With Travis Heavner on the road coaching the high school girls' basketball team, Hevener gave the facilities report. She shared that the heat had gone off in the second floor of Franklin Elementary School and that Brandywine Elementary School was experiencing problems as well. "It becomes more and more obvious," she stated, "that the project at FES must become a priority."

Hevener then added that Heavner had related that addressing HVAC at FES would help to bring down the power bill, which Mowery had said was not much less than the larger Pendleton County Middle/High School.

Sonny O'Neil, board member, informed attendees that the preservation society overseeing the historic former Circleville High School approved the placement of large stones to protect the music room that had been seriously damaged by a vehicle.

Next came a legally required reading of new policies, many of which came from the state. Amendments were made to policies that had minor errors. One important change regarded weapons in the schools. Board members voted to amend the policy to allow for the potential of shooting sports that use tools sometimes classified as weapons.

O'Neil inquired about the legal boundary of length beyond which a pocketknife could be considered a weapon. Derek Lambert, PCMHS principal, confirmed that was three and a half inches.

A key approval came from the board of education, on the recommendation of Hevener, that the board of education spend \$7,800.14 to pay for the replacement of the North Mountain traf-

fic camera. Unlike any county in the state Pendleton County, through its office of emergency management, runs a network of public safety traffic cameras. The county commission normally funds them, but requested some help from the board of education, who graciously proposed to pay the entire bill.

Hevener explained that "it is greatly missed. It cannot be repaired because the company that installed it is no longer in business. The camera needs to be replaced."

Pendleton County Schools relies on the traffic cameras as part of its decision-making process whether to close school during bad weather. Due to that, it was suggested that the camera be paid for from transportation funds since they seemed the closest category to the need for the purchase, making it "reasonably justified as an expense."

But that came with some questions before approval. Wilma Pitsenbarger, board member, inquired about who would service the camera. Mowery explained that the Memorandum of Understanding that the board would need to approve only obligated a one-time camera purchase. While the board was not opposed to assist in the future if needed, the MOU strictly relieved it of further obligation beyond a "voluntary donation for public safety."

Another MOU was approved with Liberty University to facilitate teacher education students who wished to do clinicals in Pendleton County.

In her superintendent's report, Hevener shared her experience at North Fork Elementary School observing the science and social studies fairs. "It's obvious that a lot of hard work was put into those projects." She then shared a letter from Michelle Blatt, state superintendent, that provided welcome news that PCMHS had exceeded graduation standards.

"Everyone's efforts are appreciated," Hevener said, also giving credit to rising attendance numbers due in part to the work of Carrie Nesselrodt.

Finally, she spoke of a partly virtual meet and greet between Pendleton County Schools, the board of education, and state elected officials. With State Senator Robbie Morris and others, they "had a great discussion, mostly about school finance."



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Our Heartfelt Appreciation

We would like to thank our family and friends for all of the cards and video messages to honor dad's 90th birthday. While he was too ill to attend his party, he was able to read his cards and watch the messages. We are grateful for the continued love and support shown to our family following dad's passing through visits, calls, cards, floral tributes, Gideon Bibles, memorial donations, and especially your prayers.

Special thanks to the staff of Kimble Funeral Home, the U.S. Army Honor Guard, Pastor Deborah Beam and Lois Byers for the wonderful service, the Franklin Presbyterian Women for the delicious meal, and to Grant Memorial Hospice, Leana Davis, and Kim Bowers for their assistance and care.

May God richly bless each of you.
The Family of Thomas Kline
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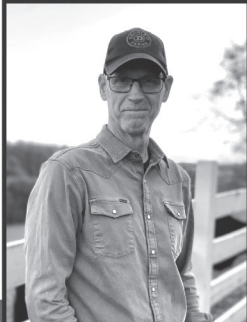
The family of K. D. Puffenbarger wishes to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone for your kind expressions of sympathy and thoughtfulness during our time of loss. It was deeply appreciated and will always be remembered.

A special thank you to Scott Beam, Phil Downs, Eugene Varner, Reverend Jerry Smith, St. Paul Independent Lutheran Church ladies and families, VFW Post 9666, Sugar Grove South Fork Rescue Squad and Kimble Funeral Home.



May God Bless each of you!
Danita, Beth, Kenny and Families

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Double the Teams, Double the Fun, as Pendleton County Prevails in Home Opener

By Stephen Smoot

The season thus far for Pendleton County boys' basketball has taken some strange twists and turns from the near complete weather-driven cancellation to the December slate of games to opening at home two weeks into January.

But the wins keep piling up. The Wildcats are, as of now, three and two against schools above Class A, including a tournament title on the road. They have swept the two Class A teams they have faced as well.

Saturday night they played in front of a jam packed house full of fans there to see rivals battle and also to honor the Class A state softball champion team from last year.

Moorefield took the opening tip, but gave it up quickly under pressure from Pendleton County's zone. All night long, the Wildcats switched between man and zone and also used multiple zone formations. That, plus the length of Wildcat players, narrowed the offensive opportunities for Moorefield considerably.

For the first five minutes of the game, the Yellow Jackets ground out a slight lead. They scored first on a layup 55 seconds in, held a 6-3 lead at 4:23, then gave it up again at about the three minute mark in the first quarter.

Chase Owens swiped a steal and drove it in for a layup to tie it at seven with 3:17 in the first, then hit a three at 2:59 to give his team the lead for good at 10-9. Jaydon Hess glided in from about 10 feet out, deftly flipped up a shot from about five feet, still in the air, and gave his team a three-point advantage. Owens followed with a three, but Moorefield cut the lead with their own deep shot at 1:10.

Now up only 15-12, Hess fired a pass to a cutting Travis Owens for a layup and a five point lead as the quarter closed.

Henry Warner brings a lot of skills to the offensive end in most games, but showed his defensive prowess well against the Yellow Jackets, elevating to block shots, getting his long arms into the passing lanes as well. He scored two blocks in the opening of the second



Cashton Kisamore powers into the middle for a basket against Moorefield. Photo courtesy of Light in Motion.

quarter.

Defense dominated through the second minute of the second quarter with blocks and steals prevailing over points. Cashton Kisamore scored from the free throw line as both teams gave and got best efforts. As the teams hit the five minute mark, Hess drove and kicked it out to Warner for a three-point basket that started to break the game open.

Chase Owens brought the ball down the lane, evaded a defender, and scored a reverse layup to extend the lead to 25-13. Almost two minutes later, Ty Heavner battled for an offensive rebound, fired it out to Chase Owens, and earned an assist when the recipient responded

with another three-point basket.

Heavner then scored on a pass whipped inside by Hess, setting the score at 28-16 with 1:45 remaining. Travis Owens shortly after connected on a three after another perfect Hess pass.

Moorefield never quits, however, and ground their way back into contention with hard earned buckets and free throws at the end of the half. The score as the third quarter opened was 34-21 after Heavner made one of two from the line with zero seconds in regulation.

The third quarter opened with almost no scoring. Those who enjoy points did not get a chance for disappointment in the third. Moorefield opened up with a charge call and Chase Owens quickly got the Wildcats back in the scoring column with a layup. His defense then forced a travel at seven minutes, then picked up an assist on a pass inside to Heavner at 6:38, setting the tone for the rest of the contest.

The Yellow Jackets hit their first basket of the second half at 6:30 with an inside shot, cutting the lead to 38-23, but Warner over a minute later responded with silky smooth layup that pushed the lead to 40-23.

As the game progressed, the intensity with which the Wildcats pounded the boards for rebounds continued. Pendleton County often got multiple looks off of offensive rebounds while Moorefield struggled to carve out room for even one clear shot at the basket. The Yellow Jackets continued playing with top effort, staying close and physical in defending Wildcat players. Pendleton County beat that effort with crisp passing, continually looking for the extra pass to find the open man.

By the time Heavner once again pulled down an offensive carom and put it back in the bucket at the end of the third, his squad had outscored one of the team's most pesky rivals, historically speaking, 26 to six.

Kisamore opened up the fourth with a power move from the post that shook off the defense and gave him an open look, with his basket making the score 63-29. Hess followed with a beautiful finger roll that pushed the lead to 65-29.

Starters for both teams gave way to bench players, but as Pendleton County demonstrated during the Lincoln tournament, not much drop off exists. Braylin Hull took a dribble inside the three point line and hit a shot after he entered play at the four minute point, then followed with a finger roll layup.

Tony VanMeter took a foul as he attempted a shot and hit one of two from the line. Dalton Rohrbaugh also got fouled driving in for a shot and hit one of two to set the score at 76-34. Cole Harper in the game late also scored a layup off an offensive rebound. Rohrbaugh later pulled in a Van Meter pass, executed a drop step move, and laid the ball in.

The game ended with an 80-39 win for Pendleton County. Chase Owens continued his tear from the three-point line, hitting six for seven for 86 percent in the game, 55 percent on the season. He totaled 30 points.

Heavner dominated on the inside, picking up 11 points and seven rebounds coming off the bench. Kisamore also powered in nine points from the post and picked up six boards. Warner scored nine as well. Hess had six points and led the squad with seven assists while Travis Owens kicked in five, Rohrbaugh three, Harper two, and VanMeter one.

Colton Roberson did not score, but had an impact with two rebounds, two assists, and a steal.

Pendleton County embodied perfectly what Heavner stated after the game, sharing simply, "We never let up." Josh Owens, head coach, praised Moorefield, stating that his squad defeated a very good Yellow Jacket team. He went on to say of the effort shown by his team from the opening tip "they are just having fun. If you talk to kids right, they respond right. I couldn't have asked for a better performance."

Coach Owens described his team's style on the evening as "nice and brisk" in running their offensive sets well, finding the extra man with the pass, and also using athleticism to make plays.

Friday, the Wildcats are scheduled to play at Petersburg.

Undermanned Wildcats Take Fight to Warriors, But Succumb in Fourth

By Stephen Smoot

Early in the season, the Pendleton County girls' basketball team has had to continually adjust — adjust to going straight from volleyball playoffs (some of them) into basketball season; adjust to a new coach, new staff, and new players capable of contributing right away; and adjust to the early season avalanche of weather postponements.

Lots of adjustments made and a lot of challenges overcome as the 2025 and 2026 edition starts to come together as a team. The scrappy roster has spent most of the season battling bigger schools from bigger cities and, while the wins have not come as often as liked, the effort, the development, and the improvement has happened.

Back in December, the Wildcats traveled to Pocahontas County with a full squad and lost by 15, 50-35. On Jan. 8, they hosted the same team and endured a 16-point loss, but played well and showed improvement over the first outing against the recently dominant Warriors.

Last week, the team had to take the court without starting center Susan Vincell and her 15.4 points per game, 54 percent shooting, 11.3 rebounds per game. That rebounds per game statistic is good for 10th in the state in all classes. Vincell is also 10th in field goals made and number two, again in all classes, in doubles with six.

The mark of a good team lies not always in how good their best players perform, but in how the team responds when challenged by the loss of one of the top performers to injury.

Vincell had taken ill, preventing her from taking the court. Her teammates, some of whom also felt under the weather, stepped in and stepped up their game to give the visiting Warriors an old-fashioned Wildcat battle.

Pocahontas County took the opening score 19 seconds into the game with a layup, working to establish themselves inside with the Pendleton County center out.

Jameigh Miller, a Potomac State recruit,

averages just more than 11 points per game, but had to play even bigger against Pocahontas County. She executed a crossover at the top of the key to shake the defender, then drove in to tie the game at two.

Pocahontas County appeared to take momentum early in the first with a 7-0 run over less than a minute of play. That was unusual for them in the opening half. However, Katie Heavner fought Pocahontas County underneath and rebounded well. Lexi Tingler at the 4:20 point swiped a steal and drove it all the way in for a layup to cut the lead to 9-6.

Next, Miller stood tight and forced a charge from the Warriors who drove in with "Truck" Bryant-like reckless abandon all night.

One of the frustrating repeated problems for Pendleton County lay in the defensive athleticism of the opposing squad, who managed to fly in and swat shots that, momentarily at least, had been "good looks" by the Wildcat shooters. Additionally, in the first half, many Wildcat shooters rushed shots. However, by the second half that had stopped.

Pocahontas County pulled ahead by six once again, but then Miller and Heavner executed a nifty give and go play that got Miller open for a layup, cutting the lead to 12-8 as the first quarter concluded.

Defenses delivered in the first three minutes of the second. Miller and Heavner repeated their give and go from before, getting the same result and cutting the lead to two at the 4:59 mark. About 20 seconds later, Miller sank a three-point shot to put her team up 13-12. At the 4:36 point, Miller worked off a Heavner pick and buried another three from the top of the key, to edge the lead up to 16-12.

The scoring burst from Miller returned at 3:22 when she drove in and finished a gliding hook shot to put her team suddenly up by six. Pocahontas County promptly answered with a three, but Jess Parker opened up a little room with a 10-foot baseline shot to set the lead at 20-17.

The Warriors knotted it up with a three at the 1:27 mark, but outfought taller players for



Lexi Tingler brought strong defense and offense to the effort against Pocahontas County. Photo courtesy of Light in Motion.

an offensive rebound, then used a baby hook to put the team up 22-20. With 48 seconds left, the Warriors took the lead on a three and carried it into the half.

In the third quarter, the two teams traded virtual punches throughout. Neither could quite put the other on their heels. Heavner opened scoring in the third with an offensive rebound and putback that got the Wildcats back on top. The Warriors once again hit a three to take the lead, but Heavner kept pouring it on, hitting a 10-foot baseline basket to knot the game at 26 with 5:30 left in the third.

As the game progressed, the Wildcats showed that the challenge had seasoned them. Tia Heavner hit an open three at the 3:23 mark to take a 30-28 advantage. Almost a minute later, Parker took a rebound, drove the length of the

court, and dropped in a layup for a 33-30 lead.

Not long after, Miller fired a pass out to Parker, who then found Tia Heavner open for a shot. Pocahontas County fouled her and she delivered on two free throws. The same player converted on two more charity shots with about 20 seconds left in the third to extend the lead to 37-32.

Throughout the quarter, the Wildcats brought full effort and got the desired results. The Warriors settled for single attempts at long shots. Upon missing them Pendleton County turned those into fast break opportunities.

And then the car seemed to run out of gas as the third quarter ended and the fourth quarter began. Pocahontas County took the game to the young and weary Wildcats. Right to the end, the Warriors maintained the same intensity with even their coach continuing to yell to distract Pendleton County free throw shooters with the game out of reach.

Pocahontas County muscled their way back into the lead, their higher levels of age and experience taking over. The final Wildcat score came from Shayne Clutter who was fouled as she drove toward the basket. She made a free throw for her team's 47th point.

Although the Wildcats fought to the end, the Warriors won the game 63-47.

Miller led with 19 points, with Parker coming in at 12, Tia Heavner eight, Katie Heavner four, Tingler three, and Clutter one.

In the absence of Vincell, her teammates showed up strong on the boards. Miller grabbed 15 rebounds playing a hybrid point guard and forward position. Katie Heavner gathered 10 while starting at center. Lauren Williams in limited action fought hard inside and took three of her own, while Parker and Tia Heavner got five a piece.

Even as they played without one of their key starters and lost, each player found a way to do more individually to create a stronger impact together. Quite often that learning situation pays major dividends down the road.

The Wildcats are scheduled to play at Moorefield today beginning at 6 p.m.

County School Systems

Continued From Page 1

issues like coaching evaluation, active shooter drills, first aid, how to comply with certain state laws, appropriate employee conduct and more.

Another long series of trainings apply to one or more categories of employees, but not others. These include training on dyslexia, advanced placement, the Third Grade Success Act, the state assessment, and more.

Total hours in the all employee training category added up to 20, or two and a half days of work. The total for all trainings of specific employee categories hits 81 hours.

With employees facing such a large regimen of required yearly trainings, the proposal requested "a small task force to review and evaluate trainings for possible reductions." Another change proposed lay in extending the employment term from 200 to 202 days to accommodate the extra time used for training, but taken away from other tasks. It also suggested to "examine 180 days of instruction calendar for more flexibility."

Much of the rest of the flexibility proposals center around personnel. First, the proposal wishes to do away with a restriction stating that a school system cannot reassign school personnel after the concluding day of the second school month. State code has also established mandates that lock "moves into rigid timelines," require postings, require board approval, give priority to employees with seniority, restrict mid-year transfers, and give "grievance rights if moved improperly."

This would allow school systems to move personnel around as needed to address any deficiencies that reassignment would correct. State code 18A-2-7 provides a number of administrative procedures that a school system must follow in terms of assignment, transfer, and promotion. Some of these include

grievance procedures.

"Redact almost all of the entire code and add the following," states the proposal, which goes on to suggest two new clauses "All personnel decisions shall be based on the needs of the students and schools within the district and made at the sole discretion of the county boards of education upon recommendation by the superintendent" and also "county boards shall adopt a policy defining the deciding factors on which personnel decisions shall be based."

Finally, and most significantly, the proposal recommends a simple way to address funding levels that will benefit all systems. It states that the state aid funding formula upon which school systems receive support from that source is too complex to be overhauled, taking up "three pages in the West Virginia Code Book."

"The easiest way is to increase funding" by raising certain allowances granted within the state aid formula, it states.

Said Sheena Van Meter, Hardy County Schools superintendent, "The school funding formula is number one in importance for Hardy County."

Each school system has the cost of a certain amount of personnel per thousand covered by the state aid formula and this is governed by other factors as well. It is not just a hard and fast number set in statute. After a 2019 act that substantially increased flexibility in certain school system procedures, systems received that funding whether they employed that many or not

J.P. Mowery, Pendleton County Schools treasurer, explained last year that for his and other smaller and sparsely populated school systems statewide, keeping the number of employees under the formula number, as he put it, "to the good" provides an unintended, but vital means of support.

"That's how we balance the budget and keep all our schools open," he explained. School systems that employ "over the

formula" and past what the state pays for either have a large excess levy or are in significant financial trouble." Mowery described the impact of this in Hancock County as having a "grenade go off."

The proposal offers a minimum and maximum ask. Minimally, it would like to see the state cover one more professional or one more service person per thousand. The cost of adding one professional per thousand statewide would be \$19.5 million. Adding one service personnel per thousand would come to \$12.2 million. The total to add both would come to just under \$31.8 million.

The maximum request comes to a three per thousand increase from both professional and service. Doing it for just personnel would come to a cost to the state of almost \$59 million while just for service would come to \$36.7 million. Doing for both would bring the total tally to \$95.4 million.

Van Meter expressed support for the three per thousand increase, sharing that "if it increased by three that would do a lot for us." It would help to cover the number of employees over the current formula "that I don't have to take out of our local share" of county taxes. She added that "we've cut positions every year to get close" to the formula point and shared that "there's no fluff" in the employees of Hardy County Schools.

She explained that while the county had a \$2 million carryover, Hardy County Schools had to pull from it to keep employees. Pendleton County Schools also had a healthy carryover, but Mowery has continually warned his superintendent and board to remain vigilant because of expected drops in federal funding, rising costs of food and other inputs, and other potential budgetary and financial headwinds.

Unexpected major expenses under the county schools' obligation to pay can also cut down a healthy balance quickly, Van Meter giving the example of "a major equipment malfunction" being one of her concerns.



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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PROPOSED INCREASE IN ENHANCED 911 FEE

On Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6:30PM, the Pendleton County Commission will conduct a public meeting and receive public comments on a proposed Amended E911 Ordinance. The existing 911 Ordinance, adopted in 1998, established standards for the county 911 emergency system and imposed fees of \$2.50 per month on telephone wireline customers in the county. In order to preserve the integrity of service to county residents, the county has undertaken to upgrade the E911 system with the latest technology available. Since E911 fees have not increased in the county since 1998, they are now insufficient to fund necessary modern technology upgrades to the E911 system. It is proposed that fees be increased as follows: residential customers from \$2.50 to \$5.00; business from \$2.50 to \$8.00; PBX lines from \$2.50 to \$8.00; and Centrex lines from \$2.50 to \$8.00. The Proposed Amended Ordinance may be examined at the Pendleton County Administrator's Office, Pendleton County Courthouse. 1c

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REVIEW AND EQUALIZATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

You are hereby notified that the County Commission of Pendleton County will meet as a Board of Review and Equalization of Pendleton County, West Virginia, at the Courthouse of said Pendleton County

beginning on

January 29, 2026

For the purpose of reviewing and equalizing the assessment of said Pendleton County, as returned by the Assessor thereof, and said Board will continue to meet in session from day to day as long as the said Board deems that it will be justified in remaining in session. The land books and personal property books of said Pendleton County for this current year will then be open for inspection and any person, or persons may examine the same and have any errors corrected that may appear in the assessment of his or their property and do such other and further things as may be necessary to protect his interest therein. If any person fails to apply for relief at such meeting, then he shall be deemed to have waived his right to ask for any correction in his assessment list as fixed by the aforesaid Pendleton County Commission, acting in the capacity of said boards, and he shall not thereafter be permitted to question the correctness of his list.

Anyone desiring to appear before said Board should contact Elise M. White, P.O. Box 1167, Franklin, WV 26807, or call 304-358-2505.

Given under my hand this 8th day of January, 2026.

Elise M. White, Clerk of the Pendleton County Commission of Pendleton County, and Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of Review and Equalization 1-15-2c

NOTICE OF ANCILLARY FILING WITHOUT ANY ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATE

Notice is hereby given that a foreign will or affidavit has been filed before Pendleton County Commission at 100 S. Main Street, Franklin, WV 26807.

That no appointment of administration is being made pursuant to the provisions of law but that a foreign will or affidavit of heirs of the decedent has been filed with the Pendleton County Commission, and is of record in the Pendleton County Clerk's Office.

Any interested person objecting to the filing of the foreign will or affidavit or objecting to the absence of appointment or administration being made in this state must be filed with the Pendleton County Commission within 60 days after the date of first publication or within 30 days of the serving of this notice, whichever is later. If an

Commissioners Hear That General Services Building Is Nearing Move-In Dates

By Stephen Smoot

Commissioner Roger Dahmer led the first regular meeting of the Pendleton County Commission with an invocation, praying "Lord we ask you to guide our actions and our words." Carl Hevener, commission president, then added that "the way our country is going, I'd like to start reciting the Pledge of Allegiance again," which all joined in saying.

Discussion opened with an update on the progress of the new Pendleton County General Services Building, located in the former Franklin Elementary School.

Rick Gillespie, Pendleton County Emergency Services coordinator, has taken a lead role in getting the structure restored to standards for government service. One major issue faced temporarily since the county acquired the building lay in the fuel consumption of the oil burning heat system.

"Crews," said Gillespie, "found some sensors in various parts of the school" all set above 80 degrees by the previous owners. This contributed to unexpectedly high fuel bills until sensors were adjusted. He said, "Fuel consumption has dropped tremendously in the past couple of weeks."

Preparation for the relocation of multiple entities continues. The office of emergency management's conference room, operations center, and office space should "be ready toward the end of the month. Gillespie asked commissioners to create work priorities for the contractor and also expressed that West Virginia University Extension and the Pendleton County Public Service District would likely move next,

possibly, with state run offices in the community building to follow after.

The Pendleton County Commission purchased the building that is now the PCGSB because officials feared the rise in the bed of the South Branch of the Potomac River had reached the point where buildings previously thought safe from flooding no longer are. The nearby Pendleton Senior and Family Services experienced flooding issues in the first half of 2025.

Gillespie and commissioners also tackled another issue, that of undergoing the legally required process, including public meetings, involved in raising the county landline fee upon which the funding of Pendleton 911 depends. Not since its inception in the mid-1990s has the fee been raised.

Despite the decreases in landline use and tremendous increase in costs of operation since that point, the commissioners opted for slight increases in the fees. The commission will hold the special public meeting on the rate increase at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 17.

Commissioners and Gillespie discussed issues concerning the malfunctioning traffic cameras overlooking U.S. Route 33 on North Mountain. Gillespie presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Pendleton County Commission and the Pendleton County Board of Education. It puts into agreement the board's offer to assist the county with replacing the camera and incurring on the board of education no subsequent obligation. "I applaud the board of education for wanting to be a partner," Gillespie noted.

The OEM reconfigured a security camera nearby to provide a less effective viewpoint from which to see road conditions, but it was described as "a good stopgap" but "nowhere near as good."

Officials noted that no other county in West Virginia funds its own network of traffic cameras. The state operates a 511 website with cameras covering various locations on main routes.

Resolutions Word Search

H	A	B	I	T	J	T	L	A	B	E	P	B	C	T	L	P	A	R	J	ACCOUNTABILITY
M	H	J	P	E	S	R	M	B	C	L	Y	H	S	A	S	B	U	G	V	ACHIEVEMENT
I	E	C	Y	R	P	A	N	O	A	H	A	F	C	T	C	O	U	E	E	ASPIRATION
U	B	W	C	R	R	N	D	N	T	N	I	F	O	G	H	A	S	D	G	CHANGE
N	I	O	H	O	T	S	F	Y	G	I	M	E	O	I	E	C	W	C	C	COMMITMENT
O	M	B	F	M	T	F	D	E	P	P	V	I	V	C	N	A	I	R	D	DETERMINATION
I	P	J	N	T	E	O	T	A	E	W	P	A	N	E	U	I	U	I	C	DISCIPLINE
T	R	E	P	G	N	R	N	C	N	P	E	R	T	D	M	S	I	R	N	FOCUS
N	O	C	J	N	O	M	E	C	I	L	R	F	O	I	S	E	P	O	O	GOAL
E	V	T	M	S	T	A	M	O	T	A	S	S	L	G	O	E	N	B	I	HABIT
T	E	I	V	N	S	T	T	U	U	W	I	A	V	A	R	N	T	T	T	IMPROVEMENT
N	M	V	I	O	E	I	I	N	O	E	S	C	M	G	O	E	I	T	A	INTENTION
I	E	E	S	I	L	O	M	T	R	N	T	I	T	E	A	G	S	A	N	MILESTONE
C	N	H	I	T	I	N	M	A	Y	E	E	W	C	C	V	B	S	S	I	MINDSET
A	T	O	O	A	M	V	O	B	V	R	N	P	R	O	M	I	S	E	M	MOTIVATION
G	C	C	N	R	C	S	C	I	S	T	C	E	T	G	R	U	R	L	R	OBJECTIVE
G	Y	A	U	I	I	U	Y	L	Y	Y	E	D	C	M	B	T	V	P	E	PERSISTENCE
I	J	P	C	P	W	H	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	I	N	E	B	N	T	PLAN
U	U	J	O	S	G	W	G	T	Y	N	E	Y	E	D	I	E	J	O	E	PROGRESS
H	R	G	L	A	A	M	U	Y	M	H	J	E	F	P	T	O	R	C	D	PROMISE
																				RENEWAL
																				ROUTINE
																				TRANSFORMATION
																				VISION

History of New Year's Resolutions

Though Americans might think they can lay claim to the practice of making resolutions for the upcoming year, it actually dates back to the ancient Babylonians. For them, however, the year started in mid-March, when crops for the season were planted. During Akitu, a 12-day religious festival, Babylonians made promises to the gods in return for good favor in the new year. It is from this ancient practice that today's New Year's resolutions are believed to have evolved.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII introduced the world to the Gregorian calendar. At that time, he declared that January 1 should mark the start of the new year, and the Western world soon complied.

